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MONTAIGNE AND THE *HOMO MESURA*:

A STUDY OF RELATIVISM

IN MONTAIGNE

Antoinette Voget



"If man really is the measure of all things, there would appear to be no measure of man, and oddly enough, no man either, only a large number of very different men."¹

Albert Thibaudet in his discussion of Montaigne's skepticism correlates Montaigne's method with relativism and indicates that relativism is the philosophical nexus underlying his sceptical world-view in the "Apology:" "l'argument de Montaigne pour fonder son scepticisme c'est la pluralité: pluralité des opinions philosophiques, pluralité des mondes."² Relativism has been the subject of much study by Montaigne scholars in recent years and has been recognized as a key concept for defining the political and moral philosophy of the *Essays*. Abraham Keller states that

by this interesting and ambitious program of relativity, Montaigne is to be associated with one of the distinctive intellectual movements of the Renaissance, a movement which can be traced through such influential fifteenth century thinkers as Pico della Mirandola, Cusanus, and Leonardo Bruni and which had gathered great momentum by the sixteenth century.

Although relativism was not actually defined as a coherent philosophical system until the nineteenth century when it was characterized as "a doctrine affirming the relativity of knowledge and esthetic and moral values,"⁴ it existed as a philosophical concept long before. One of the most complete definitions of relativism prior to the Renaissance, for example, is contained in the eighth trope of the *Hypotyposes Pyrrhoniennes* (circa A.D. 200).⁵

It is commonly accepted that relativism had its inception in the doctrine of the sophist Protagoras (490–421 B.C.) who stated that "of all things the measure is man; of the things that are, that they are; and of things that are not, that they are not."⁶ Gorgias of Leontiniem (470–375 B.C.) is credited with the first expression of a theory of 'moral relativism' as he is believed to be the first to postulate that virtue was not an absolute, but rather was situational, a function of age, temperament, occupation and sex. 'Linguistic relativism' (nominalism⁷) can be traced back to Plato's *Cratylus* where Hermogenes counters Cratylus' argument that language is a natural phenomenon (*physis*) in which the name attributed to a given object is inherent in the object itself and hypothesizes that language is rather a convention (*nomos, thesis*), and that an object has a name simply because it has been agreed to accept the name as the symbol of the object in question.

During the Renaissance itself expressions of relativistic theory could be found at least a century before the publication of the *Essays* in 1580. As Keller has stated, "relativity of place was not, of course, new with Montaigne."⁸ In the fifteenth century Cusanus had challenged the Aristotelian view of motion based on clear spatial divisions and absolute fixed points by substituting a relativistic concept of space and movement which abolished the notion of up and down and presupposed that any given point in space could lay equal claim to being the center of the universe. Two centuries before the publication of the *Essays*, Petrarch made reference to 'cultural relativism' and its role in the formation of customs in his *Rerum Familiarium* (1325–1366).

In the light of this tradition of relativism, I shall attempt in this article to examine the interplay of primitivism and skeptical relativism and their relationship to Montaigne's concept of universal relativism. Keller considers Montaigne's relativism primarily as an outgrowth of primitivism alone—in the form of new geographical knowledge derived from "voyages of discovery"—and denies the importance of a theoretical basis for the formulation of his relativism. His contention that Montaigne "was no metaphysician" and that "his relativism, though it must have received welcome philosophical support from Cusanus, derived its strength from a

more practical source—the new geographical knowledge of the Renaissance”⁹ is too one-sided. It overlooks the tremendous role played by Greek skeptical philosophy, in particular that of Sextus Empiricus in the elaboration of his relativism. Indeed Craig Brush has demonstrated masterfully that Sextus Empiricus’ chapter on the ten tropes “contributed greatly to the ‘Apology of Raymond Sebond,’ ” and has proven that at least a dozen pages were copied almost textually from the *Hypotyposes Pyrrhoniennes* and “spread over thirteen pages of the ‘Apology.’ ”¹⁰

Although Montaigne’s relativism can be linked with that of such influential fifteenth century writers as Pico della Mirandola, Cusanus, and Giordano Bruno, his relativism was qualitatively different. His relativism was far more radical because it was partly rooted in skeptical philosophy and from this epistemological framework evolved into a more extreme form of relativism. Whereas Cusanus, Giordano Bruno and Pico della Mirandola used a deductive approach based on syllogistic reasoning and argued cultural pluralism as a theoretical concept, Montaigne proceeded inductively as well, incorporating the new geographical knowledge of the Renaissance into his “science of the world.” Montaigne’s originality is that he fused the new geographical knowledge with the skeptical relativism which he had assimilated largely from Sextus Empiricus and Pyrrho to arrive at his own concept of relativism.

In my opinion, this issue of the relationship between primitivism and skeptical relativism deserves further consideration. Although Pierre Villey in his magistral study of Montaigne underscores the role of skeptical relativism in Montaigne’s intellectual development, he fails to point out that it is the *skeptical* orientation of Montaigne’s relativism which makes it original. Although he mentions Pico della Mirandola’s nephew, Giordano Bruno, briefly, he does not differentiate Montaigne’s type of relativism from that exemplified by thinkers such as Giordano Bruno or Cusanus who were less radical largely because their relativism lacked a skeptical basis. Montaigne’s skepticism enabled him to go beyond cultural pluralism to an absolute form of relativism where, as Casserley states, “relativism is not simply the observation of the many relativities, but the dogma that life is such that it can contain nothing else but relativities.”¹¹ Cusanus and Giordano Bruno never arrived at this absolute form of epistemological relativism because they remained subject to the dialectical framework of Aristotelian scholastic philosophy which attempted to reconcile paradox by the doctrine of the coincidence of opposites (*coincidentia oppositorum*).¹² They never seriously doubted the validity of reason as a mode of cognition nor did they recognize factors such as perennial movement¹³ or the inadequacy of sense perception as *aporias*¹⁴ which

could not be transcended. R. A. Sayce only touches upon this problem, stating that

skepticism also leads in a quite different direction which is even more important for Montaigne's thought as a whole. This is the group of related ideas which may be designated as primitivism, relativism, and diversity. Each, it will be readily seen, implies a skeptical basis.¹⁵

The ensuing discussion will deal with three aspects of relativism—primitivism, skeptical relativism, Renaissance relativism—in an effort to put the interplay of primitivism and skeptical relativism into a historical context where the originality of Montaigne's relativism can be more readily assessed. Although studies have been devoted to Renaissance relativism, focusing primarily on Cusanus, Giordano Bruno, and Pico della Mirandola,¹⁶ to my knowledge, no comparative studies of relativism have been undertaken.

