

Mark T. Mitchell

## The Homeless Modern

In 1848 Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of “the approaching irresistible and universal spread of democracy throughout the world.”<sup>1</sup> Since his time the drumbeat has quickened, and with the fall of the Soviet Union the ultimate triumph of democracy seemed inevitable. In his 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*,<sup>2</sup> Francis Fukuyama argued that liberal democracy really is the final historical step in the development of political thought and practice. The fact that so much of the world today seems either to be embracing democracy outright, or taking faltering steps toward it, or at least paying lip service to it suggests to many that Fukuyama was right, and all that is left is merely a mopping-up operation.

Of course, the smooth highway to universal democracy encountered a serious obstacle on September 11, 2001. It would seem that *not* all the world shares the same dream. In fact, if the rhetoric is to be believed, the very freedoms that we in the West cherish as essential to a good life are just those that Islamic militants see as the source of Western decadence. With patriotic pride, we instinctively object. But with dispassionate reflection, we can see that the Islamist rhetoric may point to at least a shadow of the truth. If liberty is not directed toward a common good that tran-

sends arbitrary will—even if it is the will of a vast majority—then it eventually descends into a libertinism that is ultimately destructive to society.

This raises important questions: Is it really true that democracy is a stable system that can, on its own terms, perpetuate its freedoms? Is it really true, as the end-of-history theorists claim, that democracy *satisfies* our basic need for “recognition”? If so, why do so many citizens in the most democratic society in the world behave as if something is amiss? Tocqueville noted the “strange melancholy often haunting” the Americans.<sup>3</sup> This sense of longing is not explicit and generally has no definite object. It is, rather, an underlying dissatisfaction that today manifests itself in a variety of ways: restless mobility, consumerism, frenzied sexuality, substance abuse, therapy, and boredom.

Modern Westerners—despite incredible affluence, comfort, entertainment, and security—all too often seem to suffer from a condition that the Desert Fathers called *acedia*: they are both bored and uneasy. Modern democratic institutions, which

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promise and in many ways provide unparalleled freedom, seem ill-equipped to provide a *context* within which contentment is achievable. Our pursuit of happiness leaves us curiously unhappy; a restless boredom is our besetting sin. This suggests that freedom, at least when understood as political liberty, is *not* the proper end of man. Freedom is not happiness, but at best a partial means to contentment, or perhaps even a by-product of something more fundamental. Perhaps political liberty is a means to contentment if and only if other preconditions are already present. But if modern democratic man is increasingly uneasy, could it be that the very institutions that provide our freedom are actually corrosive of our happiness?

This line of inquiry seems especially appropriate in light of the current efforts to democratize foreign lands. If democracy is a genuinely universal moral ideal, then powerful democratic nations may indeed have a moral obligation to work for democratization everywhere. But if there are preconditions necessary for the success of democracy—success at the level of human happiness—and if modern democracies have failed to secure or even recognize these necessary preconditions, then to what extent will the exported product prove defective? Or, if not defective, incomplete?

In her book *The Need for Roots*, the French writer Simone Weil points to one particular lacuna in modern democracy's theoretical self-understanding. She argues that "to be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul.... A human being has roots by virtue of his real, active, and natural participation in the life of a community which preserves in living shape certain particular treasures of the past and certain particular expectations for the future."<sup>4</sup> If this is the case, then a society characterized by hypermobility, a society that seems to take a sort

of satisfaction in its own deracination, would be ill-equipped to fulfill a central human need. According to Weil, the modern condition of rootlessness is not merely geographical or even cultural but spiritual as well. Writing of mid-twentieth-century France, but sounding as if she could be writing to twenty-first-century Americans, Weil describes "a culture very strongly directed towards and influenced by technical science, very strongly tinged with pragmatism, extremely broken up by specialization, entirely deprived both of contact with this world and, at the same time, of any window opening to the world beyond."<sup>5</sup> Human beings have a need for geographical roots in a particular place embodying particular traditions, habits, and practices. But equally, humans require roots in a transcendent world, a world of spirit, a world of moral truth. In short, the uprootedness of the modern world is both spiritual and geographic.

