# MONTAIGNE AND LA BOÉTIE IN THE CHAPTER ON FRIENDSHIP

By Harry Kurz

THE problem we are proposing to discuss is the result of a peculiar carelessness of Montaigne in his chapter on Friendship in his *Essais*, Book I, 28. He begins by noting that a painter,[1] commissioned by him to decorate some of the large panels of his study with pictures, daubs fanciful designs, "crotesques," around the central pieces. So, remarks Montaigne, his thoughts here are mere figures without any other purpose than to enshrine a great piece composed by his friend, Etienne de la Boétie. This gem is a little essay called by its author *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, but soon renamed *Le contr'un* by those who read it. Montaigne then relates that it was written by La Boétie in his early youth (later specified as eighteen) and circulated among appreciative readers who relished its spirited defence of liberty against tyrants. Hence the name of *Contr'un*. Montaigne insists that it is beautifully composed and if its author had lived and undertaken a long work of reflection, he would have created something memorable that would have made him comparable to authors of antiquity. But this *Discours* and a Commentary on the Edict of January[2] are all he has available now, since he has already published all the other MSS left him by his friend's bequest.[3] Montaigne admits that he has a special fondness for the *Contr'un* because it furnished the means of their first awareness of each other even before they met, thus opening the door to the perfect friendship between them. This relationship was so extraordinary that its like will not be seen more than once in three centuries.

The chapter on Friendship continues in a less personal tone to discuss the attachments between fathers and sons, between brothers, between husband and wife, between men in homosexuality. Montaigne presently reverts to his beloved La Boétie and writes with touching recollection of their friendship and its foreordained quality, leading to the famous phrase: "Si on me presse de dire pourquoy je l'aymoys, je sens que cela

[1] We can date the composition of I, 28, because of this allusion to a painter who is working in his study decorating its walls with frescoes and inscriptions. One of the latter is dated March 1571.

[2] The Edict of January 1562, issued by Michel de l'Hospital at the behest of Catherine de Medici, marked the high point of royal tolerance toward Protestants, before the fateful massacre ten years later.

[3] These included *La mesnagerie de Xenophon*, *Les règles de mariage de Plutarque*, *Lettre de consolation de Plutarque à sa femme*, and a number of poems in French and Latin, all published chez Frédéric Morel (Paris, 1571).

ne se peult exprimer qu'en respondant, 'Parceque c'estoit luy; parceque c'estoit moy.'" Their interchange was so perfect, their spirits went on together in a union so admirable that their goods as well as their thoughts were always held in common. Since the day Montaigne lost his friend, he has been dragging along rejecting pleasure at the thought that he could not share it with the departed. He feels that he has been only half alive, and in his bitter sorrow he quotes the sadly appropriate verses:

> Alloquar? Audiero numquam tua verba loquentem?
> Numquam ego te, vita frater amabilior,
> Adspiciam posthac? At certe semper amabo.[4]

"Now," he concludes, "let us hear this lad of sixteen talk." Up to this point we see how consistently Montaigne has composed in his nostalgic souvenirs the framework of "crotesques" into which he is about to place the precious discourse of his lamented friend. To be sure, he has changed the age at which La Boétie wrote the *Contr'un* from the vague "en sa première jeunesse" (ed. of 1580) to nearly eighteen, "n'ayant pas atteinct le dix-huitiesme an de son aage" (ed. of 1588), and then at the end of the "crotesques" to a very youthful sixteen (ed. of 1595).[5] But this lack of consistence is not serious in itself, merely causing us to wonder why Montaigne was seemingly careless, and leading us to guess that perhaps be wanted to increase our admiration for the essay by stressing the adolescence of its author, or that, as he himself reread it in 1571 when he presumably composed the chapter on Friendship, he was struck by its assertive vigor and sought to paliate this impetuosity on the ground of extreme youth. We cannot even be sure of a motive in this vagueness about the age of the young author, and it is entirely possible that Montaigne did not know exactly when the *Contr'un* was written.[6]

What follows is more surprising and puzzling than this matter of age. After a space, the essayist continues: "Parce que j'ay trouvé que cet

[4] Catullus, LXV, 9.

[5] "C'est plutôt le souci du sentiment de la postérité pour la Boétie qui a inspiré Montaigne rajeunissant ainsi l'auteur du Contr'un. Pour atténuer l'impression, sans doute défavorable, que la vigueur du langage de La Boétie pouvait faire sur les esprits réfléchis, Montaigne a mis sur le compte de la fougue et de l'âge les écarts de parole de son ami . . . Les faits le contredisent, et nous savons que le Contr'un, s'il fut composé dans l'extrême jeunesse de La Boétie, fut revu plus tard par un esprit moins adolescent." Paul Bonnefon, *Montaigne et ses amis* (Paris: Colin, 1898), I, 144–145.

[6] This uncertainty is further attested by Montaigne's first reference to the *Contr'un* in the *Essais*, I, 26. In discussing Plutarch he quotes the phrase: "que les habitants d'Asie servoient à un seul, pour ne sçavoir prononcer une seule syllabe, qui est, Non," and adds that this statement "donna peult estre la matiere et l'occasion à La Boétie de la SERVITUDE VOLONTAIRE." Note the "perhaps" which reveals his ignorance. This phrase was added in the 1588 ed., is not present in the first two eds. of 1580 and 1582.

ouvrage a esté mis en lumiere, et à mauvaise fin, par ceulx qui cherchent à troubler et changer l'estat de nostre police, sans se soucier s'ils l'amenderont, qu'ils ont meslé à d'aultres escrits de leur farine, je me suis dedict de le loger icy." He again stresses his friend's adolescence: "Ce subject feut traicté par luy en son enfance par maniere d'exercitation seulement, comme subject vulgaire et tracassé en mille endroicts des livres." Something has happened since Montaigne began the writing of this chapter in 1571 to make feel him obliged by 1580, date of the first edition of the *Essais*, to minimize the *Contr'un* to the point of slighting and suppressing it as a schoolboy effort. So this precocious gem is taken out of the elaborate setting prepared in this chapter, and, instead, Montaigne declares he will disply La Boétie's literary gifts by substituting for the serious *Discours* a series of gay sonnets composed about the same time of his career. Chapter XXIX (ed. of 1580) follows then with twenty-nine love sonnets revealing a Petrarchan influence and bearing out Montaigne's statement that his friend would rather have seen the light of day in Venice than at Sarlat, where he was born in 1530. The "crotesques" now serve as a frame for a group of imitative sonnets similar in tone to the dozens composed by the Pléiade poets, and which Montaigne is led to use because they turned up in unexpected fashion and had been sent to him at the appropriate moment.[7] Thus, by this seemingly impulsive decision, the world of readers was deprived by his best friend of the opportunity to appreciate La Boétie's true calibre and the *Contr'un* disappears from ken for nigh two centuries.[8] Montaigne must have known that he was not using the one work which marked his beloved friend as extraordinary, the work which above all others had given literary reputation to La Boétie. Indeed the whole chapter on Friendship, as we have seen, was intended to serve as background and setting for this little masterpiece produced by a precocious youth. The reasons which led Montaigne to replace it with a group of inconspicuous sonnets must have been powerful. Our problem is to examine these probable reasons so vaguely mentioned and to try to measure the nature and significance of their pressure upon

[7] "Ce sont vingt et neuf sonnets que le sieur de Poiferré, homme d'affaires et d'entendement, qui le connoissoit longtemps avant moy, a retrouvé par fortune chez luy, parmy quelques autres papiers, et me les vient d'envoier, de quoy je luy suis tres obligé, et souhaiterois que d'autres qui detiennent plusieurs lopins de ses escris, par cy, par là, en fissent autant" (*Essais*, I, 28).

[8] The editor Pierre Coste finally carried out what had been Montaigne's intention and included the *Contr'un* as an appendix to the *Essais* in his edition of these in Geneva (1727, 1729), an edition which became the model of many reprintings (The Hague, 1727; London, 1739, 1745; Paris, 1754). There is evidence that Coste was beaten to the draw by a suppressed edition of the *Essais* in Paris, 1724 and 1725, to which censors objected because the *Contr'un* had been included.

the devoted essayist seeking a fitting literary monument for his friend. We may also query why, after his decision was made not to use the *Contr'un*, he did not go over his chapter to eradicate the references to the Discourse, and why he left those mentions of La Boétie's age so inexact and groping. We shall take up the latter problem first.

## THE ATTEMPT TO DATE THE *CONTR'UN*

Discussing this question of the author's age at the time of the writing of the *Contr'un*, Arthur Tilley gives a succint résumé and a credible conclusion:

> De Thou's statement that it was inspired by Montmorency's suppression of the sedition at Bordeaux in 1549 may be dismissed, as there is not a word of allusion to that event in the treatise. In the first edition of the Essais, Montaigne said that La Boétie wrote it in his 18th year, i.e. in 1548, but later he corrected this to 16. Probably he had not any precise information on the subject. In any case the treatise must have undergone revision later, probably at the hands of La Boétie. himself, for the words "nostre Ronsard, nostre Baïf, nostre du Bellay" could not possibly have been written before 1550, and hardly before 1552, when Baïf, then only 20, published his first volume of poems. M. Bonnefon indeed conjectures that the whole treatise was written at this later date, when La Boétie was at Orléans, and that it bears traces of the influence of Anne du Bourg, at that time a law professor at the University (*Montaigne et ses amis*, I, 143–163). This view of course involves throwing over Montaigne, and it is safer to assign the original composition to the earlier date, and to suppose that the work was revised later, which would account for its comparative maturity of style.[9]

Most French critics who examine this matter are led to the general theory that La Boétie wrote the *Contr'un* in 1548, near the age of eighteen, but that he kept a copy for a time and made changes or additions. Thus Jean Plattard maintains that while the *Contr'un* was circulating among friends equally fired by the "enthousiasmes de son adolescence d'humaniste," La Boétie may have had a copy available as late as 1553, since he presumably presented his discourse to the magistrate Longa, also of the Parlement of Bordeaux, who resigned his charge in 1553 to make place for the young La Boétie.[10] Longa is mentioned twice[11] in the *Contr'un* in very flattering terms. Therefore, concludes Plattard:

[9] *The Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1904), II, 139.

[10] *Montaigne et son temps* (Paris: Boivin, 1933), p. 64.

[11] The first reference to him is as a connoisseur of poetry. Apparently La Boétie arrives in Bordeaux to take his post, finds his predecessor still there, and revises his MS to include Longa's name as a lover of poetry, so to honor him. Longa left shortly after to assume his new post as "conseiller au Parlement de Paris," in which city he died in 1557. It is likely that Longa had a copy of the *Contr'un* in his possession since its author would be impelled to present him with one. There seems no reason to doubt that La Boétie meant to have it printed, perhaps with other writings, but his public functions left him slight leisure.

L'ouvrage étant manuscrit, La Boétie put y faire des additions. Tout le passage dans lequel il rappelle les légendes religieuses de la monarchie française (fleur de lys, ampoule et oriflamme) et salue en Ronsard le futur chantre de la Franciade, est une digression ajoutée après que Ronsard fut devenu célèbre, vers 1551 ou 1552.

C. Aymonier[12] similarly finds that it makes sense to believe that the young La Boétie had written his discourse by the age of eighteen and that he had it in his baggage when he started off for his law course at the University of Orléans. It was his first work, his pride, he was bound to reread it, polish it, submit it to the suggestions of his classmates who would have in common with the young author a love of liberty and a background of classical lore: "Il est vraisemblable que plus d'un étudiant lui emprunta le manuscrit, lequel dut passer de main en main. Plus d'une copie en fut faite, peut-être par de jeunes Réformés." The reference to the Protestants who were numerous at Orléans should be noted because of its bearing on a later part of our discussion dealing with the reasons that led Montaigne to suppress the *Contr'un*.

These critics thus accept the idea of additions, first expressed by the greatest authority on La Boétie, Paul Bonnefon,[13] who considers the possibility that it was Montaigne or someone else who inserted the references to Ronsard:

> Est-ce l'auteur qui aurait revu plus tard le texte de son propre ouvrage? Ou bien faut-il y voir la main de Montaigne qui se serait permis quelques corrections délicates et discrètes aux vers et à la prose de son ami? On pourrait croire aussi que le Discours en courant longtemps sous le manteau s'est insensiblement accru, et supposer en quelques endroits des interpolations ainsi amenées. La retouche n'en est pas moins incontestable. La Boétie y parle de Ronsard, de Baïf, de du Bellay qui ont "fait tout neuf" notre poésie française. Or, les uns et les autres ne commencèrent à être connus que postérieurement à 1546 ou même à 1548. Du Bellay n'avait rien publié avant 1549 et la réputation de Ronard ne se répandit en France qu'en 1550.[14]

L. Delaruelle sums up this matter in a satisfactory way. He refers to Bonnefon's declaration on the reference to Ronsard in the *Contr'un* and asks:

> Dira-t-on que tout le discours date de cette année-là? Le témoignage de Mon-

[12] "Quel est l'auteur du Discours sur la servitude volontaire?" *Revue historique de Bordeaux*, XXXII (Oct. 1939), 155.

[13] *Montaigne et ses amis*, I, 156.

[14] Aymonier (*op. cit.* n. 12) adds: "Ces poètes, il les a connus plus tard et autrement que par leurs vers . . . Antoine de Baïf l'initia aux ambitions de la Pléiade: il fut toute sa vie intimement lié avec Dorat . . . son beaufrère Lancelot de Carle était l'ami des premières années de Ronsard; et Belleau, cher à Ronsard . . . était également affectionné à ses collègues La Boétie et Montaigne."

taigne nous l'interdit absolument . . . [The reference to Ronsard] se conçoit mieux comme une addition introduite de sang-froid, quelques années après la rédaction primitive, pour louanger la jeune école poétique qui venait justement d'apparaître. Voilà donc dans ce Discours une première addition qui date au plus tôt de 1553.[15]

There is only one discordant note among our scholars on this issue and that is struck by the learned Armainguad, who edited the *Oeuvres* de Montaigne in eleven volumes, chez Louis Conard. In the last volume, dated 1939, he prints the *Contr'un* with certain passages in italics which he maintains were inserted by Montaigne before he gave the La Boétie MS to the Huguenots for them to use as propaganda against the perpetrators of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day. Among these passages is the one containing the reference to the Pléiade (p. 140), where La Boétie speaks of "nostre poesie françoise, maintenant non pas accoustree, mais, comme il me semble, faite tout à neuf par nostre Ronsard, nostre Baïf, nostre du Bellay, qui en cela avancent bien tant nostre langue, que j'ose esperer que bien tost les Grecs ni les Latins n'auront gueres, pour ce regard, devant nous, sinon, possible, le droit d'aisnesse," La Boétie continues, again mentioning Ronsard and his *Franciade*: "J'entens sa portee, je connois l'esprit aigu, je sçay la grace de l'homme." Armaingaud definitely attributes this passage among many others to Montaigne[16] for reasons that will be discussed more fully later when we touch upon the use by the Protestants of the *Contr'un*. Even this contention will still permit us to accept 1548 as the date of original composition of the *Discours*, with the understanding that a few contemporary references could have been inserted by La Boétie himself.

Bonnefon himself provides the only other tenable theory when he mentions this possibility: "N'est-il pas permis de croire que le Contr'un fut composé plutôt que revu à Orléans par La Boétie?"[17] Since the young man was little more than a month older than twenty-three when he received his degree of "licencié en droit civil" on September 23, 1553, he

[15] "L'inspiration antique dans le Discours de la servitude volontaire," *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, LXXII (Jan. 1910), 34. Also Pierre Mesnard decides on the date of definitive composition as 1552 or 1553; *L'essor de la philosophie politique au XVIème siècle* (Paris: Boivin, 1936), p. 391.

