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Niccolò Machiavelli--Adviser of Princes¹

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I

In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates argued that true artisans work not in their own interest but for the good of that upon which they practice their art. So the true ruler is one who works for the good of the city or the citizens, not the ruler's own self-interest.² Many would hold, with Leo Strauss, that Machiavelli contends the very opposite--that for him the true prince ruthlessly seeks self-interest and personal power.³ I think this is too simple a reading of Machiavelli.

I do not want to argue that Machiavelli is not a Machiavellian--that he does not counsel evil. But I do want to argue that Machiavelli's advice to the prince is to avoid self-interest. The prince is encouraged to act for the good of the state. It is true that in Machiavelli's opinion this will often require doing evil, and it is also true, one must admit, that Machiavelli does not really expect the prince to succeed in avoiding self-interest. It will take us a while to sort out and explain all the complexities that are involved here, but let us begin by simply noticing that Machiavelli frequently says that one should work for the "common good" or the "benefit of the state" rather than for "private ambition" or for one's "party."⁴ Machiavelli repeatedly indicates his opposition to self-interest. He praises the actions of Pope Julius and says, "so much the more credit to him inasmuch as he did it all to exalt the Church and not any individual."⁵ He denounces the use of mercenaries because they are self-interested and disloyal.⁶

Moreover, he counsels against ministers who seek their own profit rather than loyally serve their prince.⁷

Machiavelli says that it is important for a prince to appear

merciful, trustworthy, humane, blameless, religious--and to be so--yet to be in such measure prepared in mind that if you need to be not so, you can and do change to the contrary. And it is essential to realize this: that a prince ... [is] often forced, in order to keep his position, to act contrary to truth, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. Therefore he must have a mind ready to turn in any direction as Fortune's winds and the variability of affairs require ...⁸

The prince must be able to change with the wind so as to do what the *situation demands*, not what the prince wants. The prince must not be committed to virtue inflexibly. But just as much, it very clearly follows, though Machiavelli does not explicitly say so here, princes should not be locked into a concern for their own narrow self-interest either or the prince will be inflexible and thus unable to change with the wind--do what the situation demands. The prince must acquire power and "understand when to use it and when not to use it, in *accord with necessity*."⁹

While it is quite true that princes must be concerned with power, it does not at all follow that they must be narrowly concerned with personal power. The prince must study power in the large, not just seek personal power. We must envision political power as a field of forces interacting, clashing, and in conflict--a very dangerous field in which you can easily be destroyed if you do not know what you are doing. The prince must study and come to understand this dynamic of forces. The prince should have "no other object and no other interest and [take] as his profession nothing else than war and its laws and discipline ... when princes are more interested in luxuries than in arms they lose their positions."¹⁰ The prince must view this dynamic of forces the way a scientist would, or--

if that carries too much unnecessary freight--the way an artisan or a technician would. The prince must come to understand what the situation allows, what it necessitates, must know how to carry this out, and nothing must be allowed to get in the way, including self-interest. Many have likened Machiavelli to a scientist and this has meant various things to them. I have something very limited in mind. I certainly do not want to suggest a Kuhnian notion of paradigms or anything else that modern. I have in mind an older notion of science, one even that would be compatible with a commitment to astrology--as Parel so impressively argues was the case for Machiavelli and many other Renaissance figures.¹¹ All I mean to imply by 'science' is a lack of self-interest or concern for personal advantage, a cold, objective study of the object, an attitude of analyzing, discovering, calculating, and then doing what the situation--what necessity--demands, and the putting aside of all else, or at least subordinating it to this goal.

Machiavelli also says that the prince must learn to *use* cruelty well.¹² Here, as elsewhere, he is being reductive. When the prince looks at anything, the prince must not be concerned with its intrinsic value--its own goodness or badness. The *only* thing the prince should be concerned with is the way the thing can be *used*. Everything must be viewed--radically and completely--from the perspective of its use in the field of power and from no other perspective. You must understand what the situation makes possible and do what the situation demands, what is necessary, not what you want. You cannot lock yourself into personal interests or you risk blinding yourself to what is going on in the power field and losing your flexibility. You must view everything as something to be used. Suppose, for example, that as a prince you desire wealth, and at this moment have an opportunity to get it. You have to ask what is involved. How will it affect the dynamics of power? How will it affect relations with your enemies? Now? In the future? There are many things to consider. It may be that this power calculation requires that you avoid wealth. Or it may, ironically, require that you make yourself wealthy--but

for reasons of *power* that have nothing to do with your self-interest. You may need this wealth to build and maintain an army.

I suppose that any individual who wants to enter the political arena and try to become a prince will very likely be motivated by a concern for personal power, wealth, self-interest, and the like. But Machiavelli is suggesting, I think, that anyone who wishes to be a *successful* prince has to learn to put aside these personal concerns which are very dangerous. The prince must do what the situation demands, not what the prince wants.

At first, I suppose, princes will think that, yes, they will have to put aside their self-interest for a time, until they get solidly in power, and that then they will be able to get what they want. This too is an illusion. You never just get power. It is not something you have or possess. It is a dynamic that you must continuously study, be wary of, and be careful with. You will *always* have to do what the situation demands--not what you want.

One might find this interpretation a bit unrealistic. Real princes just do pursue their own self-interest. No doubt they do, and I do not think Machiavelli is unaware of this. In fact, I think that Machiavelli does not really expect to see that many princes actually succeed in avoiding self-interest. What is he doing then? Let me try to uncover something in Machiavelli's text and defend my interpretation more convincingly at a higher level. In the *Prince*, the main focus certainly *seems* to be on the prince. But really, a moment's reflection will show that while this is correct, it is not exactly correct. What is going on in the text is that advice is being given to a prince *by an adviser*. The adviser is always present in the text; it is just that you never notice him. He is like the photographer behind the camera, who is not there when we look at the photograph.

At any rate, I think it is quite clear that the aims of the adviser--Machiavelli's aims--are not self-interest, personal power, or wealth. His aims--as commentator after commentator would concede--are the good of Florence, the good of Italy, the common good. And Machiavelli gives this same advice to the prince, namely, that the prince should not

pursue self-interest but benefit Italy as a whole, and that as a first step toward achieving the common good the prince should run the barbarian, the French, out of Italy.¹³

I do not intend to take up the question of whether it is possible to *completely* overcome self-interest. That is not Machiavelli's point. His point is simply that to the degree that you follow narrow self-interest you become inflexible, and his ideal is to ignore self-interest as far as is possible so as to calculate scientifically. At any rate, even if it is not realistic to believe that a prince would put aside self-interest, I think it is believable that Machiavelli, the adviser, the theorist, the scientist, would *try* to put aside self-interest and do what the situation demands--or at least that is very clearly his ideal. In this sense it is possible that the *Prince* is really about the adviser as much as or even more than it is about the prince.