The Kentucky farmer and writer Wendell Berry has also recognized the intimate connection between rootedness and a properly constituted human life. Unlike those who use the term "community" rather loosely to refer to anything from a collection of houses situated in the same suburban development to the grossly abstract notion of a global community, Berry writes that "[b]y community, I mean the commonwealth and common interests, commonly understood, of people living together in a place and wishing to continue to do so. To put it another way, community is a locally understood interdependence of local people, local culture, local economy, and local nature."<sup>6</sup> Berry identifies the corrosion of flourishing communities as the result of an excessive individualism that places rights ahead of responsibilities and economic gain ahead of meaningful relationships. But Berry also sees that this localism ultimately requires that people recognize other per-

sons, whether members of one's community or not, as living souls: creatures who exist as members of both a biological world and the world of spirit, creatures capable of labor, of love, and ultimately of worship.<sup>7</sup>

There are two kinds of rootedness, then: physical and spiritual. And while the two can be distinguished conceptually, they are intimately related. Conversely, rootlessness can be understood in either physical or in spiritual terms. If Weil and Berry are to be believed, a flourishing human life requires both physical roots manifest in an affection for and commitment to a particular place and people. A flourishing human life also requires an object of belief that transcends the individual and is ultimately grounded in the world of spirit. Human beings need to be *located*, both physically and metaphysically.

Physical roots require a long-term commitment to a place; such roots provide the temporal continuity that makes a particular place a community, a dwelling. Rootlessness is now the norm for many, and perhaps most, modern people, but America is pre-eminent in this regard: exceptional in this respect, as in so many others. Over the course of a lifetime, the average American will have thirteen different addresses. This far eclipses even our close neighbors, the Canadians, to say nothing of Europeans. We are rootless because we have traded a commitment to a particular place for the promise of a better job, a better standard of living, a better climate, or perhaps the variety that relocating affords. We Americans are experts at *moving*.

Just as physical roots are important, so too are spiritual roots. Our spiritual rootlessness manifests itself in a variety of ways, not the least of which is skepticism about moral, religious, and aesthetic truth. For

example, religion can give explicit and authoritative voice to the moral principles governing a community. Even if not all citizens are equally committed to the formal doctrines of a particular religion, the habits and practices grounded in the religion and embodied by a community create a coherent, though largely tacit, moral framework. Such a framework provides the preconditions for members of a community to appreciate that there are some goods that transcend the individual; there are some goods that justify self-sacrifice; indeed, there are some goods that require it. Such a framework makes possible the idea of a common good. And a conception of a common good is what makes a

community possible. The absence of such a good reduces human associations merely to fleeting contractual relationships that are repudiated as soon as a better deal is found.

Modern moral theories that seek intentionally to separate the idea of the good from any notion of transcendence run the perilous risk of overplaying their hands. As Alasdair MacIntyre argues, modern utilitarian and deontological accounts of ethics are fundamentally incoherent precisely because they are merely emaciated versions of earlier, richer accounts (i.e. Aristotelian and Thomistic theories rooted in teleology and theology respectively) that did not deny their own metaphysical underpinnings.<sup>8</sup> An openness to transcendent reality facilitates a posture of subordination to an authority that is oriented toward good, beauty, and truth beyond the mere will or whim of any individual or group. Such a corporate relationship with transcendent reality binds individuals together spiritually in the same way that a commitment to a place binds people geographically. But in



Francis Bacon  
(1561-1626)

our modern world, we have largely forfeited our commitments both to a particular place and to any notion of transcendent reality. In short, modern people, especially modern elites, tend to be rootless skeptics.

With these concepts in hand, let us return to Tocqueville. Tocqueville realized that democracy is potentially self-destructive, and he sought to divine how its corrosive tendencies could be forestalled. He argued that democracy can only avoid slipping into soft despotism if citizens engage in developing and maintaining a robust associational life. That is, they must live as members of strong communities that serve as intermediaries between the citizen and the state. Without these intermediaries, the citizen stands naked before the vast and all-powerful state that democratic societies tend to produce and even enjoin. But what then is the prospect for democracy in a society where mobility is constant and social capital is declining, where the frantic pace of life makes the formation of meaningful friendships difficult, where success is all too often measured in purely economic terms at the expense of transcendent truths?

