Machiavelli and Rousseau

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Introduction

This study attempts to compare two political philosophers who are in many respects so different as almost to defy such an effort. Nevertheless, we shall try to show that the similarities that unite them are frequently as striking as are their differences.

In Machiavelli's case I have relied entirely on authorized translations of his works, as well as on a number of commentaries. Of these by far the most valuable have been the chapter entitled, "Machiavelli's New Science of Politics" in Ernst Cassirer's The Myth of the State and Friedrich Meinecke's Die Idee der Staatsraeson in der Neueren Geschichte. From the latter, particularly, many of the ideas for this study were derived. Authorized translations have been used for quotations from Rousseau's writings whenever possible. Where no reliable English version was available, the original French has been employed. While this is not conducive to smooth reading, it is hoped that still more is to be gained by the consequent accuracy. It is difficult to estimate the value of all that has been written and said about Rousseau, or to give adequate credit to those who have by their work made the understanding of this complex writer less difficult. C.E. Vaughan's "Introduction" to his edition of the Political Writings of Jean Jacques Rousseau was very helpful in this respect, as was Ernest Cassirer's illuminating article, "Das Problem Jean-Jacques Rousseau". (1) Possibly the most useful book for the

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(1) Archiv fuer die Geschichte der Philosophie, Vol.XII, 1932.

purposes of this study has been Alfred Cobban's Rousseau and the Modern State.

While all the books and articles which were in any way helpful in writing this paper have been listed in the bibliography, I have tried to avoid an excess of foot-notes by mentioning in this way only those which were quoted verbatim, and those from which I had directly and consciously derived a large number of vital ideas and facts.

Chapter I

Machiavelli and Rousseau: Allies or Antagonists?

The first impression upon seeing the names of Machiavelli and Rousseau together is often one of absolute contrast. The wily devil's disciple and the apostle of the natural goodness of man undoubtedly make strange companions. Nor is the distance between them merely one that their respective reputations has created; it is very real, beginning with first principles, their general world view, their personal characters and their environments. While we do not intend to gloss over the many differences,or to disregard the inherent difficulties in comparing such diverse writers, it is the aim of this study to demonstrate the numerous similarities that bind them together. In spite of all that separates them, Machiavelli and Rousseau are by no means natural adversaries in the battle of ideas.

One of the greatest difficulties in trying to establish any relationship between Machiavelli and Rousseau lies in the fact that those few commentators on the history of political thought, who have chosen to look at them together at all, have done so only to criticize one by using the other as an example. Even that is rare; mostly they are kept at an almost unbridgeable distance.

Professor Laski manages to dispose of both in one sentence, since both, it seems, have held inadequate, even though opposed, theories about human nature. "Theories which build upon the over-simple faith that men are either wholly good or wholly bad are bound to result in a distorted political philosophy". (1) He also remarks that, for all

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(1) H. Laski, "Machiavelli and the Present Time" in The Dangers of Obedience (London & New York, 1930), pp. 238-264.

Machiavelli's show of Realpolitik, Utopia is "inscribed upon his map", but he does not develop any further analogies that might have arisen out of this statement.

Giovanni Ferrari finds a common chord in the revolutionary implications of their theories. "D'après Machiavel la vieille civilisation était méprisable à cause de sa faiblesse, d'après Rousseau elle était faible à cause de son iniquité." (1) The inclination to build upon a tabula rasa, and to exalt a Graeco-Roman ideal as a means of inciting radical political action, is evident in both writers. Shrewdly he observes their common admiration for the Swiss, but fails to investigate the nature or cause of this attitude. (2)

One of the most typical and sweeping statements of their relative position is presented by Benedetto Croce, who sees Machiavelli as a man of deep moral impulses, driven by the very sternness of his conscience to the discovery of the realm of "pure politics".

> "Machiavelli discovers the necessity and autonomy of politics, of politics which is beyond, or rather, below moral good and evil, which has its laws against which it is useless to rebel, politics that cannot be drivem from the world by holy water", (3)

Rousseau, on the other hand, is a typical representative of the Age of Enlightenment, addicted to the cult of pure reason, "which is nothing but the mathematical attitude of the human spirit".

"His book is an extreme form, or one of the extreme forms, and certainly the most famous, of the school of natural law".

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(1) G. Ferrari, (Machiavel Juge des Révolutions de notre Temps. (Paris, 1849), p. 30.

(2) Ibid., pp. 100-101.

(3) B. Croce, Politics and Morals (New York, 1945), pp. 59-73.

Such ideas have their uses as propaganda, "but as doctrines or criteria for the explanation of facts (they) were and are simply absurd". (1)

Such a characterization of Rousseau is inadmissable, as is the unfortunate glorification of Machiavelli. One clue to Croce's mistake lies in the reference to Rousseau's "book", which implies that he is dealing only with The Social Contract, to the exclusion of the rest of his works. Even with such scant material, it is unforgivable to picture Rousseau as a typical philosopher of the Enlightenment. Very few, if any, scholars, would be willing to place him in that particular category. Certainly he himself would have objected violently, since he was much concerned to point out his isolation from the currents of opinion of his own time. The essence of Croce's opinion is that Machiavelli sees political life in terms of what "is", while Rousseau lives in the realm of "what ought to be", and an "ought to be" which lacks all contact with political actualities. We will later try to show that Machiavelli was by no means free from posing standards for political action, both abstract and ethical in nature, and that Rousseau was not blind to the limits and necessities of political life. Nevertheless, there is much in their writings that supports the opposite view. "What makes it legitimate?"(2) Rousseau asks himself in examining civil society.

> "My intention is to write something of use ..... for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation". (3)

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(1) B. Croce, Politics and Morals, pp. 58-73.

(2) Social Contract, tr. by G.D.H. Cole (Everyman's Edition, New York, 1950), p.4.

(3) The Prince, tr. by L. Ricci (Modern Library, New York, 1940), ch. XV, p. 56.

When we compare this with Rousseau's inquiry based on "principles", and with the avowed purpose of demonstrating that "justice and utility may in no case be divided", it appears that there is such a difference in purpose that they are simply not dealing with the same subject matter. (1)

Rousseau, who is never tired of condemning war and violence, wishes to live only in a country "diverted by a fortunate impotence from the brutal love of conquest." (2) Machiavelli advises his ruler to be a lion and a fox in enlarging his domain, and at times appears to be glorying in the very wickedness of such heroes as Caesare Borgia and Castruccio Castracani. As for a republic, "tranquility would enervate her or provoke internal dissensions", which would only ruin her. (3) War is a necessity, and the problem is how to win.

Besides such obvious differences, and the intervention of two centuries which, among other notable events, witnessed the Reformation, there are some vast personal differences as well. What can the author of so ribald a comedy as Mandragola have in common with the didactic romancer of the Nouvelle Heloise? Machiavelli was gregarious, Rousseau shunned the society of his fellow men. Rousseau's experience with practical politics was limited to a short and unhappy career as secretary to a half-insane French ambassador in Venice. There his chief occupation seems to have consisted in issuing passports, and in unsuccessfully trying to collect his pay. (4) He had, moreover, no taste for public

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(1) Social Contract, p. 3.

(2) Discourse on the Origin of Inequality, tr. by G.D.H. Cole (Everyman's Library, New York, 1950), p. 179.

(3) Discourses, tr. by C.E. Detmold (Modern Library, New York, 1940), bk.I, ch.vi, p. 129.

(4) Confessions (Modern Library, New York, n.d.), bk.VII, pp.305-320.

activity. While he recognized the possibilities of great achievements in that line, he could not persuade himself to go to Corsica. He had no hope for success, and "twenty years of profound and solitary meditation would be less painful to (him) than six months of an active life in the midst of men and public affairs". (1) In a letter to Buttafuoco, who had suggested that he write a plan for a Corsican constitution, Rousseau wrote: "Il me manque, enfin, l'expérience dans les affaires, qui seule éclaire plus sur l'art de conduire les hommes, que toutes les méditations". (2) He was quite aware of his own limitations as a practical politician. How strange his words sound beside those of the "Florentine secretary"!

> "Fortune has decreed that since I cannot discuss silk-making or wool-manufacture, or profits and losses, I have to discuss matters of state. I must either make a vow of silence or talk about that subject". (3)

Machiavelli's inactivity was to him an unendurable punishment. Nothing could compensate him for the sense of being left out of the bustle of public affairs. If he tried to ingratiate himself with the Medicis, even if it involved such an unworthy action as deserting his erstwhile benefactor, Piero Soderini, it was neither safety nor money that he really sought so much as a chance to return to the political scene, to practice his métier. Anything was preferable to being excluded: "There is my hope that these Medici lords will begin to employ me, even if they begin my making me roll a stone". Nor does he doubt his own

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(1) Confessions, bk. XII, p. 677.

(2) Lettre à M. Buttafuoco, le 22 septembre, C.E. Vaughan, The Political Writings of Rousseau (Cambridge, 1915), vol. II, p. 357.

(3) Letter to Vettori, April 9, 1513, Familiar Letters, tr. by A.H. Gilbert (Chicago, 1941), p. 228.

capacities, for he has "not been asleep or playing for the fifteen years that I have devoted to the study of the art of the state". (1)

In the face of such examples of diversity, there seems to be little reason to expect signs of similarity. Nevertheless, at least one writer has supported the notion that there might be a more profound bond between Rousseau and Machiavelli than is commonly supposed. In discussing Rousseau's attitude to the problem of State and Church, Irving Babbitt remarks:

> "Machiavelli (too) had sought to discredit the idea of a separate spiritual order, and also of Christian humility itself, so that the state might be all in all. Quite apart from Rousseau's admiration for Machiavelli and from any conscious discipleship, his view of the State has more in common with the Machiavellian view than one might first suppose. Machiavelli is not, of course, like Rousseau, an emotionalist, but is, in his main trend, utilitarian....Rousseau too has a strongly utilitarian side. Indeed one finds in him, as in the whole of our modern age, an endless interplay of sentimental and utilitarian elements". (2)

It is along the lines of thought suggested by this paragraph that we propose to examine the relation that Machiavelli's and Rousseau's political theories bear to one another.

First of all there is the matter of Rousseau's opinion of Machiavelli. With the exception of Plato and Plutarch there is scarcely a writer whom he appreciated with less reserve. His notes in the Social Contract show that he was acquainted with the Prince, the Discourses and the History of Florence, and he mentioned as conclusive Machiavelli's statements on such matters as lesser associations in a republic, the character and methods of the "extraordinary legislator", and the tribunate of the

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(1) Letter to Vettori, December 10, 1513, Familiar Letters, p. 243.

(2) Irving Babbitt, Democracy and Leadership (Boston, 1924), p. 94.

Roman Republic. (1) The Prince, he considered "a book for Republicans", teaching the people to guard themselves against tyrants. Of Machiavelli personally he writes that he "was a proper man and a good citizen; but being attached to the court of the Medici, he could not help veiling his love of liberty in the midst of his country's oppression. The choice of his detestable hero, Caesare Borgia, clearly enough shows his hidden aim; and the contradiction between the teachings of the Prince and that of the Discourses on Livy and the History of Florence shows that this profound political thinker has so far been studied only by superficial or corrupt readers". (2) While the view that the Prince is a mere satire is not accepted generally, it is not an entirely absurd idea. Some of the acrid human and fantastic images that colour the pages of the book can easily impart such an impression, and there is the surface discrepancy between it and the Discourses. At any rate, Rousseau is in good company, for even Spinoza was puzzled by the apparent contradictions in "that most ingenious Machiavelli's" thought. On the whole he too decided that the Prince is a book of warning to free peoples.

> "I am led to this opinion concerning that most farseeing man, because it is known that he was favourable to liberty, for the maintenance of which he has, besides, given the most wholesome advice." (3)

Although probably unduly kind to Machiavelli, both Spinoza and Rousseau admired him as a shrewd observer, a man steeped in ancient learning and a sincere republican, but neither fell into the stupid idolatry with which the German idealists, and some Italian nationalists of the nineteenth century came to regard him. The process by which the idealists came to

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(1) Social Contract, pp. 27n, 41n. & 85n.

(2) Ibid., p. 71n & Discourse on Political Economy, p. 293.

(3) Spinoza, Tractus Theologico-Politicus, ch.v, sec., 5. quoted from E. Cassirer, The Myth of the State, pp. 119-120.

accept him has been aptly likened to the "legitimization of a bastard". (1) It was nothing for such an apostle of "sacro egoismo" as Alfieri to speak of him as "il divino Machiavelli". Possibly, to the extent that one may consider Rousseau a precursor of modern nationalism, his admitted debt to Machiavelli is rather an ill omen of things to come.

The agreement on the republican form of government is, however, only a small part of a far greater kinship, consisting of a common worship of antiquity as a moral and political ideal. Rome and Sparta were the foci of boundless admiration. Moreover, both used the idealized images they had adopted as standards for the most intense criticism of their respective contemporaries. Both their appreciation of the past and their loathing for the present was based on the same precepts. This is not surprising, since both derived their dreams of antiquity from the same sources, Livy and, above all, Plutarch.

Even while busy at the court of Caesare Borgia, Machiavelli found time to write frantic letters to a friend in Florence, begging him to send him a copy of Plutarch as soon as possible. (2) His love of the ancient writers is also shown in one of the few really moving passages in his letters, in which he tells us how after a day spent in degrading labours and company on his farm, he returns home to his books.

> "At the door I take off the clothes I have worn all day, mud-spotted and dirty, and put on regal and courtly garments. Thus appropriately clothed, I enter into the ancient courts of ancient men, where being lovingly received, I feed on food which alone is mine, and which I was born for; I am not ashamed to speak with them and ask the reason for their

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(1) Friedrich Meinecke, Die Idee der Staatsraeson (Berlin & Muenchen, 1929), p. 435.

(2) P. Villari, Niccolo Machiavelli and his Times, tr. by L. Villari (London, 1878), vol.II, p. 131.

> actions, and they courteously answer me. For four hours I feel no boredom and forget every worry; I do not fear poverty and death does not terrify me. I give myself completely over to the ancients." (1)

This, he tells us, is where he derived the inspiration for the Prince.

Rousseau was led to an excess of effusiveness in his love for Plutarch. When he was only six years old, Plutarch was his favorite author, and at eight, he claims, he knew him by heart.(2)

> "Unceasingly occupied with thoughts of Rome and Athens, living as it were amongst their great men, myself by birth the citizen of a republic and son of a father whose patriotism was his strongest passion, I was fired by his example; I believed myself a Greek or a Roman." (3)

This passion was not confined to childhood, for thirty years later, on learning that he had been awarded a prize by the Academy or Dijon, he writes:

> "This news awoke again all the ideas which had suggested it (the Discourse on Arts & Sciences) to me, animated them with fresh vigour, and stirred up in my heart the first leavening of virtue and heroism, which my father, my country and Plutarch had deposited there in my infancy. (4)

At the very end of his life he could still say that:

> "In the small number of books which I still read sometimes, Plutarch is the one which attracts me most. This was the first reading of my childhood, it will be the last of my old age; he is almost the only author whom I have never read without profit to myself". (5)

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(1) Letter to Vettori, December 10, 1513, Familiar Letters, p.240.

(2) Lettre à Malesherbes, le 12 janvier, 1762, Lettres à Malesherbes, ed. by G. Rudeler (London, 1928), p. 30.

(3) Confessions, bk.I, p. 7.

(4) Confessions, bk. VIII, p. 366.

(5) Reveries of a Solitary, by J.G. Fletcher, (London, 1927.) p. 78.

This intense absorption in tales of ancient life influences the whole work of both writers. Coupled with the conviction that the purpose of historical studies was purely didactic, and an urge to condemn and reform the scene that surrounded them, it led to a great unanimity of opinion. Religion, leadership, intellectual and economic activity, military organization and the virtues of patriotism all were closely examined by both writers, and the results of their deliberations were frequently identical. Even on the point where their agreement seems to end abruptly, over the notorious issue of morals and politics, we will try to show that, in spite of all their differences, it is false to place Rousseau at the opposite pole from Machiavelli, a pole that is reserved for trusting and simple souls, such as the Abbé de Saint-Pierre, for whom Rousseau had but little sympathy, in spite of his apparent interest in his work.

Lastly, as Babbitt notes, there is the same utilitarian bias. Machiavelli openly declares his intention to write about the useful, rather than about such law and justice as has never been known to man. In his last political works, particularly in the Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne, we find Rousseau abandoning his most cherished ideals in favour of a stern attention to the details of political actuality and possibility, so as to give the Poles some practical advice in their days of adversity.

Chapter II

The Worship of Antiquity

One of the many difficulties in studying political theories is that they are unintelligible when examined in vacuo. They acquire a meaning only as we place them into the context of their historical background, as we compare them with their antecedents, and explain them in terms of the experience of their authors.

As far as Machiavelli is concerned, we encounter a rare unanimity of approach among the commentators. He is always, and not unjustly, treated as a "child of his age", and almost every sentence of his writings has been interpreted as an expression of some general trend of the later Renaissance, or as a description of the events that he witnessed. Even so, he can by no means be said to have absorbed the entire content of the Renaissance, or to have been representative of all its aspects. Its speculative, philosophical, artistic, and critical preoccupations scarcely touched him. Unfortunately this general method of study is entirely useless as far as Rousseau is concerned. Among the elegant theorists of his time he was an outcast. The contempory climate of opinion was alien to him. In an age of religious indifference he was deeply interested in religious problems, and a sincere admirer of the Gospels. At a time when most intellectuals supported enlightened despots, he scorned princes as being ipso facto self-interested, and warned that egoism and enlightenment were, by definition, opposed to each other. While the major states of Europe were expanding, he sang the praises of the city-state. The cosmopolitanism of his fellow-intellectuals he distrusted profoundly, preferring the social cohesion of the narrowest parochialism. In an atmosphere of optimism about man's

powers of self-perfection, once certain external restraints were removed, he was thoroughly sceptical of the potentialities of human reason. Students of Rousseau therefore have found an explanation of his thought in his own character, and personal experiences, in his plebeian origin, in his extreme sensibility and awkwardness, in his republican heritage of Genevan citizenship, and in his inability to adjust himself to the standards of Parisian society. "Malgré la politesse de mon siècle, je suis grossier comme les Macédoniens de Philippe". (1) This was his own comment on this disparity, and it was not meant as an expression of personal inferiority.

In one respect, however, like Machiavelli, he adopted, and adapted to his particular purposes, the fashion of the times. The worship of the antique was as rampant in the 18th century as it was in the Italy of the Renaissance. It is now a commonplace of historians to dwell on the devotion of the Italian humanists to the culture of antiquity. In the main it was confined to the artistic and philosophical activities of a small literate group. Thus, for instance, Petrarch was more admired for his imitative Latin work than for his Italian poetry. Julius II undertook the most extensive program of excavations, while Lorenzo de' Medici could express the sentiment that without Plato one could not possibly be either a good citizen or a good Christian. This enthusiasm can be explained both, as a reaction to the mediaeval spirit, and as an impetus to the creativeness and originality of the period itself. Moreover, the many material reminders of Roman greatness in Italy, as well as the frantic intellectual preoccupation with antiquity, served to popularize the cult. The career of Cola di Rienzi alone is an indication of the strength that the ideal had over the popular mind. At times it assumed

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(1) Préface de Narcisse, Oeuvres (Paris, 1826), vol.XI, p.222.

a pious simplicity, such as the pride of the Neapolitans in the fact that Virgil had been buried near their city, and the conviction of the Paduans that Livy's bones had been interred near their city-walls. Parents whose children might have spent an inconspicuous life as plain Giovanni were blessed with no lesser names than those of Agamemnon, Achilles, or Aeneas. (1)

In the 18th century the cult became even more intense, till it reached a veritable frenzy in the Revolution. Speaking of the 18th century philosophers Becker writes:

> "The Garden of Eden was for them a myth, no doubt, but they looked enviously back at the Golden Age of Roman virtue or across the waters to the unspoiled innocence of an Arcadian civilization that flourished in Pennsylvania". (2)

Montesquieu cried out, "J'avoue mon goût pour les anciens, cette antiquité m'enchante", and in the collèges young people were surfeited with tales of Rome, though the conservative teachers of the ancien régime counselled their pupils to cultivate only the private, not the public, mores of the Romans. (3) Madame Rolland claimed that, as a young girl, living in the apparently too drab world of a middle-class home, she constantly regretted that she had not been born a Spartan. Brissot, as an unsuccessful lawyer, convinced himself that, in a free

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(1) Most of these remarks are based on information derived from Jakob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy, tr. by S.G.C. Middlemore (London & Oxford, 1945), J.A. Symonds, Renaissance in Italy, (Modern Library, New York, 1935) and Hiram Haydn, The Counter-Renaissance, (New York, 1950).

(2) C. Becker, The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers, (New Haven, 1932), p. 30.

(3) H.T. Parker, The Cult of Antiquity and the French Revolutionaries, (Chicago, 1937), p. 35, at seq.

society, such as he thought Rome to have been, the talents of a budding Cicero, like himself, would not have gone unrewarded. The battle of the Ancients and the Moderns had been confined to artistic and scientific achievements. Even Fontenelle admitted to the moral superiority of the Romans. Most people felt that the achievements of the past were too sublime to be copied, not to mention surpassed, by their contemporaries. It was not until the hope of a new Rome, and one that lacked the pre-requisite of small territorial confines, across the Atlantic, encouraged them, and until their accumulated grievances reached an explosive pitch, that the creation of a neo-Roman state became a practicable ideal for them. Condorcet even spoke with contempt of the slave-system of Rome and Greece, and pointed with infinite hope to the new society that was to emerge from the ruins of the old.

During the Revolution the cult, as it was during the Renaissance, was popularized. When the National Assembly moved to its new quarters in the Tuilleries in 1793, it was decorated with statues of Solon, Lycurgus, Plato, Demosthenes, Junius Brutus, and Cincinnatus. Each of them wore a crown of laurel. The president's chair was draped with silk, "à la romaine". A spectator described the room as being noble and simple, "dans le style de la belle antiquité". Who could worry, in the presence of such elevated sentiments, about the fact that the acoustics were terrible, and that no provisions for ventilation had been made ! (1) The young and innocent were again condemned to an heroic nomenclature. In some localities during the year 1792 no less than three-hundred children were called either Lycurgus, or Junius Brutus. Babeuf was, of course, a well-known example of this craze; from a modest François-Noel he ascended to the heights of Camillus Caius Grachus.

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(1) Parker, op. cit., pp. 146-147.

Lycurgus was the idol of the radical Jacobins, and Solon that of the Girondins, and it not insignificant, in trying to estimate Rousseau's influence on the leaders of the Revolution, that under Robespierre a plan for education based on the Spartan ideal was drawn up, not unlike the one that Rousseau had proposed to the Poles.

