A STUDY OF NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI'S PHILOSOPHY OF THE STATE AS
DERIVED FROM THE PRINCE AND THE DISCOURSES ON THE
FIRST TEN BOOKS OF TITUS LIVIUS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In a comparison of Niccolo Machiavelli's Prince with his Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius, contradictions and paradoxes are evident in his larger philosophy of the state. Most translations of either work are usually prefaced with the admonition that the works are to be read as a unit; furthermore, the two works are often included in a single volume. But critical comparisons are few.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this thesis was to make a critical study of The Prince by Niccolo Machiavelli, primarily but not exclusively, as a reflection of a careful reading of his Discourses. The problem was to detect whatever paradoxes may arise in Machiavelli's larger philosophy of the state through such a comparison of his separate works.

Importance of the study. Although critical reviews and studies of the works of Machiavelli have been made, disparate elements in the works have been seldom assimilated as a unit pertinent to a total and consistent philosophy of the state. As a result of the deficiency of this desirable
requisite to any complete judgment on his philosophy of the state, Machiavelli becomes persona non grata in the judgment of some readers. This condition was a factor in the writing of the thesis.

II. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Before an attempt can be made to understand the writings of Machiavelli, attention must be given the actual life and times of this Renaissance author and politician. Chapter II, therefore, is a summary biography of Machiavelli.

Chapter III presents the appropriate post-Renaissance background with the political and philosophical development of the post-Renaissance state.

Chapter IV discusses The Prince. Because of its value as a separate treatise containing a methodical exposition of the principles of conduct for the monarch, it is given close attention. Somewhat closer attention, in the same sense of methodical exposition, is given the larger and more solid Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius. Relative value of certain passages was consistently kept in mind.

Chapter V is a considered estimate and comparison of both works in which possible contradictions are discussed.

Chapter VI presents the basic concepts in Machiavelli's philosophy of the state.
CHAPTER II

A SUMMARY OF THE LIFE AND BACKGROUND OF
NICCOLO MACHIAVELLI

Biographical aspects are necessarily and desirably reduced to the minimum when, as in this thesis, they preceded exposition and analysis of the work of an author. Some biographical statements were based on inference and innuendo. Some facts were deleted as being not pertinent to the reader's comprehension of the actual work under consideration.

Niccolo Machiavelli was born May 3, 1469, in Florence, Italy. His father, Bernardo, waged a constant battle to retain the rather modest pecuniary family standard of the gentry.\(^1\) Although Bernardo could trace his family to the Marquis Hugo of Tuscany of the tenth century, he was poor in possessions and depended for his income on his position as jurisconsult and Treasurer of the Marches of Ancona.\(^2\) Machiavelli's mother, Bartalomea Nelli, had been married to Niccolo Benozzi, but had evidently profited little from his

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death. In summary, Machiavelli's family was rich in heritage, but poor in land and wealth.

While very little is known about Machiavelli's early childhood, we may suppose that it was comparable to the childhood of others of his social class. In accordance with the educational standards of this class, he would probably have read the traditional Latin texts common to his generation. He would doubtless have been instructed in an appreciation for the fine arts. Perhaps his father saw that he was trained in logical and analytical thinking as a necessary background for one who seeks public office. Probably his mother, the author of some religious poetry, gave him appreciation for verse.

After the death of Lorenzo the Magnificent in 1492, the power and prosperity of the Florentine republic began to decline, as a prelude to a change in the government. Two years later, in 1494, Machiavelli entered the world of politics in the role of a minor clerk, retaining this position until 1498. His business as a clerk in the Second Chancel-

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3Ibid., p. xvi.
4A comparison of Max Lerner's popular "Introduction" in The Prince and the Discourses by Niccolo Machiavelli (New York: Random House, Inc., 1950), to Detmold (cf. ante) seems to indicate that Lerner relied heavily on Detmold.
5Detmold, loc. cit.
6Thatcher, op. cit., p. 58.
lery, under Marcello Virgillo Adriani, was with diplomatic representatives and the problems of war. During this period, he may have made favorable impressions, through either ability or friendship, on those persons shaping the Florentine republican government, for in 1498, he attained an appointment as Second Chancellor and Secretary to the department of the "Dieci di Liberta e Pace." His opponent for this office, Francesco Baroni, was held in high esteem by the state for his actions in the trial of Fra Girolamo Savonarola. Machiavelli, however, remained in this position until 1512, a total of fourteen years, until the Medici returned to power.

While he was in office, he had occasion to be employed as a diplomatic representative to the other Italian cities, to France and Germany, and possibly to Spain. This period constitutes the political training period which was instrumental in originating the ideas and political rules of conduct embodied in his philosophy of the state. The realities

7Detmold, op. cit., p. xvii.

9Detmold, op. cit., p. xvi.

of actual diplomatic relations became the basis for his advice to his superiors in Florence. He was expected to be shrewd and critical in his analysis of political maneuvering in the areas to which he was appointed. Therefore, he gained an apparent mastery of the art of diplomacy; meeting men of power, he cultivated a certain brilliance and wit, but also became aware of his own limitations.11

Machiavelli thus became the chief Florentine ambassador when he was appointed Secretary of the Republic, and became acquainted with Emperor Maximilian, Louis XII of France, Piero Soderini, Caesar Borgia, and others.12 Unfortunately, after the battle of Ravenna in 1512, when the Papacy, in the person of Julius II, was victorious over Florence and her French allies, one of the stipulations of the victory was the restoration of the Medici in Florence.13 Machiavelli and his trained militia14 bowed in defeat before the Pope's Swiss mercenary army; he was arrested, thrown


14Detmold, op. cit., Vol. I,
into prison, and tortured as a suspected revolutionist. Upon his release, he returned to a small farm near Florence, where he remained until his death on June 22, 1527.

During these remaining fourteen years of enforced retirement, Machiavelli began his major writings, which, while they may have focused attention on his abilities as a statesman and diplomat, did not cause him to be restored to full political life, for he died under a guise of political exile. The exception occurred when he declined a small job in Genoa in 1518. He entered the Florentine Literary Society in 1520 for a production of his work, The Art of War. From 1520 to 1525, he was commissioned by Cardinal de Medici, later Pope Clement VII, to write the History of Florence. Further fruits of his retirement were: The Prince (1532), Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius (1531), and the plays Clizia and Mandragola.

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15 Ibid., p. xxviii.


17 Idem
CHAPTER III

THE POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL POST-RENAISSANCE DEVELOPMENT

I. GENERAL POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

The politics of Machiavelli's times left a deep impression on him. The governments of both church and state were in a period of transition. In the words of Professor Gettell:

The pope, no longer able to claim supremacy in secular affairs, had regained his position in the ecclesiastical organization; and church councils, seldom assembled, were brought under his control. In the political world, the tendencies toward nationality and monarchy were finally successful. The former idea of a united Europe under an imperial ruler had lost all significance. National distinctions were clearly marked and separate states, secular in nature, stood forth under strong monarchs, who reduced the feudal assemblies to positions of unimportance. The tendency toward conciliation made least progress in Italy.¹

Shortly before the time of Machiavelli, strife and wars among Italian cities had led to the rise of despotic rulers.² For these rulers, oaths or pacts were in general simply instruments of personal advantage, and if a favorable opportunity arose that involved the dishonorable breaking of bond, the bond was broken as a matter of course. Violence

²Ibid., p. 139.
and bloodshed were not avoided if the rewards were commensurate with the actions, and if punishment could possibly be avoided. Intimidation by physical size or force was utilized as the suitable mode of conduct. Rulers who signed treaties with each other would aid a common enemy against their co-signers if it were to their immediate advantage. Particularly in the little Italian states, the use of craft and diplomacy replaced military force. The art of diplomacy, however, based on the rule of survival of the fittest depended, in the final analysis, on force. As George H. Sabine said, "Everywhere there was an enormous wreckage of medieval institutions, for the absolute monarchy was a thing of blood and iron which rested in large part quite frankly on force."

