

Socrates' Profession

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Abstract

The claim of the need to philosophize has within it the question of what philosophy is. Beginning from Aristotle's observation that philosophy stems from *thauma*, this question is pursued through Pythagoras' coining of *philosophos* to Socrates' assertion that philosophy is preparation for death to Montaigne's criticism of this Socratic view in his essay, "That to philosophize is to learn to die."

I. Before Philosophy

In the famous passage in the first book of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle asserts that "it is owing to their wonder [*thauma*] that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize" and "even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for myth is composed of wonders."¹ That whether to philosophize is an inescapable need in human existence, a necessity not a choice, presupposes that although we may be ignorant of the nature of things understood as the object of philosophizing, we are not ignorant of what philosophy and philosophizing is.

My purpose in the remarks that follow is to affirm the truth of the assertion that "even when one does not have to philosophize, one philosophizes"; to deny the need to philosophize is still to make a philosophical claim. We can no more eliminate the philosophical act, than we can deny the law of contradiction, because our attempt to deny it requires our employment of it. Implicit in the claim that we cannot escape philosophy's net is the question of why we philosophize at all. It is this question I wish to pursue and to do so guided by Vico's advice that "Doctrines must take their beginning from that of the matter of which

¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, 2 vols. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2:1554 (982b).

they treat.”² To know what something is requires first of all a knowledge of its origin, from where and whence it comes in human experience.

Aristotle regards wonder as generated from the mind encountering an *aporia*—two conflicting arguments having no apparent resolution. As Aristotle puts this in the *Topics*: “an equality between contrary reasonings would seem to be a cause of perplexity; for it is when we reflect on both sides of a question and find everything alike to be in keeping with either course that we are perplexed which of the two we are to do.”³ The only way to surmount an *aporia* is dialectically to compare views. The exploration of various routes of reasoning or *diaporia* is required. Our ignorance places us in the position even of determining what the dimensions of the *aporia* are. For, as Aristotle says, “it is not possible to untie a knot which one does not know.” He says further, “But the difficulty of our thinking points to a knot in the object; for insofar as our thought is in difficulties, it is in like case with those who are tied up; for in either case it is impossible to go forward.”⁴ The *aporia* may not be a matter of our thought of the object that might be solved by a loosening up of our thought. The *aporia* may be entailed in the object itself. Thus, *thauma* persists and deepens in relation to our ignorance.

Aristotle regards the experience of philosophical wonder to have been directed first to obvious and limited difficulties in thought and from there those who so wondered “advanced little by little and stated difficulties about the greater matters, e.g. about the phenomena of the moon and those of the sun and stars, and about the genesis of the universe.”⁵ Aristotle has in mind the so-called Pre-Socratics or early physicists whose wonder was directed not toward a knowledge of themselves or their own thought processes but toward nature. Their engagement in wonder led them to reformulate the accounts of nature that were established in the primal myths of the Greeks and Mid-Eastern religions. As the classicist F. M. Cornford puts it regarding the nature of Ionian physics, “for here the inward spirit and trend of this philosophy might be expected to emerge, as

² Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), para. 314.

³ Aristotle, *Topics*, in *Works*, 1:245 (145b)

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in *Works*, 2:1572 (995a).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:1554 (982b).

mythical representations came to be detected for what they are and discarded by advancing rationalism.”⁶ He says further: “Histories of philosophy and of natural science begin with this system, initiated by Thales, rounded out by Anaximander, and somewhat simplified by Anaximenes. Every reader is struck by the rationalism which distinguishes it from mythical cosmogonies. . . It was an extraordinary feat to dissipate the haze of myth from the origins of the world and of life.”⁷

Cornford's point is that philosophy does not emerge as a new way of approaching nature directly through empirical observation and experimentation; it emerges as a new way to formulate what myth had formulated as the actions of gods and images of light and dark, sky and earth as principles, ideas, and processes expressed by reason. The mythopoeic mind aims at intensifying objects through similes that magnify a particular object in its particularity. The rational mind proceeds by analogies toward a universal element, a *tertium comparationis*, toward a precise statement of what is being compared and thus what is held in common.⁸ In the development of Pre-Socratic philosophy, *logos* supercedes *mythos*.