There can be little doubt that Montesquieu of all the writers of the period influenced Rousseau's political thinking most profoundly. Characteristically, the majority of the "philosophes" looked upon him with some suspicion. It is therefore worth-while to examine his words on antiquity a little more closely. Equality and frugality were for him the great virtues of the ancient Republic. (1) Virtue formed the true basis of the Republican order, which is defined as one in which "le peuple en corps ou seulement une partie du peuple a la souveraine puissance". Patriotism is the essence of the Republican spirit, and he admires this quality even though he recognizes that it stands in an equivocal position to the ordinary rules of morality.

> "C'étoit un amour dominant pour la patrie qui sortant des règles ordinaires des crimes et des vertus, n'écoutoit que lui seul, et ne voyoit ni citoyen, ni ami, ni bienfaiteur, ni pere; la vertu sembloit s'oublier pour se surpasser elle-même; et l'action qu'on ne pouvoit d'abord approuver, parce qu'elle étoit atroce, elle la faisoit admirer comme divine." (2)

This patriotism, though based on equality, was also based on property. For Montesquieu was convinced that only property-holders had a real "stake" in the welfare of their country.

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(1) Maxime Leroy, Histoire des Idées Sociales en France (De Montesquieu à Robespierre) (Paris, 1946), pp.97 & 108.

(2) Montesquieu, Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence. (Paris, 1852), pp.112.

> "Les fondateurs des anciennes républiques avoient également partagé les terres; cela seul faisoit un peuple puissant, c'est-à-dire une société bien réglée; cela faisoit aussi une bonne armée, chacun ayant un égal intérêt, et très grand, à défendre sa patrie". (1)

And he reiterates: "On avoit attention à ne recevoir dans la milice que des gens qui eussent assez de bien pour avoir intérêt à la conservation de la ville". (2)

The strict observance of law was the sign of true liberty among the Romans. Much, however, as he admired them, and pointed to them when he wished to criticize his own times, there is no attempt to resurrect Rome in another age. That "liberty is not the fruit of all climes" was one of the lessons he taught Rousseau, and his own conservative preferences made his feeling for the ancients an entirely abstract passion. Though Rousseau's longing for the ancient state could lead him to say that it is better to imitate the ancients than to explain them, which is indeed the attitude of the true believer, in the main he shared Montesquieu's opinion. (3)

Unlike the humanists, Machiavelli seems to have had little interest in the artitistic achievements of antiquity. What he admires in them is their political and moral life.

> "When we consider the general respect for antiquity, and how often - to say nothing of other examples - a great price is paid for some fragment of an antique statue, which we are anxious to possess to ornament our houses with, or to give to artists who strive to imitate them in their own works; and when we see, on the other hand, the wonderful examples which the history of ancient kingdoms and republics present to us, the prodigies of virtue, and of wisdom displayed by kings, captains, citizens and legislators who have sacrificed

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(1) Montesquieu, Considérations sur les Causes de la Grandeur des Romains et de leur Décadence. (Paris, 1852), p.22

(2) Ibid., pp.85-86.

(3) Letter to Perdiau, January 18, 1756, quoted from C.W. Hendel, J-J. Rousseau, Moralist, (London & New York, 1934), vol.I, p.157.

> themselves for their country - when we see these, I say, more admired than imitated, or so much neglected that not the least trace of this ancient virtue remains, we cannot but be at the same time as much surprised as afflicted". (1)

This indifference is shared by Montesquieu, while for Rousseau artistic excellence is so much a sign of decay that the only comment to which the sight of an ancient statue could move him was a moralistic aphorism.

> "Le moral a une grande réaction sur le physique et change quelque fois jusqu'aux traits du visage. Il y a plus de sentiment et de beauté dans les visages des anciens grecs qu'il n'y en a dans ceux d'aujourd'hui". (2)

His preference for Sparta to Athens is based on his distrust of the latter's artistic achievements, which were to him only an expression of a taste for luxury. His praise of Socrates is never greater than when he speaks of the banishment of poets from the Republic, and of the latter's remarks on the pride and folly of artists. (3)

Quite apart from the general trends of thought that surrounded them, Machiavelli and Rousseau had a special impetus to feel drawn towards the political life of antiquity. For both stemmed from small republics in which some semblance of the old patriotic spirit had survived, and in which they could still see the remnants of popular participation in the management of public affairs. Though Machiavelli had no illusions as to how far Florence was from his ideal of a republic, and called the history of the city an account of "the means by which, through the labour of a thousand years, she became so imbecile", his own love for his native city was quite sincere. (4)

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(1) Discourses, "Introduction", pp. 103-104.

(2) Fragments, "Histoire des Moeurs", Pol.Wr., vol.II, p. 340.

(3) Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, tr. by G.D.H. Cole (Everyman's Edition, New York, 1950), pp.154-155.

(4) History of Florence, (Bohn's Library, London, 1898), bk. I, ch.viii, p.46

When he speaks of "patria" he means Florence, not Italy as a whole. It is Florence he refers to when he writes: "I love my native land more than my soul". (1) Nor can he refrain from applauding the acts of patriotism that once distinguished the citizens of Florence. When they joined a league against the Pope in 1375, they demonstrated their supreme love for their city. "So much did citizens at that time prefer the good of their country to their ghostly consolations, and thus showed the Church, that if as her friends they had defended her, they could as enemies depress her". (2) Moreover, the temporary transformation in the habits of the city that Savonarola had been able to call forth showed him that there were still latent sources of public spirit beneath the general corruption of the times. In his Discourse on Reforming the Government of Florence he suggests to Pope Leo X that nothing he could do would be more glorious or pleasing in God's eyes than to mould Florence into a stable republic, and in the general equality among the citizens he saw the basic prerequisite for such an order. (3) However, on the whole, contemporary Florence offered little cause for enthusiasm to Machiavelli. In his comedy Mandragola, in which he sardonically caricatures the life of the city, we find not one decent character. There are depraved priests, fools, and adventurers, no heroes, no soldiers and no upright citizens. There is no one there to arouse the least sympathy among the audience. He is never anxious to hide the corruption of morals or institutions in Florence. For a model of republican life he had to turn to the memories of Greece and Rome.

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(1) Letter to Vettori, April 16, 1527, Familiar Letters, p. 270.

(2) History of Florence, bk.I, ch. ii, p. 119.

(3) Discourse on Reforming the Government of Florence, tr. by A.H. Gilbert (Chicago, 1941), pp. 91 & 84.

Though Rousseau too was to be disappointed by his native city, the influence of Geneva on his thought can be scarcely over-estimated, both in the sense that he felt himself to be closer to the men of antiquity by being a citizen of that republic, and in that it formed the concrete basis for his highly idealized view of republicanism and the ancient city-state. (1) Even though finally he was forced to renounce his citizenship, totally disillusioned by the contrast of the actual city, governed by a patrician clique, and his imaginary picture of a popular republic, it was his experience there that gave him a far more lively sense of the life in ancient republics than the two-dimensional image that was admired by most of his contemporaries. In that respect his attitude was closer to that of the Revolutionaries of the following generation, even though he would not have shared their optimism or their means of resurrecting antiquity.

> "His whole conception of the state assumes the existence of a public spirit, which to modern ears may sound incredible, but which was intensely real to the student of Plutarch, for the spiritual child of Sparta and Rome". (2)

And we might well add, "to the citizen of Geneva".

> He built his thought on a nostalgic memory of the civic and republican virtues of Calvin's community, in which the influences of the Old-Testament theocracy and the literary memories of republican Rome, and of Stoic philosophy were revitalized by the Reformation in a hard-working and proud middle-class society". (3)

It is this sense of writing as a citizen for fellow-citizens that also distinguishes Machiavelli from the many contemporaries who attempted

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(1) For information on Rousseau's relations to Geneva I have mostly relied on Gaspard Vallette's J-J. Rousseau Genevois. (Paris, 1911).

(2) C.E. Vaughan, "Introduction", Pol. Wr., Vol. I, p.62.

(3) Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism (New York, 1945), p. 239.

to copy Livy, or rather those parts that are most picturesque and lively in the old historian. In his History of Florence and in the Discourses, Machiavelli is neither a mere chronicler, nor simply an author of historical fiction. He is closer in spirit to the republican historians than their mere imitators could ever be. Rousseau in such works as the Lettre à D'Alembert and the "Dedication" of the Discourse on Inequality appears very self-consciously in the role of the ancient republican defending public morality against dangerous innovations. He not only seems to prefer Cato to Socrates, but actually wants to identify himself with the former. Speaking of his childhood as a son of an artisan in Geneva, he claims that "at the age of twelve I was a Roman, at twenty, I had coursed about the wide world and then I was nothing but a bad boy". (1) Geneva at her best, and the "Citizen of Geneva" in his most heroic mood are an illustration of the ancient ideal. Nevertheless, Rousseau also had occasion to perceive the difference between Geneva and the perfect republic, and that the absolute surrender of the individual to the community had not been realized in the city of his birth.

> "At such times he turned eagerly to the records of antiquity. Deep as was the spell that Geneva had cast upon his imagination, that of Rome and Sparta was still deeper, and it is to them that, even more than Geneva, we must look for the practical type of his ideal". (2)

It is interesting, moreover, to see in what terms these two authors praised the world of antiquity and how shabby, in comparison, the present looked to them.

> "Je me plais à tourner les yeux sur ces vénérables images de l'antiquité où je vois les hommes élevés

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(1) Letter to Dr. Tronchin, November 26, 1756, C.W. Hendel, Citizen of Geneva (New York & London, 1937), p.160.

(2) "Introduction" to Contrat Social, Vaughan, Pol. Wr., Vol. II, p.6.

> par de sublimes institutions au plus haut degré de grandeur et de vertus où puisse atteindre la sagesse humaine. L'âme s'élève à son tour et le courage s'enflamme, en parcourant ces respectables monuments. Rome et Sparte portèrent la gloire humaine aussi haut qu'elle puisse atteindre, toutes deux brillèrent à la fois par les vertus et par la valeur. (1)
>
> "Sparta was a republic of demi-gods rather than of men, so greatly superior their virtues seemed to those of mere humanity". (2)

These few examples serve to illustrate with what ardour Rousseau admired the ancients, and Machiavelli, usually more restrained in his expressions, is equally carried away by this image. Speaking with some approval of Florence, he at once hastens to add that "nothing has subsequently arisen from the ruins of Rome at all corresponding to her ancient greatness." (3) We have already quoted his remarks about the "prodigious virtue of the ancients". He goes on to point out that civil law consists of nothing but the decisions of Roman juris-consults, and medicine is based entirely on the experience of ancient physicians. (4) Not only the willingness of citizens to sacrifice themselves for their country, the spirit of justice, but even the great severities of Roman life arouse his admiration.

> "Even if we had not an infinity of other evidences of the greatness of this republic it would be made manifest by the extent of her executions, and the character of the punishments she inflicted on the guilty. Rome did not hesitate to have a whole legion put to death according to a judicial decision, or to destroy an entire city, or to send eight or ten thousand men into exile with such extraordinary conditions as could hardly be complied with by one man, much less by so many" (5)

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(1) Fragments, "Rome et Sparte", Pol. Wr. vol.I, pp.314-315.

(2) Discourse on the Arts & Sciences, p. 153.

(3) History of Florence, bk. V, ch.1, p.203.

(4) "Introduction" to Discourses, pp.104-105.

(5) Discourses , bk.III, ch.xlix, p.539.

If one is tempted to find a sign of justification for Machiavelli's evil reputation in this passage, it must be recalled that all admirers of the spirit of antique republicanism fall into the danger of sanctioning harshness. Montesquieu, who enjoys so great a place in the affections of liberals, found it in his heart to admire the brutality of the Romans in dealing with their enemies, and even gives praise to Atilla.(1) The ancient spirit, if not always quite so cruel, is at all times stern. Thus both Rousseau and Machiavelli have an overwhelming esteem for Brutus, who killed his own sons when they threatened the newly established liberty of the Roman republic. For both it was an example of that spirit of virtue that maintains republics.

> "Whoever makes himself tyrant of a state and does not kill Brutus, or whoever restores liberty and does not immolate his sons will not maintain himself in his position long". (2)

> "Il sera toujours grand et difficile de soumettre les plus chères affections de la nature à la patrie et à la vertue. Après avoir absous ou refusé de condamner son fils, comment Brutus eût-il jamais osé condamner un autre citoyen? "O consul! lui eût dit ce criminel, ai-je fait pis que de vendre ma patrie? et ne suis-je pas aussi votre fils?" Qu'on me montre aujourd'hui un seul juge capable de sacrifier à la patrie et aux lois la vie de ses enfants!" (3)

In a footnote that he later crossed out, Rousseau added:

> "Je suis fâché pour St-Augustin des plaisanteries qu'il a osé faire sur ce grand et bel acte de vertu. Les Pères de l'Eglise n'ont pas su voir le mal qu'ils faisaient a leur cause, en flétrissant ainsi tout ce que le courage et l'honneur avaient produit de plus grand".

In short, "Rome was for five-hundred years one continued miracle which the world cannot hope to see again". (4) That alone, however,

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(1) Montesquieu, op. cit., ch.VI, p.58 & ch. XVIII, p. 189-90.

(2) Machiavelli, Discourses, bk.III, ch.iii, p.405.

(3) Fragments, "Histoire des Moeurs", Pol.Wr., Vol.I, p.337.

(4) Discourse on Political Economy, tr. by G.D.H. Cole (New York, 1950) p.310.

would not necessarily be a cause for lamentation, but it is because the world of the present fell so far below this standard that both Rousseau and Machiavelli cried out in despair.

> "L'histoire moderne n'est pas dépourvu de traits admirables; mais ce ne sont que des traits; j'y vois quelques grandes actions, mais je n'y vois de grands hommes". (1)

That was one of the kindest judgements, particularly when compared to some of Machiavelli's more bitter phrases. In deploring the fact that modern states no longer acquire colonies and build new settlements, he observes that:

> "This has wholly arisen and proceeded from the negligence of princes who have lost all appetite for true glory, and of republics which no longer possess institutions that deserve praise" (2)

> "Although the transactions of our princes at home and abroad will not be viewed with admiration of their virtue and greatness like those of the ancients, perhaps they may on other accounts be regarded with no less interest, seeing what masses of high spirited people were kept in restraint by such weak and disorderly forces. And if in detailing the events which took place in this wasted world, we shall not have to record the bravery of the soldier, the prudence of the general, or the patriotism of the citizen, it will be seen with what artifice, deceit and cunning princes, warriors and leaders of republics conducted themselves, to support a reputation they never deserved. This perhaps, will not be less useful than a knowledge of ancient history; for if the latter excites the liberal mind to imitation, the former will show what ought to be avoided and decried." (3)

The physical vigour and military excellence of the ancients is a particular source of admiration. This is especially true of Machiavelli, with whom the advantages of a citizen militia over the system of mercenary

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(1) Fragments: "Histoire des Moeurs", pp.338, p. 310, Pol.Wr., Vol.I.

(2) History of Florence, bk.II, ch.i, p.48.

(3) Ibid., bk.V, ch.i, p.204.

soldiers was a constant theme. In fact it amounted to an "idée fixe". He even went so far as to attempt an organization of such an army in the Florence of his own day. Needless to say, the tradesmen whom he drafted were unenthusiastic heroes. Machiavelli himself fell ill before the battle actually took place, and the whole adventure ended in a general débâcle. Altogether, as far as military affairs are concerned, Machiavelli was little but an over-enthusiastic amateur. Rousseau detested physical violence in any form, and he prefers to avoid mentioning the more gory activities of the ancients, and even goes so far as to claim that Sparta and Rome totally lacked the spirit of conquest. (1) He was, nevertheless, very appreciative of the virile habits and vigorous discipline engendered by military activity. Unlike Rousseau, Machiavelli was not at all upset by the excessive brutality of soldiers, whether they were mercenaries or citizens. What he loathed about the hirelings was their lack of courage and efficiency, particularly in defending Italy against her Northern neighbours. There are countless references to this evil in all his works, and a few examples will suffice to show how sharply he felt the difference between the soldiers of ancient Rome and those of modern Italy, especially, since he held good military institutions to be of supreme importance in the life of states.

> "The foundation of states is a good military organization....without (such) organization there can be neither good laws nor anything else good. The necessity of this appears on every page of Roman history. We also see that troops cannot be good unless they are well disciplined and trained, and this cannot be done with any troops other than natives of the country.....Any republic that adopts the military organization and discipline of the Romans, and strives by constant training to give her soldiers experience and to develop their courage and mastery over fortune, will always and under all circumstances find them to display courage and dignity similar to that of the Romans". (2)

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(1) Fragments, "Rome et Sparte", Pol. Wr., vol.I, p. 319.

(2) Discourses, bk.III, ch XXXI, pp.503-504.

> "The best armies are those of states that arm their own people. Only armies like them can resist them. Recall the armies that have gained renown, they are the Romans, the Lacedemonians, the Athenians, the Aetolians and Acheans and the swarms of peoples from beyond the Alps". (1)

His fear of, and admiration for the Swiss is based on their constant military readiness. Only Italy seems to be weak and degenerate, incapable of organizing an effective army. Freedom and military power are to him inseparable. "Rome and Sparta were for many centuries well armed and free. The Swiss are well armed and enjoy great freedom."(2)

The Italians, however, through the adoption of the system of mercenary troops have "made the practice of arms so totally ridiculous that the most ordinary leader possessed of true valour would have covered them with disgrace". In battles there is only a general display of cowardice, both sides end by being losers, and modern history is filled with nothing but "idle princes and contemptible arms." (3)

Rousseau is also vastly impressed by the military valour of the ancients, and disdains the armies of his own days. Emile is advised to abstain from a military career because courage has ceased to be honored. Comparing the physical strength of the Romans to that of modern men he concluded, "Nous sommes déchus en tout". Painters can no longer even find decent models. Modern exercises are nothing but child's play besides the gymnastics of the ancients. As to troops, they are no longer capable of the long marches of the Greeks and Romans, whose infantry officers, even, were not allowed to ride a horse while their troops marched. (4)

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(1) Letter to Vettori, August 26, 1513. Familiar Letters, p. 239.

(2) The Prince, ch. XII, p. 46.

(3) History of Florence, bk. I, ch.vii, p.46.

(4) Lettre à D'Alembert, p. 137 - Oeuvres, vol.XI (Paris 1826).

In denouncing the evil effects of the arts and sciences on morality he writes:

> "With what courage in fact can it be thought that hunger and thirst, fatigues, dangers and death can be faced by men whom the smallest want overwhelms and the slightest difficulty repels? With what resolution can soldiers support the excessive toils of war, when they are entirely unaccustomed to them"?

While he does not doubt the personal courage of modern soldiers or their ability to obey a good general, their powers of endurance are negligible in his eyes.

> "I have no doubt that you would have triumphed with Hannibal at Cannae, and at Trasimene, that you would have passed the Rubicon with Caesar and enabled him to enslave his country, but you would never have been able to cross the Alps with the former or with the latter to subdue your own ancestors, the Gauls." (1)

> "All the victories of the early Romans, like those of Alexander were won by brave citizens, who where ready, at need, to give their blood in the service or their country, but would never sell it."

With the institution of mercenaries, however, Rome lost her liberty.

> "(The merit of) mercenaries may be judged by the price at which they sold themselves, proud of their own meaness, despising the laws that protected them, as well as their fellows whose bread they ate, imagining themselves more honoured in being Caesar's satellites than in being defenders of Rome. As they were given over to blind obedience, their swords were always at the throats of their fellow-citizens and they were prepared for general butchery at first sight". (2)

For Poland he therefore prescribed a citizen army, a system of selecting officers by merit, and warned that due honour must be given military men if they are to pursue their calling in the defence of liberty. (3) The calling of the soldier, like that of the teacher, is too noble to be recompensed by money.

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(1) Discourse on the Arts & Sciences, pp.165-166.

(2) Discourse on Political Economy, pp. 318-319.

(3) Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne, Pol.Wr., vol.II, chap. xii, pp.485-492.

Although the above examples of effusive admiration for antiquity might seem sufficient in expressing Machiavelli's and Rousseau's sentiments, they form only a small segment of the concentrated effort in eulogy. However, neither Machiavelli nor Rousseau were content with mere adulation. In their deep resentment of the conditions about them, both felt that hope for a regeneration in imitation of ancient glory was not wholly impossible. Both considered the purpose of historical writings to be didactic, and looked upon themselves as teachers, in their exposition of the events of ancient days. Machiavelli is always ready to avow his intention to write something useful for those that have the intelligence to understand him, and the energy to act upon his maxims. Rousseau, in such works as the two projects for constitutions for Poland and for Corsica, assumes the role of political adviser, while in the Lettre à d'Alembert and the First Discourse we see him as a scolding school-master, a second Cato. It seems only logical to assume that if one decides that the purpose of history is to instruct men in their actions, and if one thereupon writes detailed and consciously moralistic accounts of past events, one considers men capable of improvement by instruction. If our two authors seem unduly harsh in their contempt for their contemporaries, it is not only due to the fact that they held antiquity in such high esteem, but also that they were deeply animated by a desire to change the world. In Machiavelli this attitude is simple. His two basic tenets, the uniformity of nature and the cyclical movement of history, make it impossible for him to speak of Rome as an Age of Gold that can never be regained. While Rousseau accepted both these ideas, he added so many modifications to them that his position becomes more complex. Before examining these problems more thoroughly, it would be unfair to leave unmentioned those occasional instances where Rousseau and, particularly Machiavelli, seem doubtful of the absolute perfection

of antiquity. In neither case does this happen frequently. The former devotes several, not uncritical chapters to Roman institutions in the Social Contract, and he repeats them, but there is none of the ire in his words that moves his denunciations of the present. "Au reste je n'excuse pas les fautes du peuple romain ... Je l'ai blâmé d'avoir usurpé la puissance exécutive qu'il devait seulement contenir". (1)

Considering how much he loathed slavery his words on that institution in ancient Greece are oddly lenient; still there is an implicit criticism in his words.

> "There are some unhappy circumstances in which we can only keep our liberty at other's expense, and where the citizen can be perfectly free only when the slave is the most a slave. Such was the case in Sparta". (2)

He also recognizes the essential cruelty of paganism in spite of the manly virtues it engendered. (3)

In a mood of total distress about humanity he exclaims: "Quand j'ai dit que nos moeurs s'étoient corrompus, je n'ai pas prétendu dire pour cela que celles de nos aïeux furent bonnes, mais seulement que les nôtres étoient encore pires". (4)

It is at such moments that he comes closest to Machiavelli, whose warning against an uncritical worship of the old days is both shrewd and honest, more so, in fact, than Rousseau's half-hearted attempt at an objective evaluation. For, since at times he chose to adopt the same

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(1) Lettres Ecrites de la Montagne, Lettre IX, p.273, Pol. Wr., vol. II.