The new national state knew no limitations of a moral nature, for it was not bound by a code, but was its own law—was based on might in the pure struggle for power.

The same set of standards had to be assumed by the church when operating at the political level; the assumption of any other standard assured failure. Thus, as Hearnshaw pointed out, the realm of spiritual values underwent a change

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3 Loc. cit.


with the invention of a double standard of moral conduct. Machiavelli was a witness to the struggle of the church for political power, and while it is possible that he had no disdain for its actions, it is equally possible that he was not inspired to his attitude toward the church by any notion of salvation. Careful observer that he was, he was conscious simply of the important position of the church in any philosophy of the state.

In summary, it would appear that royal power grew at the expense of all other power, and when it continued to grow, a state of absolute monarchy was the result. Political power was converted from the control of responsible men of business; from the control of the church, which could be expected to retain at least a measure of decency; from the control of experienced diplomats, who would not pledge themselves to action detrimental to their own affairs of state, into the complete control of one man in the person of the king, who often initiated governmental action on the whim of the moment. By those who were ruled, a measure of control was retained through various checks and balances, but these often represented a narrow margin of safety for the state. Nevertheless, when the king was wise and just,

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a considerable measure of security in terms of peace and prosperity was insured. No doubt, it was this latter condition that Machiavelli, motivated by patriotic desires of nationalism, and a desire to see Italy as an equal among all nations, desired to establish by the application of principles of past history to the contemporary business of government.

II. IN ITALY

The major political powers in Italy, in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, were centered in the cities of Florence, Naples, Milan, Venice, and in the Papacy. Except as the balance of power between these cities was upset by other independent Italian states, the cities felt no threat. Therefore, the duel for control centered in the major cities, with the other city-states merely attempting to enlist with the victorious city at the propitious time. In these circumstances Lorenzo the Magnificent, by use of diplomacy and power, managed to insure Florence peace and prosperity.

War, with its expense and bloodshed, was not an ultimate recourse at the end of diplomatic negotiations, but was a concomitant instrument of diplomacy. Perhaps one of the

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major reasons for this condition was the hiring of mercenaries rather than committing private citizens to battle. In battle, it was the custom to array the opposing armies on the field of combat and compare numerical strength. As was frequently the case, when one army outnumbered the other, the battle was not initiated. Leaders of the inferior army, appraised of the situation, and knowing that the possibility of victory was slight, accepted terms of defeat without a show of resistance.

Conditions of this nature made it imperative that the realm of diplomacy remain in the hands of only the most intelligent and capable men. In general, the continued existence of the city or state largely depended upon the thoughts and actions of the diplomatic representatives. And furthermore, careful observation and assessment of political conditions and sound and trained judgment constituted the mandatory instrument of the successful statesman. The actual realities of diplomatic bargaining contained a type of thought and a type of ethics not reflected in general

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8Ibid., p. 6.


10Gilbert, loc. cit.
social intercourse. This type of "power" politics required a new type of man, the "political" man—the power politician.

Fear was the emotion that contributed to most political action in Italy at this time. When Charles VIII of France surmounted the natural Alpine barrier in 1494, with the intent of capturing Naples, all Italian politics became obsequious in character, obsessed with fear of this new threat of foreign influence. This accentuated the general pattern of inner political action instead of leading to a course of unification to resist outside domination. Foreign influence and power, instead of being ignored or destroyed, were cultivated by each independent power as possible tools of victory to bring to submission other Italian states.

Frequently, although foreign aid, either in soldiers or monetary measures, was a critical factor in victory, the resultant price was exorbitant. Payment for this aid was rendered in many ways: payment of money or valuables, payment in land concessions or trade rights, or payment from

12 Idem
the victim in the form of an imposed tax. 14 Whatever the circumstances of repayment, Italy, as a whole, suffered. The foreign gain was a general Italian loss, and the general economic disadvantage was not to the advantage of the one specific area that had received benefits from the foreign addition of power. This general Italian loss became the concern of Machiavelli, but never became a factor in more responsible city or state actions.

Few Italian statesmen wished Italian national unity prior to the complete domination of their own and their city's vested interests over the whole peninsula. Most would seem to have believed that after the use of outside power had given them control over all of Italy, then the new growth of a national spirit, as a result of that control, could be turned against the particular source of aid. 15

Machiavelli did not hold with this doctrine. "A united Italy was the limit of his vision..." says T. S. Eliot in a crucial essay on Machiavelli. 16

14 Machiavelli's letter September 3, 1500 in Detmold Ibid., p. 90.


would unite Italy, and then arbitrate individual state and city differences, without the use of foreign aid. Machiavelli's observations in the European courts no doubt gave him reason to believe that use of European power could end only in complete foreign domination, and not in national unity; and on this interpretation, The Prince would be not a manual of advice for gaining control of other independent Italian powers, but an Italian instrument of unification opposed to any foreign invasion. "It is only because he so highly values the commonwealth," says Eliot, "that Machiavelli elects to advise the Prince." 17 Machiavelli had seen his country ravished and violated by foreign invaders employed by ambitious native princes, and Eliot believed this to be the origin of his thought and writing.

Summarily, then: The economic expansion of geographically and naturally favored areas had resulted in inevitable concentrations of power specifically in Florence, Naples, Milan, Venice, and in the Papacy, as previously remarked; and it was in the struggle for supremacy that Machiavelli primarily received his political instruction. He had been, indeed, on two occasions, in the presence of Caesar Borgia 18.

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17 Ibid., p. 51.
and his followers, and was witness to the diabolically clever actions of a man motivated by a pure and intense will to power. Furthermore, Machiavelli formulated his theory of power politics and recommended comparable action as the sensible course for his weakened city of Florence. If power were to remain in Florence, it would have to come from the new norms of political action. 19

III. THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT

Philosophically, Machiavelli's contemporaries were mainly of the Humanistic movement which placed great emphasis on man and his own destiny, and stressed individual values. This Humanistic movement was in turn divided into two main schools consisting of Marsilio Ficino and his followers, of the Platonic school of thought, and Pietro Pomponazzi and his followers, of the Aristotelian school of thought. Of the two schools of thought, the influence of the Florentine Platonists appears to be the more lasting; it is still apparent in such thinkers as Berkeley and Coleridge. 20


Machiavelli attaches enough importance to Ficino to devote a section of the History of Florence to him, but the author of this thesis found no reference in Machiavelli to the more academic Humanistic Aristotelianism of Pomponazzi.

Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, a Humanist and friend of Ficino, believed that man had the choice to share in the properties of all other beings because man had no fixed properties of his own. He further believed that because of this free choice, man should elect to participate in the properties of angels, and thus choose the best of choices. While Machiavelli mentions the name, only a few times, and only in conjunction with the family members and not Pico, he nonetheless was in a period of transition when the Humanists, who had been primarily intellectuals, were already essentially politicians with all literary interests being subservient to politics, and Pico's Humanistic good, of the choice of properties best worthy of sharing, had become the good of sharing in the power or properties of politics.

In this manner, once again, power of ruling or power.

per se became a good in itself; and Machiavelli saw that this good, or power, was sought by the use of all methods, including murder, war, and other violence. Power lost all moral significance, and the sole reality became the individual possession of power. Thus religion for Machiavelli was subservient to power, and was to be used only as a tool for the acquisition of more power. Yet the evaluation and philosophy of power had for Machiavelli a practical end in a national unification of Italy, and in another sense was therefore not a philosophy of power having pure power as its end. At the same time, this unification of Italy through the application of power politics was not to destroy the freedom of men but was to create a freedom wherein all force would be balanced against itself. Thus the Humanistic dignity of man was not lost.

