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Montaigne and the Origins of Modern Philosophy

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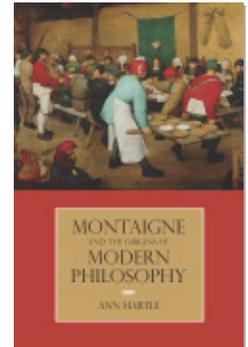
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NOTES

Chapter 1

1. Hugo Friedrich, *Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan, trans. Dawn Eng (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 55–56. However, Ullrich Langer, “Aristote,” in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan (Paris: H. Champion, 2004), 61, shows the influence of Aristotle’s *Ethics* on Montaigne’s moral philosophy at a very deep level.

2. See Terence Cave, *How to Read Montaigne* (London: Granta Books, 2007), 9.

3. Descartes adopts a similar course which he recommends in a letter to Regius in 1642: “I should like it best if you never put forward any new opinions, but retained all the old ones in name, and merely brought forward new arguments. This is a course of action to which nobody could take exception, and yet those who understood your arguments would spontaneously draw from them the conclusions you had in mind. For instance, why did you need to reject openly substantial forms and real qualities?” Descartes says that, in his *Meteorology*, he did not reject or deny these but simply found them unnecessary for his explanations of things. Thus, he led his audience to see their uselessness and to reject them for themselves. *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 3, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 205. My thanks to Keith Fennen for this passage.

4. See Philippe Desan, *Montaigne: Les formes du monde et de l’esprit* (Paris: Presses de l’Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2008), especially 9–15. As the title suggests, Desan argues that Montaigne does not believe in essences but insists on the plurality of forms.

5. Francis Slade, “Two Versions of Political Philosophy: Teleology and the Conceptual Genesis of the Modern State,” in *Natural Moral Law in Contemporary Society*, ed. Holger Zaborowski (Washington, D.C: Catholic University of America Press, 2010), 235.

6. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. C. B. Macpherson (reprint, London: Penguin Books, 1968), part 1, chap. 11, p. 161.

7. *Ibid.*, chap. 46, p. 682.

8. Slade, “Two Versions of Political Philosophy,” 241.

9. See Tzvetan Todorov, *Montaigne ou la découverte de l’individu* (Tournai, Belgium: La Renaissance du Livre, 2001), 22: “Montaigne’s end is not to tell how he ought to be but how he is. The moderns, since Machiavelli, know how to separate the two.” Zahi Zalloua, “Montaigne, Skepticism and Immortality,” *Philosophy and Literature* 27 (2003): 54: “Montaigne defines his self-portrait in opposition to the ideal of *perfectio*, to the representation of a ‘perfect face.’ . . . Perfection is clearly not the project of the author’s self-study.”

10. Tzvetan Todorov, *Imperfect Garden: The Legacy of Humanism*, trans. Carol Cosman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), 168–69: “Montaigne is modern also in that he does not regard the distance between the ideal and the real as a curse.” Montaigne’s goal is to tell not how he should be but how he is (148), for “each individual is already the whole man” (167). See also André Tournon, “Action imparfaite de sa propre essence,” in *Montaigne: Scepticisme, métaphysique, théologie*, ed. Vincent Carraud and Jean-Luc Marion (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2004), 37 and 41. Tournon provides many contrasts between Montaigne and Aristotle, especially concerning teleology, essence, and perfection. F. Rigolot, “Repentir,” in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan, 868–69, argues that Montaigne’s attitude toward repentance suggests that to repent would be to “form” the man according to an ideal model. Rigolot also discusses repentance as an attempt to escape the flow of time.

11. See William J. Bouwsma, *Waning of the Renaissance, 1550–1640* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), 86: prior to the Renaissance, the hierarchy of the cosmos and the hierarchy of human beings is the ontological foundation for political and social order and the legitimation of power. See also Cave, *How to Read Montaigne*, 48, on Sebond’s theology and the “transcendental hierarchy.”

12. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 38.

13. Eva Brann, *What, Then, Is Time?* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1999), 188. Brann discusses what she calls “aeviternity,” which is a kind of agelessness, a kind of timelessness, which is somehow between eternity and temporality. She associates this with Vico’s “imaginative universals.” “They have a maker and a beginning; for all their poignant particularity they stand for a human type; they act in their own time and as individuals, and yet they are as indestructible as universals.”

14. Francis Slade, “On the Ontological Priority of Ends and Its Relevance to the Narrative Arts,” in *Beauty, Art, and the Polis*, ed. Alice Ramos (American Maritain Association, 2000), 62–63.

15. *Ibid.*, 61.

16. *Ibid.*, 66–67.

17. Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, ed. M. A. Screech (London: Penguin, 1991), xxi.

18. Erich Auerbach, “Figura,” in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature: Six Essays* (New York: Meridian Books, 1959), 12–13.

19. *Ibid.*, 28.

20. *Ibid.*, 58.

21. *Ibid.*, 42–43.

22. *Ibid.*, 72.

23. *Ibid.*, 59.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Peter Burke, *The Renaissance Sense of the Past* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1969), 4.

Chapter 2

1. For an especially clear exposition of this view, see Terence Penelhum, *God and Skepticism: A Study in Skepticism and Fideism* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), 22, 24, 56; and Penelhum's "Skepticism and Fideism," in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. Myles Burnyeat (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 293, where he describes Montaigne as a "Catholic Pyrrhonist."

2. André Gide, *Essai sur Montaigne* (Paris: Jacques Schiffrin, Editions de la Pléiade, n.d.), 41–42, claims that Montaigne never speaks of Christ and may never even have read the Gospels. Arthur Armaingaud, "Montaigne: Etait-il ondoyant et divers? Montaigne était-il inconstant?" *Revue du seizième siècle* 10 (1923): 44, says that Montaigne sometimes hides his meaning. His contradictions must be interpreted by determining what is real and what is pretended. Armaingaud concludes that Montaigne's expressions of religious opinions are not sincere. On the other hand, Philippe Desan, in *Montaigne: Les formes*, 195, claims that it would be absurd to make an atheist of Montaigne.

3. For a thorough account of Catholicism in the *Essays* and the *Travel Journal*, see B. Petey-Girard, "Catholicisme," in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan, 140–43. For Montaigne, religious practice is anchored in tradition. Catholicism is for Montaigne a religion perfectly adapted to the needs of human beings of flesh and blood, as found in the Incarnation. M. A. Screech, "Montaigne: Some Classical Notions in Their Contexts," in *Montaigne in Cambridge, Proceedings of the Cambridge Montaigne Colloquium 1989*, ed. Philip Ford et al. (1989), 45–49, shows that many interpreters are not aware of the sometimes subtle indications of Montaigne's Catholic sensibilities. See also Malcolm Smith, *Montaigne and the Roman Censors* (Geneva: Librairie Droz S.A., 1981), 29. Smith offers an explanation of Montaigne's use of pagan terms, a practice which was of some concern to the censors. Smith examines the occurrences of these terms and shows how their meaning, within the context of the essays, is compatible with Christian teaching. Smith's exhaustive study of occurrences of pagan terms in the *Essays* leads him to conclude that Montaigne is "suffusing human language with the values of the Christian faith." Indeed, Smith regards the *Essays* as "the supreme example of a Renaissance author fusing the heritage of classical antiquity and the Christian faith." The *Essays* show how the values of classical antiquity are "absorbed and transcended" by Roman Catholic teaching (112). I agree with Smith's conclusion but I believe that it must be taken a step further. The new meanings that emerge out of this suffusion of human language with the values of Christian faith are, in my view, an absorption and transcendence of both classical antiquity and Christian belief. They are not reducible to the meanings of either ancient philosophy or medieval theology, for Montaigne brings forth new meanings.