(2) Social Contract, p.96

(3) Première Version du Contrat Social, Liv. IV, ch.viii, Pol.Wr. vol.I, p. 502.

(4) Préface de Narcisse, p. 227.

premise of unchanging degrees of virtue and evil in the world as a whole, he had little justification for such an over-generous appraisal.

> "Men ever praise the olden time and find fault with the present, though often without reason....We never know the whole truth about the past and very frequently writers conceal such events as would reflect disgrace upon their century... Men's hatreds generally spring from fear or envy. Now these two most powerful reasons of hatred do not exist for us with regard to the past, which can no longer inspire either apprehension or envy. But it is very different with the affairs of the present in which we ourselves are either actors or spectators, and of which we have complete knowledge". (1)

While the amount of greatness in the world is always more or less the same, it is not stably situated in the same country at all times, but moves from one state to the next. Therefore, those states that have declined have every reason to think with regret of their past glory.

> "If after the Roman Empire none other sprung up that endured for any length of time, and where the aggregate virtues of the world were kept together, we nevertheless see them scattered amongst many nations.....but whoever is born in Italy and Greece and has not become an Ultra-montane in Italy or a Turk in Greece has good reason to find fault with his own and to praise the olden times; for in their past there are many things worthy of the highest admiration whilst the present has nothing that compensates for all the extreme misery, infamy and degradation of a period where there is neither observance of religion, law or military discipline and which is stained by every species of the lowest brutality".
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> "I know not then, whether I deserve to be classed with those who deceive themselves, if in these Discourses I shall laud too much the times of ancient Rome and censure those of our own day. And truly, if the virtues that ruled then and the vices that prevail now were not as clear as the sun, I should be more reticent in my expressions".

However, his ultimate justification lies not in his factual accuracy, but in his moral purpose.

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(1) Discourses, bk. II, "Introduction", pp.271-275.

> "I shall boldly and openly say what I think of the former times and of the present, so as to excite in the minds of the young men who may read my writing the desire to avoid the evils of the latter, and to prepare themselves to imitate the virtues of the former whenever fortune presents them the occasion". (1)

In this chapter we have tried to show the extent and nature of Machiavelli's and Rousseau's worship of antiquity. Their's is not a balanced view, ignoring great parts of ancient life, Athens being disregarded in favor of Rome and Sparta, and only a glorified Plutarchian picture of their political and moral habits is considered. Rousseau emerges as the less circumspect admirer, but on the whole both the enthusiasm for the past and the corresponding disdain for the present are shared by Machiavelli. The virtues that captivated their respective imaginations are the same; self-sacrificing patriotism, military discipline, obedience to law and the asceticism of a simple life. In both cases the personal experience of participating directly in the life of a declining republic contributed much to the intensity with which they looked towards the more successful city-states of antiquity.

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(1) Discourses, bk.II, "Introduction", pp.271-275.

Chapter III

Public Morality and the Dynamics of Corruption

In the preceeding chapter we referred to Machiavelli's and Rousseau's concept of history and their inclination to be didactic, and also indicated some of the reasons for their admiration of the ancient republican order. Before we can go on to discuss these matters further, to derive a clearer picture of their political thinking, we must first examine their attitudes to the raw material of political life - human nature and its potentialities. Once this has been more or less determined we find that much of what follows is either an elaboration of, or even, a foregone conclusion to the basic premise.

Machiavelli has generally been accused of "pessimism", because he held his fellow men in such low esteem. It is, of course, true that the evil of man is a fundamental axiom of his political philosophy. When he advises his prince to be a lion and a fox, he declares the necessity for such behaviour to lie in the deceitfulness and egotism of mankind. (1) In the Discourses he reminds all legislators that if men should at any time appear good, it is only because they happen to lack opportunity for displaying their viciousness. (2) However, harsh words about human nature are not enough to make a man a pessimist. A real pessimist removes himself from the worldly scene and contemplates nothingness, he does not act as ambassador for a republic, or write histories and, least of all, composes elaborate schemes for civic reform. Rather more to the point is the fact that absolute rulers have generally tried to justify their existence in

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(1) The Prince, ch.xviii, p. 64.

(2) Discourses, bk.I, ch.iv, pp.117-118.

terms of a necessity imposed on them by the baseness of those they rule. It is not without significance that Frederick the Great, in the hopeful Age of Enlightenment, spoke of men as "that damned race". Thus when Machiavelli speaks of men as being "ungrateful, voluble, dissemblers, anxious to avoid danger and covetous of gain", more interested in their patrimony than in the well-being of their fathers, he goes on to advise the Prince to rely on cruelty, rather than on gentleness, in dealing with his subjects. (1)

It has been observed that in regarding human nature as the basic evil, and one that must be overcome, Machiavelli displayed a similarity to Christian thinking, particularly Calvin's morose belief in the total depravity of man. Though he totally ignores the question of divine grace, for his scope of interest is limited to the temporal sphere, it is still held that he presents a resemblance to traditional attitudes. (2) Such an attempt to return Machiavelli - even if only as a very dark sheep - to the Christian fold seems very far-fetched. While it is true that he considers man to be evil, and unchageably so, he holds him also to be extremely malleable. The fundamental stuff that men are made of never changes; it is a natural force which is only one factor in the complex of forces that work in history. It undergoes no real transformation when it is debased in the Italy of his own time, or elevated in the Roman republic. Necessity shapes it, organizes it, or leaves it idle, and this necessity may be either a political ruler, political institutions, laws, habits or merely the natural environment. In its turn it is one of the ingredients

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(1) Prince, ch.xvii, p. 60-61.

(2) E.g., Hiram Haydn, op.cit., ch.viii, p.467.

that form the necessities a ruler must take into account when he builds and administers a state. There is no difference in his attitude to human nature in the Prince and in the Discourses, but in the former he sees human matter left to rot, in the latter it has been laboriously moulded into a workable mechanism. "Men act rightly only upon compulsion,..... It is this that has caused it to be said that poverty and hunger make men industrious and that the law makes men good". (1)

In considering the question whether it is best to establish a city on fertile or on barren soil, he observes that: "Virtue has more sway where labor is the result of necessity rather than of choice ....(for they) are less given to idleness (and) would be more united". However, fertile soil makes the state richer and more capable of defence against its inevitable enemies.

> "As to idleness which the fertility of the country tends to encourage, the laws should compel men to labor where the sterility of the soil does not do it....."By way of an offset to the pleasures and softness of the climate (laws can) impose upon soldiers the rigors of a strict discipline and severe excercises, so that they become better warriors than what nature produces in the harshest climates". (2)

In the Christian scheme of things nature is but a lowly part in the hierarchy of values, and something that must be consciously transcended in man's quest for salvation. Whether it is Plato speaking of the appetitive part of man, or Calvin scorning nature as degraded, and even St. Thomas, who felt that nature was in itself not lacking in positive worth, it is never the beginning and the end of man's scope, and just because Machiavelli is disdainful of his fellow creatures he does not move one inch nearer to the world of these thinkers.

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.iii, p.118.

(2) Ibid., bk.I, ch.i, p.108.

That nature is not to be overcome, and that this is, in fact, impossible, Machiavelli repeats frequently. It is because men are always the same that the study of history is so useful; for it can teach us to foresee the future and to learn from the past. "All cities and all peoples are and ever will be animated by the same desires and the same passions". If we study the ancients properly we can copy their techniques in dealing with the events of the present; it is only because we disregard their examples that the same troubles recur, but perhaps even this neglect is inevitable. (1)

However, while "human events ever resemble those of past times" it is also true that, "men are more or less virtuous in one country or another, according to the nature of the education by which their manners and habits of life have been formed". (2) This education may endure for a long time,so that nations always preserve certain characteristics. The French of his own day, he was quite sure, still retained all the qualities of their barbaric ancestors, the Gauls. Education itself consists of a mixture of laws, good or bad examples, habit and religious beliefs.

In his whole approach to the problem of human nature Machiavelli is really not interested in the individual as such. The extraordinary man, the leader and the creator of societies fascinates his imagination, but, "the vulgar are always taken in by appearances and the issue of the event; and the world consists only of the vulgar". (3)

Most people then are not only wicked, they are not very bright either. Only when they act as a totality in a successful republic, when

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(1) Discourses, bk. I, ch. xxxix, p. 216.

(2) Ibid., bk.III, ch.XLIII, pp.530-531.

(3) Prince, ch. XVIII, p. 66.

they are representative types of a community permeated by virtue, which is valour, energy and self-denial, do they concern him.

Much has been made of Machiavelli's supposedly scientific approach to the study of politics, his exclusive concentration on "brute facts". He himself seems to be very conscious of the newness of his empirical method. "I have resolved to open a new route that has not been followed by anyone" (1), he proclaims in the Discourses, and he boasts of his reliance on his own observations as a basis for judgement. " I do not know what Aristotle said .... but I consider well what reasonably can be, what is and what has been". (2) We also saw that he was critical of the objectivity and methods of historians, and warned against an excessive reliance on their testimony. One author even goes so far as to claim that Machiavelli was treating social problems in terms of the dynamics of Galileo and the science of the medical men of Padua, and cites such references as his laws of perpetual motion of states, and of the purging of ill humours from society. (3) However, one must not exaggerate Machiavelli's attempt at scientific thinking; his notion of the laws of evidence was after all primitive. There is a very common tendency to assume that when a writer depicts a particularly sordid scene he is being exceptionally "realistic", when he is actually only being disagreeable. Just because some of Machiavelli's "facts" are so brutal, it is not unlikely that this inclination has worked to give him a reputation for truthfulness and accuracy in describing political life. Even if that

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(1) Discourses, "Introduction", p.103, and Prince, ch.xv, p.56.

(2) Letter to Vettori, August 26, 1513, Familiar Letters, p.238.

(3) Leonardo Olschki, Machiavelli the Scientist, (Berkeley, California, 1945.

were the case, to be scientific he would have to show, beside a disinterested attitude to the "simple occurences of life", also the ability to correlate them with some general law, so as to give his facts a meaning and an explicatory function. For his acceptance of such hypotheses as the Polybian cycle, or his belief in the simple and systematic movement of grandeur from state to state, on the other hand, he has no evidence in the events about him, or in history. He accepts them, one suspects, out of an academic admiration for their symmetry.

In the flow of history Machiavelli actually discerns two cycles. First of all there is the commonplace one inherited from Polybius, but there is also a law of corruption that affects the people as a whole. When necessity forces men to be good, the civic morality of a people is high, when a state has overcome some of necessity's constraints, men relax and grow feeble and evil. The first cycle is merely the governmental expression of the condition of the social fabric. When that is sound, Manlius Capitolinus is executed, and Cincinnatus returns to his plow; when it has decayed, Ludovico Sforza brings the French into Italy, and Caesare Borgia is a hero.

The origin of cities lies in the need for self-defence. At first, men lived in dispersion like beasts, but as they became more numerous they came into contact with each other, and conflict ensued. To escape this "tooth and claw" existence they decided to live under a common master, usually the most respected person among them. It is there that the sense of gratitude and ingratitude to their ruler and to each other arose, and the notion of justice was derived from this. (1) Machiavelli is not much concerned with analyzing the fundamental basis of political

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(1) Discourses, ch.I, p.106 and ch.II, pp.112-113.

life, but rather with its later movements. If you are consciously creating a state, he advises that a republic is possible only in a community in which social equality reigns, while monarchy is best for one in which there is a great distance between the various orders of society; (1) but he admits that the original constitutions of a state are mostly a matter of chance. One thing is certain, it will not last long. Heaven has ordained a full course for states, but unless they take care, they may not even live out their prescribed span. Like religious sects they must be brought back to their first principles, to the origins of their vigour. That is what the Franciscans and Dominicans did for Christianity, and the Parlement of Paris does for the French Monarchy. These two are an example of intrinsic forces of revitalization, but an external pressure, such as a war, may have the same effect. (2)

Like Polybius he believes in three "pure" forms of government, monarchy, aristocracy and popular government. Transition from these to their respective degenerate opposites, tyranny, oligarchy and licentiousness is easy and inevitable. He then goes on to admire the mixed government of Lycurgus' Sparta as the most stable form. (3) This is certainly not the most original part of Machiavelli's thought, but, as we noted, an almost superfluous imitation of ancient maxims. However, he gives this commonplace theory a new twist. Beneath this ancient wheel of governmental change he places the forces of history that really make this world turn. It is through the action and reaction of necessity and virtue that states

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(1) Discourse on Reforming Florence, pp.84-85.

(2) Discourses, bk. III, ch. I, pp.397-98, and 401-402.

(3) Ibid., bk.I, ch.II, pp.114-15.

live and die. "Virtù and necessità are in relation to each other something like the sphere of values and the sphere of causal determination in modern philosophy". (1)

Good laws create good habits, and as long as these survive the prominent citizens of a republic set a good example to the rest of the citizens. Good habits and good laws are inseparable, one cannot live without the other, and when the former begin to decay the latter must be altered to suit them. Thus when men's propensity to be ambitious in excess of their capacities stirs up ill humours in the city, repressive legislation must be imposed. When this is not done the decay moves on unchecked. For instance, the right of all Roman citizens to propose new laws, while good in itself, became an evil once an oligarchic clique arose and monopolized the right, and only used it to strengthen its own position. However, one must not act too drastically in imposing restrictive legislation. Once the evil has set in one can only temporize with it. Retroactive law must always be avoided, it only hastens the disintegration and the disunion. (2) At the lowest ebb no law can check or improve the rampant corruption of the community, only a single leader can by the force of his individual virtue and strength raise it again. There again necessity becomes operative; for it was necessary that the children of Israel be enslaved for Moses to display his powers, or that Cyrus should find the Persians discontented with the empire of the Medes. The great events in history are a mixture of the prowess of the leader and the degradation of the people. (3)

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(1) Friedrich Meinecke, op.cit., p.7.

(2) Discourses, bk.I, ch. XVII, pp.168 and 170.

(3) Prince, ch. VI, p.21.

A stable monarchy, too, can achieve a degree of vitality in a country that has lost its virtue. Such was the condition of France and Spain, which were less disorderly than Italy, "not owing to the goodness of their people, in which they are greatly deficient", but because they are kept united by a king, and also by institutions which are still pure. (1) To create a republican order, however, when the people are used to the rule of tyrants, is almost impossible, for they are like domesticated animals which have been set loose. A new prince might restore a measure of liberty to them, but they will relapse as soon as he is dead. (2) As the Florentine exiles in 1397 found out, "it is dangerous to attempt to set free a people determined to be slaves". (3)

What are the characteristics of the virtuous republic, and where can it be set up? The best place to set up a republic is amongst "simple mountaineers, who are almost without civilization, (not in) cities where civilization is already corrupt"; for "untutored and ignorant men are more easily persuaded to adopt new laws". (4) However, even in Florence, he remarks, Savonarola was able to persuade a highly sophisticated population to change its habits. In his own time he saw the small cities of Germany still swayed by "probity, obedience, to law and religion". This was due to the strict maintenance of equality among them, their great hostility to all strangers, and the fact that they preferred poverty to commerce. In their willingness to pay taxes they were equal to the Romans. (5) In Sparta,

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(1) Discourses, bk. I, ch.LV, p.253.

(2) Ibid., bk. I, ch. XVI, pp.160-161 & ch.XVII, p.165.

(3) History of Florence, bk.III, ch.7, p. 154.

(4) Discourses, bk.I, ch.XI, pp.148-149.

(5) Ibid., bk.I, ch.LV, pp.253-54.

among the ancients, the same rules led to the same virtues after Lycurgus established an equality in poverty, a great unity, and a total isolation from foreign influences. (1) However, because states must either expand or decline, Sparta and the Germans, both trying to remain small and stable, are not regarded with the same admiration as Rome. One advantage, if not the greatest, of a free state, in Machiavelli's eyes, is its ability to achieve power. Since people are secure in their possessions, and know that the road to success is open to talent, they are ready to increase their families, and the state is, as a result, rich in manpower. (2) Moreover, not only does the population increase, but as long as its spirit is uncorrupt the people place the good of their country far above that of their private interests. Nothing is stronger in them than the love of their country, and the only way the ambitious can gain public acclaim is to do something remarkable in the service of their country. In a good republic the citizens remain poor while the state is rich. Not only are its men ready to sacrifice themselves, but they know no considerations of private morality in the defence of their country. In war "no thoughts of justice or injustice, humanity or cruelty, nor of glory or of shame should be allowed to prevail" (3) No wonder that, animated by such resolutions, Rome came to conquer the world! Power, it must be remembered, is for Machiavelli the ultimate criterion of success.

The iron law of history, however, demands that such brilliance be short-lived, and that the decline inexorably follow the ascent. At one point Machiavelli suggest that sheer delight in change can bring men to prefer a tyranny after having long lived in a republic.

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.VI, pp.126-27.

(2) Ibid., bk.II, ch.II, p.287.

(3) Ibid., bk.III, ch.XLI, p.528.

> "Cruelty, perfidy and irreligion can give reputation to a ruler in a province where humanity, faith and religion for a long time abounded. In the same way humanity, faith and religion are of value where cruelty, perfidy and irreligion have been in power for a time. The reason is that just as bitter things disturb the taste and sweet things surfeit it, so men get weary of good and complain of evil." (1)

It is an amusing suggestion, at any rate, but not the explanation he usually offers. It is the slow infusion of luxurious habits that destroys the moral fibre of the people, till they cease to be vigilant and honest, and the rise of an ambitious tyrant becomes easy. From the very outset the Romans were saved from the dangers of effeminacy by the fact that, of their first three kings, two were interested mainly in war. It was essential that the second king, Numa, give them laws and institutions, but had Tullus followed in his peace-loving steps, Rome would never have been great. (2)

Even a well regulated republic may become "enervated by pleasures and luxury", brought to them by foreign nations,"for these indulgences and habits become contageous". This happened to the Romans when they invaded Capua.(3) It will not necessarily be a permanent injury, but it is a constant danger. However, this effeminacy is inevitable, unless necessity keeps tight reins on the citizens, either through some law that carries them back to "first principles", or, even better, by means of wars that reunite them and restore them to virility.

The reason why states which rise to great heights must return to the ultimate depth lies in the fact that:

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(1) Letter to Soderini, January, 1512-13, Familiar Letters, p. 225.

(2) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xix, p.172.

(3) Ibid., bk.II, ch.xix, p.348.

> "Valor produces peace; and peace, repose; repose, disorder; disorder, ruin; so from disorder order springs.... Hence wise men have observed that an age of literary excellence is subsequent to that of distinction in arms."

It is an "excusable indulgence, (but) indolence (cannot) with greater or more dangerous deceit enter into a well regulated community". Cato acted with the greatest wisdom when he banished the Greek philosophers from Rome; for he knew the "evils that might result to his country from this specious idleness". (1)

After peace was restored in 1474 Florence was subject to the same dangers and, being without a Cato, it succumbed. The young men were left without employment, and came to spend their time idly and dissolutely, "their principal study being how to appear splendid in apparel and attain a crafty shrewdness in discourse; he who could make the most poignant remark being considered the wisest". (2)

Intellectuality, wit and elegance are the expressions and stimulants of corruption. For Machiavelli, the greatest citizen of Rome at her republican best was Cincinnatus, and while we might feel that the contemporary of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci lived in an age of splendour, he would see in them, and in their fame, only a manifestation of the utter degradation of Renaissance Italy.

It must at once be admitted that Rousseau's attitude to human nature generally bears little resemblance to Machiavelli's. His interest in the matter is far more profound, his treatment thereof infinitely more elaborate and subtle. We cannot here adequately examine the problem of the state of nature, his ideas on natural law or even the whole genealogy of law, but

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(1) History of Florence, bk.V, ch.i, pp.202-3.

(2) Ibid., bk.VII, ch.v, p.341.

can only indicate the bare essentials of his theories and their connection with his estimation of human nature. At least we shall attempt to avoid attributing to Rousseau a consistency in thought which he never attained.

Before we can discuss the qualities of human nature we must first determine just what this entity meant to Rousseau. Is it always fundamentally the same, or does it alter in its essence? There are for him three separate categories called nature. First of all there is nature as non-art, as raw primitiveness. Secondly, there is its diametrical opposite, nature as a teleological concept. This is all that man would be if he fully developed all his highest moral potentialities. It implies the triumph of the will. It is for men in this state that a social contract is a reality. Only they are ruled by a communal will, only their every action is in conformity with the general good, and it is only they who are truly free. Both these concepts of nature are universal, dealing with all mankind, uniform in its abstraction. Lastly, there is human nature as we observe it in history. Here Rousseau ceases to generalize, and recognizes the endless variability of the species.

> "L'homme est un je l'avoue, mais l'homme modifié par les religions, par les gouvernements, par les lois, par les coutumes, par les préjugés, par les climats, devient si différent de lui-même qu'il ne faut plus chercher parmi nous, ce qui est bon aux hommes en général mais ce qui leur est bon dans tel temps et dans tel pays". (1)

Coupled with his acceptance of Montesquieu's climatic theories as to liberty and industriousness, it appears that a thorough relativism with regard to human nature must be the result, and the basic uniformity of mankind relegated to the level of a purely biological fact, and to the sphere of the ends of his moral and political development. Thus he warns the Genevans not to imitate the ancient Romans.

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(1) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.21

> "Les anciens peuples ne sont plus un modèle pour les modernes, ils leur sont trop étrangers à tous égards .... Vous n'êtes ni Romains, ni Spartiates, vous n'êtes pas même Athéniens .... Vous êtes des marchands, des artisans, des bourgeois toujours occupés de leurs intérêts privés, ... des gens pour qui la liberté même n'est qu'un moyen de posséder en sûreté". (1)

Moral and extrinsic forces combine then to make men so radically different from each other that one cannot deal with human nature as such, but, as far as politics are concerned, must consider only the specific material at hand. Unfortunately Rousseau did not consistently pursue this train of thought. Ultimately even historical nature is uniform and the variations are only superficial, depending on outside forces, not on any deep internal difference. He had derived from antiquity a picture of not the absolutely best conceivable, but of the best historically possible state, and this remained an ideal by means of which he judged the merits of states and peoples of different ages and civilizations.

