

Cambridge University Press
0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
Edited by Ullrich Langer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
MONTAIGNE

Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592) is the author of a rich and varied philosophical and literary output which was influential in his lifetime and has continued to capture the attention of thinkers up to the present day. He made important philosophical contributions to ethics and skepticism, and his *Essays* had a significant impact on literary form. This volume brings together newly commissioned chapters on the full range of his work, and considers his relationship to his time and his lasting influence on other thinkers. New readers will find this the most convenient and accessible guide to Montaigne currently available. Advanced students and specialists will find a conspectus of recent developments in the interpretation of Montaigne.

ULLRICH LANGER is Professor of French and Senior Fellow, Institute for Research in the Humanities at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Cambridge University Press
 0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
 Edited by Ullrich Langer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

OTHER VOLUMES IN THE SERIES OF CAMBRIDGE COMPANIONS

- ABELARD *Edited by* JEFFREY E. BROWER *and* KEVIN
 GUILFOY
- ADORNO *Edited by* THOMAS HUHN
- ANSELM *Edited by* BRIAN DAVIES *and* BRIAN LEFTOW
- AQUINAS *Edited by* NORMAN KRETZMANN *and*
 ELENORE STUMP
- ARABIC PHILOSOPHY *Edited by* PETER ADAMSON
and RICHARD TAYLOR
- HANNAH ARENDT *Edited by* DANA VILLA
- ARISTOTLE *Edited by* JONATHAN BARNES
- AUGUSTINE *Edited by* ELENORE STUMP *and*
 NORMAN KRETZMANN
- BACON *Edited by* MARKKU PELTONEN
- BRENTANO *Edited by* DALE JACQUETTE
- CRITICAL THEORY *Edited by* FRED RUSH
- SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR *Edited by* CLAUDIA CARD
- DARWIN *Edited by* JONATHAN HODGE *and*
 GREGORY RADICK
- DESCARTES *Edited by* JOHN COTTINGHAM
- DUNS SCOTUS *Edited by* THOMAS WILLIAMS
- EARLY GREEK PHILOSOPHY *Edited by* A. A. LONG
- FEMINISM IN PHILOSOPHY *Edited by* MIRANDA
 FRICKER *and* JENNIFER HORNSBY
- FOUCAULT *Edited by* GARY GUTTING
- FREUD *Edited by* JEROME NEU
- GALILEO *Edited by* PETER MACHAMER
- GERMAN IDEALISM *Edited by* KARL AMERIKS
- GREEK AND ROMAN PHILOSOPHY *Edited by*
 DAVID SEDLEY
- HABERMAS *Edited by* STEPHEN K. WHITE
- HEGEL *Edited by* FREDERICK BEISER
- HEIDEGGER *Edited by* CHARLES GUIGNON
- HOBBS *Edited by* TOM SORELL
- HUME *Edited by* DAVID FATE NORTON
- HUSSERL *Edited by* BARRY SMITH *and* DAVID
 WOODRUFF SMITH
- WILLIAM JAMES *Edited by* RUTH ANNA PUTNAM
- KANT *Edited by* PAUL GUYER