[16] H. Barkhausen calls it a "niaiserie" to say that Montaigne slipped in the reference to Ronsard's *Franciade*, he would know he could never get by with that; "A propos du Contr'un," *Revue historique de Bordeaux*, II (1909), 77. Armaingaud maintains that all this is part of Montaigne's system "de dire confusément, dire discordamment" (III, 9). Besides this anachronism of the *Franciade* was a way of putting readers on their guard to look out for other interpolations. Armaingaud, *Montaigne pamphlétaire: l'énigme du Contr'un* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), p. 223.

[17] *Montaigne et ses amis*, p. 158.

obviously spent his formative years in a University even then renowned as a place for free discussion, whose great professor, Anne du Bourg,[18] was noted for his generous broad ideals. The references to the glowing Pléiade would naturally then find their place in this work of youthful exuberance. The very style and maturity of the *Discours* can be more easily accepted if it is attributed to the Orléans period of its author. Bonnefon rejects as impossible the age of sixteen mentioned by Montaigne. It is true that La Boétie was a precocious young man, a fact generally conceded by his contemporaries since he was appointed a judge at the Parlement of Bordeaux at the age of twenty-three. His record at the Court during the ten years of his incumbency till his death in 1563 indicates clearly his remarkable maturity as he dealt with a mission to the court at Paris and with the growing religious disorders near Bordeaux. A youth with such unusual endowment might have composed the immortal *Discours* at the age of eighteen, a supposition easy to grant if we add to it the likelihood that he kept the MS and revised it during the period of his university training, finally dedicating a copy of it to the magistrate Longa when the latter received him at Bordeaux as his successor to the Court. Sainte-Beuve notes the youthfulness of the style: "un des mille forfaits classiques qui se commettent au sortir de Tite-Live et de Plutarque,"[19] but the great critic admires profoundly the vigor and indignation that animate the pages of the *Contr'un*. It is indeed this extraordinary mixture of classical learning and youthful impetuosity that is the winsome mark of the *Discours*. Only a young man could have written it at such maintained white heat of inspired excoriation. We easily accept the age of eighteen for the precocious author and we can as easily permit him to keep his precious MS for a few years during which he changes and polishes, even adds classical examples of despotism and its evil results, finally including also a graceful reference to the admired poets of his time some of whom he had come to know personally. This and a loyal obeisance to the Kings of France to whom he owes gratitude for the special dispensation facilitating his appointment as a magistrate though he is under age, will be the main modern touches to this vigorous discourse woven out of the learning and inspiration absorbed from antiquity. The *Contr'un* is indeed early and potent evidence

[18] Anne du Bourg began his teaching career at Orléans in 1549 even before he received his doctorate. He was named regent in May 1550 and rector June 23, 1553, and reappointed successively till Oct. 1557, when he left Orléans for the Parlement de Paris. His function as "conseiller" ended abruptly two years later when he was strangled and his body burned in the Place de Grève as a heretic. His crime consisted of his counsel of moderation and clemency toward the Protestants.

[19] "Etienne de la Boétie," in the *Causeries du lundi*, 3rd ed., IX, 140–161.

of the rejuvenating winds blowing into France with the force of the Renaissance out of Italy.

The mention of the Renaissance leads to one more remark which does not affect the problem of the age of La Boétie when he composed the *Contr'un* but has a bearing on it. One of our French scholars, J. Barrère, has elaborated the theory that the "un" of the title refers to Machiavelli's *Prince* and that the *Discours* was written to counteract the spreading influence of that tract.[20] But at the time the *Contr'un* was composed, the work of Machiavelli was not yet arousing prevalent interest in France. Armaingaud[21] points out that La Boétie's knowledge of Italian was rather rudimentary when he was eighteen.[22] In the years since its publication in 1513 *Il Principe* had not attracted the animosity of the Church censors, rather inclined to favor the work because of its authoritarian maxims and overlooking the fact that its author was cynical about prelates and their scandalous conduct in Rome. It was only in 1552 that the Cardinals raised the first cry of alarm when one of them pointed out that this book had influenced Henry VIII and had led to the English schism. This association finally brought about the condemnation of *Il Principe* in 1559. Even then there is no evidence in France of a decisive concern although the book was available in a French translation dated 1553. It is only in 1577, five years after the Massacre, that a Protestant pamphlet[23] proclaims that this work is the evangel of the Queen Mother, Catherine, and of her son Henry III. It was at this time that the current of anti-Machiavellism in France really starts with the circulation of such tracts as Gentillet's *Discours sur les moyens de bien gouverner contre Nicolas Machiavel* (1576) and Languet's *Vindiciæ contra tyrannos* (1578). Jean Bodin in the preface to the *Six Livres de la République* (1576) reports that after the Massacre the reaction against the Florentines at Court was strong and stories circulated of their reading and acting on the precepts of

[20] *Etienne de la Boétie contre Nicolas Machiavel* (Bordeaux: Mollat, 1908).

[21] "La Boétie et Machiavel d'après une publication récente," *Revue philomatique de Bordeaux*, XI (Nov. 1908), 296.

[22] La Boétie was 24 when he translated the 32nd canto of *Orlando Furioso* into French verse. In the *Contr'un* he renders in accurate prose three lines from Petrarch's Sonnet 17 concerning the butterfly and the flame (Armaingaud ed., p. 155). While the first Petrarchan translation into French was published in 1555, it is easy to accept Armaingaud's contention that translations of these sonnets had long circulated in MS before the actual printing. Besides the Italian lines are simple and would present no difficult problem for the young La Boétie.

[23] *Tocsain contre les massacreurs*. Cited by Armaingaud in *op. cit.*, n. 21, and mentioned by Daniel, *Histoire de France* (1756), XI, 53. The works of Gentillet, Languet, and Bodin are also listed by Armaingaud. Bodin ridicules Machiavelli in his preface to the *De la république* (1576), and Hotman shows Protestant horror of *The Prince* in his letter to Gualter, Dec. 1580: *Epistolae* (Zurich: J. C. Fuessli, 1742), p. 139.

Machiavelli. Thus it seems unlikely that thirty years before *Il Principe* had aroused the youthful La Boétie to the anger he pours out on tyrants in his *Discours*. In any case, even if the Italian original were available to him in some library at Sarlat, the question of his age when he wrote the *Contr'un* is not clarified by the rather fantastic theory of Barrère.

## CONTROVERSIAL ASPECTS OF THE *CONTR'UN*

That the *Contr'un* was not an easy document to handle when Montaigne first considered it for inclusion in his *Essais* is evident enough by his hesitations. In 1570 he had excluded it from his edition of La Boétie's works, assigning as his reason the unpleasantness of the time.[24] Ten years later he excluded it again for the reason he frankly states, its use by the Protestants[25] as a document of protest against the Massacre of 1572. It is indeed a "hot potato," this treatise on liberty, and our essayist saw clearly its controversial possibilities. It is safe to say that no matter what one's conclusion is about its nature or message, some other critic can be found to dispute one's findings. We shall present here some of these opposing points of view in order to illustrate more clearly one aspect of the dilemma in which Montaigne found himself during this decade from 1570 to 1580 when he considered the enterprise of perpetuating his friend's name by setting into the *Essais* the most vigorous example of his work. More recent critics are inclined to be as puzzled as Montaigne in their clashing conclusions on this youthful *Discours*.

One investigator finds the *Contr'un* filled with digressions and ramifications which do not always bear on the point under discussion causing the essay to lack progressive unity. "The author's mind circles from idea to idea like a bee in a flower garden without ever getting very far away from the starting point."[26] Most critics however speak more appreciatively of the *Discours* and might be inclined to accept the viewpoint of Delaruelle, who distinguishes clearly a succession of thought and plan

[24] In the preface to his edition of La Boétie's works, under date of Paris, Aug. 10, 1570, Montaigne writes: "Mais quant à ces deux dernieres pieces (Discours de la servitude volontaire et quelques Memoires de noz troubles sur l'Edict de Janvier, 1562), je leur trouve la façon trop delicate et mignarde pour les abandonner au grossier et pesant air d'une si mal plaisante saison."

[25] His statement from *Essais*, I, 28, has already been quoted above. The *Discours* of La Boétie appeared anonymously three times under Protestant auspices, as follows: 1. A fragment in Latin, *Dialogi ab Eusebio Philadelpha* (Edimburgi [Bâle?], 1574), at the end of the second dialogue. 2. In French without two opening paragraphs, *Le Réveille-Matin des François* (Edimbourg [Lausanne], 1574). 3. Complete, *Mémoires de l'Estat de France sous Charles neufiesme* (Genève: S. Goulart, 1576); reprinted (Meidlebourg, 1577 and 1588).

[26] J. C. Lyons, "Conceptions of the Republic in French Literature of the 16th Century: Etienne de la Boétie and François Hotman," *Romanic Review*, XXI (Oct. 1930), 296.

which he arranges in four divisions: Paragraphs 1 to 8, "position de la question, réflexions prolongées sur ce qu'a de paradoxal, d'étrange, l'asservissement de 100.000 hommes à un tyran"; Paragraphs 9 to 16, "raisons qui peuvent expliquer cette servitude, la coutume, etc."; paragraphs 17 to 20, "lâcheté engendrée chez les sujets par la servitude et développée encore par les artifices des tyrans"; paragraphs 21 to the end, "intérêt que les favoris et leurs propres créatures ont toujours au maintien de la tyrannie; réflexions sur le sort misérable et sur l'aveuglement de ces favoris."[27]

There is likewise disagreement as to the intellectual background from which La Boétie drew inspiration even while critics perforce acknowledge the youth of the author. Thus Henri Baudrillart sees mainly profuse vagueness of a young mind swept along by the eddies of thought of his day:

La Boétie est le type et le précurseur de ces jeunes générations que nous avons vues exaltées de républicanisme et de fièvre niveleuse à vingt ans, puis se rangeant plus tard à cette société, et s'accommodant même des abus qu'ils avaient maudits . . . . Un talent tout ensemble inspiré et savant, un fonds d'idées vague et pauvre, tel est La Boétie.[28]

Gustave Lanson accepts this interpretation of the *Contr'un*:

Le Contr'un, s'il n'est pas une traduction, est un écho: on y voit la passion antique de la liberté, l'espirit des démocraties grecques et de la république romaine, des tyrannicides et des rhéteurs, se mêler confusément dans une âme de jeune humaniste, la gonfler, et déborder en une âpre déclamation. Rien de plus innocent que ce pastiche, où toutes les lectures d'un écolier enthousiaste se reflètent.[29]

Pierre Villey similarly beholds a young man with his imagination fired by his readings:

Avant de la connaître Montaigne avait lu de lui, et goûté, un opuscule qui circulait en manuscrit et qui devait être publié beaucoup plus tard sous le nom de la Servitude Volontaire. C'était une œuvre de jeunesse toute tissue de réminiscences antiques, soulevée d'un juvénile enthousiasme pour la liberté, à la façon de Tacite ou de Lucain. Quand la Pléiade avait jeté son cri de guerre, l'adolescent avait pris feu pour une si belle cause, et on colportait de lui, également en manuscrit, des sonnets amoureux à l'imitation de ceux de Ronsard et de du Bellay. Ce féru d'antiquité n'avait pas pour autant renoncé aux vers latins: Il composait des satires morales sur le modèle d'Horace.[30]

[27] "L'inspiration antique dans le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire," *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, LXXII (Jan. 1910), 67

[28] *J. Bodin et son temps* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1853), p. 70.

[29] *Histoire de la littérature française* (Paris: Hachette, 1908), p. 266.

[30] *Montaigne* (Paris: Rieder, 1933), p. 22.

Yet we find in spite of such learned unanimity the thorough Barrère sweeping away these limited conceptions of La Boétie's background and elevating this young author to the eminence he truly occupied in the mind of Montaigne:

La détermination plus complète de ces sources si variées (Platon, Aristote, Pausanius, Xénophon, Plutarque, Don Chrysostome, Tacite, Flavius Vopiscus, Instituts de Justinien, le Dante, St. Thomas d'Aquin, Thomas Morus, Guillaume Budé, Erasme, Castiglione, Machiavel, etc.) élargit singulièrement l'idée que l'on s'était faite de la Servitude Volontaire. Elle permet d'apprécier plus exactement le mérite de l'œuvre. A aucun moment la Servitude Volontaire malgré son origine "livresque" n'apparaît comme un travail de compilation. Evidemment La Boétie avait "beaucoup lu" et il avait aussi "beaucoup retenu," mais il avait digéré ses lectures, il s'était complètement assimilé les ouvrages dont il avait nourri son esprit. . . . Montaigne qui a merveilleusement connu et compris son ami, a pu dire, parlant de cet homme d'élite: "Il avoit son esprit moulé au patron d'autres siècles que ceux-ci" (I, 28), et plus loin: "C'estoit une âme à la vieille marque" (II, 17). Tout La Boétie est dépeint dans ces formules frappantes.[31]

From this Barrère proceeds to make of the *Contr'un* a significant document in the development of political concepts:

Cherchant de con côté un remède théorique à la tyrannie non moins théorique, il s'est avisé d' "instituer" la victime en lui ouvrant les yeux, mais il "institute" évidemment le "prince" par la même occasion. Dans la pensée de la Boétie, la bonne "institution du peuple" constitue le véritable, le seul frein de la tyrannie . . . . Ces deux "institutions" contraires tendent au même but: elles se servent de contrepoids réciproque: elles président à l'équilibre des deux forces sociales dont l'opposition constante et intelligente doit assurer dans chaque nation, le règne de la justice et de la liberté . . . .[32]

In this matter of contrasting opinion on the teaching of the *Contr'un*, a startling element is the attitude toward monarchy. It is true that La Boétie goes out of his way to state that his preachment against tyrants can find no application to the French court. He says, speaking of French Kings: "aians tousjours eu des rois si bons en la paix et si vaillans en la guerre, qu'ancore qu'ils naissent rois, si semble il qu'ils ont esté non pas faits comme les autres par la nature, mais choisis par le Dieu tout puissant avant que naistre, pour le gouvernement et la conservation de ce roiaume. . . . "[33] This gives sufficient ground for Villey's contention that

[31] J. Barrère, *L'humanisme et la politique dans le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire* (Paris: Champion, 1923), p. 120.

[32] *Op. cit.*, p. 241. Pierre Mesnard seems to agree: "Pour La Boétie comme pour Machiavel, l'autorité n'est faite que de l'acceptation des sujets; seulement l'un apprend au prince à forcer leur acquiescement, tandis que l'autre révèle au peuple la puissance de son refus" (*op. cit.*, n. 14, p. 400).