Once we have spotted this adviser, behind the camera as it were, we are driven to ask a new set of questions. Just as we must say that this text is not just about the prince but about the adviser *and* the prince, so it clearly follows that the text cannot be just about how the prince should act, but also about how the adviser should act. This opens up a whole range of issues that to my knowledge have not been addressed before.

How should the adviser act? The adviser first appears in the dedication of the *Prince* humbly begging Lorenzo de'Medici for a job, presenting himself as someone the prince can use.¹⁴ Indeed, Machiavelli's general view seems to be that advisers should serve their princes loyally and devotedly, that the good minister "should never think of himself but of his prince ..."¹⁵ Is there anyone naive enough to believe this? Is there anyone who has so poorly followed the argument as not to see the contradiction involved here? The advice of this adviser has been that the prince simply cannot be virtuous; the prince simply cannot afford loyalty, fidelity, and mercy; it is simply necessary to "betray friends, to be without fidelity, without mercy"¹⁶ when the situation demands. Can this same adviser, then, when it comes to his own behavior, contradict all this advice and lock himself into strict loyalty, devotion, and virtue? Can that even occur to him? Throughout

the text the adviser has been telling the prince to *use* everything, to calculate power, to do whatever the situation demands. Can we really believe that this adviser would not *use the prince* if the situation demanded it?

In the last chapter of the *Prince*, Machiavelli again, as in the dedication, directly addresses Lorenzo de'Medici. He calls on him to free Italy from the barbarian. He flatters Lorenzo by suggesting that Lorenzo is capable of accomplishing this glorious deed.¹⁷ And, as in the dedication, it may seem as if Machiavelli is begging Lorenzo--to employ Machiavelli, to help free Italy, to get rid of the French. It may seem that in flattering Lorenzo, Machiavelli is trying to appear loyal and devoted. All of this, it is true, is present--*on the surface*. But beneath the surface, something else is clearly going on. Commentators have never failed to notice the intensity of the patriotic fervor that emerges in this last chapter. It does not go too far to say that Italy is what Machiavelli cares most about, more even than about getting a position with the Medici, and certainly more than about the Medici themselves--who, after all, fired him and had him tortured. Machiavelli is careful to preserve the appearance, in this last chapter, of offering to serve Lorenzo, of letting himself be used by the Medici to achieve the glorious purpose of freeing Italy. But actually it is Machiavelli who is trying to use Lorenzo--use him to achieve the end to which he is truly loyal and devoted--the freeing of Italy from the barbarian. The desire to use the Medici is certainly apparent--at least once one learns to look for it--in the underlying stance of this last chapter. Machiavelli, I think, would like to make it true in fact. And can we fail to believe that if the situation demanded it, and if it were possible, Machiavelli would work to get one prince eliminated and to install a new more capable one? In short, the adviser would act precisely in accord with the advice that he has given to the prince. It is just that the adviser will remain in the background, behind the camera. I see no evidence that Machiavelli would like to be prince himself. He prefers to be hidden. One can often play the game even more effectively and securely from there. Machiavelli wants the prince to act like a scientist, to put aside self-interest

as well as virtue and to do what the objective situation demands. If the prince will not or cannot do this, then the adviser--Machiavelli himself--will. He will even put aside the prince.

Once we notice this hidden dimension of Machiavelli's thought, other passages start to come into clearer focus and begin to reinforce this reading. Machiavelli tells us, in discussing ministers, that the minister has the prince's "existence in his hands".¹⁸ He also says that "a prince who is not wise himself cannot be advised well, unless indeed by chance he turns himself over to a single person--a very prudent man--who entirely controls him. In this case he really could get good advice, but not for long, because that tutor in a short time would take his position away from him."¹⁹ In this masterful little passage, Machiavelli admits to all I have been saying, but does it in such a way as to prevent the naive reader from suspecting that this is what Machiavelli has in mind himself. He actually warns the prince against those who would do the sort of thing he would like to do and so the prince never suspects that he would like to do it. He advises the prince not to be controlled by advisers who would dominate the prince, which itself is a way for this adviser to control and dominate the prince. But then, after all, Machiavelli himself tells us that he wants to "write something useful to whoever understands it ..."²⁰ Fair is fair.

In the *Art of War*, Fabrizio says, "In Italy, then, to know how to manage an army already formed is not enough; a general must first know how to form it and then know how to command it."²¹ Fabrizio then goes on to construct in imagination an army, much as Machiavelli constructs his prince. Fabrizio then says that the Italians do not have wise princes, "Yet the people are not to blame, but certainly their princes are to blame, who have been punished, and for their ignorance have received the fitting penalty of losing their states ignominiously, and without doing any courageous deed."²² So this adviser constructs an ideal army and an ideal general, criticizes Italian princes for not living up to this ideal, and says that they therefore deserve to lose their cities. He does not say that he

would act to help take their cities away from them and replace them with better leaders, but does he need to say this for it to be true?

What we must also notice here is that Machiavelli, like his character Fabrizio, theoretically constructs the prince--which certainly subordinates the prince to the theorist at least in theory, and if the theorist is good enough may even subordinate the prince to the theorist in actuality. The adviser is like a sculptor, Fabrizio says, who makes a statue from marble in the rough.²³

Machiavelli says that in ancient Rome, love of country was more important than any other consideration.²⁴ It seems to me that Machiavelli himself also believes this. Moreover, Machiavelli is even willing to defend Brutus on these grounds. He argues that Brutus acted for his country rather than out of self-interest.²⁵ In the *History of Florence*, Machiavelli also mentions a relative, one Girolamo Machiavelli:

So when the government had been taken over and the *balia* and then the chief magistrates selected according to the desire of the few, in order with terror to give a beginning to the government which they had set up by force, they banished Messer Girolamo Machiavelli with some others, and also deprived many of their offices. This Messer Girolamo, who did not keep the rules of his banishment, was declared a rebel; and as he went traveling around Italy, stirring up the princes against his own city, he was arrested in Lunigiana through the treachery of one of those lords; being taken to Florence, he was put to death in prison.²⁶

