Machiavellis Revivus

Machiavellis Revivus: Slashing a Sword on the Western Classical Tradition

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To my mother and father

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PROLOGUE

Machiavelli's uniqueness and originality renders his educational direction as pertinent for the times and conditions that are similar to ours. On the grand scale, his thought process disrupts the classical sense of philosophy, metaphysics, and religion. This disruption of the traditional Western consciousness is an aim in the contemporary educational realm of political thought. From the extensive criticism of modernity found in the works of Nietzsche and beyond, this disruption of the Western tradition has been developed throughout the twentieth and onto the twenty-first century. Machiavelli – who lived circa 500 years ago – is nevertheless the source for productive knowledge, analysis, synthesis, criticism and prognosis for the contemporary political and spiritual crisis, a crisis due to the downfall of modernity. The presupposition of latter-day modernity, as being considered the best of all possible worlds, is no longer believable. Modernity, that which was once considered as being utterly unique and superior in human history, is responded to today as a repetition of downfall through class domination, Western imperialism, the dissolution of community and tradition, the rise of alienation, and the impersonality of bureaucratic power. Machiavelli supplants the dominant modern consciousness, even though it was primarily ahead of his time. He portrays himself a source for a new artistic revolution, an educative revolution of consciousness through a divergent humanitarian call for strength in facing reality, to re-constitute a contending set of epistemological and ontological foundations that are better aligned to the condition of the present-day than those formulated by the Western Classical Tradition, a fainting phantasmagoria of modernity.

FOREWORD

"It was the meeting place of two worlds; day and night came thither
from two opposite poles...The odd thing about it was that
these worlds should border on each other so closely."
—"Two Worlds," *Demian*, Hermann Hesse, 1958

"Ages are to be assessed according to their *positive forces* – and by this
assessment the age of the Renaissance...appears as the last *great age*, and
we, we moderns...of scientificality – acquisitive, economical,
machine-minded – appear as a *weak* age."
—"Expeditions of an Untimely Man," *The Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche,
1888.

(i) Preface: An Overview of the Educational Direction

No matter the time, space, or place, Machiavelli's works engender analysis, a pondering synthesis, with many interpretive judgments. The interpretations made on his works shift from one-side of the spectrum to the contrasting other. From the reduction of politics to power, to the diminishment of literary and historical understanding in the modern age, Machiavelli has been largely misinterpreted and misunderstood. In the anemic politics of the present-day, the historical exemplary method - the main educational platform for Machiavelli - has been forgotten. Many interpretations are limited for proper understanding in bypassing the important ingredients of religion, and the distinction between power and authority. Many of the recorded statements have emanated from the omission of the careful readings of much of his primary works, or rely solely on secondary sources. Machiavelli's educational worth is more pertinent for today, since our temporal condition is generally similar to his, the end of one age, and the beginnings of a new one, yet unknown.

Historical exemplary lessons, on the grand scale, can be used not only for his time, but for all days to come. In one respect, this places him on the same level of the established traditional political thinkers and philosophers, yet his approach is inherently detached from the standard philosophical and political discourses. This divergence forms a large part of his "paths not yet trodden by anyone," his "hunt for seas and lands unknown." This work will portray the outcomes of his untrodden and exploratory directions

of search through a concentration on the primary factors in his educational mode: history, religion, power, and authority.

The merit of any study is on its educative ability for any present-day. On doing so, the reader ponders to consider a comparison of different points in history. From this onset, one can better judge the prognosis of the current condition – whether it is in progress or decline, whether it has a strong form of civilization, or a weak one – in order to more properly envision the future. The overall goal in political science, or any science, is to identify the beneficial features and relinquish the harmful. From this analysis, one can identify the educational means to re-vitalize the productive, and cast out the denigrating. In various ways, explicitly and implicitly, Machiavelli continuously entices his readers to carry out this task. This work will re-position Machiavelli as not only a producer for his personal and temporary condition, but revive him for all times and all conditions, especially when a stimulating growth on the essential features of a civilized world is required.

The argumentative statement in the title, of Machiavelli "slashing a sword on the Western Classical Tradition," is partially an allusion to a quotation from a German historian, Friedrich Meinecke (1862-1954), used in Isaiah Berlin's article "The Originality of Machiavelli," which stated that Machiavelli's works were like "a sword thrust into the body politic of Western humanity, causing it to cry out and to struggle against itself" (Berlin 1979, 39). An inspiring and edifying statement on the one hand, but on the other - particularly with the use of the word "thrust" – a slightly improper mirage is made through a brunt and violent act, seemingly out of anger or despair, from which Machiavelli would detach himself. Slashing a sword on the Western tradition does not entice a violent counteraction. Slashing a sword unveils the real Western tradition, and unleashes the necessity to break it down in order to discover ways to make it productive educationally. Machiavelli may be less predisposed to the Christian and secular rational humanist, but acceptance of the natural present condition of the world is more important than a violent reaction to it.