4. See Thierry Gontier, "Montaigne, les humanistes et la doctrine des anciens," *Montaigne Studies* 21, nos. 1–2, pp. 26–31. Gontier reconciles Montaigne's submission to the Church and his independence from the theologians by claiming that what legitimates the discourse of humanists in "Of Prayers" is

not the subject matter (for “Of Prayers” is a theological subject matter), but the modality of affirmation: Montaigne does not claim authority.

5. See M. A. Screech, *Montaigne and Melancholy: The Wisdom of the Essays* (London: Penguin Books, 1983), 95: “Montaigne professed his complete submission to the Church of Rome. These professions increase in number and intensity in the final version” of the *Essays*. Screech also claims that Montaigne argued for the truth of Roman Catholicism (18).

6. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, II-II, q. 2, a. 10.

7. The tradition, then, includes many important variants and developments from which Montaigne draws out intimations. Aquinas’s Christian development, elaboration, and extension of Aristotle’s teaching on the common good is in some ways taken up into Montaigne’s notion of society and of virtue. See Mary Keys, *Aquinas, Aristotle, and the Promise of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 96: “Aquinas does appear to privilege the generically *social* character of human nature over [Aristotle’s] regime-relative political in several key respects. One may even say that while retaining an awareness of the importance of regimes and the virtues and vices they tend to promote, Aquinas *redefines* the political or civic character of human nature more fundamentally in the function of human sociality and its ethical requirements.” Keys also discusses the role of goodness of will in Aquinas’s notion of the common good (118–24, especially 123).

8. Josef Pieper, *Tradition: Concept and Claim*, trans. E. Christian Kopff (Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books, 2008), 35.

9. *Ibid.*, 33.

10. *Ibid.*, 40–43.

11. Malcolm C. Smith, *Montaigne and Religious Freedom: The Dawn of Pluralism* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1991), 81–82.

12. Francis Slade, “Was Ist Aufklärung? Notes on Maritain, Rorty, and Bloom with Thanks but No Apologies to Immanuel Kant,” in *The Common Things: Essays on Thomism and Education*, ed. Daniel McNerny (American Maritain Association, 1999), 52.

13. Ali Benmakhlouf, *Montaigne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2008), 130, claims that the superiority of Catholicism over Protestantism is the fact that Catholicism does not forget our corporeal condition.

14. Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400–1580* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 480. Although this book deals specifically with events that took place in England, Duffy’s description of the Reformation applies to Christendom as a whole.

15. *Ibid.*, 237.

16. Michael B. Foster, *Mystery and Philosophy* (London: SCM, 1957), 41.

17. *Ibid.*, 28.

18. *Ibid.*, 46.

19. For a more complete discussion of the dialectic of faith and reason, see my *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), chap. 5; “Montaigne and Scepticism,” in *Cambridge Companion to Montaigne*, ed. Ullrich Langer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

2005), 183–206; and “The Dialectic of Faith and Reason in the *Essays of Montaigne*,” in *Faith and Philosophy* 18, no. 3, (July 2001): 323–36.

20. Frédéric Brahami, *Le scepticisme de Montaigne* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997), 23.

21. T. S. Eliot, “The *Pensées* of Pascal,” in *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932), 363.

22. See my *Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher*, chap. 6.

23. T. S. Eliot, *Christianity and Culture: The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1949), 101.

24. *Ibid.*, 198.

25. *Ibid.*, 200.

26. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 91.

27. Neither Frame’s nor Screech’s translation captures this Eucharistic sense.

28. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 52.

29. Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg, rev. ed. (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1946), no. 789.

30. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1970), 37.

31. Michael Oakeshott, *Religion, Politics and the Moral Life*, ed. Timothy Fuller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1993), 34.

32. Oakeshott, *Religion*, 59–60.

33. Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, 265.

34. *Ibid.*, 298.

35. Roger Scruton, *A Political Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2006), 112.

36. Michel de Montaigne, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Albert Thibaudet and Maurice Rat (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1962), 1236 (F961). References to the English translation of the *Travel Journal* are to *The Complete Essays of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1943), and will be cited in the notes as (F, CW). This passage is from (F, CW 961). The Church, then, is the only multicultural society.

37. Pieper, *Tradition*, 55.

38. Etienne Gilson, “Where Is Christendom?” in *The Gilson Reader*, ed. Anton Pegis (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Image Books, 1957), 342.

39. *Ibid.*, 343.

40. *Ibid.*, 346. See also Bouwsma, *Waning of the Renaissance*, chap. 1: “The Cultural Community of Europe.” Bouwsma devotes this chapter to a discussion of Christianity as the fundamental community of Europe at the time of the Renaissance.

Chapter 3

1. For a more complete discussion of both the skeptical aspects of the *Essays* and Montaigne’s transformation of skepticism, see my “Montaigne and Skepticism.”

2. See Benmakhlof, *Montaigne*, 54–56, for a discussion of Montaigne as “the third possibility” with respect to the choice between two contraries.

3. In the versions of this passage earlier than the Bordeaux Copy, Montaigne had written: “Whoever wants to essay himself in the same way, and get rid of this violent prejudice of custom . . .” See François Roussel, *Montaigne: Le magistrat sans juridiction* (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 2006), 87–92, for a discussion of this passage and Montaigne’s interior “reformation.”

4. Those who form man are, presumably, the philosophers and theologians, “our masters” and “directors of conscience” (VS942, F720). See G. Defaux, “Représentation,” in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan, 869–72. Representation is an image, copy, or likeness, that is, it is not form.

5. In *The Fabulous Imagination: On Montaigne’s Essays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), Lawrence Kritzman examines the role of the imagination in the emergence of the Western concept of the self. “In the *Essays*, the imagination acts as the generative core of an internal universe that influences both the body and mind and reveals itself as essential to human experience” (22). Philosophy is limited to the apprehension of static Being, of unchanging forms and essences, by the mind alone, separated from the body and the senses. However, a particular being that is constantly changing and becoming other can be approached only through the imagination. “As opposed to the universalizing ethos of reason, the imagination allows for an openness to the particular and the strange” (36). In “Of the Power of the Imagination” Montaigne says that his end is to tell, not what has happened, but what can happen. That is why “fabulous testimonies” serve him as well as true stories. “The essay, as Montaigne suggests, consequently becomes an exercise in approaching a horizon of possibilities” (4).

