Introduction

> What is a man
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.[1]

Sleep, Romance and Human Embodiment examines the impact of the Aristotelian tripartite soul on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century literary conceptions of the human, moving from the period of the tripartite soul's hegemony to that of the rise of Cartesianism.[2] The study contends that the genres of epic and romance, whose operations are informed by Aristotle's theory, provide the raw materials for exploring different models of humanness; and that sleep is the vehicle for such exploration, as it blurs distinctions among man, plant and animal.[3]

The Aristotelian tripartite soul is usually considered in relation to period conceptions of psychology and physiology. However, its significance is much greater than that, as it constitutes a theory of vitality that simultaneously distinguishes man from and connects him to other forms of life. For Aristotle, a living thing's vitality, defined by the capacity for "self-nutrition and growth and decay," is determined by the presence of a soul, which is that living thing's form.[4] At the same time, different kinds of living creatures have different bodily capacities, which Aristotle identifies in terms of vegetative, sensitive and rational souls. These three "souls" are best understood as specific sets of functions or powers:[5]

> 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 intellective soul, finally, included not only the vegetative and sensitive powers – the organic faculties – but also the three rational powers of intellect, intellective memory (memory of concepts, as opposed to sense images) and will.[6]

Man alone enjoys all of these powers; plants have only the nutritive and reproductive powers of the vegetative soul, while animals boast those and the sensitive, appetitive and locomotive powers of the sensitive soul. The crucial point is that, in ontological terms, man is both distinct from plants and animals – he alone has a rational soul – and continuous with them – he possesses a vegetative and a sensitive soul.

The implications of Aristotelian vitality for conceptualizing the human are fully investigated in epic and romance, with sleep being integral to the investigation. This study considers these two genres at the point of their intersection, in what David Quint has dubbed the romance episode.[7] The romance episode, and epic and romance more generally, depend for their operations upon relations of sameness and difference between man and other forms of life, with sleep the vehicle for exploring those relations. Additionally, this exploration has a geographic or placial dimension; it occurs across and through the distinctive landscape of the *locus amoenus*, which concretizes the relationship of epic to romance values. The *locus amoenus* expresses a particular relationship among body, genre and environment – a relationship to which sleep is integral – that emerges out of a distinctly Aristotelian template for human vitality.

Chapters 1 through 3 of this study center upon Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Book 2, Sidney's *Old Arcadia* and Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*. In all of these works, epic and romance appear as *vital* genres – they model ways of thinking relations between forms of life and are animated by Aristotelian vitality. However, Chapter 4 offers a different scenario, as the modified Aristotelianism of Milton's *Paradise Lost* is advanced in explicit refutation of Cartesian vitality. Chapter 5, focused on Dryden's *All for Love*, presents us with a still more complicated case: a critique of Cartesianism that deploys the vestiges of an Aristotelian logic without recognizing that it does so. As we see in this play, the intimate connection between life and literary form is severed with the ascension of Cartesianism, and the relationship of epic and romance to vitality is rendered only superficial or apparent. The romance episode lives on after Descartes, but only as bereft of its (Aristotelian) vitality.

The rest of this introduction will lay the groundwork for the first three chapters. It is divided into six sections. The first further considers the tripartite soul and its implications for thinking the human in relation to plant and animal life. The second develops out of Aristotle's theory horizontal and vertical models for figuring the human through relations between forms of life. It also relates those models to epic, romance and the romance episode. Section 3 extends the analysis of the romance episode to

discuss the *locus amoenus*, with particular emphasis on relations between body and environment in Tasso's Garden of Armida. Drawing further on Tasso, the fourth section centers upon sleep and its affinity with romance. Section 5 offers an overview of the remaining chapters in the study, while the final section briefly situates this analysis in relation to recent work on genre, embodiment and environment, and animals. Readers particularly interested in the nature of this study's contribution to current scholarship should feel free to read the sixth section first.

