

Renaissance and Reformation Renaissance et Réforme



Desan, Philippe, Déborah Knop, and Blandine Perona, eds. Montaigne, une rhétorique naturalisée ? Actes du colloque international tenu à l'University of Chicago (Paris) les 7 et 8 avril 2017

Vivek Ramakrishnan

Volume 43, Number 1, Winter 2020

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1070197ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i1.34114>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Ramakrishnan, V. (2020). Review of [Desan, Philippe, Déborah Knop, and Blandine Perona, eds. *Montaigne, une rhétorique naturalisée ? Actes du colloque international tenu à l'University of Chicago (Paris) les 7 et 8 avril 2017*]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 43(1), 234–235. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v43i1.34114>

© All Rights Reserved Canadian Society for Renaissance Studies / Société canadienne d'études de la Renaissance; Pacific Northwest Renaissance Society; Toronto Renaissance and Reformation Colloquium; Victoria University Centre for Renaissance and Reformation Studies, 2020

This document is protected by copyright law. Use of the services of Érudit (including reproduction) is subject to its terms and conditions, which can be viewed online.

<https://apropos.erudit.org/en/users/policy-on-use/>

érudit

This article is disseminated and preserved by Érudit.

Érudit is a non-profit inter-university consortium of the Université de Montréal, Université Laval, and the Université du Québec à Montréal. Its mission is to promote and disseminate research.

<https://www.erudit.org/en/>

La parution de ces actes du colloque de 2014 confirme donc l'intérêt croissant des chercheurs italiens et français pour le milieu lyonnais à la Renaissance. Elle permet moins d'interroger les publications elles-mêmes que les réseaux socio-économiques et les pratiques traductives qui leur servaient de contextes et renforçaient leur légitimité à l'échelle européenne.

FRANÇOIS PARÉ

University of Waterloo

Desan, Philippe, Déborah Knop, and Blandine Perona, eds.

Montaigne, une rhétorique naturalisée ? Actes du colloque international tenu à l'University of Chicago (Paris) les 7 et 8 avril 2017.

Paris: Honoré Champion, 2019. Pp. 250. ISBN 978-2-745-35182-1 (paperback) €41.

This volume is a collection of articles that stems from a conference, held at the University of Chicago in 2017, on the relationship between rhetoric and what is natural in the writings of Michel de Montaigne. The editors are Philippe Desan, an extremely prolific and well-known researcher on Montaigne and professor at the University of Chicago; Déborah Knop, a professor at the Université de Grenoble; and Blandine Perona, a professor at the Université Polytechnique Hauts-de-France. This book is addressed to Renaissance specialists. The articles all show a great depth of thought and a rigorous approach; many are written in a very clear and logical fashion. There is an index but no bibliography, which may seem surprising given the status of its contributors; however, the book is intended not as a general take on the rhetoric of Montaigne so much as an analysis of the specific relationship that Montaigne had between rhetoric and what is natural. The book is divided into four parts: an introduction by Blandine Perona, a section on Montaigne's rhetoric, a section on the resistance to that rhetoric from what was natural, and a section on the sublime and irony as ways of naturalizing his rhetoric.

This book deserves to be read because it is a profound and well-organized discussion of two opposing facets of Montaigne's writing, by some of the great researchers on this Renaissance philosopher. There are many interesting and profound articles here. For example, Francis Goyet details how Montaigne

used historical examples to arouse the interest of the reader. Thomas Mollier discusses the way in which Montaigne questioned the foundations of rhetoric. Olivier Guerrier discusses the liberties and limits of Montaigne's writing. Philippe Desan examines Montaigne's rapport between the social and the solitary, and Olivier Millet offers an interpretation of the relationship between Montaigne's letter on the death of Étienne La Boétie and the *Essais*. The articles are well laid out, easy to follow, and subtle in their analyses.

Although the articles are small in number, relative to other collections, they are all of great depth. Their authors tackle many different subjects relating to rhetoric and the natural in Montaigne. For example, they put forth the judicial aspects of Montaigne's rhetoric, they highlight Montaigne as a skeptic, and they are careful to point out the limits of his thought.

It is a strength of the volume that it tackles a precise question instead of trying to be more general. While not exclusively a long analysis of the question it poses, it is an indispensable contribution to Montaigne scholarship—because of its solid research and clear writing. It is important to note how well structured each article is. This leads to little guesswork on the part of the reader. Moreover, this book is not written in language or phrases that are overly technical. It is therefore accessible to graduate students in Renaissance studies.

The book lays bare the subtle writing of Montaigne and the limits of his thought; indeed, it is admirable how much it says on the ambiguities of Montaigne's writing. In this way, this volume is a fine contribution to Montaigne scholarship and is recommended to all Renaissance specialists. It is hoped that many more books along this line will be published.

VIVEK RAMAKRISHNAN
Burlington, Ontario