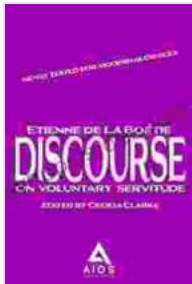


Discourse on Voluntary Servitude: A Mirror for Modern Society



Discourse On Voluntary Servitude by Kenyon Zimmer

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 187 KB

Text-to-Speech : Enabled

Screen Reader : Supported

Enhanced typesetting : Enabled

Word Wise : Enabled

Print length : 39 pages



Étienne de La Boétie's seminal treatise, "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude," written in the 16th century, remains a profound and thought-provoking examination of the nature of tyranny and the human tendency to submit to oppression. La Boétie's insights into the psychological and social mechanisms that sustain tyranny offer a timeless framework for understanding and resisting authoritarianism in all its forms.

This article provides a comprehensive analysis of La Boétie's "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude," exploring its key arguments, relevance to contemporary society, and the enduring lessons it offers for those seeking to live in freedom and self-determination.

La Boétie's Critique of Tyranny

La Boétie begins his treatise by posing a fundamental question: why do people submit to tyranny? He argues that tyranny is not a natural state but

rather a result of the voluntary consent of the governed. People become enslaved not because they are forced but because they choose to give up their freedom in exchange for security or other perceived benefits.

La Boétie identifies three main tactics that tyrants use to maintain their power:

- **Fear:** Tyrants use fear to intimidate and control their subjects. They create an atmosphere of terror and uncertainty, making people afraid to speak out or challenge their authority. - **Deception:** Tyrants manipulate the truth and use propaganda to deceive their subjects. They create a false reality that glorifies the tyrant and demonizes their opponents. - **Corruption:** Tyrants use bribery, patronage, and other forms of corruption to buy the loyalty of their followers and silence dissent.

La Boétie argues that these tactics are effective only if people allow themselves to be deceived and manipulated. If people were to recognize the true nature of tyranny and refuse to cooperate with it, then the tyrant's power would crumble.

The Importance of Resistance

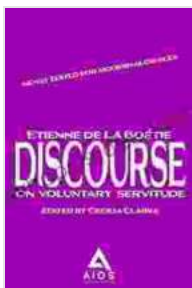
La Boétie emphasizes the importance of resistance as the only way to break the cycle of tyranny. He argues that true freedom can only be achieved through the collective action of the oppressed. When people refuse to obey unjust laws, resist oppression, and speak out against tyranny, they undermine the tyrant's power and create the possibility for a more just and equitable society.

La Boétie's call for resistance is not an exhortation to violence but rather a call for civil disobedience and nonviolent protest. He argues that the most effective way to fight tyranny is to withdraw the consent that makes it possible.

Relevance to Contemporary Society

The insights of "Discourse on Voluntary Servitude" remain relevant to contemporary society in several important ways:

- **The rise of authoritarianism:** In many parts of the world, we are witnessing a resurgence of authoritarianism and the erosion of democratic institutions. La Boétie's analysis of tyranny offre



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