

“LIKE LIFE IN EXCREMENTS”:  
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY, HAIR,  
AND THE LIMITS OF THE BODY’S VITALITY  
IN EARLY MODERN ENGLISH THOUGHT

by

EDWARD JAMES GEISWEIDT

A DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Department of English  
in the College of Arts and Sciences of  
The University of Alabama

TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

2010

Copyright Edward James Geisweidt 2010  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

## ABSTRACT

This study focuses on early modern understandings of hair as a means to investigate English thought about life, the soul, identity, and the place of the human in the natural world. Hair is a useful body part for exploring such natural philosophical issues because the competing theories regarding hair's ontology—regarding it as either a living body part or harmful, lifeless excrement—touch on more philosophically weighty debates about the body and soul. As a characteristic shared across all forms of earthly life, hairiness provided the English with an anatomical index for the vitality they shared with non-human life. Moreover, the indeterminability of hair's ontological nature made it especially apt for figuration in literary discourse. Poets and playwrights of the period registered the cultural ambivalence over hair to various ends in the construction of character, commentary on art's relation to nature, and the exploration of human affinity with the natural world.

In chapter one, I explore the concept of the ensoulment of individual body parts and the “all in all, all in part” theory of the soul's residence in the body, a *topos* of not only theological but also poetic interest. Focusing on natural philosophies of body part formation, chapter two presents the competing theories of hair growth that fueled the cultural ambivalence toward hair, which served as a literary theme. Chapter three treats the various connections between hair and plants, examining the vegetable life hair was thought to possess. Shakespeare and Spenser write about hair as a corporeal indication of humans' vegetable affinities. In chapter four, I explore

how hair and fur were thought to demonstrate likenesses between people and animals, particularly horses. I also consider the way in which horse hair's spontaneously generative power provides a central image for Shakespeare's exploration of human and animal life. Chapter five deals with the competing constructions of human identity in the two versions of *Sir Thomas More*. Not only does long hair bring into question one character's humanity, it is also central to sustaining and altering his identity. The play's revisions, I argue, demonstrate the way hair's culturally contested status affected literary character construction.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I once saved my family for last in a list of acknowledgments, and the publication's editors unjudiciously omitted them from my dedication. So now I put them first, but not out of concern for word limits (yet words are always too limited in expressing love and gratitude). My parents, Robert Geisweidt and Arlene Geisweidt, and my brother Mike have been my quiet strength throughout this project, sending their affection, patience, and trust from afar, even as we enjoyed only a few brief weeks a year in each other's company. They are the source and the final assessors of all my work's value.

My dissertation committee has been an esteemed parliament of heroes. Tricia McElroy's enthusiasm for English verse sent me chasing after Britomart and grappling with Samson. Tatiana Summers brought her valued perspective on Classical literature and philosophy, as well as the cheerful rigor that I enjoyed as a student in her Latin class. While helping me gain access to the Folger Shakespeare Library, Michael Mendle took encouraging interest in my archival work and I am happy that he brought an historian's expertise to my committee. Harold Weber has been a characteristically astute, honest, and indispensable reader. In short, he is a maker of scholars. Gary Taylor provided valuable encouragement and guidance as I began to formulate my research. Conversations with him inspired my curiosity and imagination. When she took on the role of director, Sharon O'Dair brought new life to my project. Since taking my first

graduate course with her, I've experienced demonstrable growth as a writer. I owe the best of my scholarly accomplishments to her brand of incisive challenge and spirited enthusiasm.

I must thank Michael Schoenfeldt for a lively discussion of digestion over fried catfish, fried green tomatoes, and other fried foods. For their readings of chapter drafts, and for on-going scholarly camaraderie, I am grateful to the participants of the 2007-2008 Folger Institute seminar "Researching the Archives," directed by David Scott Kastan and Keith Wrightson. My colleagues at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon, too numerous and lovely to name, have seen me through this project from start to finish. My third chapter shows the benefits of editorial advice from Brett Hirsch, David McInnis, and my anonymous readers at *Early Modern Literary Studies*. Chapter four is all the better thanks to the editors of *Ecocritical Shakespeare*—Daniel Brayton and Lynne Bruckner, who has become a super colleague and friend. Scholars with whom I've shared my ideas include Celia Daileader, Will Fisher, Andrew Hadfield, John Jowett, and Katie Hogan. For saying the word "excrement" in such a way that I knew someone else understood what I was on to, I must acknowledge Carla Mazzio. Even one word can be a great contribution.

The institutional support I've received is humbling. At the University of Alabama, travel funding and fellowships from The Graduate School, The College of Arts and Sciences, The English Department, and the Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies supported my research and sent me to libraries, conferences, and seminars regularly. I want to thank the Folger Institute for a generous grant-in-aid. Pat Causey and Lisa Yuro at the University of Alabama's Gorgas Library have been tremendously helpful and supportive beyond the call of duty.

Over the years, many colleagues (and their families) in the Strode Program provided guidance, encouragement, admonishment, and friendship. To Austin Whitver, Pamela Whiddon,

Kevin Crawford, Heidi Atwood, Jennifer Hartman, Jim Casey, Dawn Papuga, and Sally Fortin, I extend a heartfelt “Semper Strode!” Speaking of hearts, Catherine Roan Bullis made sure I kept mine in work. Ron Tumelson (with assistance from Miette) was helpful as a mentor and constant source of wide-ranging references, from Anglo-Saxon history to Dr. Seuss. Sara Whitver ingeniously devised a “cake-per-chapter” writing incentive program. And I offer warmest gratitude to Leah Nielsen, with whom I enjoyed alimetary support, delightful conversation, hours of painting the soffit, and, most importantly, puppies.

## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
Chapter 1: “All in part”: An Introduction.....	1
Chapter 2: “A matter of no great necessity”: The Nourishment of Cultural Ambivalence.....	35
Chapter 3: Horticulture of the Head: The Vegetable Life of Hair.....	75
Chapter 4: “The Courser’s Hair has yet but Life”; or, “Tennis Balls and Horses” II.....	105
Chapter 5: “Cherishing a Loathsome Excrement”: Reading Humans with the Hair.....	155
Epilogue.....	186
Works Cited.....	192

## Chapter One

### “All in Part”: An Introduction

When Hamlet’s father returns to “whet [his son’s] almost blunted purpose,” the Ghost worries about the “amazement” of Gertrude’s “fighting soul,” and the strong “[c]onceit” engendered in her characteristically “weak[]” body (3.4.101, 102, 103, 104). But aside from this benevolent spectral sexism, we do not receive cues to Gertrude’s physical state; rather, it is Hamlet, as described by Gertrude, who shows the startling physical signs of amazement and a fighting soul:

Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep,  
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th’alarm,  
Your bedded hair, like life in excrements,  
Start up and stand on end. (110-113)

Wild-eyed and with hair standing on-end, Hamlet shows the typical signs of fear and “amazement.” But we might look beyond a merely affective explanation of his reaction and conjecture that life itself is trying to escape Hamlet. The OED defines “peep” as, intransitively, “To emerge or protrude a very short distance into view; to begin to appear” (*peep*, v.<sup>1</sup>). Hamlet’s eyes, then, become the portals out of which his spirits are trying to emerge; meanwhile his hair acquires its own locomotion and, hence, a kind of autonomous agency. The hair lives, but in simile—it has not a life but a “like life,” or like-life. Gertrude compares this like-life to another life, that of soldiers mechanically responding to the external stimulus of the alarm. But

Gertrude is witnessing the same basic phenomenon in both: Hamlet's spirits are making their way to the edges of his body, and perhaps even beyond it. In so doing, the spirits give a kind of life to Hamlet's hair, a body part that, as we shall see, was readily amenable to taking on life of its own in the early modern imagination.

Most amiss in what appears to Gertrude as Hamlet's unfounded fear and distraction is the nature of the body part most enlivened in his reaction. The hairs that act and react like soldiers are also excrements, "That which grows out or forth; an outgrowth; said *esp.* of hair, nails, feathers," according to the OED ("*excrement*" n. 1). Of course another definition of excrement was deployable in this period—"The alvine fæces or the waste matter discharged from the bowels"—but Gertrude's usage does not quite invoke this messier definition ("*excrement*" n. 2.b). Still, this way of referring to hair is foreign, even surprising, to modernity's hair-consciousness. What Gertrude intends with her simile is to register the anomaly of Hamlet's behavior by reference to an equally unusual phenomenon—that is, excrement, a bodily by-product, coming to life. That Hamlet could behave inexplicably, however, is not beyond the realm of possibility, and that hair could acquire life was not beyond early modern imagination, or thinkability.<sup>1</sup> In *Hamlet* Shakespeare stages the pervasiveness, multiformity, and instability of life. In the end, the loss of life is evident even at the level of the body part. The English Ambassador laments that "The ears are senseless that should give us hearing," recalling the power of the sensitive soul from which ears derive their capability (5.2.313). When the Ambassador asks from whom England should receive thanks for dispatching Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Horatio refers to the dead Claudius in his response, "Not from his mouth, / Had it th'ability of life to thank you" (316-317). Ears and mouths were uncontested parts of the

---

<sup>1</sup> On the "thinkable," see David Scott Kastan, 49-50.

bodily whole, but their abilities to hear and speak give them a certain autonomy here. Having no native sense or obvious function, Hamlet's hairs claim life under more extraordinary conditions. Hair's uneasy status as a part of the body, the life that inheres in the body's parts and the extent to which it does, and hair's subject-making effects and the legibility of those effects, are all issues, nicely condensed in this passage, upon which this dissertation will focus.

Gertrude's other description of Hamlet's hairdo somewhat elliptically draws in other areas of thought that are central to this project. While Hamlet's hair is excrement, it is also "bedded," and this usage is one of two with which the OED illustrates the definition of bedded as "Laid or strewn in a smooth layer" ("*bedded*" ppl. a., 5). Of course, a network of associations arises from the "bed" of Gertrude's description. The OED defines a "bed" in its most common usage as a "sleeping-place of men or animals" (*bed*, n., 1). Such a bed often features prominently in critical and dramatic renderings of this "closet scene" between Hamlet, mother, and sometime father. In this sense of being "bedded," Hamlet's hair is restful excrement, stirring from its sleeping place only when it is disturbed from the slumber a bed affords. A bed is also a dwelling place for plants, described in the OED as "usually somewhat raised" areas of a garden. The term bed is "also used to include the plants themselves which grow in it" (*bed*, n., 8). Human in the Aristotelian sense, Hamlet raises his head toward the heavens, so that his crown provides a space for the cultivation of his hair. Hamlet's bedded hair resides in a space occupied by various forms of life—vegetable, animal, and human. This constellation may be somewhat fortuitous, but it points to an early modern understanding of the nature of life—that in all its various manifestations, life is a hairy phenomenon, just as hair is a life-like substance.

Gertrude's simile, in which she depicts Hamlet's hair, standing on end, as "like life," provides my work with a governing, and purposely ambiguous, figuration of the vitality that was

often thought to reside in hair. In one sense, the simile registers the anomalous approximation of vitality in non-living material. Like-life is life of a dubious nature, springing from sources or through processes not necessarily accounted for by traditional, philosophical descriptions of generation by seed, such as that offered in Aristotle's widely influential *Generation of Animals*, or William Harvey's (1578-1657) response to Aristotle in *Anatomical exercitations concerning the generation of living creatures* (1653). On another level, "like-life" also registers the likeness between forms of life in early modern thought. Despite a strong, Christian polemicist argument asserting humans' *sui generis* ontology, whereby any continuity between humans and other forms of life is denied, natural philosophical and medical discourse recognized likenesses between humans, and plants and animals, most often expressed as a likeness between specific anatomical parts. I do not mean to argue that a recognition of likeness is the same as species continuity, but that the felt connections with other species derived from likeness should not be minimized by a post-Darwinian emphasis on continuity.

The term "like-life" aligns the poetic device simile with the philosophical mode of thinking relations through analogy. W. R. Elton recognizes analogy among the "intellectual conventions" of the period (17). It is a mode of thought that lends itself easily to hierarchical organization. Analogy, for instance, allowed the English to think of the human body as a microcosm of the universe (17-18). Common analogies between beings at the top of their respective hierarchies link God, the king, the sun, the eagle, and the lion (despite its human-conferred titular authority over the animal kingdom, the lion was not generally considered the closest link to man in the Chain of Being, an honor belonging, as I argue in a later chapter, to the horse). During the early modern period, Elton argues, analogy became a "secularized instrument" and "[t]hrough this unified theory of the human imagination, poets sought with

scientists to interpret the Book of Nature and to discover the harmonious, ordered, and interrelated universe” (18). Gail Kern Paster writes of the organizing function of analogy: “It organized the world in a network of mutual functionality that enlivened all animate life in a hierarchical continuum of ensoulment (*empsychos*), ascending from vegetables to imperfect animals such as sponges, to perfect animals such as birds and mammals, and finally to the human being, uniquely endowed with an intellective soul” (*Humoring* 4). One can easily see an overlap between categories of ensouled life and categories, or links, in the Great Chain of Being. But I want to look at ways that ensoulment and analogy also worked against the logic of linear continuum, presenting life as a figure of three dimensions. Ordering the universe through analogy requires thought on a grand scale, but analogy was also important in matters so fine as determining the nature of hair, and thus the nature of hairy beings. Analogies of parts actually worked across hierarchical divisions in helping to develop a notion of shared life, or “like-life,” in English thought.

#### §

Given that hair is a substance that can be found almost literally everywhere, but certainly across various forms of life, I will often invoke in my discussion The Great Chain of Being. The Great Chain of Being has experienced fluctuating value in its critical currency. It can hardly be mentioned in Shakespeare studies without an at least implicit evocation of E. M. W. Tillyard, whose very name is almost synonymous with the concept. Interestingly, Tillyard’s *Elizabethan World Picture* rarely employs the words “Great Chain of Being,” and the book does not spend much time on the non-human elements of the rock-plant-animal-man-angel-God progression. Part of the reason that the Chain of Being became a disposable concept for Shakespeare scholarship was its association with the political myth of the “Elizabethan World Picture,”

which, like the Chain of Being, asserts a static background upon which early modern thought (in this case, political) can be reliably mapped. The critics of Tillyard tend to focus more on his political and historical criticism of Shakespeare's age, not the cosmological order with which his name is also associated. Indeed, one area where Tillyard's notions of order are seeing a resurgence of critical currency is in ecocriticism, particularly in Gabriel Egan's *Green Shakespeare*. Egan recuperates Tillyard's focus on analogy as an ecopolitically expedient way of making a literary critical intervention into modern thought on ecology. Egan also insists that even if the World Picture is not so ingrained in the Elizabethan mind as Tillyard suggests, nonetheless

the account of the universe that the Picture embodied was available for use in plays and poems. Characters in Shakespeare speak meaningfully about comets presaging disaster and about the music of the spheres, and unless we suppose that these lines elicited derisive laughter from the theatre audiences we have to accept that such things were within the realm of the believable even if not widely believed. (25)

Indeed we might wonder to what extent we are meant to laugh at Gloucester and think like Edmund in *King Lear*. Of course questions about cosmic order are not left open to the fickle censure of theater audiences alone. In natural philosophical, medical, theological, and other learned discourses, the nature of being was actively debated in terms not unlike the ones dismissively associated with Tillyard. And just as Egan finds poetic analogies as sites where "conventional and conservative meanings shear away and radical applications become possible" (90), literature also reflects the contestable nature of thought and surprises us in finding likeness

between unlikes. In this project, I will examine likenesses across the terrestrial life that comprises three links of the Chain of Being: plants, animals, and humans.

That the Chain of Being, called also by the name of *scala natura*, really was to a considerable degree consciously employed as a guide of cosmic ordering is evident from English literature, and literature translated into English, from the early Renaissance to the eighteenth-century. A literary passage often cited to both assert and deny claims for cosmic order in early modern English thought is Ulysses' monologue about degree in *Troilus and Cressida*. Extracted from context, the passage serves as eloquent evidence of the belief that planetary motion, diurnal operations, and human relations are tuned all on one "string" (1.3.109) and are structured accordingly as a "ladder to all high designs" (ll. 102). Viewed in context, as part of one of Shakespeare's most pessimistic plays, in which great heroes and grand designs are constantly undercut, Ulysses's words come off as representing misguided adherence to an ultimately untenable worldview. Whether Shakespeare held Ulysses's faith in degree, he does nonetheless provide evidence of a well-articulated structure of hierarchical relations governing everything from individual peasants to unreachable planets. Totemic as Ulysses's words on degree are, Tillyard himself recognizes that something is missing, something that gives the Great Chain of Being its very source of renewal in ecocritical interest: "There is nothing about God and the angels, nothing about animals and vegetables and minerals. For Shakespeare's dramatic purposes he brought in quite enough, but it would be wrong to think that he did not mean to imply the two extremes of creation" (8). Tillyard's presumption of what Shakespeare meant to imply is in line with his claim that the world picture his book describes is so ingrained in Elizabethan thought that it can go unspoken. Still, Tillyard proceeds to offer from various discourses evidence that the natural world was thought to be ordered by ascending degrees.

Citing such texts as Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1621), Thomas Elyot's *Book Named the Governour* (1531), and Richard Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593, 1597).

Centuries after these publications, Alexander Pope delivers his paean to the Chain of Being in *An Essay on Man* (1733), although he does exclude plants and minerals from the plan: "Vast chain of being, which from God began, / Natures ethereal, human, angel, man, / Beast, bird, fish, insect! what no eye can see" (Epistle 1, ll. 237-39). Joseph Addison does include plant life as part of the "Scale of Being" discussed in his *Spectator* number 519, October 25, 1712: "[God] has, therefore, *specified* in his Creation every degree of Life, every Capacity of Being. The whole Chasm in Nature, from a Plant to a Man, is filled up with diverse Kinds of Creatures, rising above one another by such a gentle and easy Ascent that the little Transitions and Deviations from one Species to another are almost insensible" (348, emphasis in original).

While Pope's poem affirms the principle of degree, instructing man in particular not to try to shake the order by willful and narcissistic ascent, Addison's essay celebrates both the plenitude of God's creation and the continuity that almost imperceptibly links forms of beings together. These mechanisms of gradualism and plenitude in Addison, and discrete, fixed categories in Pope, are well-articulated in the eighteenth century, but we will see below that they have ancient origins.

In Shakespeare's lifetime, one other expression of natural order matching that described as the Chain of Being requires particular attention here. It comes to the English from the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner (1516-1565), by way of a preface inserted in Edward Topsell's *Historie of fouer-footed beastes* (1607), an important work of natural history based largely on Gesner's own *Historia Animalium* (1551-8). For Gesner, the order of forms of being shows that a divine

presence inheres in all of creation, so that the animals that are the subject of his natural history might be read as expressions of the divine:

[W]e cannot but thinke that euery story of a beast is like a seuerall Hymne, to praise the Diuine wisdome and goodnes, from which as from a pure euer-springing-fountaine, proceed and flow all good, beautifull, and wise actions: First, thorough the heauenly spirits and degrees of Angels and celestial bodies: afterward thorough the minds of men, beginning at the highest, and so proceeding to the lowest, (for euen in men the giftes and graces of God differ,) and from men to other creatures that haue life or sence, as to plants and inanimate bodyes, so as the inferiors do alwaies so compose themselues to the imitation of the superiours, euen as their shaddowes and resemblaunces. (¶3<sup>v</sup>)

Gesner's groupings are interesting here, as he apparently equates life with sense (a distinguishing faculty of animal souls), and he groups plants with "inanimate bodies." Yet in all cases, animated or not, lower forms of being "compose themselues"—an action that suggests a kind of natural self-fashioning—in the likeness of superior beings. In Gesner we see a glimpse of the upward mobility promised in some writers' conceptions of hierarchical order, Baldassare Castiglione's being among the most well-known, with his celebrations of love that aspires to the angelic and condemnation of that which sinks to the bestial.<sup>2</sup> The desire to be like higher forms of being explains the "resemblaunces" Gesner finds in nature, but this is a result of "his Protestant religious orthodoxy (he was a typical product of the Swiss Reformation of 1522-3)" (Egan 93). The history of the Chain, of course, predates Reformed notions of divine presence in

---

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Castiglione, Tt1<sup>v</sup>-Tt3<sup>v</sup>.

nature or in the sacrament, and it complicates being in ways that the standard six link chain rehearsed by Gesner can account for.

The Great Chain of Being, as Arthur O. Lovejoy explains in his definitive (though not unchallenged<sup>3</sup>) study, is more than a schematic ladder of broad categories of being, ascending from stone to God. The Chain is a complex intertwining of sometimes contradictory ideas stemming from Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. The Platonic idea to which Lovejoy's study gives particular focus is what he refers to as the Principle of Plenitude. This concept answers the question from Plato's *Timaeus*: "What principle determines the number of kinds of being that make up the sensible and temporal world?" (Lovejoy 46).<sup>4</sup> Since Plato's creator is the "best soul," a representative, if not a manifestation, of the Idea of the Good, it follows that he would create "nothing less than the sensible counterparts of every one of the Ideas" (46, 50). In other words, everything that *could* be created, Plato's demiurge creates. Prior to Lovejoy's articulation of this concept, it had no name. Throughout his book, Lovejoy pursues, from Plato to Leibniz, not only

the thesis that the universe is a *plenum formarum* in which the range of conceivable diversity of *kinds* of living things exhaustively exemplified, but also

---

<sup>3</sup> See, for instance, Paul G. Kuntz, "A Formal Preface and an Informal Conclusion to *The Great Chain of Being*: The Necessity and Universality of Hierarchical Thought," in Kuntz and Kuntz, eds. Among other faults Kuntz points out are Lovejoy's neglect of Hebraic sources, and his neglect of Jacob's Ladder as a figuration of hierarchy.

<sup>4</sup> Dominic J. O'Meara finds Lovejoy's reading of *Timaeus* "debatable," claiming that this question and answer "will not be found in a careful reading of the relevant texts." O'Meara concedes that Lovejoy "is more concerned with the later 'influence' of Plato than with Plato himself," and that, "[i]t would seem fair to consider *The Great Chain of Being* primarily as a study of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century thought with introductory chapters in Antiquity (Ch. II), the Medieval period (ch.III) and the Renaissance (beginning of Ch. IV) viewed in the perspective of the main (and later) period studied in the work" (28 n.9). I approach Lovejoy with this caution, and, in fact, find Lovejoy the more useful for this perspective. As for my own treatment of Aristotle in the following chapters, I try not to let early modern understandings of his work color my discussion, yet I do wish to highlight aspects of his natural philosophy that influenced early modern thought, as well as point out some aspects that the early moderns reinterpreted.

any other deductions from the assumption that no genuine potentiality of being can remain unfulfilled, that the extent and abundance of the creation must be as great as the possibility of existence and commensurate with the productive capacity of a 'perfect' and inexhaustible Source, and that the world is the better, the more things it contains. (52)

While the implications of the last deduction—an evaluative impulse that prompts Leibniz's optimism and Voltaire's irritation—do not reach their full philosophical urgency until the eighteenth century, the ontological questions raised by the Principle, and the first two of Lovejoy's deductions therefrom, are of implicit concern in the early modern English understanding of being.

A second idea out of which the Chain of Being was forged is that of continuity, a contribution ascribed to Aristotle. Within the profusion of the *plenum formarum*, developments can be traced from one creation to another, suggesting a progressive series of perfection. Lovejoy approaches with caution the notion that continuity spelled out its series in specifics: "That the qualitative differences of things must similarly constitute linear or continuous series he did not with equal definiteness assert, still less that they constitute a single continuous series" (56). Lovejoy goes on to point out that Aristotle leaves no detailed, over-arching map of continuous animal development from species to species, but that he did see continuity on microlevels, such as in the form and function of anatomical parts (56). More interesting than the narratological sequence that mischaracterizes Aristotle's idea of continuity is the melding of like beings into hybrid categories. As Lovejoy explains, "Nature refuses to conform to our craving for clear lines of demarcation; she loves twilight zones, where forms abide which, if they are to be classified at all, must be assigned to two classes at once" (56). There is a rhetorical

productivity in recognizing the likeness between distinct points of comparison. Early modern thought and imagination trafficked in the affiliations of likeness as well as narrative progression (the presence of which I do not mean to understate). And in especially broad strokes, the early moderns saw continuity between forms of life that otherwise would be entirely separated in a sequential, hierarchical scheme.

Lovejoy designates a third strain of thought in the Chain: clear-cut categories of Being, “discrete, well-defined class-concepts” subject to “rigorous classification” (57). That such compartmentalizing logic directly conflicts with the logic of continuity Lovejoy readily admits. Nonetheless, the Western tradition develops a *scala naturae* from Aristotle, placing the discrete categories of being in a hierarchy that, like the series of continuity, holds for large categories, but must refer to more minute details when it comes to categorizing specific species. One such criteria that comes from Aristotle is an animal’s degree of perfection at birth (58); whether animals are oviparous or viviparous is a significant point of evaluative comparison for Aristotle. Another criterion by which forms of being could be ranked was the type and faculties of soul they possessed. While the early moderns concerned themselves with animals’ generation in placing them in a broad scale, the nature of their souls (still another Aristotelian and Platonic subject) was an even more important characteristic. The conceptual tension between the continuity of life and the delineating classification of species is inherent in the Great Chain of Being concept. Likewise, in the early modern period, hair was variously deployed to delimit categories of life and to suggest likeness between them, not only in anatomy, but also in intangible personal traits, characteristics, and psychology in the early modern sense pertaining to the soul.

§

For the early moderns, the concept of “life” was unthinkable without reference to the soul, the ineffable essence that, like the Chain of Being itself, was a continual elaboration on ideas attributed popularly to Aristotle and Plato. Katherine Park and Eckhard Kessler write, “Aristotle and his followers defined the soul as the life principle of the individual body—that which differentiated living from non-living things” (455). As the object of natural philosophy, the soul was not the entirely immortal, ghostly essence of an individual’s identity, but rather it sustained the life of the body in quite material ways. It divided its labor of life functions among the three types of soul familiar from Aristotle’s *De anima*, with special functions assigned to each soul and its associated organs. The souls lent themselves to hierarchical organization, as Katherine Park makes clear in her standard description:

The lowest, called the vegetative soul, included the functions basic to all living things: nutrition, growth and reproduction. The second, the sensitive soul, included all of the powers of the vegetative soul as well as the powers of movement and emotion and the ten internal and external senses. The intellectual soul, finally, included not only the vegetative and sensitive powers—the organic faculties—but also the three rational powers of intellect, intellectual memory (memory of concepts, as opposed to sense images) and will. All living beings were divided into genera according to the kind of soul they possessed: thus plants were animated by a vegetative soul, “imperfect” animals (including sponges, worms and bivalves) by a partial sensitive soul, “perfect” animals (including insects, birds and mammals) by a complete sensitive soul and humans by an intellectual soul. (467)

Park refers to the sensitive and vegetative souls collectively as the “organic soul,” a term that resonates with the current green movement in Shakespeare criticism. Rather than certifying the eternal singularity of an individual who will reap blissful (or tortured) autonomy once freed from the earthly body, the embodied early modern soul helped the English to think of themselves in terms of an organic and psychological likeness with the lower orders of nature. This likeness is felt, I argue, because the bodily functions associated with soul are recognized in the physiology of animals and plants, and the anatomical homologies between humans, and animals and plants, encouraged people to see the lower souls housed in the human body, and the functions of the lower souls occurring in the same.

Today, advocates of the conventional view of the soul’s complete immateriality would object to the implication of necessary embodiment entailed by the organic soul, just as early modern English moralists did. Even writers who approached the soul from the more natural philosophical, rather than theological, perspective can be found protesting the value of the organic soul in some way. Edward Reynolds does so by ignoring it in *A Treatise of the passions and faculties of the soul* (1640). He also calls the body a *vehiculum animae*, a coach that transports the soul much less efficiently and nimbly than the soul could do were it on its own (B4). In her study of John Donne’s interest in the soul, Ramie Targoff concludes that while Donne makes a handful of serious references to the tripartite soul in his lyrics, verse epistles, and sermons, “these references to our threefold souls are vastly outnumbered by the countless references in the sermons and *Devotions* to the soul as a singular entity, a soul whose integrity would be threatened by even the suggestion of its being composed of multiple parts” (11). Nonetheless, Donne is intensely concerned, as Targoff argues, with the intimate connection he believes to exist between the body and soul. The “fighting soul” and peeping spirits in *Hamlet*

testify to a general understanding of the soul's physiological functioning. In fact, the spirits that appear to be attempting an escape from Hamlet's body are the closest thing to a materialized soul imaginable. According to early modern thought *spiritus* was "bodily substance in its most rarefied form" (Paster, *Humoring* 12). Reviewing various ancient theories of the soul's ontology in an English translation of *The vanitie and vncertaintie of artes and sciences* (1569), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa (1486?-1535) attributes the equation of the soul with spirit diffused throughout the body to Hippocrates (S2). Spirit carried in the bloodstream is what Nancy J. Siraisi explains as the "power termed vital virtue, so called because it ensured that life (*vita*) itself was maintained" (107). The functions of the sensitive soul—motive, emotive, and cognitive—depended on animal spirits, while natural spirits powered the labors of the vegetable soul—nutrition, growth, and reproduction (Park 469; Sirasi 108). With regard to the spirits, Paster's work raises our "recognition of the vitalism that early modern thought about the relation of self to environment tends toward" (30).

The theory of spirits traveling in the body provided just one sense in which the soul was materialized; another was the disputed belief that soul was also localized in each of the body's parts. The controversy stems from Aristotle's assertion of the soul's necessary corporeality in *De Anima*. Indeed not just a body alone but individual, functioning organs are vital to the ensoulment that gives a body life. His simple definition of a soul entails bodily organs: "Hence soul is the first actuality of a natural body having in it the capacity of life. And a body which is possessed of organs answers to this description" (28).<sup>5</sup> Organs carry out the specific functions of

---

<sup>5</sup> In commentary on this definition, Hippocrates G. Apostle writes, "Soul as the first actuality corresponds to soul as being possessed or being with body as matter [...]. The term 'first' means prior in time and in existence; so the soul is prior in this sense to the soul when active or to the soul when dormant" (97 n.16). Aristotle's analogy for soul is knowledge that is possessed prior to both its actual use and non-use, as when the knower is asleep. William Charlton writes, "Although the word translated 'actuality' is common in Aristotle, it is not used outside this chapter of the *De Anima* with 'first'; nor is it anywhere

specific souls. Livers, for instance, are involved in the vegetative soul's function of digestion, while the eye takes a role in the sensitive soul's exercising sight. But Aristotle also suggests that soul can be found throughout the body, not just in the major organs. In *Parts of Animals*, he writes, "Now it may be that the Form of any living creature is Soul, or some part of Soul, or something that involves Soul. At any rate, when Soul is gone, it is no longer a living creature, and none of its parts remains the same, except only in shape, just like the animals in the story that were turned into stone" (67). Of course, for a body part to have life, it must have soul, and in *De Anima* Aristotle indicates that the soul pervades the body. The soul's presence throughout the body is evident in that "plants and animals continue to live when divided and seem to have specifically the same soul in each segment" (18). Aristotle later clarifies that this unity of soul holds only for plants, some insects, and annelids; the spatial separation of more complex creatures' souls remains an open question for Aristotle, but the soul's bodily habitation does not necessitate that each body part go on living after being severed from the whole (30).

The question of the soul's presence in the body as a whole and in body parts comes up again and again in early modern English texts. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), Robert Burton (1577-1640) refers to the possibility as the soul's being "all in all, and all in every part" (1:1:2:5). According to Raymond B. Waddington, the doctrine of all in all, all in part is the "belief that the soul exists as an indivisible whole both in the entire body and in every individual part of the body" (40). The idea was formulated by the third-century philosopher Plotinus, though Waddington documents an early modern misattribution of the idea to Aristotle, who argues that "each part of the body would be informed by a part of the soul" (40). In a lengthy

---

used with a word meaning 'second' or 'subsequent'" (198). He suggests that "actuality" might be translated as "a variant for 'truth' in the phrase 'in actuality' — 'The Loch Ness monster is in actuality a large seal'" (198).

survey of classical definitions of the soul, Agrippa attributes the belief in a soul divided by individual body parts to Galen:

Galene supposeth that euery parcell of the bodie hathe his soule, for in this wise he speaketh in his booke of the vtilitie of partes: there are also many partes in liuinge thinges, some greater, some lesser, and some not able all manner of waies to be diuided into the likenesse of liuinge thinges, but necessarily euery soule standeth in neede of all these: for the bodie is the instrumente thereof: and therefore the partes of liuinge creatures doo much differ one from an other, because the soules doo. (*Vanitie* S3)

It oversimplifies the matter to conveniently polarize beliefs about the soul's presence within individual parts (for those who actually *did* believe the soul could be found in body parts) according to the two categories characterized by Plotinus (the homogenous soul found entire in each part) and by Aristotle/Galen (unique souls as different as the body parts in which they reside). I want to emphasize, however, that reading the soul through the body, with its diversity of parts, encouraged the recognition of difference, not just in anatomy and function, but in essence. Thus John Ainsworth (fl. 1609-1613) presents a somewhat conciliatory statements in *The trying out of the truth* (1615), "For though there is the very self same soule in the head and foot, and in each part, yet it worketh otherwise in the head then in the foot" (P3). The potential of the soul's embodiment in individual parts, and the debate over the soul's differentiation throughout the body, provide a conceptual frame for an early modern understanding of hair as living.

Looking again at Conrad's preface to Topsell's *Historie of foure-footed beastes*, we see a correlation between the singular soul manifested diversely in parts, and God's presence in the infinite variety of creation:

In the meane time Diuinity it selfe remaineth one and the same, without change and alteration, notwithstanding the manifold increasings and decreasings of all these creatures, which it vseth but as Glasses and Organs; and according to the diuersity both of matter and forme, it shineth and appeareth in one and other more or lesse, euen as we see in our owne bodies, whose soule is disseminated into euery part and member, yet is there a more liuely representation thereof in one part and member, then in another, and the faculties more visibly and sensibly appear in the vpper then in the neather partes. (¶3<sup>v</sup>-¶4)

The concept of hierarchy returns in this iteration of "all in all, and all in part." Gesner treats the difference of ensoulment between the parts as one of degree, not of kind. His notion might be called a trickle-down theory of ensoulment, whereby the head receives the bounty of "liuely" soul (a privilege of headship that can be traced back to Aristotle's definition of the human), while organs and parts below the waist, presumably, are quickened by leftover soul. Such thinking has implications for the understanding of hair, which has the paradoxical distinction of coming last in the dispersal of nourishment by vital juice yet anatomically occupies a position even more privileged than the head itself.

Before leaving the topic of ensoulment, I want to look at two of the many poetic interventions into the debate over the soul's relation to the body. As Waddington indicates, the "all in all, and all in part" *topos* "had considerable appeal to poets" (43). What follows are a rather light-hearted treatment of the topic, and a tragic one. The first comes from Charles

Aleyn's (d. 1640) *The historie of that wise and fortunate prince, Henrie of that name the seventh* (1638), a long poem dealing with Henry VII's defeat of Richard III and his subsequent legitimization of his rule in England. Aleyn alludes to philosophical debates concerning the nature of the soul in his recounting of the Henry and Richard's battle near Bosworth. His spry tone and clever wielding of philosophical concepts makes light of the debates, but he also demonstrates the extent to which questions of the soul are practical matters, not mere abstractions about which only cloistered theologians and metaphysicians are concerned. Aleyn presents in miniature a debate between the partial and the unitary definitions of the soul in his depiction of battle. Surveying the carnage near Bosworth, Aleyn's speaker tells us,

There see an Arme sunder men by the sides:  
One instrument by a Compendious way  
Makes two divorces, and at once divides  
Their Bodies from themselves, and soules: you may  
But that incorporeity controules  
Feare there had been dissection of soules. (C5<sup>v</sup>)

Of bodies being divided from souls, and of body parts being divided from the body, the speaker is sure. The carnage is so gruesomely thorough, however, that the speaker speculates, against his better judgment, on the very divisibility of the soul, a notion perhaps justified by Aristotle, but certainly contrary to the "all in all, all in part" *topos*. In the parenthetical statement ("But that incorporeity controules") the speaker's thinking is pointedly corrected by incorporeity, or "The quality or state of being incorporeal; immateriality" ("*incorporeity*"<sup>1</sup> 1). In the sense that "control" means to "challenge, find fault with, censure, reprehend, object to (a thing)" ("*control*," v., 3.b.), a personified doctrine of immortality establishes authority concerning the

nature of the soul, and argues down the competing philosophical position that posits a soul in parts, adhering in particular body parts. Arising from a “Feare” inspired by carnage, the notion of a dividable soul is valid insofar as it is a gut reaction—we may even call it an organic reaction—and it characterizes potential thought as widely spread as Aleyn’s readership, the “you” who may entertain such fear.

At another point in the poem, two consecutive stanzas are governed by two different theories of the soul:

If when the soules from bodies are divorc’d  
They transmigrate, and others doe endue  
By an assumption: Richards would be forc’d  
To wander, and be desperate of a new;  
Pythagoras had beene pos’d and ne’r could finde  
A Body, sutable to such a minde.

Into the fanges of danger he did goe,  
(Arm’d with the Doctrine of fatalitie  
As strongly as all Turkie) every foe  
Did feele him, for he prov’d ubiquitie,  
And bodies unconfin’d: he like a soule  
Was both in every part, and in the whole. (C6)

The first stanza posits a Pythagorean likeness of body, mind, and soul, wherein the qualities of each are conformable to the others, a notion that suits well in a portrayal of an ill-minded, evil-souled Richard III, whom the extended title of Aleyn’s poem names “Crookbacke.” The second

stanza employs simile to show the likeness between the vigorous, physical presence of Richard on the battlefield, and the soul. Richard fights so many people that every one of Richmond's soldiers seems to have encountered him, although he can be in only one fight at a time. Richard becomes the essence of the battlefield, even as he appears in particular spots all over. Aley's analogy makes a human body of the landscape, and bodily parts of Richmond's soldiers. Here simile verges on synecdoche, as the doctrine of a soul that is the same in parts as it is as a whole allows for a part to represent the whole. As a ubiquitous whole, Richard is the same in any one particular fight. The passage particularly highlights the tropic and figurative modes of thought that are employed in thinking the soul's relation to the body, even though the relationship, as we have seen, was a significantly material one. Aley's treatment of the soul comes as miniature excursions into heavily contested territories, providing philosophical digressions to a historical narrative.

At his career's end, John Milton (1607-1674) produced a dramatic rendering of the body-soul relation with *Samson Agonistes* (1671). A work that seems to relish indeterminacy, *Samson Agonistes* incorporates the cultural ambiguity regarding the substance and bodily status of hair in its central agon. Biblical exegetes have read the strength of the Book of Judges's Samson variously as a characteristic literally inhering in his hair and as divinely derived power granted by God on the condition that Samson adhere to his Nazarite vow, which entails growing his hair long.<sup>6</sup> For Milton's readers (as for his Dalila) the challenge is to determine "in what part [Samson's] strength / Lay stored, in what part summed" (ll. 394-95). In other words, does Samson's strength reside physically in his hair, or does his hair simply serve as a "testamentary ornament," in the words of John Rogers (111)—an index of Samson's strength, which is

---

<sup>6</sup> In his reading of *Samson Agonistes*, based on a "theology of strength," Michael Lieb emphasizes the position taken by certain early modern moralists, that is, that Samson's strength derives from his vow not his hair (115-18).

divinely, not corporeally, derived? The problem is tied to the larger one regarding the extent to which body parts house the soul, a soul that allows certain parts to perform specific functions. These questions remain unanswered in the characteristically unforthcoming poem, but Milton's monistic view of the relation between body and soul bolsters the position that Samson's hair participates in ensoulment and that it has a particular faculty of strength. But like other major uncertainties inherent in the poem—if there is a moral equivalency between serving God and serving Dagon, if Samson is exalted or damned in his death (if he dies), if Dalila is justified in saving her people or if she is another example in the long scholastic tradition of women who cause the fall of great men—Milton offers no definitive answer to whether the soul resides in the hair.

The seventeenth century inherited a long history of Biblical commentary that attempts to locate the source of Samson's strength based on the few references to it in Judges 13-16. Milton scholar F. Michael Krouse provides an account of receptions of the Samson story, from its foundations through the Patristic and Scholastic Periods, to the early modern period. According to Krouse, fourth-century Biblical commentator Ambrose holds the view that “by his locks of hair, Samson was a figure of Christ. Indeed, [Ambrose] added, all true believers cling to Christ, the head of the Church, just as Samson's locks clung to his head” (10). The analogy allows us to imagine a Christ whose hairs are each alive and, as members of a Church, ensouled. Augustine offers a somewhat more detailed allegorical reading of Samson and his hair in *Sermo de Samson*. Krouse writes that, for Augustine, “Samson's having his strength in his hair is a figure of Christ sustained by the prophecies of the Old Testament; and Samson's hair growing again prophesies the conversion of the Jews” (41). Isidore de Seville believed that Samson's being shorn of his locks represents the despoiling of the spirit caused by the surrender to the passions

and the flesh, while “the restoration of Samson’s holy locks is a promise that he who repents will be restored to grace” (Krouse 43). These three readings, it should be noted, while finding allegorical significance beyond the mere possession of physical strength, do not question the inherent meaningfulness of Samson’s hair itself. Samson’s hair *qua* hair, and not as a token of a Nazarite vow, is the basis of the commentators’ readings of his strength. Krouse relates that in Hugo of St. Victor’s twelfth-century mystical interpretation, Samson’s locks are “rays of mystical insight,” or the “inner light of divine contemplation” (54). Unlike the medieval commentators, early modern writers were less inclined to attribute strength to Samson’s hair itself, but rather treated his strength as a gift from God, with the condition that he uphold his vow of purity. This view can be found in Henry Bullinger (1504-1575) and Joseph Hall (1574-1656), among many others.<sup>7</sup> In his *Learned and very useful commentary* (1655), William Gouge (1578-1653) denies that Samson’s strength derives from his hair based on the Galenic claim that hair is an excrement:

It is not to be taken, as if his hair were a natural cause of his strength. That cannot be, in these respects.