If we return to the second half of the statement of Aristotle originally quoted, he holds that myth can also be claimed to be a kind of wisdom, “for myth is composed of wonders.” Myth is a kind of wisdom because mythical thinking takes us to a grasp of the whole. In a certain sense, it fits the Ciceronian definition of wisdom as a knowledge of things divine and human and of the cause of each. Myths have as constant themes god, man, and the world, the same themes as metaphysics. Myths are narratives of opposites. The opposites, when they involve *aporia*, are not clashes of arguments, of *logoi*, but of forces captured and felt in images. Myths do not resolve such oppositions; they narrate them. The stronger the oppositions and the more that opposites are layered with and upon other opposites, the more attractive they are to the mythopoeic mind. The more oppositions are brought to bear on a particular,

⁶ F. M. Cornford, *Principium Sapientiae: The Origins of Greek Philosophical Thought*, ed. W. K. C. Guthrie (New York: Harper, 1965), 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁸ See Bruno Snell, “From Myth to Logic: The Role of the Comparison,” chapter 9 of *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature* (New York: Dover, 1982).

the richer it is in its reality. The more causes that can be attributed to it, the greater its meaning. The narrative of the myth need only encompass these oppositions; it need not find a way to resolve them.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers break out of this mindset by seeking the one in the many. They attempt to explain all things in terms of one thing or a plurality of ultimate entities. This is the quest for a *tertium comparationis* for the world, a way to think of it as a whole that is held together as a consistent order, instead of a narration that is held together by the merging of one image with another. Myth comes before philosophy and remains as a way to think on the level of feeling. But philosophy allows the mind to hold the object at a distance, to transcend the immediacy of our mythic or purely expressive grasp of the object.⁹ The wonder that generates philosophy originates from an inability to achieve consistency of thought within itself, which motivates dialectic. The wonder that generates mythology originates from a conflict of feeling, an inability to capture things felt in a single image, thus going from wonder to wonder, unable to escape the immediacy of sensation.

II. Pythagoras' Answer to Leon

The Ionian Pre-Socratics not only discover a new form of wisdom (*sophia*); in so doing, they advance a new style of life—that of devotion solely to speculation or contemplation. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates explains this ideal of the philosopher's life by recounting a story about Thales, who while studying the stars and gazing at the sky “fell into a well; and a witty and amusing Thracian servant-girl made fun of him because, she said, he was wild to know about what was up in the sky but failed to see what was in front of him and under his feet.” Socrates says: “The same joke applies to all who spend their lives in philosophy.” He says the philosopher, unlike others, does not even notice his neighbor, what he is like or what he is doing. The philosopher is instead concerned with the question: “What is Man [*anthropos*]? What actions and passions properly belong to

⁹ For a full account of mythical thinking and the mythic object in these terms, see Ernst Cassirer, *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 2, *Mythical Thought*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), esp. pt. 1.

human nature and distinguish it from all other beings? This is what he wants to know and concerns himself to investigate.”¹⁰

In the *Politics*, Aristotle recounts another story of Thales. Aristotle says Thales “was reproached for his poverty, which was supposed to show that philosophy was of no use.” Because of his knowledge of the stars, Thales knew in winter that there would likely be a great olive harvest in the coming year. He leased all the available olive presses in the off season and then, when harvest time came, he leased them back to their original owners, making a great deal of money. Aristotle draws this conclusion: “Thus he showed the world that philosophers can easily be rich if they like, but that their ambition is of another sort.”¹¹ Thales not only invented meteorology, he discovered the economic principle of monopoly.