When we enter the realm of the possible, as distinguished from the actual and the probable, we encounter the unexpected and the self appears in all its strangeness. Kritzman argues that “at the core of Montaigne’s writerly practice is the desire to domesticate the excesses and strangeness of the mind’s activities. When the essayist explains the shift from reflection to writing . . . he recognizes the need to neutralize what he terms the ‘monstrousness’ within himself” (31). The *Essays* depict “imaginative experiences that test the limits of identity, knowledge, and ethics, such as the beyond of death, the ineffable nature of human desire, and the monstrousness of the self” (22). This picture of the self must be understood in contrast to the Aristotelian ontology in which human beings are directed to and find their completion and perfection in the naturally given end of happiness common to all. In “Of Cripples” Montaigne “demonstrates how the quest for causes engages us in a retrospective attempt to inscribe the teleological as the basis for a purposeful and predetermined development” (52). According to Kritzman, then, “the essaying process suspends the teleological thrust of Aristotelian metaphysics and its doctrine of ethics based on a principle of totalization” (161).

6. Todorov, *Imperfect Garden*, 49–50.

7. Søren Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments; Johannes Climacus*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1985), 13.

8. *Ibid.*, 11.

9. *Ibid.*, 13.

10. Grahame Castor, *Pleide Poetics: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Thought and Terminology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 171.

11. *Ibid.*, 170.

12. *Ibid.*, 178.

13. *Ibid.*, 126.

14. *Ibid.*, 106.

15. *Ibid.*, 190.

16. Ullrich Langer, *Invention, Death and Self-Definitions in the Poetry of Pierre de Ronsard* (Saratoga, Calif.: ANMI LIBRI, 1986), 1–2.

17. Castor, *Poetics*, 103–104.

18. *Ibid.*, 60.

19. *Ibid.*, 62. In his *Montaigne dans tous ses états* (Fasano: Schena Editore, 2001), Philippe Desan discusses Montaigne's unpremeditated and accidental philosophy and links the accidental to contingency and thus to possibility. By contrasting Montaigne with Descartes and with Pascal, he shows why Montaigne is so difficult to locate within the parameters of modern philosophy. See especially 345, 348, 361–62.

20. This interpretation of what Montaigne means by reason is supported by Hobbes's explanation of his definition of philosophy: philosophy is the knowledge acquired by reasoning to possible causes. "By which definition it is evident that we are not to account as any part thereof, that originall knowledge called Experience." Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 46, p. 682.

21. In *The Concept of Judgment in Montaigne* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1968), 12, Raymond La Charité claims that "as far as can be ascertained, no tract of any kind, on psychology, existed which could have provided [Montaigne] with the semantic and ideational possibilities which he attributes to the faculty of judgment in the *Essays*." See also Paul Mathias, *Montaigne ou l'usage du monde* (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin, 2006), 84–90, for a helpful discussion of Montaigne's notion of judgment. Hassan Melehy, *Writing Cogito: Montaigne, Descartes, and the Institution of the Modern Subject* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 77: "The 'essays' are not of objects but of judgment—the objects enter indirectly, insofar as their constitution in the understanding comes under examination. And judgment is the 'tool' by which the limits of the understanding are scrutinized."

22. Georges Poulet, *Studies in Human Time*, trans. Elliot Coleman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956), 47–48. Poulet also shows the way in which Montaigne's notion of judgment is contrasted with memory.

23. La Charité, *Judgment*, 27: *juger* and *régler* (to order) are inseparable actions for Montaigne.

24. *Ibid.*, 34: Judgment "always brings something to a close." Judgment stops the discursive and endless movement of reason.

25. *Ibid.*, 38–40. Montaigne judges what is in him by nature. This can be seen clearly in the following passage from "Of the Resemblance of Children to Fathers" in which Montaigne discusses his natural aversion to drugs and medicine: "I have taken the trouble to plead this cause, which I understand

rather poorly, to support a little and strengthen the natural aversion to drugs and to the practice of medicine which I have derived from my ancestors, so that it should not be merely a stupid and thoughtless inclination and should have a little more form; and also so that those who see me so firm against exhortations and menaces that are made to me when my sickness afflicts me may not think that I am acting out of plain stubbornness; or in case there should be anyone so unpleasant as to judge that I am spurred by vainglory. That would be a well-aimed ambition, to want to derive honor from conduct that I have in common with my gardener and my muleteer!" (VS785, F597).

26. See C. Couturas, "Conscience," in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, ed. Philippe Desan, 201: the absolute refusal of the lie is for Montaigne the most constant quality of a conscience accountable for its acts.

Chapter 4

1. See David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1977), 4. "Be a philosopher; but amidst all your philosophy, be still a man." In his "Hume's Correction of Modern Political Philosophy" (paper delivered at Emory University, November 11, 2010), George Russell argues that the meaning of Hume's admonition is that abstruse philosophy destroys sympathy.

2. David Hume, *Essays: Moral, Political, and Literary*, ed. Eugene F. Miller (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Classics, 1985), 534–35.

3. Pascal, *Pensées et opuscules*, no. 18.

4. Erich Auerbach, "L'humaine condition," in *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1953), 308.

5. Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, ed. Timothy Fuller (London: Methuen, 1962; reprint, Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty, 1991), 491.

6. T. S. Eliot, "Humanist, Artist, and Scientist," *Athenaeum*, October 10, 1919, p. 1015.

7. Robert Sokolowski, *Pictures, Quotations, and Distinctions: Fourteen Essays in Phenomenology* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992), 32. See also Thierry Gontier, "Montaigne, les humanistes et la doctrine des anciens," 20–26, for a discussion of Montaigne's practice of quotation in relation to the humanists.

8. Sokolowski, *Pictures, Quotations*, 32.

9. For a discussion of the status of French and Latin in Montaigne's day, see Giovanni Dotoli, *La voix de Montaigne: Langue, corps, et parole dans les Essais* (Paris: Éditions Lanore, 2007), 237–38.

10. See Desan, *Montaigne: Les formes*, 60–62, for a discussion of Montaigne's "humanization of philosophy."

11. Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 71.

12. Here we can begin to see the influence of the *Essays* on modern science. See Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, trans. Peter Urbach and John Gibson (Chicago: Open Court, 1994). Bacon's new logic is a logic of discovery which

incorporates many of the features of Montaigne's mode of thought. For example, in book 1, aphorism 119, p. 121, Bacon writes: "In my opinion, in fact, nothing has hindered philosophy more than the failure to give time and attention to things of familiar and frequent occurrence that are accepted in passing, without any inquiry into their causes."