Humanistic philosophy with its classical background applied to the contemporary problems, indicated to Machiavelli that there was an order in history making possible

25 Ibid., p. 42. 26 Ibid., pp. 42-44.
29 Ibid., pp. 70-71.
present applications of past methods of conduct, which could thus be examined, categorized, and applied as a science. And for his power-philosophy, the Roman Republic was the model for his unified Italian State.30 The desired sovereign state was to be constituted as a balance of the living forces, freely at play in the organism of the commonwealth. In this sense the present meaning of the word "state" in modern political theory can be attributed to Machiavelli.31

The Machiavellian principles for the establishment of this state are embodied in The Prince, and his investigation of the historical principles and patterns of conduct to be found in such a state are developed in the Discourses. Both are discussed in the following chapter.

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31From a lecture on Machiavelli, February 19, 1953, delivered by Dr. E. I. Dyche, Professor of Philosophy, Indiana State Teachers College, Terre Haute, Indiana.
CHAPTER IV

A SUMMARY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE STATE AS EMBODIED
IN THE PRINCE AND THE DISCOURSES ON
THE FIRST TEN BOOKS OF TITUS LIVIUS

I. THE PRINCE

Machiavelli in The Prince acknowledged only two types of governments, republics and principalities; the principalities were his immediate concern. They were of two types: the hereditary principalities, and new principalities, which were formed by the acquisition of new land. The hereditary principalities were easy to maintain because of custom; but the new principalities, by their very nature, required application of intense calculation. Machiavelli offered The Prince as an outline of these calculations.

The change of government, in order to be successful, had to provide new benefits to the conquered people to gain their loyalty, and Machiavelli saw that the real problem in the required principality resulted from a disorder which came from a mixture of old and new customs of government.


2Ibid., Chapter II, pp. 5-6.
Disorder was not as intense if the languages of the people were the same, and if the laws and taxes were not changed. However, if the new principality were to be gained, lost in rebellion, and regained, the problem of maintenance would become the less difficult because the new ruler would then have the right to rule without regard for old customs and freedoms. Further simplification was attained if the people were not used to freedom.  

The problem of maintaining a new principality required that the new ruler live in the new country in order that he could quickly investigate instances of revolt and protect his financial interests from thieves. This colony could be securely established if some of the ruler's major decisions were in favor of the conquered people, who would then come to regard the new ruler with affection. Additional colonies could be established by giving land to the army, which scattered the old landowners. In this manner, a worthless standing army could be avoided, but the potential power was not reduced.  

To strengthen the new principalities, the ruler was to give attention to neighboring states by defending the weaker states and by attempting to weaken the stronger states. He would be asked to intervene when the weaker

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states disagreed among themselves, and this invitation would justify his action if he assumed control over one of them. If war were possible, as a result, the ruler was to act quickly, for, while time was neither good nor bad, quick action could be an advantage.\(^5\) And in attempting to weaken the stronger states, the ruler was not to lend aid to those who coming to power would be stronger than himself, for they would ruin him: Whoever is the cause of another's coming to power is ruined himself; for power is produced by craft or force, and the one who uses these will always be mistrusted by the one who through him thus comes to power.\(^6\)

A method of maintaining control in new principalities was killing all the old rulers, abolishing all old authority, and establishing new authority in the new ruler and his nobles.\(^7\) This could be accomplished either by destroying all the old laws or by establishing new judges without changing the old laws; in the latter case the free spirit of the conquered people, which could constitute a factor of possible revolt, would continue to exist, but would no longer be of a dangerous nature.\(^8\) Because a change of law was considered by Machiavelli to be one of the most difficult of

\(^{8}\) *Idem*
political actions, this alternative was to be avoided, unless success were assured. The law could itself become a tool of greater strength if a cruel and capable governor were appointed for the purpose of destroying the spirit of the people; later, the friendship of the people would be gained by killing the governor and by appointing councils accessible to all on an equal basis.

Another method to be utilized in maintaining the new principality was to kill all the enemies, betray all the friends, have no faith, and no pity. The ruler was to search for others of his nature and unite with them in their common goal—power. Then he was to kill the opposition and form a controlling party. If the ruler were to commit all the necessary crimes immediately, the conquered people would take less offense. However, benefits were to be given in small amounts over greater periods of time, in order that the conquered people would derive greater enjoyment from them.

The people were the source of all power in that a ruler could place reliance only upon those whom he might

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11Ibid., Chap. VIII, pp. 28-32.
command. In addition the ruler had to insure that the people were always in need of him. If the ruler were appointed by people in revolt against the nobles, the ruler was to retain favor with the people by ruling the nobles; but he was to retain the favor of the nobles by allowing them to retain some power. If the ruler were appointed by the nobles, he was to cultivate the favor of the people by protecting them against the nobles.

A further problem was to measure the strength of the principality. Either it had men, money, and could fight, or it had to retreat within its own walled forts when danger threatened. If a principality were of the latter type, Machiavelli recommended that the ruler provision well in order to insure the people's loyalty during adversities. In ecclesiastical principalities, maintenance was not a problem. Held only by religious custom, they had no real ruler, and, existing only in the spirit, could not be destroyed.

Although the people were the source of support, the basis of all good states was good laws and good arms. Where there were good laws, there would be good arms; but there

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12Ibid., Chap. IX, p. 34.
13Ibid., pp. 32-35.
14Ibid., Chap. X, pp. 35-37.
could be no good laws without good arms.\textsuperscript{16} Good arms were, to be found not in mercenary armies, or in armies of allied forces, or in mixed armies, but only in armies composed of patriotic citizens. Armies composed of the ruler's own people were dependent on him, while other types of troops were only a burden.\textsuperscript{17} Furthermore, the ruler was to keep his army in good condition by practice in war-like activities. In peace he was to practice war.\textsuperscript{18}

The problem of maintaining a new state was less difficult if the ruler possessed certain characteristics. The first was the appearance of being liberal, while actually being a miser, for liberality could lead to poverty, and poverty was not power.\textsuperscript{19} Next, a ruler was to use cruelty for his own purposes, but he was to keep it hidden in order that he be loved. Fear, while it could make for security, could lead to revolt, through hatred.\textsuperscript{20} In the same manner, a ruler was to give the appearance of being

... merciful, faithful, humane, religious, and upright, and should even be so in reality, but he should have his mind so trained that, when occasion requires it, he may know how to change to the opposite.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., Chap. XII, pp. 40-45.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., Chap. VIII, pp. 45-48.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., Chap. XIV, pp. 48-51.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., Chap. XV, XVI, pp. 51-54.
\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., Chap. XVII, pp. 54-57.
\textsuperscript{21}Ibid., Chap. XVIII, p. 59.
The ruler was to give the appearance of keeping faith in his agreements, but was not actually to proceed on faith, for there were only two methods of maintenance of his position—law and force.

The downfall of a ruler could be caused only by the people's hatred or contempt. While the line between hatred and fear was a fine one, the ruler was to maintain in his subjects two kinds of fear. One was the fear of himself; and the other was the fear of foreign powers. The first gave him security, and not the insecurity of hatred. The second gave the ruler an important role in protecting the people from foreign powers. Hatred, on the other hand, was to be avoided by keeping the people happy. The ruler, therefore assigned to his subordinates the unpleasant tasks which were necessary but for which he himself could not afford to be blamed. In this manner, says Machiavelli, the ruler was both a lion and a fox.

The sole exception to such calculations for the safety of the ruler was death at the hands of a person who himself did not fear death. But such men were rare.

When the ruler instituted any action, he was to show proof of his power in the action. The people were aware of

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22Ibid., Chap. XIX, pp. 60-64. 23Ibid., p. 65. 24Ibid., pp. 64-68.
his power if he found novel ways of rewarding and punishing. If a question arose that divided the people into two parties, the ruler was not to remain neutral, but was to declare himself on the side that appeared to be the stronger, for strong friends were to be cultivated for later use.