### The Modern Turn

In a provocative section of *Democracy in America*, Tocqueville remarks that “of all countries in the world, America is the one in which the precepts of Descartes are least studied and best followed.”<sup>9</sup> Soon thereafter he adds that “in the seventeenth century Bacon, in natural sciences, and Descartes, in philosophy strictly so called, abolished accepted formulas, destroyed the dominion of tradition, and upset the authority of masters.”<sup>10</sup> Francis Bacon and René Descartes stand at the beginning of what might be called the Modern Turn. They sought to establish a new and more secure foundation for knowledge by first rejecting the past wholesale and then introducing new *methods* that would create secure paths

to indubitable knowledge. But there was a cost. As Tocqueville points out, these radical new methodologies undermined many of the accepted ideas, traditions, and authorities that had served as ballasts for generations of thought and practice.

We are the children of Bacon and Descartes. I want to suggest that one of the unexpected results of the shift inaugurated by those early moderns—and continued even today in our mental habits and presuppositions—is a breakdown of the moral, religious, and aesthetic substance that makes possible the existence of robust communities. The writings of Bacon and Descartes reveal clearly the epistemological ideals they championed: 1) the desire to overturn the received tradition and begin anew; 2) the denigration of authority; 3) radical individualism; 4) skepticism; and 5) the centrality of method. Each of these serves to undermine the possibility of community, for each in its own way undermines commitment either to particular places or to the transcendent. In other words, this new approach to knowledge encourages both geographic and spiritual rootlessness. If the rootless skepticism that typifies modern man can, at least in part, be traced back to important philosophical changes inaugurated by these thinkers, then any effort to reinvigorate communities will require more than town hall meetings, bowling leagues, and humane architecture. While these are not to be ignored, we must attend to the very way that we think about knowledge, about ourselves, and about our relationship to the past.

Tradition plays an indispensable role in human knowing, for within authoritative traditions resides the collective wisdom of many generations. Through tradition (religious, moral, scientific, etc.), human minds participate in an on-going project of inquiry. The romantic image of the solitary thinker boldly pushing beyond the limits of

current understanding disregards the centuries of tradition that make new discoveries possible. As T.S. Eliot points out in his essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," innovation always presupposes the prior existence of and participation in an authoritative tradition.<sup>11</sup> This is the case even when—especially when—the tradition is subject to scrutiny by those within it. Insight into reality necessarily depends upon the tradition out of which that insight emerges.

It is useful to distinguish two variants of the concept of tradition, both either implicitly or explicitly denigrated by Bacon and Descartes. The first we might call *tradition as a repository*. Edmund Burke, for example, expresses this view. By relying upon a repository of tradition, otherwise weak individuals may tap into the accrued wisdom of mankind. In a famous passage Burke writes: "We are afraid to put men to live and trade each on his own private stock of reason; because we suspect that this stock in each man is small, and that the individuals would do better to avail themselves of the general bank and capital of nations, and of ages."<sup>12</sup> Tradition, in this sense, resembles what Chesterton termed "the democracy of the dead."

The second conception of tradition might be termed *tradition as an epistemological necessity*. Here, tradition is not something a person simply chooses to embrace or reject. Human beings do not enjoy a privileged vantage point outside of the knowing process from which to acquire purely objective knowledge. The tradition we inhabit provides us with the conceptual framework, the very language, by which we comprehend the world.<sup>13</sup> Tradition in the Burkean sense can be ignored or set aside—although,

according to Burke, such neglect will exact a terrible cost. The *content* of tradition is what Burke emphasized. On the other hand, one cannot coherently deny the epistemological role of tradition. To do so would, at the most basic level, require that we refrain from speaking at all, for language itself is "traditional" for us. A proper understanding of tradition will appreciate both of its conceptions.

Nonetheless, both Descartes and Bacon saw tradition as an obstacle to true knowing. Bacon claimed that he was proposing a method "entirely different from any hitherto known," for while others have attempted to extend human knowledge, "they have not ventured to cast themselves completely loose from received opinions."<sup>14</sup> In the same spirit, Descartes at the beginning of his inquiry said he must "rid [himself] of all the opinions [he] had adopted up to then, and to begin afresh from the foundations, if [he] wished to establish something firm and constant in the sciences."<sup>15</sup> But if acknowledging the necessary role of tradition in both of its meanings is essential to producing a coherent account of human understanding, then to deny any role for tradition will simultaneously create an incoherent account of knowledge and increase the possibility of excess. An appreciation for the past as both resource and sustainer is essential to human thriving, and we deny this truth at our individual and collective peril. Practically, as well, to ignore the traditions of a local community is simultaneously to neglect its future.