These two traditional stories perhaps tell us something true of Thales but they moreover support the conception of the ideal of the philosopher’s life at the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in Athens. The coining of the word “philosopher” is attributed to Pythagoras in an episode of a medical dialogue by Heraclides of Pontus, originally a pupil in Plato’s Academy and who also attended Aristotle’s lectures. He was placed in charge of the Platonic Academy during Plato’s third visit to Sicily. This dialogue is known as *Peri tēs apnou*, meaning “about the woman whose breathing stopped.”¹²

In this dialogue, there appears a conversation in which Pythagoras is asked by Leon, the tyrant of Phlius, whether he is wise. On first sight, it appears to be a digression but placed in full context of the dialogue, it serves a purpose. The dialogue concerns a banquet at which the apotheosis of Empedocles is said to occur. The dialogue describes how Empedocles revived a woman whose breathing had stopped, who had apparently died and medical practitioners were unable to revive by any empirical means. Empedocles succeeded when the doctors failed, because he determined that her state was caused by the temporary absence of her soul from her body. He was able to resolve the condition because of his knowledge of human nature and the relationship of soul to body that constitutes it. What was required in this case was philosophic wis-

¹⁰ Plato, *Theaetetus*, in *Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 193 (174a).

¹¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, in *Works*, 2:1998 (1259a).

¹² H. B. Gottschalk, *Heraclides of Pontus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980).

dom over ordinary medical wisdom. Connected to this use of philosophy is the exploration of the origin of the term “philosopher.”

As the text of Heraclides’ dialogue is lost and can only be reconstructed from fragments and reports of later thinkers, the fullest account of the conversation of Pythagoras and Leon is thought to be by Cicero in the *Tusculan Disputations*. Cicero begins his account: “And though we see that philosophy is a fact of great antiquity, yet its name is, we admit, of recent origin.” He cites as *sophoi* the Seven Sages of the Greeks (which include Thales), as well as Lycurgus, Ulysses and Nestor, and even figures of mythology, such as Atlas and Prometheus. He then attributes what he will relate regarding Pythagoras and Leon to what is now the lost text of Heraclides of Pontus.

Cicero says: “Leon [tyrant of Phlius] after wondering at his talent and eloquence asked him to name the art in which he put most reliance; but Pythagoras said that for his part he had no acquaintance with any art, but was a philosopher. Leon was astonished at the term and asked who philosophers were and in what they differed from the rest of the world.” Pythagoras coins the word *philosophos* by combining *philia* (friendly love) with *sophos*, thus excluding himself from the *sophoi* but also relating himself to them. He answers Leon’s question regarding the nature of the philosopher by reference to those who attend the Great Games at Olympia. There are those who go to compete for honor; those who go to engage in making a profit by buying and selling; and, those who go solely for the sake of watching what was done and how it was done. The persons of this third kind are then pure spectators.

Cicero says the Games are a metaphor for the types of lives available to us. Some seek honor and to fulfill ambition; some seek wealth; but, there are others whose only interest is to grasp the nature of things. He says: “these men gave themselves the name of lovers of wisdom (for that is the meaning of the word philosopher); and, just as at the games the men of truest breeding looked on without any self-seeking, so in life the contemplation and discovery of nature far surpassed all other pursuits.”¹³ The question arises as to whether Pythagoras intends to claim that the love of wisdom he practices also entails the possibility that he

¹³ Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2001), 431-33 (5.3.7-9).

can thus become wise at least to some degree.

Diogenes Laertius, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, relates the above account of Pythagoras as the first to use the term “philosopher” and to compare the philosopher to the spectators at the Games. But he also claims that Pythagoras said that “no man is wise, but God alone.”¹⁴ H. B. Gottschalk, in his reconstruction of the dialogue of Heraclides, doubts that this claim goes back to Heraclides and that Pythagoras does not make a distinction between the wisdom of God and man, that in replying to Leon it is not Pythagoras’ purpose to make such a distinction.¹⁵ This view may well be correct but it does not fully bring out the political cleverness of Pythagoras’ reply. If Pythagoras claimed to Leon that he possessed wisdom, then he would have the same power as the God. Leon is an all-powerful tyrant but he does not possess this power of the God—divine wisdom. If Pythagoras claimed to be wise, he would have a power beyond that of Leon. Pythagoras would have placed himself in a dangerous position. Leon’s question is not one of innocent curiosity. It is an attempt to assess what this new kind of person is who is not motivated by ambition, money, or political concerns. By saying that he is only a lover of wisdom, Pythagoras makes himself appear harmless, like those at the Games who are only interested in being spectators. In so doing, Pythagoras establishes not only the name “philosopher” but the philosopher’s ambiguous relation to politics and the *polis*. Philosophizing is always a threat to the ideas upon which the *polis* rests (as we see in the case of Socrates) but it also, at the same time, appears to the *polis* as a harmless and irrelevant activity, having no goal but itself.