Indeed, one could say that Girolamo was trying to use any prince he could to benefit his city. One suspects that Machiavelli models himself on people like Girolamo and Brutus. Or perhaps he is trying to do them one better. Rather than just assassinate the tyrant or appeal to other princes to do so, Machiavelli tries to use the very prince who fired him and had him tortured in order to save Florence and even Italy.²⁷

II

We must now focus on something that has been emerging here for some time. For Machiavelli there is a fundamental distinction between appearance and reality, and this distinction permeates all politics. The prince must *appear* moral, concerned with justice, committed to fairness, and so forth, but in *reality* the prince must be concerned only with a cold calculation of power dynamics--with what the situation demands. So, if one of your citizens comes to court to make a complaint and plead for justice, you had better appear to listen carefully to the complaint, consider it fairly, and dispense justice. But that is the last thing the prince should really be doing, "there is such a difference between how men live and how they ought to live that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done learns his destruction rather than his preservation ... "28 The prince had better be calculating power dynamics and had better do what the situation, what necessity, demands.

Machiavelli tells us a story about Cesare Borgia, who, after conquering Romagna,

put in charge there Messer Remirro de Orco, a man cruel and ready, to whom he gave the most complete authority. This man in a short time rendered the province peaceful and united, gaining enormous prestige. Then the Duke decided there was no further need for such boundless power ... And because he knew that past severities had made some men hate him, he determined to purge such men's minds and win them over entirely by showing that any cruelty which had gone on did not originate with himself but with the harsh nature of his agent. So getting an opportunity for it, one morning at Cesena he had Messer Remirro laid in two pieces in the public square with a block of wood and a bloody sword near him. The ferocity of this spectacle left those people at the same time gratified and awe-struck.²⁹

Borgia himself was really responsible for Remirro's cruelty, was really concerned with nothing but questions of power, but was able to appear to the people to be just, which was the very last thing he was in reality. So also the adviser, if he cannot remain completely unnoticed behind the camera, would like to appear as a humble, loyal, and devoted servant, who, as it seems in the last chapter of the *Prince*, only wishes his master's glory. But this is a mere screen behind which the adviser tries to manipulate the prince for the good of Italy. And it seems to me that Machiavelli would be willing to take as severe measures as did Cesare Borgia if it were necessary and if it were possible. In general, it is necessary that the prince--and even more so the adviser--appear to have certain virtues, but in reality be ready to change with the wind and to do what the situation demands.³⁰

III

We must now try to sort out finally what all we have said means for the vexed problem of how Machiavelli stands with respect to good and evil, an issue that so many commentators disagree so radically about. I do not think Machiavelli was a "Machiavel," the sort of ruthless, self-interested demon in pursuit of personal power, wealth, and position that one finds so often in Elizabethan drama, and which one finds echoed in a modern mode, at least at times, in authors like Strauss³¹ and even, in certain ways, in Hulliung.³² It is not that I think Machiavelli does not counsel evil--I definitely agree that he does. It is that, as I have tried to argue, he does not counsel self-interested evil. He is very much concerned with the good of Italy, or at least of Florence, and thus with what the situation demands--with necessity--which at times, however, will require that one do evil.

However, there are several ways of reacting against and rejecting the Elizabethan interpretation that I think are quite unacceptable. One is to argue that Machiavelli is fundamentally and ultimately a patriot. The argument goes something like this.

Machiavelli's ultimate purpose is to work for the common good, which requires as a first step freeing Italy from the barbarian. It is true that to achieve the common good in politics will at times require one to do what would otherwise be considered evil. But since it is for the common good, this evil is acceptable. A good end morally justifies evil means.

I agree that Machiavelli is a patriot. That is impossible to deny after reading the last chapter of the *Prince*. I also agree that his ultimate end is to work for the common good. It is also obvious that it is Machiavelli's view that to achieve the common good one must at times do what is evil. Where I disagree, and where I think Machiavelli disagrees, has to do with the claim that any of this morally justifies evil. I agree with Donaldson on this point.³³ For Machiavelli, one must do this evil, it is necessary, but it is still evil. It is justified perhaps in a political sense; it is what the prince must do. But it is not *morally* justified. It does not cease to be evil. It does not become good. In general, I will try to argue below, Machiavelli is not a utilitarian or a moral consequentialist in ethics. If an action has certain desirable consequences, it may be politically necessary to perform that action. But that does not make the action moral. If it is evil, it remains evil.

At any rate, it is not at all the case that in the last chapter of the *Prince* Machiavelli is a patriot and not a Machiavellian. He is both. He is both a patriot who wants to free Italy and a Machiavellian willing to manipulate the prince in any way necessary in order to free Italy. I think there is widespread misunderstanding of this last chapter that takes the form of thinking that because Machiavelli is clearly saying one thing he cannot also be saying another. I will cite other examples as we go.

The second way that some have traditionally tried to avoid the Elizabethan interpretation of Machiavelli is to argue that he is a scientist, that he takes a cold, detached, objective attitude toward things, that he studies them as a technician, and that this allows him to be amoral. As Cassirer put it:

All these counsels are "hypothetical imperatives," ... "there is no question whether the end is rational and good, but only what one must do in order to attain it. The precepts for the physician to make his patient thoroughly healthy, and for a poisoner to ensure certain death, are of equal value in this respect, that each serves to effect its purpose perfectly." These words describe exactly the attitude and method of Machiavelli. He never blames or praises political actions; he simply gives a descriptive analysis of them--in the same way in which a physician describes the symptoms of a certain illness.... Machiavelli studied political actions in the same way as a chemist studies chemical reactions. Assuredly a chemist who prepares in his laboratory a strong poison is not responsible for its effects. In the hands of a skilled physician the poison may save the life of a man--in the hands of a murderer it may kill. In both cases we cannot praise or blame the chemist.³⁴

As Strauss describes this position, Machiavelli abstracts from morality.³⁵ He is beyond good and evil. He is concerned only with scientific objectivity and technical necessity. I agree that Machiavelli is a scientist in the sense that he wants to analyze power dynamics, carefully study in a technical fashion what the objective situation demands, and discover what is necessary. And he thinks that the successful prince must act in accord with necessity, unhindered by any moral qualms. So far, I agree that this is Machiavelli's position. But if from here one wants to make a further leap, which I think is totally unjustified, and claim that the scientist Machiavelli is blameless, then one is just not reasoning correctly. Certainly Machiavelli tells us that the attitude of the prince must be objective, scientific, calculative--that the prince's decisions should not be influenced by morality, that the prince must do what the situation demands. In other words, in deciding what to do the prince must abstract from what is morally good or evil. The prince must not consider these things. I agree that this *is* what Machiavelli counsels. But this certainly does not mean that we should hold that the prince is *morally* justified in

abstracting from morality. Political necessity requires abstracting from morality. One is perhaps *politically* justified in abstracting from morality. It is what the prince or the adviser must do. But it is not *moral* to do so. It is highly immoral to abstract from morality in this way and Machiavelli himself continuously tells us so.