[33] Armaingaud ed., p. 139.

the *Contr'un* was never intended to be used as a personal attack on any French king:

Il faut avoir feuilleté quelques libelles contemporains, avoir senti tout ce qu'il y a en eux de haine accumulée, connaître la crudité brutale des accusations qu'ils lancent à la face de Charles IX, d'Henri III et de leur entourage, pour avoir l'impression très nette que le Contr'un n'est pas du tout de leur compagnie.[34]

That it was so used we shall presently show when we analyze the conflict in Montaigne. Obviously, the *Contr'un* had seditious possibilities, borne out not only by its history in that important decade after 1570 but even later. Thus Bonnefon reports this comment from some seventeenth century French reader: "Sur un exemplaire des Mémoires de l'Estat de France, dont le troisième tome fut achevé de lire le 22 février, 1602, nous trouvons en face de la Servitude Volontaire cette remarque d'un lecteur anonyme: 'séditieux contre la monarchie'."[35]

We know also that La Boétie, a devout Catholic, deplored the dissensions that finally made him a martyr. His rôle as a pacifier is amply attested in the minutes of the Parlement of Bordeaux.[36] He is appointed by the Court as an examiner of the farces, comedies, and moralities given by the troublesome "escholiers" of the Collège de Guyenne. He accompanies in official capacity troops sent to restore order in Agen, and he persuades the inhabitants to give up their arms. He plays a rôle as a compromiser in Bordeaux itself when the Parlement enrolls 1200 men to prevent the Huguenots from seizing power as they had done at Bergerac. In fact it was while he was functioning as arbitrator between the religious factions at Agen that he caught the germ of dysentery that caused his death a few months later. On his deathbed he insists on performing the last act of pacification in the very family of Montaigne who relates in his touching letter[37] this final scene. La Boétie addresses Beauregard, Montaigne's brother, a Protestant:

Ne faictes point de bande et de corps à part; ioignez vous ensemble. Vous voyez combien de ruïnes ces dissentions ont apporté en ce royaume; et vous respons qu'elles en apporteront de bien plus grandes. Et, comme vous estes sage et bon, gardez de mettre ces inconvenients parmy vostre famille, de peur de luy faire perdre la gloire et le bon-heur duquel elle a jouy jusques à ceste heure. Prenez en bonne part, Monsieur de Beau-regard, ce que je vous en dis, et pour un certain tesmoignage de l'amitié que je vous porte. Car pour cest effect me

[34] "Le véritable auteur du Discours de la Servitude Volontaire, Montaigne ou La Boétie?," *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, XIII (Oct. 1906), 734.

[35] *Montaigne et ses amis*, I, 145.

[36] A full account of La Boétie's activities as Conseiller at Bordeaux is given by Bonnefon in his edition of the *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Rouam, 1892), pp. xx ff.

[37] Bonnefon, ed. *Oeuvres*, p. 317.

suis-je reservé jusques à ceste heure à vous le dire: et à l'aventure vous le disant en l'estat auquel vous me voyez, vous donnerez plus de poix et d'authorité à mes paroles.

This is the inescapable lesson that the life of La Boétie teaches and which Montaigne felt to his inmost core, the lesson of unity in worship and obedience to the law of the land. How embarrassing it must have seemed as the years passed and the *Contr'un* acquired its ferocious value of propaganda against despotism, to have to acknowledge that its author was that same self-effacing Christian spirit whose ultimate teaching stressed harmony! It is legitimate to ask if Montaigne himself did not feel abashed by this startling document emanating from the pen of one whose pacific nature he knew as he knew himself. Already he hesitated in 1570 in Paris, seven years after his friend's death, at the moment most fitting to publish the *Contr'un* with the other papers of La Boétie. These doubts are somewhat quieted later in the calm of his own study at Périgord, but they awaken again as we have seen. These puzzled questionings are well expressed by Paul Stapfer:

Si le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire est un pamphlet amer et violent contre la tyrannie du jour, comment concilier l'amertume et la violence de ce cri de révolte avec le témoignage rendu par Montaigne aux sentiments de La Boétie, témoignage confirmé de point en point par tout ce que nous savons de la vie et de la mort de ce pieux et sage jeune homme? . . . Mais si le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire est une simple déclamation de rhétorique, comment expliquer sa valeur relative dans l'histoire de notre littérature et surtout la puissance et la durée, attestées par les faits, de l'action qu'il exerça sur les hommes? Un devoir de collège serait bien plus médiocre et plus banal, étant purement déclamatoire: or on sent dans l'opuscule de La Boétie une conviction, une émotion, une passion sincère d'où jaillit l'éloquence, ce contraire de la déclamation. . . . Est-il concevable qu'un exercice scolaire ait eu la vertu de soulever contre évêque et seigneur les habitants de Sarlat, et qu'il soit resté en 1574 (deux ans après la Saint-Barthélemy), en 1789, en 1790, enfin en 1852, après le coup d'état de décembre, un vivant appel à l'insurrection?[38]

Every line that Montaigne writes in direct reference to the *Contr'un* reveals this mingling of admiration and concern, appreciation and hesitation. His very decision to suppress it twice at the appropriate occasions in 1570 and 1580 calling for its publication shows his awareness of its provocative qualities. The fact is that during this very decade of his perplexed doubt when he had decided to place the *Discours* in the touching setting inspired by his devotion to his friend's memory in the Chapter on Friendship, the *Contr'un* was actually put to the use he most dreaded,

[38] *La famille et les amis de Montaigne* (Paris: Hachette, 1896), p. 148.

that of propaganda preaching violence and disunity, rebellion against the law and authority. We turn now to an examination of these appearances of the work of La Boétie which shock and displease Montaigne and lead him by the end of this disorderly decade to his final decision to suppress it.

## THE PROTESTANT ADOPTION OF THE *CONTR'UN*

La Boétie bequeathed all the MSS in his library to Montaigne, but some of his writings were apparently missing, for the legatee says so in his edition of his friend's works:

> J'entens de ceux qui l'ont pratiqué plus jeune, car nostre accointance ne print commencement qu'environ six ans avant sa mort, qu'il avoit faict force autres vers latins et françois, comme sous le nom de Gironde, et en ay ouy reciter des riches lopins . . . mais je ne sçay que tout cela est devenu, non plus que ses Poemes Grecs.[39]

Among these documents not available to Montaigne in 1563, when his friend died, was the *Contr'un*, which he set about procuring. He had seen a copy of it before they had ever met and presumably Longa had a personal copy. This and other writings of La Boétie were dispersed like the twenty-nine sonnets which were sent to him by the Sieur de Poyferré just in time to be presented in the *Essais* in place of the *Contr'un*. Montaigne went to some effort to collect these missing MSS. Some may have been stolen from his library after he had them in safe keeping, for he relates[40] that a valet in his employ got away with some of his papers. Still, this notion of Montaigne's copy of the *Contr'un* disappearing from his shelves is not at all acceptable because the essayist was not likely to treat this literary relic of his friend so lightly as to leave it lying around in careless fashion. Besides he refers to this theft again (in II, 37) with the remark: "Cela me console qu'il n'y fera pas plus de guen que je n'y ai fait de perte . . . ," with which declaration we can dismiss the idea that it may have been a copy of the *Contr'un* stolen from Montaigne that served the Prostestants.

Nothing proves that only one MS of this work was available despite the insistence of Armaingaud[41] that Montaigne was the only one to have it between 1574 and 1577. The Protestants published it three times[42] in this period, and the editor Coste,[43] who included it in his edition of Montaigne in 1727, used the reprint in the third of these Protestant sources as his original. In 1863, Payen published a MS of it he discovered in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the de Mesmes copy as it is called. Henri de Mesmes (d. 1586) was an admirer of Michel de l'Hospital and helped

[39] Bonnefon, ed. *Oeuvres*, p. 61. [40] *Essais*, II, 9.
[41] *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, pp. 55–60. [42] See n. 25. [43] See n. 8.

negotiate the treaty of Saint-Germain (1570), doing all he could to avert the impending disaster of 1572. Montaigne tells us in 1570 that he managed to retrieve the MS of the *Contr'un*, which might be this very copy which bears marginal notes in de Mesmes' hand. Bonnefon informs us that he has seen another old MS probably dating from 1576 which seems to be merely a transcription of the text published in the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France*. Thus we have clear evidence of at least two available copies in this decade and it is tenable that the Protestants procured a third. We have to remember in tracing this uncertain story of the MSS of the *Contr'un* that the magistrate Longa probably had a copy inscribed to him by the author, and that Montaigne himself had seen a copy before he met La Boétie. He relates (in I, 28) that the *Contr'un* "court pieça ès mains de gens d'entendement." In the Avertissement au Lecteur of his edition of La Boétie, under date of August 10, 1570, Montaigne declares that he is publishing all the writings he found in his friend's library. He adds that La Boétie had written other things but had lost track of them; even the *Contr'un* had gone astray, for Montaigne specifies: "je croy qu'il ne le veit onques depuis qu'il lui eschapa." But by 1570 Montaigne had been able to lay his hands on this precious MS, and he explains in his preface to the Mesnagerie de Xenophon:

> depuis sept ans que nous l'avons perdu, je n'ay peu recouvrer que ce que tu en vois, sauf un Discours de la servitude volontaire, et quelques Memoires de noz troubles sur l'Edict de janvier, 1562. Mais quant à ces deux dernieres pieces, je leur trouve la façon trop delicate et mignarde pour les abandonner au grossier et pesant air d'une si mal plaisante saison.[44]

In this imbroglio concerning the possible MS copies of the *Contr'un* available to the Protestants for purposes of progaganda against their Catholic opponents, only one thing is sure: they found a copy and turned it to their use. We can only hazard guesses as to who the finder may have been. Some have mentioned Lambert Daneau, a fellow student of La Boétie at Orléans, who later became a Calvinist and perhaps presented a copy in his possession to the Huguenots.[45] Another possibility is Beauregard, the brother of Montaigne to whom the dying La Boétie appeals so pathetically for his return to the fold. It may have been a fellow magistrate of the Parlement de Bordeaux, for there were a few Réformés among them. There were exchanges between Bordeaux and Geneva. As far back as 1554 there had been an emigration of Protestants from the former city to the latter.[46] The *Mémoires de l'Estat de France* contain a story of a massacre of Huguenots in Bordeaux (October 3, 1572), and the

[44] Bonnefon, ed. *Oeuvres*, pp. 61–62, "Avertissement au lecteur."
[45] Armaingaud, *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, p. 46.
[46] J. Barrère, *L'humanisme et la politique dans le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire*, p. 171.

writer of that sad account might have sent along at the same time to his co-religionaries a copy of the *Contr'un* for possible use, since it does appear in these Mémoires. We might seek such a collaborator in the very Parlement who by his contact with La Boétie had every chance to secure a copy of the *Discours*.

It should be noted that in all these Protestant uses of the *Contr'un* the name of its author was never attached. It appeared as an anonymous tract inciting to rebellion. This double indignity to his friend must have disgusted Montaigne. It is true that the original text was fairly well respected, since without significant alteration it expressed perfectly the revulsion of the Réformés against the royal dictatorial power that made the crime of St. Bartholomew's Day possible. The Protestants did discard the original title, *Discours de la servitude volontaire*, in favor of the more forcible *Contr'un*, but they refrained from rephrasing or changing the text enough to elicit objections from those who had known the author and the true original. A further proof of their sense of debt to La Boétie for this fiery discourse, far better for their purpose than any they could have devised, is the fact that when in 1580 Montaigne attributed authorship of it to his lamented friend, no Protestants rose to claim it as their own invention. In any case it is not difficult to sense the anger and frustration of Montaigne in the final paragraph of I, 28, when he abandons the original plan of using this eloquent setting for the *Contr'un*. Perhaps his disappointment was somewhat assuaged as he reflected over the inflammatory possibilities of his friend's discourse and the continuing unpleasantness of the political weather. The harm was done and his subsequent duty was to shield his friend's reputation. The name of La Boétie had been publicly attached to the *Contr'un* by Montaigne himself in 1570, but the Protestants had had the taste and good sense not to repeat it and claim, by mentioning the author, that Catholics themselves were advising rebellion against a despotic king. Such a procedure would have filled Montaigne with a dismay hard to imagine. He therefore decided to let the matter rest and slip into oblivion. He made the same decision for the other political treatise of his friend, the Commentary on the Edict of January. If Montaigne had published this, he would have evened things up a bit, for the Protestants who so eagerly used the *Contr'un* would never have relished, as we shall see, this sober analysis by La Boétie of the religious dissensions and the way to cure them.

Recent research has indicated other sources beside Montaigne for associating the name of La Boétie with the *Contr'un*. Certainly the preface by Montaigne to his edition of his friend's works in 1570, and the Chapter on Friendship ten years later furnish the chief evidence we have of the author's identity. But a discourse of such renown and circulation

would inevitably leave some recorded impression among other contemporaries. Plattard, Bonnefon, Dezeimeris, Barrère, all quote De Thou, a contemporary historian, who explains La Boétie's outburst as a remonstrance against the cruelty of Montmorency in his repression of a revolt in Bordeaux in 1548:

Quod Stephanus Boëtianus Sarlacensis, qui postea Burdigalensis senatus magnum ornamentum fuit, vix tunc XIX annos natus, sed judicio supra ætatem excellens juvenis, sumpta hinc occasione, elegantissime persecutus est in eo libello, qui authenotici titulo sive de Spontanea servitute inscribitur; quem tamen in longe alienum ab auctoris mente usum ac sensum ii detorserunt, qui eum post Parisiensem laniebam, quæ post annos XXIV atque adeo post ipsius Boëtani mortem accidit, ad commovendus vulgi animos in lucem emiserunt.[47]

Bonnefon mentions an Italian visitor, Jacopo Corbinelli, "qui déclare, en 1570, avoir vu un manuscrit de cette œuvre' in francese elegantissimo,' soit entre les mains d'Henri de Mesmes, soit dans celles de Claude Joly."[48] The indefatigable[49] Armaingaud[50] has turned up another contemporary reference, that of Arnault Sorbin, court preacher and author, in an anti-

[47] Jean Plattard, *Montaigne et son temps* (Paris: Boivin, 1933), p. 65. Bonnefon in his ed. of *Oeuvres*, p. xxxvii. R. Dezeimeris in "Sur l'objectif réel du Discours d'Etienne de la Boétie," *Actes de l'Académie de Bordeaux*, 3me série, LXIX (1907), 27. J. Barrère, *Etienne de la Boëtie contre Nicolas Machiavel* (Bordeaux: Mollat, 1908), p. 7. The original reference is to *Jac. Augusti Thuani historiarum sui temporis*, libri CXXXVIII (Londini, 1733), I, 186.

[48] In "Note," *Revue d'histore littéraire* (Jan. 1917), p. 2.

[49] His articles and his answers to his attackers he gathered in a book, *Montaigne pamphlétaire: l'énigme du Contr'un* (Paris: Hachette, 1910), 341 pp. In this he reprints the *Contr'un* with the presumably interpolated passages in italics that he attributes to Montaigne. He maintained his point of view against all and in Vol. XI of his monumental ed. of Montaigne (Paris: Conard, 1939), he wrote a preface in which he attempts to refute all comers. He began this ed. in 1923. At his death in 1935 he gave his famous collection on Montaigne to the Bibliothèque Nationale. He was 93 when he died, with a distinguished career in medecine and scholarship behind him. His favorite phrase: "C'est Montaigne qui me conserve."

[50] In "Réponse à Barckhausen," *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, pp. 90 ff. Sorbin's exact reference is on p. 6 of his pamphlet: "C'est certes le chemin qu'avez tenu jusqu'êtes à présent parvenu à dire tout haut dans vos libelles de la Servitude Volontaire et du Réveille-Matin des François que ceux qui s'asservissent au Roy se font grant tort de ne se retirer de son obéissance et de l'affection qu'ils lui portent." Another well-known contemporary reference to the *Contr'un* is to be found in the *Histoire universelle du sieur d'Aubigné* (Maille, 1616), II, 107: "Vous aviez le livre de la Servitude Volontaire de la Boétie, conseiller au Parlement de Bordeaux, irrité de ce que, voulant voir la salle du bal, un archer de la garde (qui le sentit à l'escholier) lui laissa tomber sa hallebarde sur le pied, de quoi cestui-ci criant justice par le Louvre n'eut que des risées des grands qui l'entendirent." This spiteful mention needs no comment. D'Aubigné gives this fanciful version of the occasion that inspired the outburst in the *Contr'un* in speaking of those "esprits irritez qui avec merveilleuse hardiesse faisoient imprimer livres portans ce qu'en autre saison on n'eust pas voulu dire à l'oreille."

