

Jacques Bon-Homme and National Politics: Ethos and Audience in Seventeenth-Century Pamphlets

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A number of fundamental problems remain in the way of providing a comprehensive analysis of pamphlets and pamphleteering in Old Regime France.¹ Our incomplete knowledge of the sizes of editions, the mechanisms of distribution, and author-patron relationships is one set of problems. Another stems from the complexity of the texts themselves. Pamphlet authors often cultivated a baroque style of rhetoric, twisting their ideas into elaborate figures of speech, sometimes beyond recognition. Many pamphlets, at least in the early part of the seventeenth century, were intentionally written in colloquial speech, and some even contain parodies of southern dialects.² Perhaps the most difficult obstacle to interpretation is the rich undercurrent of allusions and citations to other pamphlets, to popular customs, to learned books, and "the whole cultural baggage of the epoch," to use Denis Richet's marvelous phrase.³

One of the main questions that arises from these difficulties is the question of the audience. This is a particularly troubling issue for those who are concerned about the concrete political functions of pamphleteering. The identity of the *public* is especially obscure in the seventeenth century. Millions of pieces of pamphlet propaganda were published, yet there is precious little evidence as to who read them and how these readers reacted.⁴ Occasionally, we can learn from diplomatic correspondence that this or that pamphlet caused a reaction among high-level politicians. But what about the larger audience for whom the pamphlets were presumably written? The evidence available about patterns of literacy suggests that the readers were predominantly urban, but this is hardly a very satisfying solution to the problem of establishing the audience for printed propaganda.⁵

An indirect but very revealing approach to the problem of pamphlet readers and reading is available through the texts themselves. By looking very closely at the techniques of persuasion used by pamphleteers, we can develop an idea of the audience that the pamphleteers hoped to reach, and of the ways in which they wanted their readers to react. Pamphlet authors came to their tasks with very specific purposes. They identified key issues, and related them to the concerns of key political interest groups. And, as

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Peter France, Marc Fumaroli, and Louis Marin have shown, seventeenth-century authors faced such a persuasive task armed with a formidable arsenal of rhetorical strategies.⁶ By reconstructing these strategies, we can learn a great deal about how pamphlets functioned in this political culture.

What rhetoricians call "ethos," that is, the attitudes, values, and personality projected by the speaker or narrator in a piece of discourse, is a particularly revealing aspect of pamphlet rhetoric. Pamphleteers went to elaborate lengths to invent and deploy an appropriate ethos in such a way as to enhance the general messages of their pamphlets. If they used their own voices, they were careful to adopt a tone and stance that would appeal to the particular audiences they were trying to reach. In many cases, the creation of a dramatized voice, or "persona," was felt to be more effective than straightforward, first person, argumentation.⁷ In these cases the authors created imaginary voices or even complete characters that were fictional, yet clearly intended to be convincing *porte-paroles* for the authors and their political factions. Many of these persona pamphlets were vaguely satirical, but others were quite serious.⁸

Pamphlets with personae as speakers, both serious and humorous, constituted a major proportion of the total production during the pamphlet wars I have studied closely, those of the period 1614-1617. This particular pamphlet war was part of the effort of Marie de Médicis and her supporters to retain control of Louis XIII's government in the face of a challenge by several great nobles. Persona pamphlets were especially important in the early phases of this struggle, before civil war actually broke out in 1615. An analysis of these persona pamphlets in their precise political context reveals some interesting things about the ways in which skilled pamphleteers tried to enhance the effectiveness of their messages, the kinds of audiences they were trying to reach, and what exactly they wanted those audiences to do.

It is significant, for example, that some pamphlets were clearly intended to move the reader to fits of partisan anger, while others tried to evoke a more contemplative response. The persona of a militant Catholic was often deployed in the former fashion. The "Old French Warrior," the "Colonel of the Parisian Militia," "The Dull-witted Wanderer," and the "Blunt Roughneck" are some examples of militant Catholic personae who appeared in 1614.⁹ It is not surprising to hear these characters praise the administration of Marie de Médicis, applaud the policy of rapprochement with Spain, and push for the completion of Louis XIII's marriage to Anne of Austria. These were the typical positions of the militant Catholic party. However, it is interesting to note how openly some of these pieces tried to recreate the spirit of the Holy League of 1584-1593 by projecting the ethos of a vicious, lower-middle class, Parisian, religious fanatic. They make it clear that the Parisian working people will give every last cent they have to wage war on the Huguenot vermin, and they openly praise ultramontane clergymen such as the Cardinal Du Perron. In the discourse of these

personae, the politics of 1614 is simply a matter of recognizing the rebels as crypto-Protestants or worse, and mobilizing an audience of true Catholics on behalf of Marie de Médicis' administration.