Richard Popkin points out that "Michel de Montaigne was the most significant figure in the sixteenth century revival of ancient skepticism," for he synthesized insights from classical Antiquity and the discovery of the New World, "both of these newly found worlds," to discern the "relativity of man's intellectual, cultural and social achievements, a relativity that was to undermine the whole concept of the nature of man and his place in the moral cosmos."¹⁷ Whereas Aristotle with his doctrine of the category of relation had taught that only the general could be a subject of inquiry, Montaigne was a "diversitarian,"¹⁸ who judged individual cultures not with respect to a specific norm but in terms of themselves. Montaigne's perspective encompassed as Donald Frame states, the ability "to judge one's own view-point by one's neighbor's, one's neighbor's by one's country, one's country by those of other countries, that of man by that of the animals and of all nature."¹⁹ In the opening lines of his essay "Of Cannibals," (Book, I, Chapter XXXI—written between 1578 and 1580²⁰), Montaigne defines a policy of cultural relativism freed from *a priori* conceptions of cultural absolutes: "il se faut garder de s'attacher aux opinions vulgaires, et les faut juger par la voye de la raison . . ." (I, XXXI, 200). He questions the ethnocentrism which caused misguided cosmographers like Thévet to describe the Brazilian cannibals as "gens merueilleusement estranges et sauvages, sans foy, sans loy, sans religion, sans civilite aucune. . ."²¹ Montaigne states:

I think there is nothing barbarous and savage in that nation, from what I have been told, except that each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice;

for indeed it seems that we have no other test of truth and reason than the example and pattern of the opinions and customs of the country we live in. (I, XXXI, 203)²²

This conviction that "each man calls barbarism whatever is not his own practice" had its most extreme expression in the elaboration of a theory of cultural primitivism in Montaigne's political and moral philosophy. As Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas have indicated, this primitivism was part of a larger movement which originated in the cultural and chronological primitivism of Cynical thought (ca. 303 B.C.); and was directly correlated with

naturism, one of the strangest, most potent and most persistent factors in Western thought—the use of the term 'nature' to express the standard of human values, the identification of the good with that which is 'natural or according to nature.'²³

Montaigne's primitivism is not as radical as that of the Cynics or the Stoics who espoused a doctrine of both cultural and chronological primitivism, arguing with Seneca that "there is indeed no other condition of the human race which anyone would esteem more highly than this."²⁴ Although he eulogized the "state of nature," Montaigne did not adhere to primitivist theories of progressive degeneration²⁵ which were general assumptions of chronological primitivism. His cultural primitivism was primarily an epistemological tool for criticizing European institutions and mores.

Almost two hundred years before the publication of Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762) and his *Discourse on Inequality* (1754), Montaigne used the philosophical model of the noble savage to discredit the myth of enlightened "civilized" man which, (according to Rousseau), states that "L'homme est naturellement cruel, et qu'il a besoin de police pour l'adoucir;"

For, on the contrary, nothing is so gentle as man in his primitive state when, placed by nature at equal distances from the stupidity of brutes and the fatal enlightenment of civil man, and limited equally by instinct and reason . . .²⁶

In "Of Cannibals" Montaigne not only seriously questions civilized man's assumption that the "enlightenment of civil man" is superior to "man in his primitive state," but he also systematically refutes the premises underlying civilized man's argument. Using as the focal point of his logic "the identification of the good with that which is natural or according to nature,"²⁷ Montaigne underscores the existence of natural law in

so-called "savage man"²⁸ in the "state of nature," and asserts the ethical superiority of the Cannibals over artificial socialized man. As the Scythians were idealized as archetypal ancestors of primeval man in ancient cultural primitivism by writers such as Strabo in the later first century B.C., Montaigne depicts the Cannibal society as an ethically pure culture where the men seemed "fresh sprung from the Gods."²⁹ In contrast with the civilized societies of Europe "lesquelles naturelles vertus et proprieté, nous avons abastardies en ceux-cy, et les avons seulement accommodées au plaisir de nostre goust corrompu (I, XXXI, 203), the Cannibal societies remain "encore fort voisines de leur naïveté originelle." Les loix naturelles leur commandent encore fort peu abastardies par les nostres . . ." (I, XXI, 204).³⁰

Before Rousseau in his *Discourse on the Science and Arts* (1750) had ascertained that "la culture des Sciences corrompt la morale d'une nation"³¹ Montaigne had expressed the primitivist dictum that economic progress was correlated with a moral decline in society. Basing his argument in part on Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* (ca. 55 B.C.), where Lucretius had demonstrated that the development of a more complex society with its system of private property and its monetary organization had no led to a better society, but rather had "easily robbed the strong and beautiful of honor,"³² Montaigne arrives at similar conclusions. In the state of nature prior to the introduction of agriculture and metallurgy, "primitive man" had not been corrupted by the notion of property or the use of money which for Rousseau were the two factors "qui ont civilisé les hommes et perdu le genre humain."³³ Montaigne states:

This is a nation, I should say to Plato, in which there is no sort of traffic, no knowledge of letters, no science of numbers, no name for a magistrate, or for political superiority, no custom of servitude, no riches or poverty . . . The very words that signify lying, treachery, dissimulation, avarice, envy, belittling, pardon—unheard of (I, XXXI, 204).³⁴

After affirming the ethical supremacy of primitive man, Montaigne combats the anti-primitivist theory of ascent³⁵ by refuting civilized man's contention that complexity in the economic infrastructure of society and in social organization is necessarily indicative of "progress." Montaigne writes: "They could not imagine a naturalness so pure and simple as we by experience; nor could they believe that our society could be maintained with so little artifice and human sorder" (I, XXXI, 204).³⁶ A high degree of complexity in the operation of a given society can be equated with inefficiency and a less than optimal use of resources, if it can be proven

that the society can be functional with a minimal level of complexity and labor.