There is also, we might notice, a fundamental disagreement between those who view Machiavelli as a scientist and those who view him as a patriot. These two positions are usually thought to be incompatible. Wolin, for example, suggests that the picture of Machiavelli as a scientist dedicated to objective methods, a man with no moral passions, will not fit the last chapter of the *Prince* where we find the expression of fervent nationalism.³⁶ I think the last chapter is the very best example of the calculating scientist who is willing to manipulate the Medici in a cold, ruthless, instrumental fashion in order to accomplish what so passionately concerns him--saving Italy. I do not think that Machiavelli is a dispassionate scientist as opposed to a passionate and committed patriot. I do not think these are opposed at all, and I think the last chapter of the *Prince* is the best example of how for Machiavelli they are combined.

There is another way of trying to avoid the Elizabethan interpretation. This is to argue that for Machiavelli there are two forms of morality--ordinary Christian morality and a traditional, pagan morality of *virtù*. Machiavelli only counsels evil by the standards of Christian morality, which he is out to transcend and replace with pagan *virtù*. By the standards of traditional, pagan morality, Machiavelli's counsels are not at all evil but perfectly virtuous. For Isaiah Berlin, Machiavelli institutes

a differentiation between two incompatible ideals of life, and therefore two moralities. One is the morality of the pagan world: its values are courage, vigour, fortitude in adversity, public achievement, order, discipline, happiness, strength, justice, above all assertion of one's proper claims and the knowledge and power needed to secure their satisfaction ... Against this moral universe ... stands in the

first and foremost place, Christian morality. The ideals of Christianity are charity, mercy, sacrifice, love of god, forgiveness of enemies, contempt for the goods of this world, faith in the life hereafter, belief in the salvation of the individual soul as being of incomparable value--higher than, indeed wholly incommensurable with, any social or political or other terrestrial goal, any economic or military or aesthetic consideration.³⁷

Parel too holds a version of this position. He shows that Machiavelli was committed to astrology and that for many Renaissance thinkers including Kepler and Brahe astrology was part and parcel of science. Parel then argues that astrology was incompatible with Christianity but compatible with pagan *virtù*, and he concludes that therefore Machiavelli rejects the former and embraces the latter.³⁸ I agree that in many cases it is clear that Machiavelli believes that the prince must act in accordance with traditional *virtù*. The prince must be concerned with honor and glory, and this will frequently require the prince to violate Christian morality. Moreover, this is often what Machiavelli means when he tells us that it is necessary to do evil. But I do not think that Machiavelli wants to just eliminate Christian morality or simply replace it with pagan *virtù*. I do not think that Machiavelli is ultimately committed to *virtù* nor that Machiavelli totally rejects Christian morality. I will give further reasons for this below, but to start with, it is essential to see at least that the prince cannot simply discount Christian morality. It is a part of the world the prince lives in. Other people are committed to it. It is then, at least, a factor that must be taken into consideration when analyzing power. The prince may well have to appear to respect, and, indeed, appear to possess, many Christian virtues. But, of course, the prince must not be locked inflexibly into Christian morality. The prince must be free to violate Christian morality when necessary. It may seem, then, that *virtù* is the reality behind the appearance. Christian morality is for public consumption; it is an appearance which the situation demands be kept up; but in reality the prince is motivated by

principles of *virtù*. I do not think this is correct. In the first place, *virtù* can be a part of the realm of appearance rather than reality. If one must violate Christian morality, then it may be very helpful to appear to act in accordance with pagan *virtù*-- the populace might well be more willing to tolerate the violation of Christian morality if it is done in a glorious and honorable way. I will return to this and discuss an example in a moment. In the second place, I do not think that Machiavelli is ultimately committed to *virtù* because there will simply be many situations in which one must violate principles of *virtù*. In Chapter 8 of the *Prince*, Machiavelli writes: "It cannot, however, be called virtue [*virtù*] to kill one's fellow-citizens, to betray friends, to be without fidelity, without mercy, without religion; such proceedings enable one to gain sovereignty, but not fame."³⁹ Such actions, Machiavelli is saying, not only violate Christian morality, they violate the principles of *virtù*. And doesn't the prince, whenever the situation demands, *have to* kill citizens, betray friends, be without fidelity and without mercy? Isn't that what Machiavelli repeatedly counsels? Doesn't the prince have to "have a mind ready to turn in any direction as Fortune's winds and the variability of affairs require"?⁴⁰ The prince can no more be inflexibly committed to *virtù* than to self-interest or Christian morality. If *virtù* is, at least sometimes, the reality behind the appearance of Christian morality, which will often require the violation of Christian morality, then, in my view, it is the cold, calculated, scientific analysis of power that is the reality behind the appearance of *virtù*, and which will often require the violation of principles of *virtù*.

Let us take as an example the passage quoted above in Section II: Cesare Borgia uses Remirro de Orco to ruthlessly unify Romagna and then has Remirro cut in two pieces and displayed in the public square. This brutal treatment certainly violates Christian morality, whereas it *seems* to affirm pagan *virtù*. It is *virtù* because it is a righting of wrongs, a dispensing of justice--in the form of revenge. Borgia courageously, forcefully, keeps faith with the people and removes Remirro, the cause of their suffering--or so it appears. This sort of *virtù*, presumably, at least to some extent excuses the violation of Christian

morality in the eyes of the populace. An evil oppressor has been removed. But notice also that to some extent Christian morality is taken seriously as a real force in the world and the importance of appearance is affirmed. Borgia conceals the fact that he was the one who had Remirro killed. Everyone knows it, but presumably they cannot prove it. There is a certain restraint here, a certain respect for Christian morality, for appearances, limited though it may be. Borgia does not take vengeance completely in the open. Vengeance or *virtù* seems to remain the reality behind the appearance, but at the same time we must admit that it itself appears. Perhaps we could put it a bit differently: *Virtù* is supposed to *appear* as the reality behind the appearance. What is supposed to appear to the populace is that Borgia ruthlessly and immorally (in the Christian sense--though not openly) cuts Remirro down because Borgia is an honorable man of *virtù*.