Other kinds of ethos-audience relationships utilized in these campaigns are more subtle, more difficult to interpret, and more revealing. In order to demonstrate how interesting and complex the ethos-audience relationship could be, we might consider the somewhat famous 1614 pamphlet, *Letter from Jacques Bon-Homme peasant from Beauvais: To my Lords the Princes absent from the court*.¹⁰ But, before we listen to its rhetoric, a brief summary of the situation in 1614 may be in order.¹¹

The year 1614 is famous, of course, for the meeting of the Estates General convened by Marie as Queen Regent which met in late October. This assembly was convoked in response to a typical noble revolt of the early seventeenth century. The titular head of the opposition was Henri II of Bourbon, the Prince de Condé, and nearest heir to the throne outside the immediate royal family. Condé was flanked by a faction of great nobles who, like himself, felt they were losing influence at court. Condé and his confederates initiated four years of political struggle by absenting themselves from the Court and heading for the provinces.

The revolt came to the attention of the general public when in February of 1614, Condé and some of his party forced their way into the town of Mézières (close to the northeastern frontier). From Mézières, they published the text of a letter from Condé to the Queen, which severely criticized the Queen's administration and invited all good Frenchmen to join a movement of resistance and reform.¹² Within a few weeks, copies of this letter-pamphlet were circulating very widely throughout France.¹³ Marie and her supporters reacted quickly by publishing an equally partisan response, a masterful piece of political argumentation written for the Queen by Villeroy, the powerful and experienced Secretary of State, who was a veteran of the Religious Wars.¹⁴ Marie's letter was also circulating widely throughout France by the end of March in both handwritten and printed form.¹⁵

These two pamphlets turned Condé's challenge into a national political struggle and initiated a pamphlet war that lasted as long as the struggle itself, that is, until Marie was removed from power following the assassination of Concini in 1617. In the meantime some 1400 pamphlets were published.¹⁶ There were many different pamphlet genres, from silly satirical verses to careful argumentation of the highest intellectual caliber. Throughout the campaign, there were calculated "leaks" of important correspondence, like the exchange between Condé and Marie mentioned above. The texts of many official acts, and accounts of official ceremonies were also turned into pamphlets. Both sides used these pamphlets in an effort to gain the support of particularly important political interest groups, such as the middle ranks of the nobility, provincial notables, the people of Paris, and the militants of both religious parties.

Several of the Queen's advisers were genuinely concerned that the rhetoric of "the public good" that Condé was trying to mobilize in conjunction with his call for an Estates General might appeal to some of these groups. In order to persuade these groups not to join the Prince's political coalition, a rhetorical strategy had to be mobilized that was based on more than just religious partisanship. In fact, the most experienced advisers at Court wanted to tone down the militant Catholic rhetoric for fear of pushing the moderate Protestants with loyalist leanings into the camp of the opposition.

Letter from Jacques Bon-Homme peasant from Beauvais: To my Lords the Princes absent from the court epitomizes this moderate rhetorical strategy mobilized by many of the Queen's supporters in the spring of 1614, not long after the letters by Condé and the Queen appeared in print. The ethos cultivated in many pamphlets of this campaign might best be described as that of the nonpartisan sage. Indeed, except for his inability to read and his low birth, Jacques Bon-Homme would be the ideal Stoic philosopher/gentleman. He has all the stereotypical virtues of the *honnête homme*—good manners, integrity, openness, reliability, and a sense of justice and proportion. Although a strong believer in law and order, Bon-Homme stands far above factional politics. Although pious, he was not a fanatic, and does not see his religious affiliation in terms of party. The persuasive function of such an ethos was that it provided a platform from which to deliver an ostensibly nonpartisan, good-natured, evenhanded rejection of Condé's challenge to the Queen's administration. The attempt was clearly being made through the cultivation of this ethos to reach an audience that needed persuading, one that would not automatically side with the Queen's faction.