The Cartesian/Baconian rejection of tradition implies that human beings are best understood as initially located outside of any tradition, in a position where they can,



René Descartes (1596-1650)

after rational consideration, embrace one tradition or another, or presumably none at all. This position eliminates any epistemic role for authority, for it assumes that each person is completely autonomous and sufficiently equipped to decide the tradition he will embrace. Descartes held this view with a fearful purity; as he puts it, “as soon as I reached an age which allowed me to emerge from the tutelage of my teachers, I abandoned the study of letters altogether, and resolv[ed] to study no other science than that which I could find within myself or else in the great book of the world.”<sup>16</sup> In throwing off the authority of his masters, Descartes determined “to undertake my own guidance.”<sup>17</sup> Authority, in Descartes’ view, is nothing but an obstacle to be overcome. But part of the glue that holds a community together over time is the mutual recognition that all members are in themselves inadequate, in some sense incomplete, and therefore each is necessary to the whole. In short, epistemological self-sufficiency makes commitment to a community, to a particular place and people, purely optional. Descartes would have us be in dialogue with no one but ourselves.

It is not surprising that disregard for the epistemic roles played by tradition necessarily leads to an excessive individualism. Each person is believed capable of ascertaining truth unassisted either by individuals who are in some sense authorities or by the collected authority of tradition. Tocqueville writes that “in most mental operations each American relies on individual effort and judgment” and they “seek by themselves and in themselves” for answers.<sup>18</sup> As a result of this Cartesian monologue, each man tends to be “narrowly shut up in himself, and from that basis makes the pretension to judge the world.”<sup>19</sup> Just as Descartes at the beginning of his *Mediations* attempts to rid his mind of all that is uncertain and to construct a world of certainty

from the beginning point of his solitary and unencumbered self, so too, many of his modern descendents readily fall into an extreme of self-absorption.

While Descartes’ sweeping doubt is well known, Bacon’s skepticism is no less present in his writings. Like Descartes, Bacon claims to doubt not only the authorities of the past but the powers of his own mind and senses as well. Tocqueville takes a direct shot at this radical doubt when he writes that “No philosopher in the world, however great, can help believing a million things on trust from others or assuming the truth of many things besides those he has proven.”<sup>20</sup> Where Descartes and Bacon find such trust objectionable, Tocqueville recognizes both its inevitability and its benefits. “It is true that any man accepting any opinion on trust from another puts his mind in bondage. But it is a salutary bondage, which allows him to make good use of his freedom.”<sup>21</sup> Tocqueville here echoes a truth that was recognized by the medieval Scholastics, the same Scholastics that Descartes and Bacon scorned: Unless you believe, you will not understand.

There is an irony here, an irony that points to a problem in a methodology rooted in radical doubt. While both Bacon and Descartes begin with doubt, neither lingers there; instead, each quickly presents a method by which doubt can be eliminated and absolute certainty put in its place. For all their talk of radical doubt, therefore, they primarily evince a smug confidence in the ability of the autonomous mind to make indubitable judgments about reality. Trust has not disappeared; only its locus has changed. Now, trust is directed inward.

Both Bacon and Descartes were convinced that if a proper method could be achieved, the difficulties of gaining knowledge would disappear. Thus, they both believed that their primary task was to develop a method, easily grasped by all and

by which all people could reach indubitable conclusions. Descartes' great appreciation for mathematics and geometry provided him with a model of certainty that he aspired to apply to philosophy. Since mathematics provides certainty, why then had mathematical principles not been applied to the study of philosophy? "I was astonished that on such firm and solid foundations nothing more exalted had been built."<sup>22</sup> He thus applied himself to this very endeavor. Bacon, too, sought a sure method by which to acquire knowledge. As he puts it, "our only remaining hope and salvation is to begin the whole labour of the mind again; not leaving it to itself, but directing it perpetually from the very first, and attaining our end as it were by mechanical aid."<sup>23</sup> Where Descartes proceeds from deduction, Bacon pursues induction; nonetheless, each is certain of his method.