- KIERKEGAARD *Edited by* ALASTAIR HANNAY *and*
 GORDON MARINO
 LEIBNIZ *Edited by* NICHOLAS JOLLEY
 LEVINAS *Edited by* SIMON CRITCHLEY *and* ROBERT
 BERNASCONI
 LOCKE *Edited by* VERE CHAPPELL
 MALEBRANCHE *Edited by* STEVEN NADLER
 MARX *Edited by* TERRELL CARVER
 MEDIEVAL JEWISH PHILOSOPHY *Edited by*
 DANIEL H. FRANK *and* OLIVER LEAMAN
 MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY *Edited by* A. S. MCGRADIE
 MERLEAU-PONTY *Edited by* TAYLOR CARMAN *and*
 MARK HANSEN
 MILL *Edited by* JOHN SKORUPSKI
 NEWTON *Edited by* I. BERNARD COHEN *and*
 GEORGE E. SMITH
 NIETZSCHE *Edited by* BERND MAGNUS *and*
 KATHLEEN HIGGINS
 OCKHAM *Edited by* PAUL VINCENT SPADE
 PASCAL *Edited by* NICHOLAS HAMMOND
 PEIRCE *Edited by* CHERYL MISAK
 PLATO *Edited by* RICHARD KRAUT
 PLOTINUS *Edited by* LLOYD P. GERSON
 QUINE *Edited by* ROGER F. GIBSON
 RAWLS *Edited by* SAMUEL FREEMAN
 THOMAS REID *Edited by* TERENCE CUNED *and* RENÈ
 VAN WOUDEBERG
 ROUSSEAU *Edited by* PATRICK RILEY
 BERTRAND RUSSELL *Edited by* NICHOLAS GRIFFIN
 SARTRE *Edited by* CHRISTINA HOWELLS
 SCHOPENHAUER *Edited by* CHRISTOPHER JANAWAY
 THE SCOTTISH ENLIGHTENMENT *Edited by*
 ALEXANDER BROADIE
 SPINOZA *Edited by* DON GARRETT
 THE STOICS *Edited by* BRAD INWOOD
 WITTGENSTEIN *Edited by* HANS SLUGA *and*
 DAVID STERN

Cambridge University Press
0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
Edited by Ullrich Langer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

The Cambridge Companion to
MONTAIGNE

Edited by Ullrich Langer
The University of Wisconsin, Madison



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
 0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
 Edited by Ullrich Langer
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
 Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press
 The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521819534

© Cambridge University Press 2005

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2005

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
 The Cambridge companion to Montaigne / ed. Ullrich Langer.
 p. cm. – (Cambridge companions to philosophy)
 Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
 ISBN 0-521-81953-9 – ISBN 0-521-52556-X (pb.)
 I. Montaigne, Michel de, 1533–1592. I. Langer, Ullrich. II. Series.
 B785.M74C36 2005
 I94-dc22 2004062841

ISBN-13 978-0-521-81953-4 hardback
 ISBN-10 0-521-81953-9 hardback
 ISBN-13 978-0-521-52556-5 paperback
 ISBN-10 0-521-52556-X paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

What I chiefly portray is my cogitations, a shapeless subject that does not lend itself to expression in actions. It is all I can do to couch my thoughts in this airy medium of words. Some of the wisest and most devout men have lived avoiding all noticeable actions. My actions would tell more about [chance] than about me. They bear witness to their own part, not to mine, unless it be by conjecture and without certainty: they are samples which display only details. I expose myself entire: my portrait is a cadaver on which the veins, the muscles, and the tendons appear at a glance, each part in its place. One part of what I am was produced by a cough, another by a pallor or a palpitation of the heart – in any case dubiously. It is not my deeds that I write down; it is myself, it is my essence.

“Of Practice” (Montaigne, *Essays*, II.6, F274, V379)

CONTENTS

	<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>page xi</i>
	<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xiv
	<i>Note on the text</i>	xv
	<i>Chronology</i>	xvi
I	Introduction ULLRICH LANGER	I
2	Montaigne's political and religious context ULLRICH LANGER	9
3	Montaigne's legacy WARREN BOUTCHER	27
4	Montaigne and antiquity: fancies and grotesques JOHN O'BRIEN	53
5	The <i>Essays</i> and the New World TOM CONLEY	74
6	Justice and the law: on the reverse side of the <i>Essays</i> ANDRÉ TOURNON	96
7	Montaigne and the notion of prudence FRANCIS GOYET	118
8	Montaigne and the truth of the schools IAN MACLEAN	142

Cambridge University Press
0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
Edited by Ullrich Langer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

x	Contents	
9	The investigation of nature GEORGE HOFFMANN	163
10	Montaigne and skepticism ANN HARTLE	183
11	Montaigne on moral philosophy and the good life J. B. SCHNEEWIND	207
	<i>Bibliography</i>	229
	<i>Index</i>	238

CONTRIBUTORS

WARREN BOUTCHER is Senior Lecturer in Renaissance Studies at the School of English and Drama, and Senior Visiting Scholar at the AHRB Centre of Editing Lives and Letters, both Queen Mary, University of London. His forthcoming publications include chapters on the early English reception of the *Essays in Montaigne et Shakespeare* (forthcoming, 2004) and on the modern reception in *Early Modern France*, volume 9. These are part of a book project entitled *The School of Montaigne: Essays and Agency in Early Modern Europe*.