THE TRIPARTITE SOUL AND THE RENAISSANCE HUMAN

Writers of the English Renaissance seldom questioned the primacy of humans over animals and plants. Scripture held that both the earth and the forms of life that populated it were under human dominion and, indeed, existed for man's purposes. Human ascendancy was expressed in man's rectitude, his speech, his reason and his greater proximity to the divine – in short, his status as a creature made in God's image.[8] Such claims were embellished and expanded upon in the period: Lodowick Bryskett emphasizes man's capacity for self-knowledge as determinative of his superiority, while Joseph Hall cites his ability to regulate the passions that he shares with animals.[9] In both cases, the crucial factor is reason, which also underwrites man's greater capacity for agency, for prudential thought and so forth. Even those who closely studied animal and vegetable life – early modern precursors to natural historians – assumed not merely the inferiority of plant and beast, but also their status as resources for human use.[10] When John Gerard rhapsodizes that "the fruits of the earth may contend for seignioritie," he is alluding to the pleasures those fruits afford man; and while Edward Topsell applauds the horse's nobility, he understands it to emerge out of "a louing and dutifull inclination to the seruice of man."[11] Certainly there were those who put pressure on the standard view of human superiority: Michel de Montaigne's "An Apologie of Raymond Sebond" offers the best example.[12] But Montaigne's was distinctly a minority position.

The Aristotelian tripartite soul is essential to ideas of human superiority; it is also commensurate with and lends its authority to various forms of hierarchical thinking, both social and cosmological. The idea of the tripartite soul is derived primarily from Aristotle's *De Anima*, albeit with significant elaboration and modification over the centuries, most notably in the tethering of the rational faculties to the immortal, non-organic soul – a development that enabled the integration of the Aristotelian conception

of life into Christian belief systems, both Catholic and Protestant.[13] The presence in man of a rational, immortal soul suggests his superiority to other forms of life because he is a more complete being than is either a plant or an animal.

At the same time, what troubles many early modern natural philosophers is that the powers associated in Aristotle's theory with plant and animal life also exist in humans. As we have seen, the tripartite soul both explains man's difference from animal and plant and articulates ontological connections among all three. As a result, the human can seem a thoroughly confused category. This confusion resonates with Giorgio Agamben's analysis of its seemingly paradoxical nature:[14]

> It is possible to oppose man to other living things, and at the same time to organize the complex . . . economy of relations between men and animals, only because something like an animal life has been separated within man, only because his distance and proximity to the animal have been measured and recognized first of all in the closest and most intimate place.[15]

"What is man," Agamben asks in echo of this chapter's epigraph, "if he is always the place – and, at the same time, the result – of ceaseless divisions and caesurae?"[16]

While Agamben's analysis apparently presupposes a paradoxical conception of the human – man is an animal, man is different from animals – that paradox disappears if we, first, understand the human not as an ontological essence but as a relation; and, second, notice that each of the two propositions (an animal, not an animal) describes a different kind of relation between forms of life, one of continuity, the other of difference. Conditioned by the familiar idea that the man–animal opposition constitutes the human, we treat evidence of continuity between forms of life – animal (or plant) life *in* man – as a failure of or contradiction within the human. On the contrary, such continuity can be seen as the basis for a specific conception of humanness – a specific relation – which foregrounds connections between forms of life. Such a conception is on display in Montaigne, who emphasizes the shared vegetable and animal powers of man and brute when he asserts that "The maner of all beasts breeding, engendering, nourishing, working, mooving, living and dying, being so neere to ours, what ever we abridge from their mooving-causes, and adde to our condition above theirs, can no way departe from our reasons discourse."[17] Montaigne begins with an itemization of all the powers active in beasts and men (nutrition, generation, motion, sensation and so on); he concludes with an appeal to

reason, putatively present only in man.[18] The sentence captures simultaneously the relations of both continuity and difference that emerge out of Aristotle's doctrine. Here and throughout the "Apologie," Montaigne identifies specific ways in which animals are equivalent or superior to man, and vice versa; he does so in service of the notion that "We are neither aboue nor vnder the rest: what ever is vnder the coape of heaven (saith the wise man) runneth one law and followeth one fortune."[19] In this as in other ways, Montaigne is exceptional. While early modern thinkers might grant to animals specific competencies or forms of advantage over man, systematic interrogations of human exceptionalism were uncommon – even though the tripartite soul provided the raw materials with which to develop them.