1. Hair is no integral or essential part of the body: it is a meer excrement.
2. It hath no stability in it self, as bones have: but is exceeding weak.
3. Hair draweth strength out of a mans body, as weeds out of the ground.

Therefore they use to shave off the hair of weak ones, especially when they are much wasted with a consumption, or other sickness. (Xxxx3)

---

<sup>7</sup> In *Fiftie godlie and learned sermons diuided into fiue decades* (1577), Bullinger writes, “For the strength of Samson lay not in his haire, so that by the cutting of his haire his strengthe was cutt away also, but it laye in the spirite of the Lord which was giuen him from God aboue” (Hh3<sup>v</sup>). Hall writes in volume three of *Contemplations vpon the principal passages of the holie historie* (1615) that Samson’s strength was not in his locks but “in his consecration, whereof that haire was a signe” (S4).

Gouge takes an interesting medical perspective in his Biblical commentary, reflecting the extent to which natural philosophy and theology overlap in the seventeenth century. His commentary denies hair the status of a proper body part, relegating it to the status of a by-product of nourishment. In the next chapter, I will examine the medical basis for regarding hair as an excrement that actually weakens the body, and in the third chapter, I will treat the association between hair and vegetable life, touched on by Gouge's comparison of hair to weeds.

The literature of the early modern period does not always echo the religious discourse in locating Samson's strength in his vow rather than his hair. Edmund Spenser's (1552?-1599) brief allusion to Samson in the *Faerie Queen* (1590) draws on an older notion of Samson's follicular puissance when the poet writes of "that mighty Iewish swaine, / Each of whose lockes did match a man in might" (5.8.2). As with Ambrose's commentary, each hair is individuated and to some degree equivalent to the life of a person. The issue is much more complicated, however, in the work of Milton, Spenser's successor as England's great epic-maker, particularly because of Milton's monistic view of the soul that, while it does not dominate the poem, certainly complicates understandings of the soul and body in *Samson Agonisties*. Simply defined by Stephen M. Fallon in *Milton Among the Philosophers*, monism is the belief that "[a]ll that exists, from angels to earth, is composed of one living, corporeal substance" (1). For Milton, this view entails a reconception of the Aristotelian soul, one in which the "rational soul is not different in kind from the sensitive and vegetative souls" (99). Furthermore, the soul and body are inseparable, according to Milton. As he explains in chapter seven of the first book of *Christian Doctrine*, man "is not double or separable: not, as is commonly thought, produced from and composed of two different and distinct elements, soul and body. On the contrary, the whole man is the soul, and the soul the man: a body, in other words, of individual substance,

animated, sensitive, and rational” (1205). Resistant to Cartesian dualism, this view of the soul is readily compatible with the “all in all, all in part” *topos*. Milton supports the notion that the soul is in every part in the same chapter of *Christian Doctrine*. He provocatively argues that individual souls are not created by God but by parents through reproduction, and that original sin is sexually transmitted. He follows with a question: “Add to this Aristototele’s argument, which I think a very strong one indeed, that if the soul is wholly contained in all the body and wholly in any given part of that body, how can the human seed, that intimate and most noble part of the body, be imagined destitute and devoid of the soul of the parents?” (1207). Aristotle receives credit due to Plotinus here, but the organic soul gains significant ground in Milton’s philosophy. Not only does it claim the rational soul in its demesne, but it also infuses the whole body over. The question we must ask of *Samson Agonistes*, then, is whether the soul reaches the outermost limits of the body, the debilitatingly detachable hair.

I argue that in Milton’s poem the question of the source of Samson’s strength is related to Milton’s ideas about the relation of soul and its faculties to the body. The poem is painfully aware of the faculties’ localizations within specific body parts. I say painfully because the frailty of the parts makes possible their virtues’ easy loss, whether the virtue be sight lodged in the exposed eye, or strength in the slight and strengthless tresses. The difference between the two is that eyesight is a commonly accepted faculty of the sensitive soul; hairstrength, however, is a rare “gift” from God (l. 59). In fact, strength itself is not one of the soul’s virtues, but it has psychological value in that it increases the body’s capacity for motion, which is one of the virtues of the sensitive soul. In *Samson Agonistes*, the qualities associated with frail body parts take on an importance beyond what common philosophical knowledge in Milton’s day would afford them. The eyes, then, become associated not only with the faculty of sight of which

Samson is deprived, but also they aspire to being the seat wherein life itself resides. Recognizing in God's "prime decree" (l. 85) the necessity of light, Samson feels his blindness as a loss of contact with God's creation itself:

Since light so necessary is to life,  
And almost life itself, if it be true  
That light is in the soul,  
She all in every part; why was the sight  
To such a tender ball as the eye confined? (ll. 90-94)

That Samson would equate the soul to light is not unorthodox. Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586) has written that "It is most true, that eyes are form'd to serve / The inward light" (*Astrophil* 5, ll. 1-2); that Samson would confuse the loss of light whereby the faculty of sense acquires knowledge, and the divine light that only the intellect perceives, demonstrates agitation in his thought. But his premise is not wrong, based on the "all in all, all in part" doctrine. His thought is this: the soul is light, the soul is life, the soul is in every part, the eye is a part, light causes the eye to function, Samson's eyes do not function, Samson cannot receive the benefit of light, and therefore, Samson has lost his life. His existence, as he says, is "a life half dead, a living death, / And buried [...] / Myself, my sepulcher, a moving grave" (ll. 100-102). If life resides completely in the ocular organ in this reasoning, the eye is overdetermined. Sight is, after all, a sensitive faculty. The motion Samson discounts in calling himself a "moving grave" is generated by the same sensitive soul.

In contrast to his eyesight, Samson's capacity for motion has in no way diminished but, in fact, increases. Physical capability, made greater by his long hair, makes him valuable to the Philistines as a slave. Like his eyeball, Samson's strength-giving hair is overdetermined. It

carries the weight of prophesy, redoubled angelic visitation, divine gift, national salvation, secrecy, strength, and whatever else hair in general might be thought to signify. Just as (to Samson) both sight and life reside in a “tender ball,” “So obvious and so easy to be quenched” (ll. 94, 95), his God-given strength resides in a particularly vulnerable body part. Samson believes God’s intention was a piece of corporeal moral didacticism: “God, when he gave me strength, to show withal / How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair” (ll. 58-59). Harapha of Gath also acknowledges the incongruity of strength residing in locks when he insinuates that Samson derives his gift not from God but black magic. Samson, he says, would not disparage a warrior’s weapons and armor

had not spells

And black enchantments, some magician’s art,  
Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou from heaven  
Feign’dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,  
Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs  
Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back  
Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines. (ll. 1132-38)

Harapha emphasizes the relative weakness of human hairs by comparing them to their stronger analogues in boars’ bristles and the defensive excrescences of porcupines. Harapha demonstrates the ridiculousness of Samson’s claim by literalizing it, but to literalize it he must still resort to figuration. The comparison of Samson’s hair to that of beasts recalls the animal strength for which the Chorus praises Samson, “Who tore the lion, as the lion tears the kid” (l. 128). Samson’s father Manoa, on the other hand, says his son’s strength is “[e]quivalent to angel’s” (l. 343). Unusual strength, then, makes Samson either animal or angel, which presents a

bit of a problem in that his strength, rooted in his hair, draws him in opposite directions on the Chain of Being.

Samson's response to Harapha complicates the location of the source of Samson's strength:

My trust is in the living God who gave me  
At my nativity this strength, diffused  
No less through all my sinews, joints and bones,  
Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,  
The pledge of my unviolated vow. (ll. 1140-44)

Rogers cites this speech as the moment when Samson rejects the "archaic identification of his hair as the literal container of strength." This rejection squares with the early modern trend in the commentaries on Judges: "Responsive to the Protestant, specifically Calvinist, discomfort with this key feature of the Samson myth, Milton follows the many biblical exegetes who felt compelled to qualify the tale's overwhelming suggestion of the bodily source of Samson's power" (112), but Milton's careful wording does not foreclose the possibility that the physical source of the diffusion of strength is Samson's hair itself, even as the poet clearly emphasizes here the contingency of Samson's vow. Later in his article, Rogers also qualifies the apparent victory for Calvinist theology on different grounds: "Samson's claim for his strength's dependence on the arbitrary judgment of a secretive God is not the poem's only creditable etiology of human power. Milton's poem offers, if not a reasoned argument against, then at least a show of rhetorical resistance to[,] the orthodox demotion of Samson's hair to a sign, rather than a source, of his strength" (115). As Rogers points out, the orthodox Protestant view of Samson is undermined by the return of Milton's hero's strength with the regrowth of his hair, and not with a

prayer at the temple where Samson crushes thousands of Philistines and himself (116). When considering whether he should make a spectacle of himself at the Philistine entertainment, Samson asks,

Shall I abuse this consecrated gift  
Of strength, again returning with my hair  
After my great transgression, so requite  
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin  
By prostituting holy things to idols [...]? (ll. 1354-58)

The present progressive form of “return” is important to note here. The return of Samson’s strength is processual, not instant, like the growth of hair. Samson does not deny the divine “Favour” that makes “holy things” of his hairs. Just as the soul is both a Godly and a bodily part of a person, so is the source of Samson’s strength.

Milton’s depiction of Samson’s final moments adds further ambiguity to his text, even as it suggests a monist ensoulment of Samson’s intrinsically empowering hair. The Biblical Samson’s strength returns in an instant, with the Nazarite’s prayer “O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once” (Judges 16:28). In Milton’s poem, as Samson stands between the supporting pillars of the house of Dagon, the Nazarite prepares for his final show of strength “with head a while inclined, / And eyes fast fixed [...] as one who prayed, / Or some great matter in his mind revolved” (ll. 1636-38). Whether Samson is praying or thinking hard at this moment, his final exclamation is not to God (as it is in Judges) but to the Philistines: “I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater; / As with amaze shall strike all who behold” (ll. 1644-45). The organic revival of Samson’s strength with his hair would make a prayer for strength redundant at this point. Milton leaves such a prayer as only a possibility, with

the alternative that Samson is, perhaps, “revolving” his words to the Philistines, preparing his last, defiant statement when he bows his head. The moment is yet another instance of the very ambiguity that structures the poem, made possible by competing cultural understandings of hair.

With this reading of *Samson Agonistes*, I want to highlight the concern over the nature of the part, and how parts do or do not serve as appropriate receptacles for the virtues, faculties, or the meanings they are thought to embody. Milton presents Samson’s hair as, in the words of Erik Gray, “essentially ambiguous—imbued with real strength, yet at the same time powerless and frail” (222). This ambiguity characterizes hair across early modern literary and non-literary discourses, and, as I have suggested, imbues hair with a philosophical import far beyond that suggested by the slightness of its substance and impermanence of its corporeal habitation.

#### §

It has been over a decade since David Hillman and Carla Mazzio enlisted a corps of critical anatomists to rip the body into parts. Contributors to their volume resist viewing the body as a whole and focus instead on the autonomous meanings of individual parts that take on lives of their own, outside of narratives of incorporation. Hillman and Mazzio present essays that “examine, collectively, the body that is ‘in’ parts, that is constituted by a multiplicity of individuated organs. The extent to which aspects of culture were imagined to reside in, on, and about individual parts of the body is the subject of [their] volume” (xi). *The Body in Parts* is composed of many major parts: joints, tongues, hearts, hands, brains, breasts, bellies, and more. The volume does not ignore hair, but its relatively minimal treatment in the book is surprising considering the great extent to which “culture [has been] imagined” to reside in this body part. Hillman and Mazzio go on to claim that body parts discussed in their volume “take on attributes of agency and subjectivity” and that they are “revealed [...] to be in endless flux between the

positions of subject and object: as vehicles of culture and symbolization, as organs with eerily individuated agencies, as objects of libidinal cathexes, as instruments of sentient experience, as imagined *loci* of self-knowledge and self-alienation” (xii). Throughout this study, I will argue that hair performs all of these subject-making functions. In particular, I want to focus on the cultural metaphors of hair, its own participation in vitality and sentience (or, emotional response), its production of self-knowledge, and the social aspects by which it becomes a means of alienation, of both the self and others.

Acknowledging its postmodern affinity, Hillman and Mazzio’s volume foregrounds an interest in fragmentation and dispersal. Parts, as the editors introduce them, assume priority over the whole through synecdoche. In this rhetorical usurpation, parts cease to represent the whole and actually claim the status of the whole. Hence the intended polysemy of the volume’s title: a body is in parts (via, for instance, medical dissection), and there is body inhering *in* parts. (And hair is today the body part often characterized as having “body.”) Another way to say the latter is that there is *life* in the individual parts, a clear violation of the rules of relationality we expect of the body.

This study of hair in the period easily avails itself of Hillman and Mazzio’s notions of fragmentation and synecdochal subjectivity. While I will treat hair as a body part that demonstrates (culturally, if not physically) qualities of the autonomous subject, I also want to look at hair in its relation to the whole, and not just the whole as a unified, unfragmented human body, but in relation to the organic whole of life. It did not take Darwinian theory for the early modern period to realize that body parts connect humans to other forms of life, including plants as well as animals. Hair is an important part in defining the whole body’s sense of self, and at the same time it is probably the most readily detachable part; it is, as Will Fisher terms it,

prosthetic. Even as natural philosophy and medicine deny life to hair, it seems to take on life of its own. Even as its transience suggests its superfluity to sustaining life, it appears in all forms of earthly life, and in certain ways, it sustains life beyond that of the body proper.

Perhaps it is appropriate that hair does not claim a chapter of its own in Hillman and Mazzio's volume. They argue in *The Body in Parts* that "[n]owhere in this period is the status of the part simply a given" (xviii). I would add that neither is hair's status *as* a part a given. In fact, quite often hair's status as a human body part was itself in question in the early modern medical tradition. Gertrude is not alone in associating hair with excrement, a word whose connotations of repulsive waste products overpower its denotation of an outgrowth, or excrescence. The early modern English, particularly moralists, reacted with a sense of abjection to hair so defined as excrement. As outgrowth associated with waste, hair's status as a part of the body proper came into question. The problematizing of hair's status as a part begins not with the coiffure visible atop one's head but the unseen process of its formation, starting with digestion. The questionable status of hair as a proper body part highlights that exterior selves are products of the interior. Of course, this point need not be made of hair alone; the whole body comes out of the stomach. Nor am I the first to emphasize the gastronomics of subjectivity as a kind of inwardness.<sup>8</sup> What I want to emphasize is how the inward process of formation (by which hair is a bodily part at best, revolting excrement at worst), and the outward fashioning of hair (evident in the amount of attention and care individuals give to their own hair and that of human and non-human others) create a productive cultural ambiguity.

---

<sup>8</sup> See for instance Michael Schoenfeldt.

§

In the chapters that follow, I examine what hair can tell us about the early modern English's understandings of the forms of organic life categorized on the Chain of Being. In the next chapter I look at ideas about the physical production of hair and debates about its status as a body part. I begin by reassessing the relevance of Aristotle's animal books, particularly *Parts of Animals* and *The History of Animals*, in early modern natural and medical philosophy. These books establish the importance of bodily parts, explaining their origins and functions. Within the context of the nutritive process, Aristotle pays special attention to the production of hairs. The process of nourishment was critical to the early moderns' valuation of their own body parts. Following the disciplinary succession from natural philosophy to medicine, I look at how Galen developed Aristotle's theory of digestion, and how, in turn, early modern medicine elaborated on Galen in explaining the formation of hair. The rest of chapter two will handle defenses of hair as a useful body part, and attacks on it as bodily waste that provokes revulsion. Both positions can be found in the philosophical, medical, and religious tracts of the period. I argue that the controversy over the very substance of hair contributes to a cultural ambivalence toward pilosity. This ambivalence itself becomes a literary *topos* in George Chapman's prose *Justification of a strange action of Nero* (1629).

Chapter three contains a discussion of vegetable life, and the organic affinities humans were thought to have with the plant world. The pilosity of certain plants often goes unnoticed, but the English were well aware that plants could be hairy, or they found that other plant parts function analogously to hair. More germane to this dissertation are the ways in which the English saw their own vegetable likenesses through their hair. They did so through the analogous relationship between leaves and hair, which helped the English to imagine human life-

cycles as arboreal; and also by likening the humoral body to a landscape in such vivid and complex descriptions that hair care begins to resemble horticulture. Finally, literature from the period suggests ways that the early moderns *felt* their relationship to the plant kingdom. I look at moments of heightened affect in which characters such as Oliver in *As You Like It* and Belphoebe in *The Faerie Queene* derive, or even seem to reciprocate, affective response through the organic continuity between their hair and the natural world.

Chapter four highlights animal fur's productive capacity to define categories of being and even generate life. I begin with the notion of life as it appears in the natural history of animals in the early modern period. I then look at recent scholarly work on the way fur and hair figure into the question of the human and animal divide. I approach that divide from two directions, looking first at physiognomic readings of human hair patterns that link people to specific animals. I then examine the discourses of animal husbandry and anatomy that treat horses' hair as evidence of that animal's human-like qualities. Horse hair is particularly significant in the period for its supposed capacity to spontaneously generate life, a phenomenon that provides a central image for my reading of social and species leveling in *Antony and Cleopatra*.

In chapter five, on humans, I focus on more physiognomic readings of hair, with particular emphasis on the part. As shorthands for reading mental habits, emotional tendencies, moral qualities, and even physical prowess, locks offered an immense lexicon of the individual's nature. The power to read a person through his or her hair also suggested the power to control that person, and this chapter will consider the intriguing case of the ruffian Faulkner and his enforced haircut in *Sir Thomas More*. The two resolutions to this scene suggest distinct, but not necessarily contradictory ways that hair participated in the making of a human subject.

## Chapter Two

### “A matter of no great necessity”: The Nourishment of Cultural Ambivalence

Hair seems to be, by its very nature, a controversial substance. No one quite agrees on its nature; no one perfectly agrees on its value. Such contention is evident in James Robertson’s preface to a recent book on the forensic examination of hair:

Hairs are a potentially ubiquitous trace material in many types of forensic investigation. Few forensic materials give rise to such differing views on their value as evidence, and these views are often held with a passion. Some believe that hairs provide worthless evidence, while others believe that hairs can provide potentially, and actually, very significant evidence. (vii)

Robertson’s statement could provide meta-commentary on this very dissertation, whose intention is to demonstrate the “very significant evidence” that the strands of hair in early modern discourse provide regarding English thought on the body, the soul, and life itself. What makes such an investigation so interesting is the very disputability of hair itself as a body part, and hence as valuable evidence of early modern selfhood.

Victoria Sherrow’s *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History* offers a generalist’s reference to the varied modern cultural meanings of hair, including the medical understanding of it. Modern science has identified the substance of hair as a “biological polymer, made up of about 10 percent water and more than 90 percent proteins, called keratins” (xix). A polymer is a

string of large molecules made up of smaller identical molecules. At a basic molecular level then, hair is a substance that is, to borrow the phrase popular in early modern psychology, “all in all, and all in part.” But a hair is also in three main parts, and so, not quite this simple. A hair has a central medulla, a column of cells that produce a protein distinct from the proteins of the other two parts of a hair, the cortex and its surrounding layers of cuticles (Harding and Rogers 15; Sherrow xix). Kurt S. Stenn opened a 1991 conference of scientists who research hair follicles with the following compressed, vaguely evolutionary history of hair in which he points to the origins of homologies between hair and other forms of animal covering:

The integument of the typical *invertebrate* animal is made of a simple epithelium embellished and covered by a protective secreted material such as mucus, chitin, or calcareous deposit. With the development of the vertebrates there was the concomitant formation of stratified epithelium. The *maturation* of this layered epithelial surface gave rise to the mature keratins. The *redundance* of this stratified layer gave rise to the cutaneous appendages: scale, feather, and the subject of our convocation, hair. (xi)

Stenn locates hair in an increasingly complex development of outer covering, with hair, scales, and feathers emerging as the proteinaceous afterthought of a complexly layered epidermis. Hair developed as a substance that could provide certain functions—utilitarian and ornamental—for mammals. Stenn writes that for “interfacing with wear and tear of the environment an epithelial product is highly desirable, since it can easily be regenerated” (xi). Among the tasks Stenn assigns to hair are “protection from physical trauma, temperature extremes, and electromagnetic radiation as well as [...] adornment and communication” (xi).

Harry Harding and George Rogers also note hair's capacity to both warm and cool mammals, and to camouflage them from predators. But they add, "For the human animal these functions are not really necessary, and hair seems to be a dilemma" (1). The dilemma to which they refer plays out in cosmetic concerns about the abundance, location and color of the hair people do, or used to, have. Harding and Rogers list another "dilemma" of modern hair consciousness, this one with a certain resonance with the early modern debate over hair's bodily status: "And then there are those who worry about whether hair is dead or alive" (1). They offer a "short answer to this paradox" by pointing out that the hair root, or follicle, is the living invagination of the skin, and what we see of the hair is dead (1). The care and concern most people have for their hair, and the anxiety that its disappearance creates, suggest that people generally do not experience their hair as dead matter attached to the body but as a vital part of the self. The same may be said of the early modern English, who learned from respected authority that their hair was excrement.

The contemporaneous assumptions that hair is part of the living body (if not alive itself) and that it is waste (or dead) matter, and that it is both beautifying and gross, contribute to a transhistorical ambivalence regarding hair. Erik Gray has noted the ambivalence that attends hair in any age:

For hair is curious: let a lover adore his mistress's hair never so much, even touch it and kiss it, he would nevertheless be displeased to find a strand of it in his soup. Hair is at once the crowning, most freely-moving and lively part of the body, and also the part of the body which, along with the nails, is technically lifeless, accidental. The spectrum of values which it comes to represent in any age varies

considerably, but because of its nature, hair will always evoke an ambivalent reaction. (221)

Gray's observation of hair as simultaneously living and lifeless has an unfolding cultural history in the early modern period. In this chapter, I examine more closely the historical and philosophical foundations of the early modern cultural ambivalence toward hair. This investigation delves into the ontology of hair, and the Aristotelian and Galenic conceptions of the body that developed into opposing views on the nature of hair. Aristotelian natural philosophy suggests that hair receives nourishment in the same process as the other body parts and that, furthermore, individual body parts—particularly hair—are best understood by comparative reference to similar parts of other animals. Because of this transspecies connection, Aristotle's natural histories, or animal books, are valuable sources for examining the received wisdom of early modern natural and medical philosophy. Competing with the notion that hair is a body part, the Galenic view of hair's ontological nature denies its status as a body part and categorizes it instead as an excrement. These competing views of hair's material nature created a cultural ambivalence about the bodily substance. My investigation into the origins of this cultural ambivalence, and the early modern debate that fueled it, will begin with the early modern familiarity with Aristotle's books of natural philosophy, and the content of that philosophy regarding the classification of bodily parts and nutritive products. In turning next to the Galenic theories of nutrition, I switch my focus from natural to medical philosophy—a natural disciplinary progression, according to sixteenth-century learned thought. Contributing to the debate over the substance and value of hair are English authors such as Helkiah Crooke and John Bulwer, and Continental author Daniel Sennert, whose work in translation advanced learned debate in the vernacular. I look at how these authors' positions on the substance of hair generate

the ambivalence about the substance, including when hair's practical value conflicts with its philosophical status in the hierarchy of bodily substance. Finally, I offer a sustained reading of George Chapman's (1559-1634) literary rendering of the ambivalence surrounding hair. Questions about the nature of hair as a substance and its practical and aesthetic value form the thematic basis of Chapman's *A iustification of a strange action of Nero; in burying with a solemne funerall, one of the cast hayres of his mistresse Poppaea* (1629).

### §

One of early modern England's most renowned medical authorities on the body, Helkiah Crooke (1576-1648), offers a succinct but pointed summation of the natural philosophical questions about hair when he writes in *Mikrocosmographia* (1615), "The controuersies concerning the haire, how they are nourished or otherwise encreased, although it bee a matter of no great necessity, yet it is very difficult and full of Philosophical subtility" (H5<sup>v</sup>). Crooke's statement is evidence that hair presented an intellectual conundrum for the early moderns. In an Aristotelian sense of necessity, hair is no great matter because it is merely the residue of which Nature makes improvisational use in the process of making a body—it is not made for an end in and of itself. Still, as Crooke attests, this matter of no great necessity engaged eminent thinkers such as Crooke, even as he prefaces his contribution to the debate by questioning the importance of the matter being debated. The amount of intellectual labor expended in searching out the nature of hair shows that something greater was at stake for philosophers and medical authorities—that is, the localization and limits of life itself in the body. For the early moderns, the debate over hair's vitality was framed according to whether hair received nourishment in the digestive process and was therefore a part of the body proper, or if it was an excremental waste product given off in the nourishment of other body parts.

The early philosophical inquiry into the nature of hair can be traced back to, and often invokes, Aristotle. Aristotle's classification of hair, as residue and as uniform substance, does not quite evoke the revulsion that the term "excrement" does for us and did for the early modern English. For Aristotle, hair is a by-product of digestion, but even as an unintended consequence of the body's nutritive processes, pilosity has its uses. He therefore locates the production of hair within the body's blood-driven nutritive process, not as part of the body's waste disposal. Aristotelian philosophy is important to the early modern concepts of the universal—of the origin and location of life, of the natural order of the cosmos. The particulars of the human body, and their practical application in matters medical and anatomical, can also be traced in part to Aristotelian natural philosophy. I emphasize Aristotle's work because it allowed the English to see the body and its parts in relation to other forms of life. Indeed, Aristotle's natural philosophy often effaces difference between human, animal, and plant in terms of anatomy, even as it assumes a delineated cosmic order.

If this study slides easily between natural philosophy and medical texts, it is not without cause. Practical, medicalized knowledge of the body derives from natural philosophy. The articulation of natural philosophy and medicine was common in the Renaissance, expressed, for instance, by the most notorious seeker of knowledge on the London stage. "Ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus" says Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus as he recounts the progress of his learning through a rigorously hierarchical curriculum, culminating in the illicit (1.1.13).<sup>1</sup> Faustus here repeats what was a "programmatically statement in the medical literature" of the period, according to historian of philosophy, Charles B. Schmitt: "Behind this simple statement lies the assumption that natural philosophy prepares one for medical studies and that a

---

<sup>1</sup> The *Faustus* editors, David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen, translate the familiar Latin tag as "where the philosopher ends, the physician begins" and attribute it to Aristotle's *Sense and Sensibilia* (110 n.13).

good foundation in those traditional areas of Aristotelian learning is essential before medical practice can even begin” (12).<sup>2</sup> Schmitt’s study of Italian university philosophers and commentators—and their Oxford readers—finds “a clear statement of the position that medical studies are founded upon a preliminary and basic knowledge of the kind of information contained in the Aristotelian zoological works” (8). These works include *Parts of Animals*, *Generation of Animals*, and *History of Animals*, books whose influence is often undervalued in assessments of early modern Aristotelian influence. These zoological works contributed to the accretion of meaning in the individual body part during the period.

Despite their augmentations of concepts developed in his psychological works, Aristotle’s zoological books were not part of the classical curriculum in Continental universities, and they were infrequently translated. But this is not to say that the works were not read or that they did not participate in shaping Aristotelian natural philosophy. Still, their importance continues to be overlooked by scholars such as Robert Black, who recently wrote, “The discipline of natural philosophy was based on the canonical textbooks of Aristotle, most importantly his *Physics* and *De anima*, although his *De caelo et mundo* and *De generatione et corruptione* maintained a secondary position late into the period” (17-18). While this small corpus would limit the Aristotelian contribution to natural philosophy, one of the standard authorities on Renaissance medicine downplays the importance of Aristotle to the development

---

<sup>2</sup> More recent scholars also emphasize the Aristotelian influence on Renaissance medicine. Timo Joutsivuo writes, “Ever since physicians had begun to stress the scientific status of medicine in the thirteenth century, its connection with Aristotelian natural philosophy was strongly underlined. It was often pointed out that universal medical principles were in fact in accordance with, or derived from, the Aristotelian philosophy of nature. As Thomas Aquinas had already insisted, a good physician should begin his training with the study of natural philosophy. In general, late medieval and Renaissance physicians had received training in Aristotelian natural philosophy and, moreover, usually espoused the Aristotelian world view” (289). See also in the same volume Heikki Mikkeli.

of medical knowledge during the period. In her highly influential work, *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine*, Nancy G. Siraisi writes,

[A]lthough the more-or-less simultaneous reception of Aristotle and of an enlarged Latin medical literature brought about an interaction of Aristotelianism and medical learning that endured from the twelfth century until the seventeenth, medicine retained its separateness from Aristotelian natural philosophy in several important respects. First and foremost, in the Hippocratic and Galenic writings medicine possessed an equally venerable scientific tradition of largely independent origin (even though Galen himself adopted some Aristotelian concepts). (15-16)

It is not my intention to dispute the canonicity of Galenic and Hippocratic thought in early modern medicine; however, I do want to elaborate on what Siraisi calls above the “interaction of Aristotelianism and medical learning” that continues into the seventeenth century. Aristotle’s philosophy of the body was foundational to the early modern understanding of bodies, particularly because of his detailed focus on the individual parts and their formation and nutrition, functions of the organic soul. As I suggested above, it is through the often neglected works on animals that Aristotle’s influence can be most clearly seen.

In an essay on psychology in its early modern sense—that is, as a study of the soul—Katherine Park and Eckhard Kessler suggest how the zoological works might be placed in the common disciplinary continuum from natural philosophy to medicine. “Psychology,” they write, “was seen both as the apex of natural philosophy and as a transition to the higher study of medicine” (457). As there was “no clear division between psychology and what we now call biology” in the period before Descartes, the study of psychology “included a good deal of plant

and animal physiology, based not only on the *Parva naturalia* but also on the ‘animal books’ of Aristotle” (455). The “animal books” to which Park and Eckhard assign a role in early modern psychology are *Generation of Animals*, *History of Animals*, *Parts of Animals*, *Movement of Animals* and *Progression of Animals* (455 n.4). The scholars suggest that with regard to university curriculum, the zoological works may have been even more canonical in England than in the rest of Europe. On the Continent, *De anima* and the *Physics* were the only two of Aristotle’s non-logical works that were required for a bachelor of arts degree, while at Oxford and Cambridge, reading in Aristotle’s biological corpus may have been required (456, 456n.5).

Schmitt’s “Aristotle Among the Physicians” refers to Paduan philosopher Jacopo Zabarella (1533-89), whose influence helped the zoological works attain currency among English physicians. Zabarella was a devoted peripatetic who championed the “Ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus” approach to the two disciplines, and he was “widely read when medicine was entering a new age” in Britain, according to Schmitt (9). Examining Zabarella’s *De naturalis scientiae constitutione*, Schmitt writes of Zabarella’s position that

physicians who wish to understand the structure of the human body should follow Aristotle’s approach as found in the *De Partibus Animalium* rather than in the *De Historia Animalium* [sic]. By this I think he means that the approach should be through an understanding of function and purpose, rather than through a mere knowledge of the external structure of the parts. (8)

As we will see below, the two texts do differ in certain respects, but what is important to note is that these two specific *Libri animales* provide a natural philosophical basis for medicine, and they are useful in that they deal with the body fundamentally at the level of the part.

Theodore Gaza's translation of Aristotle's zoological works dominated the early modern market. Under the title *De animalibus*, Gaza published collectively *History of Animals*, *Parts of Animals*, and *Generation of Animals* in 1476.<sup>3</sup> And it is most likely this volume, or any of the divisions of this volume, that are found in Greek or in Latin translation in lists of early modern English scholars' and medical students' private libraries. Marc L. Schwarz presents us with a 1553 probate inventory of Thomas Simons, M.A., B.M. (Bachelor of Medicine, 1548), of Oxford. The inventory of this medical student shows a volume of selected works of Aristotelian natural history: "Aristoteles de historia, partibus, geratione, communi gressu, communi motu animalium" (225). According to Schwarz, anatomy books represent only two of the 140 volumes in Simons's library (222). *History of Animals* was found on the shelves of Thomas Carpenter, M.A. (1575), according to a study by Kathryn A. Barbour (27). Barbour calls the eighty-six volume list "average in size for men who had recently earned the M.A.," characterizing it as "[r]easonably varied," though one-fifth of the collection, she notes, "consisted of medical books" (24). Perhaps Carpenter associated *History of Animals* as much with the medical books of other authors (Galen, Hippocrates, Dioscorides, and Thomas Gale, English author of the 1563 *Certaine workes of chirurgerie*) as he did with the Aristotelian standards in his collection: *The Ethics*, *Politics*, and *Logic*. According to Jackson Campbell Boswell, John Milton's library is known to have included *Parts of Animals*, and *History of Animals* is considered a likely inclusion (13).

#### §

Aristotle's zoological works utilize the part as an organizing principle. Aristotle elaborates on categories of parts in his *Parts of Animals* and *History of Animals*, books which,

---

<sup>3</sup> On the publishing fortunes of Aristotle's animal books, see John Monfasani.

despite their shared titular subject, cannot avoid discussing human bodies. He wrestles with two different principles of organization in the beginning of *Parts of Animals*:

[S]hould we take each single species severally by turn (such as Man, or Lion, or Ox, or whatever it may be), and define what we have to say about it, in and by itself; or should we first establish as our basis the attributes that are common to all of them because of some common character which they possess?—there being many attributes which are identical though they occur in many groups which differ among themselves, *e.g.* sleep, respiration, growth, decay, death, together with those other remaining affections and conditions which are of a similar kind. I raise this, for at present discussion of these matters is an obscure business, lacking any definite scheme. However, thus much is plain, that even if we discuss them species by species, we shall be giving the same descriptions many times over for many different animals, since every one of the attributes I mentioned occurs in horses and dogs and human beings alike. (55)

In not approaching animals through a taxonomic system that foregrounds the distinctiveness of each individual species, Aristotle's study of animals is different from that famous early modern English natural history, Edward Topsell's *Historie of foure-footed beastes*, which presents individual species alphabetically (with some grouping of subspecies). Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* approaches the body part by part, establishing generalizations across animal species, among which humans are included. Topsell approaches the animal kingdom species by species, establishing the differences that constitute such distinctions. In Topsell's work hair is often utilized as a

distinguishing characteristic for individual species; in Aristotle, it is one of many links between species.<sup>4</sup>

In a statement later echoed by Conrad Gesner, whom Topsell lifts for the prefatory matter in his famous natural history, Aristotle takes a somewhat defensive stance regarding his commingling of human and animal parts: “If, however, there is anyone who holds that the study of the animals is an unworthy pursuit, he ought to go further and hold the same opinion about the study of himself, for it is not possible without considerable disgust to look upon the blood, flesh, bones, blood-vessels, and suchlike parts of which the human body is constructed” (*Parts of Animals* 101). This interesting statement yields multiple interpretations. Is Aristotle implying that anyone who is disgusted at animal parts will also be disgusted at human parts, thus keeping in check his readers’ anthropocentric sense of superiority? Or is he justifying the imperfect medical knowledge yielded by zoological study on the basis that to actually study human bodies, or cadavers, is too disgusting? Whatever his point, and however sympathetic or exploitative his relationship with the animal subjects of his philosophy, Aristotle presents animals and humans as homologously related at the level of the part. No doubt this is why Aristotle appends the following to the above statement establishing the relevance of animal parts to human parts:

In the same way, when the discussion turns upon any one of the parts or structures, we must not suppose that the lecturer is speaking of the material of them in itself and for its own sake; he is speaking of the whole conformation. [...] so in Natural science, it is the composite thing, the thing as a whole, which

---

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle does organize sections of *History of Animals* by animal, but A. L. Peck in his introduction to the text writes, “Many attempts have been made to represent [*History of Animals*] as an essay in taxonomy, and these attempts have continued although as long ago as 1855 J. B. Meyer showed that this view was mistaken” (v).

primarily concerns us, not the materials of it, which are not found apart from the thing itself whose materials they are. (*Parts of Animals* 101)

The “In the same way” signals to his readers that for Aristotle, it is not a *non sequitur* to move from a statement defending animal part study to one downplaying the importance of the parts being studied. Humans and animals may be the same or quite similar at the level of component pieces, but the wholes are greater than the sums of the parts, and humans even greater than animals. For Aristotle, the part could only ever be metonymic: its status as a body part depends always on its relationship to the body as a whole. Thus, even discussions of a part produce conclusions about the whole. Nonetheless, Aristotle sees the suggestive power of individual parts to draw connections across categories of life. These two points are especially relevant in the study of hair in the early modern period, which has a metonymic relationship with the whole body from which it grows, and it represents a part that links forms of life across the broad categories of plant, animal, and human.

From *History of Animals*, to *Parts of Animals*, to *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle’s natural philosophical canon progressively expands the categories in which bodily substances may fall. *History of Animals* begins with the direct statement, “The parts which are found in animals are of two kinds” (3), those being the uniform and non-uniform portions. *Parts of Animals* adds a third category that subtends the two in *History of Animals*: the elements. The four basic elements—Air, Fire, Earth, and Water, and their attendant degrees of heat and moisture—would become quite familiar to the early modern period through Galenic medicine and diet, and are probably almost equally familiar to twenty-first century critics of the early modern period, and so I will not discuss them here. As the material basis of the body, elements “must exist for the sake of the uniform substances,” which is the second category of substance

(111). In other words, the elements are present in the body for the sake of composing the uniform substances. The elements are only ever present in their compounded state; fire cannot be isolated within the body, nor pure air or water. They manifest in what Philip Sidney refers to in sonnet 5 as “mortall mixture” (ln. 11), and are experienced through their various qualities of not only the familiar heat and moisture but also “heaviness[,] lightness, firmness[,] looseness, roughness[,] smoothness” (*Parts of Animals* 107).

The basic category of isolatable, tangible bodily substance, then, is that designated by Aristotle as uniform. The uniform substances take one of two forms, fluid or solid. Blood, bile, semen, and milk are among the fluid uniform substances. Of the solid uniform substances listed in *Parts of Animals*, examples are “bone, fish-spine, sinew, blood vessel” (117). In *History of Animals*, Aristotle has offered as well “skin [...] hair [...] gristle, nail, horn” (7). As their common nomenclature suggests, these substances exhibit a uniformity, an identity, so that of each of these substances, “a portion has, in one sense, the same name as the whole (e.g. a portion of a blood-vessel has the name blood-vessel)” (117). Not all of these substances lend themselves easily to partition and enumeration. How many skins does a body, or even a limb, have? How many blood vessels make up the aorta? Human nail is numerically manageable, presenting generally in twenty discrete locations on the fingers and toes. Hairs also are countable, theoretically. Whether the uniform substance can take an indefinite article (as a hair and a nail do, but milk and flesh do not), they are all, in essence as in name, unindividuated. One hair bears the same name as fifty-thousand other hairs, and the portion of a hair closest to the skin is called by the same name as the tip of that hair. As its categorical nomenclature indicates, the general non-distinction of a uniform substance from others of its type, or even from itself, characterizes it.

Of greater complexity than the uniform substances are those structures in Aristotle's third category of body parts—the non-uniform parts. As elements exist for the sake of the uniform substances, so too do the latter exist for the composition of the non-uniform parts, which “have reached the goal and End of the whole process” (*Parts of Animals* 111). Assembled from the uniform substances, these composite parts and organs carry out “various activities” (motion, for instance) other than sensation, which takes place in uniform substances (such as flesh) (*Parts of Animals* 115). As with the uniform substances, the criteria for identifying non-uniform parts imply divisibility and nameability. As Aristotle writes of certain non-uniform parts in *History of Animals*, “the hand does not divide up into hands, nor the face into faces” (3). Cut away a chunk of a face, and that chunk cannot rightly be called a face anymore. The face is an example of a non-uniform part that is made up of uniform substances and other non-uniform parts. Ostensibly, the tripartite hierarchy of elements, uniform substance, and non-uniform parts build an Aristotelian organism, with each category providing the building blocks of the next.

Aristotle's further partitioning of the second category, the uniform substances, troubles this otherwise simple scheme of fully integrative bodily composition. While the uniform substances are all composed from the same small pool of elements, they differ widely in origin and function. The differences bring into question the relative necessity and incorporation of certain uniform substances in the body. In the further distinctions between these substances we begin to see the origins of the early modern understanding of hair as excremental. In *Parts of Animals*, Aristotle divides the uniform substances into three subcategories, which he further expands and adds to in *Generation of Animals*. In *Parts of Animals* he differentiates uniform substances by not only solidity and fluidity (as we have seen) but also by function:

Now first of all there are many sorts of Cause to which the existence of these uniform parts, both the fluid and the solid ones, is to be ascribed. Some of them act as the material for the non-uniform parts (e.g. each of the instrumental parts is composed of these uniform parts—bones, sinews, fleshes, and the like, which contribute either to its essence, or else towards the discharge of its proper function). Another group of the uniform parts—fluid ones—act as nutriment for the ones just mentioned, since everything that grows gets the material for its growth from what is fluid; and yet a third group are residues produced from the second group: examples, the excrement deposited from the solid nutriment and (in those animals which have a bladder) from the fluid nutriment. (119)

As one category of composition served the ends of another, so within a category do certain substances serve others. Only some uniform substances are building materials for the non-uniform parts. Others do not directly compose the organs and limbs but nourish their building materials. Still other uniform substances are residues of the nourishing substances; of the nourishing substances, excrement is yet another distinct category. With these distinctions of the uniform substances, Aristotle shows that the nutritive function becomes an important factor in distinguishing and prioritizing the substances in this category.

