



Illiterate knowledge, Michel de Montaigne

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Abstract: This paper considers how three recurring figures in the *Essais* seem to represent three distinct ways of relating to knowledge and ignorance. We will call them the Simpleton, the Fool, and the Ignorant Philosopher. Montaigne admires the natural wisdom and happiness of the Simpleton. The question of his aptitude for knowledge then arises. Is there, in the Simpleton, a form of illiterate knowledge that could guide Montaigne in the formation of his judgment

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