Reform pamphlet called *Le vrai Réveille-Matin des Calvinistes et des publicains français* (1576). Thus it would seem that the *Discours* was generally known after its publication in the *Réveille-Matin* and the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France*. Its authorship by La Boétie could hardly be a secret ever since 1570 when Montaigne stated this fact, even though he refrained from publishing it because of the "raw disagreeable weather of this unpleasant season." Having divulged this boastful truth now turned bitter by the Protestant use of the *Contr'un*, Montaigne saw no reason for any effort at concealment, very likely impossible. He had already composed his chapter as the frame into which to fit his friend's essay. The writing of this chapter was a terribly sensitive and painful experience for Montaigne. To go back over it and eradicate references to the *Contr'un* was unthinkably grievous. Every evidence in the chapter as it stands shows that Montaigne could not bring himself to do it, even to the slight effort of crossing out the last sentence referring to the sixteen year old lad. After what the Protestants had done to his friend's precious masterpiece, it was more bearable to let his chapter remain without tinkering, fashioned as it had been out of his grief and longing. Instead, he added the final indignant paragraph against the Radicals who had used the *Contr'un* with the purpose of changing the form of government without improving it.

It seems appropriate to close this section on the misuse by the Protestants of the *Contr'un* by giving some idea of the early editions of the work and the framework in which it appeared. At the beginning of 1574 there was printed and circulated among Huguenots in France a book "tout particulièrement violent, même en ce temps où les violences abondaient, si violent qu'il déplut aux protestants eux-mêmes."[51] This was the *Réveille-Matin*, directed at others besides the French, as the full title indicates: *Réveille-Matin des François et de leurs voisins*. The first dialogue, the most violent against the Catholic tyrant, had appeared separately in 1573 in both Latin and French. Now it was included in the *Réveille-Matin* with a second dialogue between a Politique and a Historiographe, the tenor of which suggests the Protestant policy of inviting the Duc de Guise to oppose Charles IX with the assurance that the Huguenots would support him if he dethroned that vile perpetrator of the St. Bartholomew Massacre. This dialogue also expresses satisfaction at the departure of the King's brother, the "frère du tryan," the Duc d'Anjou, King of Poland, who it is hoped will never show his face again in France. Sarcasm is heaped upon the Poles for taking the risk of sheltering a Valois beast: "Que s'il vous en advenoit quelque mal en particulier, vous seriez en

[51] P. Bonnefon, "La Boétie, Montaigne et le Contr'un," *Revue politique et parlementaire*, LI (Jan. 1907), 108.

risée aux peuples qui habitent autour de vous . . . ." The author then declares that the Huguenots would be satisfied to have the same privileges and freedoms in France that the new King of Poland has been forced to accord before his new subjects accepted him. That is what the Protestants ask of the Duc de Guise before pledging allegiance to him, for they argue that many good Catholics would accept these conditions based on two freedoms, of conscience and of worship. At this point, one of the participants in the dialogue, the Politique, protests that he is not speaking for Huguenots only:

J'en parlerai tout amplement en vrai et naturel François et comme un homme peut parler des choses sujettes à son jugement, voire au sens commun de tous les hommes, afin que tous nos catholiques, nos patriotes et bons voisins, et tout le reste des François qu'on traite pire que les bêtes soient éveillés à cette fois pour reconnaître leurs misères et avisent trèstous ensemble de rémédier à leurs malheurs.[52]

Then follows the *Contr'un* almost complete, save for two opening paragraphs, the text very carefully copied but pointed in a few places by the insertion of "en nostre France" to apply specifically in attacking the tyrant of France.

The printing of the *Réveille-Matin* was finished on the twelfth day of the sixth month "après la journée de la trahison" (i.e., February 12, 1573). It was published in both Latin and French at Basle and Lausanne, probably also Geneva. It was republished in both languages in 1574 with the addition of a second part. The title page bore this description: "composé par Eusèbe Philadelphe cosmopolite en forme de Dialogues, à Edembourg, de l'imprimerie de Jacques James, 1574." Arthur Tilley believes it is the product of several hands, a sort of Protestant propaganda syndicate operating from Swiss cities.[53] There are some slight differences between the Latin and French versions. Barrère advances the theory that the author of the *Dialogi ab Eusebio Philadelpha* and the translator into Latin of the *Contr'un* with the opening paragraphs lacking is François Hotman. His vindication of this belief is based mainly on the fact that the word for "France" in the Latin edition is "Francogallia nostra," a term of which Hotman is the creator at this period.[54]

[52] These quotations from the *Réveille-Matin* are more fully presented by Bonnefon in the article cited n. 51, pp. 107–126. For a fuller analysis of the political implications of this publication, see *L'essor de la philosophie politique au XVIème siècle*, Pierre Mesnard (Paris Boivin, 1936), pp. 348–355. The same work has an excellent chapter on political ideals in the *Contr'un*, pp. 389–406.

[53] *Studies in the French Renaissance* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 298–302.

[54] J. Barrère, *L'humanisme et la politique dans le Discours de la Servitude Volontaire*, last chapter.

It is clear that the La Boétie discourse was used by propagandists who had no idea at the time that the detested tyrant, Charles IX, was about to die. After this event in 1574, Protestant hatred was directed against the regent Catherine. A libellous pamphlet circulates: "Discours merveilleux de la vie, actions, et déportemens de la reine Catherine de Medicis,"[55] a manifesto put out by disgruntled Catholics uniting with angry Protestants and using the arguments in Hotman's *Franco-gallia* against the female regency. There is nothing surprising then in seeing the *Contr'un* again making its anonymous appearance, this time in the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France sous Charles Neufiesme*. This work is attributed by Bonnefon[56] to the same authors responsible for the *Réveille-Matin*. They publish in three volumes a series of pamphlets, less violent in tone and more skillful than the first work. Catherine is the target of attack as the writers repeat the refrain that, so long as she remains alive, royal policy will never change. Little reliance is placed upon Henry III, whose first year of reign practically discredited him as being under the thumb of his mother. One of the items included is the French version of the *Contr'un*, now complete. It would appear from this repeated use that the Protestants now claim it as a regular weapon in their arsenal to be used against the Valois dynasty. Nothing could have been further from the intention of La Boétie when he wrote it and from the wish of Montaigne, who beheld his friend's work so misused. It would be difficult to overstate his revulsion when he learned of it. Armaingaud's theory that it was Montaigne himself who gave the *Contr'un* to the Protestants for their propaganda against the rulers of France seems almost ludicrous when we think of the true royalist Catholic sentiments of the two friends who shared each other's life and thought so intimately. Montaigne learned with horror that the youthful elegant *Discours* of his friend had appeared in 1574 in both Latin and French, and again in 1576 complete in French. He may not have heard of all these editions; he may not have seen them. His exact words in his final frustrated paragraph express his irritation with those who published the *Contr'un*, "ceux qui cherchent à troubler et changer l'estat de nostre police sans se soucier s'ils l'amenderont." To cap the climax he saves for last his greatest cause for bitterness: "qu'ils ont meslé à d'aultres escripts de leur farine," a phrase that indicates not only his opinion of Protestant propaganda but his realization that his beloved friend's essay was now irrevocably and nefariously associated with vile tracts intended to foment unrest. The historical record from 1570 to 1580 shows sufficiently why this last consideration

[55] Mentioned in the volume by J.-H. Mariéjol, Vol. VI of the *Histoire de France* of the Lavisse series (Paris: Hachette, 1911), for the year 1574.

[56] *Op. cit.*, n. 51, p. 111.

weighed so heavily in Montaigne's regretful decision to omit the *Contr'un*. The political circumstances involved compose one facet of the motives that guided Montaigne. It will be instructive to examine them especially with reference to despotism and royalty and civil dissension in order to receive a clearer concept of the conflict within Montaigne as he reflected over the *Contr'un* during the fateful decades from 1560 to 1580.

## THE "UNPLEASANT SEASON" AND THE *CONTR'UN*

By the sixteenth century France had been a monarchy so long that no other form of government seemed possible or desirable to the people, great or small. One historian phrases it:

> Monarchique, la France l'était de sentiments; elle le fut aussi parcequ'elle ne pouvait pas ne pas l'être. La monarchie française n'était pas le despotisme. Elle ne voulait pas l'être; le prince se croyait lié d'abord par son serment, sa conscience, par les lois éternelles qui lui traçaient ses devoirs et le rendaient responsable de sa conduite.[57]

The early Protestants of France did not feel themselves politically separate because they were abandoning what they considered a corrupt ecclesiastical system. Their sense of citizenship in the realm and of fidelity to the King was rather heightened by their inner integrity and devotion to principle at the real risk of their persons and their interests: "Très puissant en fait, le pouvoir royal a pour lui les théoriciens, les humanistes lui prodiguent toutes sortes de complaisances; les calvinistes proclament sa légitimité."[58]

> Les humanistes dans ces douze années qui précèdent la Saint-Barthélemy sont demeurés en général fidèles aux mêmes doctrines: "obéissance à nos rois et magistrats," seulement leur attitude est devenue chaque jour plus décidée. Pour eux, la France possède ce que nous appelons une constitution, non pas écrite, mais traditionnelle, qu'il faut conservier; système raisonnable et séduisant qui aboutissait à la création d'une monarchie tempérée. Quant aux catholiques ils restent presque tous attachés à la théorie de la monarchie absolue. . . .[59]

In the name of their religion Protestants marched to death or the galleys or exile with the exaltation and zeal of Polyeucte. The years 1559–60 were bad years for them as the priests asked the faithful to denounce the heretics and the police took them to the prisons in droves. Houses were razed where "conventicules" of Huguenots met. Paris

[57] Imbart de la Tour, *Les origines de la Réforme* (Paris: Hachette, 1905), p. 203.

[58] H. Lemonnier in the Lavisse *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution* (Paris: Hachette, 1904), II, 371.

[59] Georges Weill, *Les théories sur le pouvoir royal en France pendant les guerres de religion* (Paris: Hachette, 1891), p. 78.

practically emptied the faubourg Saint-Germain, called "la petite Genève." Aix and Toulouse were especially rigorous in their heartless treatment of the Réformés. The Cardinal of Lorraine started proceedings against the illustrious Anne du Bourg, who was strangled and his body burned on the Place de Grève, December 23, 1559. Yet this victim of savagery preached to the end complete obedience to authority. In his questioning he maintained: "Le roi est une ordonnance de Dieu, auquel il faut rendre tribut et révérence . . . même infidèle, inique et tyran."[60] The historian Mariéjol sums it up:

> Les Réformés avaient jusqu'ici souffert patiemment la prison et le bûcher; ils se soumettaient aux peines que l'Etat catholique édictait contre eux et marchaient à la mort sans discuter le pouvoir qui les opprimait. C'est là la période vraiment évangélique de la Réforme française.[61]

This was the period when La Boétie made his fruitful efforts in behalf of the Parlement de Bordeaux to arrange compromises and to restore order. He went so far in his efforts as to propose the "liberté du culte" in separate churches at Agen, or at separate times in the same edifice when only one was available.[62]

The decade before the crime of St. Bartholomew is filled with increasing dissension and bloody deeds. The Protestants begin to resort to arms to defend themselves and are joined by all kinds of dissidents, so that politics often play a rôle in these conflicts of religion. Calvin from his Genevan stronghold opposes violence but admits legitimacy of disobedience against the oppressor. Huguenot plotters are captured and executed (Amboise, 1560). Catherine calls Michel de l'Hospital to act as conciliator. By the Edict of January 1561, the persecutions are stopped, religious prisoners liberated, liberty of conscience admitted. But the Protestants insist on freedom of worship, and this will become the continuous point of contention despite numerous truces. Psalm-singing troupes of Huguenots are attacked, but 15,000 of them who gather in Paris to greet Jeanne d'Albret, Navarre's mother, on her visit to the royal court, are unmolested. Ardent Catholics consider the existence of two worships side by side as a monstrosity, and the entry into France of the Jesuits, authorized in 1561, does not help the cause of peace. Nor does the pressure of Philip II of Spain, husband of Catherine's daughter Elizabeth. Yet the problem can not be solved even from an implacable Catholic point of view

[60] Quoted from Armaingaud's *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, p. 46.

[61] *Op. cit.*, n. 55, p. 12.

[62] Paul Bonnefon (ed. *Oeuvres* of La Boétie) gives a full account of his activities in the religious struggles, pp. xx–xxv. Beatrice Reynolds reports two million Protestants and two thousand reformed churches by 1560—*Proponents of Limited Monarchy in 16th Century France* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1931), p. 29.

by merely exterminating dissenters. They are too numerous. The curé de Provins, Claude Haton, exaggerated when he calculated that one quarter of the population of France was Huguenot. Coligny reckoned there were 50,000 of them in Normandy alone, and the Prince de Condé mentions 2,500 Protestant groups in France. In the face of such numbers, Catherine inclines to tolerance, and in January 1562 a second edict is issued by Michel de l'Hospital, finally conceding to the Réformés freedom of worship outside the walls of cities or inside private homes but withholding the right to build churches. This is the high mark of royal moderation, and La Boétie has left us an interesting commentary on this second edict, to be discussed later. This charter of comparative freedom of worship is soon revoked and in all subsequent persecutions the Protestants will demand its readoption.

The year 1562 is filled with clashes and massacres such as at Tours where 200 corpses were thrown into the Loire. Violence spreads to Angers, Blois, Poitiers, Bourges, Lyons, Orléans. Bordeaux is the scene of a four day battle. The active intervention of Philip II is considered by Catherine, whereupon the Protestants begin *pourparlers* with Elizabeth of England. Finally, on March 19, 1563, the Edict of Amboise replaces the January Edict, affirming liberty of conscience but not of worship. The next four years bring gradual pacification with added restrictions on the freedoms already granted. But 1567 is marked by another outbreak of violence at Nîmes, a march on Paris, and the final treaty of Longjumeau (March 1568), by which de l'Hospital is forced out of power. Coligny and Condé are in La Rochelle where they are joined by Jeanne d'Albret. And here occurs the battle of Jarnac, March 18, 1569, at which the Duc d'Anjou, the future Henri III, is supposed to have distinguished himself. Condé is killed and Jeanne presents a new leader, her seventeen year old son, the future Henri IV. Coligny has escaped Jarnac and fighting continues sporadically with the Protestants helped by contingents sent in by William of Orange. In 1570, the year of Montaigne's "malplaisante saison," Coligny is leading troops around Narbonne and Carcassonne, and even crosses the Spanish border as a gesture of defiance against Philip, toward whom by this time Catherine has cooled. She is stung by his refusal to marry her daughter Marguerite after the death of his first queen in 1568, also one of her daughters. The Protestants are gathering strength, La Rochelle furnishes them the sinews of war through piracies on Catholic owned vessels, French, Spanish, or Italian. New Huguenot forces regroup in Provence, Languedoc, Dauphiné, Béarn. Finally, on August 8, 1570, a new peace of Saint-Germain is arranged which gives to the Réformés full liberty of conscience and restricted freedom of worship. Catherine espouses policies of conciliation, even

dreams in her animosity toward Spain of marrying her son, the Duc d'Anjou, to Elizabeth of England, and actually meets Jeanne d'Albret to arrange the marriage between their children. Coligny returns to court and, although a heretic, receives an abbey with a handsome income of 20,000 livres. This is the somewhat pacified period in which Montaigne composes his chapter on Friendship as a setting for the *Contr'un* which he has managed to retrieve for this loving purpose.