Fortune and the powers-that-be played major roles in the natural condition of things, and that, from time to time, historical knowledge and insightful prudence could make a possibility for political, spiritual, and cultural growth, yet nonetheless could be crushed by forces out of human control. Strength in the acceptance of these factors became significant to overcome the harmful weakness in the formulation of modern humanist rationale and untenable Christian beliefs in goodness and perfectibility. This sense of sympathy in acceptance extends from ancient times, outside of the identity of the West, outstripping it. Under these fallacies in weak

faith, or faulty reasoning and calculation, the powers of force and violence more easily overtake any reliance on human control. There is in Machiavelli a questioning of "Western humanity," where the West has to "struggle against itself," but the original "humanity" extends from the ancient Roman Republic's *humanitas*, which has a digressed connotation from the modern, and one that was attempted to be revived in the Italian Renaissance. To "cry out" and "struggle against itself" can imply the struggle against the formulated identity of the "West," including all of its related factors. A complete renunciation of the past, which became an educational principle in the modern Western Enlightenment, would only continue the destructive conditions that were identified. Machiavelli was aware of the monumental struggle he was confronting; the misrepresentations and misinterpretations of his works were implicitly anticipated, to which he foresaw an on-going battle. But it was to be done in a virtuous and exceptional manner, encouraging vitality through original thought and practice.

Machiavelli anticipated that the developments of modernity would not be recoveries from his ongoing political and spiritual turmoil. He perceived the decline in what was called modernity before it occurred. Machiavelli's educational importance should be heightened for the current period, since the chaotic political and spiritual downfall of the 'West' is beginning to be more readily seen. As has been stated by some, Machiavelli was ahead of his time, as much as he was directed towards his own. The fall of the Late Middle Ages is a recurrence of the loss of Troy in the Trojan War, the downfall of Athens in the Peloponnesian War, the loss of the Roman Republic most forceably represented in the activities of Caesar; these are predecessors to the present-day political deterioration of the modern age.

Machiavelli is relevant for today, since the appearance of the two-fold condition during the Renaissance is generally similar to ours. The "man of the Renaissance" lived "between two worlds" (Renaissance Humanism, http://www), the fall of one world, and the rise of another. The modern age is declining towards another "new yet unknown age" (Arendt 1958, 6), the argued "end of modernity," which equals the acknowledgement of the "end of history." As Gianni Vattimo claims, a reprieved "end of history" – one in contrast to the European superiority – is "an experience" that "seems to be widespread in the twentieth-century culture" (Vattimo 1990, 4-5).

From the Enlightenment Age, the "end of history" was conceived as the "crowning political achievement of the West" (Kaplan 2000, 98). In our contemporary period, with the experiences of the twentieth and onto

the twenty-first century, it appears to display the opposite assessment. The implicit meaning of "end" as the final absolute goal in human history can easily be transferred into its opposite, the final product of the West being the disposal of one brand of European civilization. This process will also be revealed in this work, as will the lessons taken to overcome it.

The knowledge of the transition during the fall of Medieval Ages in Machiavelli seemingly corresponds to the present-day, with the transitional stage in the ending of arrogant European superiority in the fall of modernity. The contemporary understanding of the "end of modernity" re-formulates a divisive framework of consciousness that recognizes the nature of reality in going beyond its modern ideological consciousness of progress in history by reverting to one that the modern West formerly belittled – the ancient – in order to revive a truly strong human civilization. The true identity of the Renaissance, particularly in Italy, is a re-birth of civilization taken from the lessons of Antiquity. Roman antiquity was the educative cornerstone for Machiavelli.

The basis for analysis comes about from the recognition that living "between two worlds" is living in a "time of transition," or a "time of crisis," where the condition is difficult to comprehend and to meaningfully act within. The time of crisis involves a situation of turmoil and upheaval, political, spiritual, and cultural. For the historical recall of Italy, in living through two centuries of tyrannical despotism leading up to the Renaissance, the 'triumph' of Christianity fell into crisis. Former Christian rule turned into "the omnipotence of the state" (Burckhardt n.d., 9), with "the deliberate adaptation of means to ends," joined to "almost absolute power" (Burckhardt n.d., 8), which produced "despotism" in the four great powers in Italy, "Naples, Milan, the Papacy, and Venice" (Burckhardt n.d., 26). Similarly, with the experience of the catastrophic world war events of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the apparent "triumph of modernity," happened simultaneously with "its greatest crises" (Cahoone 1996, 13). From this standpoint, one can easily predict on future despotism if some form of this historical political awareness is not ignored. Machiavelli's educational goal in a "time of crisis," is through the use of historical exemplary lessons, almost entirely from the influence of ancient Rome, in seeking "to bring about the rebirth of the ancient Roman Republic" (Strauss 1973, 272).

To summarize the insights of Isaiah Berlin (1979), Machiavelli is original by providing a disruption in the Western classical forms of "philosophy, metaphysics, and religion" (Berlin 1979, 36-39). Another degree of similarity amongst Machiavelli's time and ours arises, since, in our contemporary period, a re-assessment of those fundamental concepts is

required. This task of disruption is to re-configure these essential educational principles in order to live and act meaningfully in this world. Through his uniqueness and originality, Machiavelli desired to re-formulate consciousness to a different framework within his readers, with a digressive view outside of traditional philosophy, metaphysics, and religion. This was a primary directive in Machiavelli's works; and it formulates a goal to which this work will be directed. It will examine the undermining of these classical elements, which were products of modern consciousness that generated the Western tradition. The subversion of the Western tradition persists under his educational approach of exemplary lessons. The similarities on these essential features to the contemporary realm of study are other factors that make Machiavelli relevant and vital for the present-day.

(ii) The Structure of the Work

We know that the topic of history was very significant for Machiavelli, since the first "Preface" in his most insightful book, *The Discourses on the First Ten Books of Titus Livius* (1519), is entitled "The Value of History" (Machiavelli 1965, 190). It traces the path from ancient times, to the beginning of modernity. With the comparative history of time periods, this work will do the same: a historical comparison is made of Machiavelli's work in relation to the Western tradition and its effects, right up to the present-day.