A more direct indictment of civilized man's presumption that he lived "in the best possible of worlds," came from Montaigne's epistemological primitivism, what Lovejoy and Boas term the "commonplace that men's minds as nature made them, i.e., illuminated with the 'pure light of nature' saw most clearly the simple and fundamental truths which man most needs to know."³⁷ Montaigne uses the primitivist commonplace of the *consensus gentium*³⁸ not only to show that primitive man under the influence of what Cicero calls "nature's light" (*naturae lumen*) can be superior to civilized man in his reasoning faculties, but that he is capable analytically of judging the cogency of institutions outside of his cultural tradition. As such, the *topos* of the noble savage endowed with "nature's light" becomes a vehicle for Montaigne's criticism of European institutions. Through the Cannibals' repudiation of the legitimacy of European hereditary royalty (where an adolescent may command his elders) and the unequal distribution of wealth in European society, Montaigne contests illogicalness and inequities in European institutions. By purposely contrasting the sophisticated cruelty of the Portuguese in warfare to the naive vendettas of the Cannibals and by revealing the absence of sadism in the Cannibals' treatment of prisoners, he shows the innate higher moral ethic of the Cannibals who had never institutionalized torture although they were a so-called primitive culture.

In "Of Coaches" (1585-1588) Montaigne adds a new dimension to the issue of the "noble savage" by purposely selecting an Indian culture whose civilization rivaled and even surpassed that of Europe. "The people of the Kingdom of Mexico were somewhat more civilized and skilled in the arts than the other nations over there . . ." (III, VI, 698)³⁹ He uses the criterion of complexity in sciences and arts invoked by European writers such as Thévet and Léry against the "savages" of the New World to discount the myth of cultural supremacy of European societies of the "Old World."

As for pomp and magnificence whereby I entered upon this subject, neither Greece nor Rome nor Egypt can compare any of its works, whether in utility or difficulty or nobility, with the road which is seen in Peru, laid out by the kings of the country . . . (XXX, VI, 893).⁴⁰

Between the time he composed "Of Cannibals" and "Of Coaches" Montaigne seems to be modifying somewhat his argument of epistemological primitivism, which he used to corroborate his relativistic perspective of the "noble savage" endowed with the "pure light of reason." In

"Of Coaches" the context no longer is that of a primitive society as he enlarges upon the primitivist concept of "nature as norm," equating "naturalness" in this instance not with simplicity in economic and social organization but with ethical purity alone. Although the Indians of Peru have an advanced civilization, they have retained, if not the "state of nature" in the traditional sense, a "state of innocence." "Being uncorrupted, they followed nature"⁴¹ as Seneca says, but they were on a higher intellectual plane than the Cannibals for they had developed their reasoning faculties to a greater extent. When the Spanish conquistadors attempt to use sophistry to deceive the Indians, pretending that they are "peaceable men, . . . sent on behalf of the King of Castille, the greatest prince of the habitable world" (III, VI, 695), they are met with a reply which ridicules European ethnocentrism and the logic of conquest. "As for their king, since he was begging, he must be indigent and needy; and he who had awarded their country to him must be a man fond of dissension, to go and give another person something that was not his and thus set him at strife with its ancient possessor" (XXX, VI, 889).⁴²

Montaigne's enlightened judgment of so-called primitive societies becomes more remarkable when it is remembered that cultural relativism as a doctrine was not necessarily widely accepted among Montaigne's contemporaries. It should not be forgotten that Trevet's first edition of the *Singularitez de la France Antarctique* appeared in 1558, twenty-two years before the publication of the *Essays*. Thévet's conception of noble savages as "gens farouches et sauvages, esloignez de toute courtoisie et humanité"⁴³ and Villegagnon's view that they were "bestes portant figure humaine"⁴⁴ were by no means anomalies.

Primitivism was only an initial stage in the development of Montaigne's relativism rather than being its primary focus as Keller has argued. It remained for Montaigne to expand the scope of relativism beyond cultural relativism to arrive at a concept of epistemological relativism based on his observation of the plurality of philosophical opinions, this "plurality of worlds" which Albert Thibaudet mentions. Proceeding inductively, Montaigne started from the recognition of relativism in European and Cannibal institutions and mores to posit finally a theory of universal relativity. In particular in the "Apology of Raymond Sebond" (Book II, Chapter XII) composed between 1575-76 and 1578-80, Montaigne, under the influence of Pyrrho, Agrippa von Nettesheim, and Sextus Empiricus, formulated his theory of epistemological relativism. Using the basic framework of the *epoché*, Montaigne went beyond what Hugo Friedrich terms the "hodogetical doubt" of Aristotelian scholastic philosophy

which attempted to "harmonize dialectically what appears irreconcilable"⁴⁵ to arrive at a theorem of absolute doubt. Montaigne began by indicating the existence of certain epistemological *aporias* which counteract man's effort to know himself. Reason held to be a universal principle of certainty is not an absolute, but rather a relative concept.

That reason, of which, by its condition, there can be a hundred contradictory ones about one and the same subject, is an instrument of lead and wax, stretchable, pliable, and adaptable to all biases and all measures (II, XII, 548).⁴⁶

Moreover, the senses, the medium through which man analyses the world, falsify his perceptions. Unlike Locke who would affirm in the eighteenth century that "*nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerat in sensu*," Montaigne stated that "rien ne vient à nous que falsifié et altéré par nos sens. . . . L'incertitude de nos sens rend incertain tout ce qu'ils produisent." (II, XII, 584). If man has then, as Pascal would say, "no proper standard of truth and several excellent sources of error,"⁴⁷ by the limitations of nature itself, the physical world by its very structure is difficult to apprehend. Montaigne mentions that the immense diversity of the world constitutes a barrier for man's cognition. "We see in this world an infinite difference and variety due solely to distance in place" (II, XII, 390). Before Pascal, Montaigne notes the existence of "powers of deception"—imagination, custom, self-love—which predetermine man's conception of the universe and of himself. By instating the Protagorean doctrine of the *homo mesura* in the category of sense perception, Montaigne indicates that man is a victim of what Jean Starobinski terms "phénoménisme" where "man sees himself severed from all relationship with eternal essences"⁴⁸ because he is incapable of penetrating beyond the world of appearances.