The ruler was to appoint a prime minister—who was to act for him in situations that required opposition to public interests. The prime minister was to be well paid, for underpay could lead to ambition, which was dangerous in a subject.25

The ruler was to use counsel but not from flatterers, who were of no value for advice; and counsel was to be taken only when the ruler was in need of it. Council was not to be assembled until the ruler had formed his own opinions, even resolved upon the best action for his position of power. Then the ruler could carefully question the counselors, but he himself must be preeminently wise, as a condition of being a ruler.26

Fortune loomed large in Machiavelli’s concepts. Fortune was responsible for some lost states. Likewise the opposition to Fortune required energy, and a ruler of action.27 Of the two forces which governed life, one was

25Ibid., Chap. XXI, pp. 73-77.
26Ibid., Chap. XXIII, pp. 78-79.
27Ibid., Chap. XXIV, pp. 80-81.
the active power, the Virtue in the man to resist the forces which governed the world; the other was Fortune. Fortune was a woman who controlled men's actions to the extent that men allowed. While Fortune could not have been completely dominated, she would have surrendered to a firm master because of her feminine nature. 28 Virtue was that excellence in man which was his nature, 29 and Virtue, or the excellence in the man, was simply those qualities in man necessary to obtain greatness, power, and fame through the mastery of Fortune. In this sense, the attainment of power was in itself an aspect of a man's Virtue.

In the last chapter of The Prince, Machiavelli gave a key to understanding the whole work, for the last chapter was an "Exhortation to Deliver Italy from Foreign Barbarians." 30 In the opinion of the writer of this thesis, The Prince was a technical paper, not written for future generations, but for the Italians of the period in their own

28 Ibid., Chap. XXV, pp. 81-84.

The attainment of power is in itself a proof of "virtue," and Machiavelli recognizes no other standard by which virtue is to be judged. The counsels of the "Prince" are thus not merely technical rules: they purport to be rules for the exercise of "virtue," and a reversal of moral values is involved in the substitution of this notion of virtues for the other.
30 Machiavelli's The Prince in Detmold, op. cit., p. 84.
milieu, who wished to unite Italy at that particular time.' This did not prevent, of course, that it be taken, as it surely has been since its time, as if it were an abstract, timeless manual and methodical direction for the manipulation of appearance.

The *Prince*, in summary, defined a state as being an end result of power that had power as its object. Fortune, with Virtue (in the special sense appropriate to Machiavelli's use of the word), were the factors involved. Maintenance was the calculated administration of the total political power. Defects in the state were simply reductions of power.

The lesson embodied in *The Prince* was based on a calculated study of historical-political action. Such a calculation pre-supposes a concept of history as cyclical in nature which itself would be based on an historical concept of the identity of man's nature through all historical change.

**II. THE DISCOURSES**

In Machiavelli's *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius*, it was apparent that there was a broken relation of the parts to the whole. In the words of Professor Allen:

In Book I, Chap. 19 is sandwiched between reflections
on the Decemvirs and has no direct connection with the subject of the "book." Similarly there is no connection between I, 41 and I, 42 and 44. In Book III there is hardly any connection between the chapters from 21 to Chap. 49, where the book ends with absolute abruptness.

Book I seems to have been written in 1513 and Book III to have been finished by 1516. But an event of 1521 is referred to in Book II. It is possible that the Discorsi was never really finished.31

However, a general plan of organization seemed to have been that the first book concerned the origin, establishment and maintenance of the state; the second book concerned methods of expansion; and the third book concerned problems of the proper use of arms. Although this would appear to have been, in a general way, the outline of The Prince, also, it is only in the context of the larger Discourses that The Prince has its real value.

In the Discourses, Book I, Machiavelli said that all cities were founded by natives for the purpose of security or by strangers who were colonists. The latter rarely succeeded in making progress.

When cities were founded they were to be located in a fertile country, and laws would serve to stimulate the energy not required.32

32 Machiavelli's Discourses in Detmold, op. cit., Book I, Chap. 1, pp. 95-98.
There were three types of government: (1) the monarchic, (2) the aristocratic, and (3) the democratic; and these gave rise to three types of bad government which were: (1) tyranny, (2) oligarchy, and (3) licentious anarchy. All states were doomed to complete the full circle of types, whatever the point of origin unless their origin were founded on a balancing of all types. This latter would be the supreme state of balanced forces. Machiavelli explained how revolt of the Roman people against the Roman Senate helped establish this balance from the time of the Tarquins to that of the Gracchi.

Liberty would have been in the control of the people, if a republic were of a Roman nature; liberty was in the control of the nobles, if a republic were modeled after Sparta. Rome wished to extend her empire, while Sparta sought only strength in security. The combination of the two would be the theoretical state of The Prince, in the opinion of this writer. Such a state would be always in a process of change because of its double nature.

Laws were to prevent agitation in a state among other things by allowing the citizens to vent their evil dispositions.

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33 Ibid., Chap. II, pp. 98-103.
tions in accusing other citizens of being in revolt against the state.\textsuperscript{36} Foreign power would thus not have to be utilized to subdue a revolt. The system of accusation would have been used as an instrument of power to avoid the spread of public unrest.\textsuperscript{37} And so Machiavelli could have warned, as he did, against the use of foreign power, in \textit{The Prince}.

Machiavelli now postulated that one man must be the instrument of establishing, or reforming, a republic,\textsuperscript{38} on the grounds that power must be concentrated to be effective. The possible implication that of all men, one man was of greater ability was belied by the final sentence of the eleventh chapter that "all men . . . are born and live and die in the same way, and therefore resemble each other."\textsuperscript{39}

Because the church gave order to the life of the people, it was a tool of power, for an orderly people were a strong people; and the stronger the people, the stronger the power. However, the church in Italy had always kept the people from uniting. Possessed of power, it did not have the ability to use it.\textsuperscript{40} By contrast, Machiavelli examined some

\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. VII, pp. 114-117.
\textsuperscript{37}\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. VIII, pp. 117-120.
\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. IX, pp. 120-122.
\textsuperscript{39}\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. XI, p. 128.
\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. XII, pp. 129-131.
of the correct Roman usages of religion as power.\footnote{Ibid., Chap. XIII, XIV, XV, pp. 121-137.}

If a principality became free, it would not long remain free because of its inexperience—a weakness that could have been used to the advantage of a neighboring ruler. If the people were also corrupt, the maintenance of its freedom was the more difficult. Indeed, if a ruler were to discover that his own state were corrupt, he was to realize that reform was impossible. The better course of action would have been the re-establishment of the state, based on a new constitution. This constitutes the limit of Machiavelli's premise that the people were the source of all power. If the people were corrupt, there was no power—and reform was the most difficult of political actions.\footnote{Ibid., Chap. XVI, XVII, XVIII, pp. 137-146.}

A succession of two feeble rulers would destroy the state.\footnote{Ibid., Chap. XIX, pp. 146-148.} A succession of two strong rulers would increase power beyond normal expectation.\footnote{Idem.} A feeble ruler was one who would not fight, and a strong ruler was one who would fight. Power was a tool for greater power, increased in proportion to its period of possession. No single part of the power was to be used as a separate implement. All
power was to be used as a single force. The loss of a single portion of power was a danger to the whole power. Political power always accrues on itself. 45

If a reader of The Prince were of the opinion that men are either entirely good or entirely bad, Machiavelli corrected this impression in the twenty-seventh chapter. He believed that men were rarely entirely good or bad, but were of a mixed nature. 46 Yet all actions were to be based on the calculation that all men were bad, even if appearances indicated the contrary. In addition, from the twenty-eighth through the thirty-first chapters, vices of the subjects were discussed as factors in the calculations of the ruler. 47

The ruler was unremittingly to cultivate the good will of the people; he was not to delay until the people were in need of him. As in The Prince, he was to impress the people with their constant need of him by reason of his constant need of the power whose source was in them. 48

Internal difficulties of any nature were to be scrutinized and carefully approached. 49 Usurped authority--stolen.