> "Qu'ont de commun les Français, les Anglais, les Russes avec les Romains et les Grecs? Rien presque que la figure ....(mais) c'étaient des hommes comme nous. Qu'est-ce qui nous empêche d'être des hommes comme eux? Nos préjugés, notre basse philosophie... L'égoisme dans tous les coeurs, (les) institutions ineptes". (2)

With this in mind he proceeds to provide the Poles with institutions designed to make them, in time, into a second Sparta. Human nature is then not incapable of change for the better, but this is still a long distance from the celebrated natural goodness of man. Man's nature in its original primitive purity is neither good nor evil; it is morally indifferent. Nature's ultimate possibility is to reach goodness through the supremacy of the free will. As for men as they appear in historical

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(1) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre IX, Pol.Wr., vol.I, p.273.

(2) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.ii, p.427, Pol.Wr. vol.II.

life, they are far from good, and Rousseau looks upon them with only slightly less disfavour than does Machiavelli. At times he even felt that they were fit only for the rule of Nero and Calligula. (1) He had at a certain point in history seen an approximation of nature's ideal end, and it was his intention to raise certain hopeful communities from their present degradation to that level of moral attainment, and a modified version of their methods was prescribed for all states as a standard of rightness. The means of advancement depend in this, as well as in all else, entirely on the state; for man is only clay, potentially good, but institutions alone can form him. Only adverse political and moral rules have perverted human nature, that is, destroyed its potentiality for goodness. Rousseau admits ingenuously that this opinion is derived from his own experience, for he was convinced that his vices were due to his "situation", rather than to himself. Both the Confessions and the Reveries of a Solitary are filled with the most tasteless protestations of his own virtue, and it might be interesting to note here, for comparison's sake, that Machiavelli too thought of himself as an uncommonly upright citizen. However, historical man is not likely to reach that point of virtue at which his good will dominates him entirely; Rousseau resigns himself to a lesser goal. Thus good conduct engendered by law, which is possible, is not to be confused with genuine goodness. Until the will is altered, man is not really virtuous. "La loi n'agit que dehors et ne règle que les actions; les moeurs seules pénètrent intérieurement et dirigent les volontés". (2) Speaking of man before ostentation and art had taught him to disguise his behaviour, he observes that "human nature was at the

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(1) Letter to Mirabeau, July 26, 1762, Citizen of Geneva, p.352

(2) Fragments, "Les Etats de l'Europe," Pol. Wr., vol.I, p.322.

bottom no better than now", but because people lacked skill in deceit they were forced to act with greater decency. (1)

The state of nature finds man isolated and self-sufficient, possessing only two strong feelings, self-love and an aversion to seeing others suffer. Moral judgements have no place or use in such a condition. In the second stage that Rousseau postulates, man had lost his original moral vacuity, but not his moral balance. This is a state of arcadian felicity in which men live in idyllic village communities. Inequality has already appeared, but self-love has only begun to change into vanity and has not yet over-powered compassion. Grain and metal, and the institution of private property, bring about the "fatal accident" that ruins this world. Wealth and poverty, avarice, competition and war arise. It is then that the Hobbesian war of all against all begins to rage. What Rousseau wished to illustrate with this allegory was that Hobbes' state of war was not natural in the sense that it is an original, basic and irrevocable part of man's being, and also, to dispose of Locke, that neither human rights nor duties are to be derived from nature itself, to which all judgements are foreign.

There is a fatal flaw in the Discourse on Inequality. The inscription on the title page, a quotation from Aristotle to the effect that one must look for the natural not in what is, but in what should be, clearly demonstfates Rousseau's original purpose, as does his promise to lay all facts aside. Unfortunately he keeps that promise while he goes on to deal with man's progress towards society in historical terms. Such phrases as "the race was old and man was still a child", the "times of which I speak are very remote", this or that lasted a long time, or the comparison of natural man with the Caribbean savages, are totally inconsistent.

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(1) Discourse on the Arts and Science, pp.148-9

However, if we overlook these lapses, it becomes fairly evident that man's natural goodness lies in the destiny of his will, not in his primitive or present condition, and that the Discourse is an extended allegory of each man's moral history. (1)

Society is the result of dependence created by the division of labour. The end of self-sufficiency leaves man weak, morally and materially. It is one of Rousseau's most frequently reiterated axioms, and politically perhaps the most significant, that every sign of sociability and even of personal affection is a weakness, and an admission of insufficiency. Weakness is evil, particularly since dependence of necessity involves inequality, and exploitation. (2) The problem of politics is to deprive this weakness of its sinister consequences, to make dependence on men as innocuous as dependence on things. Rousseau's contempt for weakness was intense, and as we shall see, coloured his whole attitude to Christianity. "It is strength and liberty which make excellent men, and weakness and slavery have made nothing but base ones". (3)

Art must restore to men that strength which man enjoyed in the state of nature. The institution of laws has removed him irrevocably from that condition. Though law grew out of the desire of the rich to hold their possessions more securely, and of the poor to avoid greater enslavement, and is thus entirely immoral in its origin, it is under its imperfect rule that man acquires a sense of justice and of duty, and ceases to be "a stupid and limited animal". It is by making this rule of law absolute and consistent, by making man completely the creature of art and of society, that he can be

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(1) See Ernst Cassirer's "Das Problem Jean-Jacques Rousseau".

(2) Emile, tr. by B. Foxley, (Everyman's Library, London, 1948), bk.I, p.49 & bk. IV, p.182.

(3) Reveries of a Solitary, p. 130.

free and strong again. It is the substitution of moral freedom for the physical independence of nature. At present man is left with a dreadful conflict as the result of the false start he has made. He is neither an animal nor a citizen, but a confused and indecisive mixture of both. Rousseau knew from experience just how painful moral conflicts could be. He was constantly harassed by the struggle between duty and convenience, independence and obligation, the demands of solitude of those of sociability, and he is constantly justifying himself for the mistakes he has committed. (1) The great end of politics becomes the return of man to his original unity, and to make him at one with himself and his fellow-men. This demands a state in which man, though not perfect, is at least so integrated into a community that no possibility of a clash between his private and public interests can arise, where it is less difficult to do the right thing. "Happy are those nations where one can be happy without effort, and just without conscious virtue". (2) This sentence already shows how little Rousseau really expected the unaided power of the will to raise man to virtue. If it were not for the inadequacy of the will, man would need neither law nor government, but this, like a society of Christians, is chimerical. The next step is to create a form of government that will enable men to live harmoniously with each other. He himself tells us what was in his mind in composing the Social Contract.

> "I had come to see that everything is radically connected with politics, and that ....no people would be other than the nature of its government made it. What government is best adapted to produce virtuous citizens ...(and) what government keeps closest to the law?" (3)

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(1) The last sentence he wrote before his death, was: "I doubt if there ever was any man in the world who has really done less evil than I". Reveries, p. 133.

(2) Emile, bk.III, p.156.

(3) Confessions, bk.IX, pp.417-41, also Discourses on Political Economy, p.297-98.

The consequence to individuals of such a state is that they will be freed from warring motives of duty and self-interest, while mutual dependence will involve a minimum of inequality. The aim of society is to annihilate man's natural resources and to give him new ones, so that each citizen "is nothing and can do nothing without the rest". (1) "Donnez-le tout entire à l'Etat ou laissez-le tout entier à lui-même".(2) The choice between nature and society, independence and duty, is too difficult for man. There is neither harmony nor consistency at present, for man cannot be both a man and a citizen. "Good social institutions are those best fitted to make man unnatural, to exchange his independence for dependence." Men must cease to be individuals and become only units in a group, and thus at one with themselves. It was the great achievement of the ancient republics that they were able to drain all natural impulses away from their citizens. "A citizen of Rome was neither Caius or Lucius, he was a Roman; he ever loved his country better than his life". (3) When a Spartan mother was told that her five sons had been killed in a battle, but that the Spartans had won a victory, she was overcome with joy, and rushed off to a temple to give thanks to the Gods. (4) To Rousseau her action was a symbol of the essence of true citizenship. It is the educative function of governments to create and maintain the spirit of such citizenship. This is possible only in a republic, under the rule of law and justice, for without the latter no patriotism can thrive. In human nature such government finds two allies, the power of

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(1) Social Contract, p. 38.

(2) Fragments, "Le Bonheur Public", Pol.Wr., vol.I, p.326.

(3) Emile, bk.I, p. 7.

(4) Ibid., p. 8.

the will and the capacity of self-perfection which enables men to rise from degradation. This cannot, however, be achieved by appealing to his reason or to his self-interest. That was Saint-Pierre's great mistake. No one knows his own best interest, and "human understanding has always but one and the same span, and a very limited one, and it loses on one hand just as much as it gains on another". (1)

In an ideal state self-love has no place, but on a lower level even this has its uses.

> "The love of oneself is the most powerful, and in my opinion, the sole motive that makes human beings act. But how virtue, as a metaphysical thing and taken absolutely, is founded on the love of self, that passes my comprehension". (2)

In his practical projects for political institutions, he turns this unavoidable egoism to public use by means of mass emotion that can, benevolently, be called patriotism. In the Social Contract he legislates for the best possible community, and assumes the existence of a communal will above that of discordant private wills. In a sense the Social Contract involves the political equivalent of the Calvinist belief that only in a fundamental change in the meaning of life, at every moment and in every action, could the effects of a transformation from the state of nature to that of grace be manifest. For Rousseau's Social Contract has nothing in common with the older theories of that name, which try to account for all man's present and future obligations by this one act. Such a notion is rejected entirely by Rousseau, and his Contract is not just one agreement, but rather the dramatization of a perpetual principle, which must constantly animate the wills of all citizens. It is nothing

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(1) Letter to Mirabeau, July 26, 1762, Citizen of Geneva, p. 350.

(2) Letter to M. l'Abbé de Corondelet, March 4, 1764, Citizen of Geneva, p. 273.

less than a moral conversion. It lacks the element of divine grace, and is therefore termed man's natural end, but in all other respects it is a secularization of the Christian struggle for salvation, the triumph of spirit over flesh. It is to be regretted that he leaves this realm of abstraction, which he knew quite well was the only one in which the ultimate laws of political law and right could be postulated. (1) There is no logical place here for his calculations as to the practical possibilities and probabilities of climate, organization and leadership.

He never suggests that the state pictured in the Social Contract is ever to be fully realized in actuality. It remains a powerful ideal, similar to, though not identical with, the Roman-Spartan one, which he also uses as a standard of political judgment. At no point is he so simple, though he has been frequently accused of this, as to assume that the states of antiquity, or the state of the Social Contract were closer to man's original natural state than that of the present. On the contrary, their virtue lay in alienating man from that condition. Nor does he claim that ancient states, or any conceivable historical one, could be perfect. Not even Lycurgus was able to overcome the basic flaw of social life, as known to man, with its inequalities, and its laws based on compulsion. (2) The only thing one can do is to minimize the consequences of these evils for individuals and for states.

Thus, in his two projects of reform for Corsica and for Poland even the importance of the willing of law is disregarded. The tightly knit republic animated by the spirit of patriotism, which had in the Social

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(1) Letter to Mirabeau, July 26, 1762. Citizen of Geneva, p.350.

(2) Discourse on Inequality, p.254.

Contract only been a means of freeing the wills of individuals, became an end in itself. After all, even in Rome and Sparta it was habit, not will that ruled. The republican ideal alone remains. If the state of the Social Contract was a choice of the second best possible life, after Christian fraternity was recognized to be a futile dream, the plans for Corsica and Poland are an even less perfect alternative, with many concessions to be made to human corruption. It is here a matter of finding the laws best suited to raise a given people, not those best in themselves. Any little law student can devise a code as pure as Plato's, but the specific problems are the really complex and urgent ones. (1)

The different forms of government have their origin in the different degrees of inequality in the community, and the progress of inequality is inevitable and destructive in its course, leading the state through the familiar cycle from a republic to tyranny. (2) Vanity and competitiveness are the two vices which necessarily end in inequality. The Polybian cycle is also accepted, for with the decline of morality comes political laxity, and the usurpation of sovereignty by the few. After all, "if Rome and Sparta perished, what State can hope to live forever?". (3) "Le temps seul donne à l'ordre des choses une pente naturelle vers cette inégalité et un progrès successif jusqu'à son dernier terme". (4) Even the ideal state of the Social Contract lacks permanence, which is not really surprising since even Plato's Republic eventually declined. All things pertaining to man must share in his decay but there is some

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(1) Lettre à d'Alembert, p. 88.

(2) Discourse on Inequality, pp.262-3.

(3) Social Contract, pp. 87-88

(4) Lettre à d'Alembert, p.156.

comfort in Rousseau's suggestion that the state, being a work of art, can artificially prolong its life by being provided with a good constitution. Once corruption has set in, it is impossible to stop it. Once accustomed to masters, men are unfit to shake off the yoke without falling into brutish license. As inequality, and the ambitious spirit that create it, make morals and manners depart ever further from the law, so much more must government become repressive. The multiplication of laws and the rejection of old for new ones are merely the manifestations of a declining moral state. For it is useless to attempt to govern a corrupt people according to the laws and maxims set up for a wholesome one. They are not fit for them "any more than the regimen of health is suitable for the sick". (1) In Europe only Corsica and Poland offered an opportunity for establishing a republic, the former because of the simple habits and the poverty of its rugged innabitants, the latter because it found itself in a state of crisis in which the spirit of patriotism had revived.

Rousseau had a great distaste for revolutions of any kind. Whatever result they might achieve, he felt that the human cost was too great to make it worth-while. Nevertheless, he thought that such times of anarchy, when the state, either through external or internal war, had reached its lowest depth, it was presented with a chance of building a republic. Sparta at the time of Lycurgus, Rome after the expulsion of the Tarquins and Switzerland and Holland in their struggles against foreign oppression were examples of such rebirth. (2) To return a corrupt state, however, to the customs and temper of its ancient health is a doomed enterprise. That was the tragedy of Cato, who would once have ruled Rome, but "the greatest of men....died with Rome because he

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(1) Social Contract, p. 120.

(2) Ibid., p. 43.

did not fit the age he lived in". (1) Laws can influence morality effectively only at the birth of states, later on they are at the mercy of public morality. When the latter is wholesome, the laws derive their strength from public opinion; but when that is not the case, law and government must decline, and find themselves disobeyed, unable to eradicate the evil (2). It is then best to temporize with immorality, and even the very corruptions of society, such as art and science, must be retained once they have arisen; for they become means of halting the decay of which they are only an expression. The spirit of competition, loathsome in itself, can still be exploited to serve a community already infested with it (3). Rousseau advises the Poles to make use of it by inciting men to distinguish themselves in the service of their country. For the inhabitants of large cities, which he hated, he agrees that even the arts and the theatre must necessarily be retained, lest the corrupt masses turn to even more mischievous entertainment. Ostentation, luxury, philosophy, art and wit are all the results of vanity, which, for Rousseau, is the equivalent of original sin. Good customs can make it harmless in its social effects, even if it cannot be oblirated. The strict regime of Poland is designed to deprive it or all opportunity to develop into ostentation, but only a conversion of the will can erase it entirely from the human heart, and even then not for long.

"The love of letters and the arts arises in a people from an internal weakness which it augments....The age of Lelius and Terence foreshadowed the age of Nero and Seneca". (4) Rome, nation or citizens and warriors,

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(1) Discourse on Inequality, p.269

(2) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.87

(3) Préface de Narcisse, p.233

(4) Letter to Voltaire, September 10, 1755, Citizen of Geneva, p.135

declined with the appearance of letters. "Let us be as proud of our lack of taste as (the French) are of possessing it". (1)

The Lettre à D'Alembert is Rousseau's real "profession of faith" - civic, Protestant, republican and bourgeois. It was the ill-treated apprentice's revenge on the Genevan patricians, and to what degree it was representative of the feelings of the lower bourgeoisie there, is shown by the fact that, before a theatre could be established in 1783, the "circles" had to be closed, the militia abolished and the citizens disarmed (2).

Much as he fears the arts as a corruption of morality, his deepest contempt is saved for philosophers. "La famille, la patrie deviennent pour lui des mots vides de sens, il n'est ni parent, ni citoyen, ni homme; il est philosophe". (3) If art leads to effeminacy, philosophy leads to atheism, selfishness, dishonor and a host of unsociable habits. Philosophers make notoriously poor soldiers themselves and divert the minds of their fellow citizens from all martial activity. Cato's warnings are repeated, and his sound anti-intellectual spirit praised. Socrates cared for nothing but truth, but Cato loved nothing but his country, which is infinitely superior. "He seems like a God among men", in fact. (4) The philosophic spirit is, above all, uncreative. Rome was built by one king who cared only for war, and another who cared only for religion - the two most unphilosophic occupations imaginable (5).

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(1) Letter to Vernes, April 2, 1752, Citizen of Geneva, p.134.

(2) Vallette, op. cit., pp.134-38.

(3) Préface de Narcisse, p.231.

(4) Discourse on Political Economy, p.502 & Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, p.155.

(5) Préface de Narcisse, p.235.

One of the most undesirable results of the philosophic spirit is its inclination to extend the scope of a man's allegiances beyond the confines of his fatherland. Cosmopolitanism is a sign of deep moral decay both in individuals and in nations. "The patriotic spirit is a jealous one, which makes us regard anyone other than our fellow-citizens as a stranger and almost as an enemy. Such was the spirit of Sparta and Rome". (1)

> "The smaller social group, firmly united in itself and dwelling apart from others, tends to withdraw itself from the larger society. Every patriothates foreigners; they are only men, and nothing to him. This defect is inevitable, but of little importance. Among strangers the Spartan was selfish, grasping and unjust, but unselfishness, justice and harmony ruled his home life. Distrust those cosmopolitans... such philosophers will love the Tartars to avoid loving their neighbours". (2)

In the Discourse on Political Economy Rousseau had spoken of the great "city of all mankind",of the primacy of one's duty to mankind over one's duties as a citizen. It was a fleeting notion; for even there he warned that our love grows feeble as it is extended, and that "it is proper that our humanity should confine itself to our fellow citizens". (3)

All that facilitates intercourse between different nations is bad for morals, because they only acquire each others vices, while their virtues cannot be assimilated (4). It appears that vice is universal, and virtue particular. If you want citizens to be virtuous, make them patriots, Rousseau once wrote, for patriotism gives self-love the semblance of virtue, but in the Considérations sur le Gouvernement de Pologne the means had become an end.

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(1) Letter to Usteri, April 30, 1762. Citizen of Geneva, p.263.

(2) Emile, p.7.

(3) Discourse on Political Economy, p.301.

(4) Préface de Narcisse, p.227.

Liberty consists for Rousseau in submission to law, but the passive act of obedience, though important, is not enough. The respect due to magistrates is a constant theme, but it is not the only feature of lawfulness. "Respect for magistrates constitutes the glory of the citizens of republics, and nothing is so fine as knowing how to submit after having proven that one could resist". (1) Even when living in a foreign monarchy it is the duty of republicans to render strict obedience to the law (2). Nevertheless, that in itself is not enough. Citizens must love the law, they must be eager to obey, they must impose it upon themselves, to the extent where law enforcement becomes superfluous and the general spirit of morality alone rules. Rousseau was certain that this was the case in Sparta, and Sparta examplifies the spirit of republican austerity and patriotism (3). The means of achieving this spirit is education, public education such as Sparta provided by keeping the citizens constantly together, so that everyone was always under everyone else's eyes, and public censure was the chief means of control. Privacy was abolished (4).

> "Lycurge entreprit d'instituer un peuple déjà dégradé par la servitude et par les vices qui en sont l'effet. Il lui imposa un joug de fer, ... mais il l'attacha, l'identifia pour ainsi dire, à ce joug, en l'en occupant toujours. Il lui montra sans cesse la patrie .... il ne lui laissa pas un instant de relâche pour être à lui seul. Et de cette continuelle contrainte .... naquit en lui cet ardent amour de la patrie .... unique passion des Spartiates qui en fit des êtres au-dessus de l'humanité". (5)

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(1) Letter to M. D'Ivernois, March 24, 1768, Citizen of Geneva, p.358.

(2) Letter to M. Rey, May 29, 1762, Citizen of Geneva, pp.227-28.

(3) Discourse on Inequality, pp.263-264.

(4) Lettre à D'Alembert, p. 163.

(5) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.ii, pp.428-9, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

Moreover, a nation must be roused to activity my means of stimulating its pride. Where there is no luxury and ostentation, vanity loses its purpose, whereas pride is natural, since it can also measure itself by really worthwhile standards.

> "Comme il n'y a rien de plus réellement beau que l'indépendance et la puissance, tout peuple qui se forme est d'abord orgeuilleux. Mais jamais peuple nouveau ne fut vain; car la vanité par sa nature est individuelle". (1)

Similarly the Poles are advised to have a high opinion of themselves; national pride makes men anxious to live up to their own concept of themselves (2). That is also the purpose of cultivating ancient customs. Not only do they impart a national character to a people, but they unite them in a common worship of their native land. Above all, education must have one single aim, the transformation of mere men into a body of patriotic citizens.

> "C'est l'éducation qui doit donner aux âmes la forme nationale, et diriger tellement leurs opinions et leurs goûts, qu'elles soient patriotes par inclination, par passion, par nécessité. Un enfant, en ouvrant les yeux, doit voir la patrie et jusqu'à la mort ne doit plus voir qu'elle ... cet amour fait tout son existence; il ne voit que la patrie, il ne vit que pour elle; sitôt qu'il est seul, il est nul; sitôt qu'il n'a plus de patrie, il n'est plus". (3)

All Poles enjoying the rights of citizenship must be educated in the same schools, the state providing aid for the indigent. Their amusements, their games and public festivals all must be used to inspire patriotic sentiments in the participants. Equality is found in common patriotic devotion to one's country, and education provides the means thereto. (4)

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(1) Projet pour la Corse, pp.344-345, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(2) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.iii, p.433, Pol. Wr., vol.II.

(3) Ibid., ch.iv, p.437.

(4) Discourse on Political Economy, pp.309-311.

Rousseau's preference for agricultural life is based partly on the patriotic spirit that it is supposed to breed. "Le meilleur mobile d'un gouvernement est l'amour de la patrie, et cet amour se cultive avec les champs". (1) Commercial activity only produces corrupting wealth, necessitates international contacts, and enhances greed. The rustic life, moreover, is well suited to make good soldiers. A state rich in such men is always strong (2). Nor does Rousseau ignore the military advantages of an increasing population which is both the result of a true republican order and the standard for judging its success. It is also the cause of its decline, since Rousseau felt that large states and urban settlements are always bad for civic morality. Machiavelli also clearly saw the difficulties, for he attributes the decline of Rome to an excessively large and heterogeneous population, and he is, therefore, an active champion of colonialism.

