Montaigne Amongst the Moderns: Receptions of the Essays
MONTAIGNE AMONGST THE MODERNS
Receptions of the Essays
Dudley M. Marchi

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REVIEWS
"... an original book that attempts and succeeds in understanding the idea of Modernity from the reworking of Montaigne's Essais. · Philippe Desan

"... a most significant contribution to Montaigne studies ... thoroughly researched, well conceived and composed... which will reach out and be of interest to a wider audience than scholars and student of French thought and culture." · Marcel Tetel

DESCRIPTION
Montaigne is one of the most cross-cultural writers ever – both in the assimilation of writings from other cultures into his own work and in the subsequent translations, critical receptions, and creative adaptations of the Essais by other writers throughout the world for the last four hundred years. His work is generally considered as exemplary of the European Renaissance, yet also demonstrates a remarkable relevance to the literary and intellectual activity at the present time. However, whereas there has been an abundance of commentary on Montaigne during the first centuries after his death, much less attention has been paid to his impact on writers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, particularly those outside France. This study redresses the imbalance.

By establishing a stylistic and ideological relationship between Montaigne’s work and that of such writers as Emerson, Nietzsche, Pater, Woolf, and Sollers, we not only gain a greater appreciation of the richness of the Essays, but also of some of the roots of modernist and postmodernist writing.

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Subject: General Cultural Studies
Area: France Europe

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The Essays (French: Essais, pronounced [esɛ]) of Michel de Montaigne are contained in three books and 107 chapters of varying length. They were originally written in Middle French and were originally published in the Kingdom of France. Montaigne's stated design in writing, publishing and revising the Essays over the period from approximately 1570 to 1592 was to record "some traits of my character and of my humours." The Essays were first published in 1580 and cover a wide range of topics. In 1572, Montaigne retired to his estates in order to devote himself to leisure, reading and reflection. There he wrote his constantly expanding 'essays', inspired by the ideas he found in books from his library and his own experience. He discusses subjects as diverse as war-horses and cannibals, poetry and politics, sex and religion, love and friendship, ecstasy and experience. Above all, Montaigne studied himself to find his own inner nature and that of humanity. The Essays are among the most idiosyncratic and personal works in all literature. An insight into a wise Renaissance min