III. *Phaedo’s Account to Echecrates*

Plato’s *Phaedo* opens with Phaedo, one of the intimates of Socrates and present at Athens at his death, being asked by Echecrates on behalf of a group of Pythagoreans to relate the details of Socrates’ last days and conversation.¹⁶ The dialogue takes place in Phlius, in the

¹⁴ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans. R. D. Hicks, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2000), 1:13 (1.12).

¹⁵ Gottschalk, Heraclides, 26.

¹⁶ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 50 (57a-b).

Peloponnese, where Phaedo has stopped on his way back home to Elis. Phlius is the same place in which Pythagoras, approximately a century earlier, coined and defined the term “philosopher.” The Pythagorean connection is further incorporated in the dialogue in terms of Socrates’ discussants—Simmius and Cebes—who are from Thebes, a city along with Phlius where Pythagoreans had settled after their expulsion from Southern Italy. The Pythagoreans are noted for their belief in the immortality of the soul, the theme of much of the conversation. Plato places this dialogue in Phlius with Pythagoreans because it represents a redefinition of philosophy, a shift from the original definition of the philosopher as pure spectator of nature of Pythagoras to the new definition of Socrates as the gadfly of the *polis*. Socrates is the thinker of the *polis* who, as Cicero says, was the first to bring philosophy down from the heavens and into cities and homes.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates the city-dweller is shown as venturing into the countryside, conversing with Phaedrus. As they walk along the Ilisus, they arrive at the probable spot where it is said by legend that Boreas, the north wind, carried Orithuia away. Phaedrus asks Socrates if he believes the story. Socrates replies that the investigation of the correctness of this myth and its variant explanations “are a job for a man I cannot envy at all. He’d have to be far too ingenious and work too hard.” Because, Socrates says, to investigate such a story would require a science of mythology in which we seek to “give a rational account of the form of the Hippocentaurs, and then of the Chimera; and a whole flood of Gorgons and Pegasuses and other monsters, in large numbers and absurd forms.” Socrates then says: “But I have no time for such things and the reason, my friend, is this. I am still unable, as the Delphic inscription orders, to know myself; and it really seems to me ridiculous to look into other things before I have understood that.”¹⁷

Socrates replaces the overcoming of myth by accounts of nature developed through reason with the problem of self-knowledge—the instruction of *gnothi seauton* inscribed in the pronaos of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi. Myth and its rational criticism and investigation offer us no access to self-knowledge. The philosophical problem of how to comprehend nature is well underway since the early natural philosophers took it up. The phi-

¹⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus*, in *Works*, 509-10 (229b-e).

losophical problem now is how to comprehend human nature: to grasp what it means to be a human being. This is the problem Socrates' philosophy delivers to us—the acquisition of human wisdom.

To return to the *Phaedo*, Socrates, who is at the threshold of his own death, says: “*hoi orthos philosophountes apothneskein meletosi* [those who rightly philosophize are practicing to die].”¹⁸ Socrates repeats this claim somewhat later when he is speaking of the *psyche*. He says that philosophy when pursued in the proper way is “*melete thanatou* [practice of death].”¹⁹ These sentiments are sometimes summarized in the assertion that Socrates says the profession of philosophers is learning to die. We philosophize because we are mortal and because we know we are mortal; we are neither simply animals who are without thought of their death, nor gods who are immortal and have no need to pursue the question of mortality.

Self-knowledge, the distinctively human problem, is tied to the thought of the certainty of our mortality—that our being is not immortal. Those who philosophize rightly are practicing to die in the sense that they are lovers of the mind over lovers of the body. The cultivation of the mind has above all the aim of preparing the embodied self for its death. There is no other form of thought than philosophy that can rationally provide this preparation. Socrates' claim of this purpose of philosophy puts aside any question of his identity with sophistic. To argue that Socrates is not a sophist because his arguments are not designed to make the worse appear the better case, or to point out that he never has accepted payment for his teaching, is not to provide the true refutation of the charge of sophism. The sophist speaks only of the means for being successful in politics and commerce. The sophist offers us nothing in regard to the fact of our mortality. Only the true philosopher can take us to this question as a condition of our humanity. The charge of sophistry of the *Apology* is only answered in the *Phaedo*.