However, even more crucial than the "powers of deception" or the diversity of customs as a limiting factor in man's cognition of what Starobinski calls the "dialectic of the inner and the outer world"⁴⁹ is the Heraclitian doctrine of universal flux (*ens mobile*). In Book III, Chapter II, "Of Repentance," (1585–1588) Montaigne emphasizes that the self, far from being the static entity of traditional Aristotelian faculty psychology (existing in a permanent space-time continuum) is forever "in the process of coming-to-be and passing-away."⁵⁰ Montaigne indicates that he does not portray "l'estre," but "le passage," and "non un passage d'aage en autre, ou, comme dict le peuple, de sept en sept ans, mais de jour, en jour, de minute, en minute." (III, II, 782).⁵¹ Hugo Friedrich has observed with great acumen that by so doing, Montaigne departed from the

ancient vision of man derived from deductions and classifications, thereby "ruining the anthropological notion of type."⁵² After declaring the fundamental instability of the self, Montaigne passes to a formulation of the constant metamorphosis of the world itself as a material substance subject to laws of motion and transformation:

"Le monde n'est qu'une branloire perenne. Toutes choses y branlent sans cesse: la terre, les rochers du Caucase, les pyramides d'AEgypte, et du branle public et du leur." (III, II, 782).⁵³

This questioning of the humanistic doctrine of the *dignitas hominis* by undermining faith in man's reasoning faculties and in his cognition of the world receives further support from Montaigne's theriophily.⁵⁴ Montaigne uses the *topos* of the *praestare bestiis* to challenge systematically the premises underlying the humanistic view of man's exalted place in the animal kingdom. He adopts Aristotle's argument that instinct (a *vis quaedam naturalis*) substitutes for reasoning faculties in animals, but goes beyond Aristotle's contention that animals possess *in potentia* what man has *in actu* by pointing out the superiority of the instinct of honeybees and animals in general to our intelligence "qu'elle surpasse en toutes commoditez" (II, XII, 433).⁵⁵

Once he has finally demolished the principle of anthropocentrism so crucial to man's vision of himself as the "measure of all things" by comparing man unfavorably with animals, Montaigne goes on to sabotage the cosmological systems of the Greek philosophers. He accentuates the confusion and the diversity of hypotheses concerning the origin of the world, a fundamental concept in Greek epistemology. Thales constructs the world on the basis that water is the elemental principle; Anaximenes chooses air as the ultimate source of all things. Montaigne summarizes his condemnation of their philosophical systems in a phrase which is singularly caustic in its repudiation of speculative philosophy. "Fiez vous à vostre philosophie; vantez vous d'avoir trouvé la fève au gasteau, à voir ce tintamarre de tant de cervelles philosophiques." (II, XII, 496).⁵⁶ Given that the philosophy which he is singling out for criticism represents the apotheosis of Greek thought (for after all, he is dealing with famous Greek thinkers), Montaigne introduces by extension a principle of doubt concerning the cogency of any philosophical system.

If Montaigne has partly destroyed an ethic of confidence in human nature by showing the limitations of ancient philosophical systems, he undermines it further by concentrating on a critical appraisal of the nature

of law and institutions in the sixteenth century. He defines law in terms of custom and indicates the arbitrary foundations of all laws. "La nécessité compose les hommes et les assemble. Cette cousture fortuite se forme après en loix." (III, IX, 934).⁵⁷

One repercussion of such a scathing analysis of institutions and customs is certainly to reject the notion of *a priori* absolute values in the area of law and to refocus the entire issue in a relativistic perspective. By reducing the inner workings of law and institutions to their most elementary principles and by erecting relativism as a universal theorem, Montaigne hopes to inculcate a spirit of tolerance and moderation into his reading public. If indeed there exists "une infinie différence et variété pour la seule distance des lieux" (II, XII, 506),⁵⁸ if the criteria governing judgment are not stable, if laws and customs are indeed functions of a given culture, it follows that tolerance is the most enlightened approach. In his chapter "Of Conscience" (Book II, Chapter V—1573–1574), Montaigne protests against the methods of torture used to extort a confession, arguing that "tortures are a dangerous invention" (II, V, 266) for "pain forces even the innocent to lie."⁵⁹ He questions the torturing and execution of alleged witches in "Of Cripples" (Book III, Chapter XI—1585–1588) for it "seemed to be a matter rather of madness rather than of crime"⁶⁰ and "to kill men, we should have sharp and luminous evidence" (III, XI, 789). He decries at length the ravages of the religious wars which "let flow the innocent blood of so many of its beloved elect" (I, XXIII, 120—1572–1574).

In this section, we have shown that skepticism played a key role in the development of Montaigne's relativism. Indeed, to limit Montaigne's relativism to primitivism is an oversight given the overwhelming textual references to skeptical thought. Montaigne's relativism cannot be clearly understood without an insight into the interaction between primitivism and skeptical relativism, and it is an error to dissociate the two as though one or the other was the fundamental source for his relativism.

If Montaigne is to be associated with one of the distinctive intellectual movements of the Renaissance, it remains to demonstrate how skepticism enabled Montaigne to make a radical departure from the type of relativism exemplified by Pico della Mirandola, Cusanus, and Leonardo Bruni.

Although Montaigne's relativism stems from a philosophical tradition which is shared by Cusanus and Giordano Bruno, essential differences exist which distinguish his relativism from theirs. However, many of the primary tenets of his relativist theory were in evidence in their writing in

germinal form, in particular the concept of spatial relativity and the belief in the inadequacy of reason alone as an epistemological tool. In the fifteenth century Cusanus departed radically from the Ptolemaian and Aristotelian view of the universe when he postulated that the universe had neither a circumference nor a fixed center and became one of the earliest philosophers to subscribe to a doctrine of relativity of place and movement. In his treatise *De Triplici Minimo et Mensura* (1591), Giordano Bruno, who had been influenced by Copernican physics, posited a theory of the plurality of worlds and refuted Aristotle's supposition of a finite universe where space was indivisible to infinity.