One result of making method primary is that only those things susceptible to a particular method are considered potential objects of certainty, while those things to which the method cannot apply are simply outside the purview of knowledge. They fall into "mere opinion," or "mystery" or "mumbo-jumbo." But as the political philosopher Michael Oakeshott has argued, this modern insistence that only "technical knowledge" can be accounted as true knowledge severely reduces the realm of human knowing. For example, modern methods fail to admit of what Oakeshott calls "practical knowledge," the kind of knowledge that is acquired and transmitted not through books and explicit instructions but through *practice* at the side of a master. This is the knowledge of the cook and the connoisseur, a knowledge that can not be fully articulated. If we begin by assuming that all true knowledge is technical, this practical knowledge is simply eliminated.<sup>24</sup>

The advent of the new methodology in the sciences was by no means completely

bad, of course. The obvious successes of modern science are readily acknowledged. The trouble arises when the method dictates the inquiry rather than vice-versa, as Aristotle taught us. When a particular method is elevated as the *only* way to knowledge, all knowledge not encompassed by the method is *de facto* ruled out. Thus, the rise of modern "technical knowledge" has been accompanied by an inability or refusal to recognize aspects of reality not reducible to a technical method.

This modern reliance on method is not surprising. When the epistemic roles of tradition and authority are neglected, a certain degree of individualism is sure to follow. When that individualism is leavened with a confidence in the autonomous rational mind, that mind, in order to ground itself, will seek out a method to provide guidance. In short, method replaces tradition and authority as a guide to thought. But dependence on tradition and authority serves to cultivate the virtue of humility, for this dependence forces us to acknowledge the natural limitations imposed by human finitude and fallibility. A dependence on method, on the other hand, cultivates the belief that certainty can be achieved by those who faithfully employ the method and submit to its demands. Thus, method can be either master or servant, and only a certain cast of mind is capable of escaping its domination. Furthermore, the belief that a simple method is sufficient for every inquiry will tutor minds to expect universal solutions to all problems, many of which in reality require local knowledge rooted in particular practices.

One of the fruits of a rationalistic epistemology is the demand that all knowledge be explicitly accounted for. That is, if all objects of knowledge are technical in nature, then they are knowable in the same terms, and these terms are capable of being rendered fully and explicitly. Tocqueville writes

that because Americans “are successful in resolving unaided all the little difficulties they encounter in practical affairs, they are easily led to the conclusion that everything in the world can be explained and that nothing passes beyond the limits of intelligence.... Hence they have little faith in anything extraordinary and an almost invincible distaste for the supernatural.”<sup>25</sup> But if some knowledge is not reducible to explicit terms—the knowledge of human character and the human soul that novelists, for example, seem to possess—then some knowledge will necessarily be consigned to “mere opinion.” And certainly the concept of a transcendent Good or God is a mystery not perfectly and explicitly comprehensible to human minds. Thus, if there exists a transcendent realm, to exclude consideration of it due to a methodological commitment to the ideal of explicitness is to banish from our sight a crucial dimension of reality, a dimension that seems necessary to adequately satisfy a central human longing.

Skepticism about transcendent realities leads invariably in the direction of philosophical materialism, and philosophical materialism tends to open the door to the quotidian materialism we call consumerism. After all, if we are merely pleasure-seeking creatures who cease to exist with the demise of our physical bodies, then our chief concern will be the enhancement of our pleasures. When the horizon of eternity is eclipsed, individuals will not surprisingly embrace an ethic of mobility, for each person will be quite willing to relocate in pursuit of an abstract promise of worldly affluence. Thus, our homes tend to become merely launching places for economic and hedonistic endeavors, and individuals tend to lose any abiding concern for the long-term future of the local community. Modern people find themselves without a place either in this world or the next.

### The View from Nowhere

The disposition that characterizes the modern mind—a disposition that favors as its ideal a skeptical “view from nowhere,” to borrow Thomas Nagel’s suggestive phrase—serves to undermine the very elements that make community possible. The insistence that all knowledge be explicit and determined by a particular method requires that epistemological certainty replace the possibility of transcendent realities that elude human mastery. This collection of dispositions seeks to force human finitude upon infinity and thereby artificially reduces infinity to a finite, observable, and ultimately controllable entity. In short, the revolutionary changes introduced by thinkers such as Descartes and Bacon represent an concept of knowing that, when habitually practiced, serves to isolate and uproot individuals, centralize thought, and produce skepticism.

What would induce intelligent people to deny the very things they need for a full and true account of human knowledge? The answer emerges clearly from the pens of Descartes and Bacon. It is a craving for universal, unmediated access to truth. Such a craving is actually a longing for a God’s-eye view of reality. For certainty. For control. It is a longing to escape the contingencies of human existence and to establish a more secure footing. It is an attempt to transcend the human condition, with its lamentable limitations.