Evidence of continuity between forms of life is found in depictions of human beastliness or (less frequently) plantliness. Consider this famous passage from Pico della Mirandola's *On the Dignity of Man*:

> 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.[20]

Pico's allusions to the vegetative, sensual and rational powers reveal the Aristotelian foundations of this formulation.[21] A human who "become[s] a plant" lives a life dominated by the powers of the vegetative soul (nutrition, growth, reproduction); and one who "grow[s] into brute" is in the sway of the powers of the sensitive soul (especially the senses and the passions).[22] Brutishness (or beastliness) connotes the ascendance within the individual of the passions and of sensory pleasures.[23] Moreover, insofar as man's beastly behavior attests to the hegemony of the sensitive soul, it suggests the functional equivalence between man and animal *along the axis of that behavior*. To identify human behaviors as brutish is to attest to the ontologically variegated and relational nature of the human.[24]

Beastliness and plantliness are states of being seemingly bounded by the flesh; they express the hegemony of faculties and powers that exist "within" man. At the same time, the sensitive and vegetative faculties are means by which an individual links up to his or her environment. Nutrition, reproduction, sensory activity, passionate motion: all presuppose particular ways that bodies engage each other and/or the world. This means that brutish behavior describes a way of interacting with one's environment (for instance, by overindulging in pleasures identified

and enjoyed through the senses). "Beastliness" and "plantliness" are terms describing human behaviors that extend beyond the perimeter of the human body.[25]

If the three souls enable the articulation of ontological variegation within man, they also define different kinds of beings. As Robert Burton puts it, "The common division of the Soule, is into three principall faculties; *Vegetall*, *Sensitive*, and *Rationall*, which make three distinct kinde of living Creatures: *Vegetall* Plants, *Sensible* Beasts, *Rationall* Men."[26] According to Burton, the faculties *make* the creatures; the tripartite soul provides a mechanism for explaining how plants might be distinguished from beasts and beasts from men ("*Vegetall* Plants, *Sensible* Beasts, *Rationall* Men"). In this regard, the tripartite soul identifies the powers specific to each form of life – plants are defined by nutrition, growth and reproduction; animals by movement, emotion and sensory activity; and humans by the rational powers – and thereby arrogates to each its own distinctive vitality. To return to brutishness with this in mind, we can see it has less to do with the *behavior* of actual animals – they seldom perform the kinds of actions the term connotes – than with how animal *vitality* is construed.[27] Brutish behavior is human action imprecisely accounted for in terms of those powers definitional to animal life but also present within man. Crucially, then, the *making of* and the *distinguishing between* forms of life are operations that occur simultaneously – indeed, they are two aspects of the same operation.

Burton's assertion that the faculties make the creatures, while important for this study, is palpably inadequate as an account of either plants or beasts. The tripartite soul and the forms of life defined by it exist in only an oblique relation to natural history. At the same time, Aristotle's doctrine invites slippage between faculties and creatures, an invitation that literary texts are often quite happy to accept. The doctrine's utility for Renaissance literature resides, first, in the distinctive principles of vitality that it locates in plants, animals and humans; second, in the patterns of correspondence and difference that it identifies among the three; and, third, in the conceptions of the human that it enables and underwrites.

One might contend that a relational approach to the human fails to account for distinctive capacities, most notably reason, which provide the basis for an essentialist view of the human. Intellect is exclusive to man and thus defines the human; it is also a non-organic rather than organic function and, along with the will, is usually taken to comprise the immortal soul. However, the essentialist view isolates the operations of reason from other bodily processes; it treats cognition as abstractable from

somatic operations or phenomena – generation, nutrition, passionate and sensory activity – that man shares with other forms of life.[28] Consequently, the essentialist view fails to account for the ways in which humoral physiology sutures cognition to embodiment, and thus the rational to the sensitive and vegetative powers.[29] In sum, the view is anachronistic and conditioned by Cartesian dualism, which posits a profound separation between mind and body.[30] Indeed, one can understand Descartes' project as an attempt to recast the human in essential rather than relational terms. It is a relational conception of the human that Descartes refuses by elevating the *cogito* to a precondition for being, rejecting the vegetative and sensitive souls, and ascribing machinic status to both animals and the human body.[31] In the Aristotelian tradition, man is not man (or alive) without nutritive and sensory capacities. In this regard, man's potential for plantliness or beastliness is part of what makes him human.[32]