The process of digestion produces the special category of residues, treated in *Parts of Animals* as a subcategory of uniform substances, in *Generation of Animals* as a distinct category of bodily substance. Explaining the terminology in his *Parts of Animals* English translation, A. L. Peck writes,

“Residue” is so called because it is that which is left over when the living organism, by acting upon the nutriment which it has taken has provided itself with

a sufficient supply for its upkeep. Some of the surplus will be useless material contained in the food from the outset, or else has been produced during the process of reducing the food into a condition suitable for its purposes in the body.

The useless residues include the excrements. (33)

In his classic translation of, and commentary on, *Parts of Animals*, William Ogle identifies five distinct categories of residues, including the first category “The indigestible residue of food, i.e. the excreta,” and the fourth category, “inferior parts themselves, e.g. hairs,” which receive the blood that remains “after the nobler organs have been supplied” (159-60 n.8). Excrement, in its sense of waste product properly disposed of discreetly, is generally understood to be a type of residue, but not the only type. Excrement is also the only residue considered useless by Aristotle.

Early modern questions over the status of hair as a body part have their Classical equivalents in the variable status of bodily substances in Aristotle, where hair alone is not so much in question as are the categories under which Aristotle classifies hair. Whether hair is a uniform substance, as in *History of Animals*, or a residue categorically distinct from the uniform and non-uniform parts, hair is clearly not an excrement. In *Generation of Animals*, where residues are separated from uniform substances, Aristotle indicates that hair belongs to the former category. What sets the residues of nourishment apart from the excrements of nourishment is usefulness. However minor or few, the uses of residues secure them a certain, albeit scant, place in Nature’s nutritional husbandry. Aristotle’s lively description would influence early modern thought on digestion:

The most honourable [parts], those which have a share in the supreme controlling principle, are formed out of the first of the nourishment, which has been

concocted and is purest; the 'necessary' parts, which exist for the sake of those just mentioned, are formed out of inferior nourishment, out of the leavings and the residues. Like a good housekeeper, nature is not accustomed to throw anything away if something useful can be made out of it. In housekeeping the best of the food available is reserved for the freemen; the residue left over from this as well as the inferior food goes to the servants, and the worst of all goes to the domestic animals. [...] In the same way Nature is at work within the creatures themselves that are being formed, and constructs flesh and the bodily parts of the other sense-organs out of the purest of the material, whereas out of the residues she constructs bones and sinews and hair, and also nails and hoofs and all such things, which means they have to wait till nature has some residue to hand, and that is why they are the last to be constructed. (231)

The point in the digestive process at which hair is formed becomes the crux of the early modern denial of hair's status as a body part. The direct connection from stomach to hair in early modern thought is rooted in the Aristotelian theory of digestion. His emphasis here on the quality of nutrients, the sequence in which parts are nourished, and Nature's discriminating dispensation of nutrients, combined with his idea that certain bodily substances exist for the sake of more complex parts, all work to affirm a bodily hierarchy within a single complex organism. In the above passage's terms of household structure, the freemen represent the non-uniform parts. Subordinated to them are the uniform substances, garbed in servants' livery. Their food consists of both the residues of the freeman's dining, and the inferior food, so they do appear to have a fare proper to them, as well as the leftovers of the freemen's meal. To the animals go only scraps. The animals signify parts made of residues, and the associations of residual parts,

such as hair and nails, with animals, or the animal in human nature, are difficult for us to ignore, whatever Aristotle intended. Interestingly, the residual substances appear to be not compounds of residue, but uniformly simple residues themselves, although as Ogle points out, blood carries the nourishment from part to part in a pre-Harveyian one-way path toward the skin. Hair, therefore, is formed out of whatever residual nutrients and blood make it to the skin. The relation between blood and hair will underlie much contention in early modern discourse.

§

Following the statement of disciplinary progression “ubi desinit philosophus, ibi incipit medicus,” I move now from discussing the natural philosophy of Aristotle to the medical theories of Galen. Galen takes up Aristotle’s emphasis on bodily parts as hierarchically categorized by their place in the nutritive process. Whereas Aristotle granted hair participation in the nutritive economy of the body, categorizing it as a part of the body, Galen makes the argument that hair is an excrement unworthy of bodily status. Galen takes an Aristotelian philosophy of the body—one representing both humans and animals—and creates a medical corpus of the human body that would shape the way the early modern English thought about their bodies and the bodies of others. It is Galen’s description of digestion that dominated English understanding—learnèd, lay, and imaginative—of the nutritive process, which he discusses in the Fourth Book of *On the Usefulness of the Parts*. A civic metaphor governs his account of the process, as the body becomes an *urbs* unto itself. The stomach serves as a storehouse, its digestive function performed by workers: “For just as workmen skilled in preparing wheat cleanse it of any earth, stones, or foreign seeds mixed with it that would be harmful to the body, so the faculty of the stomach thrusts downward anything of that sort” (204). The labor simile continues: “Just as city porters carry the wheat cleaned in the storehouse to

some public bakery of the city where it will be baked and made fit for nourishment, so these veins carry the nutriment already elaborated in the stomach up to a place for concoction common to the whole animal, a place which we call the liver” (204). Galen’s comparison switches from the cereal to the vineal as nutrients liquefy and travel the veins from the stomach to the liver:

[I]t would be better to liken the chyle carried up from the stomach to the liver by the veins not to dry grain, but to a fluid or humor, pre-concocted and already elaborated, but still needing its concoction to be complete. Let us, then, compare the chyle to wine just pressed from the grapes and poured into casks, and still working, settling, fermenting, and bubbling with innate heat. (205)

As in the production of wine, concoction in the liver produces dregs that sink to the bottom, and flower, or scum that floats to the top. The spleen receives the dregs, the bladder the flower. A pure, red humor remains and is distributed from the liver via the vena cava.

Just as Aristotle presents ensoulment as a full-body experience, so too does the Galenic version of digestion incorporate the body’s various parts. Michael Schoenfeldt summarizes the Galenic understanding of digestion, as it was received in early modern English medical texts, as well as in lay thought:

The process of digestion was imagined to occur in three stages. The first, occurring in the stomach proper, is termed concoction, and converts food into chyle, a fluid the body can absorb. The next stage occurs in the liver, and converts the chyle into blood, which can be distributed to different members of the body through the network of veins. The third stage takes place in the various parts of the body that attract what nourishment they need from the blood.

Digestion thus is not something that happens exclusively in the stomach, but occurs throughout the organism.<sup>5</sup> (26)

The Galenic theory of bodily composition and nutrition does not treat substances as building blocks of higher substances, as in Aristotelian philosophy; but Galen retains the notion of an orderly, one-way distribution of increasingly purified blood that allocates aliment in a hierarchical sequence. What is most striking about early modern digestion is that the process is a full body one, occurring even just under the skin. As Schoenfeldt points out, the part of the process that occurs in the stomach is called concoction, following the etymological understanding of the term as it “derives from the Latin *concoctus*, ‘to boil together’” (28). But early modern medical writers frequently refer to the digestion that takes place in the various other parts of the body (that is, not in the stomach or liver) as the third concoction.

Early modern medicine recognized various products of the different stages of digestion. Milk and semen, for instance, constitute the most well-concocted blood (Schoenfeldt 26). But the early modern English did not always maintain the Aristotelian distinction between bodily parts formed by residual nutrients, and the excrements for which Nature could find no use. Everything residual in Aristotle becomes excremental in the early modern Galenic regime. As Schoenfeldt explains, each of the three stages of digestion “produces its own excrement: in the stomach, the excrement is feces; in the liver, urine; and in the various parts of the body, sweat, hair, nails, and mucus” (26). The status of a bodily substance is determined by its relation to, and production in, the processes of digestion and nutrition. As an extrusion of the by-products produced in the third stage of concoction, hair is technically homologous to the excrements of the second and first stages. So while the OED does allow for a disassociation of hair from fecal

---

<sup>5</sup> Robert Burton includes mastication as the first in a four-step process of concoction. See *Anatomy of Melancholy* 1:1:2:5.

matter based on the term's usage for any outgrowth from the body, analogy causes the alvine waste connotation to resound semantically as well as homophonically when the early modern English, or their imagined representations, call hair an excrement.

In *Mixtures* Galen explains how vaporous excrements become the fiber-like extrusions on top of the head. He conceives of the body as filled with substances, either moist or vaporous, trying to escape. If the skin is wet and soft, "rather like cheese which is just setting," then the pores do not stay open long enough for the substances to escape. Moisture and vapors perforate dry skin, however, and "like well-set cheese," the skin does not close back up, leaving its pores open. The vapors that attempt egress in small pores, if they are "sooty, thick, and earthy," can get stuck in the pores. Eventually a pore becomes clogged with sooty vapors, which "become intermingled and conjoined, forming a single body not unlike smoke in the world outside, the difference being that the more it thickens, the more completely stuck it becomes," until the smokey mixture is pushed through the skin as "wiry" substance (251). Galen goes on to clarify the natures of the various wedged excretions and the color hair each waste product produces. A "genuinely" smokey excretion produces black hair. If "the wedged-in substance is a sedimental waste product of yellow bile," the hair is fair. Phlegm makes white hair; a sediment "half-way between phlegmatic and the bilious" produces red hair (252). Far from being thought of as polymers of proteins, the modern building blocks of life, hair in Galenic medicine is a solid, compact accretion of the body's various waste products. In *Mikrocosmographia*, Crooke offers the *Mixtures* account of hair production as a plausible explanation of hair's nature. The sooty vapors of the third concoction, dried by natural heat as they try to escape through the pores, combine in one body, "euen as in chimneyes we see by the continuall ascent of soote, long strings of it are gathered as it were into a chain. The difference is, that the straitnesse of the

passages of the skin, where through the matter of the haire is a[u]oyded, formeth them into a small roundnesse, euen as a wyre receyueth that proportion wherof the hole is, where through it is drawne” (G3<sup>v</sup>).

The understanding of hair as analogous to fecal matter can be found in much early modern English imaginative writing as well. In Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labors Lost*, the discomfoting likeness between the two types of matter activates a joke at Don Adriano de Armado’s expense. Criticized by Holofernes because he “draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument” (5.1.15-16), Don Armado also lets slip no occasion to use a Latinate term where another would better serve. One such instance is when he is bragging about his friendship with King Ferdinand: “[F]or I must tell thee it will please his grace, by the world, sometime to lean upon my poor shoulder and with his royal finger thus dally with my excrement, with my mustachio. But, sweetheart, let that pass” (ll. 86-89). Armado’s diction implies a scatological intimacy between himself and the king, and Shakespeare leaves the audience with a moment of possible disgust at Armado’s expense before having the braggart clarify that he is talking about his moustache. Whether Armado is aware that he has deployed two meanings with his word choice is debatable. When Shakespeare writes unflatteringly of his mistress, “If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head” (Sonnet 130, l. 4), he draws on a theory of hair growth that attributes the reviled substance to the solidifying of sooty vapor. Today, we might think of wires as too tensile, malleable, and metallic a substance for a suitable comparison to hair, but the similitude derives from the way both take shape in the process of their production, not in their actual substance.

§

Despite the hegemony of Galenic theory in early modern English medical thought, the view that hair was solidified fuliginous vapor, or any kind of excrement, did not go unchallenged. Crooke is faithful to Galen in his account of hair formation, but he apparently finds challenges to that view sufficiently articulated enough to dispute. In a passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter, Crooke refers to the difficulty and “Philosophical subtilty” of the arguments concerning the growth and nature of hair. The “controuersies concerning the haire” touched on the larger controversies discussed in the introduction, that is, the status of the part, the location of the soul, and the limits of life in the body. As we might expect from one who labels hair as excrements, Crooke wants to deny life to hairs. Yet, he cannot do so without some concession to hair’s status as a body part: “Hence it appeareth, that they are onely excrements, and their aucion is but an improper accretion, vtterly deuouide of life, and therefore they are not to be reckoned among the parts of the body; or if they be, it is not because they do participate of life, but because they haue other vses of couering, ornament, and such like” (H5<sup>v</sup>). The terms of the debate are familiar: excrement or life. Can bodily substance that grows out of the body participate in life? Further, can it be considered part of the body? Grudgingly, Crooke demonstrates the claims that usefulness can make on bodily status. It appears that having any function, even one not governed by the soul in any sense, is enough to qualify a substance for status as a part.

The *Mikrocosmographia* continues with Crooke’s refutation of authorities who affirm that hair has a semblance of life: “But there are some of Aristotle’s followers, who contend that they haue a life, but that of nourishment onely, not of sense. Which distinction seemeth to mee to be very friuolous. For if you take from them any part of life, you must take away all life”

(H5<sup>v</sup>). As he works out what amounts to a definition of life, Crooke's concern is less one of anatomy than of psychology. As I discussed in the first chapter, the nature of life depends on the ensoulment of the body and its parts. The Aristotelian position is that in performing the basic function of the organic soul, nourishment qualifies a body as living. Further, receiving the nourishing products of that function gives a body its proper life. In Crooke's position, however, the function of nourishment alone does not confer life to a body. He defines life as full organic ensoulment—meaning that life requires the operations of both the sensitive and nutritive souls. Based on this criterion, Crooke distinguishes hair from nails and teeth in that these parts have sense, but hair does not, in his opinion (H6). But to think that nourishment without sensory feeling gives something life is frivolity.

Having denied that life exists without sensation (and implicitly putting plants in a doubtful state), Crooke continues to refute the Aristotelians on their own terms, by denying that hair is nourished. "Beside," Crooke writes, "the very substance of the haire so dry and without sence, is a manifest euidence that they cannot be truly nourished. For if they assume an Aliment into themselues, and alter it for their behoofe, what should hinder that they should not encrease according to al the dimensions, length, bredth, and thicknesse?" (H6). Hair grows only in length because, Crooke points out, it is nourished only at the root. Nature nourishes the root and causes the hair to grow because she knows that hairs will wear away (H6), a point similar to that made by Stenn at the beginning of this chapter. That Crooke attributes to nature a concern for retaining hair shows his valuation of hair as a useful, though not living, part.

For other writers, adornment offered justification for extending bodily status to hair. One of the most commonly conceded uses of the excrement is its ornamentation of the head. In his fascinating *Anthropometamorphosis: Man Transform'd* (1653) John Bulwer (1606-1656) asserts

hair's decorative nature as though such a quality alone proves hair is not an excrement. When discussing the customs of head-shaving nations, he writes, "That the Haire should be, as these Nations conceive, a most abject excrement, an unprofitable burthen, and a most unnecessary and uncomely covering, and that Nature did never intend that excrement for an Ornament, is a piece of Ignorance, or rather malicious impiety against Nature" (I2). To these strong words he adds, "How great an Ornament the Haire is to the Head, appears by the deformity [that] is introduced by baldness" (I2). Implicitly, Bulwer allows for a certain amount of natural, aesthetic judgment in deciding what substances are part of the body. Decorative value bolsters Bulwer's argument against customs based on impious disregard for hair. Against medical authorities that project a similar disregard for hair through learned treatises, Bulwer engages his reason in the maligned part's defense. One claim Bulwer makes is that hair does not meet the definition of "excrement": "If the Haire were an excrement, it should be shut quite out of the Body, but this remains in" (I2). Bulwer understands "excrement" to connote not an outgrowth alone from the body but a complete severance or expulsion from it. The analogy of hair to the excrements of the first two concoctions does not obtain for Bulwer. Rather, he likens hair to the life and parts of other forms of being: "Neither doe they proceed from the fuliginous excrements of the Braine, as some are pleased to think, but rather as Spigelius well notes, of Blood attracted by the root of the Haire unto the rest of the Plant and Trunck, which may be procured from those things, which in other Creatures hold analogy with the Haires of Man" (I2). Instead of being like excrement, hair is like life, life of both plants and "other Creatures." What sustains the likeness between humans, plants, and other animals is the nourishment of hair by blood, which Belgian physician Adriaan van den Spiegel (1578-1625) describes. Spigelius was a significant influence for the "pro-life" strain of English thought about hair. The recognition of the nutritive

similarities between human hair, and plants and animal hair, helped the English to think of life itself as a commonality between themselves and other forms of being, a point I will pursue further in the next chapter.

As Bulwer's remarks indicate, not all medical thought circulating in London's print market held that hair was excrement and ought to be shorn of bodily status. The German philosopher, physician, and Paracelsian Daniel Sennert (1572-1637) is one author whose claim that locks are viable members of his body became part of the English discourse on the subject. The English text of his *Art of chirurgery explained in six parts* (1663) provides a lengthy account of hair's consonance with body parts, whether those parts are human or animal. Sennert devotes a book of his *Chirurgery* to skin, hair, and nails. That Sennert believes these parts are viable members of the body is evident by the several chapters he devotes to them, yet his ambivalent attitude toward hair suggests that he is aware of its controversial status, even as he acknowledges it as a body part proper: "Neither indeed are the Vices of the Hair to be passed over in silence, in regard that even these are (although ignoble, yet) parts of the body" (Gg2). A hair's status as a body part gives it the dubious credit of having "Vices" worthy of discussion, but even as a body part, hair is still "ignoble." He asserts the hair's status, furthermore, through animal analogy:

For no man can wel deny, That the Nails, the Hoofs, and Horns of al living  
Creatures, and likewise that the Feathers in Birds are parts of their body; and that  
none can wel say that a Peacocks Tail, and al the various Feathers in Birds that  
are of so many several colors; I say, as none can wel affirm that these Feathers  
affording so great variety are a thing merely excrementitious, and not parts of  
their body: so likewise it is in no wise to be denied, that the Hairs are also a part  
of the body. (Gg2)

Once again, bodily substance is categorized as either excrement or body part. Sennert's argument that hair belongs in the latter category is based on an analogy between human bodies and animal bodies. Sennert's sustained comparison, between hair and peacock feathers, implies that ornaments as such qualify as body parts. But the comparison to nails, hooves, and horns suggests a likeness in substance between human hair and these animal features acknowledged by Sennert to have status as parts.

The view that hair is made of fuliginous vapor was popular, but not uncontested. Sennert attests to the commonality of this view, even as he denies it: "We are indeed vulgarly (but erroneously) taught, That Hairs are generated when from the heat of our bodies fuliginous and thick vapors are out of the third Concoction elevated in the parts of our body, and are driven unto the pores of the Skin" (Gg2). Sennert begins to counter the long-standing assumptions about fuliginous excrements with reasoning based in anatomy and physiology: "But now if the Hair should be generated in this manner, a reason could not be given why hair should not alike be bred in al parts of the body; and in those parts where they are bred, why there should be in some places more store thereof, in some less; and why some of them are alwaies growing, when others grow not at al" (Gg2). Sennert's reasoning is most likely based on the assumption that the third concoction is taking place all over the body, providing nourishment to the skin and flesh, so fuliginous vapors should arise all over the body and in equal amounts. True to Croke's characterization of the defenders of hair's status, Sennert continues his argument with a citation of Aristotle:

Moreover, the hair is by Aristotle (in his third Book of the History of living Creatures, Chap. 12) distinguished into that which is bred together with us (such as is the hair of the head, eyelids, & eyebrows) and that that is afterwards bred, to

wit, such as at length in process of time as age comes on: of which there could no cause at all be rendered if (according to the vulgar opinion) the hairs had their original out of those vapors that break forth. (Gg2)

By Sennert's logic, a newborn has not had time to produce the fuliginous vapors needed for the amount of hair with which it is born. Further, the hair that develops after puberty, were it excrement of the third concoction, should have been present since childhood. Sennert's citation of Aristotle furthermore offers one more piece of evidence that Aristotle's *Libri animales* provided a philosophical foundation for matters medical, or "chirurgical," in early modern medical thought.

When the body's production of gross excrements fails to explain hair growth for Sennert, he proposes an ontology that draws on terms familiar from both Aristotelian digestion and psychology. Sennert's association of hair with the body's nutritive process places hair within the Aristotelian hematological economy we saw earlier. Echoing the passage from Aristotle's *Generation of Animals*, Sennert claims that Nature

dischargeth the office of a good and provident Hous-keeper, (distributing unto each particular person in the Family what properly belongeth unto him) and with the best and purest part of the blood she nourisheth the more noble and worthy parts of the body, distributing residue unto the ignoble and less principal parts, to wit, into the Nails and Hairs in Man-kind; and in Bruits, into Hairs, Hoofs, Horns, and Feathers. (Gg2<sup>v</sup>)

Residue, in Sennert, as in Aristotle, is the left-over, nutritive blood that none of the other organs and parts use. Nourishment by residue means that hair and nails are the lowest parts in the bodily hierarchy, but they are still parts. Nourishment by vapor in the Galenic system, on the

other hand, means that hairs do not receive any share of blood, but only the waste products of parts that have used blood for themselves. A particular faculty of the soul is responsible, according to Sennert, for converting this nourishment into hair, and at this point, Sennert's explanation relies on the psychology of the soul and can be seen as an alternative to Crooke's view that the hair has no connection to the sensitive half of the organic soul. Sennert attributes hair growth to "the formative (we may term it the pilisique or hair-breeding) faculty" (Gg2<sup>v</sup>). A faculty was the soul's capacity to make an activity happen. As an aspect of the soul, a faculty's products were parts of the body by necessity. While the Galenic theory characterized hair as accidental by-products of the nutritive faculty (as did Aristotle's theory, but without the implication that hair was actually harmful), Sennert's proposition of a "pilisique" faculty incorporated hair growth as part of the body's (and, implicitly, the soul's) vital functions. Sennert justifies attributing hair growth to the formative faculty by pointing out its association with another aspect of the soul's operations—the imagination: "And this moreover argueth that the hair in Animals proceedeth from the formative faculty; to wit, for that by the strength and force of Imagination the form and color of the hair may be changed" (Gg2<sup>v</sup>). Imagination affects a fetus when the apprehensive power of the sensible soul receives an imprint of a sensible object's species. As Park explains, species are the constant visible, auditory, and olfactory emissions of a sensible object that make their way into sense organs and create sensation. The species may be "impressed" on the *spiritus* and travel the body, to parts such as the womb, where they can "stamp themselves on the flesh of a developing foetus" (471-472). Robert Burton briefly treats this process in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* 1:1:2:6. Sennert does not specifically refer to hair as "ensouled," but its receptiveness to the operations of the imagination during conception indicate that hair is a body part integrated with the processes of the bodily whole, and

that its characteristics are influenced by operations of the sensitive soul as well as the nutritive. Sennert thus draws on Aristotelian anatomy and psychology to demonstrate the differences between hair and excrement.

§

In one of his final publications, poet and playwright George Chapman (1559/60-1634) demonstrates the rhetorical productivity of the debate over hair's status as either a body part or an excrement. His prose essay, *A iustification of a strange action of Nero; in burying with a solemne funerall, one of the cast hayres of his mistresse Poppaea* prefaces his verse translation of *A iust reproofe of a Romane smell-freast, being the fifth satyre of Iuuenall* (1629). The *Justification* is, as Millar MacLure calls it, a "toothlessly witty" mock eulogy presenting the scene of Emperor Nero's funeral for a single hair fallen from his mistress Poppaea's scalp (220). In mocking a too-intense concern for locks, Chapman exploits the ambivalence the English had toward the sometime part, sometime excrement. Chapman's *Justification* has received little critical attention, although Charlotte Spivack has praised it especially in comparison to the Juvenal translation it accompanies: "Always congenial to satire, Chapman succeeds in both works; but, whereas the uneven poem does not equal his earlier verse, the essay makes one wish he had written much more prose. Although the content of the Nero piece is slight, it involves a dramatic episode; and Chapman was basically a dramatic writer" (58). Spivack's assessment that the *Justification*'s "content is slight" recalls Crooke's own words about the debate over the nature of a hair having no great necessity. While Crooke acknowledges the philosophical acuity demanded by the debate, the bushy-bearded Chapman recognizes the competing affective investments and abjections such a tiny bodily substance provokes.

The speaker of Chapman's *Justification* describes the scene of a hearse carrying a single strand of Poppaea's amber locks, attended by such pomp as would become the funeral of Agrippina, the Emperor's mother, or his wife Octavia. The speaker proposes to "make it appeare to all vpright eares" that "this silly, this base, this contemptible hayre on this Herse supported, receiues no thought of honour, but what it well deserueth." He goes on to add, "My meaning is not to exceede the compasse of this hayre, which we haue here in hand. This sacred beame falne from that sunne of beauty *Poppaea*; whose very name is able to giue it honour, though otherwise base" (B2). Always there is a concern not to praise the single lock above what is meet for such a substance. The speaker resorts to careful tiptoeing, justifying his enterprise by reference to Poppaea's hyperbolic beauty. The speaker's caution shows his awareness of the incongruity of praising what Galenic thought deems to be waste: "And albeit hayre were of it selfe the most abiect excrement that were, yet should *Poppaeas* hayre be reputed honourable" (B2-B2<sup>v</sup>). Chapman's speaker flatters Nero's apparent whimsy (or madness) by subjecting the judgments of philosophically-informed anatomy to the aesthetic and affective inclinations of the Emperor. Even in its fallen state, then, Poppaea's single hair retains her radiant beauty, as light from her sun, a quality of her essence undiminished by its separation from her body.

This justification values Poppaea's amber strand as metonymically a part of her, but the speaker also pulls off the rhetorically tricky feat of presenting Poppaea's hair as nonetheless worthy of praise as an excrement than it would be as a proper body part. By references to other excrements, including animal excrements, the speaker emphasizes the value of hair within a system of likeness:

An excrement, it is, I deny not; and yet are not all excrements to be vilified as things of no value: for Muske, Ciuet, Amber, are they not all excrements? Yet

what more pleasing to the dantiest sense wee haue? Nature giues many things with the left hand, which Art receiues with the right: Sublimate and other drugges are by nature poyson: yet Art turnes them to wholsome medicines; so hayre though by nature giuen vs as an excrement, yet by Art it is made our capitall ornament. (B2<sup>v</sup>)

This passage wrests from natural philosophy and confers on art the power to determine the value of natural substances. The bodily economy here is not one of arterial housekeeping and nutrition but of utility, and the utility of human agents at that. The rhetorician's art celebrates the advances Art makes on Nature by making ennobling use of Nature's basest products. Not even the scrupulous stewarding of Aristotle's Nature can reduce and reuse to the extent that Art can. Even more impressively, Art molds other like excrements into aesthetic delights.

Chapman's speaker is not the first in early modern literary argumentation to demonstrate his wit in reconciling the paradoxical nature and use of civet, which the OED defines as "A yellowish or brownish unctuous substance, having a strong musky smell, obtained from sacs or glands in the anal pouch of several animals of the Civet genus, especially of the African Civet-cat. It is used in perfumery" ("*civet*" n.<sup>1</sup> 2). In *As You Like It*, William Shakespeare's court wit Touchstone proves to Corin that courtiers' hands are fouler than shepherds' because of the nature of the very perfume on courtiers' hands:

Corin: And they [shepherds' hands] are often tarred over with the surgery of our sheep; and would you have us kiss tar? The courtier's hands are perfumed with civet.

Touchstone: Most shallow, man. [...] [C]ivet is of a baser birth than tar, the very uncleanly flux of a cat. (3.2.54-57, 59-60)

Touchstone calls on a hierarchy of substances in which tar is not so base a substance as that produced as waste in concoction. Chapman's description of the ambidextrous relationship between Art and Nature ("Nature giues many things with the left hand, which Art receiues with the right") perhaps is a recollection of this earlier, though logically opposite, argument based on the nature of civet. Whereas for Chapman's speaker, the odiferous pleasures of civet elevate it above its excremental baseness, for Shakespeare's Touchstone, the excremental ontology of the civet makes it repulsive despite its perfume. We must keep in mind, however, that Touchstone makes his point about civet to prop a specious claim for the universality of courtly manners and how they ought to be practiced even in the country. Chapman likewise is critical of affected refinement even as his speaker praises the like excrements of civet and hair. At the same time, Chapman's speaker extols excremental hair and its aesthetic manipulation as "capitall ornament" in order to praise an adulterating and unpopular Nero. Nonetheless, Chapman himself demonstrates remarkable wit in so wielding an ontological ambiguity, whether or not his speaker's arguments are delivered in good faith. He artfully renders with the right hand the natural philosophical material in his left hand.

Chapman's speaker gives himself over to aestheticizing hair and reimagines Nature as the ambidextrous producer of excrement and art. Art is no longer the domain of human agency, making beauty from foul raw material. Instead, in the very process of producing excrement, Nature shows a "subtill skill," an "excellent point of Art" when she "indurate[s] and harden[s] a thinne vapor into a dry and solid substance" (B3). Chapman's speaker reveals he is well versed in the Galenic understanding of hair formation. The speaker's admiration for Nature's artisanship shows a not uncommon awe of the human body, but it is clear that bodily functions are also an aesthetic wonder for the speaker:

And this whole bush of hayre, hath both his being and his nourishment from those sweet vapors, which breathe and steame from the quintessence of the braine, through those subtill pores of the head in which they are fashioned and spunne by natures finger into so slender and delicate a thred, as if she intended to doe like the painter that came to see *Apelles*, drew that subtill lyne for a masterpeece of his workmanship. (B3-B3<sup>v</sup>)

Fuliginous vapors become “sweet,” escaping through pores becomes breathing and steaming, and expulsive apposition of sooty waste becomes skillful spinning of the most delicate threads. Chapman gets the story of Apelles, the ancient Greek painter, somewhat wrong. It is Apelles who draws the “subtill lyne” when he goes to visit Protogenes in Rhodes. Finding that Protogenes is not home, Apelles leaves as his calling card a fine and delicate line, straight across Protogenes’s canvas. When he returns, Protogenes paints a still finer line of a different color inside Apelles’s line and instructs a servant to show the feat to his would-be guest if he returns. Apelles does return and in like manner out-lines Protogenes, who graciously acknowledges Apelles his master and welcomes him as his worthy guest.<sup>6</sup> Chapman’s speaker imagines that, like Apelles’s painted line, a single thread of hair is the product of superlative artistic skill, as evidenced by its fineness. Even more impressive is Nature’s artistic production of hair out of the unlikeliest of matter.

Chapman’s *Justification* showcases the author’s wit throughout with this type of play on paradoxes derived from the Galenic theory of hair. In another demonstration of wit, Chapman writes,

---

<sup>6</sup> An English version of this story is available in the 1634 translation of Pliny’s *Natural History* (Zz5-Zz5<sup>v</sup>).

And howsoever hayre fals within the name of excrement; yet it is euermore the argument of a rancke or rich soyle where it growes, and of a barren where it failes; for I dare bouldly pronounce it despight of all paltry prouerbs, that a mans wit is euer rankest, when his hayre is at the fullest. I say not his wit is best, but rankest; for I am not ignorant, that the rankest flesh is not alwayes the soundest, as the rankest breath is not alwaies the sweetest. (B3)

The natural image in the beginning of this quote resonates with the frequent analogies—appearing in Galen and his inheritors—between bodies and landscapes, and between hair and plants, which will be the focus of the next chapter. What concerns us about this passage for the moment is the “proverb” to which Chapman alludes regarding hair growth and wit. In his introduction to John Heywood’s *A Dialogue of Proverbs* (1546, expanded 1549), Rudolph E. Habenicht explains how the early moderns lumped together true proverbs (which are figurative and conceal “hidden” meaning), with maxims and adages, wise sayings that are direct and unenigmatic (1). The proverb to which Chapman alludes, appearing also in Heywood’s verse tour de force of adages and proverbs as “long heare, and short wit” (l. 2183), is classified by Habenicht as a proverb proper, meaning that some decoding of the saying is needed. Habenicht speculates that the proverb “[p]ossibly means to ‘have more words than wit (truth?)’” (229 n.2183[B]). In the context of Heywood’s *Dialogue*, this reading makes sense, for a husband criticizing his wife’s story-telling says, “Thy tales [...] shew long heare, and short wit, wife” (l. 2183). This reading of the proverb is not a lone instance of a tale sporting its own coiffure. In a “Letter to Ermolao Barbaro” that purports to speak for philosophers of substance and gravity—Thomas Aquinas, John Scotus, Albertus Magnus, and Averroës—Giovanni Pico della Mirandola presumes to tell Barbaro what they might say about Barbaro’s rhetorical ingenuity. Pico alludes

to a statement by Synesius of Cyrene (ca. 370 – ca. 413) in his *Praise of Baldness*: “Actually, what Sinesius said about adolescence can be said quite fittingly of oratory: a long-haired speech is always sodomitical. That’s why we prefer ours to be shaggy, stuck together, and tangled rather than beautifully kempt, and either known to be or suspected of being filthy” (60). The philosophers warn Barbaro against masking a lack of deep philosophical thinking with ear-pleasing rhetoric in a speech. Heywood’s reading of the proverb “more hair, the less wit” and Pico’s sexually moralizing stricture against rhetoric both figure hair as adornment that distracts listeners from the essential truth or substance of discourse.

But the proverb was also used to read people physiognomically by the tokens of their hair, as in this conversation between the two Syracusians in Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*:

Antipholus: Why is Time such a niggard of hair, being, as it is, so plentiful an excrement?

Dromio: Because it is a blessing that he bestows on beasts, and what he hath scanted men in hair he hath given them in wit.

Antipholus: Why, but there’s many a man hath more hair than wit.

Dromio: Not a man of those but he hath the wit to lose his hair.

Antipholus: Why thou didst conclude hairy men plain dealers, without wit.

(2.2.77-87)

According to Dromio’s natural philosophy, animal hair and human wit are analogous features. In fact, Dromio seems to see wit as compensation for what man has been scanted in hair. And within this context, the less animal-like a person is—that is, the less hairy—the more wit that person has. Antipholus’s observation that many men are, in fact, not witty leads him, perhaps unwittingly, into an iteration of the proverb—“there’s many a man hath more hair than wit.”

Relative to the animal, all men are less hairy and more witty. The animal ceases to be the standard by which human hairiness and wit are compared as Dromio and Antipholus begin to consider the difference between men of varied hairiness, and health. Between men, the hairiest have the least wit and are therefore lacking in cunning, while those lacking hair ambiguously display either their wit or their venereal disease (the connection between syphilis and hair loss made for seemingly endless jokes in the early modern period). Shakespeare thus uses the proverb in a stichomythic comment on human folly.

Shakespeare's other use of the proverb appears in another instance of comic banter, in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. As Speed reads back the grocer's list of an encomium Lance has written of his beloved, the proverb serves as an ambivalent measure of her qualities:

Speed: "*Item*, she hath more hair than wit, and more faults than hairs, and more wealth than faults."

.....

Lance: "More hair than wit." It may be. I'll prove it: the cover of the salt hides the salt, and therefore it is more than the salt. The hair that covers the wit is more than the wit, for the greater hides the less. (3.1.338-39; 343-46)

As a cipher, the maid's hair serves as a mean between her wit and her faults, a material bridge between two immaterial (but yet somehow quantifiable) qualities. Lance's proof of how hair and wit can even be compared, let alone quantified, depends on a fully corporeal and anatomically localized understanding of wit. In both of Shakespeare's references to the proverb, he treats both the hair and the wit as embodied characteristics, whereas Heywood, surely the early modern poetic authority on proverbs, suggests that they are qualities of discourse.

Chapman follows Shakespeare in comparing the rankness of a man's—or, more specifically, a head's—hair and wit. But it is the speaker's intention to subvert expectation, to make reasonable the silly scene of a hair's funeral, and to shake the very foundation of received wisdom. Therefore, he contradicts the proverb: “I dare bouldly pronounce it despight of all paltry prouerbs, that a mans wit is euer rankest, when his hayre is at the fullest.” The rankness of the head's “soyle,” nourisher of both hair and wit, draws a vegetable analogy with hair, making the head itself a landscape. Again the impulse is to materialize the wit, whereas Heywood and Pico treat hairiness as a quality of abstraction, that is, of discourse itself. The reversal of the proverb and the horticultural metaphor set Chapman up for a pun on “rank”: “I say not his wit is best, but rankest; for I am not ignorant, that the rankest flesh is not alwayes the soundest, as the rankest breath is not alwaies the sweetest” (B3). Spinning “rankest” from a quantitative measure to a qualitative one, the speaker points up the ambiguity of words, not only in their semantics but also in their grammar. Furthermore, with its positive denotation of plenteousness and negative meaning of foul-smelling, “rank” works, like hair itself, to elicit quite different, if not opposite, reactions.

Having established hair as venerable material, Chapman's speaker turns his attention back to the individual hair fallen from Poppaea's head. The speaker argues for the veneration of particular hairs with another floral comparison, and an appeal to a certain logic of parts:

So that nature hauing honoured hayre with so great a priuiledge of her fauour,  
 why should wee not thinke it worthy all honour in it selfe without any addition of  
 other circumstance. And if Nature hath grac't the whole Garland with this  
 honour, may not euery flower challenge his part? If any hayre, then this hayre  
 (the argument of our present mourning) more then any. (B3<sup>v</sup>-B4)

In individuating Poppaea's hair, the orator also implicitly acknowledges an autonomous identity for each hair. Furthermore, that this composition is a funeral oration necessarily means that the individual hair had, at one point, life. In the marked death of a single hair, Chapman tolls a knell of heavy irony, exceeded only by that of Nero's concern for a single hair coupled with his utter cruelty to his mother Agrippina and first wife Octavia.

Chapman's *Justification* textualizes the noted ambiguity of hair as rhetorical and thematic matter for one of his final literary productions. The central focus on hair's fuliginous nature and excremental devaluation demonstrate the degree to which natural philosophical principles and medical thought informed and were adapted by the literary imagination. Ambiguity about hair in medical and natural philosophical thought translates into an admittedly humorous and bald ambiguity in Chapman's dramatization of a speaker who justifies the actions of a tyrant. Chapman's essay also highlights the tropical nature of early modern thinking about the body. While critics such as Paster and Schoenfeldt have alerted us to the literality of early modern vocabulary about the body, Chapman's work brings out the literary productivity inherent in the understandings of and meanings attached to parts of the physical body.

## Chapter Three

### Horticulture of the Head: The Vegetable Life of Hair

A recent television advertisement presents a forbidding landscape of thorny branches and unmistakably malevolent vegetation enjoying free reign. Then a Schick Quattro for Women razor comes gliding through the scene, leaving delicate, pink floral petals in its wake. A breeze gently disperses the petals to reveal that the landscape is actually a human leg. The thorns, then, are nasty leg hairs, the flowers presumably representing the gentle, refreshing feeling that comes with being cleanly shaven. With thorny branches giving way to flowers, the commercial presents forms of vegetable life as easily categorized according to the aesthetics of human hygiene (Eveready). More germane to this dissertation, the commercial also highlights a likening of hair to plant life that has persisted in the Western imagination, and is found even in the natural philosophy and medicine of Classical and early modern understandings of hair. The persistence of thought that likens hair to plant life can be traced from early English texts that insultingly refer to men's long hair as "bushy," to the application of the same moniker in the 1960s, when people with bushy hair were thought to be especially densely congregated in the San Francisco Bay area, sporting flora in their hair as a symbol of their worldview and foreign policy. In Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, Belpheobe attracts flowers to her hair like a black sweater attracts cat hair. The early modern English, however, drew on associations to plant life to make more than cosmetic and symbolic determinations about hair. The medical

philosophy and the literature of the period show an ontological connection between hair and plants.

The analogy to plants was perhaps the most important mode of thought buttressing arguments for hair's vitality. In the last chapter, I demonstrated that the question of hair's vitality depended on hair's participation in the nutritive process. As we have seen, some writers argued that hair is the recipient of nutrition, others that it was the wasteful by-product of nutrition. As the lowest form of life exercising the lowest psychological faculty of nutrition and reproduction, plants were important to figurations of the kind of life hair might possibly possess. In this chapter, I will examine the analogies between hair and plant life that blur the difference between likeness and sameness, for some authors treat hair as having quite literally a vegetable nature. The likeness between hair and vegetable life also allowed the early modern English to recognize a vegetable nature in themselves. This affinity with plant life suggests a way of thinking about the early modern relation to the natural world as predicated on the sharing of life rather than on a linear scheme like the Chain of Being, which separates humans from plants with the animal link between them.

For the early modern English, the fundamental similarity between humans and plants was the possession of life. The English understood life to derive from the vegetative soul, one third of the Aristotelian tripartite soul that, along with the animalistic sensitive and the distinctly human intellectual souls, comprised the human essence. The vegetative soul and natural spirits promoted and sustained life through their threefold function: generation, nutrition, and growth. Shakespeare refers to the shared nutritive function between plants and humans in sonnet 15:

When I consider everything that grows  
Holds in perfection but a little moment

.....  
When I perceive that men as plants increase  
Cheeréd and checked by the self-same sky,  
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,  
Wearing their brave state out of memory. (ll. 1-2, 5-8)

The sonnet speaker reflects on bodily growth and uses it as the basis for comparing human and plant life, a not unusual cogitation given the influence of Aristotelian psychology on the time. Thus Shakespeare makes conventional comparisons, governed by simile, between a non-descript plant species and his sonnet speaker who reflects on his vegetable affinities. At line five, the auxiliary “do” before “plants” is implied, making the action of increasing serve as the tenor of comparison. Shakespeare’s syntax, however, also invites readers to see men increasing in their capacity *as* plants, suggesting an acknowledgment of man’s vegetable nature from his early life as a “sap” to the fading of his “brave” outward showiness. The “as,” then, no longer takes on the function of comparison through simile but instead suggests an identity of men and plants, based on the likeness of life, growth, and decay shared between them.

