

Discourse on Voluntary Servitude: A Masterpiece on Liberty and Tyranny

In the realm of political philosophy, few works have had as profound an impact as Étienne de La Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude." Written in the 16th century, this timeless treatise explores the nature of tyranny and the reasons why people willingly submit to it. This Hackett Classics edition offers a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of this profound work, making it an invaluable resource for students of history, political science, and philosophy.



Discourse on Voluntary Servitude (Hackett Classics)

by David Holmgren

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 2869 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 98 pages



La Boétie's Insights into Tyranny

La Boétie's "Discourse" is a scathing indictment of tyranny, which he defines as "a government that is not based on the consent of the governed." He argues that tyrants are not inherently superior to their subjects, but rather rely on a combination of fear, deception, and coercion to maintain their power. La Boétie also debunks the myth that tyranny is

necessary to maintain Free Download and stability, arguing that it is, in fact, a source of chaos and oppression.

The Roots of Voluntary Servitude

One of the most remarkable aspects of La Boétie's "Discourse" is his analysis of the reasons why people willingly submit to tyranny. He argues that voluntary servitude is not simply a matter of ignorance or weakness, but rather a complex phenomenon that is rooted in human psychology. La Boétie identifies several factors that contribute to voluntary servitude, including:

- **Habituation:** People who have grown accustomed to tyranny are less likely to question it.
- **Fear:** Tyrants use fear to intimidate their subjects and prevent them from challenging their authority.
- **Deception:** Tyrants often use propaganda to deceive their subjects into believing that their rule is legitimate.
- **Complicity:** Some people willingly participate in their own oppression by collaborating with the tyrant.

Breaking the Chains of Tyranny

While La Boétie's "Discourse" is a deeply pessimistic work, it does offer a glimmer of hope. He argues that tyranny can be overthrown if people are willing to stand up to it. La Boétie urges his readers to resist tyranny in any way they can, even if it means resorting to violence. He writes, "If you are determined to be free, you will break your chains."

The Legacy of "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude"

Since its publication in the 16th century, "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" has had a profound impact on political thought. It has been translated into dozens of languages and has been studied by generations of scholars. The work has been particularly influential in the development of anarchist and libertarian思想. In the 20th century, "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" was a major inspiration for the French Resistance during World War II.

Today, "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" remains an essential reading for anyone interested in understanding the nature of tyranny and the importance of freedom. This Hackett Classics edition provides a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of this timeless work, making it an invaluable resource for students and scholars alike.

Charles River Editors

Literary Classics



DISCOURSE ON VOLUNTARY SERVITUDE

ETIENNE DE LA BOETIE

Étienne de La Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" is a seminal work on the nature of tyranny and the reasons why people willingly submit to it.

Further Reading

- [Discourse on Voluntary Servitude on Wikipedia](#)

- Discourse on Voluntary Servitude on Project Gutenberg
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