We have so far placed side by side Rousseau's and Machiavelli's opinions on such a variety of topics as human nature, the moral life and death of republics, the spirit of patriotism and the interaction of public morals and law and government. There hardly seems any need to point out the many similarities that arise. There are really only two major differences; Rousseau's preoccupation with the moral life of the individual, and the importance he places on the will in moral conduct, are not shared by Machiavelli. Rousseau attaches a greater significance to inequality, based on the ever present inclination to vanity, as the chief cause of the decline of republics. This is not surprising, since it was just this defect that was ruining the republican spirit of Geneva, as the patricians gained an increasingly exclusive hold on the

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(1) Projet pour la Corse, p.347, Pol. Wr., vol.II.

(2) Ibid., pp.310-311.

government of the city. Rousseau differs only in emphasis from Machiavelli, who also considered equality a basic feature of republican life. Possibly, since military danger was destroying Florence he was particularly conscious of the military consequences of republican equality. For it is not the moral life of the citizens, but the physical might of the state that preoccupies him most. Both Machiavelli and Rousseau saw in effeminacy a great danger in corrupting public morals, and effeminacy and intellectual activity go together. Law is tne creator of the public spirit, the great educator and founder of habits. Love of country, to the exclusion of all other loyalties, is for both the greatest and most admirable attribute of the republican spirit, and neither one regrets the loss of a wider range of affinites. Civic unity and patriotism are the two great guardians against tyranny. Lastly, both are convinced that no state, not even the best, can evade the law of inevitable decline.

One fault unites both, a bland disregard of historical fact. Rousseau admits this failing proudly. "The ancient historians are full of opinions which may be useful, even if the facts they present are false". It does not matter whether a statement is true or false, as long as "we are able to get a useful lesson from it". (1) Machiavelli only writes to stimulate the youth of his country to emulate ancient virtue, or rather his and Plutarch's ideas about ancient habits. This is understandable, for neither was interested in history as a study in itself, but as a means of forming morals. Given the right physical environment, the proper moment in history, and a people unsophisticated and free of the habits of civilization, one could consciously recreate the republican order pictured in tales about Rome and Sparta. If these tales served to inspire men to action their purpose was well fulfilled.

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(1) Emile, bk.V, pp.120-121n.

Chapter IV

The People - One and Indivisible

"In a well regulated republic the state ought to be rich and the citizens poor". (1) - Machiavelli.

"Je veux que la propriété de l'Etat soit aussi grande, aussi forte et celle des citoyens aussi petite, aussi faible qu'il est possible". (2) - Rousseau.

We saw already that equality was one of the features of republican life that aroused the greatest admiration in both Machiavelli and Rousseau. The equal distribution of goods in itself does not suffice, however, and an austere limitation of all wealth must be maintained among the citizens. Both carefully trace the corrupting influence of riches and of leisure. These two rules are accompanied by a distinct preference for the solid middle-classes, as the only sincere supporters of liberty and lawfullness, and a distrust for the poor and especially for the noble orders. The sober, industrious middle-class citizen is not only the true beneficiary of the republican order, he is also, as an individual, the true representative of the moral ideal of republicanism. Not that Machiavelli failed to distrust them at times; the unfitness of the Florentine tradesmen for military life aroused his exasperated ire. Nevertheless, he hopefully tried to organize them into a citizen-militia, and failed, as hiw own cool judgement should have foretold him. His faith in the people as the agents of republican liberty, however, remained staunch. Rousseau similarly reminded the Genevan artisans and traders that they should not fancy themselves Romans or Spartans, since their occupations of necessity gave them a less disinterestedly patriotic outlook on life. His greatest hope rests

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(1) Machiavelli: Discourses, bk.I, ch.xxviii, pp.208-209.

(2) Rousseau: Projet pour la Corse, Pol.Wr., vol.II, p.337.

on the agricultural population, but his affection for the simple artisans, for the conscientious burgher remains strong. In their contempt for the nobility Machiavelli and Rousseau are quite at one, and when either one mentions "the people" he is not speaking of the Proletariat, but of people "with a stake" in their country.

Egalitarianism rarely consists merely of an impersonal desire to increase the material possessions, and the public power of the poorer members of the community, and to lessen those of the more prosperous ones. It generally involves a hostility to the latter group based not only on their state of well-being, but on a general dislike for their manners and morals as a class. Machiavelli is no exception to this rule.

> "(Gentlemen) live idly upon the proceeds of their extensive possessions, without devoting themselves to agriculture or any other useful pursuit to gain a living. Such men are pernicious to any country or republic; but more pernicious even than these are such as have, besides their other possessions, castles and subjects who obey them....for that class of men are everywhere enemies of all civil government". (1)

In any state where such men exist they inevitably stir up dissension and disorders, not only because they are gluttons for power, but because their very existence excites the worst instincts in the rest of the population.

> "The haughty manners and insolence of the nobles and the rich excite in the breast of those who have neither birth nor wealth not only the desire to possess them, but to revenge themselves by depriving the former of those riches and honors which they see them employ so badly". (2)

Anyone who wants to establish a republic must reconcile himself to killing them all. The history of Florence shows this quite clearly.

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.lv, p.255.

(2) Ibid., bk.I, ch.v, p.124.

After freeing itself from the tyranny of the Duke of Athens the city might have lived in peace had it not been for the nobles, who "out of office could not conduct themselves like citizens, and those who were in the government wished to be lords, so that every day they furnished some new instance of their insolence and pride". (1) Instead of one tyrant the people were now tortured by a thousand.

In nothing does Machiavelli reflect the political experiences of Renaissance Italy more thoroughly than in his hatred of the nobility. Feudalism had never been as strong or as stable a system in Italy as in the rest of Europe, and its days of efficiency were far shorter there. While in Machiavelli's day it was almost obliterated by the consolidating dynasties of France, England and Spain, it nowhere left remnants as futile and, politically, as undesirable as in Italy, particularly since no organizing dynasty was able, or ready, to substitute itself for the prevailing anarchy. It was for Machiavelli a constant source of disgust to behold these petty lords, too weak to govern Italy themselves and, in the aggregate, too strong to allow anyone else to do so. These, their corrupted people, the Church, and the threatening barbarians of the North were the central fears that lend his ambassadorial reports, his letters, and his books their tone of urgency.

Actually, Machiavelli was not blind to the virtues of "gentlemen". When, after years of unrelieved struggle between the Florentine people and their nobles, the latter were finally crushed, and forced to live and behave like ordinary citizens, the republic lost something very valuable.

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(1) History of Florence, bk.II, ch.ix, p.103.

> "Military virtue and generosity of feeling became extinguished in them; the people not possessing these qualities ....and Florence became by degrees more and more depressed and humiliated".(1)

A republic "wholly in the hands of men brought up in trade" was forced to hire its warriors, and mercenaries were in Machiavelli's eyes Italy's worst curse. On the other hand, the dacay of the feudal order had created a whole class of unemployed gentry with no land, with no talent except the practice of arms, and with a great willingness to sell themselves to the highest bidder. In this state of affairs Machiavelli saw quite clearly that the nobility, as a class, had lost its place in society, and had no longer any contribution to make to the general welfare. Italy had reached the lowest conceivable point in its cycle, and the moment for the creator-leader, who alone could ever impart to a fallen people the necessary energy for an ascent, had come. The necessary situation for the exceptional man was ready; he only had to appear, and in his march to power petty nobles would be swept away with all the other debris of a decadent civilization.

In a stable monarchical order the hierarchical system had its place. Even a new prince, while depriving the nobles of all power, must still not exasperate them to the point where they become a danger, but his trust must never belong to them. He must rely, rather, on the people whom he drags from corruption. A prince requires the assistance of an intermediary group between himself and the people he rules. "You see in all states ruled by princes, and especially in the kingdom of France, how the gentlemen rule the people, the nobles, the gentlemen and the king the nobles". (2)

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(1) History of Florence, bk.III, ch.i, pp.109-110 & bk.I, ch.7, pp.45-6.

(2) Discourse on Reforming Florence, p.84.

While he advises Leo X that in Florence a republic can flourish, he recognizes the existence in the city of "some lofty spirits who think they deserve to precede the others", and whom one must accord some special place in the government lest they be driven to active opposition. We recall that Machiavelli is not a blind reformer; he temporizes with evil, in this case hoping that, if treated intelligently, it will disappear. If a republic can expect to survive only in a community where equality exists, a new prince has no hope of enduring unless he is willing to create a nobility - "not only in name but in fact giving them castles, possessions, as well as money and subjects to rule". Only by such bribes will he persuade the boldest spirits in a city of equals to accept the yoke of a prince. Even then it is unlikely that he will succeed. (1) For the existence of equality implies an uncorrupted population, whereas in those places where the nobles are already established "the people is so thoroughly corrupt, that laws are powerless for restraint, (and) it becomes necessary to establish some superior power which, with a royal hand and with absolute powers, may put a curb upon the excessive ambition and corruption of the powerful". (2)

In a badly constituted republic there is constant dissension between the people and the nobles which leads to only two alternatives - tyranny or license. Liberty is impossible where no one obeys the laws or the magistrates. In the first instance "the insolent have too much authority, and in the latter the foolish". (3) In either case it is not the middle-

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.lvi, p.256.

(2) Ibid., " " " " p.255.

(3) History of Florence, bk.IV, ch.i, p.157.

class who desire these extremes of misgovernment, but the nobles and the plebeians. The career of the Duke of Athens offers an excellent example of this. His tyrannical ambitions "greatly terrified the middle class of citizens, but gave satisfaction to the great and to the plebeians", to the latter, because "they naturally delight in evil", to the former, "by thus seeing themselves avenged of the many wrongs they had suffered from the people". (1)

Eventually this despot made life unendurable for all classes in the city, and all joined in their hatred for him, except the "lowest plebeians", whom he had easily converted to his cause by bribery. The nobles eventually came to resent his supremacy, whereas the Signory had warned the Duke from the very first that they would resist him.

> "What is it you imagine you can do that would be an equivalent for the sweets of liberty ... That time can neither destroy nor abate the desire for freedom is most certain .... To one accustomed to the enjoyment of liberty, the slightest chains feel heavy and every tie upon his free soul oppresses him .... No dominion can be durable to which the governed do not consent". (2)

In such terms Machiavelli expected republican citizens to speak of their condition; for "the demands of a free people are rarely pernicious to their liberty, they are generally inspired by oppression expected or apprehended". (3) If they happen to be mistaken the advice of some honest leader will be quickly accepted. Each republic must have some special guardians of its freedom. The people are far better suited to this duty than the nobles who always encroach upon liberty. The only danger lies in their tendency to follow any leader who promises them to ruin the

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(1) History of Florence, bk.II, ch.viii, p.91.

(2) Ibid., bk. II, ch.viii, pp.93-94.

(3) Discourses, bk.I, ch.iv, pp.120-21.

nobles entirely and who, once he has acquired their trust, makes himself a tyrant. Such was the case of Marius who led the people of Rome in the conflict over the agrarian laws. Nevertheless, compared to kings and nobles they are the better keepers of public liberty.

> "The excesses of the people are directed against those whom they suspect of interfering with the public good; whilst those of princes are against apprehended interference with their individual interest." (1)

Absolute power quickly corrupts the people, however excellent their condition may have been originally. Moreover, leadership is essential if they are to act wisely, not coercive rule, but good counsel, lest they loose their heads in some moment of excitement. As long as the people is ruled by law they are perfectly capable of self-government, and even when they fail to respect the laws they can be easily persuaded to improve their ways, while a lawless prince is worse than a madman and not being "amenable to good influences.....there is no remedy against him, but cold steel."(2) Ultimately the difference between states does not depend so much on whether they are governed monarchically or popularly, but on whether they are ruled by law; for "whoever is not controlled by laws will commit the same errors as an unbridled multitude". (3)

Kings such as those of ancient Sparta and of modern France "are not amongst the number of those whose individual nature we have to consider to see whether it resembles that of the people", since they are controlled by law, they share the good qualities of a lawful republic in which the people "neither obey with servility nor rule with insolence". On the whole a republican people is superior to a law-abiding prince, just as

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(1) Discourse, bk.I, ch.lviii, p.266.

(2) Ibid., bk.I, ch.liii, p.247, ch.xxxv, p.206 & ch.lviii, p.265.

(3) Ibid., bk.I, ch.lviii, p.261.

it is less dangerous in lawlessness. In particular judgements, in matters such as the distribution of honors and offices its decisions are far wiser than those of princes or of small bodies of legislators. It is only in general questions of policy that they are led astray, and even then they can easily be persuaded to change their opinions. In appraising individual merit they are always guided by reliable criteria, such as a man's family background, his associates and his past contributions to his country. Since so much importance is placed on the latter, ambitious young men in republics try to distinguish themselves by some spectacular act of public service (1). In Rome where there was an appeal to the people in all cases involving capital punishment, the decisions of the people were always wise and just. Indeed, great progress is only possible in cities ruled by the people. Princes alone can create liberty, but only the people, provided that it is morally sound, can maintain it.

"I say that the people are prudent and stable... and it is not without reason that it is said that the voice of the people is the voice of God". (1) At times the people display such foresight that one could almost ascribe occult powers to them. Their character is always better than that of the nobility, and the saying that "he who builds on the people builds on mud" is nothing but a "trite proverb". They will never help oppressors, but a man of virtue and courage, who can animate them with his own spirit, may well rely on them (2).

The advantages of free government are great for the people, of course. Only under such a rule can they enjoy their property securely and be certain that their women will not be molested. Even a prince constructing a stable state must encourage the citizens to follow their various callings

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.lviii, p.263.

(2) Prince, ch.ix, p.38.

quietly and free them from the fear of excessive taxation and robbery. Otherwise he cannot expect any virtue to develop amongst them. The struggle over the agrarian laws in Rome shows that the thirst for riches is the worst vice of the people and the one most likely to ruin them. While people must be allowed to enjoy their own in peace, a general poverty is essential in maintaining the republican spirit. In Rome this was achieved by making honours independent of wealth. The great military leaders would return from their victories to a life of frugality and humble labour on their little properties, "obedient to the magistrates and respectful to their superiors". (1) The fruits of poverty are far more precious than those of wealth. The former brings honour to republics, the latter destroys them.

A republic with no distinguished citizens has no future, but it must recognize no merit except in what is done for the country as a whole. While it must reward talent in whatever order of society it may arise, it must guard against all persons who try to acquire fame by private acts of generosity, and who thus gather a private following among the citizens. Any excess of wealth or popularity among individuals is a threat to unity and to freedom. The conditions that give potential tyrants their chance arise out of the unavoidable quarrels between the nobles and the people. The fault rests entirely with the former; for only a small part of the population wants freedom to command, the majority wants liberty so as to live in security. The nobles want power; the people want law.

The problem of factions was one that greatly troubled Machiavelli. He was aware of the fact that unity breeds strength and, especially when he beheld the havoc that the internal dissentions of Florence had brought that city, he would declaim loudly against the "spirit of faction".

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(1) Discourses, bk.III, ch.xxv, pp.487-488.

Private quarrels are, of course, inevitable, as are public accusations, but they can be settled effectively by judicial tribunals. Once, however, factions already exist they associate themselves with these petty differences, and a major upheaval results. Italian history is filled with protracted and exceedingly vicious family fights, in which the cause of war had long been forgotten, but which were kept going for years by the force of habit and the steady accumulation of mutual injuries. Political factions, though potentially even more dangerous, are recognized to have their value. Machiavelli realized, at times, that law is based on compromise. Roman liberty emerged from the struggle between the people and the Senate. In Florence, on the other hand, such differences always ended in bloodshed and exile (1). In analyzing this difference, Machiavelli arrived at a picture of republican life that differs considerably from his favourite image of a people absolutely united and entirely devoted to the state. There also arises a new explanation for the origin of law, and one quite different than the usual one of the hero-lawgiver.

Dissension in a republic can be very healthy when it involves nothing but competition for such goods as the state can safely grant, and when it permits settlement without resort to civil war. The cause of these disagreements is always the same, the struggle between the people and the nobles, the rich and the poor, but if they lead to new laws, the creation of new ranks, and not the obliteration of old ones, they bring about an increased love of country, because all participate actively in its growth. When there is a refusal to compromise, as there was in Florence, law becomes the expression, not of general purpose, but of the conqueror's power, and nothing short of death and exile can end the tumult, leaving the city poorer in depriving her of the services of a whole class. The

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.iv, pp.119-120 & History of Florence, bk.III, ch.i. pp.108-110.

parties collect private armies by entertaining the populace with spectacles, by gifts to the poor and by distributing undeserved honours. Since nothing higher animates the members of such factions than personal interest, their union ends as soon as they have gained their ends in a particular dispute. In Rome, where the parties were held together by some general aim, based on political purpose, the quarrels ended in compromise and the improvement of the whole state (1). The mixed constitution of Rome, the military virtues and the steady growth of law were the result of the conflict between the people and the Senate. A free state has two aims, aggrandizement and the maintenance of its liberty, which implies unity in spite of dissension, their freedom being upheld by constant agitation, their power by their unity in times of war.

It must not be supposed that this particular attitude to republican life is a dominant one in Machiavelli, but merely because it is not a main trend in his thinking, there is no reason to ignore it. In the long run he likes unity and detests internal strife. He fancies the notion of one leader and one people, "not subjects, but partisans". Nevertheless, he was probably more tolerant of dissension, dissatisfaction and "ill humours" in the state than was Rousseau. Possibly this is due to the fact that he does not expect too much from people, even the best. For Florence he suggests a mixed constitution, stable, and with a place for the nobility. The chief function of the Parlement of Paris, he thought, was that it defended the people against the nobles,without too much offence to the latter, and without forcing the king to choose between the two sides. It is an example of unity through balance. Rousseau begins by demanding an "austere democracy" or an "absolute tyranny", and ends by suggesting the government of the landed gentry to the Poles.

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(1) History of Florence, bk.VII, ch.i, pp.306-307.

Rousseau's loathing for the noble and the rich was, at times, spectacular in its virulence. "Je hais les grands, je hais leur état, leur dureté, leurs préjugés, leur petitesse et leurs vices, et je les haissois davantage si je les méprisois moins". (1) There is no need to elaborate upon this sentence; it expresses his feelings perfectly. The sources of these sentiments, however, are worth examining. Much has been made by commentators, as well as by Rousseau himself, of his malaise in Parisian society, his inability to join in the life of the upper classes and the intellectuals associated with them. Probably his social failures were less dismal than he claimed. It appears that he actually possessed considerable social charm, and it is well known that he counted among his friends and admirers no lesser personages than the Prince de Conti and the Maréchal de Luxembourg. His lower class origin and his lack of formal breeding no doubt did make his contacts with polite society difficult, and it certainly made him fantastically proud and self-righteous, but an express desire to dissociate himself from it may well have played a part in his frequently boastful admissions of his complete incompatability with it. He rather liked to see himself in the position of an upright republican, entirely lost in a superficial and corrupt society; hence his insistence on the title of "citoyen". Certainly he knew more about the life of the common people and appreciated them more readily than could the society people and professional intellectuals whom he met in Paris. He had himself been in turn an apprentice to a clockmaker and to an engraver, a lackey, a secretary to a financier and to an ambassador, a music master and copyist, a composer, a novelist and at last a political philosopher. No wonder that he claimed an acquaintance with all classes of society.

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(1) Lettre à Malesherbes, 28 janvier 1762, Lettres à Malesherbes, pp.52-53

"J'ai connu tous les états, j'ai vécu dans tous, depuis les plus bas jusqu'aux plus élevés." (1)

For all his wide experience, he felt a real attachment for only two social orders, the sober middle-class, and especially, the independent farmer. His distrust of the lowest classes almost equals his scorn for the nobility. In fact, his whole outlook is at one with the social order of Calvinist Geneva before the rule of the patricians. In 1741, that is, some eight years before he wrote the first of the Discourses and some time before his entry into the Parisian world, he already wrote bitter words about the nobility.

> "Mangeant fièrement notre bien,
> Exigeant tout, n'accordant rien." (2)

In the Epitre à M. Parisot, written slightly later, he again points with disgust at the social system of France, and points with pride to the free, proud and laborious life of the Genevans. It is thus to Geneva and to the social doctrines of Calvinism that we must look for the real origin of Rousseau's ideal economic order.

According to Calvinism the virtues incumbent upon the elect are diligence, thrift, sobriety and prudence. As there are no simple ways of being assured of election, those who are in the state of grace can recognize their condition only in a life of constant steadfastness, virtue and application to whatever tasks they are called upon to perform. Each man has a calling, and to the extent that he carries it out with a maximum of success he has at least a sign of grace. As Calvin's God was primarily one of order, and the world He created meant to be usefully employed by mankind, nothing could seem more righteous than the well-regulated and

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(1) Quoted from Maxime Leroy, op.cit., p.136.

(2) Epitre à M. de l'Etang, quoted from A. Cobban, op.cit., ch.vii.

solid existence of the bourgeoisie. Even those lacking grace must devote themselves to useful labour, not because it will benefit them, but for the greater glory of God. It is the duty of the community to see that all its members follow the path ordained for them. Not sporadic acts of devotion, but only a whole life of perpetual hard work can be considered a sign of goodness. There is no room here for the familiar cycle of Catholicism, from sin to absolution to renewed sinfulness, nor for vicarious atonement, every man must be a dedicated monk at every moment of his life, and in all his wordly activity. Baxter, an English Puritan, counted loss of time through sociability, idle talk, luxury and even too much sleep as being worthy of condemnation. Such an attitude to life involved a rejection of all that is leisurely and even emotional in culture and in social life. Useful science and such sport as was necessary for health were sanctioned, but all the arts, the theater, even pretty clothes were scorned as idle ostentation and superfluity, serving no rational purpose and enhancing the glory of man, not that of God. We need only recall the heat with which the English Puritans opposed the reopening of the theaters after the Restoration to understand the single-mindedness and devotion that they brought to every-day life. Wealth, however, unless it leads to idleness and vanity, was not in itself thought an evil. On the contrary, it was a sign of success in one's calling that betokened divine grace, whereas poverty implied a lack thereof. In short, the life of idleness was held in contempt and that of industrious traders and farmers exalted. (1)

We have already seen to what an extent Rousseau shared this outlook, particularly in his objections to the theater and to the fine arts, which

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(1) This section is largely based on material presented in Max Weber's The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, tr. by T. Parsons (London, 1930 & 1948), particularly ch.'s iv & v, pp.95-183.

he felt were valued for their very uselessness, while the work of the artisans, honourable and necessary, was poorly rewarded (1). A taste for ostentation, he assures us, never went together with a taste for righteousness, while "gluttony is the vice of feeble minds", for the gourmand has "his brains in his palate". (2) The desire for inequality, the "rage to distinguish oneself", is the cause of these unforgivable habits, and excessive wealth is in itself a temptation to such activity. "Everywhere it is the rich who are the first to be touched by corruption, the poor follow, the middle classes are the last to be attained."(3) Even more reprehensible than their own corruption is the harm they do to the rest of the community.