Relativity of space and movement was correlated in their doctrines with a theory of epistemological relativism. For Cusanus who deemed knowledge to be "learned ignorance" (*docta ignorantia*) which could not define reality empirically, but merely state conjecture (*coniectura*),⁶¹ the functioning of reason was relational. It could never arrive at absolute truth as it operated in steps, proceeding from hypothetical premises to unproven deductions. Giordano Bruno posited that although reason (*ratio*) could arrive at natural knowledge (i.e., knowledge of the physical universe), it was incapable of attaining the highest degree of knowledge. Moreover, empirical, mathematical knowledge thought to be an example of the "triumph of reason" reflected rather the limitations of reason and of human cognition. Turning to the scholastic doctrine of the minimum,⁵² Bruno concluded that since reason was unable to determine the minimum or maximum point of a quantity of substance, it could not assess its size or true nature and mathematical certainty was therefore only an illusion. "For how can you expect that, one of these parts being undetermined, the whole or any part could be determined?"⁶³

Distinguishing between the minimum directly perceptible by the senses (*minimum sensibile*) and the minimum as it exists in nature (*minimum naturae*), Bruno went on to erect a theory of the relativity of sense perception. "Sense is an eye in the prison of darkness, looking forth upon the hues and appearances of things as though through bars and apertures."⁶⁴ Bruno anticipates Montaigne's argument that our field of perception is limited both internally by the weakness of our organs of perception and externally by a physical universe infinite in its dimensions and divided into a plurality of universes. Cusanus also insisted upon the limitations of sense perception stating "Sense knowledge is a limited kind of knowledge the senses know only the individual."⁶⁵

The concept of epistemological relativism derived in part from a recognition of the imperfection of man's senses receives further support from

the doctrine of the *ens mobile*. The uncertainty of human knowledge filtered through the medium of sense perception is further compounded for Bruno by the realization that all matter is subject to a law of eternal flux. All things in the universe are subject to continuous change, to endless becoming and thus lack a fixed essence which can be measured quantitatively. The flow of atoms which takes place within objects modifies their structure continually such that even basic units of measurement—numbers, weight, time—cannot be calculated because they are never constant.

Although Cusanus did not explicitly refer to the Heraclitian doctrine of universal flux to explain man's incapability of penetrating beyond the world of phenomenal appearance to the *noumenon*⁶⁶ this concept was implied in his doctrine of the coincidence of opposites. Cusanus extrapolated the movement of the universe from theological speculation which involved using God and His attributes as a point of departure for an inferential categorizing of qualities of the material world. According to the doctrine of *coincidentia oppositorum*, the existence of one quality automatically presupposes the existence in nature of its dialectical opposite. Cusanus reasoned that since God alone is immutable, containing an absolute maximum and minimum, and that "rest is unity, in which all movement is contained,"⁶⁷ God is absolute rest as opposed to the universe which is movement and perpetual transformation. "No movement, therefore, is absolute, for absolute movement is rest. It is God, and in Him all movements are contained."⁶⁸

Although the relativism of Cusanus and Giordano Bruno anticipated Montaigne's doctrine of universal relativism, fundamental differences did exist in the form and substance of their "science of the world." Montaigne's relativism was far more extreme largely because it was partly rooted in skeptical philosophy and used this epistemological framework to corroborate personal observations. As Ernst Cassirer indicates,

To be sure, the *docta ignorantia* emphasizes the opposition of the absolute to every form of rational, logical-conceptual knowledge, [but this is resolved by] new mode and new form of knowledge (*visio intellectualis*) . . . and the moment that distinguishes this principle from every sort of scepticism is also evident.⁶⁹

Giordano Bruno did not arrive at a philosophy of absolute epistemological relativism as Montaigne would later do for he, like Cusanus, never seriously doubted the cogency of reason as a mode of cognition. Although Bruno synthesized a doctrine of universal relativism and posited relativism

with regard to sense perception, he argued that reason was a control mechanism for rectifying errors in judgment resulting from the imagination and sense perception. Montaigne's skeptical orientation which provided a holistic philosophical base for his relativism caused him to refute not only the scholastic dictum that the "truth is one" (*ens verum*), but to turn to a concept of the truth close to Plato's description of it in the *Phaedrus* as "colorless, formless, intangible."⁷⁰

Both Cusanus and Giordano Bruno while affirming, as Montaigne would later, the existence of factors which limit cognition such as the inadequacy of the senses and the mobility of the physical universe do not consider these factors as *aporias* which cannot be transcended. The universe is ultimately knowable and the passage from ignorance to understanding is possible. For Bruno enlightenment comprises three degrees—sensation, reason, and intellection—where "reason . . . amounts to power by which, from the things that are perceived and retained by the sense, something beyond, not subject to the senses or even beyond the senses is brought in and enclosed, as the universal is inferred from the particular."⁷¹ Although reason is incapable of attaining the highest philosophical knowledge according to Bruno, he ascribes to an intuitive faculty of intellection (*mens*), a comparable role to Cusanus' *visio intellectualis*. While Bruno discards traditional logic with its definitions as a means of cognition, he turns to analogical reasoning as a method of reaching "understanding."

Cusanus goes even farther than Bruno in affirming the validity of reason as a mode of cognition. He elaborates a version of epistemological theory where the mind becomes a creative locus generating concepts and universals from ideas which are preexistent in itself. Through a process of *explicatio*⁷² and *complicatio*⁷³ the mind attains true insight.

The act of the intellect, which is most clear and penetrating, apprehends the contraction of the universals in itself and in others. . . . As far as its operation is concerned, understanding presupposes being and life, for it cannot by its act give being or life or understanding, but with regard to the things understood, the understanding of the intellect itself presupposes being, life and understanding similar in nature.⁷⁴

Human knowledge becomes a form of creation, which, while it does not create new knowledge *ex nihilo* lends unity and intelligibility to the confusion of sense perception.