Indeed, the body’s nutritive vegetable nature distributed life over all the body’s parts. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare draws on plants’ association with vitality, and the capacity for each body part to partake in the life of the body. Commenting on Perdita’s costume at the sheep-shearing festival, Florizel tells his beloved, “These your unusual weeds to each part of you / Does give a life; no shepherdess, but Flora / Peering in April’s front” (4.4.1-3). Underlying Florizel’s conceit is the Aristotelian psychology of the life-giving vegetable soul. Florizel speaks not of one life but of multiple lives, one for each part of Perdita covered by her festive weeds. But it is not the clothes themselves that invest each of Perdita’s parts with life. The clothes give

lives only via the fecundity of the goddess whom, when the clothes are placed on Perdita's body, they play a part in representing. As the goddess of flowers, Flora naturally represents life in abundance: life is a collective of individual blooms under Flora's care. It follows, then, that each of Perdita's parts, when covered in Flora's garb, takes on a peculiar, floral life of its own. Her body parts may be thought to have a vegetable quality to them, each possessing a certain claim to autonomous life. As we will see, what can be said metaphorically of Perdita's body parts was thought literally about hair in the period.

Florizel clearly intends no insult toward Perdita when he points out the floral lives of her individual body parts. According to the kind of hierarchical schematization represented by the Chain of Being, however, for humans to take on qualities of lower forms of life was seen as a degradation of their being, or a moral failing. Human proximity to animals in the early modern cosmic order was a cause for anxiety, for the possibility of descending into an animal nature threatened human life constantly.<sup>1</sup> Baldassare Castiglione warns of such degeneration in *The Courtier* (1561), as does Lodowick Bryskett in *A Discourse of Ciuill Life* (1606).<sup>2</sup> The threat of descending to a lower form of being was palpable in the array of similarities between people and animals, manifested, for instance, in their homologous body parts and functions, and in their

---

<sup>1</sup> Recent critics have explored the human/animal divides and junctures. Notable studies include Bruce Boehrer, *Shakespeare Among the Animals*; Erica Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*; and Gail Kern Paster, *Humoring the Body*.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, M. Peter Bembo's praise for rational, instead of sensual love in Castiglione, Tt1<sup>v</sup>-Tt3<sup>v</sup>. Bryskett likewise recognizes that, given his position in the cosmic order, man has the potential "to decline (if he list) to the nature of those brute beasts." See Bryskett, Y2<sup>v</sup>. Levinus Lemnius admonishes beastly people in *Touchstone of Complexions*: "In many men there is a greate resemblance & affynitie in nature with other Beastes, and the further that these digress from the puritie of temperament, the lesse sway in them beareth Reason, Judgment, Understanding, willingnes to doe good, Wysedome, and discretion: to be short, they are partakers of all those things that are common to Beastes." He continues, "And thus, there bee many which eyther for lack of good education, or through this deprauation of Nature, degenerate into Beastes, and in all their actions in one point or other, resemble them in conditions" (M8<sup>v</sup>). What is striking here is the way that moral degradation appears to almost precipitate physical transformation.

capacities for sensation, mobility, and even language. Aristotle's *Parts of Animals* contains a passage describing a theoretical devolution of humans. Notable here is the potential descend into not only bestial but also vegetative forms of life:

Even among human beings, children, when compared with adults, and dwarf adults when compared with others, may have some characteristics in which they are superior, but in intelligence, at any rate, they are inferior. And the reason, as aforesaid, is that in very many of them the principle of the soul is sluggish and corporeal. And if the heat which raises the organism up wanes still further while the earthy matter waxes, then the animals' bodies wane, and they will be many-footed; and finally they lose their feet altogether and lie full length on the ground. Proceeding a little further in this way, they actually have their principal part down below, and finally the part which answers to a head comes to have neither motion nor sensation; at this stage the creature becomes a plant, and has its upper parts below and its nether parts aloft; for in plants the roots have the character and value of mouth and head, whereas the seed counts as the opposite, and is produced in the upper part of the plant on the ends of the twigs. (369, 371)

The descent Aristotle describes here equates the height to which an organism raises its noblest part—its head—toward the heavens with the ability to exercise the rational soul,<sup>3</sup> a function perfected in the divine. The scheme is vertical, supposing a God at the top, with an adult below, supported by dwarfs and children. As its intellectual capacity diminishes, Aristotle's hypothetical creature becomes shorter, eventually making the leap from biped human to multiped

---

<sup>3</sup> Aristotle privileges humans' erect posture by relating it to their intellectual capacity: "Man is the only animal that stands upright, and this is because his nature and essence is divine. Now the business of that which is most divine is to think and to be intelligent; and this would not be easy if there were a great deal of the body at the top weighing it down, for weight hampers the motion of the intellect and of the general sense" (367).

animal, its head ever-closer to the earth. As it moves further from rationality, so does the organism hold its head further from heaven. It loses the little height its legs can offer, and as it makes the next leap from slithering animal to plant, it actually buries its head, the part equated not only with rationality but also the intake of nutrients. Height correlates with the presence of the intellectual soul and is measured by the proximity of the noblest part to the heavens. Thus the stoutest redwood could never be as tall as even an unremarkably fledged human. As the creature's noblest part makes its descent from its celestially-reaching height to its niche underground, so too does the defining function of that part descend from intellectual activity to nutrition, a function of the vegetable soul.

A better-known example of philosophical human-to-plant transformation comes from Italian humanist Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's *On the Dignity of Man*. Pico claims that man's distinguishing characteristic is his lack of a fixed nature, affording him the free will to fashion himself after any form of life or being:

At man's birth the Father placed in him every sort of seed and sprouts of every kind of life. The seeds that each man cultivates will grow and bear their fruit in him. If he cultivates vegetable seeds, he will become a plant. If the seeds of sensation, he will grow into brute. If rational, he will come out a heavenly animal. If intellectual, he will be an angel, and a son of God. (6)

Pico's categories adhere to the Chain of Being, and the divisions of life forms also reflect the three parts of the Aristotelian soul and their associated virtues. While Pico is asserting man's capacity to distinguish himself from lower forms of life, his claim is nonetheless wrapped in a horticultural metaphor. Indeed, the comparison of the soul to a garden is commonplace, but here it subtly reinforces man's vegetable affinities even as it resists them.

The distinctions Pico is trying to draw are moral ones. He does not hold with the ancient philosophers who claim that wicked men literally change into plants and animals. Pico writes that “it is not the rind which makes the plant, but a dull and non-sentient nature; not the hide which makes a beast of burden, but a brutal and sensual soul” (6). In effect, Pico says that body parts provide no indication of the nature of the whole, meaning the soul. A person may display a debased nature through outward actions: “For example, if you see a man given over to his belly and crawling on the ground, it is a bush not a man that you see” (6). Such a man has given himself over to the operations of his vegetative soul. He is ruled by his appetite, like a plant in constant need of food, the lowly source of which brings him from the dignity of an erect posture, head aloft, to the depravity of proximity to the ground. Pico’s version of descent down the Chain is the moral equivalent of Aristotle’s anatomical description. Pico’s focus is on the will, and for him, becoming plantlike has little to do with anatomy—“not the rind...not the hide.” *On the Dignity of Man* is a model text of Renaissance humanism, but insofar as the English regarded humans’ natural affinities to plants, early modern English thought was more aligned with an Aristotelian tradition in which body parts did, in fact, matter.

By focusing on hair, I examine what one specific anatomical part tells us about the early modern relationship between the humans and plants. Recent scholarship on the period has begun to trace the interactions between body and environment. According to Rebecca Bushnell, “More than any other type of early modern writing, literary texts compared people to plants in their common experience of growing, flourishing, and fading” (136). But the medical and natural philosophical texts of the period also demonstrate a rich texturing of plants and humans in their similar experiences of vitality. Although literature is according to Bushnell the genre most likely to comment on human-plant likeness, the connections between the two forms of being are not

always figurative. Hair offered early modern authors across disciplines a material referent for their shared experience of life cycles with plants, and the non-literary texts examined here clearly elucidate the connections. In Mary Floyd-Wilson and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr.'s work in charting "a variety of body-environment relations conceived in the period," they present various models useful for considering how the likeness between hair and plants can be made legible (3). Two of their specific models trace similitudes between body and environment, and exchanges between them. In this vein, emotions have received particular attention, operating in what Gail Kern Paster, Mary Floyd-Wilson, and Katherine Rowe call an "ecology" and a "transaction" between the body and environment. As a figure of similitude between humans and plants, not only does hair provide a material referent of the inter-relation between human life and plant life, but hair also helps us understand the exchanges and distribution of vitality—and, in Spenser's *Faerie Queen* and Shakespeare's "green" plays, affect— between people and the natural world.

§

Hardly known popularly for their hirsuteness, plants are nonetheless hairy forms of life. Indeed plant hairs, which modern botanists call trichomes, are a prevalent and much-studied feature of plant anatomy.<sup>4</sup> Botanist H. Dietmar Behnke dates the study of trichomes back to the latter half of the seventeenth century: "Plant trichomes were among the first anatomical features recognized and depicted by the early microscopists of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: Hooke (1665), Grew (1682), and Malpighi (1686)" (2). The name trichome may defamiliarize this plant part for us (as it would, no doubt for England's early modern botanists), but the contemporaries of Hooke as well as Shakespeare certainly understood hairiness to be a characteristic that humans shared with

---

<sup>4</sup> According to H. Dietmar Behnke, "Plant trichomes comprise such structural and functional extremes as hairs, glands (i.e. glandular hairs, capitate hairs, colleters), scales (or peltate hairs) and sometimes, emergences and papillae" (2). The functions of trichomes are various. According to the editors of *Biology and Chemistry of Plant Trichomes*, the hairs protect plants from phytophagous insects, temperature drops, and water loss (v).

at least some plants. In his sprawling attempt to create a universal language, *An essay towards a real character, and a philosophical language* (1668), John Wilkins (1614-1672) notes a variety of the English vernacular's hairy plants. Some are so named for that very property, as the aquatic herb known as Hairy River Weed, described by Wilkins as "either that which consists of small round leaves, floating on the top or immersed in the water, having little strings shooting down from them: Or that which consists of long small slimy filaments, resembling green raw silk," and Hairy Grass, "having hairy leaves, with long woolly strings on the sides of them" (K4). Among the Herbs of Round Leaves are the Sun Dew, "with red hairs upon the leaves retaining the Dew"; the Ladies Mantle, "whose leaves are somewhat hairy, being of an elegant structure"; and the Ground Ivy "with a hairy leaf" (L2<sup>v</sup>, L3, L3<sup>v</sup>). Gramineous Frumentaceous Herbs, including wheat, rye, barley, and panic, are described as bearded (K4<sup>v</sup>). The Hairy River Weed appears to have received its name through analogy, its slimy filaments resembling human or animal hair. But Wilkins's description of other herbs as hairy or bearded suggests that hirsuteness was not a property plants claimed only by analogy. Hair was considered common anatomy shared by plants with the otherwise differentiated bodies of humans and animals.

Nehemiah Grew (1641-1712) was one of the first English botanists to observe plant hair under the microscope. In his *Anatomy of plants with an idea of a philosophical history of plants* (1682), in which a small appendix is devoted to thorns, hairs, and globulets, Grew explains the function of plant hairs as twofold:

The Uses of Hairs are for Distinction and Protection. That of Distinction is but secondary, the Leaves being grown to a considerable size. That of Protection is the prime, for which they were originally form'd together with the Leaves themselves, and whose service they enjoy in their Infant-estate: For the Hairs

being then in form of a Down, always very thick set, thus give that Protection to the Leaves, which their exceeding tenderness then requires; so that they seem to be vested with a Coat of Frize, or to be kept warm, like young and dainty Chickens, in Wool. (L1<sup>v</sup>)

This notion of plant hairs' dual-purpose accords with the medical and natural philosophical works of the period that regard human hair as both protective and ornamental. Poised as he is on the threshold of modern botanical science, Grew retains a sense of hair's similar function across forms of life, plant and avian. These examples demonstrate that hair was a bodily feature humans shared with plants, both homologously and directly. One plant, however, was considered to be hair itself. The 1634 English edition of Pliny's *History of the World* identifies the medical uses of the herb *Equisetum*, that is, Horse-tail. *Equisetum* is so named because "it is esteemed the very haire, proceeding out of the earth, like for all the world to the haire of an Horse-taile" (Z6).<sup>5</sup> The comparison between the herb and the horse tail is one of resemblance that works in some sense to vitalize the earth. Whether from human, animal, or plant, hair is a common anatomical feature of all life.

#### §

Just as early modern naturalists identified a certain feature of plant anatomy by using a human and animal referent, so too did the period's medical and natural philosophical discourses understand hair as an incorporation of vegetative anatomy, figuring the body as a kind of landscape. Galen, the second century physician from whom the early modern English inherited much of their medical knowledge, makes intricate connections between human hair growth and plant cultivation in the eleventh book of *On the Usefulness of the Parts*. In explaining why the

---

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Elyot identifies the herb with cattes taile. See *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie* (London, 1542), R4<sup>v</sup>. John Gerard identifies several types of Horse-tail in *The herbal or Generall historie of plantes* (London, 1633), Aaaaa3-Aaaaa4<sup>v</sup>.

hairs of the eyelashes and eyebrows do not grow but remain at a certain length, and why the eyelashes are able to stand on end, Galen treats the human body as a landscape with hair as an equivalent of vegetative growth. God shapes the landscape and selects the best materials out of which to fashion the body's parts. To make the eyelashes stand erect, "he implanted them firmly in a cartilaginous body," because hair growing "in a soft, fleshy substance" would have as much trouble standing tall as would a "wall or palisade in a swamp" (534). God also draws on botanical knowledge in planting eyebrows in rather dry flesh. Lack of moisture keeps eyebrow hairs from growing long, whereas hair in the body's moister regions enjoys unchecked increase:

For just as grass and plants coming up from damp, rich soil grow very tall, whereas those that come from dry, rocky soil remain without increase, small and hard, so in the same way, I suppose, the hair coming from soft, moist parts has a very good growth, like the hair of the head, armpits, and pudenda, whereas that from the hard, dry parts does not grow and remains short. Thus, like herbs and plants, hair has a twofold generation, stemming in part from the providence of the Creator and in part from the nature of the place. (534)

God has the luxury of selecting the qualities of the human soil in which he intends to plant certain types of hair. The landscape shares with the body the property of radical moisture, which, along with heat, provides a necessary elemental basis of life in Galenic medicine. Hair growth thus provides a material referent for understanding the homology between land and body.

Galen extends the comparison between hairy bodies and lush landscapes by imagining God as not only the designer of the landscape but also the farmer who selectively cultivates its flora once planted. Galen makes a distinction between the vegetation growing on a farmer's carefully cultivated land, and that growing on untended land: "One can often see a field in which

wheat or barley is growing up as yet like tender, short grass, and another spot similarly thick with vegetation and full of real grass. The rich growth in the latter has been produced by natural moisture, but the farmer's providence has produced it in the field" (534). Evidence of God the farmer's care is seen in the "evenness" of the crops' germination and the straightness of the field's edges. On the other hand,

[w]ith the growth that has sprung up by itself the contrary is true in both respects; the germination is uneven and is not marked out in straight lines. This is the nature of the hair in the armpit and on the other members; for it is not bounded by definite lines like the hair of the eyebrows, eyelids, and head, but has irregular boundaries and is scattered indiscriminately, without order. (534-35)

Normally, Galenic medicine understands the brain as moist, and so the head would provide the moist landscape that allows for unhindered growth. By placing the head's hair in the farmer-Creator's care, Galen here contradicts his own medical knowledge in order to reinforce Aristotle's height-based hierarchy, which devalues plants for the literal lowliness of their sources of nutrition and deems noble the human head for its elevation toward the heavens. In arguing that God takes special interest in the hair of certain body parts, Galen shows a concern for maintaining the head's privileged position. By virtue of growing on the head, the hair nourished by the brain's moisture is ennobled beyond that growing on other moist body parts.

The idea that plants and landscapes share a relationship homologous to that between hair and body parts demonstrates a salient connection between human bodies and the plant kingdom, one that early modern literary authors picked up on. In a particularly bawdy instance of corporeal topography in *Venus and Adonis*, Shakespeare draws on the homologies of plants (or

plant parts) and hair. Venus proffers her hair to shelter Adonis from the weather (as in lines 190-91) and to afford him (sexual) sustenance:

“Within this limit is relief enough,  
Sweet bottom-grass, and high delightful plain,  
Round rising hillocks, brakes obscure and rough,  
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain.” (ll. 235-38).

Venus’s body parts shape the topography of her “limit” (or bounded territory according to the OED) with her breasts serving as the “rising hillocks,” and her belly “the high delightful plain.” As for the plant life of her terrestrialized body, her hair appears to be all that populates her body with life. The *Norton* editors gloss the “[s]weet bottom grass” as pubic hair, and the “brakes obscure and rough” refer also to Venus’s pilosity. Noting the darker aspects of life in the poem’s setting, Anthony Mortimer writes that “Venus is offering Adonis a safer landscape than the one in which he wants to hunt” (73). Mortimer suggests that Venus’s own body presents a danger to the sexually reticent hunter. To Adonis, “[b]oth the real landscape and the real body are dangerous: only the landscaped body is safe” (73).

Medical writers of the period echoed Galen’s explanation of hair growth. Levinus Lemnius describes bodies with moist complexions in terms of landscapes:

Albiet manye tymes it happeneth to this body, as it doth to plashie wet grounde, wherein by reason of ouermuch moystnes and wette, no yong trees, no shrubbes, nor grasse growth.... For where too much wette is, there the hayres grow thinne, because heate wanteth power and lacketh strengthe, to bring out the pores and worke the humour vnder the skinne into hayre. (K8)

Helkiah Crooke treats the body as a landscape in *Mikrokosmographia*: “for as neither in Marrish and Fenny ground, nor in one that is ouer dry and worne out of heart [*sic*] can any thing bee brought forth: so in an ouer moyst or ouer dry skin no haire can grow” (G4).<sup>6</sup> Crooke also anatomizes in botanical terms the hair planted in the body’s fleshy soil: “Now that part of the haire that is impacted in the pores of the skinne, may fittely bee resembled to the roote of an hearbe sticking in the ground, and that which beareth out of the skin, to the hearbe it self.” Crooke picks up Galen’s distinction between cultivated and uncultivated hairs, but he reverses Galen’s judgments concerning the brows, eyelashes, and head. He writes that some hairs are “congeniti, bred with vs, as the haire of the head, of the eye-browes, of the eye-lids. These are bred in the child while it is yet in the wombe, and are resembled not vnto hearbes that grow by sowing, but vnto such plants as nature bringeth forth of her owne accord; and such do not necessarily follow the temperature of the body” (G4). While offering no explanation for his claims, Crooke also shuns the entire apparatus of God’s divine horticulture. By not framing the discussion in Galen’s terms of providence, Crooke draws attention to the natural similarities between plants and hair. In this brief passage, hairs are like plants not through a shared design but through a natural development. The womb is not the conscientious farmer but a space free of intercession, where hair grows according to its own natural inclinations.

Later in the seventeenth century, Dutch anatomist Ysbrand van Diemerbroeck (1609-1674) discusses the vegetable qualities of hair as they manifest not in the unborn child but the dead body. In the 1689 translation of Diemerbroeck’s *Anatomy of human bodies*, an English reader would find a lengthy inquiry into hair’s status as a body part and its participation in the life of the whole body. Diemerbroeck argues that hair has life, but life separate from that of

---

<sup>6</sup> The 1651 edition replaces “Marrish and Fenny ground” with “Ground where water always standeth” (F2<sup>v</sup>).

other body parts. Countering the theory that hair is produced out of the same seminal matter from which other parts are formed, Diemerbroeck argues,

Hair is form'd and stirr'd up, being endu'd with a particular Soul and Life distinct from the rest of the Parts, because they are not stirr'd up, and endu'd with Life with the rest of the Parts out of the same Seed; but apart, out of other Matter afterwards generated. Now that they live by virtue of another peculiar Vegetable Soul, that has no Communion with the other animated Parts of the Body, is apparent from hence; for that they do live only while a man is alive, but after his Decease, are nourish'd and encreas'd, after the same manner as *Polypody-Moss*, &c. grow upon old Trees, both before and after the Tree dies; because they have each a proper Soul, distinct from the Form and Soul of the Tree, out of which, and wherein they grow. (Bbb2<sup>v</sup>)

In the 1682 edition of *The anatomy of humane bodies epitomized*, The English physician Thomas Gibson (1648/9-1722) follows Diemerbroeck's position on hair vitality (having probably read the 1672 Latin *Anatomy*): "They are no parts of the Body, and therefore have no Animal life; yet they have a Vegetative life, and that peculiar to themselves, and not owing to the life of the Body, seeing they continue to grow after a Man is dead, as has been observed in embalmed Bodies" (V8-V8<sup>v</sup>). Diemerbroeck's and Gibson's claims are based on the mistaken assumption prevalent in the period that hair continues to grow after the body's death.<sup>7</sup> But this assumption of continued growth suggests a vegetative function, guided by a rudimentary soul in each hair. These speculations on the vegetable life of hair raise the question of the distribution of life in the

---

<sup>7</sup> This assumption continues among many people today, but as Max M. Houck writes, "Hairs do not grow after you die (skin shrinks from loss of water) and, despite some studies to the contrary, shaving does not stimulate hair growth" (81).

body by the vegetative soul. The attribution to hair of a type of vegetable life relies on the Aristotelian concept of the tripartite soul. Insofar as hair was thought to be constituted by a vegetable soul, it could be easily imagined to possess a form of life that is autonomous from the body in which it is rooted.

Indeed, Diemerbroeck acknowledges (without attempting to resolve) the question of hair's status as a human body part. Comparing it to the moss growing on a dead tree suggests hair has "but a peculiar vegetable life" separate from the life of the body that nourishes it (Ccc1<sup>v</sup>). Hair is denied status as a part when, as in this example, "part" is defined as "cohering with the whole, and conjoined by common participation of Life." An alternate definition, however, designates hair as a body part proper when a part is "any Corporeal Substance, making it complete and entire with others." Though it may not participate in the common life with the rest of the body (hair lives on after the vital organs), yet

[h]air may be said to be a Part of the Body; for that really and indeed together with other Parts, compleats and perfects the Body of Man; as Leaves make a Tree, and Feathers a Bird. For as a Tree without Leaves, and a Bird without Feathers, can neither be said to be perfect, so a man without Hair, cannot be said to have all his Accomplishments, though he may live without it. (Ccc1)

Diemerbroeck draws an Aristotelian analogy between leaves, feathers, and hair, one that suggests anatomical continuity between forms of life. No matter the definition of part, hair shares a kinship with plant life—be it moss or leaves—that provides a material, as opposed to moral, understanding of the human body, embedded in a natural world teeming with homologous forms of life.

§

The homology between hair and tree leaves was particularly evident in the processes of balding and leaf-shedding. In *Batman vpon Bartholome* (1582), Stephen Batman (d. 1584) traces the connection back to Aristotle: “For as Aristotle sayth, The falling of haire, is lyke to the fallyng of leaues of trees, and the cause hereof is, withdrawing of hot humours and fat” (II). Daniel Sennert (1572-1637), professor of medicine at the University of Wittenberg, whose *Art of Chirurgery* appeared in English in 1663, also attributes the comparison of balding to leaf shedding to Aristotle, who extends this theme of natural loss to the animal kingdom.

Referencing Aristotle’s *Generation of Animals*, Sennert writes,

Men (saith he) of all living creatures are mostly subject unto baldness, and they evidently become so sooner then any other creature whatsoever. Which kind of Affect is in a manner general. For so Plants likewise, some of them have alwaies green Leaves, others of them lose their Leaves. The like Affect is baldness in those men unto whom it happeneth that they should be Bald. For whenas by little and little (some now, some then) both the Leaves, and the Feathers, and the Hairs fall off, when this same Affect shall happen universally, then it receiveth these words, Baldness, falling of the Leaf, and shedding of the Feathers. (Gg3)

Sennert describes a shared physiological experience among three forms of life. Feathers provide a third term of anatomical homology here, but they do not play a mediating role between leaves and hair. The theme of shedding links human to plant, and both to animal, making such loss part of the “universal[.]” pathos of life. In an epigram addressed “To one Bald” (here translated from its Latin original by Thomas Harvey) English poet and London litteratus John Owen (1563/4-1622?) pointedly reminds his readers of a significant difference between humans’ and plants’

analogous life cycles: “Leaves to the Trees, and Grass returns to Ground: / But not one hair on thy bald pate is found” (A8<sup>v</sup>). Vegetable life experiences annual renewal of its anatomical ornaments, but human balding is—early modern hair restoration recipes notwithstanding—a permanent reminder of mortality. Owen makes the point tauntingly, but this distinction within the similarity lends a note of pathos to the natural affinity between plant and human life cycles.

Certain texts printed in early modern England jumped to the defense of bald men’s dignity, and did so by also calling attention to vegetable life cycles. In a tract by 4<sup>th</sup>-century Greek bishop Synesius, *A paradoxe, prouing by reason and example, that baldnesse is much better than bushie haire* (1579), translated by Abraham Fleming (1552-1607), the author treats the lack of hair as an index of intellectual maturity, comparing balding to leaf shedding:

And as before the fall of the leafe, the fruite is not come to full perfection: no more is vnderstanding setled in the head, vntill suche time as all superfluties are fanned awaie. When therefore you see a baldpate, suppose streight way that the fruite there hath attained perfect ripenesse, and made the head a garner to preserue it: yea, you maie boldlie gesse, that such a head is the Temple of God. (B7<sup>v</sup>)

Whereas the head as landscape provides the ground on which to grow vegetable-like hairs, Synesius’s capital metaphors are architectural, the head serving first as a granary for the fruit of wit, harvested at the hairs’ falling, then as a temple for the worship of God. The teleological end of life being wit, and hair being a hindrance to wit, only the bald man can attain human perfection and come closer to the divine.

At the opposite end from bald men on the coiffural spectrum, the gallants who affected a fashion for bushy hair found themselves under attack for their hairstyle. Vegetable analogies to hair did serve a satiric purpose for writers who, however light-heartedly, promoted disciplinary

norms regarding hair length. In the decades leading up to the Civil War, men's heads were contested ground, subject to the scrutiny of other men. John Twyning explains the political and spiritual philosophy behind those who shaved their heads close and criticized long-haired gallants and aristocrats: "The bearer of a shaved head attempted to keep the world out and himself in. For many early modern London citizens, hair was reined in along with any outward display of emotion or exaggeration. More than a mere social gesture, close shaving incorporated its political philosophy within the very forms of its expression" (117). Prefacing Thomas Hall's (1610-1665) *Comarum akosmia: the Loathsomenesse of Long Haire* (1654) is a poem by R. B. titled "to the Long-hair'd Gallants of these Times," which references a particularly famous bush:

Go Gallants to the Barbers, go,  
Bid them your hairy Bushes mow.  
God in a Bush did once appeare,  
But there is nothing of him here. (A3)

Pate and landscape are subject to similar disciplinary practices by respective artisans of norms, barbers and mowers. Here the barber and mower are conflated.<sup>8</sup> R. B.'s reference to the burning bush invokes the particular landscape and vegetation of the Sinai Peninsula, bringing the issue of grooming into a moral ambit. Denying the holy presence to a gallant's head of hair, the poet signals the ungodliness of long hair itself, a point that Hall makes continually and upon much authority throughout his tract.

Thomas Dekker (c.1572-1632) also criticizes the gallants' hairstyles with satiric humor in *The guls horne-booke* (1609), drawing the familiar comparison between hair and bushes. Dekker encourages gallants not to visit the barber but to cultivate their bushy hair: "let thy haire grow

---

<sup>8</sup> A related connection is that made by Bushnell, who writes that many of early modern England's most well-known herbalists "started as apothecaries or barber-surgeons" before establishing their reputations as gardeners (26).

thick and bushy like a forrest, or some wildernesse, lest those sixe-footed creatures that breed in it, and are Tenants to that crowne-land of thine, bee hunted to death by euery base barbarous Barber; and so that delicate and tickling pleasure of scratching, be vtterly taken from thee” (C3<sup>v</sup>). As Twyning points out, by taking an ironic stance and encouraging gallants to grow their hair out further, Dekker also takes a stab at the moralists of his day, particularly John Stubbes and Stephen Gosson (118-19). Dekker figures the gallant’s head as an ecosystem unto itself. Lice, assumed to be endemic to long hair, are forest denizens who, in the punning “crowne-land” of the head, are both the game and victims of the barber-hunter, whose barbarousness makes him an unsuitable sportsman for the regal game in a gallant’s hair. As a hunter, the barber would be an indiscriminate marksman, killing the six-footed creatures by deforestation, destroying a whole habitat rather than marking specific game. Dekker draws an explicit comparison between barbering and deforestation:

If then thou desirest to reserue that Fee-simple of wit, (thy head) for thee and the lawfull heirs of thy body, play neither the scurvy part of the Frenchman, that pluckes vp all by y<sup>e</sup> rootes, nor that of the spending Englishman, who to maintaine a paltry warren of vnprofitable Conies, disimparkes the stately swift-footed wild Deere: But let thine receiue his full growth that thou maiest safely and wisely brag tis thine owne Bush-Naturall. (C4)

Dekker’s advice to the gallant takes on mock-urgency, for he stands to lose his head, his “Fee-simple” of corporeal land over which he ought to have unassailable ownership for himself and his (no doubt punning) heirs. Threats to the gallant’s head/land come in the forms of disease and deforestation. Dekker alludes to one telltale symptom of syphilis—hair loss—equating balding or barbering to trees’ removal through another shared feature of plants’ and hairs’ anatomy,

roots. He also comments on early modern English deforestation, lamenting the destruction of deer habitat for the open land and underground tunnels of man-made rabbit warrens.<sup>9</sup>

§

To conclude this chapter, I want to reiterate Bushnell's point quoted above: literary texts, more than any other form of writing, compared people to plants based on the cycles of nourishment, growth, and decay. What follows are several poetic and dramatic examples, from Spenser and Shakespeare, of plants and humans sharing in a likeness of vitality. And while the vegetative cycle of growth and decay remains important, the following examples demonstrate how anatomy facilitates an intersubjective exchange of qualities, affect, or vitality between the two forms of life. As I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, the perceived likenesses between plants and humans, and vegetable life and human hair, are not solely the product of literary imagination but can be found in the natural philosophy, natural history, and medical theories of the time. As some of these examples show, there is more than metaphorical description of human anatomy through vegetable referent here, or vice versa. The literary examples that follow, however, demonstrate the poet's and playwright's subtle capacity to suggest certain connections beyond the anatomical.

Edmund Spenser depicts his characters' hair as the site of varied negotiations between human and vegetable vitality. For instance, Spenser compares the hairs in Prince Arthur's plumage to a tree:

Vpon the top of all his loftie crest,  
A bunch of heares discolour'd diuersly,  
With sprinckled pearle, and gold full richly drest,

---

<sup>9</sup> On deforestation and royal efforts to preserve deer parks, see Keith Thomas, 200-203.

Did shake, and seem'd to daunce for iollity,

Like to an Almond tree ymounted hye

On top of greene Selinis all alone,

With blossoms braue bedecked daintily;

Whose tender locks do tremble euery one

At euery little breath, that vnder heauen is blowne. (1.7.32)

The rich ornamentation of the plumage finds its arboreal equivalent in the Almond tree blossoms, as though pearl and gold were as natural to hair as blossoms to a tree, or blossoms as ornamental as pearl and gold. What prompts the comparison to the almond tree is not the hair's ornamentation but its movement. As the hair shakes, it appears to express affect, dancing for joy. Likewise, the wind on Selinis makes the Almond tree leaves tremble, a word that, like dancing, evokes movement prompted by a specific affective state or an unconscious response to a stimulus. Furthermore, Spenser's use of "locks" for leaves may be read as not a figure but a literal designation of a plant part. As I have suggested, the human body need not be understood as an implicit referent or a vehicle in the use of the word "hair" to designate plant parts. Plants were hairy in their own right. The movement of Prince Arthur's plumage produces a twofold figuration: first a figure of the hair as a like-life, one that feels and expresses jollity, and second, a figurative comparison of Arthur himself to an almond tree via their similar adornment and the evocative motion of their homologous locks.

The Almond tree atop Selinis is an especially apt tree for evoking human-plant interconnection. According to the gloss in A. C. Hamilton's edition, popular legend recounts the story of "Phyllis, who having died through grief at her lover's long absence, was changed into an almond tree; upon being embraced by him, it sprouted fresh leaves and flowers" (1.7.32 n.5-9).

The ornate plumage of Arthur's crest evokes a tree that was once a human and appears to have retained, in arboreal form, an affective tie to the human world, which is materialized in "tender locks" that respond to a lover's embrace. The connections are rich and complex, suggesting an anatomical likeness between hairs and leaves or blossoms that facilitates affective exchange across forms of being. And to add another layer of hairy significance to the Almond tree, Hamilton points out that, according to a Geneva gloss of Ecclesiastes 12.5, a flourishing almond tree symbolizes the white hairs of old age. But triggering associations of old age does not appear to be Spenser's intent here.

Where Spenser does associate plant life with the hoariness of old age is in his description of Contemplation. Hair collocates with the notions of vegetable life and nutrition when Redcross and Mercy meet Contemplation:

There they doe finde that godly aged Sire,  
With snowy lockes adowne his shoulders shed,  
As hoarie frost with spangles doth attire  
The mossy braunches of an Oke halfe ded.  
Each bone might through his body well be red,  
And euery sinew seene through his long fast:  
For nought he car'd his carcas long vnfed;  
His mind was full of spirituall repast,  
And pyn'd his flesh, to keepe his body low and chast. (1.10.48)

As in Diemerbroeck's explanation of how hair retains a separate life on the human head, the image of a moss-covered oak likens hair to plant life, but this time the silver color of the hair adds another aspect of nature—the meteorological—to the image. Spenser compares white hair

to wintry precipitation, as though the color were a coating of something beneath. We ought to read Contemplation's hair as a combination of both the moss and the frost, the former the substance, the latter the color coating. The vegetable simile also comments on Contemplation's vitality, placing him in an annual life cycle that ends with winter. For humans, however, if there is a spring renewal, it is a spiritual, not an earthly one. White hair marks the winter, and foretells an approaching death. Thus the oak is "halfe ded" and Contemplation's body is already a "carcas." But Contemplation's physical condition is not alone a result of his ageing process. By neglecting to eat, Contemplation in effect renounces the needs of his vegetable soul and its nutritive operations. The comparison of Contemplation to a dying oak bears a double resonance, troping vitality as an effect of time and nutrition, for both of whose operations hair provides an index. While Contemplation's vegetative hair provides an indication of fading vitality, in the next example, the association between hair and flowers helps one of Spenser's characters spring through the epic with life.

In perhaps the most aestheticized demonstration of plants and hair's affinity, when Belphoebe suddenly dashes into Trompart's view, readers of Book 2, Canto 3 of *The Faerie Queen* are treated to a surprising blazon of the huntress, whose hair is detailed in the following stanza:

Her yellow lockes crisped, like golden wyre,  
About her shoulders weren loosely shed,  
And when the winde emongst them did inspire,  
They waued like a pennon wyde dispred  
And low behind her backe were scattered:  
And whether art it were, or heedless hap,

As through the flouring Forrest rash she fled,  
In her rude heares sweet flowers themselues did lap,  
And flourishing fresh leaues and blossomes did enwrap. (2.3.30)

Although the color, the curl, and the careless abandon of her locks are conventional aspects of Belphoebe's erotic appeal, the foliage that adorns her hair points to a peculiar relationship between Belphoebe and the natural world. Spenser's narrator is unsure how to read the greenery. If the leaves and flowers are artfully entwined in her locks, the narrator finds it unnecessary to dilate on the human arts of cosmetology. More fascinating is the suggestion of a natural attraction between the flora and Belphoebe's hair. The last two lines of the stanza entertain the possibility that the leaves and flowers actively (not accidentally) attach themselves to her hair. Kathleen Williams has remarked that Belphoebe is too "sincerely engaged" in the hunt to "suggest any doubleness of intention" when it comes to, for instance, her appearance (49).<sup>10</sup> The unselfconsciousness and natural sensuality of Belphoebe's presentation is in keeping with James W. Braddus's characterization of her as "a physical Venus with a Diana psychology" (98).<sup>11</sup> The flora, he adds, are "emblems of life and sexuality" (98). Also noting the huntress's hair, Judith Anderson comments that Belphoebe's "figure suggests a seasonal revival" (85). While lending a sexual allure to the unswervingly chaste huntress, the natural commixture of hair and flowers contributes to Belphoebe's representation of life and life cycles.

As in Spenser's epic, in certain moments of Shakespearean drama, hair provides a material index of the similitude and affective exchange between the natural world and the human condition. Such is the case in *Henry V*, in which France's hedges, lamented by Burgundy for being "Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair" (5.2.43), suffer the disordering absence of

---

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of art and nature in this stanza, see Harry Berger, Jr., 139-40.

<sup>11</sup> On the association of Belphoebe with Venus's disguise as a follower of Diana in Book I of Virgil's *Aeneid*, see Judith Anderson, 85.

peace in wartime. In *As You Like It*, Oliver recounts a scene in which human and plant subjects inter-actively fashion each other, resulting in complementary and unsettling states of pilosity and baldness. Having fled into the forest, Oliver encounters Celia and Rosalind, and he relates to them the abject condition in which his brother finds him: “Under an old oak, whose boughs were mossed with age / And high top bald with dry antiquity, / A wretched, ragged man, o’ergrown with hair / Lay sleeping on his back” (4.3.103-06). Shakespeare contrasts the hairiness of the man on the ground with the baldness of the tree above him. Oliver lays “o’ergrown with hair,” like a pile of the tree’s lost lushness. Juxtaposed in this way, man and tree share an ontological reciprocity. Oliver’s excessive hirsuteness signifies his vegetable nature, while the tree’s baldness distinguishes it from other trees in the green forest and casts it in a human ageing process of drying and balding at the top, in other words, the location of the human head, where natural balding is most noted in ageing humans. Neither man nor tree is in a favorable condition. The hairy Oliver shows the signs of wildness or ruffian unruliness associated with lack of grooming. The bald tree betrays its approaching death, after which its dry trunk will support the life only of its epidermal moss, just as a human corpse continues to grow hair, according to popular thought. The juxtaposition of hairy man and bald tree highlights an affective likeness between the two. As Robert Watson points out, *As You Like It* is a play “permeated with the idea of likeness, which is to say, imperfect identity” (77). Of the “old oak,” Watson writes that it “is both a family tree and a human likeness, both of which Orlando encounters in the rusticated Oliver.” He continues, “Shakespeare’s tree offers the knowledge of self and other” (95). Strikingly, this spectacle shows not just a shared ontology but a mutual loss of vitality, while the drying tree, covered in moss, approaches death, the rugged Oliver is entwined by a snake

“nimble in threats” (l. 108). While their coiffure contrasts, a precarious hold on life seems to be what brings them together. Here vegetable and human are sympathetically inter-fashioned.

In a final reading, I want to explore the ecological implications in which the shared experience of an anatomically-based vegetable life occurs. In describing the effects of her and Oberon’s discord in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Titania presents a vision of what modern audiences would consider an environmental catastrophe:

Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,  
As in revenge have sucked up from the sea  
Contagious fogs which, falling in the land,  
Hath every pelting river made so proud  
That they have overborne their continents.  
The ox hath therefore stretched his yoke in vain,  
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn  
Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard.  
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,  
And crows are fatted with the murrain flock. (2.1.88-97)

As Jan H. Blits has pointed out, Titania’s speech contains several discrepancies, among them the disconnect between the state of natural crisis Titania describes, and the generally stable, often benevolent, natural world that other characters (and even Titania) present in the rest of the play (60-62). A. B. Taylor takes Titania at her word and points to this speech as an indication of Shakespeare’s fairies’ unusual level of involvement in world affairs:

Traditionally fairies tended to be local and had only a peripheral effect on human life; they could occasionally put a curse on the livestock of some farmer who had

offended them or be held responsible for ‘changelings’ but generally they lived apart from humans, keeping themselves to themselves. Shakespeare transformed a fairly thin literary tradition in this country by blending elements of folklore with classical literature in an unprecedented way, in the process giving the fairy world new powerful dimensions and relevance. (57-58)

Perhaps Helena, too, has a sense of the dire situation when she tells Hermia that “[s]ickness is catching” (1.1.186). The drama of the fairies’ strife, with the embedded narrative of crisis, offers an urgent sense of the material relation between emotion and behavior, and the ecosystem.

Wittingly or not, Oberon and Titania through their own agency threaten the lives of humans and plants alike.

For it is life itself that is in danger in Titania’s report. Fogs bring contagion, crop failures imply impending starvation, and mutton has become murrain. The reference to wheat evokes a particular pathos by equating a blighted plant to a child’s life cut short. The account of the wheat’s death employs personification to mix urgency with pathos: “the green corn / Hath rotted ere his youth attained a beard” (2.1.94-95). Titania imagines wheat in a (male) human narrative of growth and aging. While, as we saw above, “beard” was a common term for a part of grain anatomy, coupling the term with youth emphasizes a human affinity with the vegetable. The grain has a “youth” that lamentably ends before it attains the beard that marks a boy’s emergence into manhood; the unrealized expectation of a beard makes the wheat a subject whose demise elicits sentiment. As the crop has not yet acquired its beard, its humanizing works through a kind of prolepsis. Indeed, in its youth, the “green” corn is quite vegetative. Growing a beard effects the corn’s transition from “green” vegetative life into a human-like maturity, the early life of which is revised from the appropriately botanical “green”ness to more colloquially human

“youth.” If hair is associated with vitality, the failure to attain age-related hairiness indicates a loss of vitality. For the Athens of Titania’s vision, this loss would have ecosystemic consequences.