13. At the conclusion of the "Apology," the ancient philosophical contrast between being and becoming is set out through a long passage from Plutarch. "We have no communication with being" because we are in time, always somewhere between birth and death. There can be no communication between the temporal and the eternal because the eternal is unchanging and therefore truly is, whereas the temporal is always changing and therefore "never arrives at the perfection of being" (VS601–2, F455). Montaigne would have been relying on Amyot's translation of Plutarch's *Moral Essays*, in *Les œuvres morales & meslées de Plutarch*, trans. Jacques Amyot, vol. 1 (1572; reprint, The Hague: Mouton, 1971; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971), 356. The Amyot text of this passage begins "nous n'avons aucune *participation* du vrai estre." Montaigne changes Amyot's "participation" to "communication." Participation in the divine is the transcendence of the human. The "Apology" concludes with the assertion that "it is for our Christian faith, not for [Seneca's] Stoical virtue, to aspire to that divine and miraculous metamorphosis." Man cannot raise himself above himself and humanity. He must be lifted up "by purely celestial means" (VS604, F457). Why does Montaigne replace "participation" with "communication"? The point of the passage at the end of the "Apology" is that transcendence of the human is not within our power and would have to come through the action of the divine. The Stoic sees himself as participating in divinity, as literally becoming divine. By changing "participation" to "communication," Montaigne shows that he is considering man without revelation. And that is what he had said he would do in the "Apology" from the beginning. But he is also suggesting that the temporal is the realm of communication. If there is any human universal in the *Essays*, it would be the ability of human beings to communicate with each other.

14. See René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 140. In part 5 of the *Discourse*, Descartes claims that there are two ways by which we could tell the difference between "true men" and machines that closely resembled men. The first is that "it is not conceivable that such a machine should produce different arrangements of words so as to give an appropriately meaningful answer to whatever is said in its presence, as the dullest of men can do." The second is that machines cannot act in all of life's situations in the same way as our reason makes us act. These are also the ways we can also know the difference between men and beasts.

15. Here again we see the way in which the tradition includes developments which are taken up by Montaigne. Mary Keys, *Aquinas*, 98, discusses the differences between Aquinas and Aristotle on the value and meaning of "servile" actions: "Christ's actions and example [of serving others] *had* to have

implications for a correct understanding of human nature and consequently the exercise of human authority, including political authority.”

16. In his highly suggestive “*De l’expérience: Montaigne et la métaphysique*,” in *Montaigne: Scepticisme, métaphysique, théologie*, Vincent Carraud notes that the first sentence of “Of Experience” is a translation of the first sentence of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (69). “Of Experience” is Montaigne’s “first philosophy.” It is here that he confronts Aristotle and departs from him. We do not recognize the importance of Aristotle for Montaigne on account of the traditional interpretation of Montaigne as a skeptic. But the first pages of “Of Experience” constitute a precise discussion of the beginning of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* (70–72) and the essay as a whole is Montaigne’s subversion of the Aristotelian concept of experience. This subversion is the first condition for Montaigne’s notion of the experience of the self (83). Montaigne’s experience is of the union of soul and body, the experience that he substitutes for Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and *Physics* (84–85). Carraud suggests that it might even be possible to claim that, for Montaigne, experience is only experience of the self (87).

17. See Bacon, *Novum Organum*, book 1, aphorisms 24, 25, pp. 49–50, on the discovery of new particulars; and book 2, aphorism 2, p. 135: “Nothing truly exists in nature except separate bodies performing separate pure actions.”

18. See Charles Gagnebin, *La philosophie critique de Montaigne* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de l’Aire, 2007), 161–63, for a discussion of Montaigne’s “strong and generous ignorance.”

19. See Sarah Bakewell, *How to Live, or A Life of Montaigne in One Question and Twenty Attempts at an Answer* (New York: Other, 2010), 17: “The trick is to maintain a kind of naïve amazement at each instant of experience.” This is Montaigne’s “desire to pay astounded attention to life.”

20. See Michael Oakshott’s discussion of philosophy in *Experience and Its Modes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933).

21. In his *Montaigne en mouvement* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1982), Jean Starobinski claims that Montaigne’s purpose is to leave a record of ordinary life: this was what was so outrageous and scandalous about the *Essays* (51). This is “a truth closer to home that philosophy neglects” (282). Marcel Conche, “Montaigne, penseur de la philosophie,” in *Montaigne: Scepticisme, métaphysique, théologie*, ed. Vincent Carraud and Jean-Luc Marion, 179: with Montaigne we rediscover the astonishment and the attitude of inquiry which are at the heart of Greek thought; we rediscover philosophy in its essence.

22. Todorov, *Imperfect Garden*, 167 (emphasis added). La Charité, *Judgment*, 48: Montaigne eventually substitutes *vie* (understood as temperament) for *judgement*. Thus “the faculty of judgment permeates the whole of one’s psyche.” Screech, *Melancholy*, 13: the last pages of “Of Experience” form the climax of all three books. “For Montaigne, at the end of his quest, had come to terms with melancholy and ecstasy—and so with religion, life and death, and with his being as a man.” Tournon, “Action imparfaite de sa propre essence,” in *Montaigne: Scepticisme, métaphysique, théologie*, ed. Vincent Carraud and Jean-Luc Marion, 34: concerning Montaigne’s discussion of “vanité toute la sagesse,” Tournon says that Montaigne opposes to this, not the wisdom of God,

but the deliberate choice of earthly life, here below, in its very inanity. Philippe Desan, “Essai (genre),” in *Dictionnaire de Michel de Montaigne*, 341: Desan’s discussion of the sense of essaying as tasting (*dégustation*) fits well with this sense of experience and the practice of everyday life.

Chapter 5

1. Two major studies of Montaigne’s political philosophy have been published over the past twenty years: David Lewis Schaefer’s *The Political Philosophy of Montaigne* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Alan Levine’s *Sensual Philosophy: Toleration, Skepticism, and Montaigne’s Politics of the Self* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001). Both have the merit of recognizing Montaigne’s originality as a political philosopher and his status as a founder of modern philosophy. Schaefer claims that Montaigne’s purpose is “a radical transformation of the political and social order” (32) and locates him in the line of philosophers of liberalism that begins with Machiavelli. Levine argues that Montaigne cannot be regarded precisely as a liberal because he does not insist on democratic government, the separation of powers, or the “rights” of individuals. Nevertheless, he sees Montaigne as a “protoliberal” (168) who lays the groundwork for liberalism and has a significant role in establishing the liberal ethos. Because they take Montaigne seriously as an original political philosopher, both Schaefer and Levine provide valuable insights into Montaigne’s thought, and my own understanding of Montaigne has benefited from their work.