In a Catholic court where he is a hated oddity, Coligny's persistence in raising troops for an invasion of the Low Countries, then under Philip's domination, leads Catherine, who has timid memories of the Spanish victory at Lepanto (1571), to decide on his death. Navarre's marriage is celebrated, August 18, 1572, and the subsequent massacre of the Protestant celebrants in Paris begins Sunday, August 24, spreading over the provinces till into October. The Huguenot leaders are murdered, but their surviving followers go underground and affirm a renewed determination to defend their religious freedoms and avenge the victims. They breathe a sigh of relief when the siege of La Rochelle is abandoned by the Duc d'Anjou, newly elected King of Poland. They behold France rid of one Valois and now concentrate their pamphleteering attacks on the detested Charles IX:

> Dans le midi, le particularisme provincial et l'esprit d'indépendance de la noblesse assuraient un solide point d'appui à la Réforme. En ce pays, où jadis les hérésies les plus audacieuses et les plus subtiles avaient poussé; où la sécheresse dogmatique s'allie avec les plus ardents enthousiasmes, et la logique avec le rêve et l'extase, la cause protestante trouva ses organisateurs, ses politiques et ses sauveurs.[63]

In 1573, the pamphlet, "De furoribus gallicis," an account of the massacre of 1572, appears in French as "Discours véritable des rages exercées en France." In 1573 also, Hotman publishes his Latinized "Franco-Gallia," in which he attempts to prove that the Crown, hereditary by custom, is not so according to ancient law where sovereignty resided in the three orders, and a despotic king could be deposed. The following year the *Réveille-Matin* with its unauthorized inclusion of the *Contr'un* appears. This publication incites the de Guise nobles to claim the throne of Hugues Capet. Catherine is not mentioned but, as in Hotman, queen mothers are excluded from authority. All these tracts agitate the people, Catholics and Protestants alike, and by January 1574 La Noue is elected war chieftain of regiments of both sects in the Midi. The leaders leave a back door open for retreat from rebellion by accepting the promised complicity of the Duc d'Alençon, the youngest of the Valois, who is to

[63] J.-H. Mariéjol, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

join them at Sedan. This plan is discovered, d'Alençon and Navarre are both kept under guard, while the moderate Catholics and Protestants develop their alliance into a full-fledged union of military power. At this juncture Charles IX dies, May 30, 1574, and Catherine remains as Regent while her beloved Henry escapes from Poland and makes his leisurely way back in triumph across German and Italian principalities into France.

The succeeding six years till the first publication of the *Essais* of Montaigne appear as turbulent as ever. The united Catholics and Protestants issue a libellous pamphlet, "Discours merveilleux de la vie et deportemens de la roine Catherine de Medicis," as their manifesto. A pact is signed, January 1565, under Condé at Nîmes between the Eglises and the Catholiques Associés, gathering under one government the provinces of the Midi and the Centre, with its own assemblies, courts of justice, armies and finances. This may be the object of the reference by Montaigne in his final paragraph in I, 28, when he mentions "Ceux qui cherchent à troubler et changer l'Estat de nostre police." The new king, Henry III, refuses the request of the Alliance to re-establish the Edict of January 1562, and war breaks out afresh, a war of ambush and surprises, with Catholic and Protestant captains inextricably mingled on the rebels' side. At the end of his first year of reign, Henry is so discredited that many nobles are ready to join his brother, François d'Alençon, in an uprising. A truce of seven months is arranged in 1576 and Navarre is permitted to leave the court, whereupon he promptly abjures his Catholicism. The Protestants win the rehabilitation of the victims of the Massacre of St. Bartholomew, and even freedom of worship in all cities of the realm. This lull so humiliating for the Catholic majority merely precedes a new storm, the authorization by the king of the Ligue of which he promptly declares himself chief. It is now that the *Contr'un* makes its second appearance, bound in the Protestant tracts that compose the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France sous Charles Neufiesme*. The Etats-Généraux called in November 1576 finally force the King in their last session, March 1577, to give up his plan for religious unity. The Peace of Bergerac that year ends the Ligue and reaffirms to Protestants their freedom of worship with some restrictions in Paris and other cities. But outbreaks continue, with bands of soldiers of both sects ravaging the countryside. A contemporary document traces a doleful picture: "la terre couverte du sang du paouvre paysan, des paouvres femmes et petits enfants; les villes et maysons des champs desertes ruinees et pour la pluspart bruslees et tout cela depuis l'edict de pacification."[64] Catherine does make another attempt at moderation

[64] J.-H. Mariéjol, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

by taking Navarre's Margaret to him, and in February 1579 she engages at Nérac in a series of talks on the grievances of the Eglises of Languedoc. She goes to Bordeaux also and ostentatiously dissolves the Catholic confréries. But her demand that the Protestants give up their fortified places is met with obstinate refusal. War continues into 1580, when from May 28 to 31 Navarre besieges and takes Cahors. He is twenty-six, a proven captain whom the Réformés begin to regard as their providential protector. It is at this uneasy war-torn juncture that the first edition of the *Essais* finally appears without the *Contr'un*.

The Protestant attitude toward the King has undergone an important transformation in these two decades, hastened after the crime of St. Bartholomew. The Reformation in France did not die merely because most of its leaders had been murdered. According to Baudrillart, the condemnation of the Valois for their complicity and heartlessness leads to a disturbing viewpoint of royalty: "La question se pose de savoir s'il est permis de désobéir au prince qui violente la conscience des sujets. Le tyrannicide est nettement envisagé et préconisé comme la solution de la tyrannie."[65] The argument is engaged and defenders of royalty speak out also. Thus Loys le Roy publishes with Morel, the printer to whom Montaigne has entrusted the edition of La Boétie, a work entitled eloquently: "De l'excellence du gouvernement royal avec exhortation aux François de persister en iceluy sans chercher mutations pernicieuses."[66] It is a spirited defence of the hereditary crown directed against the arguments of Hotman in his *Franco-Gallia*. Le Roy finds that among all monarchies the French system is the best and the least likely to degenerate into tyranny, a conclusion in which he echoes the thought of La Boétie in his *Discours* and Montaigne in I, 28. To substitute for this hereditary succession an elective system as in Poland is the height of folly, replete with dangers and inconveniences. The Protestant answer is found in the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France*, first edited in 1576. The second volume contains the Hotman treatise on the royal succession, originally published in Latin in 1573, now translated into French as *La France-Gaule*. This like the *Contr'un* also bound into the *Mémoires* becomes the political manifesto of the Protestants, a formulation of their constitutional principles justifying a people in its defense against the tyranny of its rulers. The King is a pater-familias; obedience to him is not servitude. Besides, the crown was not hereditary in ancient France, but elective, the people remaining sovereign with the right not only to select the king (*jus creandi*) but to depose him (*jus abdicandi*). Sedition

[65] *J. Bodin et son temps* (Paris: Guillaumin, 1853), p. 59.

[66] Mentioned by J. Barrère, *L'humanisme et la politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 135.

is nefarious but sometimes justifiable, as when a people seeks its safety in convoking an assembly to act against the dictator. Catholic answers to the Hotman insurrectionary doctrine multiply—that of the avocat général Maltharel (1575) and Pierre Tourelle Champier (1576), and especially that of Jean Bodin in his *Les six livres de la Rêpublique* (1576), in which he refutes Hotman on the early election of Kings and emphasizes the rôle of honor and the family as the mainstays of royal government. Bodin, however, admits that sovereignty originates in a voluntary transmission of authority from the people to the chief of government, thus making an attempt at conciliation of both points of view before justice and law.[67]

Perhaps the final word on the debate concerning the rights of the people versus the king comes in a Latin treatise by Lambert Daneau.[68] This former classmate of La Boétie shows much the same background and training which both imbibed at Orléans under Anne du Bourg, and leads more than ever to the conclusion that the *Contr'un* was certainly revised by its author during his university years. Daneau shows no preference for monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, but admits in all three the existence of an implied initial contract between the republic and the presiding supreme magistrate (Bk. I, Chap. 4). This leads Daneau to presuppose also the right to depose him if he is unfaithful to his charge (Bk. III, Chap. 6). Daneau is not really a rebel like Hotman; he is willing to accept the hereditary system and even concedes absolute power. His Christian politics are really very moderate and prudent, marked by extreme caution with which he would undertake only under absolute necessity the removal of an unworthy ruler.

The publication of the *Contr'un* anonymously under Protestant auspices has led critics to disagree radically as to the identity of the tyrant they opposed. The time of its first appearance in 1574 lends possibility to the contention of Armaingaud and others that it was aimed at Henry III. The contemporary De Thou mentions Henry II as the target of its composition in 1548–49. Dezeimeris and others see textual evidence for

[67] Both Barrère and Baudrillart agree that Bodin's effort is toward conciliation of opposing viewpoints; Barrère in *op. cit.*, n. 66, p. 140, and Baudrillart in his preface, *op. cit.*, n. 65. Hotman's view of the Salic Law and Bodin's notion of the social contract between a king and his people are well analyzed in the Reynolds' work cited in n. 62. See also Pierre Mesnard, *op. cit.*, pp. 327–336.

[68] *Politices Christianae*, libri VII. Only three copies are extant according to M. de Felice, author of *Lambert Daneau, sa vie, ses ouvrages, ses lettres inédites* (Paris: Fishbacher, 1882), p. 249. One of these is at Bâle, another at Leyden, the third at the British Museum. The book was written at Orthez in 1584 and published after the author's death at Castres in 1595.

Charles VI, while Strowski and others, reinforced by the surrounding propaganda in the *Réveille-Matin*, proclaim Charles IX as the tyrant.[69] Of course there are two points of view to keep separate, that of La Boétie when he wrote the discourse and that of the Calvinist writers when they appropriated it. The profound Bonnefon is joined by Villey and Barckhausen in the contention that La Boétie wrote a classical disquisition against tyranny with no particular despot in mind. This is also the impression Sainte-Beuve receives from this youthful essay and is almost certainly the correct view as far as the author is concerned. Armaingaud, Strowski, and the others may argue as they please concerning the intention of the Huguenot editors. The very fact that the glove fits so many hands may be considered sound proof that La Boétie was blasting the typical tyrant as he met him in Plutarch and Tacitus. It would not be difficult even in recent times to find the main marks of identification fitting admirably such reincarnations of the type as Mussolini and Hitler.[70] As for the Protestant intention in the use of the *Contr'un*, the preponderance of the evidence seems to point to Charles IX as the object of odium. Strowski is presumably right, nor is he the first to point to this probability. As far back as 1853, the historian A. Thierry indicated this likelihood.[71] He says referring to the Massacre of 1572:

Pour avoir violé ces droits avec une odieuse barbarie, le gouvernement vit ses propres droits niés par représailles et la guerre contre un roi prévaricateur proclamée comme légitime. Les doctrines républicaines nées dans quelques âmes de l'étude de l'antiquité et de l'esprit de libre examen éclatèrent alors dans des livres où la science de l'histoire et la subtilité du raisonnement se mêlaient à des cris de haine et de vengeance.[72]

[69] A good listing of these various scholarly positions is given by E. Lablénie, "L'énigme de la Servitude Volontaire," *Revue du seizième siècle*, XVII (1930), 203–227. The surprising reference to Charles VI is justified by Dezeimeris in his "Sur l'objectif réel du Discours d'Etienne de la Boétie," *Actes de l'Académie de Bordeaux*, 3me série, LXIX (1907), 9.

[70] In my translation of the *Contr'un* (Columbia Univ. Press, 1942), it was simple to place in indentations at the beginning of most paragraphs contemporary references such as "Il Duce of 1941," "Fifth Columns," "Concentrations Camps," "Swastikas, Rising Suns, and Fasces," "From Führership to Godship," etc.

[71] *Essai sur l'histoire de la formation et des progrès du Tiers Etat* (Paris: Furnes, 1853), I, 145.

[72] How far this hatred of Charles IX went is suggested in this epitaph:

> Plus cruel que Néron, plus rusé que Tibère,
> Haï de ses sujets, moqué de l'étranger,
> Brave dans une chambre à couvert du danger,
> Envieux des hauts faits du roi Henri son frère.

Quoted by L. Delaruelle in *Annales du midi*, XX (1908), 402, attributed to the *Mémoires-Journaux* of Pierre de l'Estoile by Paul F.-M. Méaly, *Les publicistes de la Réforme sous François II et Charles IX* (1903), p. 153.

The Armaingaud thesis that Montaigne inserted in the *Contr'un* certain sections pointing meaningly to current events and aiming at Henry III, the new Valois King, has been already mentioned. Armaingaud bases his contention on certain passages, even words, which he interprets as contemporary references. Two examples will suffice to illustrate the force and also the weakness of his arguments. He quotes La Boétie's description of the tyrant as "tout empesché de servir vilement à la moindre femmelette."[73] He insists that Montaigne by this interpolation is referring to the venereal disease of Henry, caught in dalliance with a courtesan in Venice, where he stopped on his return from Poland. But this phrase appeared early in 1574 in the *Réveille-Matin*, whereas Henry passed through Venice in August of that year. Besides this, Henry is not feared in the *Réveille-Matin* since he is still out of the way, in Poland, one Valois less to worry about. "Ce roy frère du tyran" is mentioned: "faites en sorte que jamais plus ces bestes farouches ne retourneront pour mordre les François." But Charles IX is alive and his death is not expected so soon. This phrase on sexual impotence, so violently detached from its context to apply to Henry, can nevertheless be attached to many tyrants of old, the vice-ridden Roman emperors whom in fact La Boétie mentions with withering sarcasm.

Similarly Armaingaud seizes upon the description of the tyrant as "le plus lasche et femelin de la nation."[74] It is true that Henry III wore earrings, dressed as a woman, showed his throat, hid tremblingly underground in the Louvre when there was thunder, feared death as he feared Hell. But here again the classical mind of La Boétie found these cowardly qualities of tyrants in dozens of examples which he cites in the course of his *Discours*—the Syllas, the Tiberius, the Neros. Readers of the *Contr'un* in 1574 to 1580, as it appeared in the Protestant propoganda, had no difficulty in associating these characteristics with a Charles or a Henry. It is one of the peculiar virtues of La Boétie's essay that one is swept along by its remorseless, irate eloquence into a reintegration and association with any recent autocrat of the wrath heaped upon the genus or type. The general portrait fits them all and certain details strike an especially resonant chord of recognition.

[73] Armaingaud ed. of the *Contr'un* in Vol. II of *Oeuvres Complètes de Montaigne*, p. 92. In this description some readers prefer "virilement" to "vilement." Villey in his study, "Le véritable auteur du Discours de la Servitude Volontaire, Montaigne ou La Boétie," *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, XIII (Oct. 1906), 727, adds that in the 16th century the phrase "tout empesché de" meant also "tout occupé à," which interpretation could be applied with ease to any tyrant who is incapable of commanding men in the field while he is himself the willing slave of some woman. The Latin rendering in the *Réveille-Matin* confirms this understanding: "non qui vi et annis homines ad imperium cogere possit, sed qui impudicae mulierculae servitio addictus sit."

[74] In his ed. of the *Contr'un*, p. 92.

As if by some superb instinct of our precocious author, La Boétie takes the precaution of inserting in the *Contr'un* the familiar passage in praise of French kings. He is not a revolutionist, his thought on government involves no violence even against the tyrant, hatred for whom is not personal but based on love of liberty. La Boétie is heart and soul a Catholic and a royalist, and Montaigne tells us in I, 28, that his friend's supreme law was to submit fully to the laws of his country. There never was a "meilleur citoyen, ni plus affectionné au repos de son païs, ni plus ennemy des remuemens et nouvelletés de son temps: il eust bien plustot employé sa suffisance à les esteindre qu'à leur fournir de quoy les esmouvoir davantage." To imagine then that the closest friend of this loyal spirit filled with integrity would hand over his best literary effort to be used anonymously to light the fires of rebellion against authority defies all our concepts of friendship and of the sincerity of Montaigne.