In addition to widespread inundation, the region experiences unsettling seasonal alterations, described with vivid images involving vegetable hair:

And through this distemperature we see  
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts  
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,  
And on old Hiems’ thin and icy crown  
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds  
Is, as in mock’ry, set. (2.1.106-11)

The deleterious effects of climate change are indicated in part by the incongruity of coiffure in this passage. In confounding the aged, white-haired frosts with the fresh red rose, we see once again the threat of an early death that unseasonable weather brings. To add insult to injury, the substance of Hiem’s capital adornment changes, from ice to flowers. The description of his hair as “thin” is an emendation of the Quarto and Folio reading, “chinne.” Editors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries found absurd the notion of a garland of flowers being set on the chin. A chaplet can be set only upon the head, the reasoning goes, and so it makes better sense to emend “chinne” to a word that does, in fact, often describe the hair on the crowns of old men.<sup>12</sup> If we consider, however, that hair not only serves as anatomical adornment (easily covered over by a chaplet) but also has anatomical affinity with vegetable life, we can see how Shakespeare might imagine flowers not resting on Hiem’s head, but growing from it. As a man’s beard was, in Shakespeare’s time, a particularly sensitive anatomical target of insults, the “mockery” to Hiem

---

<sup>12</sup> See Shakespeare, *Midsommer Nights Dreame, A New Variorum Edition*, vol. x, 67-68 n. 113.

is all the worse if flowers replace the icy whiskers of his beard.<sup>13</sup> In the texts of the play's first printed versions, Hiem loses, if you will, his "winter heere," a phrase I take from those same texts and which editors emend to "winter cheer" at line 101 ("The human mortals want their winter cheer"). Either reading—"thin" or "chinne"—indicates that there is a time and place for the affiliation of flowers and hair. The moment of Athenian ecological crisis described by Titania provides neither.

Spenser's and Shakespeare's works reveal the affective resonances of the bond that one small, simple anatomical commonality creates between plants and humans. We must not be too hasty in writing off moments such as those in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It* as mere anthropomorphizing. Plant life participates in a moral and affective economy because it shares material conditions with humans, in terms of anatomy, life cycles, and even life itself. Linear schemas of the early modern cosmos, such as the Chain of Being, discourage us from understanding the human body as the early moderns did. With animals in between, the Chain posits a categorical separation between humans and plants. No border crossings between the two are imaginable under such a paradigm. What early modern thought reveals, however, is that hair materializes the mutual vitality between people and plants, and that the early modern English were more aware of their vegetable affinities than we have realized. Given this relation, we might take from early modern culture the suggestion that we put as much care into our horticulture as we do our hair.

---

<sup>13</sup> For a similar reference to frosty facial hair, see Ferando's reference to the North Wind in *The Taming of a Shrew*: "Sweet *Kate*, the lovelier than Diana's purple robe, / Whiter than are the snowy Apennines / Or icy hair that grows on Boreas' chin" (4.1.148-50).

## Chapter Four

“The Courser’s Hair has yet but Life”; or, “Tennis Balls and Horses” II

In the last chapter, I examined the way the early modern English’s hair helped them to develop a sense of their somatic affinities with vegetable life. The link between hair and plant life materialized and externalized human’s vegetable nature, present as the vegetable soul. If pilosity helped the English develop a sense of connection to plants, it ought to be no surprise that they saw in their hair a corporeal link to animal life as well. This chapter examines the like-life connection between humans and animals, manifested in the capillation of both species. I will also treat another sense implied in “like-life” by examining the vitality that was thought to generate from certain animals’ hair. While I will touch on a menagerie in passing, the animal featured in this chapter is the horse. Recent scholarship on early modern animals has called for a treatment of animals’ proper experience, and for letting the animals speak for themselves. My aim in this chapter, as it was in the last, is to demonstrate the early modern understanding of human affinity with the natural world. Therefore, my focus is necessarily on the anthropocentric attitude of the early modern English, but I intend to question the pervasiveness of that anthropocentrism by highlighting the concurrent notion of human-animal likeness as it manifested in life and body parts.

In the study of England’s early modern animal history, Edward Topsell’s *Historie of foure-footed beastes* remains a key text in gleaning attitudes toward and understanding of

animals. First published in 1607, the *Historie* saw a second edition in 1658, when it was reissued along with Topsell's *Historie of Serpents* (first published separately in 1608) and Thomas Moffet's (1533-1604) *Theatrum Insectorum* (1634).<sup>1</sup> Topsell's *Historie* is unusual among early modern English books for the variety and number of animals it presents. Largely based on the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner's (1516-1565) *Historia Animalium*, the text is itself an unusual accomplishment in the natural history of the period. In the sixteenth century, the nascent discipline of natural history focused much more attention on plants than animals because, according to Brian W. Ogilvie, knowledge of plants was more important to building a pharmacopoeia (50). Among European naturalists of the period, Gesner is almost unique in his attention to animals, certainly so in the scope of his zoographical work. Trained in medicine and natural philosophy, as well as natural history, Gesner enlisted a corps of naturalists across the continent for the discursive and pictorial material in his book. He offers a variety of disciplinary perspectives and forms of knowledge about each animal he treats.<sup>2</sup>

Gesner's descriptions of animals draw on knowledge from what might be called today the natural sciences, but his book also demonstrates the value that humanistic studies brought to a comprehensive account of animals. Gesner's work follows a regular structure in presenting knowledge from various disciplines. William B. Ashworth has described the eight-part structure applicable to each chapter of Gesner's *Historia*. Gesner labels each section with a letter, A through H, the first dealing with the animal's name in various languages (18) while the ultimate section, H, details "all those ways in which animals and their attributes have intruded themselves into our language, literature, and art" (20). According to Ashworth the section "resembles a vast exercise in philology, literary criticism, and biblical exegesis that has little to do with the study

---

<sup>1</sup> On Topsell's relation to his sources and his publication history, see Charles E. Raven.

<sup>2</sup> On the professional diversity of Gesner's correspondents, see Brian W. Ogilvie, 34-35.

of nature” (21). Ashworth’s thesis is that the material found in Gesner’s section H is, in fact, relevant to the understanding of nature as something knowable through an emblematic representation of riddles, symbols, and pictures. Of the stories found in the H sections of Gesner’s chapters, Ashworth writes, “Perhaps Gesner believed that such tales reveal to us a great deal about the place of animals in human culture, and that one of the goals of natural history, perhaps the supreme goal, is to understand the intricate web of relationships that interconnect humans and animals” (20). Ashworth does not explain how the stories that Gesner reports (for instance, that foxes slather themselves in mud and play dead to attract carrion birds, whom the foxes then devour [19]) actually demonstrate human and animal interconnectedness. And while Ashworth writes that the tales in *Historia* “reveal a great deal about the place of animals in human culture,” he seems intent on delimiting animals and human culture, commenting in a passage cited above on the ways that animals have “*intruded* themselves into our language, literature, and art” (emphasis mine), as though animal influences on language are alien, and as though language does not “intrude” on nonhuman animals who are systematized, categorized, and assigned value through language, literature, and art. Gesner’s *Historia*, treating each animal in an individual, alphabetically regimented chapter, in fact demonstrates little sense of interconnection.

Topsell does not follow Gesner’s A to H chapter structure, and he abridges his source (Ashworth 461 n.6), but his *Historie* is nonetheless replete with stories and folktales that can be said to represent a wider span of engagement with, or thought about, animals than those experienced by the observing natural historian, the cogitating natural philosopher, or the practicing physician. Topsell’s own remarks in the prefatory matter indicate a special regard for life represented by his volume. His dedication to Richard Neile, Dean of Westminster, relates

life and learning. Topsell explains the proliferation of books and authors in early modern England by writing that “God himself hath in all ages preserued lerning in the next place to life; for as life is the Ministeriall Gouvernor and moouer in this world, so is learning the Ministeriall Gouvernor and moouer in life” (A3). In its definition of ministerial, the OED cites this passage for a usage meaning “Subsidiary or ancillary in function, role, etc; acting as an agent, or as an instrument or means; instrumental” (“*ministerial*,” adj. 1.a.). Topsell imagines a hierarchy based on service: the world is served by life, life by learning. The non-specificity of “world” and “life” here opens up possibilities for an anti-hierarchical reading of this relationship. If we associate learning with humankind (as the context of Topsell’s dedication implies a bookish form of learning), then a specifically human form of instrumentalism comes to serve a broad, not-necessarily-human category—life. Perhaps we may want to assume the qualifier “human” before references to life here, but Topsell continues the analogy with animal referents:

As life is different and diuers, according to the spirit wherein it is seated, and by which it is nourished as with a current; so also is Learning, according to the tast, vse, and practise of rules, Canons, and Authors, from whom as from a Fountaine it taketh both beginning and increase: euen as the spirit of a Serpent is much quicker than the spirit of an Oxe; and the Learning of Aristotle and Pliny more liuely and lightsome then the knowledge of other obscure Philosophers. (A3)

Clearly animal life is part of that diversity of life that also is the “moouer” of the world. If hierarchies of classification, such as the Great Chain of Being, unequivocally place man above beast, the phenomenon of life offers a leveling of those specific forms of being endued with animating spirit. Ontologically, humans may rank above all other forms of living being in early modern thought, but humans’ rationality—exercised by learning—here serves all life, rational or

otherwise. This is not to say that life is not categorized hierarchically. A value judgment is implied in the comparison between the spirits of the serpent and the ox when Topsell analogizes those animals to renowned philosophers and obscure ones. The spirit, whose abundance marks the difference between forms of life, refers not to the character traits that it does today—traits such as enthusiasm, determination, or indefatigability. Rather, spirit here has the corporeal connotation we saw earlier when Hamlet’s spirits tried to peep out of his eyes. According to Topsell, spirits are the locus of life. They can be more or less “quick[]”; that is, they carry more or less life. Thus, it is not only that the snake is faster than the ox; it is more alive. Nonetheless, no matter how low, the snake and ox are both served by learning, particularly in this case by that type of learning advanced by Topsell. *The Historie of foure-footed beastes* is not a study of animals alone but of life.

That readers of the *Historie* are to learn about themselves as well as animals is evident in an epistle found in Gesner’s *Historia Animalium* and Englished in Topsell’s *Historie*. In the epistle is a passage that Gesner quotes from Aristotle’s *Parts of Animals* (quoted on page forty-eight and forty-nine of chapter two above), cautioning the reader against speciesist arrogance. Here is Aristotle’s passage rendered in the early modern English of Topsell’s book:

“But if any man be so Barbarous, as to thinke that the beasts and such other creatures, cannot affoord him any subiect woorthy of his contempalton [*sic*], then let him thinke so of himselfe likewise; for what ignoble basenesse is there in bloode, flesh, bones, vaines, and such like? Doth not the body of man consist thereof? And then how abhominable art thou to thy selfe, that doest not rather looke into these which are so neere of kinde vnto thee?” (¶3<sup>v</sup>)

With this same passage Gabriel Egan opens his discussion of “Food and biological nature” in *Green Shakespeare*. He comments on the false etymology of “abominable” and explains, “Gesner’s point, of course, is that humans and animals are not too far apart in physical nature, being made of the same stuff and also linked together in the Great Chain of Being” (93).

Gesner’s appropriation of Aristotle’s stance on animals demonstrates how the early modern English incorporated homologies of the individual body parts into grander cosmic schemes of being.

Topsell’s and Gesner’s prefatory remarks in the *Historie* challenge the notions of human dominion so thoroughly outlined in the first chapter of Keith Thomas’s *Man and the Natural World*. There Thomas documents an early-modern English assumption of human superiority over animals, a sense based on an appeal to humans’ perceived ontological dissimilarity to animals: “[T]here was a fundamental difference in kind between humanity and other *forms of life*. . . . Instead of representing man as merely a superior animal, [Judeaean-Christian teaching] elevated him to a wholly different status, halfway between the beasts and the angels” (30, 31, emphasis mine). Such theologically-motivated declarations of man’s superiority among thoroughly delineated categories of life underlie the hierarchical structure of the Great Chain of Being. In this chapter I want to consider a way in which the early modern English understood their relationships to animals that serves as an alternative to the strictly hierarchical notions often associated with the Chain of Being. In the quotation of Thomas above, I emphasize “forms of life” because, as I argue, a regard for the commonly shared phenomenon of life nuanced the notions of categorical or species-specific superiority that Thomas’s history amply demonstrates the English to have held. For even Thomas, at the end of his chapter on “Human Ascendancy,” points out that the “uncompromisingly aggressive view of man’s place in the natural world

which has been sketched out in this chapter was by no means representative of all opinion in early modern England.” He adds, “Not everyone thought ... that the differences between man and beast were unbridgeable” (50). As I have already suggested in discussing learning’s ministerial relation to life in Topsell’s preface, life itself served as one such bridge. I want to make a distinction here between life and Being, for although “forms of life” can be said to substantiate the categories of Being on the Chain, life for the early modern English also involved a shared experience of the world, a mode of relations between humans and other species that did not prioritize one over the other. And as life resides in the body’s parts, anatomical likeness provided a palpable demonstration of humans and animals’ “like-life.”

Scholars have begun to focus on anatomy in order to nuance the history of early modern thought concerning human dominion. Laurie Shannon, for instance, has recently complicated what appears to be a transhistorical assumption of human exceptionalism, which she defines as “a flexible but historically persistent reckoning that singles out ‘the human’ for solitary elevation and apartness, usually by asserting that humans, as such, are distinguished by the possession of a unique, hierarchizing attribute (most often an immortal soul or the use of reason)” (171). Shannon attributes this idea of a clear divide between human and animal to René Descartes’ *cogito ergo sum* doctrine and the post-Enlightenment philosophy based on it. “Yet earlier dispensations consistently complicate that divide between man and beast,” Shannon writes, citing as evidence Pico della Mirandola’s Christian humanist incorporation of the Aristotelian tripartite soul in *On the Dignity of Man* (1486). Gail Kern Paster’s work on cross-species humoralism also demonstrates a fluid relationship between humans and animals. According to Paster, the “core intelligibility” of the notion that the passions “belonged to a part of the natural order jointly occupied by humans and animals [...] depended upon three interrelated

presuppositions of Renaissance cosmology” (135). These bodily truisms included the psychological specificity of organ functions, the similarity between humans’ and animals’ organs and humors, and “the common possession of a sensitive soul” that provides the principle of life itself (135, 136). With animal qualities in his psychological and material composition, the early modern human is dubbed a “menagerie-man” by Shannon. In fashioning something “human” out of a non-essentially human nature, the menagerie-man demonstrates human exceptionalism, “but it is an exceptionalism fueled by nonbinary and potentially antiexceptionalist material” (173). As we see in the statements of Gesner and Topsell above, humans have much to learn about themselves—as bodies and ensouled beings—in the anatomy and physiology of animals.

Hair is not a trivial body part (or bodily excrement, depending on the philosophy) when it comes to marking the material and philosophical differences and similarities between humans and animals in the period. Shannon focuses on the differences, identifying humans’ relative lack of hair as the basis of what she calls “human negative exceptionalism.” She explains that vis-à-vis animal “coatedness,” humans were considered naked owing to their relative lack of hair. Shannon boldly proposes that “nakedness versus coatedness may be as important an approximation of any distinguishing principle between ‘man and beast’ as more familiar criteria, like sentience, the possession of language, social and moral punishments, the capacity to lie, cooking habits, tool use, the apprehension of death, or an eternal soul” (190). In this list, hair matters like no other body part. The condition of being born naked makes the human species exceptional, but in a negative way. Humans are born into disadvantage when it comes to natural protection against the weather and enemies. Furry animals (or spiny ones) boast a “self-completeness or natural sufficiency” (186). Humans, then, are exceptional in the hair that they lack.

As Shannon points out, early modern natural history texts “lavish enormous verbal and visual attention to the details of animal coverings” (186). For a majority of entries in his *Historie*, Topsell begins discussion with the origins of the animals’ names, and then proceeds to discussing the quality and color of their coats. Tales of some animals’ hair are more colorful than others, and the hairs of some animals’ tails are quite amazing, but I will relate here only a few exceptional accounts from Topsell’s *Historie*. The cat, for instance, has recently received critical attention: Paster writes of melancholy cats and Karen Raber of discursively elusive ones. Thanks to their fur, cats receive condemnation, or, at best, active indifference in Topsell:

The haire also of a cat being eaten vnawares, stoppeth the artery and causeth suffocation: and I haue heard that when a child hath gotten the haire of a cat into his mouth, it hath so clouen & stucke to the place that it could not be gotten off again, and hath in that place bred either the wens or the kings euill: to conclude this point it appeareth that this is a dangerous beast, & that therefore as for necessity we are constrained to nourish them for the suppressing of small vermien: so with a wary and discret eie we must auoyde their harmes, making more account of their vse then of their persons. (K5<sup>v</sup>)

When it comes to the nutritive process, the early moderns (like the postmoderns) prefer hair to play a part only in the final stages of the process: mastication of it often produces extreme disgust, or, in the case of cat’s hair, unsightly excrescences on the body. Topsell’s ambivalence about cats reflects what Raber has found to be the larger cultural attitude toward them in the period. Felines have a “complex and multivalent nature,” she writes, and they are “‘uncanny’ and ‘cruelty-prone,’ and for this they suffer abuse at the hands of their human counterparts” (99, 106). Topsell counsels tolerating apparent cat cruelty toward humans for the sake of cat cruelty

toward vermin. What is interesting here is that feline malice is imagined to be in the very hairs that a cat has shed, as though the perceived cruelty of cat nature manifests in the detached hairs that clog arteries, cause suffocation, and spread the king's evil to children.

Dog hair possessed similar unusual significance in the early modern period, but whereas cat hair could be harmful, dog hair could be helpful. A certain relationship between bodily part and whole is worked out between the perceived medicinal usefulness of literal dog hair and its metaphorical signification as dubiously palliative alcohol. For centuries, Western culture has maintained that the best "cure" for a hangover is to drink "the hair of the dog that bit you." A wise reveler, then, will save one or two cans of beer from the 12-pack to consume the next morning. In the early modern period, the dog fur cure was not only potable but also topical and literal. The bite of the dog came from actual teeth, and dogs received the medicinal benefits of dog hair as well as humans. Topsell's *Historie* contains this piece of advice for dog owners, taken from Michael Angelo Blondus's (1497-1565) *De canibus & venatione*: "First, let the sinnewes, *Fibres*, or gristles of the wound be layed together, then sow vp the lips or vpper skin of the wound with a needle and thred, and take of the haire of the dog which made the wound and lay thereupon, vntil the bleeding be stanchd, and so leaue it to the dog to be licked" (R1). The *Historie* also prescribes hairs from "the head of the Dog which did bite" for human bite victims (R5). The reiteration of this cure, by such authorities as Topsell, Blondus, and the Englishman John Caius, attests to Paster's view on the relation between modern metaphor and early modern medicine: "Because such phrases no longer fit the facts of our bodies as we come to know and experience them, the signifiers of humoralism could easily be dismissed as dead metaphors or inconsequential idioms that distort their signifieds whether they appear in earlier texts or contemporary utterances" (*Embarrassed* 7). The "hair of the dog" is a phrase in which the literal

and metaphorical significations were simultaneously operative, for at the same time that they were prescribing dog hair for the bites of mad dogs, the early modern English were also suggesting it metaphorically as a hangover antidote. Although he does not mention dogs specifically in his remedy, Charles Estienne offers the familiar homeopathic formula in *Maison rustique*, Englished in 1600: “If the head complaine it selfe of too much drink [...] if you see that your stomack be not sicke, thou maist take of the haire of the beast that hath made thee ill, and drinke off a good glasse of wine” (E4<sup>v</sup>). John Heywood’s *A Dialogue of Proverbs* features this rousing call for the tavern keeper to bring two drinking buddies a familiar sip of brew:

what how felowe, thou knaue,  
I prairie the leat me and my felowe haue  
A heare of the dog that bote vs last nyght.  
And bytten were we both to the brayne aryght,  
We sawe eche other drunke in the good ale glas. (ll. 1173-77)

According to Joshua Legerberg, the hair of the dog trope is Classical in origin, and he relates it to the history of incremental habituation to poison that has been traced back to Mithridates VI of Pontus (134-63 B.C.).

What interests me here is not so much the way that dog bites and hangovers came to share the same cure, although I suspect that they are linked by the apparent madness caused by rabies and by alcohol. What I want to point out here is the asymmetry between the literal and metaphorical remedies. “The hair of the dog” works rhetorically by combining synecdoche and homeopathy, highlighting hair’s unusual negotiation between part and whole. To cure their hangovers, people partake of the exact type of substance that harmed them—more of the same, in other words. To cure a bite, people apply only one part of the offender to their wound. But

the hair cannot come from just any dog; it must have an exclusive relation to a specific whole. The hair must stand in for, or represent, the whole dog. The logic of “hair of the dog” as a metaphor for alcohol depends on this assumption: the hair is more of the same of a larger whole. Hair is a uniquely significant bodily substance in effecting this kind of relationship. It encapsulates the entire “character” of a person, or dog (OED “*hair*,” n.). For while figurative language may contain the self in other single parts (the heart and the head being the most common), to present these parts literally as tokens of a whole causes horror. Not even the soul can condense and contain the whole both materially and metaphorically. Only hair has that cultural signification.

Animal fur can also tell us about animal inwardness in the early modern period. The buffe has especially legible hair in this regard. Analogously to human skin, the hair of the buffe (an animal often confused with the elk, according to the *Historie* [F4]) signals inward passion, even as it codes the animal according to its natural surroundings:

His colour [is] for the most part like an Asses, but when he is hunted or feared, he chaugeth [*sic*] his hew into whatsoever thing he seeth; as among trees he is like them: among greene boughs he seemeth greene; amongst rocks of stone, he is transmuted into their colour also [...]. This indeed is the thing that seemeth most incredible, but [...]we see that the face of men and beasts thorough feare, ioy, anger, and other passions, doe quickly change; from ruddy to white, from blacke to pale and from pale to ruddy againe. Now as this beast hath the head of a Hart, so also hath it the feare of a Hart, but in a higher degree; and therefore by secret operation it may easily alter the colour of their haire, as a passion in a reasonable man, may alter the colour of his face” (F4<sup>v</sup>).

Emotion provides both the basis of comparison between human and animal, and the mechanism for environmental integration of the animal in its living and non-living habitat. Paster's work on the humoral body and consciousness "in relation to an analogously constructed universe of brute beasts and things that have no life" complicates our understanding of the buffe's relation to the environment (137). The trees and stones cannot be seen as merely a chromatic background against which the hair of a frightful animal colors itself. Instead, we might see the buffe as consonant with an ecosystem permeated by affect. Paster comments on "how broadly the passions were thought to be distributed sensible features of a natural world traversed by a host of sympathies and antipathies" (145). While the buffe may not share the elemental (in terms of hot, cold, moist, and dry) and humoral makeup of its living and non-living surroundings, its hair effects a likeness between animal and environment. Topsell calls on a small range of species (humans, asses, harts) and body parts (skin, faces, heads) in order to explain the ecosystemic context of the buffe's color changes. As we have seen with the closet scene of *Hamlet*, emotion—particularly fear—has a certain enlivening quality that manifests in the hair. By analogy to human skin, Topsell tries to convince his readers of the fantastic responsiveness of fur to inward passions. By placing the buffe's fur in a system of more familiar human and nonhuman referents, Topsell attempts to explain the "secret operation" of nature in a way that demonstrates human and animal affinity.

That affinity registered at several levels: inwardly, outwardly, and even excrementally. For instance, urine, the by-product of the body's second concoction, makes materially legible the human and animal "like-life" in excrements. Erica Fudge has discovered that, according to one early modern understanding of urine, animals produce more viscous water than do humans. But when humans eat and drink to excess, their urine thickens. Fudge writes, "This transformation of

human into animal urine offers us one place in which vice—here greed—is understood to lead humans physiologically—*not just metaphorically*—to become indistinguishable from the lower animals. The impossibility of telling the urine of one from the urine of the other offers empirical evidence for this transformation” (“The dog is himself” 195-96, emphasis in original). The tale uses animality as a baseline—animals are something humans slip into through moral degeneration, while moderation and thin urine serve as markers of human exceptionalism. Excrements, then, like bodily parts, provide a point of delineation between humans and animals, but they also have the uncomfortable effect of demonstrating the similarities.

Other forms of likeness manifest in the bodily features such as limbs, faces, or the pilious excrement that lingers on the head and body. Baron Dudley North (1581-1666) writes in *A forest of varieties* (1645) that “Beasts have much of man in them, and man too much of (nay often worse then) the Beasts. It hath beene observed that most men have in their aspect a resemblance of some Beast or Bird” (O4<sup>v</sup>). If North condemns humans for their animal qualities, it is only in a parenthetical, provisional charge. Humans’ animality does not appear to result in each case from a moral failing on the humans’ part; for a majority of people, the resemblance is a matter of appearances. The early modern English could see even in their own hair their animal affinities. If a relative lack of hair serves as an exceptional trait that distinguishes human from animal, then what hair humans do have reminds them of the substantial link that exists between the two. Thomas Hill (c.1528-c.1574), author and translator of popular books on many subjects, including gardening and physiognomy, reads the outward resemblances between humans, and beasts and birds, but from appearances he extrapolates judgments about inward nature, legible in the humans’ outward hair growth. In so doing, his physiognomy recalls a medieval tradition of understanding animals anthropomorphically as exemplars of personality traits, virtues, or moral

failings common among humans. Yet Hill's close attention to bodily parts draws on Aristotelian natural philosophical understandings of the signifying relationship between the body part and the whole. The commingling of human and animal natures is especially evident in Hill's readings of human hair in his *Pleasant history declaring the whole art of physiognomy* (1613). According to Hill, if there is anything exceptional about the hair on the human head, it is not a lack: "of all liuing Creatures, man in especiall, is thickest, and hath most plenty of haire on the head" (D5).<sup>3</sup> The head, of course, is not alone the locus of human hairiness. As a 1664 English transcription of the conferences at the Bureau d'Adresse in Paris reports, one of the anonymous conferees claims that "were our Sight acute enough, we might see that there is no part of the Body but is cover'd with Hair" (K2).<sup>4</sup> Such a supposition would seem to make human pilosity so common that it would be an *unexceptional* quality. But the publication of Hill's physiognomic stereotypes attests to the tendency to read the human body through part-specific, relative difference in hair growth, with the animal kingdom providing the basis for assumed character traits.

Hill writes in *Pleasant historie*, "First Aristotle (in Methaphoricis) writeth, that such persons which haue heary legs, are venerious, applied to the Goat" (Ee6<sup>v</sup>). The associative nexus of goats, hair, and lustfulness is evident in Lucifera's parade of deadly sins in Spenser's *Faerie Queen*:

---

<sup>3</sup> The belief that the human head is the hairiest among animals is Aristotelian: "All viviparous quadrupeds are, we may say, covered with hair, unlike man, who has only a few short hairs except on his head, though in respect of his head has a thicker coat of hair than any animal" (*History of Animals*, vol. I, 83).

<sup>4</sup> English translations of hundreds of the Conferences held by Theophraste Renaudot at the Bureau d'Adresse between 1633 and 1642 were published in two large volumes between 1664 and 1665, but pirated copies of individual proceedings circulated in England throughout the better part of the seventeenth century, according to Kathleen Wellman (12). On Renaudot and the Bureau, as well as the printing of the Conferences, see also Geoffrey V. Sutton, 21-23. Sutton describes the printed Conferences as "the best evidence for popular science in their time and place" (23).

And next [...] rode lustfull Lechery,  
 Vpon a bearded Goat, whose rugged haire,  
 And whally eyes (the signe of gelosy,  
 Was like the person selfe, whom he did beare:  
 Who rough, and blacke, and filthy did appeare. (1.4.24)

The only physical attribute that denotes the common lust of goat and sinning human is hair texture: the bearded goat has “rugged” hair, and the “Vnseemely man” he bears (24) is “rough.” The goat telescopically signifies lust. First, in and of itself, the goat represents lust. A man need no more than to be associated with the goat in order to be likewise associated with lust. At the level of the part, a goat’s body further signifies lust through its rough hair. For a human to have rough hair associates him with a goat, whose own lustful nature is evidenced by his hair.

What is interesting in Hill’s *Pleasant historie* is that the legs are the specific site of signification. As he proceeds with his physiognomic details, Hill claims that “[s]uch which be very hairy, about the breast and belly: are alwaies wauering of mind, and vnconstant: applied to the Birds, which haue the breast and belly like hairy, after the kind” (Ee6<sup>v</sup>). People with a lot of hair on the back of the neck are said to be stout and liberal, like lions (Ee7). People whose “eyebrowes shed ouer the Nose and spread vpward vnto the Temples: are deuoted foolish persons: applied for the forme to the Hog” (Ee7). And “the haire of the head, flat lying of either side, descending to the forehead: doe declare such a person condicioned, to the nature of the horse” (E5). Similar hair growth denotes kinship to a beast quite unlike the horse: “The haire of the head lying flat, and reaching out on the forehead, denoteth a strong person, yet brutish (of likelihood) in conditions: for that the polling of heads in our time, may greatly beguile the iudger, applied to the Beare; and other Wilde Beasts” (E4<sup>v</sup>). While Hill wrote before polling

took on its political significations, the comment shows a belief that natural hair patterns demonstrate something essential about a person, and that the intervention of the barber masks that nature. In the next chapter, I will discuss the role of barbering in altering human nature.

Back hair is a particularly significant phenomenon in the natural philosophy of human animality. According to Hill's sources, people with hairy backs are "applied to the beasts" (Gg7<sup>v</sup>). A man's dorsal coating associates him with no specific animal, but all four-footed beasts. The generalization has Classical precedence. In Aristotle's *Parts of Animals*, the distinction between back hair and chest hair is significant to marking the distinction between human and animal:

The quadrupeds tend to have more hair on their backs than on the underside of the body; but in man the reverse is true. The purpose of hair is to give protection; and as the quadrupeds go on all fours, they need more protection on their backs; so they have no hair on their front, although the front is the nobler of the two sides. Man goes upright, and so there is nothing to choose as regards his need of protection between front and back. Therefore Nature has prescribed the protection for the nobler side, the front—an example of how, out of given conditions, she is always the cause of that which is the better. (189)

This logic depends on notions of the human body's limited capacity to produce hair, and, more importantly, on the aspirations to divinity that causes humans to walk upright. Aristotle here privileges not only the uppermost part of the body, but also the front part, making the chest more important to securing human status than the back. What is clear from Aristotle and the early modern authors who inherited his philosophical canon, hair materializes a human connection to animals. The human negative exceptionalism described by Shannon is undercut by the obvious,

varying degrees of pilosity. The connection between humans and animals was not alone manifest in human hair patterns. In what follows, I look at how the hair of one particular animal helped bolster claims about its apparent humanness.

§

For the sixteenth and seventeenth century English, no animal's hair mattered so much as did the horse's. If we see human hair as an animalizing element of human nature, we might contrast that attitude to the early modern understanding of horses' hair, which had a humanizing function for that species. As recent scholarship on horses reminds us, horses were considered to be closer to man than any other animal on the Great Chain of Being. I will not go so far as to claim that it was because of their coiffure that they were more closely associated with humans (although it is probably of no small significance that two species regarded as animal kingdom superiors—horses and lions—both have manes), but horse hair did provide a significant focal point for the humanizing, medicalized discourses that echoed their equivalents in books about care of the human body.<sup>5</sup> What follows is a survey of early modern husbandry manuals, horse training guides, natural philosophy, and literature, all of which contribute to a notion of an ontological equine superiority in the animal kingdom, deriving in part from the horse's hair even as it encourages an unusual attentiveness to hair care. Later in the chapter, I look at the fantastic, popular notion of horse hairs actually acquiring lives of their own, independent of the animal from which they derived. This phenomenon provides a central image for my reading of the relationship between humans and excremental animal life in Shakespeare's *Antony and*

---

<sup>5</sup> Humans, horses, and lions are linked in a standard of comeliness rooted in the shared characteristic of hairiness. Phillipp Camerarius rehearses an ancient judgment “not vnproperly said [...t]hat it was as ilfauored a sight for men to be without beards, as for horses and lions to bee without haire” (*Liuing librarie* M2). The pronouncement speaks to the “ideology of bearded masculinity” discussed by Will Fisher (94). It also demonstrates how hairiness linked humans to animals in ways that did not necessarily imply the bestial nature of hairy men.

*Cleopatra*. The horse thus presents a test case of the limit at which vitality was thought to infuse individuated parts of the body.

Prone to making statements such as “the Horse of all creatures is the Noblest, strongest, and aptest to doe a man the best and worthiest seruices, both in Peace and War,” Gervase Markham might rightly be called the early modern English champion of horses (*Cheape and good* B1<sup>v</sup>). But praise for the four-footed creature was pervasive in the period. One might take the words from Topsell’s *Historie* as exemplary:

When I consider the wonderfull worke of God in the creation of this Beast enduing it with a singular body and a Noble spirit, the principal wherof is a louing and dutifull inclination to the seruice of man. Wherein he neuer faileth in peace nor Warre, being euery way more neare vnto him for labour and trauell: and therefore more deare (the food of man onely excepted:) we must needes account it the most noble and necessary creature of all foure-footed-beasts, before whom no one for multitude and generality of good qualities is to be preferred. (BB3)

Topsell commends the horse in terms that link the equestrian’s enthusiasm, the naturalist’s taxonomizing, and the moralist’s need for a hierarchical, universal order. His praise suggests the horse’s lieutenancy to man in God’s hierarchical order of created life. To some degree, the horse derives superiority over other animals on its own merits: it boasts a “singular body,” a “Noble spirit,” and a multitude of “good qualities,” but all of these would avail the horse nothing were it not for its “dutifull inclination to the seruice of man.” The horse’s usefulness to man cannot be underestimated in determining its location within early modern notions of natural order.<sup>6</sup> Karen

---

<sup>6</sup> On equine labor, see Peter Edwards’s chapter on work horses in his *Horse and Man in Early Modern England*, 183-209. As Markham’s comment above testifies, horses proved their usefulness to man in not only domestic labor but also in warfare. According to Karen Raber and Treva J. Tucker, “The horse itself

Raber and Treva J. Tucker read a “shifting view of the horse” over the seventeenth century as the horse acquires rationality and liberty from the rider’s corrective control. The horse’s perceived intellectual evolution culminates in Jonathan Swift’s supremely (if not excessively) rational race of Houyhnhmns in *Gulliver’s Travels* (17). Elizabeth Tobey argues that the Italian *palio* racehorses are a part of “increasing celebration in the early modern period of the horse as an individual possessing and expressing almost human qualities” (78).<sup>7</sup> The English were not alone in venerating the horse; in *La Gloria del cavallo*, the Italian author Pasquale Caracciolo extols horses through the very matter-of-fact attitude with which he describes their qualities:

It is not surprising that the horse resembles Man in many things, being animals subject to all the same feelings and diseases that we have, and they dream, as we do, and like us in their old age, many become white-haired....And although this and other conditions horses share with Dogs, such as faith, love and memory; nevertheless they show these openly more than anything else, and they not only are participants, but conform to our natures. This conformity is perhaps the reason that they [horses] are such good friends of humans. (7-8, qtd. in Tobey 81)

The horse excels its closest animal neighbor in the Chain of Being by not only sharing emotional characteristics *of* human nature but also sharing *in* human nature. As we will see in Topsell, horses also share in humanity’s faults.

The human-equine likeness is evident in part in the humoral discourse that attempts to define both species. Paster has pointed out that “the early modern classification of horses is fully cognate with the complex hierarchical classifications of people” (168), adding that “unlike other

---

has been venerated for its noble spirit, gallant heart, innate courage, and other anthropomorphized qualities associated with warfare since at least biblical times.” See their “Introduction,” 7-8.

<sup>7</sup> Tobey bases part of her claim on the attention to horses’ proper names in portraits of the *palio* horses. We see a regard for horse individuation in the many that are properly named in Shakespeare’s canon.

animals that were thought to manifest only a single temperament common to their species, horses were further distinguished by the five humoral temperaments known to exist in people” (169). Culling evidence from Markham’s 1607 *Cavelarice; or, The English Horseman*, Paster demonstrates that horses’ humoral dispositions could be read by their “skin color” (169). Paster’s reference to skin instead of hair may sound odd, for horses are identified by the coloration of their hair, as the breed names bay and sorrel would indicate. According to Aristotle’s logic, animals’ hair and skin tell the same story. In *Historia Animalium*, animals’ skin and hair are reported to be the same color (199, 207).<sup>8</sup> Thomas Blundville (fl. 1561) begins *The Arte of Ryding and Breakinge Greate Horses* (1561) with a discussion of what horses’ outward color signifies with regard to inward complexion. The melancholic horse is black or russet, the phlegmatic milk white, the sanguine bay, and the choleric bright sorrel (A1-A1<sup>v</sup>). The horse whose four elements are balanced “equallye and in dewe proportion” may be one of many colors: brown bay, dapple gray, black with silver hairs, “blacke lyke a moore,” or a “fayre rone” (A1<sup>v</sup>). Like people, horses were placed in a hierarchical scheme based on color. With a certain prosody, Topsell writes in his *Historie*, “among al colours, first the blacke, then the bay, next the white, and last the gray are most commended” (Cc4<sup>v</sup>). Finally, Markham in *The Complete Farriar* (1639) presents an equine rainbow that links the medicalized specificity of humoral

---

<sup>8</sup> See also *Generation of Animals*, 235. In *Historia Animalium*, Aristotle claims that only among humans and horses does ageing cause a notable whitening of the hair (203). He does not, however, suggest that horses’ skin whitens with the hair. Diemerbroeck affirms, citing Aristotle, that “in Dogs and Horses of several Colours, we see the same Colours, as well in the Skin, as in the Hair,” because certain humors settle in the skin and color it along with the hairs that grow from it. Diemerbroeck *does* apply the same principle to humans, with geohumoral examples (Bbb3). Helkiah Crooke, however, noting that “the whitest men and women, haue often haire coale blacke,” also cites Aristotle to answer the question of why animal hair takes the color of the skin from which it grows but human hair does not. Human skin, Crooke reports, is thinner than other animals’ skin, and it cannot “afford any matter of haire of it selfe, or reteyne the excrement driuen to it so long as to giue it his owne colour” (G5).

coloration with generalized presumptions about the temperament or—to return to the topic of ennobling use—the loyalty and serviceability of specific colored horses:

As for his colour, although there is no colour exempt utterly from goodnesse (for I have seene good of all) yet there are some better reputed then others, as the Dapple-gray for beauty, the brown-bay for service, the black with silver haire for courage, and the Lyard, or true mixt Roan for continuance; as for the Sorrel, the black without white, and the unchangeable Iron-gray, they are reputed cholericke; the brightbay, the fleabitten, and the black with white marks, are sanguinists; the blankwhite, the yellow dun, the kiteglewed, and the pyebald are flegmatick, and the chesnut, the mousedunne, the redbay, and the blewgray, are melancholy. (G8-G8<sup>v</sup>)

Markham, ever the theriophile, finds good in horses of every stripe, including in his spectrum the kiteglewed (referring, perhaps, to the horse's belly), the piebald (irregularly patched with two colors), and the fleabitten (“having bay or sorrel spots or streaks, upon a lighter ground,” according to the OED). The humoral significations of each color make the horses legible in a human medical discourse, and the particular personality traits locate the animals in an anthropocentric economy of virtue and service. Thus in horse hair humans read equine likeness to themselves.

Horse hair was important not only as a chromatic indication of humoral complexion but also as an anatomical part of the equine whole. In the second book of Randle Holme's (1627-1699) *Academy of Armory* (1688), a book whose title advertises a blazon of “the several variety of created beings,” the author offers an anatomy of a horse, broken into five major subsections: hair; head, neck, and breast; body; thighs and legs; and feet. In Holme's anatomy, hair has a

particular status as a discrete part. Within that broad category are six different types of hair—the body’s hide, the mane, the “[t]opping” or “fore-top,” the fetlock behind the feet, the “[c]ronet” on top of the hoof, and the brills on the eyelids (V1-V1<sup>v</sup>). One of the ancient tales adorning Topsell’s *Historie* attests to the crucial role hair could play in determining horse identity. An instance of horse portraiture goes terribly wrong, all because of the artist’s faulty depiction of a horse’s eyelashes:

The haire of a horsse falleth off euery yeare, the neather eye lid or browe hath no long haire growing vpon it, and therefore *Nicon* that famous painter of Greece, when hee had most curiously limbed forth a horses perfection, & faild in no part of nature or art, but onely in placing haire vnder his eie, for that onely fault hee receiued a disgracefull blame. (Bb4)

To readers brought up in the naturalist tradition begun in the nineteenth century, this demand for a precise rendering of nature may look like an extreme version of an otherwise reasonable concern for mimetic expression. But in the early modern context of Topsell’s natural history, this concern for precision demonstrates how significant something so seemingly minor as brills were to defining anatomical identity.

As the story of *Nicon*’s failed rendering indicates, hair was a medium of both natural and cultural self-fashioning. Husbandry manuals offered plenty of advice on how owners could manipulate nature to style their horses’ hair. Just as human hair loss remedies abound in the medical texts and receipt books of the period, so too do husbandry manuals instruct readers on how to restore hairs that fall from the horse’s mane, body, and tail. For “the falling of the Crest, Mangines in the Mayne, or shedding of the haire” Markham offers his readers the following advice:

All these diseases proceed from pouertie, mislike, or ouer-riding, and the best cure for the falling of the Crest, is bloud-letting, and proud keeping with store of meat, for strength and fatnesse euer will raise vp the Crest but if the Mayne be mangie, you shall annoynt it with *Butter* and *Brimstone*, and if the haire fall away, then take *Sothernwood*, and burne it to ashes, then take those ashes and mixing them with common Oyle, annoynt the place therewith, an it will bring haire presently, smooth, thicke, and faire. (*Cheape and good* E3)

The concoction of ashes, from various sources, mixed with oil also appears in remedies for human baldness.<sup>9</sup> The cure of blood-letting reminds us that horses, too, were humoral subjects. A horse's hair gave it an aesthetic that was subject to its owner's manipulations, and it provided a shorthand for understanding the horse's natural inclinations. In short, horse hair was the basis of a signifying system whose logic followed that which was applied to human hair.