However, my study of the *Essays* is ultimately very different from each of theirs in emphasis and substance. First, I ground my interpretation of Montaigne’s political philosophy in his rejection of Aristotelian form and final cause and, thus, in his rejection of the common good as the end of political association. I believe this is implicit in Schaefer and Levine, although it is not thematic. Second, Montaigne’s notion of judgment is central to my understanding of his epistemology and his moral and political philosophy, whereas it is not for Schaefer or Levine. Third, I interpret Montaigne’s refounding as the overcoming of natural mastery and, therefore, I see his liberalism as a radically new kind of rule. Montaigne does not insist on any premodern regime, including democracy, because he is instituting a more fundamental reform. In this I am indebted to Francis Slade’s presentation of Machiavelli’s “new form.” Schaefer and Levine seem to understand Montaigne’s innovation as a “lowering” of the end and thus of the standards of government, while I see it as a transcendence of the traditional hierarchy of weak and strong.

Fourth, then, both Schaefer and Levine argue that Montaigne is lowering the standard of morality. Schaefer claims that Montaigne initiates the morality of “bourgeois individualism” and that his preference is that “particular relations among human beings be governed by the cash nexus” (376). Levine argues that Montaigne’s radically new conception of the subjective self is the basis for the liberal value of toleration. The best human life is radically private (167) and the character that Montaigne displays is a “sophisticated simplicity.” Montaigne’s argument for toleration, he says, appeals entirely to individual self-interest

(e.g., 168, 200, 234). I agree that Montaigne introduces a strong sense of the individual and also that he values toleration on the grounds that the *common good* must be rejected. However, the character that he displays is that of the “self-ordered” individual, “strong in itself” and therefore capable of freedom. Montaigne’s character is one of generosity and integrity and is not defined by self-interest. Again, his moral teaching can only be seen as a “lowering” of standards if one accepts the traditional hierarchy. My view is that Montaigne presents his new character as a “higher,” because more fully human, possibility than the character of classical virtue. Montaigne restores philosophy to man: he considers the human as such, without linking it to the place of man in any traditional hierarchy. While this looks like a lowering of the standards of human thought and action, he claims that “it is an absolute perfection and God-like to know how to enjoy our own being rightly.” I take this to be due to the fact that judgment, the overcoming of natural mastery, and his new character are all manifestations of the role of the will that transcends nature and thus makes possible a new kind of freedom.

Fifth, both Schaefer and Levine hold that Montaigne is not a Christian and that he seeks to undermine the power of religion and especially of the Catholic Church. Levine sees Christianity as the major source of the intolerance, oppression, and cruelty that Montaigne wants to overcome. I agree that Montaigne is highly critical of the Catholic side in the civil wars of France and of the cruelty of the Spanish conquerors in the New World. However, he does not blame Christianity, but rather blames the failure of men to live up to its teachings, for these evils. Also, there is good reason to believe that he did not really favor the toleration of Protestantism in France but that he ultimately accepted it as the only possible solution to the civil unrest. In contrast to Schaefer and Levine, I argue that Montaigne sees religion as essential to the social bond and that he views the Catholic Church as the basis for the possibility of a universal society that transcends the political realm.

2. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 15, p. 211.

3. Hobbes makes this explicit: “The difference of Common-wealths, consisteth in the difference of the Sovereign, or the Person representative of all and every one of the Multitude. And because the Sovereignty is either in one man, or in an Assembly of more than one . . . it is manifest that there can be but three kinds of Common-wealth.” The names that Hobbes uses to identify these types of government are monarchy, democracy, and aristocracy. “There be other names of Government, in the Histories and books of Policy; as Tyranny, and Oligarchy. But they are not the names of other forms of Government, but of the same Formes misliked. For they that are discontented under Monarchy, call it Tyranny; and they that are displeas’d with Aristocracy, call it Oligarchy: So also, they which find themselves griev’d under a Democracy, call it Anarchy.” Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 19, p. 239.

4. Hobbes’s formulation of this relationship as “master-servant” and Machiavelli’s formulation in terms of the opposition between “the great” and “the people” do capture the same idea that rule is not for the sake of the common good. However, I use the “master-slave” formulation in order to maintain the

connection with Aristotle's *Politics* where regimes that do not pursue the common good, and especially tyranny, are comparable to the master-slave relation in the household.

5. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundation of Inequality*, in *The First and Second Discourses*, trans. Roger D. Masters and Judith R. Masters (New York: St. Martin's, 1964), 173.

6. Benjamin Constant, "The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns," in *Political Writings*, ed. and trans. Biancamaria Fontana (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 311.

7. *Ibid.*, 310.

8. Francis Slade, "Rule as Sovereignty: The Universal and Homogeneous State," in *The Truthful and the Good: Essays in Honor of Robert Sokolowski*, ed. John J. Drummond and James G. Hart (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 1996), 163.

9. Francis Slade, "Zeno's City" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Maritain Association, Notre Dame University, South Bend, Ind., October 2007), 1.

10. *Ibid.*, 2.

11. *Ibid.*, 16.

12. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, chap. 16, pp. 217, 220.

13. Thus, when Rousseau claims that the will cannot be represented, the result is that slavery is necessary for the full participation of the citizens in the activities of ruling. This shocking turn of the argument at the end of the *Social Contract* points to the fact that the "general will" is Rousseau's version of freedom as "neither master nor slave." Whatever Rousseau's reasons for asserting that the will cannot be represented, he displays the difficulties of bringing together political freedom and personal freedom. This difficulty cannot be resolved by requiring the individual to surrender his public will to a representative. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, trans. Judith R. Masters, ed. Roger D. Masters (New York: St. Martin's, 1978), book 3, chap. 15.

14. In his discussion of the difference between premodern and modern political philosophy, Francis Slade explains the nature of the new form of rule that is introduced by Machiavelli. Whereas, for classical political philosophy, rule is exercised by human beings who assert their claims to rule on the basis of their contributions to the city, that is, on the basis of political arguments, "modern philosophy turns itself into political philosophy in the strong sense. It aims to rule. It will advance . . . the only claim worthy of respect, the claim to rule of reason itself, a claim which equalizes and cancels all the other claims. Reason can make this claim because, according to modern philosophy, reason as such is rule. It is the essence of reason, as modern philosophy and the Enlightenment understand reason, to rule." See Slade, "Was Ist Aufklärung?" 58. The fundamental thesis of modern political philosophy is that "the political whole is the construct of reason." Slade, "Rule as Sovereignty," 179. I argue that, for Montaigne, reason inflexible and impassive settles the natural contest between masters and subjects because it is not merely private, self-interested reason but reason without a private will.

15. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, 339.

16. Montaigne, *Œuvres complètes*, 1299–1300 (F1010).

17. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, part 1, chap. 15, p. 211. See Harvey C. Mansfield, *Manliness* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2006), 173: the laws of nature instruct men in sociability and are therefore particularly directed against pride or magnanimity. Mansfield points out that Hobbes nowhere in his mature thought praises manliness. In the *Leviathan*, he omits courage from the virtues.

18. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1987), 175.

19. Plutarch, *Moralia*, vol. 10, trans. Harold North Fowler, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1936), 815–16.