Scholars have long considered the importance of animals to human self-definition, but in the Aristotelian tradition the vegetative (rather than the sensitive or sensible) is conceptually primary and foundational; it is, as Aristotle puts it, "the originative power the possession of which leads us to speak of things as *living*."[33] Or, in Agamben's formulation, "Aristotle's nutritive life [what we recognize as the powers of the vegetative soul] . . . marks out the obscure background from which the life of the higher animals gets separated."[34] The primacy of the vegetal is suggested by Pico's use of the seed metaphor, as well as his references to cultivating and bearing fruit, to describe the creation of different forms of life. (Not coincidentally, the seed is a key Aristotelian figure; it is that which is "potentially capable of living.")[35] And it is assumed in Edmund Spenser's representation of the origins of different forms of life in the Garden of Adonis:

> Infinite shapes of creatures there are bred,
> And vncouth formes, which none yet euer knew,
> And euery sort is in a sondry bed
> Sett by it selfe, and ranckt in comely rew:
> Some fitt for reasonable sowles t'indew,
> Some made for beasts, some made for birds to weare,
> And all the fruitfull spawne of fishes hew
> In endlesse rancks along enraunged were,
> That seemd the *Ocean* could not containe them there.[36]

Spenser references "reasonable sowles," and he identifies different living beings defined by the sensitive soul: beasts, birds and "all the fruitfull

spawne of fishes." However, he does not mention the vegetative soul. In this case, its apparent omission attests to its ubiquity, as the Garden itself both tropes and spatializes the operations of the vegetative powers. (Adonis was a vegetation god, and the term "garden of Adonis" refers to an urn filled with fast-growing flowers or herbs.[37]) The vegetative soul is the soil in which "Infinite shapes of creatures," including men, "are bred."[38]

It is significant, then, that Descartes refuses the existence of the vegetative soul.[39] More broadly, he transforms soul from a category that encompasses all living things, and defines them as living, to one that accommodates only thinking things – meaning, man. Whereas some Renaissance natural philosophers argue for limited animal cognition, Descartes does not hold this position. Animals "have no mental powers whatsoever, and . . . it is nature which acts in them, according to the disposition of their organs; just as we see that a clock consisting only of ropes and springs can count the hours and measure time more accurately than we can in spite of all our *wisdom*."[40] Not only animal but also human embodiment is divorced from soul and understood in such mechanistic terms, with vital processes explained through recourse to physics. In this way, Descartes transforms the way in which plant, animal and human life were conceptualized – a transformation arguably more profound than the better-known subjective revolution initiated by the Cartesian *cogito*.[41] Descartes rethinks vitality in a way that drains all the Aristotelian life from it.[42]

THE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL MODELS AND THE ROMANCE EPISODE

This study considers two broad models of the human that emerge out of the Aristotelian tradition – more specifically, out of the fact that "animatedness, or the possession of soul, *likens* all living creatures, even if a hierarchy of souls also *ranks* them."[43] The first model emphasizes the *difference between* man and other forms of life, not only animal but also vegetal; this difference is built upon the rational (or non-organic) soul's presence in human beings alone. The second stresses *continuity across* disparate life forms; it is evidenced by the vegetative soul's presence in plants, animals and humans, and the sensitive soul's in man and beast. The first, "vertical" model insists upon, in Burton's phrase, "three distinct kinde of living Creatures"; the second, "horizontal" model traces continuities and lines of filiation between and across forms of life. The "vertical" model assumes a clearly delineated conception of human superiority that is

influentially expressed in the scriptural notion of man's dominion over other forms of life (e.g., Genesis 1:28–30).[44] Under the "horizontal" model, however, man resembles other forms of life with which he shares a number of vital powers. The former model receives theoretical elaboration in accounts of human exceptionalism (man is the only creature to walk erect, to gaze upward toward the heavens rather than "groveling towards the earth," to be made in God's image, and so forth).[45] In contrast, and largely because of exceptionalism's hegemony, the latter model is more likely to emerge out of representational practice.