> "The privileged few gorge themselves with superfluities, while the starving multitude are in want of the bare necessities of life...The poor perish of want and the rich of surfeit."(4)

As for the nobility, they are everywhere the mortal enemies of law and liberty, which is not surprising, for "what can remain for fellow citizens of a heart already divided between avarice, a mistress and vanity?" (5) Luxury is , as we saw, the corruptor of public morals, depraving both the consumer and the servant. It is an evil in itself, but far worse is the state of mind that it implies. That is what must be banished from men's hearts. Inequality without luxury is harmless, and that is in fact the great plan he proposes to the Poles (6). Idleness is in itself dangerous and

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(1) Emile, bk.III, p.149.

(2) Discourse on the Arts and Sciences, p.162 & Emile, bk.II, p.117.

(3) Letter to Dr. Tronchin, September 26, 1758, Citizen of Geneva, p.160.

(4) Discourse on Inequality, pp.272 & 276.

(5) Discourse on Political Economy, p.308,

(6) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.iii, pp.436-437, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

detestable, and Rousseau's objections to wealth are based on the recognition that it cannot be separated from idleness and luxurious living. Success at ones work is admirable, and "if you are sober and industrious, before the end of the week you have earned your pay and lived in freedom, health, truth and righteousness." (1) A well-earned income is a thing to be admired, but if it is too large it will ruin the character of its owner.

"Il faut que tout le monde vive et que personne ne s'enrichisse." Taxation on consumption and luxury goods is one way of achieving this. (2) Still better is the avoidance of its source. Hence his objections to commerce, which, while involving no great exertion, can still produce sizeable profits. Rousseau claims that the ancients despised commerce and only allowed strangers to practice it (3). There is a definite hierarchy of occupations, with farming as the most honourable, metal work as the next choice and carpentry as the third. Farmers and artisans, the good peasants of Neufchâtel, whom he described to D'Alembert, and his own people in Geneva, patriots all, were the only two classes fit for republicanism. "Les bras, l'emploi du temps, la vigilance, l'austère parcimonie, voilà les trésors du genevois." (4)

The moral necessity for work is stressed everywhere. The whole Project for Corsica is inspired by this aim. It is there that he advises the government that it is not only its duty to insist on equality, but also on useful activity. "Les peuples seront toujours laborieux quand le travail sera en honneur, et il dépend toujours du gouvernement de l'y mettre." (5) That all must work is an essential law to civil society, as much as austerity is the means to its preservation.

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(1) Emile, bk.III, p.160.

(2) Discourse on Political Economy, p.328.

(3) Fragments, "Le Luxe," p.342, Pol.Wr., vol.I

(4) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.125.

(5) Projet pour la Corse, p.347, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

> "The man who eats in idleness what he has not himself earned is a thief...Outside the pale of society the solitary, owing nothing to any man, may do as he pleases, but in society, either he lives at the cost of others or owes them in labour the cost of his keep. There is no exception to this rule....Man in society is bound to work." (1)

The nobility are not the only sinners in the system of inequality; the well-to-do trader is as much to blame. "Le sot orgeuil des bourgeois ne fait qu'avilir et décourager le laboureur." (2) Feudalism, though he considered it "an absurd system if there ever was one", had long ceased to be a matter worth discussing, and the nobility he saw about him was nothing but a "corps de valets". He therefore concentrates even more on the commercial classes, whose internationalizing influence he disliked as much as their wealth. The Corsicans were to abolish the use of money entirely and to return to a system of simple barter, so as to avoid any great accumulation of private wealth. Taxes are to be paid in personal labour not in cash, which is especially desirable, since citizens should serve their country directly, not with money. From the very first, a large public domain is to be set aside for the use of the state, so that it will be independent of the property of individuals. That had been the system of Romulus, and it was to be that of Corsica as well (3).

The people are mankind, the only ones who really matter, but the people as a group includes neither the rich nor "une populace abrutie et stupide", but the solid middle class, "ni assez élevés pour avoir des prétensions, ni assez bas pour n'avoir rien à perdre." (4) Their great

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(1) Emile, bk.III, p.158.

(2) Projet pour la Corse, p.317, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(3) Discourse on Political Economy, p.314 & Projet pour la Corse, p.338.

(4) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre IX, pp.282-283, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

interest lies in the common good, in seeing the magistrates respected and the laws obeyed. The artisans are decent, modest, respectful, reserved and grave in demeanor; "c'est la plus saine partie de la République."

> "He was revolutionary in so far as he wished for the abolition of aristocratic privileges and the power of wealth; but looked at from a broad historical standpoint this did not imply the social revolution as it has been understood later, but rather the continuance and the completion of the political revolution that began when feudalism was first repulsed from Swiss mountain retreats and Flemish city walls. Politically Rousseau believes in the small owners of property, the middle classes, because he believes that it is only on them that the rule of law be imposed with any hope of success." (1)

Rousseau is convinced that equality is the result of uncorrupted morals and the indispensable basis for republican life. In the well regulated state one must have neither millionaires nor beggars. Both these extremes are inseparable and the friends of tyrants; for "the one buys (public liberty) and the other sells (it)." (2) The excessively rich or poor always tend to encroach upon freedom. "C'est par eux toujours que l'Etat dégénère: le riche trait la loi dans sa bourse, le pauvre aime mieux du pain que la liberté." (3) The Polish serfs cannot be given liberty at once, only a slow process of education can fit them for civic life.

> ,"Ce que je crains n'est pas seulement l'intérêt mal entendu, l'amour propre et les préjugés des maîtres. Cet obstacle vaincu, je craindrais les vices et les lâchetés des serfs....Je ris de ces peuples avilis qui, se laissant ameuter par des ligueurs, osent parler de la liberté sans même en avoir l'idée....(qui) s'imaginent que pour être libres il suffit d'être des mutins." (4)

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(1) A. Cobban, Op.Cit., ch.vii, p.203.
In this chapter I have relied very much on Mr. Cobban's brief, but excellent chapter on Rousseau's economic ideas.

(2) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.ix, p.481, Pol.Wr., vol.I & Social Contract, p.50.

(3) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre IX, p.283, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

There is a famous passage in the Confessions in which Rousseau tells of his encounter with a farmer who treated him with great inhospitality, because he suspected him of being an exciseman. When his host discovered his mistake, he at once became friendly and generous, explaining that he dared not show his prosperity, because the tax-collectors would at once deprive him of his possessions, if they knew of their existence. Rousseau claims that this incident impressed him prodounfly and that it awakened his social conscience and sense of justice.

> It was the germ of that inextinguishable hatred which subsequently grew up in my heart against the oppression to which these unhappy people are subject....This man, although in good circumstances, did not dare to eat the bread he had obtained by the sweat of his brow....I left his house equally indignant and touched, lamenting the lot of these beautiful countries upon which nature has only lavished her gifts to make them the prey of barbarous farmers of taxes." (1)

Whether the story is true, and whether it really was one of the several revelations that he underwent, is really not very important. Rousseau was too much given to self-dramatization and literary exaggerations to be taken at his word. The interesting thing about this tale is that it shows with whom Rousseau sympathized, and what social wrongs revolted him. It is not the sight of the most sordid poverty, and of the really debased members of society that arouses him. He admits that those who wrong them are more to blame than they themselves, but they remain, politically, a hopeless class. The farmer for whom a new social order must be built is a hard-working and independent man, he is not unprosperous, but "in good circumstances", and he has every right to enjoy that condition. The Third Estate are the true representatives of the public interest, Rousseau claims, but

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(1) Confessions, bk.IV, pp.169-170.

only the more successful commoners seem to belong to that category (1). It is the farmer, and his class, who are the "people", the lovers of law and liberty, who are the wisest of rulers. "They are far less often mistaken in their choice of (magistrates) than the prince; and a man of real worth among the king's ministers is almost as rare as a fool at the head of a republican government". (2) Emile is warned never to underestimate the people's intelligence and common sense (3). "Souvent l'injustice et la fraude trouvent des protecteurs, jamais elles n'ont le public pour elles, c'est en ceci que la voix du peuple est la voix de Dieu". (4)

The task of governments is the maintenance of law and justice, particularly, the protection of the poor against the rich, although, "the greatest evil has already occurred once there are poor to be defended and rich to be restrained." (5) The middle class is always the loser once this situation has arisen, since they are "equally powerless against the treasures of the rich and the penury of the poor". Their interest is wholly on the side of the law, but the rich "mock them and the (poor) escape them". It is advantageous for the middle class, therefore, to preserve a high degree of equality, which can only be achieved by regulative legislation, especially, since, "the force of circumstances always tends to destroy it". (6)

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(1) Social Contract, p.94.

(2) Ibid., p.72.

(3) Emile, bk.IV, p.187.

(4) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre VIII, p.257, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(5) Discourse on Political Economy, p.306.

(6) Social Contract, p.50.

Absolute equality in the distribution of wealth is, however, rejected. "Cette égalité ne peut s'admettre même hypothétiquement parce qu'elle n'est pas dans la nature des choses." (1)

> "I have already defined civil liberty by equality, we should understand, that the degrees of power and riches are not to be identical for everybody, but that power shall never be great enough for violence and shall always be exercised by virtue of rank and law.....which implies on the part of the great, moderation in goods and position and on the side of the common sort, moderation in avarice and covetousness." (2)

We already saw that the states of equality and self-government are entirely dependent on each other, increasing and decreasing proportionally. As absolute equality is rejected, so is absolute democracy, and for the same reason, not because it is not good in itself, but because it is impossible; for "so perfect a form of government is not for men". (3) In the most sterile parts of Switzerland he observed with approval a general poverty, as well as a highly egalitarian and democratic social order. Corsica, fortunately deprived of her nobility by the Genoese, was also suitable ground for such an arrangement. Since there were no great differences in wealth to begin with, and since the barreness of the soil would prevent any great accumulation of wealth in the future, it offered a rare opportunity for a free and equal state (4). In small countries equality is both necessary and possible, but Rousseau explicitly rejects such a pattern for the larger states of Europe. A large state requires a monarch, a single centre of control, to unite it, and intermediary orders between the prince and the people to give it cohesion (5). Nor does it

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(1) Fragments, "La Richesse", p. 347, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

(2) Social Contract, p.50.

(3) Ibid., p.65.

(4) Projet pour la Corse, pp.339-340, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

(5) Social Contract, p.71.

matter if the economic status of individuals is in constant flux, for the basic relation of the sovereign to the subjects remains unchanged. Politically it is of no significance whether the rich get wealthier and the poor more impoverished, or whether one man is rich today and poor tomorrow, or vice versa.

> "Jamais dans une monarchie, l'opulance d'un particulier ne peut le mettre au-dessus du prince, mais, dans une république elle peut aisément le mettre au-dessus des lois. Alors le gouvernement n'a plus de force, et le riche est toujours le vrai souverain." (1)

Equality, democracy, poverty and the preference for the small state are ultimately only means to an end for Rousseau, unity and the abolition of all the contradictions and conflicts that all the social life that he saw about him presented. His insistence that only the small state can be really prosperous and free is not actually based on the complicated mathematical reasons that he offers in the Social Contract, namely, that if the sovereign consists of one-thousand persons, each individual's will is only a one-thousandth part of the sovereign will, and therefore, has only a very small influence on the supreme authority of the state. (2) However, since the General Will is not the will of all, but an objective standard of social justice, independent of the shifting wills and opinions of the citizens, it can make no difference to the individual whether he is one of a thousand, or one of a hundred, persons who are "forced to be free" by living in unanimous agreement to its laws. On a less abstract plane, it is quite true that it is more difficult to unite and improve a large group of people than a small one, but its relation to pure justice is not necessarily affected by that fact. A sounder explanation for his insistence upon small

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(1) Lettre à D'Alembert, p. 155.

(2) Social Contract, p.56 & Emile, bk.V, p.427.

states is given by Rousseau in his concern for the actual relationships between people in a state, and his recognition that these are made morally most perfect by the cohesion, and even the inbredness, of small communities.

> "Presque tous les petits Etats, Républiques et Monarchies indifféremment, prospèrent par cela seul qu'ils sont petits; que tous les citoyens s'y connaissent mutuellement et s'entre-gardent, que les chefs peuvent voir par eux-même le mal qui se fait, le bien qu'ils ont à faire, et que leurs ordres s'exécutent sous leurs yeux. Tous les grands peuples....gémissent....sous les oppresseurs subalternes qu'une gradation nécessaire force les rois de leur donner." (1)

Equality even is sacrificed to national unity, and patriotism. The condition of inequality was at first attacked because it was opposed to the rule of law. For Rousseau, however, the rule of law involved a unanimity of consent and, that failing, at least a unity in patriotic dedication to the state. In Poland's case he felt that this second alternative could be best achieved by not only maintaining the existing class structure, but by making distinctions in rank very distinct. However, the social standing of individuals is not hereditary and must be separated from their wealth, so that this source of corruption and wrangling might be eliminated. "Je voudrais que tous les grades, tous les emplois, toutes les récompenses honorifiques se marquassent par des signes extérieurs." (2) No one must appear incognito in public, and the marks of a man's rank and dignity must follow him everywhere, so that he may be respected for them, and learn to respect himself. The public service to be rendered by each class remains the chief criterion for distinguishing them, and for judging the worth of individuals.

In an earlier work, Rousseau had defended the right of inheritance on the ground that the shifting of ranks and fortunes among the citizens was

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(1) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.v, p.442, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(2) Ibid., ch.xi, p.479, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

fatal to public morality; for "those brought up to one thing find themselves destined for another, and neither those who rise, nor those who fall are able to assume the rules of conduct...of their new condition, still less to discharge the duties it entails". (1)

> "In the social order where each has his place, a man must be educated for it. If such a one leaves his own station he is fit for nothing else....In Egypt, where the son was compelled to adopt his father's calling, education had, at least, a settled aim". (2)

There must, however, be no social exclusiveness, which could lead only to jealousy and disunion. Let the Poles have many open-air festivals, where everyone is welcome, "où les rangs soient distingués avec soin, mais, où tout peuple prenne part également comme chez les anciens". (3) It is important to create an atmosphere in which everyone will feel inspired to distinguish himself by performing some great deed in the service of his country, whatever his social position may be. Above all, the nobility must not wallow in luxury, which makes them an object of envy, renders them unfit for their high position and sets a corrupting example to the nation as a whole. While Rousseau regrets that only the higher orders should have political power, he resigns himself to it rather easily.

> "Bien que chacun sente quel grand mal c'est pour la République que la nation soit en quelque façon renfermé dans l'Ordre équestre, et que tout le reste, paysans et bourgeois, soit nul, tant dans le Gouvernement que dans la législation, telle est l'antique constitution". (4)

He goes on to suggest that gradually this state might be ameliorated, as the people became more enlightened, and justice was slowly rendered to

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(1) Discourse on Political Econory, p.313.

(2) Emile, bk.I, p.9.

(3) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.iii, p.434, Pol.Wr., vol. II.

(4) Ibid., ch.xiii, p.497.

the serfs. What, however, has become of the general will? We have already seen that power, "exercised by virtue of rank and law" is necessary and good in a republican order. The public will is not made general by "the number of voters, but by the interest that unites them". (1) Not even the happiness of the citizens is a criterion for gauging the success of the social order. "Ce n'est donc pas par le sentiment que les citoyens ont de leur bonheur, ni par conséquent, par leur bonheur même qu'il faut juger de la prospérité de l'Etat." (2) Rousseau is always ready to recognize the need for inequality in governmental power. As long as a certain class within the state is best fitted to care for the public good, it has every right to monopolize governmental authority, provided that the rule of law prevails, and the unity of the state is maintained. In the Social Contract, however, Rousseau makes a clear distinction between the sovereign and the government. To be legitimate, the former had to consist of all subjects of the state. In the plan for Poland this distinction has disappeared. Moreover, not all subjects are citizens, and neither the constitution, nor any subsequent fundamental legislation, requires their consent. This does not involve as great a contradiction as one might suppose. The general will is the sovereign, but it is well known that the general will and the will of all are by no means identical. The general will comprises only the morally perfect, the totally disinterested wills of the community. Probably Rousseau felt that only a small class in Poland was capable of achieving a will guided by public devotion. If that be the case, it follows quite logically that this class alone should possess both sovereign and governmental authority.

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(1) Discourse on Political Economy, p.297 & Première Version du Contrat Social, bk.I, ch.vi, p.472, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

(2) Fragments, "Le Bonheur Public," p.328, Pol. Wr., vol. I.

With such an emphasis on unity, and on the general will, whatever its form, as the only guide to action, Rousseau's attitude to lesser associations, or "factions", as Machiavelli called them, becomes self-evident. At one point he suggested that the general will, that is fundamental law, might emerge from the cancelling out of private wills, but he rejects this notion as definitely as the representative system, because each individual's moral conscience must participate directly in the determination of the general will. At other times he even agrees that a free state, of necessity, implies an agitated one, since freedom means self-expression. "La nation la mieux gouvernée, n'est elle pas précisément celle qui murmure le plus"? (1) In the Social Contract he quotes Machiavelli to the effect that internal dissension, as well as external disaster, may give a state vigour, and that "prosperity is gained not by peace, but by liberty". (2) He also defends the "cercles" of Geneva as agents of public morality. "Il n'y a que le plus farouche despotisme qui s'alarme à la vue de sept ou huit hommes assemblés, craignant toujours que leurs entretiens ne roulent sur leurs misères." (3)

However, even when he chooses to defend lesser associations, he does not believe for an instant that law and liberty might arise from the conflicts between them, and from the compromises they impose upon each other. Mixed government is rejected because it lacks simplicity, presumably since this quality facilitates unity. The fear of the "tyranny of factions", led Rousseau to oppose any division in the executive power of the state, both in his proposals for a Polish Senate and in his criticism of Saint-Pierre's Polysynodie. (4) He insists that a good soldier or a good priest is likely

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(1) Fragments, "Le Bonheur Public", p.328, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

(2) Social Contract, p.89.

(3) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.145

(4) Jugement sur "La Polysynodie" de l'Abbé de Saint-Pierre, p.418, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

to be a poor citizen, and that a state that consists of a web of smaller societies, which set and modify its aims, is not well constituted. Their power must never be so great that they can substitute themselves for the state, especially since one of them might become so strong as to replace the general will. There is no room in the state for a variety of personal loyalties, and the voice of the people can be said to be that of God, only when the will of all is identical to the general will. Partial societies always live at the expense of the general society, and prevent the general will from expressing itself.

> "It is therefore essential that there should be no partial societies within the State and that each citizen should think his own thoughts, which was indeed the sublime and unique system established by Lycurgus". (1)

Rousseau is not satisfied with unity in action, which he felt to be superficial, without a corresponding unity in thought. Equality is important in achieving this end, but inequality must be treated gently, lest haste defeat its own purposes. Poverty remains an important part of the republican spirit. He even points out that the poor Swiss defeated the wealthy Austrians, and the Dutch the Spaniards, to prove the superiority of poor and united nations over large and degenerate ones. Lastly, the whole moral code to be imposed on the republic is that of the middle class, which is the true bearer of the republican ideal.

Though, as usual, Rousseau's treatment of these matters is more complex than Machiavelli's, there are no vast differences in their opinions. It must be repeated that Rousseau is interested in the moral life of individuals, which he expects the republican order to further, while Machiavelli is concerned with the political power that he believes to be the outcome of that same republican order. This great difference appears in all that they

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(1) Social Contract, p.103, & Discourse on Political Economy, p.293.

say. For instance, that is why Rousseau insists on a small republic, while Machiavelli holds aggrandizement to be one of its chief aims. It is not unlikely that this difference is based on their respective experiences in their native cities. Florence was collapsing because of military impotence, while Geneva was decaying morally, and losing its civic unity.

It would be false, in spite of all the evidence here presented, to forget that Rousseau was able to teach Kant the respect due to the individual, and that, for all his contradictions, the purpose of political society, for him, was always its potentiality for liberating man's will for goodness. Thus he wrote that: "Only among free peoples is the dignity of man recognized." (1) At times, however, he subjects man to such extensive coercion, that one must suppose that he has forgotten the dignity of the individual, or relegated it to the distant realm of ultimate possibilities.

Chapter V

Leaders and Lawgivers

Nowhere are the similarities and the differences between Rousseau and Machiavelli more clearly displayed than in their respective pictures of the creators of states. We have already seen that while, for both the origin and growth of law depends on single acts of construction, not on slow social development, its maintenance and decline are entirely determined by the moral and material condition of the community as a whole. A people cannot have good laws without being morally healthy, but the required civic spirit can only be generated by the proper laws and institutions. Both authors solved this dilemma by a belief in the creative powers of single individuals, who appear at given points in a people's history to give it political and religious institutions, and so form its national life. The achievements of Moses, Lycurgus and Numa Pompilius are for both the brightest examples of the great heights that political genius can reach. In his description of the ideal lawgiver Rousseau scarcely deviates from the image he had formed of these giants of antiquity. Machiavelli, on the other hand, though he entertains fairly similar notions as to their characters and work, also conceives of a second, and in many respects very different, kind of leadership. There is the founder of ancient republics, and there is the prince who must arise in the Italy of the Renaissance to bring about her rejuvenation. If not totally dissimilar, these two figures are by no means identical. For the first type one had merely to look into ones well-worn copies of Plutarch and Livy, but for the second one had to search in the world about one, and Machiavelli was the last person to confuse such different scenes, even though he had a sharp eye for the permanent features in all human history. There can be no doubt that his highest admiration is reserved for the great men of antiquity; such

fanciful idols as Caesare Borgia or Castruccio Castracani cannot compete with Romulus or Numa. Nor is the Prince a mere manual for petty despots. Machiavelli was perfectly aware of the fact that no one could teach the Sforzas, the Malatestas or the Visconti their business, nor had he any desire to do so. We saw that he considered their political existence and their military system a menace to Italy. However, Machiavelli knew his Italy well, and he saw that no one but the condottieri were available to be groomed for the high task of emulating the ancient builders of states. Nevertheless, the Prince is dedicated to a prince of some achieved position. Macniavelli had quite enough historical sense to realize that the methods, forces and talents that would be employed were those prevalent, not those of antiquity. Just as a leader must suit his actions to the temper of the times, so a political theorist must accommodate himself to the habits and possibilities of his contemporaries.

At any time the reform of an old republic, or the creation of a new one,can only be the work of one man.