20. According to Tarn, there are three extant versions of the death of Betis, those of Hegesias, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and Quintus Curtius. Tarn says that the version of Dionysius is the simplest: Alexander ordered that Betis be tied living behind a chariot and the horses driven at full speed, and so killed him. Hegesias's version is the earliest and Quintus Curtius relied on it to some extent. See W. W. Tarn, *Alexander the Great II: Sources and Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 267–68. Montaigne's principal source must have been Curtius's *History of Alexander*, 4.vi. According to Villey and Saulnier, this work was in Montaigne's library. More important, the punishment of Betis is not mentioned by the other historians of Alexander: Arrian, Diodorus, and Plutarch. Finally, Alexander's address to Betis, as found in "By Diverse Means," is almost verbatim from Curtius. See Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 2 vols., trans. John C. Rolfe, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1946), 4, vi. David Quint, in *Montaigne and the Quality of Mercy: Ethical and Political Themes in the Essays* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998), 15, notes that Montaigne's source is Quintus Curtius and that, in the historian's account, Alexander is imitating Achilles. Quint also discusses the silence of Betis and the fact that Alexander finds it intolerable.

21. According to Curtius, when Betis was brought before Alexander, Alexander (who was "usually an admirer of valour even in an enemy") was "exulting . . . with insolent joy" (4.vi.26–27). Montaigne omits this description entirely. Curtius says that, in response to Betis's haughty silence, Alexander's "wrath changed to frenzy, for even then his new fortune suggested foreign customs" (29–39). Instead of reporting that Alexander's wrath changed to frenzy, Montaigne says that he turned his anger into rage (*tournant sa cholere en rage*), and he omits Curtius's explanation that Alexander was under the sway of foreign customs.

22. Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 4.vi.29–30.

23. Ibid. See Isabelle Pantin, "Montaigne lecteur de Quinte-Curce: Quelques réflexions sur la collecte de Dezeimeris," *Montaigne Studies* 17 (2005): 138, for a discussion of the story of Betis and Montaigne's omission of the comparison to Achilles. In the same volume, Philip Ford provides a thorough examination of the question of Montaigne's knowledge of Homer. See "Montaigne's Homer: Poet or Myth?" 7–16.

24. Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 4.vi.24.

25. *Ibid.*, 4.vi.5–7. “Alexander, however, although trying to track Darius with all care, could not find out for what region he had made, because of a custom of the Persians of keeping the secrets of their kings with a marvelous fidelity; not fear, not hope, can elicit a single word by which confidences are betrayed. The ancient discipline of the kings had enjoined silence on pain of death. An unbridled tongue is more severely punished than any act of wickedness, and the Magi believe that no great cause can be upheld by one who finds it hard to keep silence, which nature has decreed to be the easiest thing for a man to do.”

26. *Ibid.*, 7.

27. See Etienne de La Boétie, *Le discours de la servitude volontaire*, text established by P. Léonard (Paris: Payot, 1985), 134–35. I have relied upon David Lewis Schaefer’s translation of the *Discourse in Freedom over Servitude*, ed. David Lewis Schaefer (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1998). This passage is found on p. 205 of Schaefer’s translation.

28. Victor Davis Hanson, *The Soul of Battle: From Ancient Times to the Present Day, How Three Great Liberators Vanquished Tyranny* (New York: Free, 1999), 52. Hanson relies on scattered references in Xenophon, Plutarch, Pausanias, and Diodorus (52, 417).

29. *Ibid.*, 118.

30. *Ibid.*, 111.

31. *Ibid.*, 57, 71.

32. *Ibid.*, 53.

33. *Ibid.*, 55.

34. *Ibid.*, 53.

35. *Ibid.*, 54–55.

36. *Ibid.*, 107.

37. This is Cornelius Nepos’s version of the story: “He was leading an army in the Peloponnesus against Sparta and had two co-commanders, one of whom was the brilliant Pelopidas. Because of the envious hatred of some men in Thebes these three leaders were stripped of their command, and others were sent out to replace them. Epaminondas disobeyed the order and, having persuaded his co-commanders to do the same, carried on the war. He was convinced that the inexperience of the new commanders would surely lead to the destruction of the army. Epaminondas did all of this under the shadow of a Theban law which punished with death all who kept their command longer than the prescribed period. Since he recognized that this law was enacted to preserve the state, and since he did not want the same law to ruin the state, he held his command four months longer than the people had originally directed. As soon as the commanders returned home, they were indicted on a charge of insubordination. Epaminondas allowed the other two officers to transfer all responsibility for their illegal actions to him. Such a line of argument freed them but made the case against Epaminondas so tight that no one thought he would even dare to speak in his own defense. During the trial he denied none of the charges, and having confessed to everything, admitted he deserved full punishment under the law. He did ask one favor of his judges, namely that they enter

the following statement in the trial record: ‘Epaminondas was sentenced to death by the Thebans because he forced them at Leuctra to defeat the Spartans, whom they had never dared to oppose in battle before Epaminondas led them. In just one battle he snatched the Theban army out of the jaws of defeat and lifted the Spartan yoke off all Greece. He completely changed the earlier fortunes of Thebes and Sparta: Thebes now attacks Sparta and Spartans consider themselves lucky to escape from the battlefield alive. He did not cease his relentless pressure until Messene had been recovered and Sparta lay encircled by his troops.’ When he had finished, a roar of laughter went up from the crowd, and no judge dared to indict him on any charge. The trial which had begun with accusations of treason, ended with exoneration and commendation.” Cornelius Nepos, “Epaminondas (420–362 BC),” in *Lives of Famous Men*, trans. Gareth Schmeling (Coronado, 1971), 84–85. Hanson, *Soul of Battle*, says that Epaminondas reasoned that the law of a one-year limitation on the tenure of beotarchs was to prevent tyranny (83).

38. Hanson, *Soul of Battle*, 32.

39. Quint, *Quality of Mercy*, 17.

40. Hanson, *Soul of Battle*, 21, 116–17.

41. Nepos, “Epaminondas,” 86.

42. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), chap. 12, p. 50. Epaminondas died in 362 BC. Philip became king of Macedon in 358 and occupied Thebes in 338.

43. James J. Supple, *Arms Versus Letters: The Military and Literary Ideals in the Essays of Montaigne* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1984), 249: Epaminondas shows Montaigne’s increasing insistence on the primacy of virtue over valor and his shift from the worldly man to private conduct. See also 246–48 on the primacy of private values.

44. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses on Livy*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 1.21.3, p. 55.

45. *Ibid.*, 1.17.3, p. 48.

46. *Ibid.*, 1.55.4–5, pp. 111–12.

47. This was suggested to me by Francis Slade’s discussion of the rejection of the common good in his “Two Versions of Political Philosophy,” 248, in which he quotes Josef Pieper concerning his conversation with Carl Schmitt: “I asked . . . [Carl Schmitt] why, in his book on the ‘concept of the political’ . . . he had not written a syllable about the *bonum commune*, since the whole meaning of politics surely lay in the realization of the common good. He retorted sharply: ‘Anyone who speaks of the *bonum commune* is intent on deception.’” Josef Pieper, *No One Could Have Known: An Autobiography: The Early Years* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1987), 175.

48. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 236–37.

49. *Ibid.*, 241.

50. *Ibid.*, 239–40.

51. *Ibid.*, 237, 244.

52. *Ibid.*, 238.

53. *Ibid.*, 240–41.

54. *Ibid.*, 239 n. 76 and 77.

55. Ultimately, of course, the question is whether or not these restraints are effective and sufficient. In particular, what kind of community is it possible to have in the absence of the standard of the common good? Keys, *Aquinas*, 41–56, considers the common good in relation to contemporary theories such as communitarianism and liberal pluralism, which seem to lack the solid moral foundation which the common good offers.

56. Simone Weil, “Méditation sur l’obéissance et la liberté,” in Etienne de La Boétie, *Le discours de la servitude volontaire: La Boétie et la question du politique* (Paris: Payot, 1985), 95.

Chapter 6

1. Slade, “Two Versions of Political Philosophy,” 254.

2. *Ibid.*, 251.

3. The note on this passage in the Pléiade *Oeuvres complètes* (1458) refers to Paul-Emile who, in *De rebus Francorum*, says that this nobleman would have borne the name of Gascon.

4. Biancamaria Fontana, *Montaigne’s Politics: Authority and Governance in the Essais* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008), 27. See also R. Doucet, *Les institutions de la France au xvi siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Éditions A. et J. Picard, 1948), especially vol. 1, pp. 60–61, where the distinction and the relationship between common or customary law and written Roman law is discussed. Doucet shows that the question of the laws was a vexed issue in the sixteenth century and that no province of the kingdom enjoyed unity of legislation. I am grateful to Professor William Beik for his help in uncovering Montaigne’s meaning and for suggesting the Doucet volume to me.

5. Fontana, *Montaigne’s Politics*, 33. See also Desan, *Montaigne: Les formes*, 176–77.

6. Fontana, *Montaigne’s Politics*, 28.

7. See Desan, *Montaigne: Les formes*, 171–73, for a very helpful discussion of the “new ethic” associated with the economic practices of the new merchant class which was developing in the sixteenth century.

8. Michael Oakeshott, “Political Education,” in *The Voice of Liberal Learning*, ed. Timothy Fuller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989; reprint, Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Fund, 2001), 173.

9. *Ibid.*, 179.

10. *Ibid.*, 175.

11. Fontana, *Montaigne’s Politics*, 114.

12. Quint, *Quality of Mercy*, 20.

13. *Ibid.*, 45.

14. *Ibid.*, 26.

15. *Ibid.*, 41.

16. *Ibid.*, 104.

17. *Ibid.*, 107.

18. See Emmanuel Faye, “Montaigne et la perfection humaine de Socrate dans ‘De la physionomie,’” *Montaigne Studies* 21 (2009): 38; Montaigne goes

beyond the opposition between nature and education in the formation of Socrates's character.

19. See Desan, *Montaigne: Les formes*, 182: Montaigne ties the honor of the nobility to keeping one's word.

20. Within this context of the reordering of the virtues and vices, where does the virtue of justice find a place? Justice might be called *the* political virtue. Aristotle's understanding of the common good is inseparable from the virtue of justice: those regimes are just which aim at the common good and those which aim at the good of the rulers are unjust. Given Montaigne's rejection of the common good, what could he mean by "justice"?

Montaigne does refer to what he calls "justice itself." In "Of the Useful and the Honorable" he writes: "Justice in itself, natural and universal, is regulated otherwise and more nobly than that other, special, national justice, constrained to the needs of our governments" (VS796, F604). Here he denies the possibility of perfect justice established by human beings. In the "Apology" he expresses his dissatisfaction with the philosophical position that justice is simply a matter of obeying the laws of one's country. "Truth," he says, "must have one face, the same and universal." To say that we must follow the laws of our country is to say that justice has many faces. Montaigne's response is: "I cannot have my judgment so flexible" (VS578–79, F436–37). Yet there does seem to be a sense in which Montaigne sees obedience to the laws as the best that can be done given the imperfect forms of justice that men devise. "Laws," he says, "remain in credit not because they are just, but because they are laws. That is the mystic foundation of their authority; they have no other. And that is a good thing for them. They are often made by fools, more often by people who, in their hatred of equality, are wanting in equity; but always by men, vain and irresolute authors. There is nothing so grossly and widely and ordinarily faulty as the laws. Whoever obeys them because they are just, does not obey them for just the reason he should" (VS1072, F821). However, unlike Socrates, Montaigne's allegiance to the laws is conditional. If the laws threatened his freedom, he would instantly go and find others (VS1072, F821). This perhaps implies that freedom, not the common good, is the touchstone for evaluating the laws.

Montaigne's attitude toward justice may also have something to do with the fact that justice involves retribution or revenge, and that is the passion which he seems most concerned to suppress. Thus, in "Of Cruelty" he asserts that, even in "the executions of justice," whatever punishments go beyond plain death are "pure cruelty" (VS430, F314). It would seem, then, that the social virtues supersede the political virtue of justice in the reform of the nobility.

21. Fontana, *Montaigne's Politics*, 104.

22. *Ibid.*, 105.

23. In *Montaigne: La manière et la matière* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1991), G eralde Nakam comments on these stories from "Various Outcomes of the Same Plan" and connects Montaigne with Machiavelli's *Discourses*: public peace rests on the confidence of the people (161–68). He also provides a very useful commentary on the symmetry of "By Diverse Means We Arrive at the Same End" and "Various Outcomes of the Same Plan" with respect to the terror exercised by tyrannies (169–71).

24. Montaigne, *Oeuvres complètes*, 1289 (F, CW 1002).
25. *Ibid.*, 1262 (F, CW 982).
26. *Ibid.*, 1294 (F, CW 1006).
27. Smith, *Montaigne and Religious Freedom*, 81–82.
28. *Ibid.*, 57, 61–63. Smith quotes from La Boétie’s *Memorandum*: “It is impossible to couple together truth and falsehood, for one necessarily drives out the other. In ancient societies, any error easily gained acceptance, but as soon as the light of the gospel appeared and gave the lie to all the idolatry of the gentiles, it became manifest that the true religion and false religions were incompatible. The struggle between them did not cease until truth defeated falsehood and light drove out darkness. Now, just as our religion could not in any way accept paganism, in the same way it cannot accept diverse sects within itself, since truth is one, pure and simple, and never compromises with what is false and deceitful. And to imagine that our faith can have anything to do with what it rejects is to do violence to its inherent purity” (64).
29. *Ibid.*, 105.
30. *Ibid.*, 135.
31. *Ibid.*, 86.
32. *Ibid.*, 171.
33. *Ibid.*, 178.
34. *Ibid.*, 124.
35. *Ibid.*, 102, 117.
36. *Ibid.*, 112.