One question remains to be discussed under our consideration of Protestant politics in this decade. If their hatred of the Valois rulers was so intense, why did they not cut out the passage of the *Contr'un* praising the French Kings? It seems to pull the wrong way for violent propaganda against a dynasty. We can hazard the guess that it seemed simpler to run this heaven-sent essay without tinkering with its irresistible flow of eloquence. The Swiss editors did not edit nor the printers change what was so much to their liking. Haste was a factor, no doubt, as the crime of Saint Bartholomew rankled in bloody memory. And perhaps also, if there is any iota of political significance in this retention of a passage oddly out of key with the Protestant resentment, mention might be made of the Condé princely household and of Jeanne d'Albret and the young prince of Navarre, all royal personages in whom the Huguenots recognized their leaders and indeed the legal justification of their rebellion against the contemptible Valois. The *Réveille-Matin* and the *Franco-Gallia* were not manifestos of revolt against monarchy as a system of government, but were aimed at a particular tyranny. In this mission of stirring up hatred for a despot the *Contr'un* served admirably, as it has ever since. The judgment of Lamennais in the preface he wrote for the edition of 1836 still rings with truth:

> Il semble que la lutte de la tyrannie et de la liberté doive être immortelle sur la terre; et c'est pourquoi les âmes les plus fermes ont souvent besoin d'une parole sympathique qui les ranime pour ne point défaillir dans la défense des droits sacrés de l'humanité. L'ouvrage d'Etienne de la Boétie nous a paru propre à remplir ce but.[75]

[75] Printed in a tiny format by Hauman (Brussels), the Lamennais preface has 42 pages. The quotation is from p. 8.

LA BOÉTIE AND COUNTER-REFORMATION

Catherine had summoned to Saint-Germain two members from each Parlement for a conciliatory discussion of religious affairs. The sessions began January 3, 1562, with some twenty representatives meeting with the Conseil Privé. After two weeks, on January 17, the "interim" was promulgated to promote immediate peace in the realm. By this Edit de Janvier, permission was refused to the Réformés to build temples, but they did receive "liberté des prêches et du culte seulement de jour et hors des villes, à la condition de ne prêcher que la 'pure parole de Dieu.' "[76] Michel de l'Hospital presented this Edict to the Parlements of the realm and it was approved by all except Dijon. Catherine, still in a conciliatory mood induced by her realization of the large numbers of French Protestants, called another conference, this time of leading Catholic priests and Huguenot pastors, who sat with the Conseil Privé to decide on controversial points involving the "culte des images, celui des saints et le symbole de la croix." This second session argued for two weeks and dissolved without agreement.

The Parlement de Bordeaux received the January Edict and approved. But La Boétie, studying it closely, was dissatisfied with its provisions. His mind went beyond immediate pacification and reasoned about the political implications of religious dissension, the repercussion on the government and the effect on the people. Montaigne was in Paris in June 1562, precisely at the time that La Boétie was setting down in Bordeaux his *Mémoire touchant l'Edit de Janvier*. Perhaps the Mémoire was read to the Parlement at its solemn session of July 13. It should be noted that this year of 1562 probably marks the closest relationship attained by the two friends, one of whom was to disappear so soon, and that in all likelihood the views expressed in the Mémoire are common to both men. This will be apparent when we examine Montaigne's attitude toward sectarianism in France.[77]

[76] Quoted from Bonnefon's introduction to his ed. of the *Mémoire* (Paris: Bossard, 1922), p. 40.

[77] Jean Plattard, in his *Montaigne et son temps*, pp. 72–73, makes this pertinent comment: "Il y a tout lieu de croire qu'il n'eût pas désapprouvé les mesures de rigueur destinées à montrer aux mutins qui bravaient la volonté royale la 'terrible face de la justice courroucée.' Quant aux observations et cérémonies de l'Eglise, il avoue lui-méme (en 1580) qu'en son adolescence, il inclinait à en négliger quelques unes et à faire peu de cas de celles 'qui semblent avoir un visage ou plus vain ou plus estrange' (*Essais*, I, 27). Peut-être rangeait-il dans cette catégorie l'usage du latin aux offices ou la vénération des reliques et des images. Plus tard ayant communiqué ses opinions à des 'hommes sçavants,' il constata que ces choses là 'ont un fondement massif et très solide, et que ce n'est que bestise et ignorance qui nous fait les recevoir avec moindre révérence que le reste'; il devint, sur cette question, beaucoup plus traditionnaliste que La Boétie ne l'était en 1562."

Some six months after the Edict of January had been promulgated and approved, the Parlement of Paris required its members to make public profession of Catholicism, and this example was followed by the other Parlements of the realm. Montaigne made this profession in Paris and we can be sure it was not a mere desire to hold office that prompted his submission. He acted as La Boétie wrote, for although the two friends were separated at the time, their two souls had "charrié si uniement ensemble" that they reacted in the same way to public events. On his deathbed less than a year later, La Boétie foresaw the approaching civil war and his sad words must have increased all the more Montaigne's hatred of the "nouvelletés" that were undermining discipline and bringing ruin to the country. Montaigne's own final conclusion is clearly set forth in I, 27: "Ou il faut se soubmettre du tout à l'auctorité de nostre police ecclesiastique, ou du tout s'en dispenser: ce n'est pas à nous à establir la part que nous luy debvons d'obeïssance."

Yet in 1570 he refrained from publishing the *Mémoire* as well as the *Contr'un*. The reasons for this decision are easily perceived in the "si malplaisante saison" he alleges, and they apply even more to the former document. Montaigne's critical preference evidently went to the *Contr'un* which was more literary and removed from the altercations of the present. The *Mémoire* would have done his friend credit, but its judicial treatment of a burning question of the day would have added fuel to the fire. We have already seen that the publication of the *Contr'un* was taken out of Montaigne's hands by the Protestants. If they ever put their hands on the *Mémoire*, they would never have published it, since it argues against them. Perhaps that is another reason why they made no mention of authorship of the *Contr'un*. The *Mémoire* disappeared from view, kept alive only by Montaigne's reference to it in his preface to his edition of the works of La Boétie. A copy was finally found by Bonnefon in the Bibliothèque Méjanes at Aix-en-Provence and published in 1922 together with the *Contr'un*, thus finally completing Montaigne's unfulfilled task.

The *Mémoire* of La Boétie is a wise, fair-minded analysis by a legal mind of the origin and the solution of religious disturbances in France. It makes fascinating reading for those who are curious about the best Catholic thought in this violent period. Historically it is an important document both for its date and its content, and it is hard to forgive Montaigne his extreme preoccupation with his friend's reputation which almost lost us this fine testimony of La Boétie's judicial genius. The *Mémoire* reveals an understanding of the Protestant complaints and, by that very token, gives a clearer insight into the balanced spirit so beloved by Montaigne.

Before we analyze the *Mémoire*, it is proper to add that Voltairian notions of tolerance and equality among sects within a nation's frontiers were already stirring at this time. Catholic dogma itself was not so fixed as it later became. The Council of Trent which began its sittings in 1545 had been interrupted after 1552 so that its pronouncements were not yet completed by 1562. Catherine's attempts at conciliation, in part due to her own lack of conviction, were not out of tune with the temper of the times. An Italian herself, she calmly ignored the Pope when he refused the sanction of the Church for the marriage of her daughter to a Protestant prince. We have already mentioned Jean Bodin and his conciliatory political thesis on sovereignty. This good Catholic speaks in similar vein for religious freedom, as pointed out by A. Franck: "Bodin est le premier qui, faisant de la tolérance un principe, la réclame non seulement pour les réformés, mais pour toutes les sectes indistinctement quand elles n'offensent ni les moeurs ni les lois."[78] Such ideas were naturally current among Protestants. François de la Noue suggests three measures which are a definite echo of La Boétie: permit worship of God in other ways than by processions or chants; suppress venality of those in high posts and lessen taxes; conciliate both religions without recourse to arms.[79] Daneau and Agrippa d'Aubigné can be listed here among the natural champions of tolerance, as well as the anonymous authors of the *Satire Ménipée*. At mid-century there is still a climate of conciliation and compromise that might have been successfully encouraged by competent royal authority to the point of minimizing civil strife. Henry of Navarre himself by his equivocal attitude on religious denominationalism was both leader and follower in the movement of ideas that sought to subordinate allegiance to Rome and papal authority to the vital material interests of government within a country. We have seen that Catherine was a rank opportunist ready to make deals with William of Orange or Elizabeth of England to offset the preponderance of Philip of Spain. There was a current not so much of tolerance but of what might be called indifferentism at the time in the high places, an official flexibility willing to make arrangements and alignments not dictated by conscience so much as by self-interest.

In such an atmosphere of irreverent laxity, spirits bearing the stamp of integrity like those of La Boétie and Montaigne would not find a natural habitat. We have already seen the dying La Boétie exhorting the Protestant brother of Montaigne to return to the faith of his fathers

[78] *Réformateurs et publicistes de l'Europe, Moyen Age et Renaissance* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1864), p. 454.

[79] J. Barrère gives this succint analysis in *L'humanisme et la politique*, pp. 140 ff.

and restore the unity of the family. For the logical mind of the author of the *Contr'un*, there were three alternatives to consider in aiming toward religious order within the realm: maintain the old doctrine, espouse the new one, or let them compete under regulation. It is characteristic of our sincere magistrate that for him there could be no hesitation about rejecting the last two alternatives. He is a Catholic for whom there can be no deviation from the line of conviction and truth. Yet he is not blind to imperfections in the organization and the practices of his Church. To correct these he will make definite suggestions. He refuses to "géhenner les esprits des hommes et vouloir se faire maître de leurs pensées et opinions."[80] Indifferentism has had only one result in his day: "où qu'on se tourne . . . on ne voit sinon la face d'une extrême désolation et les pièces éparses d'une république démembrée." He beholds two segments of the country face to face in hostility, insubordination everywhere and civil war impending. The *Mémoire* he now composes offers a solution which even today sounds plausible, and one in which many of his fellow magistrates must have found the echo of their own convictions.

In the main, the *Mémoire* of La Boétie conveys among its important ideas the following conclusions:[81]

(a) Liberty easily degenerates into license when the people lose respect for their leaders and are unable to distinguish between good and bad; freedom in religion loosens the union between them and their prince and the law of conscience can easily become a matter of persuasion and whim; "car comme il n'est rien plus juste ni plus conforme aux lois que la conscience d'un homme religieux, et craignant Dieu, et pourvu de probité et de prudence, ainsi il n'est rien plus fol, plus vain et plus monstrueux que la conscience et superstition de la multitude indiscrète."

(b) Violence spreads evil: "On ne saurait faire accroire à beaucoup de gens qu'il y a que celui-là n'ait la raison pour lui qui veut maintenir ce qu'il dit au prix de son sang et de sa vie; donc, en cuidant par le couteau extirper les opinions, nous faisons, comme on dit de l'hydre, que pour une tête qu'on lui coupait on en voyait renaître sept."

(c) Religious dissensions are the worst: "Nulle dissension n'est si grande ni si dangereuse que celle qui vient pour la religion; elle sépare les citoyens, les voisins, les amis, les parents, les frères, le père et les enfants, le mari et la femme; elle rompt les alliances, les parentés, les mariages, les droits inviolables de la nature et pénètre jusqu'au fond des cœurs pour extirper les amitiés et enraciner des haines

[80] This and the following phrases are taken from the Bonnefon ed., pp. 114–115.

[81] The quotations are taken from the Bonnefon ed., as follows: (a) 104, (b) 113, (c) 120, (d) 122, (e) 126–131, (f) 135, (g) 138, (h) 140. There is a curious echo of this horror of religious strife in La Boétie's Latin epistle to Montaigne where he even mentions America as a refuge. There he wants to sail so that he might not be forced to behold the ruin of his beloved France though he will never be able to forget the image of her ravaged soil.

irréconciliables." These words are indeed a version of his final sad appeal to Montaigne's brother a few months later.

(d) The Prince weakens his authority by conciliation: " . . . car, à qui a puissance d'ordonner, le moyen d'apaiser ceux qui sont en différend n'est pas de les entretenir tous deux et de les flatter en leur cause, mais plutôt d'adjuger rondement à l'un ce qui est contentieux. Même qu'en ce fait, si l'on autorise les deux parts, chacune se sentira forte, et rien ne donne au sujet tant de moyen de faire entreprise que de se sentir fort et appuyé."

(e) Tolerance in the past has promoted disorder: "Mais s'ils vivront plus paisiblement quand ils sauront que le roi a permis à chacun de vivre en sa doctrine, on se trompe. Ils ont tous pensé cela longtemps y a et cela leur a donné l'audace de faire toutes ces folies. . . . Ne pensons donc pas permettre deux religions, mais voyons qu'en permettant ces deux nous permettons tant qu'il en pourra naître dans l'esprit des gens fantasques et envieux pleins d'ambition. . . . Quel remède sinon de partir encore l'Eglise de Dieu et y faire une autre pièce, comme les pères à qui il naît d'autres enfants, après le premier testament, qui augmentent le nombre des parties de leur hérédité."

(f) Truth is indivisible: " . . . puisqu'il est nécessaire que l'une des deux soit vraie, il faut que l'une soit non seulement fausse mais fort mauvaise car l'Eglise Romaine tient les protestants pour hérétiques quant aux sacrements et infinis autres points, et les protestants appellent les catholiques idolâtres. Donc, si le Roi en entretient par nécessité, il en entretient une fort méchante. . . . Or tout ainsi que notre loi ne pourrait souffrir aucunement le paganisme, ainsi en soi elle ne peut souffrir diverses sectes, étant la vérité une, pure et simple, et n'entrant jamais en composition avec ce qui est faux et abusif. . . . Et encore j'ai opinion que le nôtre se comporterait plutôt avec le paganisme qu'avec l'hérésie."

(g) The solution: "Mon avis est de commencer par la punition des insolences advenues à cause de la religion, et après ne laisser comment que ce soit, qu'une Eglise, et que ce soit l'ancienne, mais qu'on réforme tellement celle-là qu'elle soit en apparence toute nouvelle, et en mœurs toute autre; et, en ce faisant, user de telle modération qu'en tout ce que la doctrine de l'Eglise pourra souffrir, on s'accorde aux protestants, pour les ranger en un troupeau, faire revenir ceux qui ne seront trop délicats et leur donner moyen de se réunir sans offenser leur conscience et non pas déchirer la part de Jésus-Christ en deux bandes, chose détestable devant Dieu, et certaine révélation de son ire, et indubitable présage de l'entière ruine de ce royaume."

(h) The King alone can heal the breach: "Le moyen de châtier le peuple n'est pas d'en donner la charge aux gouverneurs des pays, car il faut qu'ils soient punis par la vraie et naturelle justice. C'est la Justice qui a été outragée; c'est elle qu'il faut rétablir si le Roi veut régner. Et maintenant ce qu'on a principalement à faire, c'est d'enseigner les sujets du Roi à le révérer et les remettre en ce chemin de lui porter honneur; et autrement il n'y, aura jamais fin de cette malédiction."