46Ibid., Chap. XXVII, pp. 146-157.
47Ibid., Chap. XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXI, pp. 147-165.
48Ibid., Chap. XXXII, pp. 165-166.
49Ibid., Chap. XXXIII, pp. 166-169.
power,\textsuperscript{50} partial power—was to be avoided.\textsuperscript{51} To cultivate land gave wealth and power to the subjects; division of the land was to be avoided, the power of the people, once again, being the source of the ruler's power.

Certain natural human characteristics were detrimental to the ruler; certain types of people were consistent victims of accidents,\textsuperscript{52} and certain types of government were similar victims.\textsuperscript{53}

The ruler was to present a slowly changing appearance to the subjects, when being either cruel or gentle, in order to conceal his true nature,\textsuperscript{54} which was only seeking the attainment of power. The purity of power depended on the purity of the subjects; soldiers, for example, were to be interested only in honor and fame.\textsuperscript{55} Machiavelli warned against the ruler's permitting himself to appear as a threat to other powers, unless the army was incorruptible;\textsuperscript{56} as he warned against constantly deceiving subjects who wished to

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid., Chap. XXXIV, pp. 169-171.
\textsuperscript{51}Ibid., Chap. XXXV, pp. 171-173.
\textsuperscript{52}Ibid., Chap. XXXIX, pp. 180-181.
\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., Chap. XL, pp. 182-187.
\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., Chap. XLI, p. 187.
\textsuperscript{55}Ibid., Chap. XLIII, pp. 188-189.
\textsuperscript{56}Ibid., Chap. XLIV, pp. 189-190.
be deceived—for even these men would become resentful; and against freeing a state, for a newly freed state, having no knowledge of freedom, would not remain free.

Thus the ruler was to know human nature—but particularly the defects, for their utility in the consolidation of his power; and the people were to be under close observation at all times. General indications of unrest for example, were predictions of future evils—and evils once foreseen, could be conquered. Yet because human courage was proportional to the size of the group in any action, the subjects were to be utilized as a group, never in part. And there is a sense in which a special wisdom resides in the collective body of the people; the people will finally be the best judge of their rulers, as indeed agreement made with foreign power were best made with republics, for groups of men were more trustworthy.

The measure of power was the measure of the subjects of that power, for the subjects were the vital force.

Book II early admonishes that a study based on history

57 Ibid., Chap. XLVII, pp. 193-196.
58 Ibid., Chap. XLVIII, XLIX, pp. 197-199.
59 Ibid., Chap. LVI, pp. 212-213.
60 Ibid., Chap. LVIII, pp. 214-219.
61 Ibid., Chap. XIX, pp. 219-221.
risked being incomplete. The historical record was incomplete because of language "transition," or the introduction of new beliefs which destroyed all records of prior beliefs. Natural accidents further reduced records. One might raise the question: Does Machiavelli here imply that the incompleteness of the records of history would be a weakness in his own theory of power politics based on generalization about history?

Another incalculable factor, as we have seen, was Fortune, which he took into account in his calculation saying:

But men should never despair on that account [Fortune's]; for, not knowing the aims of Fortune, which she pursues by dark and devious ways, men should always be hopeful, and never yield to despair, whatever troubles of ill-fortune may befall them.

Lack of historical data then, and the element of Fortune were unknown factors in his theory.

Considerable attention was devoted to Roman power as derived from the Roman army. The excellence of the Roman army was a result of its soldiers' desire for honor instead of wealth. Desire for honor caused good Fortune to follow the exploits of the army. Power was accumulated by an

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63 Ibid., Chap. XXX, p. 304.
64 Ibid., Chap. I, pp. 221-227.
inexpensive manner of war, although the rewards of the war were large, for all plunder was the property of the state. However, the wealth of plunder was not now an instrumentality of greater power in arms, nor a tool for more profitable war. Power in arms was not derived from money, but only from a soldier's desire for honor.

The structure of the Roman army was judged best. The foundation of this excellence was the freedom from the state of military leaders during war time. The army itself was composed of three divisions which closely followed each other. The first division advanced as a solid unit, and was reinforced by the open ranks of the second and third. The cavalry of each division gave support from the flank. While this strong army structure was the best, its value was diminished if the citizens were not the soldiers. Use of auxiliaries or mercenaries as soldiers was to be avoided.

As to military strategy, a ruler faced with war was to defend his land if his citizens were well armed and good

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65 Ibid., Chap. VI, pp. 243-245.
67 Ibid., Chap. XXXVIII, pp. 317-318.
68 Ibid., Chap. XVI, XVII, XVIII, pp. 264-278.
69 Ibid., Chap. XV, pp. 282-284.
soldiers. If his power were based on financial resources, he was to fight away from home. Inversely, if an enemy people were good soldiers, they were not to be invaded. An enemy was to be invaded only if his power were based on financial resources. 70

The most desirable expansion of the state occurred when other states voluntarily submitted as subjects. 71 If arms and force were used in expanding, they were not to be used in sieges, but were to be used in destroying the enemy's natural resources, for that kind of spoliation insured victory. 72 But victory in expanding was to be measured by degrees of success, and a determination for total victory was to be avoided. A common error was not knowing where to limit hope of greater victory, and an error in calculation could lead to defeat. 73

Cities involved in internal conflict were not to be directly assaulted, for they were likely to unite in the face of a common danger. Instead, Machiavelli said that the confidence of one group of the divided citizens was to be gained in order that internal strife would be continued. When the

70 Ibid., Chap. XII, pp. 255-258.
71 Ibid., Chap. XXI, pp. 284-286.
72 Ibid., XXXII, pp. 314-317.
73 Ibid., Chap. XXVII, pp. 302-305.
two factions exhausted themselves, this single confidence was repaid by total subjugation. 74

Expansion also had its dangers, for Machiavelli said:

... in a thousand ways, and for many reasons, acquisitions of territory may prove injurious; for one may well extend one's dominion without increasing one's power, but the acquisition of dominion without power is sure to bring with it ruin. Whoever impoverishes himself by war acquires no power, even though he be victoripps, for his conquests cost him more than they are worth. 75

The safest and most certain expansion, Machiavelli saw epitomized in the Roman Republic, which made associates of other states, but reserved to Rome the rights of sovereignty, the seat of empire, and the glory of their enterprises. 76

War, as a method of expansion, was caused either by accident or from the policy of the party that desired to make the war. 77 And of the latter type, Machiavelli said:

... if I desire to make war upon any Prince with whom I have concluded treaties that have been faithfully observed for a length of time, I shall attack some friend or ally of his under some color of justification, well knowing that, in thus attacking his friend, he will resent it, and I shall then have grounds for declaring war against him; or, if he does not resent it, he will thereby manifest his weakness and lack of fidelity in not defending an ally entitled to his protection. And

74 Ibid., Chap. XXV, pp. 299-300.
75 Ibid., Chap. XIX, p. 281.
76 Ibid., Chap. IV, p. 238.
77 Ibid., Chap. IX, p. 249.
one or the other of these means will make him lose his reputation, and facilitate the execution of my design. 78

Nevertheless, there were two different kinds of such wars; one was caused by the ruler's ambition to extend his empire; the other was caused by a people, suffering from famine or war, who left their country to seek new country by driving out or destroying the original inhabitants. The former kind of war was that which hostile powers normally carry on against each other. 79 The object of either kind of war was for a people "to conquer, and to maintain their conquests, and to do that in such a manner as to enrich themselves and not to impoverish the conquered country." 80 And the conquests were to be guarded by colonists who were to cultivate the land, 81 for it was good cultivation that made wealth. 82

Government, either in the colonies or in the state, Machiavelli said:

... consists mainly in so keeping your subjects that they shall be neither able nor disposed to injure you, and this is done by depriving them of all means of injuring you or by bestowing such benefits upon them

78\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. IX, p. 250.
79\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. VIII, p. 246.
81\textit{Ibid.}, Chap. VII, p. 245.
82\textit{Idem}
that it would not be reasonable for them to desire any change of fortune. 83

Book III consisted in the main of directions for the proper use of arms, and certain basic considerations relevant to our purpose.

