

The Renaissance Studies Program  
“Renaissance Cultures in Transit” Lecture Series  
Presents the third lecture by

MICHAEL WYATT

*Florio’s Montaigne and the End of  
Renaissance Humanism*

5:30 p.m., Thursday, April 21, 2011  
Persimmon Room  
Indiana Memorial Union



John Florio’s 1603 translation of the *Essais* of Montaigne marks a watershed moment both in English letters and the translator’s career. This lecture examines the conjunction of these elements in an English text that was published just as Elizabeth I lay dying but which had seen its genesis in the hopes of those pro-Stuart elements in and around the English court working to secure the succession of James VI.

Translation is here seen as a critical tool in the advancement of a new form of cultural politics in England, a significant practice in its own right and not merely a point of reference for other more established literature, such as the late plays of Shakespeare. In its transposition of a foreign text into English, Florio’s Montaigne speaks a language newly invigorated through the process of translation, in a context vastly different from its native French habitat, and in so doing—as Carlo Ginzburg has observed—participates in the emergence of a newly assertive English identity.

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