His renown historical exemplary lessons involve the use of an intricate "historical cycle" (Wiser 1982, 140), stemming from the ancient cosmological consciousness, "the cosmological world-view of the ancient pagans" (Wiser 1982, 141). The order of the cosmological world, its religious and political participation, was "intra-mundane," *ergo*, in this world. The cosmological world view of ancient paganism, which generated the view of the "historical cycle," placed nature as a "cosmic sacrality" (Eliade 1959, 12) on the nature of life on earth. The belief in the general recurrence of historical conditions does not negate the importance of recognizing temporal differences. In historical analysis, the general and particular are not necessarily contentious. On this prerogative, Machiavelli's historical cyclical view can be considered truly "new," since it contrasts the common modern consciousness, and particularly the historical view of progress in history, which desires to forget the past. These issues will be displayed in the first chapter "History."

The first section includes detailed research mostly from Machiavelli's *Discourses*, while referring to essential secondary texts, and small

influences in *The Prince*. The next major section will be a comparative review with another prominent and unique historian, to which Machiavelli is comparable; that is, Polybius, a one-time Greek, who was captured at home, taken to Rome, yet fell in love with the "Eternal City." Machiavelli's distinction in this comparison is not ignored. It will be followed by the opposition and consequences of the historicism of the latter-day modern period in comparison with that of Machiavelli. The end of the chapter will comprise a study of his literary style of "historiography," the manner by which he educates through his historical exemplary method, which also encompasses a unique literary mode.

Religion, a topic that at one time was forgotten by the dominance of the modern secular consciousness, is extremely important for Machiavelli. The "preface" of "Religion," will introduce the originality of his ancient conceptualization in comparison to Christianity, which is a significant part of the Western tradition. The main thinkers in the Christian tradition will be briefly summarized, as the path of thought is trailed through Christianity up to Machiavelli's sense of religion. It will then start with an overview handed to us by pertinent contemporary thinkers. The following section reveals the effects on the "contrariness" of his sense of religion which is tied to politics and the historical exemplary method. It will be followed by his matchless criticism of Christianity. Moses, a Biblical figure important for Machiavelli, will be re-configured through ancient lessons with support of contemporary authors. Moses' worth is re-constructed through ancient religious values. More influential knowledge is given from a new conception of ancient religion – neo-paganism – with a brief description of the other three leading figures used directly in *The Prince*: Theseus, Cyrus, and, of course, Romulus. Another political-religious hero will be displayed that lived close to Machiavelli's time, that is, the highly praised judicious practices of a poor, barefoot boy, Michele Di Lando. All are displayed as both political and religious leaders under a digressively-valorized form of religion, values in ancient paganism that was largely denounced by Christianity.

Under the ancient cosmological view, politics is closely tied to a cyclical view of history, with the values of pagan religion. The very word religion, *re-ligare*, has its Latin roots derived from the Roman Republic, and literally means "to be tied back" (Arendt 1954, 121), or "to be tied again," evidently to the cosmological cycle. No matter of the keen recognition made by Machiavelli of the beginning of modernity, he nevertheless returned - or tied himself back - to the "Roman religion" to analyze, learn, and incite propositions for meaningful human action in his

time. His inferred claim would be that the lessons from ancient paganism can have an educational effect on the events of the present-day.

This reliance on ancient religion is inevitably opposed to the development of modern religion with the separation of Church and state. For Machiavelli, Christianity was a strong force in the disastrous condition of Italy. In his judgment, the performance of Christianity, both in world view and a fierce use of power, had condescended to inhumane cruelty. Even though secularism is apparently on opposing poles to religion, oddly enough there are many arguments made that the modern world of ideological secularism is not detached from the previous religious fervour. Machiavelli reformulates religion by going back to its roots in order to re-configure its abuses. At present, as we have seen, religion can be easily abused through the coercive forces of political power.

Under the modern conception, the term power is almost synonymous with politics. The numerous intricacies of the concept of power are described in Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*. Power "is boundless" (Arendt 1958, 201). "Under the conditions of human life," she claims that "the only alternative to power is force," which is exerted by "the means of violence" (Arendt 1958, 202). Current-day politics contain divergent manners of acquiring and using imperial forms of power that are being incorporated in global performance. The chaotic condition in Italy during Machiavelli's time made him raise his attention to similar concerns of power, which has become dominant in the present-day.

Through the analysis on "Power," the important distinction that corresponds to Machiavelli's depiction of the concept is its division into "power of necessity," and the "lust for power." Machiavelli clearly makes the opposing contrast, of the "good" or "bad," within the term "power" (Machiavelli 1965, 1160). As Wiser relates, being a "realist," he "acknowledged the primacy of political power," but, in *The Prince*, "he did not allow the reality of mere power," but to recognize itself in "its appropriate and inappropriate use" (Wiser 1982, 138). These distinctions within the concept power, which are ironically opposed yet interrelated to authority, are significant for a proper understanding of Machiavelli. Opposed to the actual common utterance during the middle of the 20th century, power is an antithesis to authority. The distinct characteristics on power are other features that make him unique and important. Machiavelli can be more applicable to the contemporary period than the modern. The popular protest of "power to the people" was not a protest against true authority. The adverse political disorders were due to being based on power and not authority.