"The causes of the success or failure of men depend upon their manner of suiting their conduct to the times." 84 The times change, but man does not change his mode of proceeding, and man should simply follow his natural impulse to gain the favor of fortune 85—for "it is this [fortune] that causes the varying success of a man." 86 The ruin of a state could, indeed, be brought about by its not conforming to the changes of time. 87 Yet nations preserved for a long time the same disposition in regard to either vice or virtue. 88 Machiavelli said:

Wise men say, and not without reason, that whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times. This arises from the fact that they are produced by men who have been, and ever will be, animated by the same passions, and thus they must necessarily have the same results. 89

Machiavelli's basic principle, evident in his writ-

83 Ibid., Chap. XXIII, pp. 289-290.
84 Ibid., Book III, Chap. IX, p. 353.
85 Idem 86 Ibid., p. 355. 87 Idem
88 Ibid., Chap. XLIII, p. 422.
89 Idem
ings always, was:

It is necessary then . . . for men who have associated together under some kind of regulation often to be brought back to themselves, so to speak, either by external or internal occurrences.90

. . . those changes are beneficial that bring them back to their original principle.91

. . . without such renovation, these bodies cannot continue to exist.92

. . . Such a return to first principles in a republic is sometimes caused by the simple virtues of one man, without depending upon any law that incites him to the infliction of extreme punishments.93

90Ibid., Chap. I, p. 320.
91Ibid., p. 319.
92Idem
93Ibid., p. 321.
CHAPTER V

THE RELATION OF MACHIAVELLI'S WORKS AND
THE DIFFICULTIES IN HIS POSITION

What was the relation between The Prince and the Discourses? The principles in accordance with which a ruler must govern his actions were in their most general statement laid down in the Discourses, argued J. W. Allen, and The Prince might be described as a particular application to Italy of those principles. Yet, as W. A. Dunning observed, the Discourses analyzed the political system of a strong republic, while The Prince analyzed that of the strong monarchy: "In one, [The Prince], the main theme is the successful creation of a principality by an individual; in the other, it is the creation of an empire by a free city."2

And there is a unity of reasoning in The Prince and in the Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius. According to Lord Acton this unity is indicated in a passage from the play written by Machiavelli titled Mandragola: "Io credo che quello sia bene che facci bene a più, e che i

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piu se ne contentio."³

What was The Prince? To Lord Acton it revealed, elsewhere, simply the theory of petty despotisms.⁴ For Ferdinand Schevill, it was much more—"the boldest and rudest challenge of the specific ideology of Christianity which has ever been issued." He felt that Machiavelli must have thought "in his pagan self-assurance that Christianity was dead."⁵ The State was a law unto itself, dwelling in a moral void, and its sole regard was its own welfare with power as its goal. Yet in affirming this, Machiavelli was sustained by a suppressed emotion of patriotism, which made The Prince an Italian sacred prophecy.⁶

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⁶Idem
Much more modest a judgment of the work was made by others: "That treatise [The Prince] is a summing up of the author's observations and reading on political matters"; and this was simply the concrete form of what successful men had been doing, and were still doing without censure, and often even with "applause and imitation." The Prince was a theory for a strong, dominant state for which "all means--vice, crime, cruelty, falsehood--were justifiable, while scruples were but the follies of a milksop."

At the same time there is a sense in which The Prince may be taken to express no theory of government. This is argued by J. W. Allen:

"Though it [The Prince] tends to leave an impression that Machiavelli considered despotism the most effective form of rule, there is really nothing in the book from which such a conclusion can logically be drawn. It can at most, be inferred that he considered such government best for Italians in the year 1513."

If this were correct, one would do less than justice.


8Idem


10Allen, op. cit., p. 470.
to The Prince as an abstract manual still in use, and to its relation to the Discourses. And Allen would further have overlooked the historical connections of the doctrines. Machiavelli based his case on certain premises. As C. C. Maxey said:

The first of these premises is the ancient Greek assumption that the state is the highest form of human association and endeavors, the most necessary of all institutions for the protection and promotion of human welfare; and hence that reasons of state should outrank all other kinds of individual or social obligation. The second is the no less ancient doctrine that self-interest in one form or another, particularly material self-interest, is the most potent of all factors of political motivation; and, consequently, that the art of statecraft lies in cold calculation of the element of self-interest entering into any given situation and intelligent use of the most practical means of meeting the difficulties which may arise from conflicting interests.  

However, The Prince did have, of course, the value of a possible remedy for Machiavelli's Italy, and a manual for similar political situations. While the value of The Prince to Italy at that time was slight, perhaps it was because Italy was able to endure "nec vitia nec remedia." And surely his premises had a continuing importance in any philosophy of the state because Machiavelli represented in his work immortal living forces that are real functions in

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any state—"energy, force, will, violence."\textsuperscript{13} Indeed, one of these forces—man's will—never changed, and because it, as a purely selfish will, was anti-social and anarchical, it "constitutes the central problem of politics and the difficulty of actual government."\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 49.
\textsuperscript{14}Allen, op. cit., p. 453.

The validity of The Prince is, however, another problem. John Neville Figgis in Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius (Cambridge: The University Press, 1907), p. 87, said:

The net result of his writings has been that, in the long run, Machiavelli's principles have remained, as they ought, as a mere Deus ex Machina for internal politics; but have become commonplace in International diplomacy... The mistake of his followers is that they treat him as though he had been interpreting and laying down rules of universal validity, which it is quixotic even to desire to alter.

(*Confirming this aspect of the work, but generalizing it as definitive of the essential nature of Machiavellianism, George H. Sabine, in A History of Political Theory (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), pp. 338-339, said:

Machiavelli's political writings belong less to political theory than to the class of diplomatic literature... Diplomatic writing, and Machiavelli's works as well, has characteristic merits and defects. There is the shrewdest insight into points of weakness and strength in a political situation, the clearest and collest judgment of the resources and temperament of an opponent, the most objective estimate of the limitations of a policy, the soundest common sense in forecasting the logic of events and the outcome of a course of action. It is such qualities as these, possessed in a superlative degree, that made Machiavelli a favorite writer for diplomats from his own day to the present.)
What then were the Discourses? It appeared that Machiavelli's conclusions in The Prince, based on careful observation and analysis, were empirical in nature and were "reinforced by appeals to history." The Discourses were to be used as interpretation in terms of principles of The Prince. In a larger sense, the Discourses represented that happy state of the republic where the maxims for The Prince were no longer so necessary.

Weaknesses in the Discourses have been variously argued, Villari said:

Machiavelli, though always a fifteenth century Florentine, never lost sight of the example of Titus Livy and other Roman writers, and consequently, like all the scholars of his age, was inspired with a lofty contempt for any small details apt to endanger the epic unity of historic narrative.

Furthermore, Machiavelli was in error in "leaving almost entirely out of account the history of the peoples in whose development Christianity played so large a part"; as, in addition, Sabine questioning his relevance to us points

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15Dunning, op. cit., p. 294.


See the treatment of Livy himself on this score in which Livy is charged by a contemporary historian with the same fault here charged against Machiavelli. Robert Graves, I Claudius, Modern Library (New York: Random House).