La Boétie reckons that among 100,000 Protestant men in France, about 200 would know the reasons for their sectarian revolt. The rest would be ignorant of the quibbles in matters of faith or ceremony. Of

course, "il est vrai que je ne prétends pas contenter les chefs de leur religion qui ne seront jamais satisfaits, quelle mine qu'ils fassent, sinon qu'on leur laisse une grande domination, un empire spirituel en tout semblable à celui du Pape."[82] The Church images offend the Protestants but they have pictures in their homes without kissing or clothing them. In churches images should serve strictly to preserve the memory of saints or martyrs and should not be worshiped. La Boétie proposes regular morning services by priests, and then other gatherings under secular leaders who will teach the Gospels without controversy, with prayers in French. He advises simplicity in preaching, purification of the practices in the confessional, "et principalement si la personne des confesseurs recommande la chose."[83] He insists on a minimum age of thirty for priests, their number to be wisely limited to the actual needs of the parish. He forbids the granting of several ecclesiastical domains to one prelate merely for the purpose of honor or revenue. La Boétie even advises that the Catholic church imitate some of the Protestant methods, like the organization of synods under a bishop to name priests for preaching and administration. He detests simony in all its forms, especially at funerals. "Rien ne se fasse en l'Eglise, je ne dis pas à prix d'argent, msai du tout où il y intervienne aucune mention de marché ou don, ni accordé ni volontaire. Que cette règle soit seulement gardée, et on verra, en moins de rien, tous les abus survenus tomber de soi-même. . . . "[84]

By this honest procedure based on common sense La Boétie hopes to bring back the errant and reestablish the true faith:

J'ai mis en avant ces moyens . . . seulement pour montrer ce chemin, m'assurant que si ceux qui ont expérience des affaires et sont pourvus de vertu suivaient sa trace, il serait aisé de trouver ainsi une réformation qui remettrait l'Eglise en son honneur et première splendeur et qui ferait aimer et révérer ses ennemis. On userait d'une telle modération qu'on ferait d'une pierre deux coups, de tant qu'on donnerait sa première forme à l'assemblée de Dieu et si, on s'accommoderait à ceux qui s'en sont séparés pour les y rappeler.

It is pertinent here to trace as far as we can Montaigne's own attitudes toward the *Contr'un* and the *Mémoire*, to analyze his hesitations on both these eloquent manuscript legacies of La Boétie, and to explain as far as possible his decision to delay their publication which finally ended, as we know, in their disappearance for centuries. The intimate thought of Montaigne, as suggested by his writing, will, we think, clarify his conduct toward his beloved friend, possibly even justify it in view of what has been said about the polticial and religious conditions of the sensitive decades in which these hesitations played their rôle in suppressing La Boétie's major works.

[82] Page 142. [83] Page 152. [84] Page 160.

MONTAIGNE, LA BOÉTIE, AND THE *ESSAIS*, I, 28

It strikes anyone who reflects over the intimate quality of the relationship between these two men that Montaigne's memory of their past together is singularly uncertain. He is vague and contradictory about La Boétie's age at the time of the composition of the *Contr'un*. He is indefinite about the number of years they knew each other: in the 1588 edition of the *Essais* he mentions "quatre ou cinq années" as the duration of their friendship, which period he changes to "quatre années" in the edition of 1595. Yet they knew each other from December 3, 1557, to August 9, 1563, which makes nearly six years. Some of this forgetfulness may be attributed to the nervousness of a young man recently appointed magistrate, confronting for the first time a man of much greater importance in the same court. At their first meeting, La Boétie, in addition to the advantage of his marked ability already ripened by three years of judicial experience, was also older than Montaigne by two years and four months and married for some years back, whereas Montaigne was not to marry till three years after his friend's death. He was indeed going to sow some wild oats in Bordeaux and receive a gentle reproof from his older friend in the shape of a Latin epistle, *Ad Michaelem Montanum*.[85] Add to all these indications of greater maturity the fact that La Boétie had married Marguerite de Carle, a widow with two children who was probably older than himself. Her daughter, who was eighteen when La Boétie died at thirty-three, was to marry Thomas Montaigne, brother of our Michel, and her son likewise was to marry into the Montaigne family. In short, at their first meeting in 1557, Montaigne finds a judicial colleague who is favorably known for his accomplishments and whose private life is without blemish. No wonder the distance between them seems great, to be spanned only by a sudden surge of inner sympathy that will become profound and lasting. Almost two decades later Montaigne will recall these early impressions in the *Essais*, II, 17: "le plus grand homme que j'aye cogneu au vif, je dis des parties naturelles de l'âme et le mieux nay, c'estoit Estienne de la Boëtie; c'estoit vrayement un'ame pleine, et qui montroit un beau visage à tout sens; un'ame à la vieille marque, et qui eust produict de grands effects si sa fortune l'eust voulu; ayant beaucoup adjousté à ce riche naturel, par science et estude." It is natural that in the friendly Latin epistle La Boétie gently admonishes his friend to become more serious, for a high sense of dignity and individuality is the mark of his nature.

Despite the historic closeness of their friendship we cannot find in Montaigne any precise biographical or chronological information, except for that final phrase in his heartbroken letter to his father telling of

[85] Bonnefon, ed. *Oeuvres*, p. 210.

La Boétie's death: "Mais une heure après ou environ, me nommant une fois ou deux, et puis tirant à soy un grand soupir, il rendit l'ame, sur les trois heures du Mercredy matin, dixhuitiesme d'Aoust, l'an mil cinq cens soixante trois, après avoir vescu 32 ans, 9 mois, et 17 jours. . . ." For such facts as we need we must depend on annals of the court at Bordeaux. The prefaces Montaigne wrote for each of La Boétie's pieces, inscribing them mainly to their judicial colleagues, are both laudatory and lamenting, but strangely vague in details that would interest the biographer. It would seem as if grief had dulled the memory of our essayist, or as if the poignancy of his loss would not permit him to refer back to their past without pain, so that he draws a veil over the events they had lived together.

In 1570, seven years after his bereavement, he travels to Paris to publish La Boétie's MSS, the translations from Xenophon and Plutarch, the Latin and French verses, all except two pieces, as we have seen. In the preface to the *Règles du Mariage de Plutarque*, he explains why he is publishing his friend's works:

> J'estime toutefois que ce soit une grande consolation à la foiblesse et brieveté de ceste vie, de croire qu'elle se puisse fermir et allonger par la reputation et par la renommée. . . . De maniere que, ayant aymé plus que toute autre chose feu Monsieur de La Boëtie, le plus grand homme, à mon advis, de nostre siecle, je penserois lourdement faillir à mon devoir, si à mon escient je laissois esvanouir et perdre un si riche nom que le sien, et une memoire si digne de recommendation; et si je ne m'essayois, par ces parties là, de le resusciter et remettre en vie. Je croy qu'il le sent aucunement, et que ces miens offices le touchent et rejouissent. De vray, il se loge encore chez moy si entier et si vif, que je ne le puis croire ny si lourdement enterré, ny si entierement éloigné de nostre commerce.[86]

In his dedication of the *Poëmata* to Michel de l'Hospital he states that his friend was fitted "aux premières charges de France." He goes on to recall his merits, "sa piété, sa vertu, sa justice, la vivacité de son esprit, le poix et la santé de son jugement, la haulteur de ses conceptions . . . le tendre amour qu'il portoit à sa miserable patrie, et sa haine capitale et jurée contre tout vice. . . ."[87] Thus these laments repeat their litany of praise for the departed and the expression of the sense of loss of the survivor. This last will never diminish. We find the lament again in I, 28, the chapter which started us on our exploration into the mentality and the events of the period of these two extraordinary men. Some eighteen years later, traveling in Italy, he grieves once more in a letter he writes: "Ce mesme matin escrivant à M. Ossat je suis tumbé en un pensement si pénible de M. de La Boëtie et y fus sy longtemps, sans me raviser, que cela me fit grand mal."[88]

[86] Bonnefon, ed. *Oeuvres*, pp. 159–160.
[87] *Ibid.*, p. 205.
[88] *Journal de voyage* (Lautrey ed.), p. 326.

For a friend so preoccupied with another whom he has lost by death, Montaigne's conduct with some of La Boétie's MSS must be superficially judged as a bit cavalier. It is true that he did his best to acquire all the stray papers besides those actually in the library bequeathed to him. When he has all he can trace, he plans their dedication to different notables and writes his prefaces. Nevertheless, for reasons he deems sufficiently persuasive, he keeps out the two most important, possibly for future use when the time is more propitious. A decade passes, and although he has carefully prepared a fitting preface for one of these, he suddenly decides not to use it but to substitute for it another MS which a friend has found "par fortune parmi quelques autres papiers, et me les vient d'envoier, de quoy je lui suis très obligé et souhaiterois que d'autres qui detiennent plusieurs copies de ses escrits, par-ci par là en fissent de mesme" (I, 28). The likelihood is, as Bonnefon suggests,[89] that Montaigne had already written a preface for the *Contr'un* with every intention of including it in the *Oeuvres* published in 1570–71. But his first suppression of this work is dictated by the events of the time. He is easily comforted by the sense that he is acting in the interests of his friend's reputation. Moreover, this is not to his manner of thinking a definitive decision. He obviously intends to use the *Contr'un*. Back in his château he expands the preface he has presumably composed into the chapter on Friendship, which now will form an integral part of the *Essais*, and will serve as an even better frame for the presentation of his friend's famous work. His decision to suppress it a second time is again dictated by events, especially by the Protestant use of the *Discours* to foment discord. Some may judge this line of conduct as whimsical, but we have endeavored to show in this study that such an opinion cannot be lightly taken. An epoch which could produce a crime like the massacre of St. Bartholomew was hardly favorable for the dissemination of a work like the *Contr'un*. Still the decision may appear cavalier and abrupt, especially when we realize that Montaigne did the same thing with another work, the twenty-nine sonnets he had so gladly welcomed in place of the *Discours*. In the 1588 edition of the *Essais* he leaves his short dedication of the poems to Mme de Grammont but substitutes for his friend's poems the brief observation: "Ces vers se voient ailleurs." He is referring to the previous edition of the *Essais*. One cannot help wondering, however, why in 1588 he did not revert to his original intention of using the *Contr'un*. A revision of his work was giving him a fine opportunity to carry out his original intention, every detail of which was glaringly left stated in the chapter

[89] Strowski agrees with this analysis of Montaigne's devious conduct, *Revue philomatique de Bordeaux*, X (Feb. 1907). Both scholars date I, 28, at 1571. The essayist has just returned from Paris with a sense of disappointment at the omission of the *Contr'un* and sets about the work of rectifying his decision.

on Friendship. It is true that he made almost no changes or additions to his chapter in this edition. The season was perhaps still "malplaisante" in his opinion. More likely he had by that time abandoned beyond recall his original plan. Yet, strangely, he did not go back over his chapter to make the few excisions necessary to adjust his text to some reasonable conformity to this circumstance. His instinct seems to guide him to a consistent reticence as regards his friend, except in unguarded moments as in his *Journal de voyage* when he was overcome by painful memory. This seems to be the key to the understanding of Montaigne's silence and his refusal to touch his prose where La Boétie is mentioned. He shows this attitude when he withdraws the *Contr'un*, and continues it when he suppresses the sonnets. Perhaps only those can enter imaginatively into his suffering consciousness who have experienced some similar grievous loss. He may have made some attempt at readjustment of his text, for there is visible on the photograph of the Bordeaux MS of his *Essais*, at the end of Chapter 28, a trace of paste. There are other such traces evident on this copy, indicating that the author had attached paper slips bearing emendations or notes, though we have no way of knowing what writing they bore. All we can say is that it is a peculiar and striking fact that he never made the few changes in I, 28, that would have brought it accurately into line with the variation in his plan, though he did revise the chapter to some extent between 1588 and 1592.

Bonnefon has attempted to trace Montaigne's gropings with the *Contr'un* during this period.[90] We can date I, 28, because of the allusion to the painter, probably the artist who did the frescoes in his study and the inscriptions, one of which is dated March, 1571. Now this is very close to the time when he published the works of La Boétie. He had already mentioned in this edition the *Contr'un* and the *Mêmoire* on the Edict of January, 1562, and indicated his reason for not including them. Perhaps he realized that he could have set the *Contr'un* into a special frame of reference and comment, carefully arranging to show it in its genuine high-spirited quality, and taking precautions to have it understood as remote from any local or contemporary application. This he now proceeds to do in his chapter on Friendship, unaware that if he had followed his original thought he might have honored his friend and saved the *Discours* from its misapplication by those who cared so little for the true intent of the author. Eventually, just before the publication of his *Essais*, he learns that it had been used by the Protestants anony-

[90] In the "Post-scriptum" added to the Villey article, *Revue d'histoire littéraire*, XIII (Oct. 1906), 737. Pierre Mesnard in his *Essor de la philosophie politique au XVIème siècle* makes the pertinent remark (p. 390): "mais l'on peut justement se demander si cette amitié n'a pas été sans nuire à l'œuvre."

mously, a possibility he might have foreseen in view of the unruly times. His resentment and disappointment are too strong to permit him to go over his chapter and eradicate references to the *Contr'un*. All he needed to do was to change one sentence at the end and a few phrases at the beginning.[91] He did not make the changes, and we can divine from the feeling revealed by his hastily added paragraph, the mingling of his admiration and his grief and his inability to bring himself to touch the consecrated prose tribute to La Boétie. He liked the chapter as it was, the sincere movement of ideas between the personal and the general was suitable to his intimate sense of fitness, and he preferred to leave the few illogical references touching the *Contr'un*. What he said about his friend was true and beyond correction. There are disgust and anger in this attitude, and also great reverence. We can enter sympathetically into Montaigne's reactions even if we cannot clear up definitively the mystery of his own words on the subject.

Armaingaud, as we have noted, sees in this disparity an underhanded intention: "Par le simple rapprochement des premières pages du chapitre et de la page finale, l'absence de sincérité éclate aux yeux des moins prévenus et la contradiction se voit à toutes les lignes."[92] He stresses the fact that Montaigne could not say in 1571 that the season was "malplaisante" and plan in the same year to include the *Discours* in his *Essais*. An obvious answer to this pertinent observation is that Montaigne was not publishing the *Contr'un* in that year but merely planning for its eventual appearance when the times might be more favorable. Again Armaingaud stresses the disparity between the beginning of the chapter when Montaigne says he is arranging a frame for a "discours gentil," and the end when he refers to it rather slightingly as a "subject vulgaire."[93] What Armaingaud twists into an undercover procedure to hide Montaigne's conniving with the Protestants appears to most scholars as an attempt to protect his friend's reputation by minimizing the import or significance of this particular work in view of his shock at its misuse. One exception among students of this matter is Edme Champion, who maintains that if Montaigne did not like the Huguenot

[91] Montaigne seems to be contradictory in his corrections. In III, 9, he says: "J'ajoute mais je ne corrige pas." Armaingaud maintains that this did not apply to the 1580 edition but rather to the later ones. He comments in *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, p. 122: "Il modifie et retouche avec le plus grand soin . . . il rature . . . il couvre de suppressions comme de surcharges le texte des anciens chapitres de 1580 pour en faire ceux de 1588, puis ceux de 1588 pour en faire ceux de 1595." In II, 12, Montaigne indicates that he tries often to change his "première imagination" in order "à y mettre un nouveau sens." Yet the fact remains he did not take the trouble to correct the glaring contradiction in I, 28.

[92] In *Revue politique et parlementaire*, XLVII (March 1906), 499.

[93] *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, p. 81.

borrowing of the *Contr'un* he could have protected La Boétie's name by suppressing all references to the work from I, 28.[94]

All this eloquence overlooks the facts that Montaigne had already attached his friend's name to the *Contr'un* in 1570 and that colleagues in Bordeaux knew very well who was its author. Perhaps, indeed, the best way to handle this delicate situation was to ignore it, as Montaigne did after his slighting reference to the Huguenot appropriation and misuse of La Boétie's work. Such conduct is more in line with what we know of Montaigne's integrity of conduct and character[95] which could brook no "finesse et rouerie" in this sincere chapter, and in fact in any matter that touched his departed friend. How could such a man exploit under cover and anonymously the advantage given him by the sacred trust of his dead friend's MSS? That would be sheer perveristy, disloyalty to the memory of his devoted companion of whom he said, "Nous étions la moitié de tout."