The preface of "Authority" will display its condemnation of power-politics. For Machiavelli, the best example of a great authority is in the mixed constitution of the Roman Republic, which existed before the rise of Roman imperialism. The contrasting views of liberty and hierarchy will be argued as essential items for a healthy authority. Machiavelli investigates the lessons adhered to through the fall of the Roman Republic, to its use for the Italian Renaissance, which provide lessons for future times, therefore the current-day condition. The segment on revolution severely questions the worth of so-called "modern revolutions," which is elicited by Machiavelli's views that are identified in the works of a significant contemporary thinker, Hannah Arendt. The final point in the chapter shows that ancient authority, as a quintessential element that is almost lost in present-day politics, actually can subvert the foundational principles of the Western tradition, which have currently been questioned in the field of study of contemporary political thought.

The origin of authority comes from the term generated during the Roman Republic – *auctoritas.* Machiavelli is in line with the great writers as an author - *auctore* - of the past, where authority - *auctoritas* - was one of its main features. *Auctoritas* is a cornerstone that measures the worth of historical exemplary lessons. It is continually augmented in the performances of duties that inspire civic loyalty, and the confirmation of a civil religion dedicated towards public care. Greatness can be re-born by *auctoritas*. Rome, the "Eternal City," and related ancient great leaders, were re-born in his works – a real Renaissance was constructed by Machiavelli, with the activities in his native city, Florence. Authority can be formed as a venue to challenge the overpowering of politics. It does not involve "oppression, threat, punishment, force, or violence." A fruitful authority involves the public acceptance and the willingness of following leadership that is acquired by dignified performance for public liberty. This is the ancient form of republicanism, significantly opposed to that of modern republicanism. Machiavelli can be a source to educate on the contentions between power and authority. His treatment on the contentious struggles in power and authority can, in a significant manner, be directed towards our present-day condition.

Machiavelli, through his ancient cosmological historical mindset, perceived more clearly than anyone at his time, the future nature of politics. He places himself in a delicate position, where he must properly justify what could otherwise be renounced; and the sense of the required "newness" is not to completely dislodge the foundational principles upon which to establish political order. To do this 'new' task, requires a

different approach from the standardized Western classical tradition of both power and authority.

In the "Forerunning Afterword," the lessons acquired of Machiavelli's works will be applied to the noted conditions of the present-day. The current conditions will be revealed by contemporary thinkers of the twentieth century onto the twenty-first. It will display the effects of Machiavelli who slashes a sword on the dominance of the Western tradition; and that his originality of the four main concepts – history, religion, power, and authority – can be educationally productive for the conditions of the present-day. It may readily be said that the conclusive point throughout this entire process displays Machiavelli's effort in defacing the Western consciousness and subsequent tradition, from its beginning and onto its end. The creative and productive developments extending from this claim will be expanded upon in the conclusion.

(iii) Precursor: A Re-positioning of Machiavelli

Machiavelli is engaged in criticism of modern values even before they became prominent, and therefore, he is more pertinent for today, the downfall of modernity. The period of his life, the Renaissance, is comparable to ours, a transitional time of crisis. In it, he produced a creative critical pedagogy of a condition like ours, on the brink of nihilism; and therefore, Machiavelli, in tackling his condition, is more relevant for political thought today than what has previously been claimed. For contemporary thinkers, it is argued that to tackle our modern condition, a return to the past is needed, one outside of the Western tradition to resolve the flaws within it. His incomparable approach can provide a means to treat the "disintegrated character of this time" (Nietzsche 1967, 14), as "nihilism stands at the door" (Nietzsche 1967, 7). If there can be an alternative foundation for understanding the condition in "times of transition," it can rest to some degree on Machiavelli for a creative response to a similar "time of crisis," with a critical yet productive educational approach. Contemporary thinkers argue for our temporary condition as the "end of modernity," just as Machiavelli taught of the end of the Christian theological world. Both realms of political thought seek to perceive and relate to a new yet unknown future world. These arguments, with such a contemporary approach, will form the central focus of this work.

In confronting the reality of facing a declining world, a renewal is required of human principles that are long forgotten in his time and ours, of placing virtue, nobility, honour, and excellence back into the political

framework. Machiavelli is still with us, especially in the realm of contemporary political thought, which also seeks to regain the positive elements that have been lost through the modern consciousness that produced the Western tradition. Under these conditions, the pursuit of these virtuous elements is to be done with a divergent foundation. For Machiavelli, "the concept of foundation is central, if not paramount" (Arendt 1954, 136). Machiavelli's novelty is comparable to the newness advocated by Vattimo at the "end of modernity": "new is identified with value through the mediation of the recovery and appropriation of the foundation-origin" (Vattimo 1990, 2). His advocated recoveries are 'new' through the necessitated re-formulation of the foundations of the Western tradition. A foundation is to be created within the cyclical ebbs and floods of time and nature, yet not disbanding the attempt of a foundational cornerstone that allows an adjustment to divergent conditions.

