



Montaigne and the Life of Freedom (Ideas in Context)

Felicity Green

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More than any other early modern text, Montaigne's *Essais* have come to be associated with the emergence of a distinctively modern subjectivity, defined in opposition to the artifices of language and social performance. Felicity Green challenges this interpretation with a compelling revisionist reading of Montaigne's text, centred on one of his deepest but hitherto most neglected preoccupations: the need to secure for himself a sphere of liberty and independence that he can properly call his own, or himself. *Montaigne and the Life of Freedom* restores the *Essais* to its historical context by examining the sources, character and significance of Montaigne's project of self-study. That project, as Green shows, reactivates and reshapes ancient practices of self-awareness and self-regulation, in order to establish the self as a space of inner refuge, tranquillity and dominion, free from the inward compulsion of the passions and from subjection to external objects, forces and persons.

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