But if we know what actually happened, then we know that in reality Borgia is not a man of *virtù* at all. Borgia sent Remirro to Romagna in the first place and ordered him to ruthlessly pacify the province. Borgia himself is responsible for the suffering in Romagna. And after Remirro does exactly what Borgia wanted--does his job excellently--Borgia betrays him. Borgia is not a man of honor--he possesses no *virtù* --at least not in this case. Borgia engages in a cold, calculated analysis of power; he uses people; he does what is necessary. In doing so, he violates Christian morality *and* he violates *virtù*. Ultimately, he is committed to neither. However, to do what the situation demands, he must be seriously concerned with both Christian morality and *virtù* at the level of appearances. Grand and virtuous action can excuse evil at the level of Christian morality in the eyes of the populace and *virtù* can keep hidden the cold, calculation of power that could be quite harmful to the prince if it were to become visible.

So instead of a *simple* distinction between appearance and reality, I think we must begin to see that what we have here are many different layers--we have a series of screens that separate each level of appearance from a deeper reality, and then that reality can be seen to be an appearance behind which an even deeper reality lurks. In my view, both

Christian morality and *virtù* are appearances and the scientific calculation of power dynamics is reality. Yet, I suppose, there is even a sense in which scientific calculation too is an appearance. In advising the prince, Machiavelli will try to teach the prince to perceive necessity, to do what the situation demands, to scientifically analyze power dynamics. At one level, Machiavelli is trying to admit the prince to the inner sanctum of reality. But the prince may be a beginner, or may be too self-interested, or simply not capable. The adviser may someday have to cut down the prince the way Borgia cut down Remirro--though, no doubt, in a much less dramatic and visible fashion. The adviser wants to remain behind the camera--he must conceal his scientific ruthlessness from the prince. I suggest that one way in which he does this is by counseling the prince to be scientific, by adopting a scientific attitude, by always focusing on the objective situation, by emphasizing external necessity. In this way, he draws the prince's attention away from himself, the adviser, the theorist, the person who may have to decide one day that he must cut down the prince. At this level, science--the science that the prince learns, the science that the prince is able to grasp--is mere appearance. Reality is grasped by a higher science, or a better understood science, or a science practiced by a more adept scientist, a science that may have to be used against the prince.

Skinner thinks that the *Prince* is written within the mirror-for-princes tradition; it holds "up a 'mirror' to princes, presenting them with an ideal image and asking them to seek their reflection in its depths."⁴¹ I do not want to disagree with this exactly, but I very definitely disagree that the *Prince* is written straightforwardly, directly, naively for the prince, that, as Skinner puts it, Machiavelli thinks that the "best education for a prince would simply consist in memorising *The Prince* ... " ⁴² To put my objection another way, the *Prince*, if it is a mirror, does not simply reflect without distortion. If it is a mirror, it is being used the way a magician uses a mirror, to deceive, to control, to manipulate what appears to an audience, and to conceal reality. In that sense the *Prince* is a mirror-for-princes, but I do not think that is what Skinner has in mind.

A better view, I think, is found in a very interesting book by Donaldson, who shows how Machiavelli's thought was taken as arcana, that is, the sort of strategic wisdom that in order to work has to be kept secret. Arcane wisdom could take many forms. Some argued that Machiavelli put things in the *Prince* that if followed would actually work to destroy the prince--the prince that Machiavelli so hated. For others, Machiavelli's purpose in the *Prince* was to *reveal* arcane wisdom, that is, to reveal the tyranny of the tyrant. Arcane wisdom can also be a wisdom that is intended to conceal as much as it reveals.⁴³ Indeed, if Machiavelli is attempting to reveal the evil of the prince or to give advice that would destroy the prince, Machiavelli is doing this at least in part, I think, to conceal the adviser. He keeps our attention on the prince and off the adviser. At any rate, there is no direct mirroring here--there is arcane concealment.

One last way of trying to avoid the Elizabethan interpretation is to argue that Machiavelli is a utilitarian or a consequentialist.⁴⁴ Parel, for example, thinks that for Machiavelli, if something serves the state, it cannot be evil.⁴⁵ This may seem to be Machiavelli's view, as when he says,

Cesare Borgia was thought cruel; nevertheless that well-known cruelty of his re-organized Romagna, united it, brought it to peace and loyalty. If we look at this closely, we see that he was much more merciful than the Florentine people, who, to escape being called cruel, allowed the ruin of Pistoia.... he is more merciful than those who, through too much mercy, let evils continue, from which result murders or plunder, because the latter commonly harm a whole group, but those executions that come from the prince harm individuals only.⁴⁶

We must notice, however, that Machiavelli does not actually say that good consequences transform cruel acts into morally acceptable ones. He only says that Borgia's acts had consequences which were not as bad as those of the acts of Florence.

He definitely does not say that Borgia's acts were moral--and I do not think he believes they were. Nor does Machiavelli say this even in the following passage: "Nor will a prudent intellect ever censure anyone for any unlawful action used in organizing a kingdom or setting up a Republic. It is at any rate fitting that though the deed accuses him, the result should excuse him; and when it is good, like that of Romulus, it will always excuse him, because he who is violent to destroy, not he who is violent to restore, ought to be censured."⁴⁷ Machiavelli clearly holds that at times evil acts are necessary; they must be done; and thus are to be approved or excused--I would say--*politically*. But this is not to say that they are *morally* justified. Perhaps Machiavelli slips from time to time. He does quote Livy to the effect that "a war is just for those to whom it is necessary ...",⁴⁸ though this does occur in the last chapter of the *Prince* where he is trying to manipulate the Medici. At any rate, I think Machiavelli is usually very clear about the difference between political necessity, which must be done, and which therefore gains political approval or acceptance, and something which is totally different--what is moral. We can see this even in his hesitations. He speaks of "cruelties badly used or well used. Well used we call those (if of what is bad we can use the word well) ..."⁴⁹ In other words, though he does it continually, he still feels that it is questionable to use value terms like "well" of acts which are evil.