Under these conditions, his educational goal is beyond analysis, stemming towards a prognosis for a cyclically-conceived venue of political "action" deviated from the modern conjecture, through a re-formulation of history, a contrasting form of religiousness, all married with the possibility of a contemporary form of authority, with the diminishment of power. The lessons Machiavelli projected to help correct what for him was the worst condition in Italian history can be used in transformation to the political, spiritual, and cultural disorder of today, a technological world that is forced to contend with a more internationalized world. In the productive contemporary framework, "newness" is conceived as coming from lessons of the past, a cognizance that seems ironic, but only so in modern consciousness, of which certain elements should be bypassed. These goals are all perceived through an honest display of Machiavelli's education, which calls for an unconventional assessment of the nature of things. A deviated consciousness is called for, a "new" return to the ancient. This "turning to the ancients" was partially accomplished in the healthy Italian civil society during the Renaissance; therefore, it can occur again. It is becoming more obvious that, today, with the downfall in political activity, spirituality, and culture, *we need a new Renaissance*.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY

Romulus his grandsire's throne shall gain,
The people the Romans call the city of Rome.
To them no bounds of empire I assign,
Nor terms of years to their immortal line.
Even haughty Juno, who, with endless broils,
Earth, seas, and heavens, and Jove himself turmoils;
At length atoned, her friendly power shall join,
To cherish and advance the Trojan line.
The subject world shall Rome's dominion own,
And, prostrate, shall adore the nations of the gown.
An age is ripening in revolving fate
When Troy shall overturn the Grecian state,
And sweet revenge her conquering sons shall call,
To crush the people that conspired her fall.
—Virgil, *Aeneid*

Not to know what occurred
before one was born,
is always to remain a child.
—Cicero

Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.
—"Burnt Norton" *Four Quartets*, T.S. Eliot

1.1 Preface: An Overview of Time Periods in History

To most, it would seem odd that someone who lived circa 500 years ago could be beneficial for the present-day. To be so, a dominant mind-set must be overcome. The situation is difficult, but there are elements that display that the historical knowledge forgotten during modernity has

become significant for the present-day. In reality, history has become an essential educative mode. It is apparent that Machiavelli perceived this future significance beforehand. Yet, even though there are numerous examples of present-day political mistakes and manipulations, historical lessons are continuously on the way side.

Modern political agendas often display the forgetting of similar historical events that could have derived important lessons for making proper judgments. Political tactics employ an overpowering yet restricting umbrella that tosses aside historical knowledge and more readily produces dishonour, corruption, and violence for the acquisition of power. The ideological framework produces this forgetfulness of history, and becomes part of the coercive effects on the majority of the people, with a diminishment in their judicial consciousness. Political party factionalism thrives on the majority's limited political knowledge, and thrives on various levels and techniques of deception. The illusory apathy and willful ignorance is manipulated with the latest "new plan" that makes one forget the mistakes of the old. The "new plan," for example, to win the "war on terror" through "the hearts and minds of the people" is done through false notions of victory that is truly a repetition of a costly defeat in lives through unjustified warfare. Current day political tactics are administered with seemingly impressive hard-core diligence and determination that point to betterment in the future, yet, through the forgetting of the past, the future visions only hide illusory maneuvers that contain a false view of reality, and misleading visions of success. An intensified historical consciousness easily identifies these political deceptions, and the ways and means of political corruption. After witnessing the effects of two world wars, the production of atomic bombs, genocidal events, the inhumane destruction of the planet, historical attentiveness strips away what was once a modern conventional view of progress in history, a consciousness that produces the erroneous discrediting of history through an illusory futurist image that hides the former errors and makes one and all forget the past.

The twentieth century influential historians have incorporated a historical view to combat progress in history with a return to the ancient cyclical view, where historical events are displayed as a continual recurrence of the past. Instead of perceiving civilization as arising to the highest point in history, one comes to the realization that there is a possibility of arriving at the "end" of one form of civilization, one that is only on the "boundary of civilization," with the potential death of an established tradition, a repetition of continual occurrences of the past. Machiavelli was an antecedent to this contemporary historical lesson that

is based on the criticism of the now known destructive restrictions of modern historical consciousness. Machiavelli's historicism can now become fruitful conscientiously, where historical recurrence provides a more meaningful understanding of the truer nature of communities, societies, homelands, and civilizations. This standpoint forms the basic analysis of the importance of Machiavelli's lessons on history for the present-day.

A brief description of time periods becomes necessary in the understanding of not only the main goal in Machiavelli's historical study, but also on the main direction of themes within the entire work. It is from reflection upon the recognized periods - the ancient, the source of the Western classical tradition, early and Medieval Christianity, the Renaissance, the numerous elements of the modern age, and the end of modernity – that Machiavelli is revived as being important for today. It is from the astute and real knowledge of these historical identities that one can justly distinguish their falsity or incoherence.

The ancient identity has been construed as prior to the source of the Western classical tradition. It involves the "pre-Socratic" time period, with influences outside of Athens and Greece. Antiquity obviously includes the Roman Republic, which focuses on the virtuous activities of Romulus, the beginner of Rome, who lived circa 771BC- 717BC, who is reported to come from the same blood as Aeneas, the nephew of King Priam of Troy, who escaped the defeat in the Trojan War to the Dorians and Achaeans, and began to employ fertile ancient republican virtues onto the central portion of Italy. One pathway of "ancient history" identifies its beginning with the beginning of Rome, just as "classical antiquity" is the beginning of Greek history at roughly the same time period (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic, 1).

In the history of political thought, the Western classical tradition begins with Plato, who wrote, to a large extent, the dialogues of Socrates. In the introduction to the book *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (1961), the author of the introduction and editor, Huntington Cairns, states: "THESE DIALOGUES...have been praised as the substance of Western thought" (Cairns 1961, xiii). They are "the chief lines of the Western world view," and that "a return to the insights of these dialogues is a return to our roots" (Cairns 1961, xiii). This is similar to the comments made by James Wiser in the opening paragraph of Part I, "The Classical Tradition," that the "Hellenistic civilization of the fifth and fourth century BC has had such an immense attraction for Western society" (Wiser 1982, 3). With a list of well-known Greek figures that Wiser identified, it formulated "the

basis for the most important pillars of modern Western civilization" (Wiser 1982, 3).