TOM CONLEY is Professor in Romance Languages and in Visual and Environmental Studies at Harvard University. Author of *The Self-Made Map: Cartographic Writing in Early Modern France* (1996) and *L'Inconscient graphique* (2000), he is completing a study of topography and displacement in sixteenth-century France.

FRANCIS GOYET is Professor of French Literature at the Université Stendhal (Grenoble, France). He is a specialist in the history of rhetorics and poetics, with current research on the rhetorical practice of Jesuits and barristers (www.u-grenoble3.fr/rare/). His publications include *Traité de poétique et de rhétorique de la Renaissance* (1990, reissued 2000), *Le sublime du "lieu commun"* (1996), and a comprehensive commentary on Du Bellay's *Deffence et illustration de la langue françoise* (2003). In the area of political theory, he is editor of *Devenir roi* (2001) and *L'éloge du prince* (2003).

ANN HARTLE is Professor of Philosophy at Emory University. Recent publications include *Michel de Montaigne: Accidental Philosopher* (2003), and articles on Montaigne in *Montaigne Studies*, *Philosophy*

xii List of contributors

and Literature, Faith and Philosophy. She is currently writing a book on Montaigne and modern rationalism.

GEORGE HOFFMANN is Associate Professor in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures at the University of Michigan. He is the author of *Montaigne's Career* (1998), editor of *New Biographical Criticism: The Making of Young of an Old Discipline* (2004), and has recently published "Anatomy of the Mass: Montaigne's 'Of cannibals,'" *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America* 117: 2 (2002), as well as contributing to the *Dictionnaire Montaigne* (2004).

ULLRICH LANGER is Professor of French at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His publications include *Vertu du discours, discours de la vertu: Littérature et philosophie morale au XVIIe siècle en France* (1999), *Perfect Friendship: Studies in Literature and Moral Philosophy from Boccaccio to Corneille* (1994); he is editor of *Au-delà de la Poétique: Aristote et la littérature de la Renaissance / Beyond the Poetics: Aristotle and Early Modern Literature* (2002). His current research centers on the notion of pleasure in Renaissance philosophy and literature.

IAN MACLEAN is Professor of Renaissance Studies in the University of Oxford and a Senior Research Fellow of All Souls College. Among his publications are *The Renaissance Notion of Woman* (1980, frequently reprinted), *Meaning and Interpretation in the Renaissance: The Case of Law* (1992), *Montaigne philosophe* (1996), *Logic, Signs and Nature in the Renaissance: The Case of Learned Medicine* (2001), and an edition of Cardano's *De libris propriis* (2004).

JOHN O'BRIEN is Professor of French at Royal Holloway College, University of London. Recent publications include: *Anacreon Redivivus* (1995), *Les Odes d'Anacréon de Remy Belleau* (1995), *Distant Voices Still Heard* (2000) and *La familia de Montaigne* (2001). He is currently working on the notion of the imagination in French Renaissance thought and literature.

J. B. SCHNEEWIND is Professor Emeritus in the Philosophy Department at Johns Hopkins University, where he has taught for more than twenty years. He has written numerous articles and is author of

Sidgwick's Ethics and Victorian Moral Philosophy (1977), and *The Invention of Autonomy: A History of Modern Moral Philosophy* (1998).

ANDRÉ TOURNON is Professor Emeritus at the University of Provence (Aix-Marseille I), where he taught French literature of the Renaissance. Editor since 1994 of the *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Montaigne*, his publications include *Montaigne: la glose et l'essai* (1983, 2nd edn., 2000), "*En sens agile*": *Les acrobaties de l'Esprit selon Rabelais* (1995). He is editor of *Montaigne's Essais* (3 vols., Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1998, repr. 2003), in which the text divisions and punctuation of the last edition annotated by Montaigne are restored, and, with Hélène Moreau, of Béroalde de Verville, *Le Moyen de parvenir* (1984, 2nd edn., 2004). His current research includes a forthcoming study of the *Essays*, entitled *Route par ailleurs*, and another of Rabelais, entitled *Rire pour comprendre*.