Machiavelli, in my view, very clearly sees the difference between good and evil. No one sees it more clearly. He thinks that at times the prince must do evil. But unlike many others, at this point Machiavelli does not begin to fudge. Evil does not become good--it remains evil. Machiavelli tells us that Cesare Borgia is highly worthy of imitation by aspiring princes.⁵⁰ Yet I think there is no question but that Machiavelli presents Borgia as evil--certainly when Borgia betrays Remirro and has him cut in half. Machiavelli makes no attempt to conceal this evil or even soften it. Moreover, generally speaking, Machiavelli does not pull his punches linguistically. He says simply and straightforwardly that the prince "must acquire the power to be *not good* ... "⁵¹ and that

the prince must "know how to enter into *evil* ... "⁵² Just because something is necessary does not change the fact that it is evil.⁵³ Evil is even necessary, in Machiavelli's view, to advance or preserve the common good--after all it is a theological truism that God can bring good out of evil. But this does not change the fact that evil is evil. It does not become good.

I think that Machiavelli's views on good and evil are best captured in a passage from the *Mandragola* where Callimaco says, "the worst you can get from it is that you'll die and go to Hell. But how many others have died! And in Hell how many worthy men there are! Are you ashamed to go there?"⁵⁴ This is to say that good and evil are absolutes. Evil is objectively, absolutely, God-ordained evil. There is no utilitarian or consequentialist slight of hand possible here--evil cannot be turned into good. If you do evil, you go to hell. Period. But, nevertheless, it is necessary to do evil. So you accept that; you do the evil; and then you must bravely accept hell. After all there are some very worthy people there.⁵⁵ There is a good deal of *virtù* involved here. The bravado involved in accepting hell is even rather impressive. Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that such *virtù* does not get you out of hell. Evil is evil. You have done evil and you remain in hell. Here, very interestingly, the screens have shifted. It is no longer the case that Christian morality is a mere appearance behind which lurks the reality of *virtù*. *Virtù* has become the *appearance*, or the keeping up of appearances. And Christian hell, we ultimately see, is *reality*.

This is not an isolated instance that can just be attributed to Callimaco instead of Machiavelli. Several of Machiavelli's biographers tell us that on his deathbed he related the following story.⁵⁶ I quote de Grazia's version:

He sees a long file of people, ragged, sick, weak, and weary. Asking who they are, he is told that they are the blessed of paradise whom one reads about in scripture:

"Blessed are the poor for theirs in the kingdom of heaven." As they fade from sight

he sees gathering a group of impressive persons in courtly attire, walking and gravely discussing matters of state. Among them he recognizes Plato, Plutarch, Livy, Tacitus, and other famous men of antiquity. These, he is told, are the damned of hell, because it is written: "The wisdom of this world is the enemy of God." As they stroll off, Niccolò hears himself being asked: "With whom would you rather go?" "Me?" he said, "I am not tagging along with those ragbags to go to paradise. I am staying with that other company, to talk about the state and go to hell."⁵⁷

I think Machiavelli believes in hell. It is true that he is not a very religious man, but he is not an atheist. As de Grazia so elegantly puts it, "The most his enemies can say is that while he does not lack faith, there is not much to spare."⁵⁸ Machiavelli's brother, Totto, was a priest, and Machiavelli never challenges the existence of the clergy, the papacy, or the church.⁵⁹ Moreover, he never attacks Christian dogma.⁶⁰ On his deathbed, Ridolfi and Villari tell us, he confessed his sins to Frà Mateo.⁶¹ Machiavelli, as far as I can see, believes in hell. He thinks that evil is evil and that it sends one to hell. Nevertheless, he thinks that it is necessary to do evil and thus accept hell. He does not have that modern ability to cheat and to transform evil into good.

What does it mean to say that something is morally evil but politically necessary? It means that if you are a prince or an adviser you must do it to achieve certain results; it is necessary; political imperatives require it. However, it cannot be justified morally. This, certainly, is to say that the prince should not adopt it as a general principle. It is not the thing to do in all cases. It is evil and thus to be avoided whenever possible. But in some cases it just cannot be avoided. The prince and the adviser accept the need to do evil and the necessity to pay for it. Machiavelli is a consequentialist in the political sphere, but ultimately, and thus really, in the moral and religious spheres he is not a consequentialist at all but a rather strict deontologist.

This may seem like a contradiction. If something is evil, let alone if it gets you sent to hell, we think one simply shouldn't do it. If one should do it, if it is necessary, then it has to be the moral thing to do. Machiavelli lived in a world in many ways very different from ours, the world of the Italian Renaissance, where, I think one must say, such contradiction was at least fairly common. Our drive to unravel such contradiction, while it shows an admirable concern for logical consistency, will cause us to fail to understand the Italian Renaissance, which, like many another age, simply *lived* its own contradictions. For example, in the *History of Florence*, Machiavelli tells us of one Giovannandrea who together with others planned to assassinate Duke Galeazzo and, indeed, to carry out the act in church. So they arrived at the church early, heard mass together, and then, believe it or not, they *prayed* for the success of their assassination attempt. Burckhardt in *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* mentions this and other similar cases and suggests that such contradiction was characteristic of the times.⁶² Perhaps this sort of contradiction is best seen in Marlowe's play *Doctor Faustus*, written toward the end of the century. Faustus gives up on medieval religiosity, theology, and abstract, metaphysical knowledge. He instead seeks practical knowledge, power, and an enjoyable life. He is modern. He is a Renaissance man. And Marlowe writes this play so that we cannot help but identify with Faustus and sympathize with him. But at the end of the play, Faustus is carried off--kicking and screaming--to hell. On the one hand, Renaissance knowledge, power, and enjoyment are affirmed. We cannot help but believe in them. On the other hand, they send you to hell. The Renaissance has serious concerns other than, and incompatible with, religion. But it has not shed religion.

Modern commentators who cannot tolerate such contradiction, who cannot accept that someone can think that something is evil, yet think you should do it, who cannot accept that someone could hold that certain deeds will land you in hell, but that they must be done, such commentators will be driven to explain this contradiction away. They will be driven to conclude that Machiavelli cannot really believe in hell or that for Machiavelli

evil is not really evil--either because Machiavelli is a patriot, a scientist, a pagan, or a utilitarian. In short, I think that a great many of the disagreements found in Machiavelli scholarship over the interpretation of his views on good and evil stem from trying to force a certain kind of consistency on him that is out of place.