> "A sagacious legislator of a republic, therefore, whose object is to promote the public good and not his private interest, and who prefers his country to his own successors should concentrate all authority in himself". (1)

In pursuing his aim the leader may employ any means necessary for his success, and Romulus is absolved from the crime of fratricide by his creative labours and, above all, by having set up the Roman Senate. The single man need be the whole state only at one point of the cyclical progression of a state. Once he has given a people its laws his usefulness as a ruler is at an end.

> "(A republic) having good laws for its basis, and good regulations for carrying them into effect, needs not like others, the virtue of one man for its maintenance.

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.ix, pp.138-139.

> "With such excellent laws and institutions, many of those ancient republics which were of long duration, were endowed". (1)

To give a state such laws that it can survive on its own vitality is the great aim of all great men. Machiavelli is even certain that such brilliant men as Plato and Aristotle only wrote political treatises because they lacked the opportunity to rule states themselves. (2) Only such leaders as really produce a lasting edifice deserve admiration. As much as Moses, Lycurgus and Romulus are to be praised, so much must Caesar be despised. He was guilty of ruining Rome. When a man cannot save his rank in a state except by refusing to give it good laws, he has some excuse at least, but Caesar lacked even that feeble apology for his acts. "If a prince be anxious for glory and the good opinion of the world, he should rather wish to possess a corrupt city, not to ruin it wholly, like Caesar, but to reorganize it like Romulus". (3) The real founder of Rome, however, was not Romulus, who gave it its military institutions and the Senate, but Numa, who brought a savage people to civil obedience. For this grand design he used religion, as must all real law-givers.

> "In truth there never was any remarkable lawgiver among any people who did not resort to divine authority, as otherwise his laws would not have been accepted by the people; for there are many good laws, the importance of which is known to the sagacious lawgiver, but the reasons for which are not sufficiently evident to enable him to persuade others to submit to them; and therefore do wise men, for the purpose of removing this difficulty, resort to divine authority. Thus did Lycurgus and Solon and many others who aimed at the same thing". (4)

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(1) History of Florence, bk.IV, ch.i, p.157.

(2) Discourse on Reforming Florence, p.91.

(3) Discourses, bk.I, ch.x, pp.143-45.

(4) Ibid., bk.I, ch.xi, p.147.

For it is useless to count on the people's intelligence and good-will in building a state, one must mould them by all means available. The people of that time admittedly were a simple lot, but Machiavelli had seen many members of the Platonic Academy of Florence renounce their Hellenism under the influence of Savonarola's sermons, and he was not likely to underestimate the political importance of religion, although its doctrinal truth was a matter of indifference to him. Fear of God is the great stimulant to lawful behaviour, and where it is wanting, "a country will come to ruin unless it is sustained by the fear of the prince which may temporarily supply the want of religion, but as the lives of princes are short, the kingdom will of necessity perish as the prince fails in virtue". (1) This sentence well indicates what considerations moved Machiavelli in his advice to the prince, and why it differs from the admirable maxims followed by Numa and Romulus. Besides the distinction in method, the people's moral state imposes certain limitations on a leader. A people is in a condition to receive new laws either when it is still very rude and simple in its habits, like the Swiss, whom Machiavelli admired, and whose power he feared so much, or when it has reached the lowest ebb in its cyclical life. According to the laws of history a leader must arise, and an ascent must follow, once a people has reached this utter depth of degradation. When Numa gave Rome its laws it was still a totally uncivilized community, but the state of Italy was that of the last possible degree of decadence. The necessity for organization arises in each case, and the response to it by dynamic leadership is almost inevitable, but the nature of these two forces differs, as does their interaction. Necessity and virtue continue to move history, but the power of the leader must grow in direct proportion to the corruption of the led.

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xi, p.148.

There is also a great difference between the prince who rules a stable monarchy, and the man who must alone create a new state. The government of France, and that of the Roman Empire are representative of the former type. A true monarchy for Machiavelli, as we saw, is exemplified by the feudal state, by a monarch surrounded by nobles with whom he shares his power, and who cannot set himself above the law. Opposed to this is the oriental prince, whose power is absolute, and who has only an entourage of satraps to assist him. The former is more stable, the latter can be more powerful, and is suited to times of corruption. Machiavelli generally preferred the first, as the best alternative to a republican order. Both suffered from an inherent defect, the rules of succession. That the ability to rule is not inherited is one of Machiavelli's most constantly repeated warnings. That is why he advises all founders of states to build so that after their death the rule of the many will maintain what they have set up. All the Roman emperors who reached the throne by inheritance, Titus excepted, were wicked, and "when the Empire became hereditary, it came to ruin". After vividly describing the worst horrors of the later Empire, Machiavelli concludes that these were "the infinite obligations Rome, Italy and the whole world owed Caesar". (1)

In reforming a monarchy or a republic, rulers should try to change as few customs as possible, and avoid all that might upset the loyalties that citizens have already formed. Reform must proceed slowly and cautiously. A prospective tyrant, however, is planning a revolution, and cannot afford to leave anything as it was. Monarchies and republics rest on the foundations of tradition, but a new prince must leave "nothing unchanged in that

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.ix, p.139 & ch.x, p.145.

province, so that there should be neither rank, nor grade, nor honor, nor wealth, that should not be recognized as coming from him". (1)

Obviously if a new ruler faces a simple people, without any previous political life, such an upheaval is tolerably easy, and does not necessarily involve extremities of cruelty. That was Moses', Romulus' and Numa's good fortune. Their people were in the best condition to absorb the vigour that a determined leader would transmit to them. Machiavelli's Italy, however, was riddled with sophisticated corruptions and powerful centres of resistance to any attempted regeneration. The work of the prince would doubtlessly have to be "cruel and destructive of all civilized life, and neither Christian nor even human, and should be avoided by every one. In fact the life of a private citizen would be preferable to that of a king at the expense of the ruin of so many human beings". (2)

At any rate, anything is better than a middle course, which brings only confusion and suffering to ruler and ruled alike. If a man does not want to undertake the building of a state, let him remain a mere subject, but once one is driven by the desire to construct, one must face the consequences. Cruelty for creative purposes is condoned in Romulus, and Machiavelli applauds it in modern heroes as well. There is no anecdote that he repeats more frequently, or with greater approval, than the one about Duke Valentino's tricks in bringing discipline to the dissolute citizens of the Romagna, without making them hate him. Finding the province in a state of utter lawlessness, he sent them one of his henchmen, a certain Remirro de' Orco, who proceeded to subdue the people

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xxvi, p.184.

(2) Ibid., " " " " " "

with the most extreme cruelty, and who, needless to say, was universally feared and hated. When he had done the necessary job, Caesare had him brutally murdered, and his body publicly displayed. Thus demonstrating his repudiation of Remirro's actions, he assumed the character of a liberator, and enjoyed the order set up by his envoy. "Force and fraud, and "the lion and the fox"!

The nearest thing to the antique method of building or reforming states is the scheme for reforming Florence that Machiavelli proposed to Leo X. He did not expect perfection, showing the pope how he could benefit himself, his family, his friends and his city, all at once, by moderate reforms, and then leave the city in a free and self-governing condition after his death. The basic conditions for such a change were present, as we saw, and he thought Sienna and Lucca might be similarly revived, by some "man of sagacity, well versed in the ancient forms of civil government". (1)

Machiavelli loved his country well enough to desire to see it well governed, but he also knew that it could never be powerful. It could never carry on great wars; and the vocation of princes and republics alike is to increase their territory, and their importance on the political scene. "I call that prince feeble who is incapable of carrying on war". (2) Numa was able to rule by the arts of peace only because Romulus' wars had secured Rome from attacks, and his successors, Tullus and Ancus, both fought frequently and vigorously. Good laws depend on good arms. " A prince should therefore have no other aim or thought, nor take up any other thing for his study, but war and its organization and discipline". (3)

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.lv, pp.255-256.

(2) Ibid., bk.I, ch.xix, pp.173-74.

(3) Prince, ch.xiv, p.53.

Machiavelli knew that only large states could be powerful, and that while it was, of course, highly laudable to rebuild Florence on the model of an ancient city-state, it was infinitely more urgent to make Italy into an efficient state, well organized internally, and ready to make war on her neighbours. He had an intimate acquaintance with the indignities of political impotence. There can scarcely be a position more humiliating than that of an ambassador of an unimportant state. At the court of Caterina Sforza, at the headquarters of Caesare Borgia and in Paris he was outwitted or ignored. In Paris he even lacked funds for clothing, suitable for a foreign envoy. Wherever he went he was treated shabbily, and for a man so conscious of his own ability, that must have been particularly hard to bear. His interests could not be confined to the little republic; it had to extend itself over a more imposing political unit. Who was going to make Italy powerful, and how could it be done? The principle of legitimacy had fallen into decay in Italy. The typical ruler was a self-made man. That is doubtlessly why Machiavelli is so much more concerned with the whole problem of creating, rather than with that of ruling established states. The sense of hierarchy had similarly disappeared, and with it the concept of an assigned place for each individual in the general order. The new despot depended for his support not on vassals, but on free-lancers like himself. For lustre he might add men of talent, exhuberantly self-reliant men of letters and artists to his court. Nothing might seem odder than the sight of Sigismondo Malatesta of Rimeni, a condottiere with an almost disinterested love of pure cruelty, surrounded by all sorts of learned men and artists. However, in the last analysis they differed only in the application of their energies, and not in spirit. The much celebrated individualism of the Renaissance expressed itself in a general distate for any kind of

conformity to rules. Eccentricity in dress and mannerisms was carried to extremes. The devotion to antiquity had served to substitute the worship of historical greatness and glory for the Christian ideal of humility. Hence, for instance, the innumerable half-fictitious biographies of great men that appeared. Machiavelli too wrote one of Castruccio Castracani, tyrant of Lucca, which is typical of the genre. Possibly the most flagrant example of the rejection of conventional manners and morals is that of one of the earliest condottieri, Werner von Urslingen, whose silver haubek bore the revealing inscription, "enemy of God, of pity and of mercy". (1) Machiavelli's picture of Caesare Borgia is the incarnation of all the outstanding characteristics of the "new prince", unrestrained egotism and cruelty, and immense ambition. The constructive element that Machiavelli adds to his hero's actions, however, was not typical. He never expected a man of his time to act on any motives except selfish ones, such as the desire for fame and glory, nor did he see any applicable political methods other than those practiced by the condottieri, but his main purpose was to demonstrate that with such aims and such means a resolute man, with a strong army, could still batter Italy into shape. We may feel some disgust at the enthusiastic approval with which, for instance, he describes Caesare's "well used cruelty" in the massacre at Signaglia. However, let us consider the victims. Oliverotto of Fermo had in one night killed his uncle and benefactor, as well as all his friends, while Vitellozzo Vitelli practiced his trade with such an élan, that he was considered an uncommonly vicious soldier, even in his own day. Not an agreeable pair, nor one

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(1) These general remarks are mostly based on information derived from J. Burckhardt, op.cit., Part II, pp.81-93 & part VI, pp.262-296, and J.A. Symonds, op.cit., vol.II, ch.iii, pp.51-98.

likely to arouse ones sympathies. They and their kind, however, constituted the "new prince's" milieu, they were the people whom he must count on, overcome, subdue and organize. They are what create the element of necessity, which he must consider in all his actions. In his ascent to power, cruelty becomes inevitable, and the question is whether it is exploited well or badly, resolutely or hesitantly.

> "Well committed may be called those cruelties (if it is permissible to use the word well of evil) which are perpetuated once for the need of securing one's self and which afterwards are not persisted in, but are exchanged for measures as useful to the subjects as possible". (1)

Necessity creates virtue, and each type of necessity brings forth a different form of virtue. Only the end of creative virtue remains the same, to drill out of the poor material of the average community a powerful body of citizens. Once that is done, we see the life of collective virtue that maintains a state, but it must be preceded by the organizing, the inspiring virtue of the leader. For this purpose power is essential. In Machiavelli's world the leader was left alone, with nothing but his natural capacities of mind and body to fight fate and fortune; for, as we shall see, he faces not only the material forces of necessity, but also the supernatural ones of the goddess Fortuna. The essence of his strength must lie in adaptability.

> "Men in their conduct and especially in their most prominent actions should well consider and conform to the times in which they live. And those who, from an evil choice or natural inclination, do not conform to the times in which they live, will in most instances live unhappily and their undertakings will come to a bad end; whilst on the contrary, success attends those who conform to the times". (2)

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(1) The Prince, ch.viii, p.34.

(2) Discourses, bk.III, ch.viii, p.439.

A man's nature is his great enemy in this respect, because it requires immense will-power to change one's natural disposition. That was the misfortune of Piero Soderini, who was "governed in all his actions by patience and humanity", but since the times demanded sterner qualities, he was ruined. Machiavelli, with a remarkeable show of tactlessness, informs the unfortunate exile of these failings (1). Though he owed to Soderini's support a great part of his success in his career, he commented cooly at the latter's death: "The night that Piero Soderini died his soul went down to the mouth of hell; but Pluto cried, "Foolish soul, no hell for thee! Go to the Limbo of the babes". (2) For Machiavelli all failure was despicable. Savonarola who was "careful to adapt himself to the times and (made) his lies plausible", (3) and Caesare Borgia who knew how to act resolutely were admirable, in so far as they proved successful.

The extent to which Machiavelli deprecated even those measures which he acclaimed amongst ancient rulers, when employed at the wrong moment, is best shown by his disdain for Cola di Rienzi and Stefano Porcari. Rienzi, he felt, lacked ability more than anything else, and though, theoretically one would expect Machiavelli to have approved his aim, at least, there are no words of approbation for him.

> "Niccolo, notwithstanding his great reputation, lost all energy in the beginning of his enterprise; and as if oppressed with the weight of so vast an undertaking, without being driven away, secretly fled". (4)

A man who does not risk anything, cannot expect to gain power. Even more illuminating are his remarks on the adventures of Stefano Porcari,

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(1) Discourses, bk.III, ch.ix, p.442, & Letter to Soderini, January, 1512-13, Familiar Letters, p.439.

(2) Quoted from E.Janni, Machiavelli, tr. by M. Enthoven (London 1930), ch.iii, p.60.

(3) Letter to Bachi, March 9, 1497-98, Familiar Letters, p.221

(4) History of Florence, bk.I, ch.vi, p.38.

a noble citizen of Rome, who in 1452 attempted to restore that city to its ancient grandeur. His chief inspirations, Machiavelli claims, came from Petrarch's prediction that Rome would some day be delivered by a noble knight.

> "Like all who are in pursuit of glory he resolved... to attempt something worthy of memory, and thought he could not do better than to deliver his country from the hands of the prelates, and restore the ancient form of government; hoping in the event of success, to be considered a new founder or second father of the city. The dissolute manners of the priesthood and the discontent of the Roman barons and people encouraged him to look for a happy termination of his enterprise." (1)

Through some treachery in his own camp his plot was discovered, and he and all his followers were put to death. Though Machiavelli hoped for nothing more than the fulfillment of such attempts as Porcari's, he has, as usual, no appreciation for mere good intentions.

> "Thus ended his enterprise; and, though many may applaud his intentions, he must stand chargeable with deficiency of understanding; for such undertakings, though possessing some slight appearance of glory, are almost always attended with ruin". (2)

Of all things Machiavelli condemns half-measures most, whether adopted by republics or by princes. The glory of the Romans was largely due to their determination in carrying out all their designs. If a man is going to be wicked, and all princes must be cruel, he must be entirely and splendidly so. It is the way to acquire both the "reputation" so essential to his success, and to triumph over his enemies and fortune. In the year 1505 Giovanpaolo Baglioni could easily have crushed Pope Julius II and his troops with whom he was at war, but at the last moment the idea of killing a pope was too much for the man. Machiavelli could not heap enough

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(1) History of Florence, bk.VI, ch.vi, p.292.

(2) Ibid., bk.VI, ch.vi, p.293.

scorn on such a hypocrite and coward, who threw away "eternal fame and rich booty". Everyone would have admired his courage if he had been the first to show "these prelates how little esteem those merit who live and govern as they do; (and such) an act of greatness would have overshadowed the infamy... that could possibly result from it". Certainly no one thought that Giovanpaolo was restrained by moral considerations. He was known to have committed, among other things, incest and patricide, and "no piety or respect could enter the heart of a man of such vile character". (1)

Yet Machiavelli, and all mankind would have forgiven this, had he committed "a crime of grandeur or magnanimity", instead of putting on a show of false religiosity at the crucial moment. When sufficiently spectacular even malignity can be impressive.

Unlike Moses, whom Machiavelli regards as a figure as purely political as Numa, passing over the divine guidance he was said to have received with a few ironical remarks, the modern leader cannot count on any religious feeling among the people, to help him in his organization of the state. Hence his task is particularly difficult, and his ability must be exceptionally great. Important as religion is, without military power it will not suffice; whereas strength without the aid of religious feelings can succeed. It is easy to persuade the people of anything, but difficult to "keep them in that persuasion". Therefore only "armed prophets", like Romulus or Moses, gained their ends, and Savonarola, who relied on faith alone, failed. Great men emerge only under the stress of the most difficult of times, but once they have overcome, by their own abilities, all the dangers

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xxvi, pp.185-86.

and obstacles they meet, they will be "held in veneration ... and remain powerful and secure, honoured and happy". (1) That is the bait Machiavelli holds out to any Italian leader willing to raise his country from its abject condition.

Obligation to the leader is the best substitute for a genuine public spirit; it is the germ of unity on which one can build an enduring state. At all times the prince must set a good example if he wants to rule over a decent population. While it is not possible to succeed in a world of evil by gentleness, a prince does not rule by force alone. The comparison of man to a centaur illustrates the fact that one must rule the rational part of men by laws, and his bestial side by force. A prince can count on men to be false, "unless necessity compels them to be true", but necessity implies law as much as arms. Machiavelli sums up his counsel to princes with the warning that one "should not deviate from the good if possible, but be able to do evil when constrained". No ruler should think himself fortunate in obtaining a victory that afflicts his subjects, but should emulate the ancients in sharing the spoils of war with them (2). Lastly, even cruelty must have its limits. The enormity of Agathocles' ruthlessness was too much for Machiavelli.

> "It cannot be called virtue to kill ones fellow citizens, betray one's friends, be without faith, without pity, and without religion, by these methods one may indeed gain power, but not glory... (Agathocles') barbarous cruelty and inhumanity, together with countless atrocities, do not permit his name among the most famous men. We cannot attribute to fortune or virtue that which he achieved without either". (3)

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(1) Prince, ch.vi, pp.21-22.

(2) Ibid., ch.xxiii, p.89 & ch.xviii, pp.64-65.

(3) Ibid., ch.viii, p.32.

In the Prince Machiavelli describes only the means by which a prince might gain power over Italy; little is said about his actions once that end is achieved. Certain objective advantages must be present to aid him, such as, for instance, the support of the Church that Caesare Borgia had, while his father was Pope. This condition was also available to the Medici lord to whom the book is dedicated, lending some plausability to the notion that this was meant as more than a mere attempt on Machiavelli's part to ingratiate himself with the new rulers. If the book does not deal to any extent with the ends of power, beyond strengthening the position of the prince individually and Italy collectively, Machiavelli in the Discourses, in the Reform of Florence and in the History of Florence had amply set forth what the ruler must try to do, once he is in the necessary position of power to organize a state. Military might, good laws and institutions and strong religious beliefs are the basis of the good republic. The prince serves only to construct and to breathe life into such a structure. The only criterion for judging his actions in this process is his ultimate success.

It has been suggested that, in expecting the prince to renounce the salvation of his own soul, in his attempt to benefit his country, Machiavelli had located the highest moral point of "raison d'état", thinking, and so set up a standard for a super-morality beyond and above that of ordinary life (1). Quite aside from the question of the intrinsic validity of such a morality, the assumption that the entities weighed by the prince are the supremacy of his state, and his personal hope for eternal blessedness, seems false. After seeing Machiavelli's comments

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(1) Friedrich Meinecke, op.cit., ch.i.

on the importance of "ghostly consolations", this is hardly a justifiable view. The prince is merely comparing an immense present good, that of private and public glory, to a highly uncertain future advantage. Morality, pedestrian or extravagant, does not enter into his calculations as a measure of his actions. Machiavelli does not demand any personal sacrifice of his prince. It is just because of this feature that it has been said that Machiavelli dealt only with "hypothetical imperatives", to use Kantian terminology, and that the Prince is a purely "technical book". (1) This seems to be a fairer appraisal of his intentions, but it can be accepted only as far as The Prince is concerned, and does not apply to his writings as a whole. Machiavelli considered all activities, religious, moral and intellectual, to be absolutely subservient to political life, and so, of necessity, he has set his own highest imperatives, and has given the reasons for them, as well as the means to their attainment. He first informs us that the creation of a powerful and lawful state is the most important thing in the world, that everything else hinges on this, and then explains how it can be achieved. After that there is obviously little room for a choice of values for him. The fact that this outlook gives him a chess-player's attitude to international relations and to human life in general, as well as a blithe disregard of most of the things that are important to the majority of men, cannot be denied. It is this that gives The Prince the air of a text-book in ruthlessness.

There is not very much of the Machiavellian prince about Rousseau's lawgiver. While this figure is of central importance in his political thought, he does not attach nearly as immense and exclusive a weight to the character and practices of the lawgiver as Machiavelli does to those

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(1) Ernst Cassirer, The Myth of the State, ch.xii, p.153.

of the prince. Above all, Rousseau has no use for brutality and violence, well or ill employed. Physical coercion in any form has no part in a lawgiver's work. That is one of the things that sets ancient lawgivers high above the modern process of legislation, which is nothing but an expression of the power of the strongest, a means by which the strong and rich arm themselves against the poor and the weak. Such law is accepted out of fear, and not with consent. Law and government should be the result of the will of the governed, and the chief problem is the guidance of that will.

The talent of reigning consists in making men love the law. That is why "in ancient times, when philosophers gave men laws", they created them anew to command them (1). A king reigns over people indifferently, all that matters is that he be obeyed, but a republic requires men, not mere subjects, and it is the lawmaker's task to create men, and give them wills. Machiavelli would agree that, ultimately, that should be the effect of the prince's dealings with his subjects, but the similarity in views does not extend very much further.

The respective attitudes Machiavelli and Rousseau take to Romulus are an apt illustration of some of the differences between them. We have seen that Machiavelli approves entirely of all that Romulus did, even his cruelty. Rousseau also finds it impossible to castigate the man who founded Rome, but he must find some excuse for "the ferocious Romulus". Romulus' creativity does not fulfill that purpose, as it does for Machiavelli. Rousseau explains that the man was not so much wicked, as ignorant of virtue. Since the notions of virtue and vice are collective ideas that exist only in society, Romulus can be said to have lived in a pre-moral

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(1) Discourse on Political Economy, pp.295-298.

condition, and not in an immoral one. In short, he neither knew, nor could have known that fratricide is wrong. (1) Unlike Machiavelli, Rousseau will never simply consent to coercion, or evil-doing in any form, whatever its result may be. Probably that is why he could not imagine Machiavelli's picture of Caesare Borgia to be anything but a satirical caricature.