Certain white markings were deemed desirable in a horse's coat. In a chapter titled "How to make a white Starre," Markham instructs readers of *Cheape and good husbandry* to "[s]lit the Horses fore-head the length of your Starre, and then raise the skinne vp with a cornet, and put in a plate of Leade as bigge as the Starre, and let it remayne so two or three dayes; and then take it out and presse downe the skinne with your hand, and that haire will fall away, and white will come in the place" (F4<sup>v</sup>). Topsell offers the following recipe, a less cruel method of hair care, depending on how the badger's fat is acquired: "if the fat of a badger [is] mingled with crudy hony, and annointed vpon a bare place of a horse, where the former haire are pulled off, it will make new white haire growe in that place" (D5<sup>v</sup>). The desire for a white patch on a horse's head has its negative corollary in the aversion to dark spots on a horse's face. In *Antony and*

---

<sup>9</sup> See for instance, John de Fechenham, Abbot of Westminster, *This book of sovereign medicines against the most common and known diseases* (Folger MS V.b. 129).

*Cleopatra*, Shakespeare alludes to the undesirability of horses with dark facial marks as Enobarbus and Agrippa comment on Octavia's parting from Caesar:

Enobarbus: Will Caesar weep?

Agrippa: He has a cloud in's face.

Enobarbus: He were the worse for that were he a horse;

So is he, being a man. (3.2.50-53)

Commenting on this passage, Bruce Boehrer writes, "a cloud (or dark spot) on the face of a horse was proverbially a mark of bad temper, and when Enobarbus conflates Caesar's tears with such a mark, he [...] suggests Caesar's treacherous nature" ("Social Devaluation" 107). The passage highlights how humoral reading practices were interchangeable between human and equine texts. Given the negative connotations of the dark facial markings, the production of white stars and patches on horses' heads might be seen as the masters' attempts to alter their horses' very nature, reversing the phenomenal logic of humoral theory.

The head was not the only part whose white coloration piqued horse owners' interest. In his humoral color coding of horses, Blundeville pays particular attention to the location of white marks around the feet. He lists four instances in which it is good to have white marks around the feet (for instance, when both hind feet have white marks) and seven when it is bad (when both forefeet have white, for one) (*Fower chiefyst* A2-A3). Of the white star on the forehead, Blundeville writes, "It is an excellent good marke also for a horse to haue" (A3), while to have no white marks on the body is to be regarded ambivalently: "The horse that hath no kind of white marke, is most commonlye manegeable, but then he is ramege, that is to say, he wil kepe no iust pace in his goinge, but fareth as one that goeth with .ii. mindes" (A4). Aesthetics and practical legibility both play a role in determining the value of coloration. If white hairs were not

the horse owner's desire, particularly if the owner were treating a scarred horse, then the English translation of John Baptista Porta's (1535?-1615) encyclopedic *Natural Magick* (1658) offers the following advice on how to correct the discoloration caused by a wound:

You must knead three pints of bruised or ground barley, and put to it the froth of nitre and a little salt, and make it into loaves; then you must put them into an Oven till they are burned to coals; afterward crush them, and beat them to powder and then mix them with oyle, and anoint the sore or the scar therewith; and this you must do for twenty daies. But what should be the reason that this barley ashes should cause, not white hairs, but the like in colour to the rest, to grow upon the scars or sores of horses whereupon it is cast, that, Alexander Aphrodisaeus ascribes to this, because barley hath in it a purgative and cleansing force, and so wasteth and expelleth the humors, and all the naughty stuff, that was gathered by the sore into that part, because it was maimed, and consequently not so well able to relieve it self. (K4<sup>v</sup>)

Porta's oil and ash mixture attempts to counter a natural phenomenon that Markham takes advantage of, that is, the growth of white hair over healing flesh wounds. Thus, nature and culture, aesthetics and utility all form an intricate signifying system with horse hair as the media.

In a vogue for transspecies identification, horse owners fashioned their horses' hair to match their own. To instruct readers on how to dye their and their horses' hair the same shade of red, Porta describes a process of boiling in lye a powder called Alchena, "brought to us from Africa," and anointing the head with the mixture so that it dyes the hair red "for many days." He cautions readers, "take heed you wet no [sic] your nails therewith: for they will be so died, you cannot easily make them clean." In that caution we might infer something of the connection

between hair and nails still prevalent today. Alchena was not the only source of red dye: “I can easily do it with Oyl of Honey; for when the clear and Saffron-colored waters are drawn off, increase the fire, and the Oyl will come forth, the red. This is excellent [sic] to make the Hairs red, and it will dye white Hairs red for many dayes; and when the tincture is worn off, the hairs will shine of a golden colour.” Porta prides himself on what we might call the “generic brand” of what is probably an otherwise costly dye made from an African importation. Interestingly Porta’s dye is not meant for humans alone: “So also we dye the Tails and Mains of white Horses red” (Kk2). The intended effect of Porta’s dye, however, is to incorporate humans and horses within the same mode of fashion. The horses’ manes become prosthetics of similarly coiffed humans. Conspicuously red hair causes humans and horses to make an interspecies fashion statement, and it is telling of humans’ relationships to horses that they would want to make such a statement. Paster has described the master-horse relation (where both are specifically male) as demonstrating a “mutual narcissistic reinforcement that seems more like the equal terms of idealized male friendship than the hierarchical opposition of man and animal” (170-71). Paster is commenting on reports of a mutual admiration of stature and status between horse and master, but the narcissistic relationship also characterizes the desire for matching hair color.

Female horses were the subject of particular anthropomorphizing qualities related to their hair, specifically with regard to sexuality and the chief of human sins, pride. A likeness in the sexual practices of women and mares is suggested in the management of the horses’ hair. Topsell attributes to mares a prideful regard for their manes, further reinforcing an affective affinity between humans and animals. The pride of hair-conscious mares manifests sexually in their refusal to breed with certain short-haired animals: “The horsses are naturally proud of these [fore]lockes and manes, as may appear by those mares which are kept for procreation of mules,

by copulation with Asses, which at the first despise to ingender with those shaueling and short haired Stallions” (Bb4). Therefore, the keepers shave the mares’ foretops and manes and lead them to water, “wherein while the Mares behold their owne deformity, they grow so shamed, deieted, and discouraged, that euer after they admit with quietness the Asses to couer them” (Bb4). While the story proffers little practical advice for breeding mules, it does speak to a real early modern perception of horses as proud, even vain. The story also contributes to a male fantasy of controlling female sexuality, in this case through somatic alteration. Elsewhere, sexuality provides the basis for an even more explicit link between mares and women: “[A]mong al the females of the world, there is none beside a woman, that is more greedy of procreation then a Mare” (Cc5<sup>v</sup>). Again, hair care is the means of managing mares’ sexuality, for “if their manes be shorne off, their lust is extinguished” (Cc5<sup>v</sup>).

Just as the horse keeper uses a mare’s hair to control her sexuality, he uses her sexuality—specifically, her pre-coital imagination—to control her offspring’s hair. From the Bible to seventeenth-century natural philosophy, authorities have attributed a role to imagination in the formation of hair. In *The Art of chirurgery* (1663), Daniel Sennert (1572-1637) explains the connection: “the hair in Animals proceedeth from the formative faculty; to wit, for that by the strength and force of Imagination the form and color of the hair my be changed, as out of the 30. Chapter of *Genesis* in the History of Jacob sufficiently appeareth” (Gg2<sup>v</sup>). What the imagination’s capacity to affect the hair proves for Sennert is that hair is a body part proceeding from the body’s “formative faculty”; therefore it is not an excrement. Sennert draws on a Biblical animal analogy in a proof of hair’s origination as a bodily part. Topsell relates how a mare’s coital imaginings can be manipulated to deliberately color the hair of her foal:

Horsse-keepers haue deuised to make their Mares conceiue strange colours, for when the Mares would go to the horse, they paint a Stallion with diuers colours, and so bring him into the sight and presence of the Mare; where they suffer him to stand a good while vntill she perfectly conceiue in her imagination the true *Idea* and ful impression of those pictures, and then they suffer him to couer her; which being performed she conceiueth a Foale of those colours. (Cc4<sup>v</sup>)

A similar technique can be applied to dogs. In *Natural magick*, Porta advises dog owners how to “procure a shag-hair’d Dog” by lining the kennels with “fleeces and hides of beasts” so that while the female dogs “continually look upon those sights, they will beget shag whelps like Lions” (K3). The human imagination, in the moments leading up to and during conception, supposedly possessed similar influence on the physical characteristics of children. Lemnius attributes a certain power to the female imagination when he claims that “a woman at the time of her conception, stedfastly fixing her ymagination vppon any thinge, deryueth & enduceth certayne markes and tokens thereof into the Infant” (M5). Lemnius calls on this power of imagination to uphold the honor of certain honest Dutch matrons who are said to have looked on as Charles V landed with several Spanish gallants in his company. Nine months later, the Dutch matrons, having witnessed the Spaniards’ arrival, gave birth to children “hauing eyebrows and hayres blacke and curled, and in all respects coloured like Spaniards” (E8<sup>v</sup>). In the eleventh Conference of the Bureau d’adrese, one of the conferees cites claims of the power of a mother’s imagination in shaping the hair and other features of her newly conceived offspring. A young girl was reportedly presented before Emperour Charles IV, her body being covered with hair, her feet shaped like those of a camel. The reason was her mother’s “having too wistly consider’d the Image of Saint John Baptist clothed in Camel’s hair” (I4<sup>v</sup>). If reports of these apparently unusual

births are true, we might suspect secret operations, but not of the imagination. Likewise, we might suspect that any multi-colored foal's appearance is more the product of the horse keeper's imagination than the mare's, the human having already demonstrated his artistic sensibility on the stallion. What is tangible from Topsell's report is the potential subversiveness of female sexuality. And whether the resulting dark features, excessive hairiness, or multi-colored skin are desirable or not, male readers are meant to glean some reassurance that the female imagination can be made materially legible, in skin and hair.

Hair is a matter of horse's pride in *Venus and Adonis* when Adonis's courser and a newly arrived jennet offer up a portrait of equine eroticism from which Venus easily extracts a sexual moral for Adonis. The courser is clearly the paragon of horse beauty, receiving all the praise for his looks, while the mare gets none. Adonis has clearly spent time to gussy up his courser, whose "braided hanging mane / Upon his compassed crest now stand on end" (271-2). Like his "ears up-pricked," the horse's mane signifies his sexual arousal. Anthony Mortimer finds the responsiveness of the horse's ears and hair, as well as the "hard hoof[s]" wounding the earth's "hollow womb" (267-8), to be "suggestions of penetrative energy and phallic pride" (77). The erectile pun in "up-pricked" will not escape anyone schooled in sonnet number 20. But ears become perked voluntarily for a variety of interests. Hair stands only involuntarily, and usually in the context of fear. To emphasize the phallic parallel of a standing mane, Shakespeare draws to mind the mane's ordinary state of "hanging." The double qualifier of the mane, "braided hanging," suggests the two terms work in tandem, braiding ensuring that the hair hangs, hanging displaying the aesthetics of braided hair. Braiding also works, then, as a control on the horse's virility. While he is more comely (to humans at least) for his braiding, and while horses take pride in their manes, as Topsell writes, Adonis's courser is the embodiment of natural, unbridled

lust, and expressing that lust means flouting the aesthetics of hanging braids, just as he breaks the reins that yoke him to a tree.

Loose hair becomes the horse, for a few stanzas later it interplays with nature in further eroticizing him. Shakespeare writes,

Sometime he scuds far off, and there he stares;  
Anon he starts at stirring of a feather.  
To bid the wind a base he now prepares,  
And whe'er he run or fly they know not whether;  
For through his mane and tail the high wind sings,  
Fanning the hairs, who wave like feathered wings. (301-06)

References to weightlessness abound in this stanza—the startling feather, the singing wind that fans the hairs, the feathered wings, and the horse’s movement itself, which appears like flying. Lightness of being is tied in this poem with erotic expression, but not necessarily wantonness (as another denotation of ‘light’ would suggest). Weightlessness is a property that lends itself to motion; it enables motion, especially ascendance. The couplet of this stanza evokes the airy weightlessness with the horse’s body through the trope of the horse’s hair. Not only does this buoyancy give the horse a naturally erotic aesthetic, with the breeze not just blowing but singing through his tail and mane, but the waving motion of the hairs themselves associates them with the fleetness of the courser’s courting dance. Running is not the cause of the hair waving but the hair waving causes the similarity between the horse’s running and flying. This passage is not the only time that Shakespeare clusters images of a remarkably buoyant horse and hair, as we will see with Bourbon’s steed in *Henry V*, where equine buoyancy derives from an internal source—

hair *inside* the horse's body. Wind is no longer a necessary elemental accessory to flight, just the hair itself.

§

Rather oddly, Bruce Boehrer gives the title “Horses and Tennis Balls” to a section of his recent essay, “Shakespeare and the Social Devaluation of the Horse” (94). The section examines the “composite nature” of equine representations (think centaurs, for instance, or Caesar's facial cloudiness in the *Antony and Cleopatra* passage above), as well as the way Shakespeare registers the decline of a chivalric mode of life through the ineffectuality of aristocrats who are too fond of their horses or who value cavalry over more advanced military technology. (This fondness, while a sign of the horse's *social* devaluation in Shakespeare's England, may also be a sign of the animal's elevation in natural philosophy). Citing the horse's various significations in human affairs—from exploration and agriculture, to warfare and sport—Boehrer posits the horse as the subject of “the anxiety of composite forms,” locating the animal “half in nature and half in culture” (94). What Boehrer neglects to do, however, is mention the substance that both nouns in his section's title have in common—hair. Tennis balls, so stunningly insulting in *Henry V*, were stuffed with hair. Boehrer connects horses and tennis balls instead through the formers' increasing association with sport and pleasure (rather than warfare), thus aligning horses with tennis balls in purpose, though not necessarily in body. Unfortunately, Boehrer fails to mention the moment when horses and tennis balls merge into a composite nature.

Horses and hair collocate homonymically, if not semantically, in act 3 scene 7 of *Henry V*, where a French aristocrat's praise for his horse reaches a hyperbolic pitch. Following the Oxford, the Norton Shakespeare prints the Duke of Bourbon's words on his horse thus: “He bounds from the earth as if his entrails were hares” (3.7.12-13). The Oxford editors note in the

*Textual Companion* that the Folio actually reads “hayres” for the Oxford’s “hares” (380). Of course, the Folio’s spelling does not definitively signal that Shakespeare intended “hairs,” for the spelling “hayres” is also a variant for “hares” (“*hare*” n. OED). The Riverside Shakespeare editors opt for “hairs” as the stuff of the horse’s guts, with the gloss, “i.e. like a tennis ball (which was stuffed with hair)” (III.vii.13-14n.). Hares or hairs: either reading gives the horse an unusual material interiority. To follow the Norton and Oxford and imagine a horse with rabbits for entrails, we would have to put pressure on the simile and wonder if the horse has consumed hares and, in digesting them, acquires their capacity to “bound” into the air. Or are the horse’s entrails made of living, jumping rabbits, whose motion by transference makes the horse capable of super-species fleetness? Such a horse/hare hybrid would be a prize in the collection of dual-natured horses.

Dwelling on the hare’s own nature, we find that the fleet-footed little beast has its own distinguishing hair growth, according to early modern natural history. Perhaps the following point owes its interest only to the fortuity of the homonym, but one of the hare’s distinguishing characteristics is its hair. More specifically, the hair in the hare’s foot serves to disprove a conjecture that attempts to explain why humans’ palms and the soles of their feet do not grow hair. One author who enlists the hare for such a purpose is John Banister (1540-1610), who, in *The historie of man* (1578), writes, “In the sole of the foote and ball of the hand grow no heares, and that (say some) because of the broad Tendon: which, the foote of the Hare hauing the same, and yet filled with heare, confuteth. But in deede those partes in man to be without heare, both vse and mouying required: for in the Hare such hearynes furthereth her swiftnes” (Hhiiii) So even if it is hares who give Bourbon’s stuffed horse its fleetness, it is hair that makes those hares so agile.

The Oxford editors' decision to modernize the Folio's "hayres" as hares homonymically and naturally brings us back to hairs. In his 1982 edition of *Henry V*, Gary Taylor allows that at this point in the text, "there may well be a pun on 'hairs,' used to stuff tennis balls" (3.7.13n.); however, he cites an article by J. W. Lever as support for the decision to amend the Folio's "hayres" to "hares." Published in 1953, Lever's "Shakespeare's French Fruits" argues that John Eliot's *Ortho-epia Gallica* (1593), a primer of French dialogues with facing English translations, was a source so colorful for Shakespeare's imagination that traces of it show up in his sonnets and dramatic dialogue, particularly in the second Henriad. Lever argues against the "hair" spelling, which he says is "invariabl[e]" in the editions of the 1950s, and he proposes that an emendation to "hare" gives us "an image far more worthy of Shakespeare" (87, 88). This more Shakespearean emendation, however, is based on a collocation of words assembled first in Eliot's text. Among those words are "ginger," "nutmegs," and "*le cheval volant*," all of which are also found in the Frenchmen's dialogue of Shakespeare's play, between lines twelve and nineteen, where the flying horse stuffed with "hayres" appears. Because the animal "hares" also appears in the same *Ortho-epia Gallica* passage, Lever implies that Shakespeare would include it semantically in his passage. Even if Lever is right in hearing echoes of Eliot in Shakespeare's passage, the playwright does not necessarily have to follow semantically what he hears homonymically in Eliot's passage. The decision (such as that of the Riverside's editors) to read "hayres" as "hairs," suggests a certain logic that opting for "hares" does not. While "hares" may strengthen the verbal collocation with Eliot's text, the tennis ball—evoked in hair as the stuffing in the horse—creates an imagistic parallel with the offering Harry makes to the Dauphin earlier in the play.

Further, being stuffed with hairs would make buoyancy not just an anatomical but an essential feature of the horse, whom Bourbon is so keen to distinguish from other horses, not only in quality but in nature. Bourbon effectively extracts his horse from the animal kingdom (at the cost of its equine fellows) in his praise: “He is indeed a horse, and all other jades you may call beasts” (3.7.22-23). Bourbon reclassifies the equine population so that the term “jades,” usually a derisive, class-inflected term for the least useful, least desirable horses, now encompasses all horses except Bourbon’s, and the term “horse” itself, reserved now only for Bourbon’s creature, designates a species that is not part of the animal kingdom. In light of Boehrer’s thesis that horse-praise connotes the obsolescence of aristocratic values in the period, having Bourbon redefine the common category of horse could be read as further satire of effete, upper-class dotage on horses, with an additional barb for the more philosophically inclined thinkers who regarded the horse as the ultimate beast in the natural order. To be stuffed with hares would give Bourbon’s horse a horrifying diet; to be stuffed with hairs would empty it out of all its normal organs and make flight almost its material essence. This image, of course, also retains enough of the ridiculous to douse Bourbon’s praise in satire. It also points up the effect hair has in determining the nature of a creature in early modern thought.

Perhaps the most unusual aspect of horse hair in the period lies in the belief about its life-producing capabilities. The hair of a horse’s tail exhibits a quite vivid “like-life” in early modern natural history and imagination. In his highly influential *Chronicles* (1587), Raphael Holinshed (c.1525-1580?) writes of the popular belief that “a horse haire laid in a pale full of the like water will in short time stirre and become a liuing creature” (224). Derived from Classical natural history, references to horse hair coming to life are common in early modern culture. The 1651 English edition of Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa’s (1486?-1535) *Three books of occult philosophy*

(1651) reports that “the hair of a Horse taile put into Water, receiveth life, and is turned into a pernicious worm” (F5). Porta’s *Natural magick* similarly says, “We have experienced also, that the hairs of a horses mane laid in the waters, will become serpents: and our friends have tried the same” (G3). The English naturalist Martin Lister (*bap.* 1639, *d.* 1712) corrects the “vulgar error” concerning “animated Horse-haires,” claiming to be able to show, “by an unquestionable observation, that such things as are vulgarly thought animated Hairs are very Insects, nourished within the bodies of other Insects” (H4<sup>v</sup>). The belief in animated horse hairs had special appeal to the English well beyond the seventeenth century. In 1886, J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps penned a manuscript titled *Some Account of the Popular Belief in Animated Horse-hairs, Alluded to by Shakespeare in the Play of Antony and Cleopatra*. He solicits evidence of the phenomenon from his contemporary countrymen, including one in Shakespeare’s hometown:

A friend at Stratford-on-Avon, who kindly made enquiries for me on the subject, thus writes under the date of February, 1865, — “I have made a great many enquiries respecting...animated horse hairs. Some have heard of the change; others have not. One even said that he knew it as a fact, that he tried the experiment, and he was satisfied it was so, and if I would try the experiment he felt certain that I should be convinced.”

As we see here and with Porta above, vivification of horse hair seems to be something that only a friend of a friend witnesses. Halliwell-Phillipps also relates a tale of schoolboys stripping the eel-like product of just such an experiment and finding the horse hair serving as a backbone.

Behind the odd fecundity of the horse hair lies the othering of the female body, made mysterious by women’s alleged ability to similarly generate serpentine life from their own hair. In the 1651 translation of *Three books of occult philosophy* by Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa, a list

of “monstrous generations” includes the generation of scorpions from legless crabs buried underground or from basil bruised between two stones, the engendering of frogs from a duck dried into a powder then moistened, and the births whereby from “the hairs of a menstruous Woman put under dung, are bred Serpents; and the hair of a Horse taile put into Water, receiveth life, and is turned into a pernicious Worm” (F4<sup>v</sup>-F5). Horse and woman align in this list in that they are the only two beings whose hair generates new life. Boehrer notes in *Shakespeare Among the Animals* a “long-standing emblematic identification of sexually active women with mares” (45). Menstruation was a sign of a woman’s sexual maturity and her ability to bear children. The menstrual woman’s difference from the hairy man is highlighted by Stephen Batman: “And through strength of heate and vertue of drie complection, no man hath the passion menstrual as women haue. All superfluities that bee bread in mens bodyes, are eyther consumed by greate heate, or els turned into haire, or are voided by businesse and trauaile” (O2<sup>v</sup>). What separates women from men also separates them from animals. Thomas Lacquer writes that according to ancient wisdom, “humans produce proportionally more semen *and* more menstrual fluid than other animals,” and “humans retain, as a surplus, material that in animals goes into their horns and hair” (38, emphasis in original). Menstruation is a female substitute for male hair, activity, and work, but it also signals the distinctively female capacity to give life. The woman who, like the horse, generates life from her own hair does so only during a certain stage of her menstrual cycle, when the physical sign of both her fecundity and alterity link her to the reputedly lustful mare. The serpents produced by the woman’s hair not only strengthen her equine connection, they also represent the potential transgressiveness of female sexuality. Female non-coital reproduction produces life both across a species barrier and down a link on the chain of being. The meeting of hair and dung—or excrement with excrement—is itself a kind of

coition, mimicking the meeting of refined bloods in human sexual intercourse, and epitomizing the phenomenon of “like-life” in excrements.

§

As the title of Halliwell-Phillips’s brief investigation points out, Shakespeare alludes to spontaneous generation of life from horse hair when Antony, assessing the growing danger of Pompey’s rising popularity among the “slippery people,” says, “Much is breeding / Which, like the courser’s hair, hath yet but life, / And not a serpent’s poison” (1.2.169, 176-78). Pompey is momentarily harmless. He has life—indeed more “blood and life” than “name and power” (ll. 174, 173). The fear is that he is growing into a more dangerous, poisonous creature.<sup>10</sup> Over time, the horse’s hair enlivens by degrees, with an envenomed serpent as its *telos*. The horse has been a significant figure in recent criticism of *Antony and Cleopatra*. Both Boehrer and Paster look to Cleopatra’s exclamation, “O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!” (1.5.21), to comment on equine-human relations in the play and the period at large. Boehrer writes that the function of the remark is “to specify the erotic character of Antony and Cleopatra’s mutual attraction, and to depict it as a threat to Antony’s military identity and masculine self-sufficiency” (102). The image contrasts, Boehrer argues, with depictions of gaunt horses and stoic Roman resolve later in the play, setting up Antony as the vehicle for the movement from martial aristocracy to social leisure class, symbolized by horses (“Social Devaluation” 101-106). Paster uses Cleopatra’s fanciful wish to launch into a discussion of the “intellectual and ethical burden that the play places on Antony as paradigmatic man” (165-66). She writes in explanation of that burden, “Precisely because the heroic accomplishments of the younger Antony seemed to secure the binaries of gender and species, the older Antony’s infatuation in Egypt dismantles them” (166). A sign of that dismantling is that, according to Paster, despite the histories of

---

<sup>10</sup> As Egan points out, Antony’s simile can refer to multiple pending difficulties in his situation (111).

women being troped as horses, treated as property like them, and accused of sexual encounters with them, Cleopatra's "momentary envy of animal affect" stands "entirely apart" from such histories. Instead, Cleopatra "hail[s]" the horse "as a fellow subject united by desire for Antony" (165), and she "finds in the physical and psychological fellowship of desire a reason for denying essential differences between human and animal" (168). Playing a representative role in symbolizing changing (even, degenerating) human social dynamics and in effacing distinctions between humans and animals, the equine species has proven a welcoming entrée into examining the representation of life itself in *Antony and Cleopatra*. In what follows, I, too, take a specific equine representation—the image of the courser from whose hair a pending life emerges—as central to a depiction of life, both animal and human, in the play. Like the hair that the serpent derives from, the particular kind of animal life I am discussing can be called excremental. The horse is not the only source of excremental life in the play: the slimy Nile and patches of dung also produce their share of non-coitally generated creatures. But in the stages of life from living horse, to excremental hair, to living and excremental serpent, I find a governing image for the play's thematic interconnections between varied forms of life and excrements.

When in *Antony and Cleopatra* the eponymous Roman prioritizes his affairs in Egypt over his duties in Rome, his reasoning collocates thematic elements that appear in various combinations throughout the play: land, excrement, nourishment, life, and animals. Antony connects these elements in order to level Rome with Egypt, but he also effaces distinctions between civilization and farmland, and human and animal:

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arch  
Of the ranged empire fall. Here is my space.  
Kingdoms are clay. Our dungy earth alike

Feeds beast as man. The nobleness of life

Is to do thus. (1.1.35-39)

Antony imagines a topographically and politically level surface whose sole value lies in sustenance, not in the kingdoms or the cities built upon it. He resigns human pretensions to dominion over the land by acknowledging that it nourishes animals as well as humans. Rome, then, is no better than a kingdom of clay. But unlike Rome, the dungy, uncivilized land sustains both man and animal, without regard to glory. Claims to the land offer no true marker for distinguishing species. Rome's empire may be ranged, but its leaders are, for all of Rome's pomp, no better than beasts.

The nobleness to which Antony refers is a qualitative judgment, meant to set some life apart from and above other life. Life can refer to a span of lived experience, and the comparison can remain strictly between humans' lived experiences. But the way that Antony frames the statement demands a broader understanding of life, that is, as a phenomenon that animates various forms of being, including plants and animals, as well as humans. The beasts fed by the dungy earth also participate in life. The need for nourishment is one of the most telling equivalencies between humans and animals, and it presents a basis from which humans must try to assert their nobleness. The earth's dunginess also points to another leveler—excrement. In this section, I pursue some of the various aspects of early modern thought concerning the interrelations of life, excrement, and earth as they contribute to both a social leveling among humans, and a species leveling between humans and animals. Certainly a moral discourse of the period conceived of life as divinely sanctioned hierarchy. Thomas Adams (1583-1652) offers a particularly instructive example in *Englands sicknes* (1615):

The excellency of health, is measured according to the Life, which holds it: and the dignity of Life is considered by the cause that giues it, 1. The Life of the Plant is basest, because it consists but in the iuyce which is administred by the earth to the root thereof, and thence deriued and spred to the parts, 2. The Life of the brute creature excels, because it is sensitiue, and hath power of feeling, 3. The Life of man is better then both, because it is reasonable, conciuing & iudging of things by vnderstanding 4. The Life of a spirituall man is better then all the former. (N1<sup>v</sup>)

Adams gives the bottom to top version of Gesner's progress of being that Topsell offers in the beginning of *The historie of foure-footed beastes* (¶3<sup>v</sup>), with the exception that Adams accords life to plants, whereas Gesner does not.<sup>11</sup> Adams can be said to advocate spiritual striving as the nobleness of life. But with its presentation of excremental life, *Antony and Cleopatra* elicits a reading that questions humans' ability to rise out of the dung heap and attain a nobleness of life that sets them above the animals, or one another.

In Antony's declaration of life's nobleness, what "thus" means was once the subject of an editorial crux. A common reading derives from Alexander Pope's addition of a stage direction indicating that the lovers should embrace here. Modern editors find the suggestion plausible, but limiting. John Wilders offers a typical gloss in his Arden edition: "The SD *Embracing* which Pope introduced here, though perfectly acceptable, limits the significance of Antony's statement, which refers not simply to a physical embrace but to their whole way of life" (1.1.38n. 38).<sup>12</sup> Or, the colon that follows "thus" in the Folio, it has been conjectured, points toward the clause that follows it as a restrictive modifier to "thus."<sup>13</sup> I am reading "thus" as a deictic to a physical

---

<sup>11</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>12</sup> Similar glosses of "thus" can be found in David Bevington's *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* and his Cambridge edition, as well as in *The Norton Shakespeare*.

<sup>13</sup> See Marvin Spevack's *The New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare*, 11 n. 48.

expression of affection with Cleopatra. In his ecocritical work, Egan reads this moment as evidence of Antony's "disdain" for biological reproduction, and his celebration of non-procreative sexuality. Because of its fecundity, the earth is implicated in Antony's disdain (110). Indeed Antony celebrates love for love's sake, not for a projected child's. What distinguishes forms of life, and the noble from the ignoble, is not species *per se* but the valuation and expression of affect. Human life, Antony argues, achieves its *summum bonum* in loving embraces, not in sovereignty. Whether through a loving embrace or a lifestyle of loving, Antony and Cleopatra's doing "thus" makes them higher life forms than Caesar and other Romans, but it also distinguishes them from the animals with whom they would otherwise be equals. In its uncontainable intensity, however, the couple's love is as extraordinary as the Nile itself. If to do "thus" is to love as Antony and Cleopatra do, then few in their milieu—or, probably, ours—achieve distinction as more noble forms of life than beasts are. But *Antony and Cleopatra* in fact fails to demonstrate that the expression of love alone separates man from animal. First of all, Antony and Cleopatra are never solely lovers. For instance, Linda Charnes writes, "Unlike Troilus, who renounces his role as lover in order to play the soldier, Antony cannot be the one without being the other" (8). Second of all, with the resolution of another of the play's textual cruxes (the "shard" crux discussed below), we see that hyperbolic expressions of love can liken a man to an animal, one apparently born out of excrement, and one whose love is for excrement.

Yet, for life, excrement is vital. And for the early moderns, excrement could be living. In particular, Shakespeare's play problematizes the categorical distinctions between humans and animals by dramatizing alternative ways that life was thought to take shape. This alerts us to the excremental life that was born outside of the norms of divinely sanctioned birthing. As Susan Singe Morrison has recently written, "Excrement carries hierarchies with it, but it reminds us that

these are delusions, impositions imposed on matter we all produce” (155-56). Waste, according to Morrison, is the “great leveller” (156). Excrement, in various forms and from various sources, is central to the play’s theme of leveling. In the broad early modern understanding of the word, excrement comes from the head as well as the rectum, the earth as well as the body. Excrement takes the form of not only dung, but also hair and animal life, for those animals thought to generate spontaneously from dung and slime are associated with excrement throughout their lives. Shakespeare incorporates these various forms of bodily and topographical waste in a theme of leveling that runs athwart characters’ aspirations to the nobleness of life. With excrement’s productive capacity to generate and nourish life, Shakespeare’s protagonists struggle to define human life over and above the animal life that foregrounds its excremental affinities.

Shakespeare inherited a cultural understanding of the Nile as a location particularly productive, slimy land. The Nile’s spontaneously generative capacity is unusual in its regularity and volume of production. Among the excremental life born out of the Nile region are frogs, beetles, crocodiles, the Nile’s iconic serpents, and other creatures generated spontaneously from the earth, slime, or other excrements. To Shakespeare’s Romans, spontaneous generation appears to be one more curious example of Egyptian excess, like twelve people breakfasting on eight roasted boars. But the phenomenon is all the more fascinating for being a natural operation of the land and the river Nile. Lepidus questions Antony about this particularly Egyptian natural occurrence:

Lepidus: You’ve strange serpents there?

Antony: Ay, Lepidus.

Lepidus: Your serpent of Egypt is bred now of your mud by the operation of your sun; so is your crocodile.

Antony: They are so. (2.7.23-26)

What Lepidus finds strange (foreign, of Egypt), Antony regards as so commonplace that it requires no explanation. That normally oviparous creatures should, without mothers, or eggs, arise from the union of sun and mud marks as much the distinction between people who are used to such a thing and those who are not, as it does between animals generated that way and those who are not. Like the courser's hair, the Nile's mud has the capacity to give serpents life. This form of generation could upset the divine natural order, causing Topsell's protest in his *Historie of Serpents* (1608): "[S]ome Naturalists (especially amongst the auncient Heathen) haue taken the Originall of these venomous Beasts, to be of the earth, without all respect of Diuine and Primary Creation" (B1). Were serpent life to generate from the earth rather than Heaven, Topsell assumes, the distinction would be evident in the serpent's very anatomy: "Therefore it is most certain, that if we consider the outward parts of these creatures endued with life, no man nor nature could begin and make them, but the first Essence or fountain of life" (B1). God guarantees hierarchy and the presumption of human superiority over other beings. As the common source of life, the Creator cannot be undercut by life forms coming into being outside of His agency. Shakespeare, on the other hand, demonstrates another way of thinking, in which a value for life, by an appeal to excrement, can intervene in a discourse of anthropocentric, species-specific, and morally prescriptive superiority. In the disruption of divine natural order that the spontaneous generation of serpents represents, *Antony and Cleopatra* presents an alternative to the traditional hierarchies of animal and human life. The productive capacity of excrement, whether horse's hair, riverbed slime, or dung itself, challenges human claims to

nobleness in life—morally, politically, romantically, and ontologically. As a creature commonly thought to be generated spontaneously from excrements of various natural substances, the serpent is particularly relevant in Shakespeare’s leveling of humans and animals.

Cleopatra invokes the serpent to just such an effect when she picks up, in part, Antony’s early collocation of thematic ideas in her own, more bleak image of social and moral leveling. Her violence toward the messenger who reports Antony’s marriage to Octavia prompts Charmian’s defense: “Good madam, keep yourself within yourself. / The man is innocent” (2.5.75-76). Cleopatra’s response recalls Antony’s image of a melting civilization: “Some innocents ‘scape not the thunderbolt. / Melt Egypt into Nile, and kindly creatures / Turn all to serpents” (ll. 77-79). Again, the effacement of distinction is figured in the liquefaction of civilization. According to Cleopatra’s fantasy, the innocent are as deserving of punishment as the guilty; indifferent nature makes no moral distinction. Animals are, like bearers of bad news, implicated in this moral revaluation. As in Antony’s simile of the courser’s hair, the serpent here is a teleological end of a developing life, as gentle creatures become poisonous. And just as water in a pail provides the condition for horse hair to quicken, the liquefaction of Egypt alters the Nile’s generative power into transformative. All life is leveled for the worse, so that all people receive punishment, and all animals are poisonous serpents. Cleopatra dwells on the fantasy of a watery kingdom of serpents, wishing “half my Egypt were submerged and made / A cistern for scaled snakes” (ll. 95-96). The scourge of diluvial leveling—topographical and moral—is, of course, Biblical. With the Nile as her referent, however, Cleopatra seems to forget

that it is the silt—the dungy earth, the excrement, slime, and ooze left behind—that generates the fearsome life forms she imagines.<sup>14</sup>

Enobarbus also implicates humans—the Western world’s two most powerful ones, to be exact—in an affinity between animal life and the dungy earth when he quips about Antony and Caesar’s relationship with Lepidus: “They are his shards, and he their beetle” (3.2.20).

According to the *OED*, “shard” here means “A patch of cow dung.” In fact, the *OED* uses Enobarbus’s line as one of the textual examples of this usage of shard (“*shard*,” n.<sup>2</sup>). To describe the unusually excessive love Lepidus shows his fellow triumvirs, Enobarbus could not have employed nature in a more apt comparison. Lowly beetles love dung piles as much as imperialists love their fellow, stronger pillars of empire. The leveling of Caesar and Antony to dung patches, however, tying excrement into the play’s theme of leveling, undercuts Antony’s famous pronouncement that displays of love and affection are the very nobleness of life. What distinguishes Antony’s love for Cleopatra from the beetle’s for a shard? Cleopatra herself expresses fears of her own supplanting in Antony’s affection. Indeed, that Lepidus cannot make distinction between Caesar and Antony in his love further emphasizes the failure of differentiation, and prioritization.

Critics have recently demonstrated how Shakespeare’s usage of “shard” complicates interpretation of this passage. In his reading of Enobarbus’s metaphor, Jonathan Gil Harris deploys another denotation of shard—“The elytron or wing case of a coleopterous insect” (“*shard*,” n.<sup>4</sup>). Coleopterous refers to the type of beetle found on cow dung patches. Thus, according to Harris, Caesar and Antony are “the wings that carry the beetle [Lepidus] aloft” (420). Elaborating on what the shards-as-wings image says about the love Lepidus shows the

---

<sup>14</sup> Melting causes the dismantling of age and class hierarchies upon Antony’s death when, according to Cleopatra, “The crown o’th’earth doth melt,” so that “Young boys and girls / Are level now with men” (4.16.65, 67-68).

other two triumvirs, Harris argues that Lepidus “plays the part normally reserved for the mediating woman” in this “version of a homosocial triangle” (420). Modifying Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick’s paradigm of the erotic triangle, Harris postulates a desire of Caesar for Antony, with Lepidus as the mediator, so that

the difference asserted by Enobarbus between the “beetle” and the “shards,” the lowly insect and the soaring wings that elevate it, surely points to a difference of power rather than desire. Both Caesar and Lepidus love Antony; in doing so, both are characterized as desiring a part of their own bodies (be it “shard” or “arm”); both thus participate within the same economy of narcissistic desire glimpsed in Caesar’s loving tribute to his sister as “a great part of myself.” (420)

In this reading of “They are his shards, he their beetle,” Harris treats the beetle and his two wings as each autonomous, desiring subjects, yet he equates any desire of one part for another with narcissism. Harris establishes difference between the beetle and his wings to point up the power difference between Lepidus and the other two triumvirs. This reading reinforces distinction and, in part, resists the play’s leveling impulse. Recently, however, in his “Squashing the ‘Shard-Borne Beetle’ Crux: A Hard Case With a Few Pat Readings,” Timothy Billings presents a persuasive (albeit aggressively-titled) case for glossing Shakespeare’s usage of shard as meaning dung and not wings. Glossing shards as dung patches reduces Antony and Caesar to excrement, and any distinction between them is effaced by the beetle’s excessive love for them both. If we remember that excremental life, such as the beetle, is never disassociated from the excrement that generated or otherwise sustains it, then Harris’s evocation of Sedgwick and narcissistic love holds true, even in light of Billings’s argument for glossing “shard” as dung pile. In other words, if we read dung back into the definition of shard but retain Harris’s notion that Lepidus’s love for

Antony-as-shard is a narcissistic love for a part of himself, then Lepidus-as-beetle who loves dung is a kind of excremental life. The dung that nourishes him is also a part of him, and he loves it.

The “shard-borne” of Billings’s title, (which ought to be modernized as “shard-born” if Billings has indeed settled the crux), comes from the play that immediately preceded *Antony and Cleopatra* in Shakespeare’s career: *Macbeth*. The eponymous character hints to his wife that Banquo and Fleance will be killed

Ere the bat hath flown

His cloistered flight, ere to black Hecate’s summons

The shard-borne beetle with his drowsy hums

Hath rung night’s yawning peal. (3.2.41-44)

The *OED* defines “shard-born” and “shard-borne” as having been “Born in dung; *spec.* applied to the *shard-beetle*” (*Shard-born, -borne, a.*). Throughout the play, we are aware of how important the nature of Macbeth’s rival’s birth is to the vicissitudes of life and political fortune in the play. Like the beetle born in dung, Macduff is not of woman born. In birth, at least, Macduff is more akin to excremental life than other humans. The reference to an animal born by some way other than species reproduction has thematic resonance with the play’s climactic conflict. In moving from *Macbeth* to *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare makes excremental life thematically central with regard to leveling the high and low, and humans and animals.

Given excrement’s encoded lowliness, and its effect of bringing life associated with it down in status, my reading *Antony and Cleopatra* considers how excrement disrupts an early modern cultural narrative that prioritizes some forms of life over others. *Antony and Cleopatra* suggests a way of reading an early modern English relationship to animals, and the earth itself,

that serves as an alternative to the strictly hierarchical notions often associated with the Chain of Being. In the beginning of this chapter, I quoted Keith Thomas's reference to the early modern notion of difference between humanity and other "forms of life." But Thomas also recognizes that difference and dominion were not the only early modern modes of thought regarding the relationship between humans and animals. I have emphasized how a regard for the commonly shared phenomenon of life nuanced the notions of categorical or species-specific superiority. There is a distinction between life and Being, for although "forms of life" can be said to substantiate the categories of Being on the Chain, life for the early modern English also involved a shared experience of the world, a mode of relations between humans and other species that did not prioritize one over the other.