17Dunning, op. cit., p. 292.
Machiavelli's indifference to the truth of religion became in the end a common characteristic of modern thought, but it was emphatically not true of the two centuries after he wrote. In this sense his philosophy was both narrowly local and narrowly dated. Had he written in any other country except Italy, or had he written in Italy after the beginning of the Reformation, and still more after the beginning of the Counter-Reformation, in the Roman Church, it is possible to suppose that he would have treated religion as he did.18

And as Foster confirmed:

If we regard Machiavelli as typical of the modern spirit, we are in danger of ignoring the fact that the political ideas of Protestant Christianity played a still larger part in determining the structure of modern civilization.19

However, the Machiavellian state dwelt in a moral void not because of Machiavelli's uses of history; but because of the definition he gave to moral action: "... moral action in a civil society meant for Machiavelli chiefly conformity to a code, the moral sense is the product of law, or, in the last analysis, of fear."20 This was a definition of morality by the ruler and not from the viewpoint of the


subjects. The subjects, not discriminating between religion and morality, would not have substituted law for religion, and so ignored the double nature of man—the spirit and the body. Machiavelli, aware of this, substituted a religion subservient to positive law and discarded natural law.

This discarding of natural law gave rise, however, to further difficulties. It ignored the facts: man, after all, had a double nature, and government for the subjects could remain on a real moral basis only when law was regarded as the explication of natural law. Therefore, discarding natural law, the Machiavellian principles became only measures for state emergencies. But as he believed his philosophy was the lesson from history for conduct in founding republics, maintaining states, governing a kingdom, dispensing justice, and extending empires, he committed the fallacy of believing his philosophy a normal code of action.

John N. Figgis states: "It is not removal of restraints under extraordinary emergencies that is the fallacy of Machiavelli, it is the erection of this removal into an ordinary

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21 Idem
22 John Neville Figgis, Studies of Political Thought from Gerson to Grotius (Cambridge: The University Press, 1907), p. 84.
23 Ibid., pp. 84-85.
24 Machiavelli's "Introduction" in Book I, of the Discourses, in Detmold, op. cit., p. 94.
and every-day rule of action."\textsuperscript{25}

Perhaps the words of Edith Sichel best summarized this whole problem when she said, "He left out the soul."\textsuperscript{26} In the same connection Cook said:

Machiavelli. . . was surely shortsighted in thinking that selfish and unscrupulous outlaws and captains could use their force for the sake of the public welfare of a united Italy. . . . He was, too, mistaken in ignoring the power of abstract principles, of ideals which men would not willingly nor permanently abandon and for which they were on occasion prepared to sacrifice even the blessings of life itself.\textsuperscript{27}

Perhaps the difficulty with Machiavelli was his "powerful imagination which he evidently controls with difficulty."\textsuperscript{28} Perhaps it was in his reasons for writing. Perhaps he wrote to induce the Medici to commit acts that would lead to their overthrow; or to reveal the true nature of despotism to the people of Florence; or sincerely to ask the Medici to come forward and save Italy.\textsuperscript{29} Perhaps Machiavelli's inconsistencies were caused by a blind hope

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\textsuperscript{25}Figgis, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 86-87.
\textsuperscript{26}Sichel, \textit{op. cit.}, op. 143.
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for Italian deliverance. In any event, Machiavelli's philosophy, according to Yriarte, was "dictated by conviction rather than by perversity." And it must be remembered that Machiavelli represented the same position of other contemporary writers who believed supremacy of law was the foundation of civilized political life, --a position which has indeed an honorable and formidable philosophical tradition behind it.

Furthermore, Machiavelli was not a system builder. Discussing Machiavelli's attitude toward religion, T. S. Eliot points out he was opposed neither to religion nor the Catholic Church, *per se*; he saw the effects of the corruption of the Church, but maintained that an established

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33 This doctrine was present in the Greek Sophist's denial of natural law and assertion of an arbitrary positive law, as also in the theological denial of natural law implicit or explicit in Augustine, Luther, Calvin, et al., on the grounds of an absolute sovereignty of God and the Fall of Man.

Church was of the greatest value to a state.\textsuperscript{35} And:

As for Machiavelli's 'personal' religion, it seems to have been as genuine and sincere as that of any man who is not a specialist in devotion but intensely a specialist in statesmanship; and he died with ministrations of a priest about him.\textsuperscript{36}

Furthermore, Machiavelli's personal religion may have been in conformity with his time, for Collingwood in speaking of Machiavelli said: "Man, for the Renaissance historian was . . . man as depicted by Christian thought, a creature of passion and impulse," and not creating his destiny by work of intellect.\textsuperscript{37} Machiavelli's conception of man is by no means necessarily at odds with the Christian concept:

Behind nearly everything that Machiavelli said about political policy was the assumption that human nature is essentially selfish, and that the effective motives on which a statesman must rely are egoistic . . . Human nature, moreover, is profoundly aggressive and acquisitive; men aim to keep what they have and to acquire more . . . He frequently remarks . . . that men are in general bad and that the wise ruler will construct his policies on this assumption.\textsuperscript{38}

Indeed, T. S. Eliot, without arguing that Machiavelli is a Christian, reconciled Machiavelli's concept of human nature to Christianity, and even reconciled his concept of the state thus:

\textsuperscript{35}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 53.
\textsuperscript{36}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 55.
\textsuperscript{38}Sabine, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 342.
Machiavelli was no fanatic; he merely told the truth about humanity. The world of human motives which he depicts is true—that is to say, it is humanity without the addition of superhuman Grace. It is therefore tolerable only to persons who have also a definite religious belief; to the effort of the last three centuries to supply religious belief by belief in Humanity the creed of Machiavelli is insupportable. His reputation is the history of the attempt of humanity to protect itself, by secreting a coating of falsehood, against any statement of the truth.\textsuperscript{39}

And Machiavelli's politics were what they were not because of distorted vision, biased judgment, or lack of moral interest, but because of his "sole passion for the unity, peace, and prosperity of his country." But beyond this the ultimate utility of Machiavelli was "his perpetual summons to examination of the weakness and impurity of the soul. We are not to forget his political lessons, but his examination of conscience may be too easily overlooked."\textsuperscript{40}

On the other hand, we must remain clear what Machiavelli's attitude was toward Christianity—Eliot's superhuman grace and the specifically Christian 'virtues.' He believed them to have an insidious, servile, effect on character, on human excellence, the 'virtue' in the man; and in this respect Christianity contrasted unfavorably with the more virile religions of antiquity. Although the subjects were to be 'moral,' the ruler was not to "... believe in the

\textsuperscript{39}Eliot, op. cit., p. 62-64.

\textsuperscript{40}Ibid., pp. 64-65.
religion of his subjects or practice their virtues."\(^{41}\)

Sabine said further:

Machiavelli offers an extreme example of a double standard of morals, one for the ruler and another for the private citizen. . . . Since the ruler is outside the group, or at least in a very special relation to it, he is above the morality to be enforced within the group.\(^{42}\)

However, the usual—indeed the conventional—attitude toward Machiavelli is found in its classic statement in John Addington Symonds' great work on the Renaissance in Italy:

Unable to escape the logic which links morality of some sort with conduct, he gave his adhesion to the false code of contemporary practice. . . . While seeking to lay bare the springs of action, and to separate statecraft from morals, Machiavelli found himself impelled to recognize a system of inverted ethics. The abrupt division of the two realms, ethical and political, which he attempted, was monstrous; and he ended by substituting inhumanity for human nature.\(^{43}\)

His position was one of force against force, and not a philosophy of right "which should guard the interest of the governed no less than that of the governor"; nevertheless, "In spite of its vigor, his system implies an inversion of the ruling laws of health in the body politic."\(^{44}\)

Obviously Symonds dismissed Machiavelli as being simply of no importance

\(^{41}\)Sabine, op. cit., pp. 340-341

\(^{42}\)Ibid., p. 341.


\(^{44}\)Ibid., pp. 369-370.
to the normal state.

But what of a state that was not normal—quite apart from the enormous assumption this makes that the problem of the political reality is reducible to the ethical problem of the individual?