Jacques explains to his readers that he is a ninety-seven-year-old peasant. His age and his station in life give him the temerity to speak of public affairs, and to send this letter to Condé and his confederates. He is careful to emphasize his peasantness. He explains in some detail that he and his wife farm their twenty-five acres and their two small enclosures with their own hands, and that he has two sons and three daughters, all married happily "without having tried to change social condition" as he puts it. But at the same time, Bon-Homme has a reputation as a political savant. This he earned by having once resolved a potentially dangerous dispute between his village and some local seigneurs. The problem arose when the mongrel watchdog of one of the villagers took a bite out of the tail of a gentleman's greyhound. After he persuaded the seigneurs not to take revenge on the villagers by devastating their fields, he became known as one of the more persuasive men of the region. Jacques thinks it is conceivable, then, that his ability to reason with people, may help bring the discontented princes back to their senses, and hopefully back into the Queen Regent's political coalition.

Interestingly, Jacques explains in his letter that he has formed his opinion of Condé's enterprise largely through his familiarity with the contents of the pamphlets mentioned above, Condé's pamphlet of late February 1614 and the Queen's response published a few days later. Jacques doesn't claim he has read these himself, but rather to have learned of their contents by talking to the village *greffier*. In the course of a village assembly gathered under an elm tree, the clerk had explained some of the specifics of Condé's political complaints and of the Queen's responses.¹⁷ From this information Jacques can see clearly enough that "the princes" have embarked on an ill-conceived plan.

We can already begin to appreciate the rhetorical and psychological complexity of this pamphlet. Jacques describes many of his life experiences in a very realistic way, and with enough consistency that he emerges in the end as an authentic peasant personality. Yet, the humor makes it absolutely clear that no one was supposed to be fooled by this pamphlet into thinking it had actually been written by a peasant. The reader is confronted with an obviously fictional persona claiming to be uneducated and illiterate, who is clearly speaking for an intelligent and well informed author. The anonymous, unknown author made no attempt to conceal these contradictions. In fact, he was playful with them. Jacques mocks his own nonexistence by explaining that he was named after his great, great, great grandfather, the Jacques who led the *Jacquerie*.

The pamphlet was clearly designed to be both entertaining and disconcerting. In order to fully understand the author's message, the reader has to read through Jacques' discourse. In other words, the persona of Jacques Bon-Homme is a "trap" in the sense that Louis Marin has used this word.¹⁸ The reader is trapped into appreciating the author's point of view not only through the process of enjoying his encounter with Jacques, but through the process of trying to understand it. This gives the author an opportunity to show how Condé's revolt might look from a particular point of view—a point of view that intelligent nonpeasants and other people of good sense might share with Jacques Bon-Homme if they think about it for a moment.

Since he is ostensibly addressing great lords, Bon-Homme was especially good at conveying this wisdom gently and politely. Thus he often used anecdotes rather than hard political argument.

I remember what happened in Beauvais once in 1533, when I took some pigeons there to sell at the market. Some young men, having agreed as one learned later, to meet at precisely three o'clock, found themselves late for their appointment. So they went to the keeper of the town clock and explained to him that the clock was an hour fast, and that he should turn it back. When he refused to do this, they became abusive. Things passed from words to blows, and in the scuffle the mechanism was damaged. As a result, the damaged clock functioned erratically for the next eight days. This shows that violence is the enemy of order and the right way to do things. The gentle and gracious means are always the most desirable and often the most convenient.¹⁹

This anecdote has the important effect of personalizing and simplifying for the reader the political struggle between Condé and the Queen. The complex national struggle between two intricate political coalitions is reduced to the same fundamental kinds of human relationships that one can observe in the village. The political tactics of Condé and his associates resemble the vandalism of juvenile delinquents. Just like the young men in the story, they are making ridiculous demands and threatening violence in order to get their way. This analogy is not exactly presented as a judgment; it is simply an association that occurs to Bon-Homme on the basis of common sense, a self-evident analogy that anyone in touch with the realities of violence in his own community could reach for himself.