The "Human Ascendency" in Thomas is reversed in *Antony and Cleopatra*, as man's wings—his shards—turn out to be dung after all, and humans live in, live off of, and live out of excrement like all other life. Antony's literal assent in Act 4 involves a body mangled by a botched suicide, hardly a noble end for a Roman warrior. Cleopatra spends her final moments wrangling for her political legacy, making her last erotic and maternal gesture to neither Antony nor her children but to a slimy asp. Even Caesar fails to attain the acclaim that the spectacle of a captured Egyptian queen would have brought him. The pursuits of love and glory end tragically in failure and death. By pointing out the interconnections between life, animals, excrement, earth, and hair in this tragedy, I do not mean to suggest that the value of *Antony and Cleopatra* lies in a notion of the cyclical operations of life—in a circle of life, as it might be called. Such a message is too upbeat (not to mention too naïve) for this play, and little consolation would it be to suggest that Cleopatra's corpse continues the circle by nourishing her asp and other life forms.

However, Australian cultural critic Gay Hawkins articulates an ethics of relating to waste that offers an appropriate mode of thought for reading excrement in *Antony and Cleopatra*:

Sensing how we are in and of the world, not separate and the center of it, means sensing our similarities and interdependence with waste. It means sensing the inevitability of our own wasting. ... I've argued that to be blind to waste and its materiality is to be blind to death and the fact of loss. The refusal to notice waste is the refusal to notice the finality of life. (122)

To cull the ecologically-informed ethics of *Antony and Cleopatra*, we do not need to read tragedy out of the play. We do not need to ignore the poison or the death. Excrement provides a natural, material distillation of life, death, and loss. Being in excrement means being with both life and death. Shakespeare helps us recognize the pervasiveness of this ambivalent, natural substance, both living and dead, life and death. It is in our pipes, under our feet, in our foods, and on our heads. When excrement, the stinking evidence of life and death dancing, shows us the illusionary quality of distinction, and how forms of life—the human and animal—are level on the dungy earth, the challenge that *Antony and Cleopatra* presents us is to re-animate an old crux: “The nobleness of life is to do....”

## Chapter Five

### “Cherishing a Loathsome Excrement”: Reading Humans with the Hair

As we saw in chapter two, tales can be hairy, but this chapter focuses on the storiedness of hair. That the body is a text is by now a commonplace, but as the stuff of corporeal volubility, hair has only begun to tell its tales of the early modern self. A person's hair says a lot about him or her. Men's long hair signaled political allegiance in the 1960s as well as the 1640s. Women's short hair challenged gender norms in the 1920s as well as the 1610s. Red hair has variously denoted treachery, beauty, and Irishness, while balding signals both a decline in vitality and the culmination of wisdom. Length, color, and fullness are variably significant qualities governed by both art and nature. Nature limits each body's range of coiffured signification, but thanks to dye, razors, wigs, and pencils, the body has been able to express an unbounded range of hair's cultural meaning. But hair also has a tendency to relate its own truths: roots begin to show, the wig comes off, the eyebrows smudge. Modern forensic science reads a startling amount of detail from a single hair. Even before the human genome was fully mapped, the body's textuality became a little less metaphorical and a little more literal. The body became a code, or the function of a code, and adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine became the new quadumvirate of the human corporeal make-up. A single strand of hair contains that code, and metonymically contains the identity of the person from whom it falls. But hair expresses more than mere genetic determinism; it also tells (and tells on) its corporeal progenitor's recent activities—use of

cocaine and marijuana, or exposure to heavy metals, for instance.<sup>1</sup> Under the lens of forensic science, hair tells a tale of not only an inward self but also of a storied life, of not only identity but also intention and inclination. The curious early modern reader needed no DNA-extracting technology to produce deep-reaching yarns from the follicular text. The early modern English were avid lecturers in a tradition of reading a life's details in the subject's hair. In this chapter, I will look at early modern readings of human hair to a number of ends: how meaning is constituted in discourses of nature, how meaning is managed through cultural intervention, and the extent to which hair was thought to express identity—not add to it as a part, but materialize it as a whole. The collaboratively authored play *Sir Thomas More* offers an especially constructive literary exploration of these issues.

As an excrescence, whether excremental in all of that word's semantic deployments, hair is a necessarily outward phenomenon. But readings of hair elicit more than surface details of a subject. It reveals the content of the secret self, and, in extreme cases, hair is so essential to a subject's inward self that it grows inwardly. According to the doctor in John Webster's (1578?-1638) *The Duchess of Malfi*, Ferdinand declares that “a wolf's skin was hairy on the outside, / His on the inside” (5.2.18-19), confirming verbally the material but unseeable evidence of his lycanthropy. The Duke then “bad them take their swords, / Rip up his flesh, and try” (ll. 19-20), with an urgent need to make visible what he believes to be the material, corporeal proof of his condition. Paradoxically, what would be the most telling outward sign of his inward condition manifests itself only inwardly. Webster has precedent for Ferdinand's exclamation. In *The liuing librarie* (1621) Philipp Camerarius (1537-1624) writes,

---

<sup>1</sup> See Ian R. Tebbett.

There was one day [...] brought to Pomponatius (a famous Physition in Italy) a sick man troubled with Lycanthropisme, whom certaine husbandmen hauing found lying in a haycock, and taken for a wolfe (because he gaue out that he was one, and cried to them that they were best be gone, or else he would eat them vp) had begun to flea him, to know whether he had wolues-haire vnder his skin, according to the erroneious opinion of the common sort: But at the request of Pomponatius they let him goe, and he, by meanes of some physicall medicines healed him afterwards of his sicknesse. (Aa6<sup>v</sup>)

Ferdinand, then, expresses an “opinion of the common sort” when he makes his strange claim, but it is also fitting in the context of Webster’s play that the Duke should keep within himself the material evidence of his true self. Ferdinand knows his sister through his imagination, wherein lies for him the proof of what he considers her sexual transgressions. He imagines her “with some strong thigh’d bargeman; / Or one o’th’ wood-yard, that can quoit the sledge / Or toss the bar” (2.5.43-45). The rampant sexual appetite Ferdinand attributes to the Duchess falls short of her actual character, even if he correctly adduces her intention to remarry. Likewise, Ferdinand plays the part of a lycanthropic, although the disease fails to manifest materially in the hairy sign that his medical understanding might expect.

Inward hairiness persisted as a sign of character in the early modern reproduction of Pliny’s tale of Aristomenes, a Messinian warrior of great strength and cleverness. Lemnius recounts the extraordinary tale in his *Touchstone of complexions*, noting the warrior’s strength in killing three hundred Lacedmonians, and his craftiness in escaping prison “as Foxes and Weesels do” on more than one occasion. On his final capture, the Lacedemonians, “desyringe to see what was within him, ripped his breast, and found his heart to be ouergrowen wyth hayre” (F3<sup>v</sup>).

Aristomenes provided medical writers such as Lemnius with an example of how character traits might have a material basis in such inward hairiness. Lemnius extracts from Aristomenes's example a general condition that links character traits and anatomy both inwardly and outwardly: "For vehement heate maketh men stouthe of courage, fierce, testie, crafty, suttle, industrious, politicke, of which sorte of men wee fynde in wryting, some, that not onely in their outward parts, but in their very Entrailes and inwarde partes, also haue bin found rough and hayrie" (F3-F3<sup>v</sup>). As with Ferdinand, Aristomenes's inward hairiness attests to a certain animality in his nature. The Lacedemonian anatomists find what seems to be for Lemnius the secret source of Aristomenes's strength and ability, the material, accessible key to an inner truth that is found only in extreme circumstances. The Bureau d'adresse attests to observations that "some notable Warriours and Pirats have had their Hearts hairy" (I4<sup>v</sup>). Even Diemberbroeck testifies to the phenomenon of hairy hearts, drawing on both Classical and contemporary sources:

It is a very rare thing to find the Heart Hairy; which however has been observ'd in some Hearts. As in that of Hermogenes the Rhetorician, by the Report of Caelius Rodiginus. And in Leodina and Lisander the Lacedaemonian, by the Testimony of Plutarch. Also in Aristomenes of Messina, as Valerius Maximus witnesses. Of modern Authors Beniverius, Amatus of Portugal, and Moretus affirm that they have observed hairy Hearts. (Rr1)

Writing in the latter half of the seventeenth century, Diemberbroeck gives tentative but sincere testimony to the possibility of having a hairy heart.

One need not resort to vivisection or autopsy to make the body reveal the secrets of the inward self. The hair of one's head and body were also thought to be signs of inward character traits and dispositions, understood by those conversant in physiognomy or folk wisdom. While

physiognomy raises associations with the “occult” and “natural magic,” it fosters a mode of reading the outward body that was employed even in medical discourse, Galenic or otherwise. For instance, Francis Bacon (1587-1657) in *The Historie of Life and Death* (1638) reads hair for signs of a life’s longevity, finding that the “hairnesse of the lower parts, as the thighs and legges, is a signe of long life, but not of the breast, or upper parts” (G1). Also betokening long life are black or red hair, and hard bristles and thick curly hair (F12<sup>v</sup>-G1). In his highly popular *Castel of helth* (1539; running to some seventeen editions from 1537 to 1610), Thomas Elyot (1490-1546) uses hair as an indication of predominant humors and also the particular elemental conditions of individual organs. The degree of heat and moisture of an internal organ governs the color, and in some cases, the texture and abundance, of hair growing on the skin near that organ. Just as people are subject to imbalances of the elemental qualities, so too are the organs. And so, according to Elyot, the “brayne exceding in heat hath [. . .]the heare growynge faste blacke and courlyd” (B3<sup>v</sup>). Exceedingly cold brains produce hair “strayght & fine growing slowly & flaxen” (A3<sup>v</sup>). Heads with brains too moist are “[s]eldome or neuer balde,” though the enjoyment of the scalp’s plenty comes at a cost, for over-moist brains also exhibit a [w]ytte dulle” (A3<sup>v</sup>). Dry brains produce hard, fast-growing, black hair and cause the head to go bald early, but those baldpates may boast of “wyttes good and redy” (A4). And the descriptions become more complex: intemperately hot and dry brains bring “[m]och heare in childhod and blacke or browne, and courlyd,” but alas, poor child, he goes “[s]oner balde than other” (A4). Elyot’s text is exemplary of the humoral relation between the legible outward and material inward of the body. The elemental condition of the organ produces the outward phenomena, which, in turn, serve as signs confirming the elemental condition of the organ.

The head is not the body's only part to produce telltale hair. In the last chapter, we saw the Aristotelian notion of chest hair as a marker of (male) human exceptionalism, produced by his upright posture and distinguishing him from the naked-bellied four-footed beasts whose breasts need less protection than their exposed backs. For Elyot, the hair on the breast and stomach indicates the elemental qualities of a man's heart. Chest hair remains a marker of certain Western conceptions of adult masculinity, and the reason may be based in the Galenic and Aristotelian traditions. Today, one way of exercising a palatal coercion of boys and young men who refuse foods or drinks they find disagreeable is to bark at them, "It puts hair on your chest!" The phrase suggests that emergence into a pilosity-marked manhood can be induced by the taste buds' offense. The only apparent quality shared by foods and beverages that "put hair on your chest" is their undesirability—a matter of personal taste. From an early modern perspective, this link between diet and hair growth would have made sense, though it would have been more systematically defined in terms of the radical heat and moisture of the food, and the particular body consuming it. Food affected the body's and organ's levels of heat and moisture, which, as we see in Elyot, are two important factors in determining the growth, color, texture, and other qualities of hair.

Chest hair, according to Elyot, indicated the particular complexion of the heart. Men with cold hearts, no matter the level of moisture, lack chest hair. Such cold-hearted men also generally have a "brest narrow" and light pulses, and are fearful and slow to act (A5). These qualities generally contradict the characteristics of ideal manhood, such as those exhibited by hot-hearted men: "The hart hote distempered" produces a broad chest (although the head atop it is small), "quyckenesse in doynge of thynges," "[f]ury and boldnes," and, tellingly, "[h]ardines & manhode moch" (A4<sup>v</sup>). Diemerbroeck confirms Elyot, with some clarification: "Though they

that have hairy Breasts, and Skins, are generally reputed strong; not that the Hair confers any Strength upon the Body; but 'tis a sign the Heart and other Bowels are sound and strong, and then the rest of the Body must be strong of course" (Ccc2). Even in immoderation, the heat of the heart defines manhood; the cold heart does not. Hot hearts attended by distempers in dryness or moisture cause chests and stomachs to be covered with hair, signs once again of hardiness and an alacrity to act, accompanied by a broad chest and strong pulse (A5-A5<sup>v</sup>). A hot and moist heart can make a man "soone angry" and display "[f]iersnes," while he with a hot and dry heart is "[s]oone styred to anger & [t]ryannous in maners" (A5<sup>v</sup>). In both cases the breast and stomach are hairy. While what Will Fisher calls the "ideology of bearded masculinity" (106) deemed wearing a beard a necessary part of being a man, chest hair is also a significant marker in determining manhood.

Body hair also demarcates man and beast. Although categorically, chest hair was thought of as an effect of the definitively human upright posture, too much body hair was animalizing. Making the same physiognomical distinctions as his near contemporary Elyot, Thomas Hill (c.1528-c.1574) emphasizes the difference between bravery and savagery when reading meaning into body hair: "when the breast shall be *only* hairy, [it] declareth a hot and stout person. The whole bodie couered with hayre, both thicke and rough: dooth denote such a person to be of a more brutish will and nature, than manly" (E1, emphasis mine). Hill's qualifying "only" limits hirsuteness to the breast, a pattern that denotes "manhode moch" in the Elyot passage above. When hair spreads from the chest (to the belly for Elyot, to the body for Hill), not only is the subject's gendered status called into question but also his humanity. When stoutness turns to fury, the impassioned subject fails to exercise the restraint of reason, turning the "manly" "bruitish." What is most interesting here is how this scenario need not be acted out but is read in

the hair. Similarly in *The Castel of helth*, the children with hot, dry brains are placed in a narrative of early follicular fullness to early baldness. For Elyot and Hill, hair indicates specific, isolatable character traits, it demarcates forms of being, and it encodes mini-narratives, or life stories.

The early modern beard is the subject of much critical scrutiny,<sup>2</sup> and so I consider it only briefly here. It boasts special status as hair, completing the man just as hair on the head completes a woman in the prescriptive gender norms of early modern English thought. Commenting on the reason that men only, and not women, have ornamental beards to “grac[e]” their faces, Diemerbroeck writes, not unorthodoxly, “because that the first Architect, as he design’d a Distinction between their Instruments of Generation, so was he pleas’d to distinguish between their Ornaments; and therefore he allotted to Man a Beard about his Mouth, which in Women would have been deformed and unhandsom” (Bbb2). The aesthetic judgment passed on bearded women is taken as self-evident. This is a rare piece of circular logic for the anatomist who, on most occasions, delves into causes of anatomy and physiology. He continues that the beard is placed around the mouth as a mark of distinction “at that very time when there is a necessity for that Distinction; that is, at the time when the Procreative faculty begins to move, when it is requisite that Boys should be distinguish’d from Maids by some external Mark obvious to the Sight” (Bbb2). The early modern beard, then, is a “primary sexual characteristic” as Will Fisher has called it. It serves as the visual distinction between men and women, saving the general populace from the “necessity to inspect the Genitals of either Sex, to find the Distinction, which would have been unseemly and shameful” (Bbb2). The beard is, oxymoronically, a functional ornament. This reasoning, justifying the belittlement of men

---

<sup>2</sup> See Will Fisher’s *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* for an in-depth study of beards in the period.

without beards and women with them, founders with the implicit assumption that society need not recognize a distinction between boys and girls because both are equally innocent of procreative capability. It is on this basis that Fisher has referred to children as the early modern period's third gender. In daily life, however, pre-pubescent boys were groomed to be men, most tellingly in their exclusive access to public education.

The full but kempt beard was regarded with reverence in the early modern period. It served as the guarantor of a masculinity that long tresses threatened to negate. But the facial crenosity of bearded men, particularly the elderly, was not exempt from scrutiny. In Thomas Dekker's satiric encouragement of gallants who wear their hair long (discussed in chapter three), there is also an attack on the bearded puritans who would have all men's hair cut short:

Experience cries out in euery Citty, that those selfe-same Criticall Saturnists, whose haire is shorter then their eye-browes, take a pride to haue their hoary beards hang slauering like a dozen of Fox tailes, downe so low as their middle. But (alas) why should the chinnes and lippes of old men lick vp that excrement which they vyolently clip away from the heads of yong men? Is it because those long beesomes (their beards) with sweeping the soft bosomes of their beautiful yong wiues, may tickle their tender breasts, and make some amends for their maisters vnrecouerable dulnesse? No, no there hangs more at the ends of those long gray haire, then all the world can come to the knowledge of. (*Guls horne-booke C4<sup>v</sup>*)

Dekker's rich prose employs the ambivalence toward hair in the exposure of hypocrisy. He is more direct in pillorying the sanctimonious tonsure of the puritan moralists than the disheveled profligacy of the gallants (see chapter three). A certain aesthetic imbalance contrasts the head

hair, shorter than eyebrows, with the beard hanging “so low” as the waist. The fox tail reference performs the work of animalizing the beard style, but Dekker’s images become increasingly grotesque (and gross), first by deploying the variably significant word “excrement,” which the chins and lips “lick vp.” These hairs are not the excrescences of the Saturnists’ own bodies but the lengthy clippings of the young gallants’ ample coifs. Although Dekker does not specifically evoke fecal associations in his use here of excrement, there is a certain redolence, coupled with the disgust of licking up anyone’s hair. From delectating excrement, Dekker moves to a common figure of derision, the lustful but impotent old husband with an unsatisfied wife. The beard now acts, ridiculously, as a prosthetic that compensates for the sensual and sexual deficiencies of old age. Dekker suggests that the beard that serves as a sign of virility in young men attempts to become the instrument of virility in old men. Despite their originality and pointedness. Dekker’s insults are part of a wider range of derision leveled specifically at men in various stages of beard growth, the most familiar insult being the action of plucking someone’s beard. He also participates in the discourse of corporeal prescription that seeks to associate character flaws or moral failings with hair length or style. As Fisher writes, “the early modern writing on beards is often as much prescriptive as descriptive” and that authors “are not so much describing a morphological reality as fashioning one” (99). So closely was hair tied to particular traits that the discourse allowed for the possibility of changing the traits by fashioning the hair of others. In the next section, I will consider a dramatic text that draws on hair’s signification across the inward/outward divide and depicts it as a site of prescriptive control in that moral and political authorities assumed they can manipulate a subject by managing his or her hair.

§

In the case of *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, the cultural ambivalence toward hair is evident in the practice of dramatic composition. Collaboratively penned by several hands with many revisions and extant rejected passages, the play's manuscript exhibits a multiplicity of the sometimes contradictory meanings hair can take on. The scenes involving the long-haired ruffian Jack Faulkner reveal English understandings of the varied ways in which hair created or sustained both personal identity and human status. Scholarly criticism has focused on the authorship and source material of the Faulkner scenes, which are found both in the play's Original Text and, in revised and expanded form, in Addition IV of the manuscript. While the scenes generate much interest in the study of authorship, they also provide an intriguing point of intersection between textual studies and body studies. In both the original and revised versions of his scenes, Faulkner is defined, as a character and as a representative English body, largely by his hairstyle. What changes between the versions is the type of identity that hair is thought to create, and the extent to which haircuts are imagined to change one's identity and, even, ontology.

In both the Original Text and the revised passages, Faulkner makes two appearances. In both versions, he enters as a long-haired ruffian, a boisterous disrupter of the peace, arrested for his part in the Paternoster Row fray between followers of the Bishop of Ely and those of the Bishop of Winchester, whose secretary Master Morris retains Faulkner in his employ. In both versions of this scene, More sentences Faulkner to three years in Newgate unless Faulkner break a vow and cut his hair. Faulkner obstinately refuses to have his locks shorn and so declines the offer of remittance. Offstage, he changes his mind in prison, submits to a haircut, and in his second scene, presents the effects of his haircut. The similarities end there, for the barbered

Faulkner of the revised passages is not the Faulkner of the Original Text. In the Original Text, the newly barbered Faulkner returns to More truly repentant for his lawlessness. In the revised scene, however, Faulkner fakes remorse in the presence of More, but then he returns to his boisterous ways for his Master Morris.

The early modern barbershop was a place of both cosmetic and medical intervention, where the distinctions between the two were not sharply delineated. Faulkner's trip to the barber is not simply for cosmetic care, and More's expectation of a transformation of the ruffian is substantiated by early modern thought. Margaret Pelling has researched the barber-surgeons' role in the sixteenth-century London medical milieu. "Of the groups active in medical practice in cities," she writes, "the best established, and the most numerous, were the barber-surgeons" (83). By the time the Original Text was drafted, the London Barbers' Company had been incorporated with the Surgeons' Company for over fifty years (their 1540 union, however, post-dates the historical action of the play) (84). And whether or not *Sir Thomas More* saw the light of the stage, it was composed for an audience that understood the barbershop as a place of medical intervention. It was also a place, Pelling argues, where clients' interiors could be read on their exteriors: "Even if he did not often practice the more extreme forms of surgery, the barber-surgeon was in a better position even than the tailor to know both the appearance and the reality of his clients. He was responsible for the crucial exposed areas of head and hands, but also dealt in what was hidden" (95). In Pelling's account, the secrets to which barber-surgeons are privy pertain to syphilis, the cause of well-documented facial disfigurement and hair loss. *Sir Thomas More* suggests that the "hidden" aspects accessible to barber-surgeons also included their clients' inward selves.

In the Original Text, written in the hand of Anthony Munday, we find no proper introduction of Faulkner's character, for this scene begins on a lost manuscript page. More's first words to Faulkner, however, contain significant cues to the constitution of Faulkner's complex character: "Methinks this strange and ruffianlike disguise / Fits not the follower of a secretary" (5.1-2).<sup>3</sup> The figure of the ruffian was a recognizable type in the early modern period, distinguished particularly by his hair. Faulkner can be identified as a ruffian by his appearance, or his "disguise," which denoted any form of fashion or dress considered to be out of the ordinary. Thus, for the early moderns, a disguise does not necessarily conceal identity, as it does in the modern sense; it can in fact constitute a distinct identity. If, to modern readers, behaving "ruffianlike" and appearing in a certain "disguise" sound like conditions easily altered by a change in behavior and dress, in the early modern period these terms indicate something more intrinsic to a person's character or temperament.

The description of Faulkner's appearance as "ruffianlike" is a judgment passed on his long hair. Moralists performed their own kind of physiognomy in reading boisterous and brazen characterizations in men's long hair, so Faulkner's long hair is read as evidence of his lawless disposition. Protestant polemicists of the seventeenth century proliferated the rhetoric associating long hair with ruffians. In his 1600 *Exposition vpon the prophet Ionah*, Oxford chancellor and later archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot (1562-1633) complains about "ruffianly companions, whom onely filthinesse of speech or disguised haire, or other swaggering behaiour [...] doth commend" (Oo2<sup>v</sup>). In its gloss of 1 Peter 3.3, Thomas Wilson's (1563-1622) *Complete Christian Dictionary* (1655) deems "vicious" the "dangling locks, like the hair of Ruffians" (Tt3<sup>v</sup>). In his 1628 *The Unlouliness of loue-locks*, the puritan lawyer and

---

<sup>3</sup> References to the rejected passages of the Original Text are keyed to the "Rejected or Alternative Passages" passage and line numbers of the Gabrieli and Melchiori edition. References to the revised passages will follow act, scene, and line numbers of the same edition.

pamphleteer William Prynne (1600-1669) compares the nourishers of love-locks to “the most ouer-growne, Hairie, or deboistest Ruffian” (G1). Thomas Hall (1610-1655) says of ruffians in *The Loathsomnesse of Long Haire*, that a man’s “[l]ong haire is so farre from decency, that it is a great deformity,” and that, especially appropriate to placing Faulkner’s punishment in some context, long hair “makes men look like one come out of a Jayle, like some cheating Rook, or rude Runnagedo” (E4). For Hall, not only is it appropriate for a man in prison to have long hair, it is also appropriate for a man with long hair to be in prison (B5). In the eyes of the moralists, long hair and criminality are so inextricably linked, that the hair itself becomes the crime, *prima facie* evidence of the wearer’s punishable offence. Faulkner’s offence is not limited to his hairdo, although his hair appears to be of more concern to More. Faulkner is arrested for his role in the Paternoster Row fray. The extant Original Text contains no reference to Faulkner’s involvement in the disturbance before he is sent to prison, so More’s sentencing appears to be based on tonsorial profiling alone.

Of course, the moralists did not have the only say regarding the significance of long hair, for “ruffian” is almost always an identity that one ascribes to another, not to the self. Faulkner has a more positive valuation of his hair. In Samson the early modern English had a Biblical precedent for long hair representing something sacred to the self. The same can be said, to a certain extent, for Faulkner. The very hair that could alone justify Faulkner’s imprisonment also becomes for him the material manifestation of his conscience. By extracting this story from a history of Thomas Cromwell and relating it instead to More, Munday gives the ruffian’s hair a certain significance that resonates with More’s own struggle with sovereign authority. Faulkner says he has not cut his hair in three years and will continue unbarbered for another three more, until a vow he has made is fulfilled. The conditions of Faulkner’s vow are fuzzy, and, with a

mixture of sincerity and disingenuousness, More absolves himself of compelling Faulkner to break it:

Sure, vows are holy things, if they be made  
To good intent, and, sir, you shall not say  
You were compelled by me to break your vow.  
But till the expiration of the same,  
Because I will not have ye walk the streets  
For every man to stand and wonder at,  
I will commit ye prisoner unto Newgate,  
Except meantime your conscience give you leave  
To dispense with the long vow that you have made. (5.10-18)

More treats Faulkner's vow respectfully, as it is a matter of conscience which Vittorio Gabrieli and Giorgio Melchiori argue, is an important part of the Protestant Munday's favorable characterization of the Catholic More: "Freedom of conscience was a question that interested the Puritan and non-conformist London middle class even more than the Roman Catholic dissidents. This explains why the vindication of More, by then a martyr of the Catholic Church, was undertaken by Munday, a man who had fought with all means against that Church" (77-78). As Gabrieli and Melchiori explain, in order to downplay the religious aspect of More's disobedience to Henry VIII, Munday glosses over the nature of the articles to which More refuses to subscribe. The play's emphasis, the editors write, is on "the freedom of the individual conscience from worldly authority" (77). The Faulkner episodes present another moment in which More upholds freedom of conscience in the face of state authoritarianism, even as More exercises that authority.

Like the content of Henry VIII's Articles as the play presents them, the exact terms of Faulkner's vow remain unspecified. While Faulkner's disreputability is evidenced in his comportment and appearance, the play text does not question the sincerity of his vow. In Foxe's 1583 text, the vow is an excuse that the ruffian "fell to" when he "was not able to yield any reason for refuge of that his monstrous disguising" (LLL4<sup>v</sup>). Nothing in the Original Text of *Sir Thomas More* suggests Faulkner's vow is a shift. In fact, hair has a particular capacity for materially solemnizing vows, as though memory and intention can be excreted by the body and retained in the hair. William Shakespeare and George Wilkin's *Pericles, Prince of Tyre* features a better known dramatic character whose vow keeps him from cutting his hair. Leaving his infant daughter Marina in Tarsus under the foster care of Cleon and Dionyza, Pericles makes this vow to Dionyza:

Till she be married, madam,  
By bright Diana, whom we honour all,  
Unscissored shall this hair of mine remain,  
Though I show ill in't. (14.27-30)

Marriage promises a settled life for Marina, a life without the constant dislocations that Pericles experiences. Pericles continually leaves behind people he cares about, and though he absents himself from Marina's life, his hair will serve him as a reminder of his parental obligation to see her securely wedded. Pericles alters his own identity in this vow, adopting an ill-favored, ruffianlike appearance that is even less becoming for royalty than it is for a secretary's follower like Faulkner. Thus, Pericles would also experience increasing personal admonishment for each day he lets pass without providing for his daughter's security. The anatomical stuff of Pericles's vow becomes the sign of his mourning and his failure to see Marina safely wed. Being presented

by Cleon and Dionyza with the tomb of the supposedly dead Marina, Pericles “swears / Never to wash his face nor cut his hairs,” according to Gower (18.27-28). Cosmetic neglect quickly changes from a prompt to settling worldly affairs, to a practice of ascetic disregard for the world. For both Pericles and Faulkner, hair materializes a state of mind, or a way of being in the world.

In *Sir Thomas More*, both Faulkner and More read the ruffian’s hair as the manifestation of some inward disposition, whether toward the sacred or the profane. Where the Original Text differs from the revision is in More’s efficacy in making Faulkner read his hair the way More does. More’s reading, as we will see below, is a familiar humoral one. As he is led away to prison, Faulkner protests, “Well, sir, and I may perhaps be bailed ere’t be long, and yet wear my hair—“ (5.21-22). Although his protest is cut off, Faulkner is clearly voicing his attachment to his current hair-do. During his brief imprisonment, Faulkner begins to see his hair not as the product of a solemn disposition but a humorally imbalanced one. In the implausibly short space of seventeen lines, Faulkner apparently loses faith in the prospects of his bail, and Master Morris enters to bring news of Faulkner’s personal reformation: “My lord, being sorry for his rude behaviour, / He hath cut his hair, and doth conform himself / To honest decency in his attire” (46-48). His sudden change, like his vow, might appear calculated, his sacrifice of hair and threads sparing him three years in prison. But when alone with Master Morris, Faulkner attests to the sincerity of his inward change, and how it affects his outward show:

Sir, I confess I have been much misgoverned,  
And led by idle spleens, which now I see  
Are like themselves, mere sottish vanity.  
When in the gaol, I better called to mind  
The grave rebukes of my lord chancellor,

And looked into myself with more respect  
Than my rash heat before would let me see.  
I caused a barber presently be sent for,  
And moved your worship then to speak for me.  
But when I fall into like f[olly again,]  
Cashier me. (69-79)

As this passage demonstrates, Faulkner comes to understand himself in humoral terms. He attributes his riotous behavior to splenetic humors, thought to provoke anger and confusion. Faulkner thought himself to be “led” by his spleen, but he realizes such humors do not govern a subject but only reproduce their own unruliness through him. Faulkner’s hair manifests some inward truth about himself; his decision to be barbered requires him to weigh his vow against More’s reproof. But what appears to be a case of a unidirectional relationship of the inward self fashioning the outward appearance is not necessarily so. It was believed in the early modern period that haircuts could affect the inward self, so Faulkner’s call for a barber appears to be a part of humoral self-regulation. That a haircut might help manage some of the anti-social humors was a theory current in early modern thought. Levinus Lemnius writes of beard trimming in *The Touchstone of Complexions*,

And accordinglye as euerye Countrye hath his peculier guyse, to vse the  
Barbers helpe in trymmynge and handling ye same: for after ye same, euery man  
looketh both smugger and fayrer, and is also of mynde more myeld and tractable,  
so that his outward courage seemeth to reioyce & to be pleasau[n]t and lustye: his  
Memory made more perfecte and cleare: his Spirits (which are they that moue vs  
to do this and that) reuyued and styrred vp: and all the Senses (a litle afore dulled

and broughte as it were a sleepe) shewe forth themselues in theyr most brauery  
and perfection. (Q4-Q4<sup>v</sup>)

Like many medical authors of his time, Lemnius believes hair is an excrement of the third concoction (E7<sup>v</sup>). Cutting hair from the head means removing fuliginous excrements from near the brain. If Faulkner's reform has a humoral basis, then it is necessarily only a temporary change. Just as hair continues to grow and humors alter regardless of a subject's volition, Faulkner's "folly" will return, as though what he has found out about himself while in prison is not a lasting personal truth but merely a brief and unrecognized capacity for civility in the rush and flux of his humors, and the growth of his hair.

As I mentioned above, More's reading of Faulkner's hair is also guided by humoral theory. More, however, does not attribute Faulkner's misgovernance to splenetic humors but instead criticizes the ruffian's appearance from a Galenic standpoint. More refers to Faulkner's hair as the by-product of concoction—this is, excrement. He admonishes Faulkner for previously "cherishing a loathsome excrement" (5.56). Hair binds various discourses in a knot in this statement. Munday's use of "cherish" recalls the association between hair and vegetable life discussed in chapter three. According to the OED, one definition of "cherish" is "[t]o foster, tend, cultivate (plants *obs.*, hair, etc.)" ("*cherish*" v. 2.b.). More's statement registers the anomaly of cherishing excrement in the sense of cultivating bodily waste as though it were life. And, of course, Faulkner can be accused of misplaced affection insofar as to cherish also meant to "hold dear, treat with tenderness and affection; to make much of" ("*cherish*," v. 1.). In its acknowledgement of human care for and personal attachment to their hair, and its simultaneous recognition of hair as a revolting bodily waste, More's statement encapsulates the ambiguous attitude with which the early modern English regarded their hair.

In its larger context, More's statement about "cherishing a loathsome excrement" disrupts Faulkner's previous understanding of himself and even distances him from the category of the human. When the newly-shorn Faulkner returns to the chancellor, More acts as though the man is unrecognizable: "You mock me, surely: this is not the man" (l. 51). More continues to remark on the difference between Faulkner and his former self in a way that denies the possibility of identity between the two: "The other was an ugly filthy knave, / Thou a good featured and well favoured man" (ll. 53-54). Hair helps to make the difference between knave and man here; his excessive hair appears to have negated Faulkner's claim to humanity itself. More's jocular misrecognition of Faulkner leads into a more serious claim about hair's effect on not only identity but also the status of the human:

Why, see what monsters you will make yourselves  
By cherishing a loathsome excrement  
T'abuse the goodly image of a man,  
Whom God did frame so excellent a creature. (ll. 55-58)

More's term "monster" is dense, demonstrating how historical source material enters dramatic dialogue and affects meaning. In Munday's source, the figure of the long-haired ruffian and the street fight on Paternoster Row are compilations of two stories about Lord Thomas Cromwell as he is depicted in John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments*. Thomas More is substituted for Cromwell in the drama. In Foxe's description of the ruffian upon which Faulkner is based, he has

his haire hangyng about his shoulders, after a strange monstrous maner,  
counterfeiting belyke the wyld Irish men, or els *Crinitus Ioppas*, which Uirgil  
speaketh of, as one wearie of his owne English fashion: or else as one ashamed to  
be seene lyke a man, would rather go like a woman, or lyke to one of the Gorgon

sisters, but most of all lyke to hymselfe, that is, lyke to a Ruffin, that could not tell how to go. (LLL3<sup>v</sup>)<sup>4</sup>

We might hear in a ruffian's being "lyke to hymselfe" the source of Faulkner's humors, which "[a]re like themselves" in all their misgovernance. Foxe does not end this description in tautology, for the ruffian is like a "Ruffin," a reference to a demon or devil. Thomas Dekker, the reading public's liaison to the London underbelly and co-author of *Sir Thomas More*, defines Ruffin as a cant term for the Devil in *O per se O* (1616) (M2). Non-standardized spelling, of course, allowed for lexical identification of a ruffian and a Ruffin, or the Devil. Long hair makes Foxe's ruffian such a conglomeration of identities—gendered, national, mythic, and infernal—that, being many things in one, the ruffian cannot but be anything but a monster. Foxe and Munday assume that when a man's hair is deemed inappropriately long (by whatever measure) the man loses his status as a human. Not his appearance like a woman, an Irishman, or a devil alone alter the Godly framing of "so excellent a creature" (l. 58) and transform the long-haired man into a monster, but the *conglomeration* of these identities—signified by the "loathsome excrement"—makes the monster. In Faulkner's genuine reformation, Munday approves the reading of hair as not a bodily part but an excrement, harmful to the self, if not downright bemonstering.

---

<sup>4</sup> It is strange to see in this list Virgil's Iopas, who is often accorded a reverence among English writers as an inspired musician. Iopas might find himself in disrepute here because of an attitude that sometimes linked musicians with riff-raff such as Faulkner. He is one of several fictional and historical musicians disparaged by a German contemporary of Foxe, Heinrich Cornelius, Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486-1535), in the English translation of *The vanity of arts and sciences* (1676). Agrippa writes that "Musick has been always a Vagrant, wandring up and down after sordid hire" and that musicians are "generally of loose behaviour, incontinent in their lives, and for the most part in great poverty and want" (E5). Of course, Foxe need not have drawn a comparison between ruffians and musicians in order to conjure Iopas as a crinite model that he can depict as distinctly not English.

§

The revised Faulkner scenes—thirty lines of which are confidently attributed to Dekker, with the rest less assuredly so—take a decidedly different approach to the role of hair in constituting human identity and status. They also present a much more lively and entertaining version of the ruffian. Summing up the differences between the Original Text and the revision Faulkners, Melchirori writes, “Faulkner, from a semi-articulate moron who ends up with a verse speech of abject recognition of his folly, is transformed into a brilliant manipulator of verbal wit, pretentious and resentful—a fully rounded character” (86). In his first line of the revised scene, Faulkner asserts his human status, or, rather, denies that he is an animal: “Tug me not, I’m no bear” (3.1.49). Disorderly, hairy, and prodded by his captors, Faulkner, were he an animal, would be a bear. In denying his identification with bears, Faulkner is nonetheless affirming his affinities with them. Faulkner is, in the Sheriff’s words, “a ruffian [...] that hath set half the city in an uproar” (ll. 56-57) by inciting the fray in Paternoster Row. We see in the revised scenes a Faulkner who exhibits another ruffian characteristic—unruly speech. This Faulkner is argumentative and subversive with his words.

The Faulkner of the revision also displays a stronger sense of personal identity. He introduces himself to More with telling directness: “My name’s Jack Falkner. I serve, next under God and my prince, Master Morris, secretary to my Lord of Winchester” (ll. 80-82). He is conscious of hierarchy, and proudly asserts his place in it. He makes a strong declarative statement of his name, and demonstrates pride in his service to Master Morris—he cannot seem to register the possibility that he is what others would call a ruffian. Nonetheless, More identifies Faulkner by his hair: “A fellow of your hair is very fit / To be a secretary’s follower” (ll. 83-84). More’s words register a figurative definition of “hair”: “Taken as the distinctive

type of sort or kind,” a definition employed in the phrase “of one hair,” meaning “of one colour and external quality; hence = sort, kind, nature; stamp, character” (“*hair*,” n. 6.). The OED definition, with mathematical exactitude, equates external qualities with aspects of being generally attributed to the immaterial and intangible form of matter—kind, nature, character. In this sense, the early moderns used hair to identify a person *in toto*. When More asks how long Faulkner has worn his hair, the ruffian responds, “ever since I was born” (1.97). Faulkner’s statement, far-fetched though it is (he earlier admits to having been barbered three years previously), shows the extent to which his identity is bound up in his hair. It is the marker of the *idem* of his identity, the self-sameness traceable temporally to his birth. In a sense, Faulkner is plausibly correct. The early moderns did not know that all head hair typically falls out after four to seven years and follicles, for as long as they are active, regrow those hairs (Sherrow xx). More, however, is referring to Faulkner’s current hairstyle, not the ontological origins of Faulkner’s specific hairs: “You know that’s not my question. But how long / Hath this shag fleece hung dangling on thy head?” (II.98-99). Faulkner continues by quibbling on “long,” answering in spatial rather than temporal terms, and saying that his hair length has been “as the fates and humours please” (I. 101). Faulkner’s allusion to the fates lends a cosmic destiny to his hairstyle, as well as diminishing the Fates to the role of barbers. But in light of the variable vitality of hair, perhaps we might take as more than petulance the suggested similarity between scissoring short a life by cutting a thread and by cutting hair.

Like the Original Text character, this Faulkner is humors-conscious, but this time the humors are more directly responsible for his hairiness. The Fates and humors are responsible for both his vow and his hair. While More retains his reverence for vows, Faulkner now demonstrates an apparent glibness about his own:

More: When were you last at barber's? How long time  
Have you upon your head worn this shag hair?

Falkner: My lord, Jack Falkner tells no Aesop's fables.

Troth, I was not at barber's this three years.

I have not been cut nor will not be cut upon a foolish vow which  
as the destinies shall direct I am sworn to keep.

More: When comes that vow out?

Falkner: Why, when the humours are purged: not these three years.

(ll. 104-12)

In this exchange, it becomes clearer that Faulkner's own name is another significant marker of his identity: he occasionally refers to himself in the third person throughout the revised scene. As Laurie Maguire notes, names "mark an individual as unique, as *indiv-id-ual*" (9). His use of third person is a reminder of his name, but even his use of the first person pronoun is at times notable. He says, "I have not been cut" when he means his hair has not been cut, as though his hair is not a *part* of him but his *whole* self. Faulkner's wording gives an indication of how tightly linked are Faulkner and his hair. He is driven more by a personal, supposedly life-long, attachment to his hair than to the "foolish" vow that inspires it. Along with his name, Faulkner's hair attests to his self-sameness, across time, and, like his name, it denotes Faulkner as a whole. If his hair is cut, Faulkner is cut. Not just a part is severed but the whole itself.