The Prince with the Discourses outlines a remedy for a state in a condition of disrepair. The paradoxes in Machiavelli resulted from his lack of calculation of the importance of Christianity in history, from his complete disregard of the needs of the subjects, and from his failure to recognize natural law, which indeed resulted in an inverted 'ethics.' But it was just Machiavelli's point that a state in a condition of radical disrepair could only hope to succeed by temporarily neutralizing man's regard for natural law. And if events have not already done so, they may well lead to just such a state—in which the question of the value of

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45 Sabine, op. cit., pp. 343-345, said:

By corruption Machiavelli means in general that decay of private virtue and civic probity and devotion that renders popular government impossible. . . . When the necessary virtues have decayed, there is no possibility either of restoring them or of carrying on orderly government without them, except by despotic power. . . . Machiavelli was not thinking only, or even mainly, of political organization, but of the whole moral and social constitution of a people, which he conceived to grow out of the law and from the wisdom and foresight of the lawgiver. . . . The lawgiver is the architect not only of the state but of society as well, with all its moral, religious, and economic institutions.
Machiavelli's work would once again have to be taken very seriously and de novo.

There are those for whom Machiavelli's relevance today lies precisely in the applicability of his general principles to the present actuality of the social-political order. For James Burnham, they are indeed "capable of being applied concretely in the study of any historical period, including our own, that may interest us." Because a 'science' of politics is possible, because rule is based upon force and fraud, and because there is no permanent social structure, Burnham analyzes the nature of the present world social revolution through the use of the Machiavellian principles. Furthermore, Burnham implies that the victors in this structure will be the Machiavellian politicians. And Cassirer, the late Neo-Kantian historian of ideas, whose judgment of Machiavelli's relevance to the present time strikes a very different note than Burnham's, concedes Machiavelli was an historian who "... sought for the recurrent features, for those things that are the same at all times." And:

If a thinker of this type undertook to build up a new constructive theory, a real science of politics,

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47 Ibid., Social Revolution means a rapid shift in the composition and structure of the ruling class and in the mode of its relation to the subject class.
he certainly could not mean to restrict this science to special cases. However paradoxical it may sound, we must say that in this case our modern historical sense has blinded us and prevented us from seeing the plain historical truth. Machiavelli wrote not for Italy nor even for his own epoch, but for the world—and the world listened to him.48

CHAPTER VI

BASIC CONCEPTS IN MACHIAVELLI

What are, once again, the philosophical principles in their full generality behind, and rendering intelligible, Machiavelli's philosophy of the state?¹

It is Machiavelli's negative doctrines,--the separation of the temporal and the spiritual that paradoxically constitutes the denial of the latter as anything in itself, and its pragmatic subordination to the former, and the rejection of natural law, that are the most basic.

Machiavelli did not believe man destined to a supernatural end. Greatness, power, and fame are the only individual immortalities. Thus Human law was man's only concern, for it concerned his well-being in this world. Knowing that the state would not flourish if the citizens were induced to serve it solely by fear of the ruler, he attributed to religion a place within the state as a further motive to keep the subjects faithful and free from corruption. This is the pagan view, regarding, as a person would say, religion

¹This analysis will amount to a precis of the running commentary on the text of Michael B. Foster in Plato to Machiavelli (Vol. I of Masters of Political Thought, eds. Edward McChesney Sait, Michael B. Foster, William T. Jones, 2 vols.; Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), pp. 274-275, for the simple reason that the writer of this thesis finds nothing so precise and finally clarifying in the Machiavellian literature as Foster's terse, short treatment.
But what, then, constituted Machiavelli's denial of Natural law? In view of Machiavelli's notion of the human ends--the attainment of success, power, and fame--it follows that virtue was the quality in man which enabled him to win these ends. This cardinal notion in Machiavelli's philosophy was closely related to the natural virtue which the Greek Sophists thought it a shame to subject to restraints of law and conventional morality. The Machiavellian virtù, while meaning qualities which make a good man, presents a semantic problem--for Machiavelli thus meant something by these qualities clearly different from what the Christian world has typically meant. Indeed modern translators tend to substitute some word such as "valor," primarily because the common moral notions assumed man attains goodness only by being subject to law,--while Machiavelli repudiated natural law. Natural law implied certain eternal canons of right conduct, and judged man's conduct as it conformed to these canons. Machiavelli, denying these canons, directed men's action to the ends of greatness and power, by whatever means, the Machiavellian concern being prescriptive of these

\[2\text{Idem}\]
means. Thus, "virtue" consisted of the pragmatic judgment of success, the vigor in exercising the means to the ends of power and human greatness. 3

The essence of Machiavellianism, then, is not that it merely supplies a system of technical rules for the acquisition and maintenance of power. Such a system of rules would not necessarily involve a reversal of moral standards. A political handbook might be merely technical in the sense that it leaves it to another kind of knowledge to determine when and where in accordance with 'virtue' it should be applied. But The Prince becomes by reason of Machiavelli's notion of virtue, a reversal of moral standards. Virtue, enabling man to struggle with Fortune, allowed him to control to some extent his own destiny. Thus, the Machiavellian "virtue," displayed in the power to resist the force which governs the world, differed radically from Christianity's willing submission to the laws and purposes of God. 4

The lack of Machiavellian "virtue" in a people was the reason for The Prince. People possessed of a high degree of "virtue" could sustain a free and superior republic-state; but when they became corrupt or lacked "virtue," they were incapable of governing themselves and had to be governed by a prince. 5

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3Ibid., pp. 276-277. 4Ibid., pp. 280-284. 5Idem
"Freedom" or "liberty" in a state was that freedom which the ancient Roman republic possessed when she was a republic, but which she lost when Julius Caesar and later emperors concentrated political power in their own hands. Thus, freedom for Machiavelli meant more than to be independent of domination by other states. It was not liberal despotism allowing a high degree of liberty to individual citizens, nor was it self-government. Since the structure of the body politic is composed of laws and institutions which govern the people, the difference between a free state and unfree one depends upon whether the citizens conform to these laws spontaneously or by compulsion. The free state is the healthy body keeping parts in order naturally, while the unfree state is the diseased body requiring to be compelled by the ministrations of a doctor to play their proper parts within the system.\(^6\)

In a healthy state the necessary inherent vigor is in the virtue of the people—and the state is free. When the people lack virtue, they are corrupt and the vital force decays; and then to establish and maintain order, the state must be monarchical, for the force of a regal power is greater than the simple force of law.\(^7\)

But how will the health of a state manifest itself?

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\(^6\) Ibid., pp. 285-286.  
\(^7\) Ibid., pp. 286-287.
That "virtue" which qualifies a people to be free shows itself in its impulse to expand its power; just as the vigor of a healthy body is shown in its power of growth. This was exemplified in the vast empire acquired by Rome in the days of the Republic. "For Machiavelli aggrandizement was the symptom and natural consequence of health in a state." ⁸

The ultimate difficulty in Machiavelli is, however, in the central notion of Machiavelli's virtu. "Virtue" in the ruler was that capacity that enabled him to achieve success and fame as an individual. But Machiavelli never explicitly recognizes that "virtue" which is presupposed in the citizen of a free state must be something very different. A state where all the citizens were endowed with "virtue" could not exist, for it would have no bonds of coherence. A vigorous state must be possessed of public spirit, of a willingness to sacrifice private advantage to public good. This "virtue" and the virtu of the adventurer of Renaissance Italy were "two incompatible conceptions of human excellence which struggle together in Machiavelli's mind." ⁹

Nonetheless, in the last analysis, Sabine said:

Machiavelli, more than any other political thinker, created the meaning attached to the State in modern political usage, . . . as an organized force, supreme in its own territory and pursuing a conscious policy of aggrandizement in its own relations with other states.

... to which more and more fell the right and obligation to regulate and control all other institutions of society ... on lines overtly set by the interests of the state itself.10

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