**Dr. Preisig – Michel de Montaigne’s “Of Cannibals” – Notes**

* Why talk about Montaigne and Cannibals.
  + Montaigne literally developed the first Essay.
    - He actually created the term Essay, which comes from the French word Essayer, which means to try. The model set by his Essay is still used commonly today all over the world.
    - Cannibalism is an idea that is initially and basically gross to most people, so it is worth talking about in a moral sense.
* VOCABULARY
  + Epistemology
    - Study of Science and Knowledge
      * What is Knowledge? How and why do we know what we know?
  + Stoicism
    - Ancient Philosophy championed by Seneca
    - Stoic – Strong, Physically and Mentally tough, immovable, nothing affects you
    - Focuses on the question – How do you prepare for Death?
    - Solutions to above problem
      * Fight the inevitable death for as long as you can
      * Think about death all the time.
  + Heraclitus
    - Ancient Greek Philosopher
    - Fire Guy – Believed the world was made up of fire, everything is in a constant state of change.
  + Huguenot
    - Protestant Christians of the time.
    - Huguenot comes from a French translation of a German word describing the Protestants.
  + Metaphysics
    - What is the Universe’s origins and Nature?
    - What is everything in existence made up of? Water? Star Stuff?
  + Skepticism
    - QUESTION EVERYTHING
    - Can’t really ever know anything for sure.
    - Focuses on the limitations of our senses + intelligence as humans.
      * For Example, our brain can only process so many tastes and colors, so what is the true taste of something we taste? Because to me something may taste pleasurable and to you disgusting, so which one is it? Same thing with color, many animals can see colors we cannot, so what is the true color of anything? Is there truth?
* Montaigne
  + Bourgeois Family Member
  + Education
    - Humanistic
    - Latin as “Native Language”
    - Studied Music
    - Studied the Classics
    - Law School
  + Montaigne lived in a time of great famine and overall badness. Not good days.
  + Member of the Bordeaux Parliament
    - The Kings Administration
  + Mediator between Catholics and Huguenots (Protestants)
  + Traveled all around Europe.
  + Returned and was elected the Mayor of Bordeaux.
  + Montaigne had Kidney Stones
    - The only medication at the time was to take hot baths.
* It was a time of Great Wars of Religion
  + Catholics vs Huguenots.
* At 39, Montaigne returned to the bosom of the learned virgins. He spent the rest of his life at that point focusing on scholastic works and constructing his own works.
* From 1572-1592, Montaigne wrote the Essays
  + There are three editions of the Essays, each new edition having only added stuff then the one before it, nothing was removed from earlier editions.
* Montaigne’s “Essays” = his thoughts as they came, on a specific topic, no prearranged order.
  + He talks about everything, from sex to his own body to poop to matters of philosophy to love etc.
  + Not treatises – Treatises were a complete ordered set of ideas by old philosophers, this was unordered and random thoughts and ideas.
* Montaigne’s Philosophy
  + Epistemology
    - Skepticism
  + Moral Philosophy
    - Stoicism
  + Metaphysics
    - Heraclitus
* The “New World”
  + In 1492 Europeans start to settle on the new world and Massacre many local populations.
* Las Casas – Central American Monk
  + A short account of the destruction of the indies (1552)
    - BIG INFLUENCE ON MONTAIGNE
* 1555 – King of France finances and expedition to Brazil, a French settlement is created on an island in the Bay of Rio.
* “La France Antarctique” – Name of Settlement
  + Antarticque – Antarctica – France of the South
* Touponaum Bous – Cannibal Natives
* Notable members of the Expedition
  + Nicolas de Villegaignon
    - The Commander of the settlement
    - Catholic
  + Andre Thevet
    - The Kings “Cosmographer”
      * Sent to describe the land in general to the king
    - Catholic
  + Jean De Lery
    - A Huguenot Pastor
* French Settlers interact with the natives, the Tupi – They discover new fruits, wildlife, planets, etc.
* Tupinamba
  + 1557 – Arrival of many Huguenot settlers,
  + Dispute between the Huguenot and Catholic settlers around the way to celebrate the communion
    - “This is my body… This is my blood” – Matthew 26-28
      * Catholics – Literal flesh and blood of Christ
      * Protestant – Symbolic blood of Christ
* Huguenots (including Jean de Lery) relocate on the mainland with the Tupinambas.
* 1558 – Most Huguenots returned to France.
* Portuguese Defeat French and destroy the settlement (1557-1567)
* End of the expedition
  + Several Books, Pamphlets and other accounts are subsequently published.
* Andre Thevet – Kings Cosmographer
  + The Singularities of Antarctic France (1558)
* “This inhuman Cyclops Brings Jesus Christ down from heaven, to break him with his teeth and eats him alive, to satisfy his hunger”
* Jean De Lery
  + Lived with the natives for months
  + History of a Voyage to the land of Brazil (1578)
    - Includes
      * Many Engravings of Native people and way of life
      * A full dictionary of the native language
  + This dude knew his shit about native lifestyle.
  + Lery “Father of Anthropology”
  + Lery attended rituals in which human flesh was consumed
* A member of the expedition apparently ended up working for Montaigne.
* Jean de Leary
  + History of the City of Souverre (1574)
  + Includes
    - Descriptions of Anthropography.
    - “barabicus” Arawak word
      * Barbecue
* Of Cannibals Essay
  + Is the essay typical of thought and culture?
    - No – It says the cannibals are morally better than Europeans. Degrades Europeans and elevates foreigners
      * It’s not optimistic at all.
    - Yes – Lots of Classical Quotes and References – Typical of the Renaissance
* Anthropophagy – Actual Act of Cannibalism
* Canables – word used by the Spanish to talk about the natives.
* Barbarism – Anything Not Greek
  + When you hear a foreigner speak – Bah Bah Bah – “Barbarians.”
* The authority
  + Pliny
  + Ptolemy
  + Herodotus
  + Aristotle
  + Etc.
* Talks about the cruelty and morality of evils against a living and breathing body versus those against the dead.
  + It is worse to torture and rip living people for no reason than to eat someone already dead out of hunger or ritual.
    - In this way, we are worse than the natives.
* Last Sentence of the Essay
  + “All this is not too bad – but what’s the use? They Don’t wear breeches”
    - This is a spirit of apathy and pointlessness, making a stab at the idiotic Europeans who can’t see the error of their own ways or their own stupidity. And who can’t appreciate the ways of other cultures and regard everyone else as inferior to them simply because they don’t look European and wear pants.