Chapter 7

1. Michael Oakeshott, *The Politics of Faith and the Politics of Scepticism*, ed. Timothy Fuller (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), 76.
2. *Ibid.*, 49. So also, William J. Bouwsma in *The Waning of the Renaissance* describes this as a time of unprecedented empowerment of princes, during which the pressures of central government were felt on individuals and intermediate bodies, such as guilds and ecclesiastical organizations. The justification of such power was now a major concern of political thought.
3. Michael Oakeshott, “The Masses in Representative Democracy,” in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, ed. Timothy Fuller (London: Methuen, 1962; reprint, Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty, 1991), 364.
4. *Ibid.*, 365.
5. *Ibid.*, 370.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, 366.
8. J. B. Schneewind, *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 37.
9. *Ibid.*, 45.
10. See Todorov, *Imperfect Garden*, 109–10: Montaigne is fleeing not society but servitude. Todorov argues throughout this book that humanism rejects the incompatibility of community and liberty.
11. For example, in the discussion of virtue in the *Summa Theologica*, Thomas Aquinas makes precisely that point (ST I-II, Q63, A1).

12. Quintus Curtius, *History of Alexander*, 4.vi.29–39.

13. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary of Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger (Notre Dame, Ind.: Dumb Ox Books, 1993), book 7, lecture 11, p. 459: "Thus, sexual pleasure obviously very intense, impedes the mind to such an extent that no one is capable of exercising the act of understanding at the time of the act of pleasure, for the whole attention of the mind is drawn to it." Aquinas is commenting on *NE*. 1152b1–24, where Aristotle sets out arguments that pleasure is not the highest good.

14. Montaigne opposes cruelty in the executions of justice. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 2.2, question 159, treats cruelty as a vice opposed to moderation, specifically with respect to punishment, and therefore the moderation of punishment comes under the rule of reason like all virtues. Cruelty for the pleasure of it is, for Aquinas, savage and bestial. But for Montaigne, cruelty is distinctly human; it cannot be brought under reason, for, more than any other passion, it tends toward the ravishment of reason. Also, Aquinas thinks that sexual pleasure is the best example of the ravishment of reason because at its height it interferes with thought. Montaigne thinks otherwise: the pleasure of the chase is a more appropriate example because it involves the pleasure of contemplation.

15. For a more complete discussion of Montaigne's practice of confronting the passions in their beginnings, see "Of Husbanding Your Will," especially VS1016–20, F778–80.

16. This is another instance in which we can see intimations of Aquinas's Christian development of Aristotle's ethics. Keys, *Aquinas*, 144, reads Aquinas "as offering a subtle yet far-reaching critique of Aristotelian magnanimity, one with roots in Aquinas's theology yet also comprising a philosophic reappraisal of Aristotle's account of human excellence." See also my *Accidental Philosopher*, chap. 7: "Montaigne's Character: The Great-Souled Man Without Pride."

17. René Descartes, *The Passions of the Soul*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, vol. 1, trans. John Cottingham et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), part 3, article 161, pp. 387–88.

18. *Ibid.*, articles 152 and 153, p. 384.

19. *Ibid.*, article 154, p. 384.

20. *Ibid.*, article 164, p. 389.

21. See Bernard Sève, *Montaigne: Des règles pour l'esprit* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), 319.

22. Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1949), 5. In her "Note" to the second edition of *Wise Blood*, Flannery O'Connor asks: "Does one's integrity ever lie in what he is not able to do?"

23. John Kekes, *Enjoyment: The Moral Significance of Styles of Life* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2008), 146.

24. *Ibid.*, 149.

25. Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, 339.

26. John Kekes, *The Morality of Pluralism* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 193.

27. *Ibid.*, 196.

28. John Christian Laursen, *The Politics of Skepticism in the Ancients, Montaigne, Hume and Kant* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992). See pp. 116–18 on Montaigne’s inversion of the evaluation of the public and private realms. He places the private above the public. Further, religion is a public matter, not a matter of private conscience.

29. Kekes, *Enjoyment*, 237–38.

30. *Ibid.*, 244.

31. Friedrich Nietzsche, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” trans. William Arrowsmith, in *Unmodern Observations*, ed. William Arrowsmith (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990), 171.

32. Bouwsma, *Waning of the Renaissance*, 177: Montaigne “equated the highest grace in behavior with nonchalance.” See Zahi Zalloua, “Montaigne, Seneca, and ‘le soing de la culture de l’ame,’” *Montaigne Studies* 21 (2009): 163–64, for a very helpful discussion of Montaigne’s nonchalance, especially in relation to politics.

33. Ullrich Langer, *Divine and Poetic Freedom in the Renaissance: Nominalist Theology and Literature in France and Italy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990), 186. See also Zahi Zalloua, *Montaigne and the Ethics of Skepticism* (Charlottesville, Va.: Rookwood, 2005), 88, on the relationship between generosity and friendship.

34. See Todorov, *Imperfect Garden*, 130: this friendship is “not in the service of any external goal” and is “not reducible to any general notion.” See also Todorov, *Montaigne ou la découverte de l’individu*, 9–10. Lorraine Smith Pangle, *Aristotle and the Philosophy of Friendship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 66: their friendship is “the freely chosen submission of each to the will of the other.”

35. Etienne de La Boétie, *Le discours de la servitude volontaire*, 160 (Schaefer 220). For an illuminating discussion of friendship and tyranny within the context of Montaigne’s friendship with La Boétie, see Michael Platt, “Montaigne, Of Friendship, and On Tyranny,” in Schaefer, *Freedom over Servitude*, 31–85. See Starobinski, *Montaigne en mouvement*, 71–73, for a discussion of friendship, tyranny, and La Boétie’s *Discours*.

36. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 314.

37. La Boétie, *La servitude volontaire*, 134–35 (Schaefer 205).

38. *Ibid.*, 135 (Schaefer 206).

39. In his *Montaigne: Des règles pour l’esprit*, Bernard Sève argues that generosity is necessary to discussion and that the intellectual capacities that produce discussion are necessary to the attitude of generosity (317). Generosity in discussion is shown in the refusal to be opinionated, the refusal of base interpretations of the actions of others, and the refusal of finesse and subtlety (326). Sève also argues that generosity is associated with Montaigne’s hatred of lying because lying destroys communication. Generosity is one of the motives and persuasive forces of the *Essays* themselves (324). In “Un scepticisme sans tranquillité: Montaigne et ses modèles antiques,” in *Montaigne: Scepticisme, métaphysique, théologie*, ed. Vincent Carraud and Jean-Luc Marion, 25–27, Charles Larmore argues that Montaigne transforms the skepticism that

he inherits: Montaigne's skepticism consists in avoiding enthusiasm which is imagining that one has discovered the definitive solution to a question. Larmore associates this version of skepticism with Montaigne's ignorance. Thus the true face of his skepticism appears in "the ethic of conversation" in essay 3.8, "Of the Art of Discussion."

40. Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality Among Men*, 160–61.