Although Cusanus recognized the limitations of sense perception, he remained within the confines of Aristotelian hodogetical doubt. As Ernst

Cassirer points out, "the basic character of that 'copulative theology' sought by Cusanus lies in this reconciliation of mind and nature, of intellect and sense."⁷⁵

Nevertheless, here the senses behave in such fashion that this animal is also a being of intelligence. In him the sense limitation is in some sense supposed in the intellectual nature.⁷⁶

For Bruno the problem of reconciling sense perception and knowledge was resolved also in terms of a dialectical harmonization of opposites. The evidence of the senses needs only to be correctly interpreted in order to take cognizance of the infinite.

It is for the intellect to judge, yielding due weight to factors absent and separated by distance of time and space. And in this matter our sense-perception sufficeth us and yieldeth us adequate testimony, since it is unable to gainsay us.⁷⁷

Thus, the relativism posited by Cusanus and Giordano Bruno was not an extreme form of relativism as was Montaigne's because it lacked a skeptical orientation. Both Cusanus and Bruno operated within the framework of Aristotelian scholastic philosophy in attempting to reconcile antinomies such as sense perception and cognition according to the doctrine of the coincidence of opposites. Where Montaigne adopted the method of the *épôché* and refused traditional modes of dialectical reasoning to resolve paradox, Bruno and Cusanus remained within the structure of Aristotelian hodogetical doubt.

Montaigne's originality is then that he transcended cultural pluralism to discover, as Casserley states, that "relativism is not simply the observation of the many relativities, but the dogma that life is such that it can contain nothing else but relativities."⁷⁸ Referring back to the theorem of the *homo mensura*, Montaigne used the skeptical concept of the *épôché* and the Heraclitian doctrine of universal flux to construct a theory of universal relativism where man could not be the "measure of all things," for there was "no measure of man." His scholarly refutations of the cogency of law and his sustained criticism of institutions led him to a philosophy of "universal tolerance" and became the point of departure not for a utopian Brave New World, but for the emergence of a new order which "takes place within the individual conscience."⁷⁹

Although Montaigne's relativism was part of a philosophical tradition which included Cusanus, Giordano Bruno, and Pico della Mirandola, he cannot really be considered to belong in this tradition. His *Essays* in their

treatment of relativism mark a significant break with the traditional medieval scholastic approach which saw philosophy as inferior to theology and attempted to use dogma as a focal point for arriving at conclusions pertaining to the world. While Cusanus, Giordano Bruno, and Pico della Mirando were writing in the fifteenth century, they were definitely medieval thinkers in their approach toward relativism. Both Cusanus and Giordano Bruno were too involved in theological speculation and too bound by the framework of Aristotelian scholastic philosophy to be original thinkers. Moreover, they lacked the perspective of Montaigne who sought the relationship between cultural pluralism and relativism as well as dealing with epistemological relativism. Although Bruno recognized the existence of a plurality of worlds, he made no attempt at comparative anthropology, contrasting cultures as Montaigne had done in the *Apology* and in "Of Cannibals" and "Of Coaches." Montaigne was indeed a key figure in the development of Renaissance relativism for he changed its direction not only by incorporating Greek skeptical philosophy into his "science of the world," but by his refusal of scholastic modes of thought for dealing with epistemological issues.

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Notes

1. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Nichole Marzac, Dr. Robert Hopkins, and Dr. R. E. Grimm from UC Davis for their help and encouragement. J. V. Casserley, "Relativism From A Theological Standpoint," in *Relativism and the Study of Man*, ed. Helmut Schoeck and James W. Wiggins (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., 1961), p. 97.
2. "Montaigne's argument for establishing skepticism is plurality, a plurality of philosophical opinions, a plurality of worlds." Albert Thibaudet, *Montaigne* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1963), p. 286.
3. Abraham C. Keller, "The 'Essays' of Montaigne," *Modern Philology*, 54 (1956-1957), p. 146.
4. *Le Robert Dictionnaire Alphabetique et Analogique de la Langue Francaise* (Paris: Société du Nouveau Littre, 1966), V. 5, p. 758: "Doctrine qui admet la relativité de la connaissance humaine. . . . Doctrine d'après laquelle les valeurs (morales, esthétiques) sont relatives aux circonstances (sociales, etc.) et variables."

5. Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism*, trans. Rev. R. G. Bury (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1938), p. 79: "The *Eighth Mode* is that based on relativity; . . . all things are relative—for example, with respect to the thing which judges, it is in relation to some one particular animal or man or sense that each object appears, and in relation to such and such a circumstance; and with respect to the concomitant precepts, each object appears in relation to some one particular admixture of mode or combination or quantity or position."
6. Protagoras, *Truth or Refutatory Arguments on Being*, by John W. Tietz, "Relativism and Social Control," in *Relativism and the Study of Man*, pp. 200-201.
7. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. James Baldwin (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1902), vol. 2, p. 180: "The doctrine that universals have no objective existence or validity; in its extreme form, that they are only names (*nomina, flatus vocis*), that is, creations of language for purposes of convenient communication."
8. Keller, "The 'Essays' of Montaigne," p. 148.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Craig Brush, *Montaigne and Bayle* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), p. 13.
11. Casserley, "Relativism From a Theological Standpoint," p. 106.
12. According to the scholastic doctrine of the 'coincidence of opposites,' a given quality automatically presupposes the existence in nature of its dialectical opposite.
13. Michel de Montaigne, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Bruges: Editions Gallimard, 1967), p. 782: "une branloire perenne." As this and all quotations are taken from *La Pleiade* edition of Montaigne's *Essays*, hereafter they will be referred to in my text by volume and page number.
14. Aristotle defines an *aporia* as a paradox where two equally valid answers to a question are confronted. More recently it has come to designate a problem in logic for which there is no solution.
15. R. A. Sayce, *The Essays of Montaigne: A Critical Exploration* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1972), p. 188.
16. See Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963); Henry Bett, *Nicolas of Cusa* (London: Methuen & Co., 1932); Dorothea Singer, *Bruno, His Life and Thought* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950); Ksenija Atanasijevic, *The Metaphysical and Geometrical Doctrine of Bruno* (St. Louis: Warren H. Green Inc., 1972); Paul Michel, *The Cosmology of Giordano Bruno* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973).
17. Richard Popkin, *The History of Scepticism From Erasmus to Descartes* (Assen: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1960), p. 44.
18. Keller, "The 'Essays' of Montaigne," p. 147.
19. Donald Frame, *Montaigne in France, 1812-1852* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1940), pp. 174-175.
20. All dates given in the text refer to approximate dates of composition rather than the time of publication and are taken from Donald M. Frame's translation of *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957).