The longing for a universal, purely objective view of reality represents man’s attempt to transcend man. The finitudes necessarily entailed in a commitment to a particular place will be an irritation to anyone enamored with this universalist dream. In his futile attempt to find perfection or uniformity or perpetual peace or any of the other ideals entailed in such universalism, the rootless modern will simply deny the

importance of place. The problem of geographic rootlessness—that is, a reluctance to commit to a particular place—is at least partially the product of a philosophical rootlessness motivated by a craving for the security that certainty provides. This is no better illustrated than by recalling that Descartes sought an “Archimedean point.” Archimedes, of course, boasted that he could move the earth if he had an adequate lever and a place on which to stand. In aspiring to such an intellectual foundation, Descartes sought a place from which to comprehend reality completely and perfectly. But for the very reason that such a place can only exist outside all reality, it is, quite literally, no place at all. For Descartes, the ideal place is precisely no-place. The modern Cartesian, it seems, is a homeless man trying desparately to pitch his tent in a place that cannot exist.

In the same way that the phenomenon of physical rootlessness finds its source in a desire for mastery, so too does the phenomenon of spiritual rootlessness, or skepticism. If knowledge is power, and if some knowledge is simply beyond human ken, then human beings are naturally limited in their ability to reshape both their external environment and their internal natures. We are not the sovereign masters of our own fates. Rather, we are necessarily subject to powers beyond our control. As a result, it is not difficult to see how the transcendent realm—that is, the realm of God, the soul, and the moral law—was quite happily eliminated from the publicly acknowledged realm of knowing. Even when partially known, these realities make demands on us that are not of our own choosing. They invariably remind us of our inherent limitations and obligations, and in a world where mastery is the supreme good, all that usurps our control must be eliminated. In the same way that commitment to a place is exchanged for rootlessness in order to se-

cure the illusion of universal objectivity and therefore certain knowledge, so too the transcendent is denigrated or denied in an attempt to assert control over reality generally and our own existences specifically. Both denials are motivated by the same impulse. But to the extent that human existence is necessarily rooted in a particular place and subject to obligations that transcend our own individual wills, the denial of the importance of both place and the transcendent is a denial of reality. Perhaps unexpectedly, it is also the denial of the possibility of community.

It would seem, then, that to recover the possibility of community—and thereby to secure a necessary condition for sustainable democratic life—we must attempt a reconceptualization of knowledge. Tradition and authority must once more be embraced as necessary and beneficial elements of human understanding. Only where a particular tradition is embodied in a particular location (and where else can a tradition be embodied?) is community possible. Our commitment must take the form of membership: we must see ourselves as joint owners of a living tradition embodied in a community that transcends any one person even as all its members, living and dead, sustain it by their fidelity and loving care. It is only when we commit to rootedness, both physically and spiritually, that we acquire the resources necessary to break out of the dark forest of rootless skepticism. A healthy democracy begins at home.

1. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1988) xiii.
2. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).
3. *Democracy in America*, 538.
4. Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots* (New York: Routledge, 1995) 41.

5. *The Need for Roots*, 43.
6. Wendell Berry, *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 119-120.
7. *Sex, Economy, Freedom & Community*, 168-173.
8. Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).
9. *Democracy in America*, 429.
10. *Ibid.*, 431.
11. T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" in *The Sacred Wood* (London: Faber & Faber, 1997).
12. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1999), 182.
13. Michael Polanyi and Alasdair MacIntyre both argue persuasively for this conception of tradition. See Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Toward a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958); *Science, Faith, and Society* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1964). *The Tacit Dimension* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1966); and MacIntyre's *After Virtue, Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1990).
14. Francis Bacon, "The Great Instauration," in *The Great Instauration and New Atlantis*, ed. J. Weinberger (Arlington Heights: AHM Publishing Corporation, 1980), 11.
15. René Descartes, "Meditations," reproduced in *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 95.
16. René Descartes, "Discourse on Method," reproduced in *Discourse on Method and the Meditations*, trans. F.E. Sutcliffe (New York: Penguin Books, 1968), 33.
17. *Discourse on Method*, 39.
18. *Democracy in America*, 429.
19. *Ibid.*, 430.
20. *Ibid.*, 434.
21. *Ibid.*, 434.
22. *Discourse on Method*, 31.
23. *Novum Organum*, preface.
24. Michael Oakeshott, "Rationalism in Politics" in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1991).
25. *Democracy in America*, 430.