As in the Original Text, Faulkner's vow provides his initial justification for maintaining his bodily integrity, but the vow now has a more material, corporeal basis than that of the Original Text's Faulkner. Although Faulkner's vow is set to be fulfilled in a designated period of time, it is also associated with humoral processes. The humors are here not responsible for

Faulkner's unruly behavior but for his vow—when the those humors are out, so is the vow. More's defense of vows is intended to disassociate them from the material, hairy world: "Vows are recorded in the court of heaven, / For they are holy acts" (ll. 113-14). In other words, they do not reside in the hair or in the humors. This revises More's statement in the Original—"Sure, vows are holy things, if they be made to good intent—by pointedly locating the essence of a vow in heaven, not in the vague, possibly material "things" of the Original Text (5.10-11). Again, More honors Faulkner's vow with a prison sentence, allowing him to wear his hair, but not in public: "it is an odious sight / To see a man thus hairy" (3.1.117-18). He offers to reduce the sentence from three years to one month if Faulkner decides to barber. I suggested above that Faulkner's office and sense of social place are important to him, and we will see how the resolution of his plot bears this out, but, as he is carted away, he appears to value his hair above office: "I'll not lose a hair to be lord chancellor of Europe" (l. 122).

In the revision, eighty-two lines fill the space between Faulkner's exit and Master Morris's entrance. Faulkner follows, presenting himself as "a new man" (l. 225). Again More protests that Faulkner is not himself. Faulkner's response is more emphatic than his Original counterpart's: "And your lordship will, the barber shall give you a sample of my head. I am he in faith, my lord, I am *ipse*" (ll. 227-29). He considers his hair to be not an excrement but a part of his head, and he suggests it has the power to identify him with the accuracy of modern forensic analysis. Furthermore, the last three words, written in Dekker's hand in the manuscript, give Faulkner a technical vocabulary of selfhood, even as they contradict his claim to be "a new man."

Even before More takes his leave of him, Faulkner hints that his transformation is not total:

More: Why, now thy face is like an honest man's.

Thou hast played well at this new cut and won.

Falkner: No my lord, lost all that ever God sent me.

More: God sent thee into the world as thou art now,

With a short hair. How quickly are three years

Run out in Newgate. (ll.230-35)

More wants to impose a reading of human nature on Faulkner's face. In doing so, he engages in a reading practice associated with physiognomy, of which Sibylle Baumbach writes, "Physiognomy is above all an art of *reading*, of deciphering and interpreting a text, whose reception depends heavily on the eye of the beholder and thus a specific social, historical, and cultural context, which informs the understanding and expectations of the document it faces" (99). In the context in which long hair denotes the ruffian, More can read the barbered Faulkner as "honest." But the honest face is largely of More's own making. He believes that subjects are not only legible through their faces but also that the state can discipline subjects through even painless corporeal alteration. Again Baumbach's insights are applicable: "[Physiognomy] provides the tools not only to decipher and understand but also to alter, rewrite, or even reinvent the signatures in the book of nature by offering ways to re-fashioning the body" (15). Faulkner, on the other hand, resists the notion that what is unfavorable in human character can be hacked off like so many inches of locks. More's beliefs are premised on the notion that hair is excrement, Faulkner's on the premise that hair is a body part formed by God, like all other body parts. Furthermore, Faulkner's hair again stands for the entirety of his being; in losing it he loses "all" God has given him. That he is referring to his personhood and not personal possessions is evident in More's likening the newly-shorn Faulkner to the newly-born Faulkner.

When Will Fisher writes of the revised scene that “Faulkner’s personal reformation is quite literally enacted by removing his hair” and that barbering “brings about a total self-transformation” (126), he in fact more accurately describes the Original Text Faulkner. The ruffian of the revision only feigns reformation before More, and incompletely at that. Once More leaves Faulkner alone with Master Morris, we see a Faulkner who is as ruffianly as ever. In the revision, Faulkner defies the logic of state control through hair management. In his private dialogue with Master Morris, his excitation shows the depth of his attachment to his tresses: “And the locks were on again, all the goldsmiths in Cheapside should not pick them open. ‘S heart, if my hair stand not an-end when I look for my face in a glass, I am a polecat” (3.1.243-46). With his conventional punning on the word “lock” as both a group of hairs and a metallic bolt that bars access to rooms, chests, or diaries, Faulkner also activates the dual associations with goldsmiths, who dealt in precious metals and picking locks. Faulkner places inestimable monetary value on his lost hair when he claims that not even the collective efforts—and, by implication, the monetary resources—of Cheapside’s goldsmiths could wrest his hair from him again. Yet Faulkner still has some hair, which he expects will manifest signs of fear when he looks into a mirror and does not find his face. When he says he will “look for” his face in a glass, he employs a phrase that implies uncertainty about what he will find. According to the OED, two uses of “look for” were current in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries. The first denotes the expectation or anticipation of something, a state of being on the watch (“*look*,” v. 15.a.). The second, “To seek, to search for,” is the sense that Faulkner employs here (15.b).<sup>5</sup> In either case, the phrase indicates that a reflective surface can no longer reliably present Faulkner with his image. Although he may find a face in the mirror, lacking his lengthy hair,

---

<sup>5</sup> According to the OED, the sense of “look for” meaning “To look at, to observe” was not active until the late eighteenth century (15.c.).

that face is not one Faulkner would call “my face.” So thoroughly is his identity changed that the reliable stand-by of physical self-reflection fails him. He is gone, and the horror that his absence causes is, appropriately, demonstrated by his remaining hair standing on end.

If Foxxe painted the long-haired man as a monster of multiple identities, Faulkner does the same for the short-haired man. He compares himself to a Brownist (l. 247), a madman (ll. 250-51), a sheared sheep (l. 254), and a “Sar’cen” (l. 258). He also behaves like a ruffian, threatening violence to “that rogue Tom barber” (l. 247), and even questioning More’s sentence (ll. 253-55). The persistence, and intensification, of Faulkner’s signature defiance suggests a personal identification between person and locks. In that Faulkner remains the ruffian, More’s logic about rehabilitative barbering is discredited, but Faulkner clearly feels himself to be nonetheless changed by his haircut. More’s act of identity theft leaves Faulkner with only his name, which he begins to utter with increased frequency: “Does he begin sheep-shearing with Jack Falkner?” (ll. 254-55), “Make a Sar’cen of Jack?” (l. 255), “must Jack march with bag and baggage?” (l. 271), and “Falkner flies another pitch” (ll. 279-80). His hair and his name seem to represent Faulkner’s two primary links to his personal identity. The former lost, Faulkner asserts even more the latter in a bid to maintain some sense of self. Maguire hits on a formulation that may help to explain Faulkner’s sense of himself in the revised scene: “Personal name, personal identity; professional name, professional identity: lose one part of the symbiosis and you lose the other” (49). Faulkner presents a case where personal name and professional identity are linked. His frequent assertion of his name works to compensate for the loss of his hair, and it also provides an anchor to his professional identity.

While he acts as if he has lost at least half himself to the barber, Faulkner realizes that his social position is another precariously detachable part of his selfhood. His tantrum causes

Master Morris to dismiss him from his service. Faulkner's fury then turns to comic bathos as he fawns on Master Morris:

Faulkner: Why then, a word Master Morris.

Morris: I'll hear no words, sir, fare you well.

Falkner: 'Sblood, farewell?

Morris: Why dost thou follow me?

Falkner: Because I'm an ass. Do you set your shavers upon me, and then  
cast me off? Must I condole? Have the fates played the fools, am I their  
cut? Now the poor sconce is taken, must Jack march with bag and  
baggage? *weeps* (ll. 264-71)

While his speech remains bawdy and contestational, like a ruffian's, Faulkner's affect has changed quite. Seeing his person and place diminishing to the point that he feels that the fates have cut short his life, Faulkner is reduced to tears. Losing his place in Morris's service triggers Faulkner's breakdown, but his loss of hair is closely connected to his social loss. His lament over his dismissal contains punning references to his barbering—"shavers," "cut," "sconce"—and Faulkner suggests his two losses are related attacks by Morris himself. Only when brought to this point of emotional distress does Faulkner show any genuine contrition. Once again he links the fates and the humors, this time in reaffirming his desire to keep his place: "I care not to be turned off, and 'twere a ladder, so it be in my humour, or the fates beckon to me. Nay pray sir, if the destinies spin me a fine thread, Falkner flies another pitch. And to avoid the headache hereafter, before I'll be a hairmonger I'll be a whoremonger" (ll. 277-81). Faulkner's references to being turned off the ladder and to a headache foreshadow the execution of Thomas More, but Faulkner avoids the same fate by making a new vow, reversing his old one. Mark Thornton

Burnett writes of Faulkner that he “is normalized when his locks are forcibly cut” (26). Burnett treats the barbering as part of a pattern of authority neutralizing threats made by servants (25-26). We might see Faulkner as representative of the same ambiguities Burnett finds in More: “he espouses a doctrine of the body politic which he does not strictly obey; and it is unclear if he is a servant of the court or a master of the people” (26). Faulkner’s politics are literally bodily, but he goes back on them when he sacrifices his hair to other interests. His divided loyalties between “Jack Faulkner” and his master Morris demonstrate dual aspirations toward (self-)mastery and service. Again, hair is associated with the fine threads by which the fates measure out life. Now that he is eschewing his old hairstyle and former behavior, the fates’ thread conjures negative associations. Commenting on the destinies’ “fine thread,” Faulkner evokes the proverb, “if the destinies spin me a fine thread, Faulkner flies another pitch” (ll. 279-80). In his resolve to defy the fates and fly his own pitch, Faulkner employs falconry imagery (nominally coming into his own) and asserts his self-making ability. The former ruffian makes a claim to autonomy and individuality that resists the deterministic discourses of the fates, or of the humors that Faulkner so often associates with the fates. A haircut brings new social life to Faulkner.

The texts of *Sir Thomas More* represent split ends in English thought about hair. In the Original, Faulkner’s foul temperament is coextensive with his hair, which is itself a loathsome excrement that deforms the human body. More’s reasoning that a haircut is part of a self-regulation that also cures Faulkner of his splenetic intemperance is borne out by Faulkner’s reformation. The text does not specifically state (as Will Fisher does) that the haircut effects the change in attitude, but it is certainly a necessary part of changing the ruffian to a man. The revised scenes present a Faulkner whose hair is also important to his identity, but as it is not considered an excrement, it cannot be disposed of without causing psychological harm to the

subject. Erik Gray has written that one of hair's remarkable qualities is that it can be cut from the body "without doing damage to the body, and without even doing permanent damage to the hair itself, which can grow back" (221). But the enforcement of tonsorial norms is hardly presented as a painless operation in the revised Faulkner scenes. Faulkner's sense of loss after his haircut reveals the extent to which his life's history and his personal identity are bound up in his hair. These two positions demonstrate two shared assumptions about hair. The first is that it materializes some aspect of the inward self, whether it is the conscience, humoral complexion, or temperament. The second is the belief that hair care is an effective way of managing, even altering, the inward self, either as a method of bodily waste disposal for the better, or as the more malign practice of corporeal control. The scenes of hair care in *Sir Thomas More* are exemplary of Stephen Greenblatt's statement about the transitive potential of self-fashioning: "the power to impose a shape upon oneself is an aspect of the more general power to control identity—that of others at least as often as one's own" (1). The self can be read in the hair, but that self can also be rewritten with the barber's instruments.

## Epilogue

In this dissertation, I have argued for the centrality of hair as a tropological indicator of continuity on the variegated scale of life. I have suggested that seeing their hair as living also caused the early modern English to think of their hair as manifesting connections to other forms of life. For instance, in the theory that hair is living, its life can be described as a vegetative one. And to the extent that humans display certain hair patterns, their natures can be read as animalistic. But the open question regarding the exact nature of hair as a substance helped to produce the cultural ambivalence surrounding the bodily substance. In his article on severed hair from Donne to Pope, Erik Gray writes that “hair is divine yet earthly, vulnerable yet resilient, disposable and all-important, both living and lifeless” (233). The literature of the period bears out these various sources of the ambivalence hair provokes. What Gray does not consider is that at the heart of these conflicting significations is the soul. As a reminder that the very soul is at stake in the debate over the nature of hair, Lemnius writes of the effects that excrements have on the soul. After advising his male readers to keep their beards trim and their hair short, he recommends they brush their teeth, pick their ear wax, clean their noses, hawk, sneeze, urinate, defecate, and evacuate “their ordinary Excrements” so that “not onelye the Memorye, but also all the Organes of the mynde beside, and euery seuerall faculty of the Soule shalbe well enabled throughlye and without stoppe or let, to discharge and do their proper functions and offices” (Q4<sup>v</sup>). For those philosophers for whom hair was just one in a host of bodily excrements, it

necessarily caused harm to the soul, and made a monster of a man (in the extreme case of Thomas More's view of Jack Faulkner in *Sir Thomas More*), or it brought him closer to the animal.

In Abraham Fleming's (1522-1607) translation of *A paradoxe, prouing by reason and example, that baldnesse is much better than bushie haire* (1579), the fifth-century Greek bishop Synesius of Cyrene specifically ties the question of pilious difference between humans and animals not to merely the presence or lack of hair on the human, but more specifically to the question of hair's vitality:

For, what is the haire, but a certeine thing voide of life, yea a dead thing, belonging to the partes of the bodie undued with sense and feeling? Bestes therefore which are farre from vnderstanding and reason, haue all their bodie ouergrowne with haire: but man, for that he is partaker of a more excellent estate of life, appeareth more naked and bare, but lesse hairie. And to the ende he might not keepe companie with other creatures, his haire groweth not euerie where: but scatteringlie here and there. (Biiii)

Like Chapman's *Justification of a strange action of Nero*, one of the characteristics of Synesius's attack on hair is its tendency to take moral and natural philosophical debates to a logical extreme. This passage collocates the topics of hair's vitality, the levels of soul, and humans' place in the natural world. Synesius associates hair with sense. Therefore, animals, whose highest psychological capacity resides in the sensual soul, are hairy over almost all their bodies. Humans, who have a sensual soul subservient to the rational, manifest this psychological state in the relatively diminished pilosity of their bodies. The interesting conclusion is that because of this disparity in body coverage, humans cannot keep society with animals. The reverse

implication, of course, is that hairiness links humans and animals at an essential level, not of the body alone but also of the soul. For Synesius imagines a perfectly bald world, which, of course, was just not the reality for England's hairy beings.

The other possibility for hair was that as a living part, it did not diminish the humanity of the human. As we saw in chapters two and three, Daniel Sennert and Ysbrand Diemerbroeck were two influential Continental thinkers whose arguments that hair is a body part and not an excrement found expression in the English vernacular. But whereas Sennert denies hair's lowly excremental status without speaking of the hair as necessarily ensouled, Diemerbroeck attributes pilious life to ensoulment:

The Form of the Hair is two-fold; the one Essential, and the other Accidental. The Essential Part is that which gives the Hair its Being and Life, which is its Soul. And because this Form is to us unknown, and the Presence of it only perceptible to the Mind, nor can well be express'd in Words. We, with other Physicians (who take their temper from whence all their Action proceeds, for the Form of the Parts) will likewise agree, *That their Essential Form is their cold and dry Temper.* The Accidental Form of the Hairs, is their Figures and Shape, whatever it be, long, crooked, straight, curl'd, round, square, &c. (Bbb2, emphasis in original)

Diemerbroeck's ensouled hair is like a body in miniature, having an essence and accidental properties, the essence defying sense perception with a certain ineffability. By *fait*, Diemerbroeck and "other Physicians" make themselves metaphysicians and materialize the essence of this little soul of hair.

In no early modern discourse is hair so lively as in the literary, and in closing this dissertation, I want to look at a few of the many moments in Shakespeare's drama when hair claims life—if not *a* life—of its own. After the Duke of Milan has ordered the banishment of Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Proteus and Lance eagerly search him out. There is uncertainty over Valentine's identity when they find him, but Lance claims to know him to the very hair:

Proteus: What seest thou?

Lance: Him we go to find. There's not a hair on's head but 'tis a Valentine.

Proteus: Valentine?

Valentine: No.

Proteus: Who then—his spirit?

Valentine: Neither.

Proteus: What then?

Valentine: Nothing. (3.1.190-198)

One aspect of hair's like-life in Shakespeare is its proper naming. Each of Valentine's hairs has an identity, conferred by a proper name. And Valentine is all the more present, all the more himself, and all the more materialized, by virtue of his parts' identity. For while the hairs all possess some identity that distinguishes them from others' hair (Lance's observation implies the possibility that some hairs could have been not-Valentines), the hairs receive their name from the man and are copies of him. Each of Valentine's hairs presents a synecdochal relationship of part to whole, but the hairs are also fractals of Valentine. This super-presence of Valentine presents a stark contrast to how Valentine views himself at the moment—without Sylvia, nothing.

In the scene of Gloucester's interrogation in *King Lear*, Regan initiates the corporeal abuse that ends with her host's blinding by first plucking his beard. Injustice infuses life in Gloucester's deracinated whiskers, as the Earl reproves his captor:

Naughty lady,

These hairs which thou dost ravish from my chin

Will quicken and accuse thee. I am your host.

With robbers' hands my hospitable favours

You should not ruffle thus. (*Tragedy of King Lear* 3.7.36-40)

There is a sense of the hairs representing Gloucester's property. As the Norton gloss indicates, "favours" here refer to Gloucester's facial features. To ruffle Gloucester's whiskers is akin to rifling his silver. Answering hospitality with insult takes something from Gloucester, and in the economy of early modern embodied manhood, the hairs from his beard prove to be no trivial loss. More to the purpose, the ravished hairs take on a moral agency of their own, as if by virtue of their having been plucked from Gloucester's face. Not age, but suffering insult gives the hairs a voice with which to speak. They "quicken" into a kind of like-life, independent now of their originator's face but invested in his interests. They take on a voice and the agency to "accuse" when Gloucester is powerless to do so.

Throughout Shakespeare's canon, hair takes on a multitude of like-lives, from the sexton's beard that appears to Petruchio so thin and hungry that he tries to feed it by throwing sops from his wine at it (*Taming* 3.3.43-49), to the self-moving, unwinding locks described by the Ghost of Hamlet's father (*Hamlet* 1.5.18-20); from Troilus's white whisker, Priam, that fathers the fifty other whiskers on his chin, including the forked cuckold whisker Paris (*Troilus and Cressida* 1.2.140-55), to Othello's mendacious boast about murdering Cassio: "Had all his

hairs been lives, my great revenge / Had stomach for 'em all" (*Othello* 5.2.81-82) and Siward's punning homage to his fallen son: "Had I as many sons as I have hairs / I would not wish them to a fairer death" (*Macbeth* 5.11.14-15). Shakespeare was aware of the assumption that hair is an excrement, and the anomaly of Gertrude's attribution to "life in excrements" registers the ambiguity that puzzled many an early modern natural philosopher and medical writer. The hair of his canon is overwhelmingly more alive than dead, more meaningful body part than meaningless excrement. Life makes for more interesting drama, and the more thoroughly alive characters, who are vital down to their very hairs, are more interesting characters.

## Works Cited

- Abbot, George. *Exposition vpon the prophet Ionah*. London, 1600.
- Adams, Thomas. *Englands sicknes*. London, 1615.
- Addison, Joseph. *The Spectator*. No. 519. Saturday, October 25, 1712. Ed. Donald F. Bond. 5 vols. Vol. 4. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. 345-49.
- Agrippa, Heinrich Cornelius. *Three books of occult philosophy*. London, 1651.
- — —. *The Vanity and vncertaintie of arts and sciences*. London, 1569 and 1676.
- Ainsworth, John. *The trying out of the truth*. Amsterdam, 1615.
- Aleyn, Charles. *The historie of that wise and fortunate prince, Henrie of that name the seventh*. London, 1638.
- Anderson, Judith. "Belphoebe." *The Spenser Encyclopedia*. Gen. ed. A. C. Hamilton. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990. 85-87.
- Anonymous. *Taming of a Shrew: The 1594 Quarto*. Ed. Stephen Roy Miller. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Apostle, Hippocrates G., ed and trans. *Aristotle's On the Soul (De anima)*. Grinnell, Iowa: Peripatetic Press, 1981.
- Aristotle, *De anima*. Trans. R. D. Hicks. New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006.
- — —. *Generation of Animals*. Trans. A. L. Peck. *Loeb Classic Library*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1943, rpt. 1953.
- — —. *History of Animals*. Trans. A. L. Peck. *Loeb Classic Library*. Vol. I. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.
- — —. *Parts of Animals*. Trans. A. L. Peck. *Loeb Classic Library, Aristotle in Twenty-Three Volumes*, Vol. XII. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Ashworth, William B., Jr. "Emblematic natural history of the Renaissance." In *Cultures of*

- Natural History*. Eds. N. Jardine, J. A. Secord, and E. C. Spary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. 17-37.
- Bacon, Francis. *The historie of life and death*. London, 1638.
- Banister, John. *The historie of man*. London, 1578.
- Barbour, Kathryn A. "Thomas Carpenter. Scholar (M.A.): Probate Inventory. 1577." In *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-Lists*. Volume V: PLRE 113-37. Eds. R. J. Fehrenbach and E. S. Leedham-Green. Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993. 24-36.
- Batman, Stephen. *Batman vpon Bartholome*. London, 1582.
- Baumbach, Sibylle. *Shakespeare and the Art of Physiognomy*. Tirril, Penrith: Humanities Ebooks, 2008.
- "Bed," n., 1.; n. 8. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50019155>>.
- "Bedded," ppl., a.5. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50019184>>.
- Behnke, H. Dietmar. "Plant Trichomes—Structure and Ultrastructure: General Terminology, Taxonomic Applications, and Aspects of Trichome-Bacteria Interaction in Leaf Tips of *Dioscorea*." In *Biology and Chemistry of Plant Trichomes*. Eds. Eloy Rodriguez, Patrick L. Healey, and Indira Mehta. New York: Plenum Press, 1984. 1-21.
- Berger, Harry, Jr. *The Allegorical Temper: Vision and Reality in Book II of Spenser's Faerie Queene*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Billings, Timothy. "Squashing the 'Shard-Borne Beetle' Crux: A Hard Case with a Few Pat Readings." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 56 (2005): 434-47.
- Black, Robert. "The Philosopher and Renaissance Culture." In *Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Philosophy*. Ed. James Hankins. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007. 13-29.
- Blits, Jan H. *The Soul of Athens: Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2003.
- Blundville, Thomas. *The arte of ryding and breakinge greate horses*. London, 1561.
- — —. *The fower chiefyst offices belonging to horsemanshippe*. London, 1566.
- Boehrer, Bruce. *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Nature and Society in the Drama of*

- Early Modern England*. New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- — —. “Shakespeare and the Social Devaluation of the Horse.” In Raber and Tucker. 91-111.
- Boswell, Jackson Campbell. *Milton’s Library: A Catalogue of the Remains of John Milton’s Library and an Annotated Reconstruction of Milton’s Library and Ancillary Readings*. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1975.
- Braddus, James W. *Spenser’s Allegory of Love: Social Vision in Books III, IV, and V of The Faerie Queene*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1995.
- Bryskett, Lodowick. *A discourse of ciuill life*. London, 1606.
- Bullinger, Henry. *Fiftie godlie and learned sermons diuided into fiue decades*. London, 1577.
- Bulwer, John. *Anthropometamorphosis, man transform’d*. London, 1653.
- Bureau d’adresse et de rencontre. *General collection of discourses of the virtuosi of France*. Trans. G. Havers. London, 1664.
- Burnett, Mark Thornton. *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1997.
- Burton, Robert. *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Ed. Holbrook Jackson. New York: New York Review of Books, 2001.
- Bushnell, Rebecca. *Green Desire: Imagining Early Modern English Gardens*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003.
- Camerarius, Phillipp. *The living librarie, or, Meditations and observations historical, natural, moral, political, and poetical*. London, 1621.
- Caracciolo, Pasquale. *Gloria del cavallo*. Venice, 1561. Qtd. in Tobey, 81.
- Castiglione, Baldassare. *The courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio*. Trans. Thomas Hoby. London, 1561.
- Chapman, George. *A iustification of a strange action of Nero; in burying with a solemne funerall, one of the cast hayres of his mistresse Poppaea. Also a iust reproofe of a Romane smell-freast, being the fifth satyre of Iuuenall. Translated by George Chapman*. London, 1629.
- Charlton, William. “Aristotle’s Definition of Soul.” *Aristotle’s De Anima in Focus*. Ed. Michael Durrant. London: Routledge, 1993. 197-216.

- Charnes, Linda. "What's Love Got to Do with It?: Reading the Liberal Humanist Romance in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*." *Textual Practice* 6 (1992): 1-16.
- "Cherish," v. 1., 2.b. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50037754>>.
- "Civet," n.<sup>1</sup> 2. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50040540>>.
- "Control," v., 3.b. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50048962>>.
- Crooke, Helkiah. *Mikrokosmographia*. London, 1616 and 1651.
- Dekker, Thomas. *O per se O*. London, 1616.
- — —. *The guls horne-booke*. London, 1609.
- Diemberbroeck, Ysbrand van. *Anatomy of human bodies*. London, 1689.
- Edwards, Peter. *Horse and Man in Early Modern England*. New York: Continuum Books, 2007.
- Egan, Gabriel. *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism*. London: Routledge, 2006.
- Elton, W. R. "Shakespeare and the Thought of His Age." In *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare Studies*. Ed. Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986. 17-34.
- Estienne, Charles. *Maison rustique*. Trans. Richard Surflet. London, 1600.
- "Excrement," n. 1., 2.b. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50079708>>.
- Elyot, Thomas. *Bibliotheca Eliotae Eliotis librarie*. London, 1542.
- — —. *Castel of helth*. London, 1539.
- Eveready Battery Company, Inc. "Quattro for Women® Razor TV Ad." Schick Quattro for Women. N.d. 7 Feb. 2010. <[http://www.quattroforwomen.com/media\\_razor.php](http://www.quattroforwomen.com/media_razor.php)>.
- Fallon, Stephen M. *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.
- Fechenham, John de. *This book of sovereign medicines against the most common and known*

- diseases*. Folger MS V.v. 129.
- Fisher, Will. *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- “*Fleabitten*,” a. 2. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50085987>>.
- Floyd-Wilson, Mary and Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. “Introduction: Inhabiting the Body, Inhabiting the World.” *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England*. Eds. Floyd-Wilson and Sullivan. New York: Palgrave, 2007. 1-13.
- Foxe, John. *Actes and monuments*. London, 1583.
- Fudge, Erica. *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006.
- — —. ““The dog is himself”: Humans, Animals, and Self-Control in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.” *How to Do Things with Shakespeare: New Approaches, New Essays*. Ed. Laurie Maguire. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008. 185-209.
- Gabrieli, Vittorio and Giorgio Melchiori. “Introduction.” *Sir Thomas More. The Revels Plays*. Eds. Gabrieli and Melchiori. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990. 1-53.
- Galen, *Mixtures*. *Galen: Selected Works*. Trans. P. N. Singer. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. 202-89.
- — —. *On the Usefulness of the Parts*. Trans. Margaret Tallmadge May. Vol. II. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1968.
- Gerard, John. *The herbal or Generall historie of plantes*. London, 1633.
- Gibson, Thomas. *The anatomy of humane bodies epitomized*. London, 1682.
- Gouge, William. *Learned and very useful commentary*. London, 1655.
- Gray, Erik. “Severed hair from Donne to Pope.” *Essays in Criticism* 47 (1997): 220-39.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980, 2005.
- Grew, Nehemiah. *Anatomy of plants with an idea of a philosophical history of plants*. London, 1682.
- “*Hair*,” n. 6. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50101481>>.

- Hall, Joseph. *Contemplations vpon the principal passages of the holie historie*. London, 1615.
- Hall, Thomas. *Comarum akosmia: the Loathsomenesse of Long Haare*. London, 1654.
- Halliwell-Phillipps, J. O. *Some Account of the Popular Belief in Animated Horse-hairs, Alluded to by Shakespeare in the Play of Antony and Cleopatra*. Folger Shakespeare Library S.a.173
- Harding, Harry and George Rogers. "Physiology and Growth of Human Hair." In *Forensic Examination of Hair*. Ed. James Robertson. Philadelphia, Taylor & Francis, 1999. 1-77.
- "Hare," n. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50102617>>.
- Harris, Jonathan Gil. "'Narcissus in thy Face': Roman Desire and the Difference it Fakes in *Antony and Cleopatra*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45 (1994): 408-25.
- Harvey, William. *Anatomical exercitacions concerning the generation of living creatures*. London, 1653.
- Hawkins, Gay. *The Ethics of Waste*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
- Heywood, John. *A Dialogue of Proverbs*. Ed. Rudolph E. Habenicht. Berkeley: University California Press, 1963.
- Hill, Thomas. *A pleasant history declaring the whole art of physiognomy*. London, 1613.
- Hillman, David and Carla Mazzio. "Introduction: Individual Parts." In *The Body in Parts: Fantasies of Corporeality in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Routledge, 1997. xi-xxix.
- Holinshed, Raphael. *The first and second volumes of chronicles*. London, 1587.
- Holme, Randle. *Academy of Armory*. London, 1688.
- Holy Bible: King James Version*. New York: Ballentine Books, 1991.
- Houck, Max M. *Forensic Science: Modern Methods of Solving Crime*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2007.
- "Incorporeity<sup>1</sup>," *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50114765>>.
- Ingegno, Alfonso. "The New Philosophy of Nature." In *The Cambridge History of*

- Renaissance Philosophy*. Gen. ed. Charles B. Schmitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. 236-63.
- Joutsivuo, Timo. "Aristotle and Galen on Neutral Bodies. Perspectives on Aristotle's and Galen's *Auctoritates* in Late Medieval and Renaissance Medicine." In *The Dynamics of Aristotelian Philosophy from Antiquity to the Seventeenth Century*. Eds. Christoph Lüthy, Cees Leijenhorst, and Johannes M. M. H. Thijssen. Vol. 5. *Medieval and Early Modern Science*. Eds. Johannes M. M. H. Thijssen and Christoph Lüthy. Leiden: Brill, 2002. 289-306.
- Kastan, David Scott. *Shakespeare After Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Krouse, F. Michael. *Milton's Samson and the Christian Tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949.
- Kuntz, Paul G. "A Formal Preface and an Informal Conclusion to *The Great Chain of Being: The Universality and Necessity of Hierarchical Thought*." In *Jacob's Ladder and the Tree of Life: Concepts of Hierarchy and the Great Chain of Being*. Eds. Marion Leathers Kuntz and Paul Grimley Kuntz. New York: Peter Lang, 1987. 3-14.
- Laqueur, Thomas. *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Lemnius, Levinus. *Touchstone of Complexions*. London, 1576.
- Lederberg, Joshua. "Infectious History." *Science* 288 (2000): 287-293.
- Lever, J. W. "Shakespeare's French Fruits." *Shakespeare Survey* 6 (1953): 79-90.
- Lieb, Michael. *The Sinews of Ulysses: Form and Convention in Milton's Works*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1989.
- "Limit," n. 3.a. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50133425>>.
- Lister, Martin. *Letters and divers other mixt discourses in natural philosophy*. London, 1683.
- "Look," v. 15.a., 15.b., 15.c. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50135443>>.
- Lovejoy, Arthur O. *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of Ideas*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1936; rpt. 1964.
- MacLure, Millar. *George Chapman: A Critical Study*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.

- Maguire, Laurie. *Shakespeare's Names*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Markham, Gervase. *Cavelarice; or, The English Horseman*. London, 1607.
- — —. *Cheape and good husbandry for the well-ordering of all beasts*. London, 1614.
- — —. *Complete Farriar*. London, 1639.
- Marlowe, Christopher. *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus (A-text)*. Eds. David Bevington and Eric Rasmussen. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1993.
- Mikkeli, Heikki. "Italian Aristotelians on the Debate Over the Subalternation of Medicine to Natural Philosophy." In Lüthy, Leijenhorst, and Thijssen. 307-24.
- Milton, John. *Christian Doctrine. The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*. Eds. William Kerrigan, John Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon. New York: The Modern Library, 2007. 1140-1333.
- — —. *Samson Agonistes. John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*. Ed. John Carey. London: Longman, 1997. 355-413.
- "*Ministerial*," adj. 1.a. *OED Online*. March 2010. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00310302>>.
- Monfasani, John. "The Pseudo-Aristotelian *Problemata* and Aristotle's *De Animalibus* in the Renaissance." In *Natural Particulars: Nature and the Disciplines in Renaissance Europe*. Eds. Anthony Grafton and Nancy Siraisi. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999. 205-47.
- Morrison, Susan Singe. *Excrement in the Late Middle Ages: Sacred Filth and Chaucer's Fecopoetics*. New York: Palgrave, 2008.
- Mortimer, Anthony. *Variable Passions: A Reading of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis*. New York: AMS Press, 2000.
- Munday, Anthony *et al.* *Sir Thomas More*. In Gabrieli and Melchiori.
- North, Baron Dudley. *A forest of varieties*. London, 1645.
- Ogle, W., trans. *Aristotle on the Parts of Animals. Greek & Roman Philosophy*. Ed. Leonardo Tarán. Vol. 26. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1882; reprint 1987.
- Ogilvie, Brian W. *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.
- O'Meara, Dominic J. "The Chain of Being in the Light of Recent Work on Platonic

- Hierarchies.” In Kuntz and Kuntz, eds. 15-30.
- Owen, John. *John Owen's Latine epigrams*. Trans. Thomas Harvey. London, 1677.
- Park, Katherine and Eckhard Kessler. “The Concept of Psychology.” In *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*. Gen. ed. Charles B. Schmitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. 455-63.
- Park, Katherine. “The Organic Soul.” In *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*. Gen. ed. Charles B. Schmitt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988. 464-84.
- Paster, Gail Kern, Mary Floyd-Wilson, and Katherine Rowe. “Introduction: Reading the Early Modern Passions.” *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*. Eds. Paster, Rowe, and Floyd-Wilson. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004. 1-20.
- Paster, Gail Kern. *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- — —. *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993.
- “Peep,” v.<sup>1</sup> I. 1. a. *OED Online*. March 2010. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50173986>>.
- Pelling, Margaret. “Appearance and Reality: Barber-Surgeons, the Body and Disease.” *London, 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis*. Eds. A. L. Beier and Roger Finaly. London: Longman, 1998. 82-112.
- Pico, Giovanni. “Letter to Ermolao Barbaro.” In *Renaissance Debates on Rhetoric*. Ed. and trans. Wayne A. Rebhorn. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000. 58-67.
- — —. *On the Dignity of Man*. Trans. Charles Glenn Wallis. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965.
- Pliny the Elder. *The historie of the world*. London, 1634.
- Pope, Alexander. *An Essay on Man in Four Epistles*. In *Alexander Pope*. Ed. Pat Rogers. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1993.
- Porta, Giambattista della. *Natural magick*. London, 1658.
- Prynne, William. *The Unloulinessse of loue-locks*. London, 1628.
- Raber, Karen and Treva J. Tucker, eds. *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and*

- Identity in the Early Modern World*. New York: Palgrave, 2005.
- — —. “Introduction.” In Raber and Tucker, eds. 1-41.
- Raven, Charles E. *English Naturalists from Neckam to Ray: A Study of the Making of the Modern World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1947.
- Reynolds, Edward. *A Treatise of the passions and faculties of the soul*. London, 1640.
- Robertson, James. “Preface.” In *Forensic Examination of Hair*. Ed. James Robertson. Philadelphia, Taylor & Francis, 1999. Vii.
- Rodriguez, Eloy, Patrick L. Healey, and Indira Mehta. “Preface.” In Rodriguez, Healey, and Mehta. v.
- Rogers, John. “The Secret of *Samson Agonistes*.” *Milton Studies* 33 (1996): 111-32.
- Ross, Alexander. *Arcana microcosmi, or, The hid secrets of man's body discovered*. London, 1652.
- Schmitt, Charles B. “Aristotle Among the Physicians.” In *The Medical Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century*. Eds. A. Wear, R. K. French and I. M. Lonie. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. (1-15).
- Schoenfeldt, Michael. *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Schwarz, Marc L. “Thomas Simons, Scholar (M.A., B.M.): Probate Inventory. 1553.” In *Private Libraries in Renaissance England: A Collection and Catalogue of Tudor and Early Stuart Book-Lists*. Volume II: PLRE 5-66. Eds. R. J. Fehrenbach and E. S. Leedham-Green. Binghamton, New York: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1993. 222-43.
- Sennert, Daniel. *Art of chirurgery*. Trans. Nicholas Culpeper. London, 1663.
- Shakespeare, William. *The Norton Shakespeare*. Gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt. New York: W. W. Norton, 2000.
- — —. *Antony and Cleopatra*. In Greenblatt. 2628-2708.
- — —. *Antony and Cleopatra*. *The Arden series*. Ed. John Wilders. London: Routledge, 1995.
- — —. *Antony and Cleopatra*. *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Longman, 2004. 1331-83.

- — —. *Antony and Cleopatra. The New Cambridge Shakespeare.* Ed. David Bevington. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- — —. *Antony and Cleopatra. The New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare.* Ed. Marvin Spevack. New York: Modern Language Association, 1990.
- — —. *As You Like It.* In Greenblatt. 1600-56.
- — —. *Comedy of Errors.* In Greenblatt. 690-731.
- — —. *Hamlet.* In Greenblatt. 1668-1756.
- — —. *Henry V.* In Greenblatt. 1454-1521.
- — —. *Henry V. The Oxford Shakespeare series.* Ed. Gary Taylor. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982.
- — —. *Henry V.* In *The Riverside Shakespeare.* Ed. G. Blakemore Evans. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974. 935-975.
- — —. *Macbeth.* In Greenblatt. 2564-2618.
- — —. *Midsommer Nights Dreame. A New Variorum Edition.* Vol. x. Ed. Horace Howard Furness. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1895.
- — —. *Midsummer Night's Dream.* In Greenblatt. 872-939.
- — —. *Othello.* In Greenblatt. 2100-2174.
- — —. *Pericles.* In Greenblatt. 2719-2783.
- — —. *Richard the Third.* In Greenblatt. 515-96.
- — —. Sonnet 15. In Greenblatt. 1928.
- — —. Sonnet 130. In Greenblatt. 1967.
- — —. *Taming of the Shrew.* In Greenblatt. 142-201.
- — —. *Tragedy of King Lear.* In Greenblatt. 2319-2478.
- — —. *Troilus and Cressida.* In Greenblatt. 1835-1913.
- — —. *Two Gentlemen of Verona.* In Greenblatt. 84-131.

— — —. *Venus and Adonis*. In Greenblatt. 607-34.

— — —. *Winter's Tale*. In Greenblatt. 2883-2952.

Shannon, Laurie. "Poor, Bare, Forked: Animal Sovereignty, Human Negative Exceptionalism, and the Natural History of *King Lear*." *Shakespeare Quarterly* 60 (2009): 168-96.

"*Shard*," n.<sup>2</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50221946>>.

"*Shard*," n.<sup>4</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50221948>>.

"*Shard-born*," "-borne" a. *Oxford English Dictionary*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 24 March 2010. <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50221952>>.

Sherrow, Victoria. *Encyclopedia of Hair: A Cultural History*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2006.

Sidney, Philip. Sonnet 5. *Astrophil and Stella*. In *English Sixteenth-Century Verse: An Anthology*. Ed. Richard S. Sylvester. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1984. 419.

Siraisi, Nancy G. *Medieval & Early Renaissance Medicine: An Introduction to Knowledge and Practice*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Spenser, Edmund. *The Faerie Queene*. Ed. A. C. Hamilton. Harlow: Longman, 2001.

Spivack, Charlotte. *George Chapman*. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc. 1967.

Stenn, Kurt S. "The Molecular and Structural Biology of Hair: Introduction." *The Molecular and Structural Biology of Hair*. Eds. Kurt S. Stenn, A. G. Messenger, and Howard P. Baden. New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1991. xi-xiii.

Sutton, Geoffrey V. *Science for a Polite Society: Gender, Culture, and the Demonstration of Enlightenment*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1995.

Synesius of Cyrene. *A paradoxe, prouing by reason and example, that baldnesse is much better than bushie haire*. Trans. Abraham Fleming. London, 1579.

Targoff, Ramie. *John Donne, Body and Soul*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Taylor, A. B. "Ovid's myths and the unsmooth course of love in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*." *Shakespeare and the Classics*. Eds. Charles Martindale and A. B. Taylor. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 2004. 49-65.

- Tebbett, Ian R. "Drug Analysis Using Hair." *Forensic Examination of Hair* ed. James Robertson London: Taylor & Francis, 1999. 207-227.
- Thomas, Keith. *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Tillyard, E. M. W. *The Elizabethan World Picture*. New York: Random House, 1944 rpt. 1959.
- Tobey, Elizabeth. "The *Palio* Horse in Renaissance and Early Modern Italy." In Raber and Tucker, eds. 63-90.
- Topsell, Edward. *Historie of foure-footed beastes*. London, 1607.
- — —. *Historie of serpents*. London, 1608.
- Twyning, John. *London Dispossessed: Literature and Social Space in the Early Modern City*. London: Macmillan Press, 1998.
- Waddington, Raymond B. "'All in All': Shakespeare, Milton, Donne and the Soul-in-Body Topos." *English Literary Renaissance* 20 (1990): 40-68.
- Watson, Robert. *Back to Nature: The Green and the Real in the Late Renaissance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- Webster, John. *The Duchess of Malfi*. Ed. Elizabeth M. Brennan. New Mermaids. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: W. W. Norton, 1993.
- Wellman, Kathleen. *Making Science Social: The Conferences of Théophraste Renaudot, 1633-1642*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2003.
- Wells, Stanley, Gary Taylor, John Jowett, William Montgomery. *William Shakespeare: A Textual Companion*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.
- Wilkins, John. *An essay towards a real character, and a philosophical language*. London, 1668.
- Williams, Kathleen. *Spenser's World of Glass: A Reading of The Faerie Queene*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966.
- Wilson, Thomas. *Complete Christian Dictionary*. London, 1655.