But the persuasive intention of the anecdote is more profound than that. Note that it concludes with two "commonplaces" of a very general and abstract nature. "This shows that violence is the enemy of order and the right way to do things. The gentle and gracious means are always the most desirable and often the most convenient." These two sentences are provided to reinforce the logic behind the analogy between juvenile delinquency and the behavior of Condé and his confederates. Upon confronting the commonplaces, the reader cannot help but reconstruct some of this timeless logic for himself. Reckless behavior leading to violence and destruction should always be repudiated (major premise). Condé and his associates are engaged in a reckless course of action that may lead to violence and destruction (minor premise). Clearly their behavior should be repudiated (conclusion). The question is no longer one of village politics, but of the basic structure of the moral world. Condé's politics of violence and rebellion is in fundamental contradiction to the moral logic of the human community.

But can we be any more specific about which human community? What were the social characteristics of the audience for this particular pamphlet? The rural themes are highly developed. There are elaborate plays on the concern of Jacques and his village neighbors for their chickens. They say they would one hundred times rather endure their present difficulties than endure three months of civil war and the devastations of troops.²⁰ It is tempting to associate the rural motifs with a popular or even rural audience, that is, to see Jacques Bon-Homme as living in the political dimension of the world of popular almanachs and the *bibliothèque bleue*.²¹ But most of the evidence points in a different direction, not only in this pamphlet, but in the campaign as a whole.

The vast majority of pamphlets contained political discourse of a relatively high level of sophistication. And, despite the vaguely burlesque qualities in *Jacques Bon-Homme*, this pamphlet too was written for an audience of skilled and informed readers. The references to other pamphlets, the vocabulary, and the complexity of the ironic brand of humor used throughout the pamphlet demonstrate this. So do the detailed references to the actual workings of the King's councils, and the accurate

descriptions of French society. Consider the following passage, ostensibly addressed to the rebel princes, but which actually mocks the great nobility. Bon-Homme asks why, if they are trying to improve their lot in life, are the Princes preparing to fight?

Let us consider the question of pleasure, my honorable *seigneurs*! One gains a good deal more satisfaction from a walk in the gardens of the Louvre, hunting deer at Fontainebleau, practicing martial arts in the Palais Royal, and eating Portuguese omelets at a chic cabaret . . . than from eating the dust of the country side, feeling the midday heat on your back, sleeping under the barrel of a cannon, and getting up at three in the morning for a raid against some stronghold. . . . Such inconveniences would seem all the more unsupportable in view of your delicate upbringing and your experience in every sort of pleasure and pastime.²²

The people who would have laughed in the seventeenth century at this ironic portrayal of the pastimes of Princes were the urban elite of Paris and the provincial capitals who knew very well that princes were fond of amusing themselves in frivolous ways, and that there was a good possibility that the revolt of 1614 would be just another frivolous amusement. This audience might also conclude that it would be very dangerous to support the princes in any way, since once they became tired of playing, or had obtained what they wanted from the game, they would leave their less illustrious supporters to face the full wrath of the royal government.

In this way, the author worked skillfully to discredit the idea among urban elites that they might take advantage of the princes' revolt for their own purposes, especially in view of the recently announced convocation of an Estates General. Bon-Homme was in fact a direct response to Condé's pamphlet, in which several issues of concern to the urban elite had been raised, notably, corruption in the administration of the King's finances. If Condé emerged as a leader for reform in the eyes of the deputies to the Estates General, the Queen's control over the King's councils would be very precarious.

The purpose of this pamphlet, unlike the militant Catholic pieces, was to encourage inaction rather than action. The ethos was not intended to spark a frenzy of militant support for the administration, but to convince a certain audience to ignore the political challenge of the rebels and go about their usual businesses as much as possible. Obviously, maintaining the normal channels of authority within municipal governments and their bourgeois militia was vital to the Queen's faction. Indeed, the heart of the rebels' strategy was to build a political coalition of regional governors and provincial towns so that they would be able to bargain with the Regency government from a position of real military strength. The Queen's advisers and her more farsighted partisans immediately realized this, and most of their political efforts in the spring of 1614 were directed towards blocking this effort. *Jacques Bon-Homme* was part of this campaign.