The next phase in the Western tradition of thought was the rise of Christianity seen in the works of St. Augustine (354- 430 AD), whereby history formed a new apocalyptic[1] direction for a redemption from the sinful earthly world, to the eternal life in allegiance with God in heaven. The apocalypse was either the relinquishment of man's life on earth, or the complete destruction of the planet. Later on in St. Augustine's life, he was not so extreme and found meaning in Christian faith to enhance the need for peace on a universal level. Nevertheless, he raised the tension between political relevancy and Christian principles, or, in other words, "between the temporal and spiritual powers" (Wiser, 1982, 103). This tension became "one of the major issues throughout the Middle Ages" (Wiser, 1982, 103), which only disappeared through the privatization of religion with the Protestant Reformation. The attempt to find a harmony between these two realms of power was a major concern for St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD), who lived through the late period of Medieval Christianity in the thirteenth century AD. Although "between 1000 and 1300 many of the essential features of the modern nation state system began to appear," it did not appear in Italy (Wiser 1982, 131).

It was from the lack of feudal arrangements in Italy that did not allow a strong monarchy to rise in power on a nationally-oriented stage, as it did in France, Spain, and England: "France, Spain, and England was so organized that at the close of its existence it was naturally transformed into a united monarchy" (Burckhardt n.d., 4). The Italian peninsula "was divided among five political forces: The Papal States (which were, in fact, a collection of semiautonomous fiefdoms acknowledging some sort of theological tie to the Pope); Florence; Milan; Venice; and the Kingdom of Naples" (Wiser 1982, 133). None of the five political forces could impose a strong design upon others to form a unification of Italy. There existence,

> was founded simply on their power to maintain it. In them for the first time we detect the modern political spirit of Europe, surrounded freely by its own instincts, often displaying the worst features of an unbridled egoism, outraging every right, and killing every germ of a healthier culture (Burckhardt n.d., 4).

[1] The "Apocalypse," coming from "the Book of Revelation" of the Bible, refers to the notion of the "end of the world". The end of the world is the "end of history," a Christian consciousness that gets secularized in modern political thought towards the end, or goal, of superiority.

From this weakness and uncultured egoism, the Italian city-states hired mercenary troops, which brought foreign powers to rover through and take over parts of Italy. The Renaissance in Italy had to face this large amount of instability in political rule. Nevertheless, it formed a distinctive time period, from the fall of Medieval Christianity, to the rise of a new world called modernity. Machiavelli's works are clearly identified with "the birth of modernity" (Wiser 1982, 129), but for Machiavelli, it was not a healthy birth. The Italian Renaissance is distinctively opposed to the rise of modernity.

As Cahoone states, "It is impossible to recount the dramatic changes that stimulate European modernity" (Cahoone 1996, 27). It includes nonetheless, "the voyage discovery of the fifteenth century, the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth, and the scientific revolution of the seventeenth, to name a few" (Cahoone 1996, 27). It was "the *devotia moderna* and the *vita moderna*" that led to the rise of Luther in the Protestant Reformation, and can easily be conceived as the beginning of the separation of Church and state (Wiser 1982, 150). These elements were related to the "Protestant" values of "individualism, voluntarism, and nationalism" (Wiser 1982, 151). The rise of Protestantism in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries occurred at the same general life-time of Hobbes. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, "a new world view" arose, which would eventually "create a new *world*," where the "rhythm of life" was "dictated by machines rather than by nature" (Cahoone 1996, 27). It was conceived as "the beginning of an accelerated process of change whereby modes of living that had altered little over a thousand years would eventually be turned upside down" (Cahoone 1996, 27). The new world created by the "Age of Reason," or the "Age of Enlightenment," started the legacy that the human could construct "human society, materially and politically" (Cahoone 1996, 27). It was the legacy of "the simple, profound, unquestioned conviction of Reason, Freedom, and Progress" (Cahoone 1996, 27-28). But this legacy had criticism from the start. These abrupt changes in life meant an abrupt loss of "community, tradition, religion, familiar political authority, customs, and manners" (Cahoone 1996, 27-28). All of these elements were either "transformed," or "utterly displaced" (Cahoone 1996, 28).

The later modern period is identified in the workings of Hegel and Marx. Even though they had an extensive criticism of modernity and of any remnant of Christian dogma, they did not relieve Progress from their late-modern framework. As such, they did not relieve themselves of their own versions of German idealism, a modern ideological standpoint that was concurred after the destructive events of the twentieth century as

having little to do with the real. In the rejection of the Hegelian education of the "Absolute" in a contorted version of the "Divine Revelation," Nietzsche began a complete criticism of modernity. Modernity brought about the condition where, "Nihilism stands at the door" (Nietzsche 1967, 7); a "nihilism" that "is rooted" in the "Christian-morale" (Nietzsche 1968, 7). Christianity as being the root of modern secularism in the Enlightenment Age was even stated by Hegel himself. With the "nihilistic consequences" in "contemporary natural science," the "ways of thinking in politics and economics," and with "the position of art in the modern world absolutely lacking in originality," modernity has brought about its own end (Nietzsche 1968, 8).

The "end of modernity" is identified equally with the contemporary realm of political thought, whereby Nietzsche is its primary source. It therefore extends to Heidegger, Arendt, Derrida, and Foucault, and all other influential twentieth-century thinkers. The comparable reference of the works of Machiavelli and the Renaissance with these mentioned time periods is essential for a proper understanding of this work. The Renaissance, as a distinctive time period that faced the downfall of one world-view with the rise of another largely unknown world, is similar in generality to our time, to our world, with the end of modernity and the arising of a new yet unknown world.