21. Andre Thevet, *Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, p. 51, cited by Gilbert Chinard in *L'Exotisme Americain Dans la Litterature Francaise au XVI^e Siècle* (Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1970), p. 91. "Thus we should beware of clinging to vulgar opinions and judge things by reason's way, not by popular say." "creatures, marvelously strange and savage, living without faith, laws, religion, or any semblance of civility."
22. "Or, je trouve . . . qu'il n'y a rien de barbare et de sauvage en cette nation, à ce qu'on m'en a rapporté, sinon que chacun appelle barbarie ce qui n'est pas de son usage; comme de vray il semble que nous n'avons autre mire de la verité et de la raison que l'exemple et l'idée des opinions et usances du pais où nous sommes." (I, XXXI, 203).
23. Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), p. 12.
24. Seneca, *Epist. mor. XC*, cited in Arthur O. Lovejoy and George Boas in *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (New York: Octagon Books, 1965), p. 272: "status quidem generis humani non alium quisquam suspexerit magis . . ."
25. The primitivist doctrine of "progressive degeneration" stipulated that society regressed from a pristine Age of Gold rather than evolving toward perfection. For a full discussion of the matter, see Arthur Lovejoy and George Boas, *Primitivism*, pp. 1-12.
26. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours Sur L'Origine de L'Inégalité, Oeuvres Complètes III* (Dijon: Edition Gallimard, 1964), p. 170: "L'homme est naturellement cruel, et qu'il a besoin de police pour l'adoucir. . . ."

"Tandis que rien n'est si doux que lui dans son état primitif, lorsque, place par la nature à des distances égales de la stupidité des brutes et des lumières funestes de l'homme civil, et borné également par l'instinct et la raison . . ."
27. Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, p. 12.
28. See Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1962).
29. Seneca, *Lettres. XC*, cited by Montaigne in *Essais, I, XXI*, p. 204: "viri a diis recentes." Translated into English by Donald Frame in *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1957), p. 153.
30. In contrast with the civilized societies of Europe who have "debased their most useful and natural properties in adopting them to gratify corrupted taste" (I, XXXI, 203), the Cannibal societies remain "still very close to their original naturalness." "The laws of nature still rule them, very little corrupted by ours . . ." (I, XXXI, 204).
31. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discours Sur Les Sciences et Les Arts, Oeuvres Complètes III*, p. 39: "corrupted in proportion to the advancement of our sciences and arts toward perfection."
32. Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*, trans. Cyril Bailey (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), p. 223: "quod facile et validis et pulchris dempsit honorem;"
33. Rousseau, *Discours Sur L'Origine de L'Inégalité . . .*, p. 171: "which have civilized men and ruined the human race."
34. "C'est une nation, diroy-je à Platon, en laquelle il n'y a aucune espèce de trafique; nulle cognoissance de lettres; nulle science de nombres; nul nom de magistrat, ny de supériorité politique; nul usage de service, de richesse ou de

- pauvreté . . . Les paroles mesmes qui signifient le mensonge, la trahison, la dissimulation, l'avarice, l'envie, la détraction, le pardon, inouïees." (I, XXXI, 204).
35. The anti-primitivist "theory of ascent" was based on the concept of a progressive improvement of civilization. For a discussion of this concept, see Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, pp. 1-12.
 36. "Ils n'ont peu imaginer une nasyveté si pure et simple, comme nous la voyons par expérience; n'y ont peu croire que nostre société se peut maintenir avec si peu d'artifice et de soudeure humaine." (I, XXXI, 204).
 37. Lovejoy and Boas, *Primitivism*, p. 253.
 38. See Lovejoy and Boas for a definition of this concept, pp. 255-256.
 39. "Ceux du Royaume de Mexico estoient aucunement plus civilisez et plus artistes que n'estoient les autres nations de la . . ." (III, VI, 892).
 40. "Quant à la pompe et magnificence, par où je suis entré en ce propos, ny Graece, ny Romme, ny AEgypte ne peut, soit en utilité, ou difficulté, ou noblesse, comparer aucun de ses ouvrages au chemin qui se voit au Péru, dressé par les Roys du pays, depuis la ville de Quito jusques à celle de Cusco . . ." (III, VI, 893).
 41. Seneca, cited by Lovejoy and Boas, p. 269: "sed primi mortalium quique ex his geniti naturam incorrupti sequebantur . . ."
 42. "gens paisibles, . . . envoyez de la part du Roy de Castille, le plus grand Prince de la terre habitable" (III, VI, 889), . . . "Quand a leur Roy, puis qu'il demandoit, il devoit estre indigent et necessiteaux, et celuy qui luy avoit fait cette distribution, homme ayant dissention, d'aller donner à un tiers chose qui n'estoit pas sienne, pour le mettre en débat contre les anciens possesseurs" (III, VI, 889).
 43. Thèvet, *Singularitez de la France Antarctique*, p. 91.
 44. Villegagnon, cited by Léry in his preface, *Histoire d'un voyage fait en la terre du Brésil, qutrement dite Amérique*, A la Rochelle., Seconde édition. (Genève, 1580).
 45. For a definition of the term "hodgepotal doubt" see Hugo Friedrich, *Montaigne* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1968), p. 142.
 46. "Cette raison, de la condition de laquelle il y en peut avoir cent contraires autour d'un mesme subject, c'est un instrument de plomb et de cire, alongeable, ployable et accommodable à tous biais et à toutes mesures" (II, XII, 548).
 47. "nothing comes to us except falsified and altered by our senses. . . . The uncertainty of our senses makes everything they produce uncertain" (II, XII, 584). Blaise Pascal, *Pensées et Opuscules* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1935), p. 26: "aucun principe juste du vrai et plusieurs excellents du faux. . . ."
 48. Jean Staroborinski, "Montaigne Et 'La Relation A Autry'," *Saggi E Ricerche Di Letteratura Francese*, IX, pp. 87, 91.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
 50. Heraclitus, cited by Philip Wheelwright in *Heraclitus* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1959), p. 30.
 51. "not the passing from one age to another, nor, as the people say, from seven years to seven years, but from day to day, from minute to minute." (III, II, 782).
 52. Friedrich, *Montaigne*, p. 166.