What kinds of larger conclusions can be drawn from this kind of an analysis? Pamphlet rhetoric makes clear that the most important sector of the pamphlet audience consisted of the traditional political elite. Pamphlets were generally not designed to involve *le peuple* in national politics, but to influence the thinking of what we might call "mid-level" political elites—municipal officials, officials in local sovereign courts, local governors, and religious leaders. Although it is certain that the contents of pamphlets trickled down to the lower urban classes, the impact of pamphlets on these classes was secondhand for the most part as local elites circulated orally the factual and rhetorical material that they encountered in pamphlets. More needs to be learned about this process in general, and the probable role of the clergy in particular. The important thing to recognize is how complex and important the pamphleteering process was in the context of the national coalition-building process that constituted a struggle for control of the royal government in seventeenth-century France.

Notes

1. Among the more recent studies of pamphlets and pamphleteering during the Old Regime, the following are of particular interest in the present context. Christian Jouhaud, "Écriture et action au XVII^e siècle: sur un corpus de Mazarinades," *Annales: Economie, Société, Civilisation* 38, 1 (1983): 42-64; William F. Church, *Richelieu and Reason of State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972); Donald A. Bailey, "Writers Against the Cardinal: A study of the Pamphlets which attacked the Person and Policies of Cardinal Richelieu during the Decade 1630-1640," 2 vols. (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1972); J. M. Hayden *France and the Estates General, 1614* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), and his unpublished paper "Political Pamphlets and Historians of Early Modern France: The Example of 1614-1615," (manuscript, 1980); Roger Chartier, "Pamphlets et gazettes," an excellent contribution to *Histoire de l'édition française*, vol. I, *Le Livre conquérant: Du Moyen âge au milieu du XVII^e siècle* (Paris: Promodis, 1982), 405-425; Hélène Duccini, "Regard sur la littérature pamphlétaire en France au XVII^e siècle," *Revue Historique* 260 (1978): 313-337 which presents some of the findings of her very useful thèse de troisième cycle, "La Littérature pamphlétaire sous la Régence de Marie de Médicis," 3 vols. (University of Paris X, 1977); Joseph Klaitz, *Printed Propaganda under Louis XIV: Absolute Monarchy and Public Opinion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976); and Hubert Carrier "Souvenirs de La Fronde en U.R.S.S.: les collections russes de Mazarinades," *Revue Historique* 252 (1974): 27-50. My own "Printed Propaganda and Political Power in Early 17th-century France, 1614-1617" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1982) has a selective bibliography that may be of further use.
2. For a parody of dialect, see *Le Franc Taupin*, Lindsay and Neu 2990, possibly in imitation of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné's parodies of Gascon speech in *Les aventures du baron de Foëneste* (Maille, 1617). The bibliography of Robert O. Lindsay and John Neu, *French Political Pamphlets, 1547-1648* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969) provides a convenient system of identification numbers which has also been used to index the extensive microfilm publication, *French Political Pamphlets* (Woodbridge, Conn.: Research Publications Inc., 1979-1980).
3. Denis Richet, "La polémique politique en France de 1612 à 1615," in *Représentation et vouloir politique autour des États-Généraux de 1614*, under the direction of Roger Chartier and D. Richet (Paris: EHESS, 1982), 151.
4. There are nearly 8,000 pamphlets conserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale for the reigns of Louis XIII and Louis XIV: Duccini, "Regard sur la littérature pamphlétaire" [article], 317.

Even the most conservative estimate of the total number of copies printed would have to be several millions.

5. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Printing and the People," in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975); Henri-Jean Martin, "Culture écrite et culture orale, culture savante et culture populaire dans la France d'ancien régime," *Journal des savants*, (1974-1975): 225-282; François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire: l'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 2 vols. (Paris: Seuil, 1977); George Huppert, *Public Schools in Renaissance France* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1984); and Jean-Luc Marais, "Littérature et culture populaire aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles," *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'ouest* 87 (1980): 65-105.
6. Peter France, *Rhetoric and Truth in France: Descartes to Diderot*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3-33; Marc Fumaroli, *L'Age de l'éloquence: Rhétorique et 'res literaria' de la Renaissance au seuil de l'époque classique* (Geneva: Droz, 1980); Louis Marin, *Le Récit est un piège* (Paris: Minuit, 1978). There is, of course, a large literature on rhetorical theory. Of particular interest in the present context are Hugh D. Duncan, *Language and Literature in Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953) based in part on the ideas of Kenneth Burke; Wayne Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); and Stanley Fish, *Self-Consuming Artifacts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 78-155. My approach to pamphlet rhetoric owes much to my teachers in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, especially Arthur Quinn.
7. I borrow the term "persona" from George T. Wright, *The Poet in the Poem: The Personae of Eliot, Yeats and Pound* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1960).
8. On the satirical impulse in pamphleteering, see J. H. M. Salmon, "French Satire in the Late Sixteenth Century," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 6/2 (1975): 57-88. Several of the persona pieces with a satirical flavor (notably *Le Franc Taupin* cited in note 2 above) bear a close resemblance to Des Lauriers' *Facecieuses paradoxes de Bruscombille, et autres discours comiques* . . . (Rouen, 1615). An analysis of satirical pamphlets and their relationship to popular literature, especially comic theater will certainly turn up some interesting relationships. A version of the Rabelasian comic style as described by Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1968) is clearly in evidence in many pamphlets.
9. *Le vieux Gaulois: A messieurs les princes* (Paris and Bordeaux), Lindsay and Neu 3176-3179; *Le Colonel de la milice de Paris* . . . , Lindsay and Neu 2923; *Le lourdaud vagabond*, Lindsay and Neu 2884-2885; *Le Franc Taupin*, Lindsay and Neu 2990.
10. *Lettre de Jacques Bon-homme paysan de Beauvoisis: A messeigneurs les princes retirez de la cour*, Lindsay and Neu, 2900-2902; this pamphlet and two others in the same genre have been published with useful annotations by Gustave Charlier in *Revue du seizième siècle* 16 (1929), 1-20 and 191-218. Further references will be to Charlier's edition.
11. For a detailed account, see J. M. Hayden's *France and the Estates General*, which should be complemented by the essays in *Représentation et vouloir politique autour des États-Généraux de 1614* cited above and Duccini's "La Littérature pamphlétaire" [thesis], vol. II.
12. *Double de la lettre escrite par monseigneur le prince de Condé . . . A la reyne regente . . .*, Lindsay and Neu 2930-2936.
13. The court complained of the copies of Condé's pamphlet in circulation in late February, as demonstrated by the Queen's letter of 24 February to Cardinal Sourdis (Archbishop of Bordeaux), Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Manuscrits français, 6379, fol. 181. Municipal archives confirm this, e.g. Bibliothèque Municipale de Poitiers, *Délibérations de l'Hôtel de Ville*, Registre 68, fol. 220. Pamphlet dissemination will be discussed in some detail in my forthcoming book.
14. *Double de la responce de la reyne regente, mere du roy, a la lettre escrite a sa majesté, par monseigneur le prince de Condé, le 19 Fevrier 1614*, Lindsay and Neu 3061; for seven other editions see 3062-3065, and 3073-3076.

15. Evident from the deliberations of town council meetings in Dijon, Angers, Poitiers, Agen, and elsewhere. At least twelve different printings of this pamphlet have been found by Duccini, "Regard sur la littérature pamphlétaire," [article], 328.
16. Hayden gives the figure of 858 pamphlets in 1425 editions for the years 1614-1615 alone, and estimates a total production of somewhere around 1,500,000 pamphlets, "Political Pamphlets and Historians", 2.
17. The pamphlet-letters published by Condé and the Queen (cited in notes 12 and 14 above) are clearly identified.
18. Marin, *Le Récit est un piège* (cited above). To schematize some very subtle analysis, what Marin and others have emphasized is the way certain kinds of seventeenth-century discourse took the reader through a reading experience that he would be inclined to resist if he were immediately to recognize from the beginning the author's intention.
19. *Lettre de Jacques Bon-homme*, 14-15.
20. *Lettre de Jacques Bon-homme*, 18.
21. Robert Mandrou's *De la culture populaire aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles: Bibliothèque bleue de Troyes* (Paris: Stock, 1964) remains fundamental, even if it is controversial. Almanachs, were a key item in the *bibliothèque bleue*, and have been studied carefully by Genvieve Bolleme, *Les Almanachs populaires aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles: Essai d'histoire sociale* (Paris: Mouton, 1969). The *bibliothèque bleue* in general and almanachs more specifically almost never contained overt political commentary on current events.
22. *Lettre de Jacques Bon-homme*, 12.