The Italian Renaissance formed a heralded time period, whereby Nietzsche called it "the last *great* age" (Nietzsche 1990, 102). Jacob Burckhardt, the most noteworthy historian on the Italian Renaissance, identifies its beginning with the fourteenth century. This would include the workings of the latter life of Dante (1265-1321), the full lives of Petrarch (1304-1374), and Boccaccio (1313-1375). Machiavelli could sense that during his life (1469-1527), the Italian Renaissance was close to its end, and a new modern version of the Renaissance began to appear. The Northern Renaissance was formed after the spread of humanism from the Italian Renaissance in the late fifteenth century. [2] It was closely linked to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. As William Gilbert, a recent historian, states, "the Northern Renaissance," also claims an attachment to "the scientific revolution," that started at the middle of the 16th century but moved into the Enlightenment period of the eighteenth century (Gilbert 1997, 176). The "Age of Enlightenment" consisted of "the spirit of optimism" in the new age of modern science, generated from the scientific revolution, which gave promise for control over nature through

[2] Often, as we will see, the dates at the start and end of a time period or age are not entirely consistent. The following dates of time periods are commonly accepted by most scholars.

its mechanical rationalism and empiricism (Wiser 1982, 229). As one can see, there were significant differences between the early and late Renaissance, or between the Italian Renaissance and the Northern Renaissance, involving differences that would question the veritable use of Renaissance of having anything to do with the development of modernity.

The distinction of the Italian Renaissance, as an historical epoch, has caused a continual debate upon its on-going identity. It is argued that the activities that were focused upon in the "Northern Renaissance," such as individualism, the idea of freedom, the varied political and religious affairs, and even the "scientific revolution," can find a source in Renaissance Italy. However, even with these very basic continuities and resemblances, the Italian distinctiveness in Renaissance still remains. William Gilbert, in his chapter "The Meaning of the Italian Renaissance: Interpretation and Synthesis," further argued that the reforms in the Reformation made their own distinction that did not match the "political and historical insight," nor the "efflorescence of creative power" (Gilbert, 1997, 190) in the "literary artistic genius," nor the "philosophical activity" of the Italian Renaissance (Gilbert, 1997, 191). The "scientific revolution," he states, which continued into "the beginning of the eighteenth century," includes "developments that depart drastically from the 'spirit of the Renaissance'" (Gilbert 1997, 177-78). Gilbert tells us that the definition of the Renaissance was clearly stated by Jacob Burckhardt in his work, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, "the most significant book ever written on the subject" (Gilbert 1997, 1), as it was truly the combination of 'the revival of antiquity' and 'the genius of the Italian people'" (Gilbert, 1997, 173). Gilbert relied heavily upon Burckhardt's work for a historical understanding of the Italian Renaissance. This chapter will reveal that Machiavelli displays an utter distinction in his educative use of history that has no resemblance to the other forms of the Renaissance. It is unprecedented and genuine: one that is diametrically opposed to the modern belief in history associated with "the scientific revolution" of progress in history.

We have seen throughout this depiction of time periods, the continual presence and absence of previous and new world views, accentuated, at points, where the reputed old world is crumbling, and a new future world is only beginning its appearance. This is similar to Machiavelli's world, and our world. For its understanding of being at a "time of transition," being between two worlds, one must identify the presence and absence of both worlds, which are two distinctive forms of civilization.

1.2 Exemplary Lessons in Machiavelli's Use of History

Machiavelli's use of history is a genuine re-telling of the former historical works. Newness arises from the knowledge of events that previous historians could not obviously know. Yet, the knowledge and the use of previous historians and political thinkers can aid for a better the understanding of the nature of conditions of today and future times. Machiavelli uses historical recurrence in a unique manner, coupling the eternal grand scale of cyclical history, with its distinctive use as a lesson in adjusting to the temporal conditions. This displays the reciprocal worth of history for education, and it forms the basis of Machiavelli's approach. This approach is extremely relevant for our contemporary times.

In repeating Machiavelli's educational process, let us look at his own understanding of history and its use. Let us begin by looking carefully at the title itself in his largest work, *Discourses On The First Decade of Titus Livius*, since there is much scholarly debate on the history covered by Machiavelli and its relation to Titus Livius, a Roman historian of the latter first century BC.[3] Machiavelli has experienced a distinctive period in history, a rise and fall of civilizations, incorporating the complete downfall of the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, and the rise and persistence of Christianity for a millennium and a half that Titus Livius did not. Therefore, it should be no surprise that Machiavelli covers matters in history that Titus Livius could not. There are obviously temporal adjustments to matters that Titus Livius could not fully conceive. But this does not diminish the similarities found in the general ancient historical approach shared by both Titus Livius and Machiavelli. This does not make

[3] The title in Italian is *I Discorsi sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*. Since the relation of Machiavelli to Livius is of academic importance, the meaning and use of "*sopra*" becomes significant. "*Sopra*" can be used in various ways. It is as if Machiavelli was playing with its multiple uses. It can mean being "beyond," "above," or "on top," and also "based upon" that has a lower recognition, and this is a tact that he used in the "Dedication" of *The Prince*, the play of the higher and the lower hierarchical distinctions. The word "on" in English does not suggest as much as being "above" Titus Livius, as the Italian word "*sopra*" does. Yet "*sopra*" can also mean "about" or "based upon." Machiavelli's work can be both "based upon" and "beyond," or "on top." Since his works are at a later point of history, he naturally should be "above" or "beyond" Titus Livius. But this does not subjugate Livius as is commonly argued. Machiavelli's work is naturally beyond that of Titus Livius, but this does not imply betterment. It could only imply an adjustment to understanding the present form of the events of history since Livius' time (Sasso 2000, 51).