That human exceptionalism is valorized over affinitive thinking licenses the notion that the vertical model defines the human, in the sense that the rational faculties define man.[46] From this point of view, the co-presence within man of the animal and vegetal powers can do no more than trouble or unsettle the vertical conception of the human, which is implicated in hierarchical thought of the period, including cosmology, political theory, moral philosophy and much more; it also assumes man's relation to both his environment and other forms of life to be one of domination or dominion. Because of the vertical model's cultural currency, the horizontal model stands not merely as a distinctive way of thinking about the human, but as a challenge to a normative conception of humanness.

The horizontal and vertical models each organize a variety of related but distinctive approaches to the category of the human. They serve as conceptual axes along which a wide variety of cultural materials can be plotted and they are defined by general dispositions toward those materials; each constellation of ideas plotted on these axes represents a particular iteration of the horizontal and vertical models. Consequently, while specific iterations of these two models will share a great deal, they will also still bear their own distinctive emphases. For example, in Book 2 of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, horizontal and vertical relations are organized around the concept of temperance, while in Shakespeare's *1* and *2 Henry IV* they are central to a meditation upon embodiment, history and monarchical authority. In practice, then, the horizontal and vertical models are multiple, each differently instantiated in different texts. In a given romance episode, the horizontal and vertical models come into being as distinctive articulations of romance and epic values.

The relation of epic to romance is marked by a play of sameness and difference that is commensurate with these two models of the human. This play is captured in Patricia Parker's depiction of romance as "a form which simultaneously quests for and postpones a particular end, objective, or object . . . '[R]omance' is that mode or tendency which remains on the

threshold before the promised end, still in the wilderness of wandering, 'error,' or 'trial.'"[47] On the one hand, romance resembles epic in its emphasis on a heroic quest for a particular end; on the other, it differs from and seemingly thwarts epic in deferring the attainment of that end. This play of resemblance and difference has sometimes led to classificatory conundra, but recent scholarship has moved beyond efforts to make simplistic definitional distinctions between epic and romance and has recognized the interanimation of the two genres.[48] As we can see in Parker's definition, romance depends upon the "promised end" – in most cases, the *telos* of epic – even as it frustrates it. "'[R]omance' involves the dilation of a threshold rendered now both more precarious and more essential."[49] It is romance's association with delay, dilation and deferral that, for Parker, both binds it to the figure of the female temptress – like Calypso, who stands between Odysseus and his return to Ithaca, or Dido, who temporarily frustrates Aeneas' journey to Italy – and places it in intimate relation with epic.

Whereas Parker anatomizes the connection between romance and epic, dilation and *telos*, she also treats romance as a mode, and shows how it flourishes outside of epic poetry (as in her discussion of Keats' *Endymion* or, elsewhere, of Shakespeare's Falstaff).[50] Barbara Fuchs has developed the implications of this point by attending to "romance as a literary and textual *strategy*. Under this definition, the term describes a concatenation of both narratological elements and literary topoi, including idealization, the marvelous, narrative delay, wandering, and obscured identity, that, as Parker suggests, both pose a quest and complicate it."[51] Thinking of romance as a strategy allows us to recognize that it can and often does occur "within texts that are clearly classified as some other genre."[52] Indeed, romance often proves dependent on other genres for its operations and in critical accounts of those operations:

> The instrumental notion of romance as a recurrent textual strategy . . . allows us to deconstruct the many oppositions set up by literary history, such as romance versus epic or romances versus novels. These become more complicated once we identify the presence of romance within its ostensible opposites.[53]

In this regard, romance flourishes within and as a part of a hybrid form, the very hybridity of which challenges our attempts to clearly isolate the generic (or genetic) elements of the text. Understood as a strategy, romance can exist within an epic, but it also can find a home in genres seemingly quite remote, such as science fiction.[54] Its presence can be registered in the designated genre of a work, or not.