We can add the comforting thought that Montaigne fully achieved his purpose of protecting his friend's reputation, maintaining it aloft and free from the market-place of strife and confusion.[96] Since La Boétie was no longer alive to protest against the Protestant theft of his work, Montaigne, at the end of I, 28, says just the things required to set matters straight with his contemporaries. As Barrère observes:

> Si la question de l'énigme du Contr'un s'est posée en ce moment pour quelques esprits curieux, ce qui est possible puisque Montaigne a cru devoir remettre les choses au point, toute hésitation a cessé devant la solenelle affirmation du grand philosophe dont les contemporains respectaient le témoignage et la "bonne foy."[97]

Indeed Montaigne succeeded far beyond his expectation, since with his decision to forego the pleasure of including the *Contr'un* in his *Essais*, the *Discours* disappeared shortly from public awareness and its presence in a book of Protestant propaganda did not encourage a reading public in France. It is related by Tallemant des Réaux that Richelieu on reading I, 28, was moved to curiosity concerning the *Contr'un* and requested

[94] "Montaigne et les Huguenots," *Revue bleue*, March 23, 1907. Reprinted in *Montaigne pamphlétaire*, pp. 323–333.

[95] "En vérité, le mentir est un mauldict vice . . . Si nous en cognoissions l'horreur et le poids, nous le poursuivrions à feu, plus justement que d'aultres crimes" (I, 9). "Je suis ennemi des actions subtiles et feinctes et hay la finesse en mes mains, non seulement récréative mais aussi proufitable; si l'action n'est vicieuse, la route l'est" (I, 20).

[96] "Des vivans mesme, je sens qu'on parle tousjours autrement qu'ils ne sont. Et si, à toute force, je n'eusse maintenu un amy que j'ay perdu on me l'eust déchiré en mille contraires visages. Je sçay bien que je ne lairray après moy aucun correspondant si affectionné de bien loing et entendu en mon faict comme j'ai esté au sien, ny personne à qui je voulsisse compromettre ma peinture" (III, 9).

[97] *L'humanisme et la politique*, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

to see a copy.[98] None could be found in any of the bookshops of the rue Saint Jacques. Finally an enterprising bookseller, Blaise, better informed than others, detached the essay from the *Mémoires de l'Estat de France.* bound it separately, and charged the Cardinal five pistoles. We can imagine the stateman's smile as he read the vigorous diatribe against one-man rule. It is to be regretted that Vigny's ignorance of this episode prevented him from exploiting it in his *Cinq-Mars.*

It is interesting to try to analyze Montaigne's real opinion of the *Contr'un* and what lay behind his bittersweet references to it in I, 28. He must have been struck by its eloquence, its warm youthful vigor, and its fervent classical references and quotations. He perceived, no doubt with satisfaction, that it is loyal in its mention of the French kings, that it fulminates against tyrants but does not preach tyrannicide. Yet he might have been perturbed by the fact that assassination is to some extent hinted as a solution to despotic rule. La Boétie recited with deliberate delectation the example of tyrant Sylla visited by young Cato, who says: "Que ne me donnes vous un poignard? Je le cacherai sous ma robe: je entre souvent dans la chambre de Sylla avant qu'il soit levé, j'ay le bras asses fort pour en depescher la ville."[99] Yet violence was not definitely a part of young La Boétie's scheme, who rather placed his faith in passive resistance. But the older Montaigne on rereading the *Contr'un* in 1570 or 1580 could judge its purple passages more impartially, and in view of political events at either time decide that its indirect effect could only be an incitation to insurrection, possibly murder. This, in fact, has been its curious history, as we have noted. Montaigne may have felt keenly, as he read between the lines, this vibrant intensity of the ridicule heaped upon despots and their minions. To a modern reader there seem to be no allusions so obvious that they can be interpreted as effectively applicable to the Valois monarchs. But even the remote possibility in view of the alarums of the hostile decade must have made Montaigne uneasy, aware as he was most intimately of the law-abiding nature of his friend whose main principle it was "d'obeyr et de se soubmettre tres-religieusement aux lois sous lesquelles il estoit nay." He insists there never was a better citizen, which remark gives a resonant echo to his shock at his discovery that an insurrectionist minority had presumed to use the *Contr'un* in the very way Montaigne dreaded. He must have pondered its list of liberators, Harmodius, Aristogiton and others, who took great risks to wrest freedom from their tyrants. Instructive of

[98] *Historiettes*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1862), I, 433.

[99] Armaingaud ed. of the *Contr'un*, p. 120. Pierre Mesnard's comment: "Le régicide . . . est non seulement vertueux mais assuré du succès; on ne saurait y encourager mieux les vrais champions de la liberté" (*op. cit.* n. 14, p. 402).

Montaigne's political attitude are such comments as: "Montaigne est contre le régicide, a toujours protesté contre le tyrannicide. . . . Nul ne fut plus profondément conservateur. Il craint en toutes choses les mutations qui ébranlent l'état."[100] And again: "Montaigne, toute sa conduite politique le prouve, fut un royaliste convaincu, un citoyen respectueux du pouvoir établi, ami avant tout de la paix et de l'ordre public."[101] And finally: "Montaigne, au fond, avait quelque peur. Il n'était pas autrement téméraire et ne se souciait guère de faire le brave. Il craignait la basse-fosse. Il avait, du reste, une place importante et tenait à conserver la large faveur des princes. Avouer, proclamer sa toute grande admiration pour le travail d'un réfractaire lui donnait sans doute à réfléchir."[102]

This is not to say that for Montaigne kings as such were perfect or sacrosanct. He knew how to consider them critically and reduce them to ordinary proportions: "Vus derrière le rideau, les rois ne sont que des hommes du commun et à l'aventure plus vils que les moindres de leurs sujets dont ils ne diffèrent, par manière de dire, que par leurs chausses."[103] But this sensible appraisal is very different from the righteous indignation of La Boétie against the strutters of power. For Montaigne, middle-aged in 1580 and with the wide perspective of his reflective readings, the youthful essay of his friend may have been a bit disconcerting or discordant. The future mayor of Bordeaux, indifferent husband if affectionate father, yet strangely cold and impassive, a person dominated by reason rather than pushed by impulse, such a man could conceivably read the *Contr'un* with a sense of distaste if it had been written by anyone else but the one person who had aroused in him the fountain of tenderness. His realization of its enthusiasm might permit him to discard it without too much reluctance, especially after others had misused it. There would be no bitter sacrifice in this renunciation, already performed ten years before at another occasion. There might be only a sense of disappointment at his inability to carry out a plan fondled for a decade, perhaps also a sense of relief at the pretext thus furnished, and most of all an eager determination not to let his friend's name get mixed up in the religious dissensions by which France was embroiled and which were

[100] C. Aymonier, "Quel est l'auteur du Discours sur la servitude volontaire?" *Revue historique de Bordeaux*, XXXII (Oct. 1939), 153.

[101] Abbé de la V. Monbrun, "Autour de Montaigne et de la Boétie," *Bulletin historique et archéologique du Périgord*, XXXIV (1907), 437.

[102] Fernand Demeure, "Montaigne et La Boétie," *Mercure de France*, CCXLV (July, 1933), 206. Pierre Mesnard has an enlightening comment on the "gêne de Montaigne entre l'oeuvre et la conduite de son ami . . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 405).

[103] *Essais*, I, 42.

directly responsible for La Boétie's premature death. This was a pious act of devotion that he owed to the preservation of the good name of the lamented La Boétie, of that most unique friend of whom he cannot speak otherwise than in compelling tones of loss and grief.

There is no indication anywhere in Montaigne's writings that he ever planned to publish the other discourse of his friend, the *Mémoire touchant l'Edit de Janvier 1562*, though this analysis of the religious dispute must have been closer to his own thinking and a more intimate part of his own experience than the political ideas contained in the *Contr'un*. As Plattard observes:

Il y a tout lieu de croire qu'il n'eût pas désapprouvé les mesures de rigueur destinées à montrer aux mutins qui bravaient la volonté royale la "terrible face de la justice courroucée." Quant aux observations et cérémonies de l'Eglise, il avoue lui-même (en 1580) qu'en son adolescence, il inclinait à en négliger quelques unes et à faire peu de cas de celles "qui semblent avoir un visage ou plus vain ou plus estrange" (I, 27). Peut-être rangeait-il dans cette catégorie l'usage du latin aux offices ou la vénération des reliques et des images. Plus tard ayant communiqué ses opinions à des "hommes sçavants" il constata que ces choses là "ont un fondement massif et très solide, et que ce n'est que bestise et ignorance qui nous fait les recevoir avec moindre révérence que le reste"; il devint, sur cette question, beaucoup plus traditionaliste que La Boétie ne l'était en 1562.[104]

In his *Journal de voyage* he notes with satisfaction that German Protestant sects do not abhor images. At Kempten, "ville luthérienne," he meets a pastor named Johannes Tilianus and asks about the figure of Jesus in the stained glass window of the "nouveau bâtiment d'orgues." The pastor informs him that his flock does not object to images that remind men of the Holy Family provided they are not worshiped. Montaigne then asks who had removed the old images from the church building, whereupon he is told it was not the Lutherans but the Zwinglians, "incités du malin esprit y étoient passés avant eux qui avoient faict ce ravage."

Although it seems that his mother, brother, and sister were Protestants and Montaigne himself had an official title in the household of Henry of Navarre, and that of necessity in his judicial duties he frequented many who were *réformés*, there is no reason to think that he ever swerved with any strong conviction from the line of traditional Catholicism. Plattard reports:

Mais lui-même n'a jamais incliné vers la Réforme parcequ'elle était une innovation: les risques futurs d'un changement de cette portée lui semblaient devoir être plus considérables encore que les maux et les ruines (ce sont ses expressions)

[104] *Montaigne et son temps*, pp. 72–73.

qu'il avait déjà produits. Montaigne reste donc catholique. Est-ce à dire que cette profession de foi implique une adhésion explicite à chacun des dogmes de l'Eglise? Nullement, car il se refuse précisément à soumettre ces dogmes à l'examen, estimant qu'il est "impossible d'établir quelque chose de certain de l'immortelle nature par la mortelle." Mais précisément parce que rien ne permet de sortir de ces incertitudes sur Dieu, l'âme, les fins dernières, il s'en tient à la tradition qui, en France, est le Catholicisme.[105]

His logical instinct rather led him to condemn the Calvinists and the disorders they caused. Plattard selects single statements from the *Essais*, places them in sequence under the title of "Le procès du Protestantisme":

Il y a grand amour de soi et présomption d'estimer ses opinions jusque là que, pour les établir, il faille renverser une paix publique et introduire tant de maux inévitables et une si horrible corruption de mœurs que les guerres civiles apportent. . . . Qui se mêle de choisir et de changer usurpe l'autorité de juger et se doit faire fort de voir la faute de ce qu'il chasse et le bien de ce qu'il introduit. . . .[106]

It is evident that the author of the *Apologie de Raimon Sebond* is not in the slightest fashion a rebel, or even a radical.[107] He sees clearly the distinction between special desirable reforms and a sweeping revolution. The latter always brings more evil in its wake, especially when it is waged over the correction of errors "contestées et débattables." In his reform of justice he does not seek to change the whole judicial institution because of the venality of some judges, but limits his suggestions to the doing away with the "question," torment by fire, water and the boot. This sensitivity to torture explains the only sympathetic reference to Protestantism he ever wrote, occasioned presumably by his memory of the St. Bartholomew massacre. In II, 11, of the *Essais* he writes: "Je condamne en nos troubles la cause de l'un des partis, mais plus quand elle fleurit et quand elle est prospère: elle m'a parfois concilié à soy pour la voir misérable et accablée." This movement of sympathy with fellow mortals cruelly treated is a natural impluse. More fundamental is his sincere condemnation of radicals under any guise. He says in his *Raimon Sebond*, I, 22:

[105] *La Renaissance des lettres en France de Louis XII à Henri IV* (Paris: Colin, 1925), p. 194.

[106] *Op. cit.*, p. 194.

[107] The apocryphal story of his death is à propos. Monbrun (*op. cit.*, n. 101, p. 439) relates: "Montaigne sentant venir sa dernière heure, voulut qu'on célébrât la messe dans sa chambre, et c'est dans l'effort qu'il fit pour s'agenouiller au moment de l'élévation qu'il expira." Armaingaud has denied this tale (*Montaigne pamphlétaire*, p. 135), reporting that Etienne Pasquier and Pierre Brach are the only contemporaries who have alluded to Montaigne's death in their letters and that neither of them reports this episode.

Je suis bien desgoûté de la nouvelleté, quelque visage qu'elle porte, et ai raison, car j'en ay veu des effets très dommageables; celle qui nous presse depuis tant d'ans, elle n'a pas tout exploicté mais on peut dire avec apparence que par accident elle a tout produict et engendré voire et les maux et les ruynes qui se font depuis sous elle et contre elle.

These conservative statements of Montaigne are reminiscent of La Boétie's remarks in the *Mémoire* on the Edict of January, and furnish justification for our belief that the two men saw alike and felt similarly about the religious disorders and the practical measures to take in order to achieve peace. The way to reform of Catholic practices and to the winning over gradually of French dissidents was sufficiently outlined in the *Mémoire*. It is not too hazardous to guess that Montaigne may have considered publishing it after 1570, perhaps together with the *Contr'un*, the only format indeed in which it is available today in the Bonnefon edition. But the monstrous crime of August, 1572, though it was followed by the shocked consciousness of liberal Catholics in France, made overtures toward compromise and unification seem impossible. The civil wars had begun with a vengeance, to be ended eventually, as we know now, by the extinction of the Valois, the accession of Henry IV, and the proclamation of the Edict of Nantes. This was still a long way off, though Montaigne was alive when Navarre came to the throne. In any case, the movement of events toward tolerance made La Boétie's solution increasingly academic. And so the *Mémoire*, like the *Contr'un*, disappeared from view.

We can now read I, 28, with a sense of drama underlying its touching references to La Boétie, and we can supply even the reticences that emphasize its lack of sequence or its abrupt change of plan. Montaigne was not likely to publish anything in the name of his friend that would give encouragement to disorder, or aid and comfort to the fomenters of rebellion. The censorship laws at Bordeaux could have no preventive effect on propaganda since the Swiss border was not too far away, and many of the cities of the Midi remained consecutively under Protestant control throughout these tormented decades of civil strife.

A friend, Marc Blanchard, professeur at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand, has sketched in a recent letter a tantalizing possibility. He suggests that Montaigne may have submitted his *Essais* to the Bordeaux printer intact, with the *Contr'un* in its planned place in Chapter 29. The printer, better informed on current publication, may have called to the attention of the essayist the circulation of the *Contr'un* under Protestant auspices in the *Réveille-Matin* or the *Memoires sur l'Estat de France*. Montaigne, shocked by the revelation, hurriedly makes the substitution of the sonnets which he has only recently recovered, and pastes on his MS a slip

containing the explanatory paragraph that now ends the chapter on Friendship. Pressure of time and anguish of soul prevent him from going over his MS to make the corrections that would eliminate the references to the *Contr'un*, a difficult enterprise seemingly, as the chapter was conceived as a framework leading to La Boétie's masterpiece. The necessary readjustment would involve for the sensitive author perhaps an entire revision of the pages into which he had poured his tenderness and grief. He let it go as it was, trusting to the final hastily added paragraph to explain and justify the inconsistency. The Paris edition of the *Essais* merely copied the one at Bordeaux. M. Blanchard's fascinating reconstruction might explain the edition of 1580, but would hardly suffice to vindicate the second edition of 1588 with the same chapter ending and no corrections. Here one surmise is as good as another, and we have suggested several related to the sensitivity of Montaigne in matters that touched his friend, the only person on earth to whom he was bound heart and soul. The success of the *Essais* was no doubt gratifying to Montaigne and Chapter 28, even as it stood, achieved the purpose he had fondled, that of immortalizing La Boétie. With this accomplished and their precious relationship established as an historic example, occuring perhaps only once in three centuries, Montaigne could disdain the inconsistencies in his chapter that have since received so much attention from a few obstinate scholars who insist on explaining the obvious.

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