Machiavelli someone who "explicitly questions the authority of Livy."[4] Let us move on by just stating that Titus Livius provided the basis for Machiavelli's criticism of Christianity through the splendour of Roman Republican history, her politics, her religion, and her authority. With respect, Machiavelli reinforces the works of Titus Livius. If only 35 out of 142 of Livius' works have survived through "the malice of the ages," Machiavelli's work purposely enhances their worth. Let us have a clearer look at Machiavelli's primary sources on the nature of history and its merit on its educational worth for today.

(i) "Values in the 'Gift' of History"

Machiavelli begins *The Discourses* by sending a gift. The gift is the "Dedication" itself of *The Discourses* to compatriot republican friends. Machiavelli begins with a seemingly formal "Dedication," but it contains a hidden criticism of his current formalities in the political affairs of his world. Much could and should be interpreted from these proceedings. We will see continual lessons where the knowledge of history is required to evaluate the past, the present, and provide means to educate the future.

In the "gift" addressed to his compatriot friends Zanobi Buondelmonti and Cosimo Rucellai,[5] he states, "I have set out all I know and all I have learned in the course of my long experience and steady reading in the

[4] Leo Strauss, "Machiavelli's Intentions: *The Discourses*," in *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, (1958) page 141. The intricate research and profound insights of Leo Strauss are, at times, beneficial. But he often exaggerates certain aspects. One is the distinction of Machiavelli as being close to opposing Titus Livius. Some of the references given in his endnotes do not provide clear evidence of his argument. Simply because Machiavelli adds some historical insight outside of the works of Titus Livius available to us today, does not mean that he "explicitly questions the authority of Livy," nor is he adamant about "pointing out the defective character of Livy's *History*" (Strauss 1958, 142). There is only one clear example where Machiavelli explicitly 'corrects' Livius, but only by adding some information of historical experiences that was not possible for Livius. Often, Machiavelli clearly cites Livius as being influential in the understanding of his current condition.

[5] Zanobi Buondelmonti participated in the anti-Medicean republican conspiracy of 1522. Cosimo Rucellai was the initiator of the republican Orti group, with which Machiavelli had association after undergoing a permanent change in his life after being ostracized from Florence, with a new orientation to be a man of letters. As Quentin Skinner reveals: "he started to take a prominent part in the meetings held by a group of humanists and *literati* who forgathered regularly at Cosimo Rucellai's gardens on the outskirts of Florence for learned conversations and entertainment" (Skinner 1981, 49).

affairs of the world" (Machiavelli 1965, 188). The frequent use of words "just," "judgments," "judging," the forming of "good laws," indicates the concern for justice in the "Dedication" and beyond, implying a lack of justice in his present-day. Even though Machiavelli admits, in a humble manner, the "poverty of my talents," the "fallacy of my judgments" and the "many places I deceive myself," he later, in an entirely transpositional manner, assures his friends, that with his "intention," rather "than the quality of the thing that is sent," he knows he has "made no error," in choosing that intention and quality (Machiavelli 1965, 188). Within this 'humble' nature, he quickly gives awareness of the current political and frequent historical mistakes of those, "who always address their works to some prince and, blinded by ambition and avarice, praise him for worthy traits, when they ought to blame him for every [contemptible] quality that [is shameful.] can be censured" (Machiavelli 1965, 188).[6]

The "theoretical" judgments on history, politics, and justice are taken from the past, yet are connected to his current practice: the knowledge of "ambition and avarice," in history, of "praise" or "blame" in matters of a judicial form of politics are connected to his current necessity, the practice of writing to those who are not princes, ones who are unable to falsely "load" him "with offices, honours, and riches" (Machiavelli 1965, 189), as he implies is a common practice in his princely political condition. In other words, his republican friends have the means of forming good judgments to better the foul nature of his present-day politics and properly assess and carry out honourable practices. Machiavelli surreptitiously

[6] In the Italian version of *The Discourses*, *Discorsi Sopra la Prima Deca di Tito Livio*, by Sasso, this last sentence ends with "*vituperevole*," which means "contemptible" or "shameful." Gilbert translates it awkwardly as "to be censured." "When they ought to blame him for every contemptible quality," would have been better. Gilbert frequently translates "shame" or "contempt" into "censure." Gilbert's translation of the title of Chapter X is "The Founders of a Tyranny are as Deserving of Censure As Those of a Republic or Kingdom are Deserving of Fame." But the Italian version, "*Quanto sono laudabile I fondatori d'una republica o di uno regno, tanto quelli di una tirannide sono vituperabili*," would have been better entitled as, "The Founders of a Republic or Kingdom are Praised with So Much Fame, as Much As Those of a Tyranny are Ashamed." It seems as though "censure" was a popular discursive form during Gilbert's time and place. But, as you will see in latter citations, some of Gilbert's translations are suspicious. The tendency to modernize Machiavelli is evident in the flaws in translation onto interpretation. At times, it can be productive, but at other times erroneous. And, just as importantly, "censure" is an ugly word that disrupts the rhythm of Machiavelli's written speech (Sasso 2000, 88).