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
Subject Codes ►

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Remarkably modern even to readers today, Montaigne's conviction to examine the world through the lens of the only thing he can depend on inviolably—his own self—makes him one of the most honest and accessible of all writers. The entire field of modern literary non-fiction owes its genesis to Montaigne, and non-fiction writers of all kinds—from essayists to journalists to historians—continue to read Montaigne for his masterful balance of intellectual knowledge and graceful style. Life. After these first spartan years spent amongst the lowest social class, Montaigne was brought back to the Château. The objective there was for Latin to become his first language. Montaigne continued to extend, revise and oversee the publication of his Essays. Montaigne's considerations, or essays, offer a point of departure for the modern reader's own assessments. The Essays analyze what can be broadly defined as human nature, the seemingly never-ending process by which the individual tries to impose opinions upon others through the production of laws, policies, or philosophies. The Essays analyze what can be broadly defined as human nature, the seemingly never-ending process by which the individual tries to impose opinions upon others through the production of laws, policies, or philosophies. Montaigne's motto—"What do I know?"—is a simple question yet one of perennial significance. He is currently working on the reception of Montaigne in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. "Florio's Translation of Montaigne's Essays was first published in 1603. In 'The World's Classics' the first volume was published in 1904, and reprinted in 1910 and 1924." Additional material was supplied by R.S. Bear from the Everyman's Library edition of 1910. Content unique to this presentation is copyright © 1999 The University of Oregon. For nonprofit and educational uses only. Send comments and corrections to the Publisher, rbear [at]uoregon.edu.