Cambridge University Press
0521819539 - The Cambridge Companion to Montaigne
Edited by Ullrich Langer
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Noel Carroll, Philippe Desan, and Jan Miernowski for their help in the realization of this volume, and Peter Vantine for his translation of the essay by Francis Goyet. Hilary Gaskin of Cambridge University Press has been an exemplary editor.

Ullrich Langer

NOTE ON THE TEXT

All references to Montaigne's *Essays* in this volume are to the page number in the translation by Donald M. Frame, *The Complete Essays of Montaigne* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), designated as *F*, and to the page number in the French edition by Pierre Villey, revised by Verdun-L. Saulnier (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965, and reprinted in the series "Quadrige"), designated as *V*. Occasionally the chronological "layer" of the text is indicated, as follows: A (the first edition of 1580, the first two books); B (the edition of 1588, in three books); C (Montaigne's handwritten annotations after 1588, on all three books). Square brackets indicate emendations of the Frame translation by the authors of the chapters.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1533 Birth of Michel, son of Pierre Eyquem and Antoinette de Louppes, at the castle of Montaigne, on a noble estate bought by his great-grandfather Ramon, a wealthy merchant. The child learns Latin with a German tutor.
- 1539–48 Humanistic studies at the *Collège de Guyenne* in Bordeaux.
- 1556–57 Works at the *Cour des Aides* in Périgueux.
- 1557–70 Counselor at the *Chambre des Enquêtes* of the *Parlement* of Bordeaux.
- 1558 Encounters fellow jurist and future friend Etienne de La Boétie (see *Essays*, I.28) at the *Parlement* of Bordeaux.
- 1563 Death of La Boétie.
- 1565 Marries Françoise de la Chassigne, daughter of a wealthy bourgeois and parliamentarian Bordeaux family.
- 1568 Death of his father, Pierre. Michel is heir to the title and the estate of Montaigne. Throughout his life, he refers to himself as Michel de Montaigne.
- 1569 Montaigne publishes his translation of Raymond Sebond's *Liber creaturarum* (otherwise known as the *Natural Theology*) (see *Essays*, II.12).
- 1570 Publishes his edition of the works of Etienne de La Boétie.
- 1571 In February, he “retires” to his estate, to devote his time to its management and to his writings. His daughter Léonor is born in September. In October, he is received in the Order of Saint Michel.

Chronology

xvii

- ca. 1572–3 Begins composition of the *Essays*.
 1574 Charged with a diplomatic mission to the royal army.
 1577 Montaigne becomes *gentilhomme de la chambre* of Henri de Navarre.
 1578 Begins to suffer from kidney stones.
 1580 Publication of the first two books of the *Essays*. Referred to as [A].
 1580–81 Travels to Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Italy (his travel journal will be published under the title *Journal de voyage de Montaigne* in 1774).
 1581 Elected mayor of Bordeaux for a two-year term; he will be re-elected for another two-year term in 1583.
 1582 Second edition of the *Essays*, with minor additions.
 1583 Montaigne is involved in negotiations between the king and the leader of the Protestants, Henri de Navarre.
 1584 Henri de Navarre visits Montaigne in his castle and spends two nights.
 1585 First the civil wars, then the plague ravage the Périgord region.
 1588 Publishes a further edition of the *Essays*, with the substantial addition of the third book, and various additions to the chapters of the first two books. Referred to as [B]. Montaigne travels to Paris to have his book printed; on the way he is robbed by bandits. He is briefly imprisoned in the Bastille by the ultra-Catholic *Ligueurs*. He meets Marie de Gournay, who becomes a friend and will act as editor of a posthumous edition of the *Essays*.
 1588 Return to his estate in December. He demonstrates his loyalty to the crown in the civil conflicts.
 1592 Death of Montaigne. He leaves behind a copy of the 1588 edition of the *Essays*, covered with marginal and intra-linear annotations, called the *Exemplaire de Bordeaux*. Referred to as [C]. A copy of this annotated book is edited and published in 1595 by Marie de Gournay. The *Exemplaire de Bordeaux* serves as the basis for modern editions.