The wisdom to which philosophy rightly leads us is that we are ignorant of what we will encounter after death. This ignorance leads us to the proto-Stoic assertion that no harm can come to a good man. As Socrates puts it at the end of the *Apology*, “a good man cannot be harmed either in

¹⁸ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 59 (67e).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71 (81a).

life or in death.”²⁰ This sense of good leads us to act such that no one is made the worse for knowing us. This sense of proper action entails proper speaking because, as Socrates says, “to express oneself badly is not only faulty as far as the language goes, but does some harm to the soul.”²¹

We may ask whether only philosophy can allow us to confront our mortality. The answer is no. Religion, understood anthropologically, is the original response to the phenomenon of death. Burial is one of the principles of humanity. Religion is given expression through myth and through rite. Death in human affairs is always connected to ceremony. When Crito asks Socrates, “how shall we bury you?”, Socrates replies, “in any way you like, if you can catch me and I do not escape you.” He adds, “You must be of good cheer, and say you are burying my body, and bury it in any way you like and think most customary.”²² Thus, Socrates insists that he has pursued philosophy properly because he has separated his psyche from his body. He has cultivated the wisdom necessary to pass into death in peace. The philosopher thus seeks a rational death without ceremony and, for such a death, philosophy is necessary. For those who do not actively engage in the love of wisdom, other arrangements await them, by religious rite and society. The philosopher, in death as in life, remains apart and only in the company of the friends of the forms.

IV. Montaigne’s Essay

Montaigne, in his famous statement that may be taken as a guide to his *Essais*, declares: “I study myself more than any other subject. That is my metaphysics, that is my physics.”²³ He says further: “Philosophical inquiries and meditations serve only as food for our curiosity. The philosophers with much reason refer us to the rules of Nature; but these have no concern with such sublime knowledge. The philosophers falsify them and show us the face of Nature painted in too high a color, and too sophisticated, where spring so many varied portraits of so uniform a subject.”²⁴

²⁰ Plato, *Apology*, in *Works*, 36 (41d).

²¹ Plato, *Phaedo*, in *Works*, 98 (115e).

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Michel Montaigne, “Of Experience,” in *The Complete Works of Montaigne*, trans. Donald M. Frame (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948), 821.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 821-22.

Montaigne's essay, "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," accuses philosophers of compromising the pleasure we naturally seek in life by directing our best efforts to our own end, an end that is governed by nature and which is to be accepted as simply a part of life. In this essay, he calls mostly on Satirical lines from Horace's odes, such as "Simplicity" and "Spring's Lesson,"²⁵ regarding that all of us are destined for the same fate, whether rich or poor and whether of high or low position, from Lucretius, who sees the gods as the product of superstition and sees human life as governed by material causes, and from Seneca, who gives Stoic advice regarding the fact that every step of life is also a step toward the end of one's life.

Montaigne sets such Satirical, Epicurean, and Stoical views against the view that he states in the first sentence of his essay: "Cicero says that to philosophize is nothing else but to prepare for death."²⁶ Cicero is the great Latin transmitter of Greek philosophical views, which includes this one. Montaigne understands this claim that he attributes to Cicero precisely to reflect the Socratic view of the *Phaedo*. He states further: "This is because study and contemplation draw our soul out of us to some extent and keep it busy inside the body; which is a sort of apprenticeship and semblance of death." A second reason to claim that to philosophize is to prepare for death, Montaigne says, is: "Or else it is because all the wisdom and reasoning in the world boils down finally to this point: to teach us not to be afraid to die."