53. "The world is but a perennial movement. All things in it are in constant motion—the earth, the rocks of the Caucasus, the pyramids of Egypt—both with the common motion and with their own" (III, II, 782).
54. For a discussion of theriophily see George Boas, *The Happy Beast* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933). Boas indicates that "the theoretical, if not psychological basis of theriophily is that the beasts—like savages—are more 'natural' than man, and hence man's superior." (p. 1).
55. "divine intelligence which it surpasses in all conveniences" (II, XII, 433)
56. "Now trust to your philosophy; boast that you have found the bean in the cake, when you consider the clatter of so many philosophical brains." (II, XII, 496).
57. "Necessity reconciles men and brings them together. This accidental link afterwards takes the form of laws . . ." (III, IX, 934).
58. "an infinite difference and variety due solely to distance in place" (II, XII, 506).
59. Publius Syrus, quoted by Vives, *Commentaire a la Cite de Dieu*, cited by Montaigne, II, V, 349: "Etiam innocentes cogit mentiri dolor."
60. Tite-Live, VIII, XVIII, cited by Montaigne, III, XI, 1010: "Captisque res magis mentibus, quam consceleratis similis visa."
61. "Conjecture" used in this sense does not have the modern connotation of a supposition that may or may not be true, but rather qualifies an assertion by stating that it is correct as far as it goes, but that given certain limitations, it cannot measure up to absolute truth.
62. Bruno's doctrine of the minimum bears some resemblance to Democritus' atomistic theory, but is much more metaphysical in nature. Bruno distinguishes between three types of minimum: the monad or metaphysical minimum representing the smallest, indivisible unit which comprises existence, the atom (the physical minimum), the basic unit forming all matter, and the point (the geometrical minimum). For a discussion of this doctrine in further detail see Ksenija Atanasijevic, *The Metaphysical and Geometrical Doctrine of Bruno*, in particular pp. 24-25.
63. Giordano Bruno, *Articuli Adversus Mathematicos* cited by Ksenija Atanasijevic, *The Metaphysical and Geometric Doctrine of Bruno*, p. 63: "Si in quanto non est definibile . . ."
64. Giordano Bruno, *De Minimi Existentia, Opera*, v. 1, pt. 3, (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann/Holzboog, 1962), p. 137: "Sensus est oculus in carcere tenebrarum, rerum colores et superficiem veluti per cancellos et foramina prospiciens." Translated by Dr. R. E. Grimm, Associate Professor of Classics at the University of California, Davis.
65. Nicolas Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, trans. Fr. Germain Heron (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954), p. 140: "Sensualis cognitio est quaedam cotracta cognitio: propter quod sensus non attingit nisi particularia."
66. *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, p. 184. Baldwin defines the *noumenon* as "the object of pure thought, or of rational intuition, free from all elements of sense."
67. Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, p. 76: "Ia quidem quies est unitas motum complicans, qui est quies seriatim ordinata, si subtiliter advertis."
68. *Ibid.*, p. 106: "Quare non est motus aliquis absolutus, quoniam absolutus motus est quies et deus. Et ille complicat omnes motus."

69. Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963), pp. 13-14.
70. Plato, *Phaedrus* in *The Works of Plato* Ed. Irwin Edman (New York: The Modern Library, 1956), p. 288.
71. Bruno, *Summa Terminorum Metaphysicorum, Opera I*, v. 1, pt. 4 (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann/Holzboog, 1962), p. 32: "ratio . . . est nempe potentia, qua ex his quae sensu sunt apprehensa et retenta aliquid ulterius insensibile seu supra sensus infertur et concluditur, ut ex particularibus infertur universale . . ." Translated by Dr. R. E. Grimm, Associate Professor of Classics University of California Davis.
72. For a discussion of this term see Paul Sigmund, *Nicholas of Cusa and Medieval Political Thought* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 250-251. Sigmund explains that "like the other concepts in the work, the *complicatio-explicatio* duality is, first of all, a theological conception." *Explicatio* means "unfolding."
73. *Ibid.* *Complicatio* refers to the "containment" or "envelopment" of ideas in God. As Sigmund states, "The idea is developed most fully in the third chapter of Book II of *De Docta Ignorantia*, which discusses, 'How the Maximum (i.e., God) Envelops (*complicet*) and Develops (*explicit*) All Things.' "
74. Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, p. 88: "Cuius intelligere, cum sit esse clarius et altius, apprehendit universalium contractionem in se et in aliis . . . Sequitur igitur intelligere esse et vivere, quoad operationem suam, quoniam per operationem suam nec potest dare esse nec vivere nec intelligere. Sed intelligere ipsius intellectus quoad res intellectas sequitur esse et vivere et intelligere naturae in similitudine."
75. Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos*, p. 41.
76. Cusanus, *Of Learned Ignorance*, p. 140: "in specie tame illa quae actu suprema est in genere animalitatis puta humana: ibi sensus tale animal efficit/ it est aial ut et fit intellect, home em est suus itellect: uvi cotractio sensualis quodammodo in intellectuali natura suppositat . . ."
77. Giordano Bruno, *On the Infinite Universe and Worlds*, in Dorothea Singer, *Bruno, His Life and Thought* (New York: Henry Schuman, 1950), p. 251: "A' l'intelletto conviene giudicare e render raggione de le cose absenti e divise per distanza di tempo ed intervallo di luoghi. Ed in questo assai ne basta ed assai sufficiente testimonio abbiamo deal senso per quel, che non a potente a contradirne e che oltre fa evidente . . ."
78. Casserley, "Relativism from a Theological Standpoint," p. 97.
79. Jean Thomas, *L'Humanisme de Diderot*, cited by Antoine Renaudet in "Auteur d'une Définition de l'Humanisme," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, VI (1945), p. 15.