Why, then, does Machiavelli insist on calling evil evil and yet sticking with it? One reason, oddly enough, I think, is because he is so opposed to evil. A decent society, the sort we all want to live in, a society that realizes the common good, is caught, Machiavelli thinks, in an irremovable contradiction. To exist, to preserve itself, to achieve the common good, its political leaders will have to engage, at some time or another, in evil. It is simply necessary. On the other hand, if this is to be a decent society, there *cannot* be people, especially public leaders, engaging in evil. If you really believe that you cannot produce a good society without at times resorting to evil, but at the same time you realize that the good society cannot be good if evil acts are being performed in it, then you have a real contradiction on your hands. What are you to do? The only thing you can do, Machiavelli thinks, is try to establish a complex distinction between appearance and reality, a complex series of screens. Evil cannot be allowed to appear in the public arena. Evil must be hidden from the public and carried out behind the scenes. This is so for two reasons. The leaders cannot be locked into virtuous acts. They must be willing to do evil and able to do it well. And if they get caught they may not be able to do it well. So evil must remain out of the public sphere for the benefit of the ruler--and even more so for the benefit of the adviser who may use the ruler. But also, secondly, for the benefit of the ordinary citizen, for the benefit of the good society, evil must not appear in the public arena. Evil is necessary to create and preserve the good society. But there cannot be evil going on in that society if it is to be good. So evil must at least remain outside the ordinary life realm of society, out of the public arena, hidden away behind the scenes. A contradiction remains here that cannot be finally eliminated. The *appearance* of its

elimination can be created for the ordinary populace by an astute enough prince. But the prince--or certainly the adviser--must simply live this contradiction, play it, try to conceal it, try to control it, but he will never be able to eliminate it, and finally will have to pay the price.

Why is this contradiction uneliminable? Because we do not live in a good world. We live in a world that is basically evil. We live in a world in which good will be overpowered by evil--certainly if good confines itself to moral means. Nevertheless, good is still good, evil is still evil, and the former is to be sought and the latter avoided as much as is possible. To maximize the good or at least the appearance of good in a basically evil world we have no other recourse but to use a certain amount of evil while working effectively to conceal it. That, without any doubt, remains a fundamental contradiction, but it is the best that we can hope for. And the adviser who serves the common good in this way, we see, must put aside his self-interest even at the ultimate and last step. He finally accepts his own condemnation to hell. However, we wonder whether even hell will finally eliminate this fundamental contradiction. Hell, ultimately and ontologically, is a realm of evil that is nevertheless home to some very worthy people. It is almost as if Machiavelli, in conversation with Plato, Plutarch, Livy, Tacitus, and other famous political theorists of antiquity, will try to carve out the appearance of a good world at the very center of hell. He will try to create a clearing in the midst of ontological evil, to maintain the appearance of good, to keep evil back behind a set of carefully placed screens. Whether or not Machiavelli will be able to accomplish this in the next world, whether or not the next world even exists, I cannot say, but very clearly this is what Machiavelli hopes to accomplish in this world, and he thinks it is the greatest thing that it is possible to accomplish.

I do not at all wish to defend Machiavelli's views on evil or on the necessity of evil. They are certainly not my views. I do not think good will always be overpowered by evil. I think, or at least I hope, that moral means can bring about a good society, even if this

may be extremely difficult to achieve and will be a long time in coming. My tactic would be the opposite of Machiavelli's. It would be to try to eliminate evil, starting with the greatest evil, by dragging it out into the full light of day and denying it safe haven behind the screen. But until we have flushed all evil out into the open and decided that we no longer need evil to achieve a good society, Machiavelli has a very valuable lesson for us. Mansfield, in his "Introduction" to the *Prince*, writes, "One may congratulate an American citizen for all the advantages to which he is born; but what of the nasty necessities that prepared this inheritance--the British expelled, Indians defrauded, blacks enslaved?"⁶³ There are many who will begin sliding here, who will begin to hold that defrauding Native Americans and enslaving blacks was necessary, at least back then, and so was, perhaps, not completely bad, if not actually good. Not Machiavelli! It was evil! During the recent Gulf War, I think one found a lot of people in the United States thinking as follows: (1) Saddam Hussein is an evil character. (2) It is the duty of the United States as a nation to stop him. (3) So, the United States must do what is necessary--bomb him back to the stone age. And (4) this is the moral thing to do. To see that even if (1), (2), and (3) are true--I am not saying they are, I do not agree with (2) and I *certainly* disagree with (3), but even if they were true--it definitely does not follow that (4) is true. Most people in the United States, it seems to me, who think it was necessary to invade the Gulf, also think it was moral to do so. I suggest that if they could take the small step that Machiavelli so clearly took, if they could see and admit to themselves that, even if it was necessary, it was still deeply evil, they would be a step ahead of where they are now. There would still be a long way to go, in my opinion, but they would have taken a small step forward, and the United States would be a somewhat better nation than it is. This would still fall far short of rejecting evil means altogether, but to see the means we do use as in fact evil would be a significant improvement over continuing to believe them moral.

Notes

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² *Republic*, 342c-347a; I have used *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (Bollingen Series LXXI), ed. E. Hamilton and H. Cairns (New York: Pantheon 1961), but I cite the column pagination so that any edition may be used.

³ L. Strauss, *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (Seattle: University of Washington Press 1969), 80.

⁴ E.g., "A Discourse on Remodeling the Government of Florence," in *Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others* (*CW*), trans. A. Gilbert (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 1965), I, 103. *Discourses on the First Decade of Titus Livius* (*Discourses*), *CW*, I, bk. 3, ch. 22, 482--besides page numbers, I will cite chapter numbers (and book numbers when they exist) whenever possible so that other editions, if more convenient, can be used. *History of Florence*, *CW*, III, bk. 4, ch. 22, 1213.

⁵ *Prince*, *CW*, I, ch. 11, 46.

- ⁶ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 12, 47-8.
- ⁷ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 22, 85. Moreover, Machiavelli feels compelled to argue against Livy in defense of Brutus. He argues that Brutus acted for the common good, not his own self interest. (*Discourses, CW*, I, bk. 3, ch. 2, 423-4.) He also argues that Romulus in founding Rome did not kill his brother out of self-interest but for the common good (*Discourses, CW*, I, bk. 1, ch. 9, 218-20).
- ⁸ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 18, 66.
- ⁹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 15, 58 (my italics).
- ¹⁰ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 14, 55.
- ¹¹ A.J. Parel, *The Machiavellian Cosmos* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1992).
- ¹² *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 8, 38.
- ¹³ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 26, 92 ff.
- ¹⁴ *Prince, CW*, I, 10-11.
- ¹⁵ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 22, 85-6.
- ¹⁶ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 8, 36.
- ¹⁷ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 26, 92-6.
- ¹⁸ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 22, 86.
- ¹⁹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 23, 87.
- ²⁰ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 15, 57 (translation altered--for a different translation, see *The Prince*, trans. H.C. Mansfield, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1985), 61).
- ²¹ *Art of War, CW*, II, 722.
- ²² *Art of War, CW*, II, 724.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ *Discourses, CW*, I, bk. 3, ch. 8, 450.