Philosophizing either allows us to become accustomed to the experience of death by cultivating the power of our thought as separate from our body or it simply is a means to tell us we should not be afraid to die. Montaigne says, however, "In truth, either reason is a mockery, or it must aim solely at our contentment, and the sum of its labors must tend to make us live well and at our ease, as Holy Scripture says." Instead of concentrating on our fear of death, Montaigne holds, philosophizing should aim to promote a pleasant life, a point he rhetorically emphasizes by his claim that this would bring philosophy in accord with

²⁵ Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, trans. Niall Rudd (Cambridge: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 2004), 33 and 141 (1.4 and 3.1)

²⁶ Michel Montaigne, "That to Philosophize is to Learn to Die," in *Works*, 56. A line in *Tusculan Disputations* that connects to Montaigne's claim is Cicero's comment that philosophy has "destroyed the dread of death" (429; 5.2.6).

scripture. He concludes: “All the opinions in the world agree on this—that pleasure is our goal—though they choose different means to it.”²⁷

Montaigne is not advocating simple hedonism in the sense of claiming that the good for human life is merely the pursuit of sensuous pleasure. But he is not excluding such pleasures. His view, at least in this essay, seems an endorsement of a version of Epicureanism that connects pleasure with virtue: “in virtue itself the ultimate goal we aim at is voluptuousness. . . we should have given virtue the name of pleasure, a name more favorable, sweet, and natural.”²⁸ Montaigne would appear also to hold with Aristotle’s view that, very generally put, the aim of virtue is happiness and that happiness is pleasurable. Montaigne firmly asserts without saying how virtue and pleasure are specifically to be conceived: “Now among the principal benefits of virtue is disdain for death, a means that furnishes our life with a soft tranquility and gives us a pure and pleasant enjoyment of it, without which all other pleasures are extinguished.”²⁹

Our philosophizing should rightly be directed toward our happiness. The pursuit of pleasure is itself a pleasure on Montaigne’s view. He advocates happiness as a contentment that seems close to the ideal of *ataraxia* or peace of the psyche that the Epicureans sought. Montaigne interprets the constant focus of philosophy on death to mean that the philosopher thus must pass life by. His argument is that nature ordains that we will all meet death as the finality of life, so why should this fact of our existence dominate all others such that we put virtue, pleasure, and contentment aside. There is nothing to learn about dying. It is an act governed by nature that we should accept and we can readily accept it if we are happy. Our happiness will generate for us an imperturbability of the soul. We will accept without tension what we cannot change.

The remainder of Montaigne’s essay is a discourse on the ways we may eliminate the strangeness of death and become accustomed to its ever-presence by finding ways to think about it and by considering ancient customs that instruct us, such as that of the manner of Egyptian banquets. “As the Egyptians, after their feasts, had a large image of death shown to the guests by a man who called out to them: ‘Drink and be merry, for when you are dead you will be like this’; so I have formed

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 57.

the habit of having death continually present, not merely in my imagination, but in my mouth."³⁰ Pleasure lets us, with a certain ease, confront death, for I know in such a moment that I am and that death is not.

Montaigne, in attacking the view that those who philosophize rightly are practicing or preparing to die, proceeds to explain in a philosophical manner how we should learn to accept death. The aim of his account, and where he divides from what he takes as the ancient view, is to keep the mind in connection, not in separation, with the body and our natural inclination to pleasure and to happiness. He does not divorce philosophizing from death but he shifts philosophizing from a Stoical to an Epicurean mode and offers an alternative account of the acceptance of death. In emphasizing the Epicurean elements in his account, I do not mean to claim Epicureanism as a characterization of his philosophy overall, only to point to his use of such views in treating this issue.

What may we conclude? Philosophizing arises as a response to *aporiai* motivated by wonder. Wonder first produces myths through which nature is given form. The Pre-Socratics, through the power of reasoning to universalize the particular, transform the mythical images of nature into orders of the one and the many. Myth is the thought-form of rite and ceremony in contrast to contemplation practiced by the early philosophers of nature, who thus approach nature as pure spectators. Socrates shifts the object of contemplation from *aporiai* in nature to the *aporiai* in human nature, namely, that although we know we are human, we do not know in what the human fully consists. The human is mortal and to philosophize is to confront our mortality. Montaigne transforms the Socratic problem of philosophizing concerning the relation of life to death into the problem of philosophizing in terms of the relation of happiness and mortality, such that we can confront death not through the separation of the soul from the body but by attaining the fullness of life while acknowledging the ever-presence of death. But between the Socratic and the Montaignean approaches we are left with the *aporia* of whether they can be mutually resolved.

³⁰ Ibid., 62.