²⁵ *Discourses, CW*, I, bk. 3, ch. 2, 423.

²⁶ *History of Florence, CW*, III, bk. 7, ch. 3, 1340.

²⁷ See Pitkin's impressive discussion of the Mediterranean ideal of *furbo*, i.e., "skill in employing ruses that are usually, but not necessarily, dishonest"; H.F Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1984), 33 ff. Also, Pitkin's discussion of Machiavelli's comedy, *Mandragola*, comes very close to the view I have been trying to develop. In this play, Ligurio helps a young man, Callimaco, seduce a virtuous young woman, Lucretia, who is married to a foolish old man, Nicia: "The suggestion that *Mandragola* in some ways parallels *The Prince*-- with Machiavelli as counselor in the latter resembling Ligurio in the former--has been made repeatedly by Machiavelli scholars. Like Ligurio, Machiavelli seeks to manipulate the prince into seizing power--for both the prince's glory and the good of Italy. If he were to succeed, the prince would get the actual power just as Callimaco gets the girl: poor despoiled Italy as she appears in the last chapter of *The Prince*.... Machiavelli himself is pimp to the union, rearranging present disorder and conflicting desires in a way that leaves all concerned better off; the real credit should be his" (Pitkin, 30-1). I would just add, that while Machiavelli, like Ligurio, does always continue to serve--that is, he does not seek to become prince himself--Machiavelli would be willing to go further than Ligurio does. Like Brutus or Girolamo, he would, if necessity requires, take firmer action to replace an existing prince with a better one.

²⁸ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 15, 57-8.

²⁹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 7, 31. For a very similar story about Alexandra, the wife of Alexander, King of the Jews, who had his body thrown into the public square to save herself and her two children, see B. Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. C.S. Singleton (Garden City, NY: Anchor 1959), 223-4.

- ³⁰ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 18, 66.
- ³¹ Strauss, 9, 80.
- ³² M. Hulliung, *Citizen Machiavelli* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1983), 219-57 *passim*.
- ³³ P.S. Donaldson, *Machiavelli and Mystery of State* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1988), 112, 168, 194, 212, 214-5.
- ³⁴ E. Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1946), 154.
- ³⁵ Strauss, 11.
- ³⁶ S.S. Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1960), 203-4.
- ³⁷ I. Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli," in *Against the Current*, ed. H. Hardy (New York: Viking 1955), 45.
- ³⁸ Parel, 11-13, 28-9, 51, 59, 61-2
- ³⁹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 8, 36; for the Italian, see *Opere*, ed. M. Bonfantine (Milan: R. Ricciardi 1954), 29.
- ⁴⁰ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 18, 66.
- ⁴¹ Q. Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1978), I, 118.
- ⁴² Skinner, I, 122.
- ⁴³ Donaldson, x-xii, 88-9, 124. Also see J-J. Rousseau, *On the Social Contract*, in *Basic Political Writings*, trans. D.A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hackett 1987), bk. III, ch. VI, 183.
- ⁴⁴ This view is argued by C. Orwin, "Machiavelli's Unchristian Charity," *American Political Science Review*, 72 (1978) 1217-28.

⁴⁵ Parel, 93-4, 97.

⁴⁶ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 17, 61-2.

⁴⁷ *Discourses, CW*, I, bk. 1, ch. 9, 218.

⁴⁸ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 26, 94.

⁴⁹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 8, 38.

⁵⁰ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 7, 33.

⁵¹ *Prince, CW*, I, ch. 15, 58 (my italics).

⁵² Here, I have used the Mansfield translation; see *The Prince*, trans. H.C. Mansfield, Jr., ch. 18, 70 (my italics).

⁵³ For others who agree with this view, see Berlin, 63. F. Meinecke, *Machiavellism: The Doctrine of Raison d'Etat and Its Place in Modern History*, trans. D. Scott (New York: Praeger 1965), 33.

⁵⁴ *Mandragola, CW*, II, act 4, scene 1, 805.

⁵⁵ Concerning Machiavelli's view of hell, see the fascinating book by S. de Grazia, *Machiavelli in Hell* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1989), chs. 13-14.

⁵⁶ R. Ridolfi, *The Life of Niccolò Machiavelli*, trans. C. Grayson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1963), 249-50. P. Villari, *Niccolò Machiavelli and His Times*, trans. L. Villari (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co. 1883), IV, 424. de Grazia, 341.

⁵⁷ de Grazia, 341. de Grazia thinks this comes from an earlier anonymous story. A lover says, "What do I have to do with paradise? I do not want to enter there unless I have with me Nicollette, my so sweet friend whom I love so much, for in paradise go only those people I shall number for you. There go the priests so old and those old cripples and the maimed who all day and all night cough before those altars and in old crypts, and

those who wear old tattered capes and old clothes, who are naked, without shoes or breeches, who are dead of hunger and thirst, and of cold and misery. Such are the people who go to paradise: with them I have nothing to do. But it is to hell that I want to go, because it is to hell where the fine scholars go, and the fine cavaliers killed in the tournament and the brilliant wars, the valiant men of arms and the knights. It is with these that I want to go. And there go too the fair ladies so courteous for having two or three friends besides their wedded lords; and there go also the gold and silver, the furs of miniver and vair, and there go the harpers, the minstrels, the kings of this world." (de Grazia, 341-2). I think that Machiavelli's story is a twist on Socrates' argument in the *Apology* to the effect that the afterlife, if it exists, is not to be feared because it will allow him to continue conversing as he always has, but now with great men like Homer, Odysseus, and others. See the *Apology*, 40c-41c.

⁵⁸ de Grazia, 4.

⁵⁹ de Grazia, 115.

⁶⁰ Villari, IV, 422.

⁶¹ Ridolfi, 250. Villari, IV, 421.

⁶² J. Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, trans. S.G.C. Middlemore, revised I. Gordon (New York: Mentor 1960), 75.

⁶³ Mansfield, "Introduction," in *The Prince*, trans. H.C. Mansfield, Jr., xiv.