What sort of man does Rousseau expect the lawgiver to be, and what is the nature of his functions? The lawmaker must be a man of almost super-human virtue, "beholding all the passions of men without experiencing any of them". (2)

> "He must feel himself capable of changing human nature, of transforming each individual, who is by himself a complete and solitary whole, into a part of a greater whole from which he, in a manner, receives his life and being". (3)

It is up to him to annihilate man's natural resources; which is not a modest task. No wonder that Rousseau finds that it is doubtful whether "from the beginning of the world human wisdom has made ten men capable of governing their peers". (4) The modern world has seen only one such person, Calvin, while the eighteenth century, of course, completely lacked such men of genius. "Je regarde les nations modernes. J'y vois force faiseurs de lois et pas un Législateur". (5)

The chief ancient legislators are Moses, Lycurgus and Numa. Each gave their people a constitution with a specific principle, religion in the case of the Jews, war for the Spartans and virtue for the Romans. All three gave their people unity, and defended them against any sort of

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(1) Préface de Narcisse, p.235, footnote.

(2) Social Contract, p.37.

(3) Ibid., p.38.

(4) Discourse on Political Economy, p.283.

(5) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.ii, p.427, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

foreign influence by endowing them with specific customs, ceremonies, and religious rites. "(Moise) gêna (son peuple) de mille façons, pour le tenir sans cesse en haleine et le rendre toujours étranger parmi les autres hommes". (1) Lycurgus did the same for the Spartans, while Numa, not Romulus, must be considered the true founder of Rome. Here Machiavelli and Rousseau are quite at one, and Rousseau even goes on to quote Machiavelli's Discourses as an authoritative proof of the need for religion in building civil states (2). Thus all three of the great lawgivers used religion and national customs to tie their people together, and to separate them from all others. The unity of religious and political life is, of course, what brings Calvin into this illustrious company, although Rousseau was, in all likelihood, influenced by patriotic pride as well. At any rate, he sees him not only as a theologian, but also as a lawgiver in the political sphere.

> "Whatever revolution time may bring in our religion, so long as the spirit of patriotism and liberty still lives among us, the memory of this great man will forever be blessed". (3)

In the early periods of nations religion is used as an instrument to further their political existence, and, as we saw, all lawgivers must use it, and "credit the gods with their own wisdom....so that (men) might obey freely".

> "But it is not every man who can make the gods speak, or get himself believed when he proclaims himself their interpreter. The great soul of the legislator is the only miracle that can prove his mission". (4)

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(1) Gouvernement de Pologne, ch.ii, p.227, Pol.Mr., vol.V.

(2) Social Contract, p.41n,

(3) Ibid., p.39n.

(4) Ibid., p.41.

The mass of mankind is too simple to understand, or even to follow, his designs without his employing some ruse to induce their compliance. Physical compulsion is excluded, and the people are too dull to accept rational arguments, but the lawgiver must still, somehow,"force men to be free" by moulding their minds. In explaining the methods of the leader Rousseau produces one of the best definitions of propaganda imaginable: he describes them as "an authority capable of constraining without violence, and persuading without convincing". (1) Nor can one consider this phrase an isolated instance, and subject to misinterpretation. Rousseau frequently mentions the necessity of governmental guidance of public opinion. "Car où le gouvernement peut-il donc avoir une prise sur les moeurs - c'est par l'opinion publique". (2) The ancients knew this secret of good government, and employed it successfully.

> "Ce grand ressort de l'opinion publique,
> (fut) si habilement mis en oeuvre par les
> anciens Législateurs et (est) absolument
> ignoré des gouvernements modernes". (3)

It is, of course, obvious that Rousseau could have no suspicion of the proportions that propaganda could assume, but he knew what it was, and that it was a powerful and useful force in the hand of leaders. In the last analysis, it is as much a form of compulsion as are bodily coercion and fear. The fact that Rousseau was able to visualize its use only on a modest scale does not render it any less deceitful or arbitrary. Its existence is, moreover, implicit in all that Rousseau suggests in the organization of public opinion. How can one "force men to be free"? It

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(1) Social Contract, p.40

(2) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.89.

(3) Fragments, "Les Etats de l'Europe", p.522, Pol.Wr., Vol.I.

is a self-contradictory phrase. According to Rousseau men are only free when their will is morally perfect, but the will can be considered moral only when it is freely determined. Freedom of the will and morality are inseparable. Mere compliance with the general will has no moral content, it is mere submission; for if men's consent is forced and their wills do not participate actively in their behaviour, they cannot be said to act morally. Their actions may be moral in appearance, but lacking will they are neither free nor morally valid. If, however, men can exercise their will without full self-consciousness, without real comprehension of their own actions or their purpose, but as a response to patriotically conditioned reflexes, the riddle of "forcing men to be free" is solved. The moral will is free, but it is not the expression of reason. Men readily accept law, and follow their own will without constraint, but they are not able to understand entirely what they will and do, or why they do it. Rousseau admits that the lawgiver does not appeal to reason, neither do the laws and institutions which he leaves behind him, to take his place in the community. Hence the importance of national isolation, patriotic education, ceremony, symbols, rites, and customs, the insistence on the total mobilization of public opinion, on the abolition of all privacy and on the constant preoccupation of all citizens with public affairs. Hence the notion of the dangers of public inertia and indifference and, above all, the need for the original source and rallying point of national life, the legislator. Seen from this vantage point, Rousseau's republic seems to be less one of "men", than of uniformly patriotic sheep.

The legislator unlike Machiavelli's Prince has no definite position in the state; he is neither a sovereign, nor a magistrate. Ordinary princes are not real lawgivers, and a good ruler is even harder to find than a good legislator. They should of course be defenders of the laws, but they rarely

are. Hereditary power is for Rousseau as absurd an institution as it is for Machiavelli. Occasionally there may be a good monarch, he admits, but he is sure to be succeeded by a thousand imbeciles. The very education of princes renders them unfit for their position. While he advises the Poles to retain their kings for the sake of tradition, he warns them to give their kings no powers except ceremonial ones, to make the position elective, and to exclude the sons of kings from the candidacy for the throne. As for the "legal despots" dear to eighteenth century philosophers, Rousseau thought the very title a self-contradiction. The legislator is far above all that - a quasi-divine prophet lacking all the outward signs of authority. His is a superior, extra-constitutional function exercised by virtue of genius, not of position. "(He must) disguise his power in order to render it less odious and to conduct the state so peacefully as to make it seem to have no need of conductors". (1) He is the engineer who invents the whole mechanism of a state. The men who follow him are mere technicians, who keep it in good or bad condition. His chief duty is to enlighten the judgement that guides the general will. The will of individuals must be turned away from selfish ends, and the public shown the best road to the general good, which it desires, but does not always perceive. In this process the Legislator must pay due attention to the climate, the soil and such customs as the simple community has already developed. While he does not actually impose law, he so organizes the public will that it freely accepts the legislation he wishes them to adopt. Such is the general will. Even in the later life of republics only magistrates should be allowed to propose laws, not ordinary citizens (2).

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(1) Discourses on Political Economy, p.296 & Social Contract, p.37

(2) Social Contract, p.38.

A community is ready for good laws only in its earliest youth, before it has had any experience or real political life. It should be united by customs and habits, but it should be held together by nothing but these, and the mutual dependence of its members. Nations are docile only in their youth, in their old age they become "incorrigible".

> "Si le gouvernement peut beaucoup sur les moeurs c'est seulement par son institution primitive;.... quand une fois il les a déterminées non seulement il n'a plus le pouvoir de les changer, à moins qu'il ne change, il a même bien de peine à les maintenir contre les accidents inévitables qui les attaquent". (1)

A legislator can build most effectively only in a state of moral vacuity. One cannot return vigour to a people once it has lost it. That is why Brutus failed in his struggle against Ceasar, and Rienzi's efforts came to naught (2). This did not prevent Rousseau from playing legislator for Poland, which was an old state. Moreover, he admitted that Lycurgus found Sparta in anything but a natural state, saving it from dissolution and anarchy. We saw that he recognized in revolutions a possibility for rebirth, but such a regeneration borders on the miraculous. On the whole, reform holds little interest for Rousseau. Total revolution is recognized as a possibility, but a fearful one. The best moment for building a state is the one at which a people is just emerging from complete primitiveness.

Lycurgus must be considered the most brilliant of legislators because he entirely recreated an extremely corrupt society (3). For not every innovator can be considered a lawgiver. Peter of Russia, who failed to recognize the specific characteristics and inclinations of his own people,

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(1) Lettre à D'Alembert, p. 98.

(2) Première Version du Contrat Social, liv.VII, ch.iii, p.489. Pol.Fr., vol.I.

(3) Fragments, "Rome et Sparte", p.318 & "Droit d'Esclavage", p. 312, Pol.Fr., Vol.I.

and tried to force them to assume foreign habits, was not a creator, but a mere imitator, and not a very successful one (1). A lawgiver must never disregard environment and the moral condition of the people. The former are the constant factors determining his choice of laws, the latter are the variables he can change.

Personal ambition plays no part in a lawgiver's actions; unlike Machiavelli's prince he is not interested in power, and his aloofness from any official public post ensures his continued disinterestedness. This is another cardinal point of diversity; for Machiavelli was far too disenchanted an observer of the rulers of his own day to expect selfishness to have no part in their work, and as a result he discusses the techniques of leadership in terms of individual interests. Only in ancient days, he believes, could such self-abnegation have existed. Rousseau, on the other hand, is far more impressed with the idols that he has raised. He not only believes in the possibility of super-human understanding and benevolence, but he holds such qualities to be absolutely indispensable to leadership at all times, past or present. As a result, we have no clear picture of the personality of the lawgiver, or of the way in which the community responds to him. The man must consider all sorts of external conditions in making suitable laws for a particular people, but he himself is a changeless figure, quite unaffected by his surroundings. He must be nothing less than Moses or Lycurgus, then and now. The "great soul" of the leader is a miracle, and thus not subject to rational analysis.

Machiavelli, in the presence of Caesare Borgia, probably felt the force of personal magnetism that some leaders bring to their task. His doctrine of the virtue of leaders, the emphasis on "reputation" and on grandiose extravagance in crime and courage, are a recognition of the

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(1) Social Contract, p.43.

importance of this faculty. He goes on to describe carefully how it can be cultivated and projected into the community, to create "partisans" for the leader. However, he is never himself impressed with the bluff and the magnificent lies that he urges his prince to use. As far as Machiavelli is concerned, Savonarola never talked to God, and neither did Moses, but both were masters in the art of mass organization. Numa was no more miraculous than was Caesare Borgia, but both were skilled technicians, whose every move was calculated to achieve some recognized political end. Rousseau is never as crudely straightforward as that. After all, some of the methods used by the lawgivers whom he admired, and considered worthy of emulation, were the same as those suggested by Machiavelli, but the men themselves he surrounds with an aura of sanctity. He does not believe in their claims of divine inspiration, but short of that, he has a good deal of the hero-worshipping instinct. He does not care to explain the strategy of leadership in terms of the personal motives of the leaders, and their effects on their followers; he prefers to perpetuate myths. The lawgiver is placed on a pedestal above and beyond all ordinary political life, not because he is more effective in that position, but because he belongs there by virtue of his genius, a genius that, unlike the "virtù" of the prince, cannot be examined or explained.

In brief, Machiavelli says that charismatic leadership is the most successful form of one-man rule. Then he proceeds to tell the prince how to acquire such a position of leadership. To him it is always a matter of reputation, of what the prince seems, not of what he really is. Rousseau claims that societies can grow only with the help of charismatic leaders, and then he goes on to look for a man endowed with the "miracle of genius", which is an intrinsic part of the leader's being, not merely the sum of feelings that he arouses in the minds of the led.

Chapter VI

Religion and the State

> "Christianity preaches only servitude and dependence. Its spirit is so favourable to tyranny that it always profits by such a regime. True Christians are made to be slaves... (for) the essential thing is to get to heaven, and resignation is only an additional means of doing so". - Rousseau (1)
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> "These principles (of Christianity) seem to have made men feeble and caused them to become an easy prey to evil-minded men, who can control them more securely, seeing that the great body of men, for the sake of gaining Paraside, are more disposed to endure injuries than avenge them". - Machiavelli (2)

Rousseau and Machiavelli, as we have seen, agreed that no lawgiver can hope to succeed without the aid of religion. The next question to consider is what sort of religion should be employed? The above quotations make it evident that neither one thought Christianity at all suitable for the building of the spirit that maintains republics. Besides this distrust of Christianity, both harbour an especially intense dislike for the Roman Catholic Church. In Machiavelli's case this hatred is based on political considerations, and a repugnance for the degeneracy of the Church of his day, but theology as such is a matter of indifference to him. Rousseau is opposed to Catholicism on doctrinal, as well as moral and political grounds. Basically he is animated by the traditional distrust of Protestants for "Papists". The figure of the proverbially dissolute friar of the Renaissance has disappeared from his horizon, to be replaced by the sinister forces of an international and conspirational body of power-thirsty and superstitious priests. One aim animates both writers: the unification of the state under a single head. Both recognize religion as a matter of

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(1) Social Contract, p.137

(2) Discourses, bk.II, ch.ii, p.285.

political law, but in spite of their severe criticism of Christianity, neither one suggests that it would be possible to substitute a pure paganism. Ultimately both knew perfectly well that Christianity could not be abolished. While it would have to be reformed and modified, it was too firmly rooted in the civilization of Europe to be completely removed. Machiavelli never found a solution to this difficult problem. Rousseau settled for that very dubious mixture of religious tolerance and moral compulsion, known as "civil religion". Both agree that early Christianity was better in its forms and practices than that of later days.

Machiavelli admits that European states might not have fallen so low had men remained true to the pure form of Christianity of earlier days, but things being what they are, he trusts in the inspiring valour of the Prince to substitute itself for the apparently hopeless religious decline. Too much has already been said about the condition of the Catholic Church during the Renaissance to require any further comment. Suffice it to say, that all that seemed to be lacking was a way of making the Papacy hereditary. Machiavelli's contempt for the "Court of Rome" and the friars becomes perfectly comprehensible in view of all this. He was far from being alone in Italy; his attitude was shared both by religiously indifferent persons, such as Guicciardini, and by the most devout, such as Savonarola.

If anyone should be led to doubt that almost anything was possible in the religious affairs of that time, the following incident should dispel any such belief. Machiavelli, who was an outspoken blasphemer, was ceremoniously invited by the Wool Guild of Florence to select a preacher for the Lent season, in the year 1521. The joke was by no means lost on Machiavelli. He does not propose to choose a second St.Francis, but a friar "crazier than Ponzo, more crafty than Fra Girolamo, more of a hypocrite than Fra Alberto, for it would seem to me a fine thing, and worthy of the

goodness of these days, that all we have experienced from many friars we should experience in one". (1) Guicciardini answered him in the same spirit, warning him not to disgrace himself by a pious act.

> "Your honour would be sullied were you, at your age, to give yourself over to piety, for having always professed contrary opinions it would be supposed that you had become senile rather than good".

Machiavelli writes back, to tell his friend that "the friars are exceedingly deficient in edifying and exemplary behaviour", and his friend's reply urges him to make some trouble for them, which could "not be a great difficulty, taking their ill-feeling and malignity into account". (2) A fitting end to this correspondence was made by Guicciardini some years after Machiavelli's death, when in his comments on the latter's Discourses he remarked that, if he had not been in the employ of the papacy, he would "have loved Martin Luther more than (himself), for (he) would hope that this sect might ruin, or at least clip the wings of this wicked tyranny of priests." (3)

In his play, Mandragola, which was given a command performance in Rome, Machiavelli depicts a friar who is the epitome of all that seems despicable. Fra Timoteo put his religion to use in his activities as a procurer, he accepts bribes for this purpose, and spends the rest of his time shining his image of the Madonna, worrying about the offerings to be made to it (4).

If Machiavelli scorned the friars, his dislike of the papacy was even more intense. His sketches of the characters of the various popes are even

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(1) Letter to Guicciardini, May 17, 1521, Familiar Letters, p.259. The friars referred to are Savonarola and two characters from Boccacio's Decameron.

(2) Quoted from E. Jenni, op.cit., ch.iv, pp.96-99.

(3) Ibid., ch.ix, pp.205-206.

(4) Mandragola, tr. by Stark Young (New York, 1927).

more derogatory in their investive than those of the friars. Of Sixtus IV, who was blessed with two sons, he comments: "He was the first who began to show how far a pope might go, and how much that, which was previously regarded as sinful, lost its iniquity when committed by a pontiff". (1) Alexander VI "of all pontiffs who have reigned best showed how a Pope might previal both by money and by force". (2) "He did nothing else but deceive men: he thought of nothing else". (3)

> "Among the blessed souls is the spirit of Alexander; in whose holy footsteps follow his three familiar and beloved handmaidens, Luxury, Simony and Cruelty". (4)

His greatest venom, however, Machiavelli reserved for Julius II, whose political strategy he thought to have ruined Italy.The man himself he describes as, "very passionate and full of the devil", as well as, "insolent, violent, mad and stingy". (5) We remember that Machiavelli would have been ready to forgive Giovapaolo Baglioni all his sins, had he only killed Julius II, and shown the priests the contempt in which they were held. Only Leo X escapes from a tongue-lashing, but he was still alive, besides being Giovanni de' Medici, and head of his house. Machiavelli was not so imprudent as to offend a potential benefactor, and the most disastrous of enemies.

Quite aside from his revolt at the personal habits and morals of the clergy and the Popes, he deplored their effect on Italian life and power.

> "The evil example of the court of Rome has destroyed all piety and religion in Italy which brings in its train infinite improprieties and disorders, for as

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(1) History of Florence, bk.VII, ch.iv, p.334.

(2) Prince, ch.xi, p.43.

(3) Ibid., ch.xviii, p.65.

(4) Decennale, quoted from E. Janni, op.cit., ch.v, p.114.

(5) Letter to Vettori, April 29, 1513, Familiar Letters, pp.230-235.

> we may presuppose all good where religion prevails, so where it is wanting we have the right to suppose the very opposite". (1)

The nearer people are to the Church of Rome, he remarks, the less religious they are. However, not only has the lack of religion destroyed morality in Italy, the political activities of the Church have weakened the country almost beyond repair.

> "A country can never be united and happy except when it obeys wholly one government, whether a republic or a monarchy, and the sole cause why Italy.....is not (so) governed is the Church". (2)

The Popes were too weak to unite Italy under their rule, and powerful enough to prevent a secular prince from doing so at their expense.

> "We Italians owe to the Church of Rome and to their priests our having become irreligious and bad, but we owe her a still greater debt, and one that will be the cause of our ruin, namely that the Church has kept and still keeps our country divided". (3)

That alone is the cause of Italy's having failed to achieve a power and unity equal to that of the French and Spanish monarchies, and this will eventually lead to her complete defeat at the hands of the Northern barbarians.

> "I am willing now to begin to weep with you our ruin and slavery, for though they may not come today or tomorrow they will come in our day. And for this ruin Italy will have to thank Pope Julius". (4)

As for the rule prevailing in ecclesiastical principalities, Machiavelli speaks of them with the most acrid irony. "(They are) acquired by ability

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xii, p.151.

(2) Ibid., bk.I, ch.xii, p.152.

(3) Ibid., bk.I, ch.xii, p.151.

(4) Letter to Vettori, August 26, 1513, Familiar Letters, p.270.

or fortune and maintained without either, ... sustained by ancient religious customs which are powerful and of such quality that they keep their princes in power in whatever manner they proceed and live", which means without governing or defending their people in any way (1).

Most of this, however, is directed against the prevailing activities of the Church, not against Christianity as a religion. The "muddy road of St.Francis" is not to be identified with the loose living of the friars.(2) At times there is even a vague implication that Christianity, as such, is not necessarily bad.

> "If the Christian religion had from the beginning been maintained according to the principles of its founders, the Christian states and republics would have been much more united and happy than they are". (3)

On the whole, he felt that the politically dangerous implications of Christianity are not only due to some of its basic doctrines, but also to the fact that these have been interpreted according to "the promptings of indolence, rather than of virtue". (4) However, Machiavelli does not expect a Christian revival, leading to both a purification of religious feeling and an increase in civic virtue, nor would such a possibility have met with his approval. Machiavelli prefers a decent clergy to a corrupt one, but a pagan, national religion pleases him infinitely more. His attitude to Savonarola shows clearly that he did not think that Christianity had much of a future. What, after all, had Savonarola accomplished? "He had demonstrated exhaustively the sterility of Christianity, either as a system of statecraft, or as a way of practical life". (5)

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(1) Prince, ch.xi, p.41.

(2) Letter, to Guicciardini, May 17, 1521, Familiar Letters, p.259.

(3) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xii, p.151.

(4) Ibid., bk.II, ch.ii, p.286.

(5) Ralph Roeder, The Man of the Renaissance, (New York,1933), p.104.

His success was only momentary; his moral reforms were based wholly on a fleeting wave of religious enthusiasm, and when they were divorced from that source, they withered. The personality of the man was impressive enough, Machiavelli recognizes that, and he never ridicules him, nor does he deny the fascination Savonarola exercised over his audiences. Pico della Mirandola was among his partisans, and the sons of some of the noblest houses of Italy joined his reformed monastery. In some respects his new order was not unlike Calvin's rule of Geneva. The strict regimentation of private and public morals, spying and accusations, and a vigorous simplicity of all life recall the Puritan rule of the North. Machiavelli admired those of his measures that were severe, but his weakness and his failures were unforgivable, they only showed the poor chances of a Christian revival.

First of all, the religious ills that Savonarola predicted would lead to Italy's defeat by Charles VIII were not the cause of the disaster, which was caused by political disunion (1). Secondly, he suffered from the general disease of Christians, not strong enough to unite, too strong to be removed from the field of dissension. The Florentines owed him no thanks. "Divided and ruled by the creed of Savonarola who stirred and was divinely moved to lead and bewilder us with a word". (2) On the whole it was best for all concerned that he be "devoured by a greater fire". "However, one must speak with all respect of so great a man whose writings exhibit so much learning, prudence and courage". Moreover, "The purity of his life.... and the subjects he selected for his discourses sufficed to make people believe in him", but he also exhibited "an ambitious and partial spirit",

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(1) Prince, ch.xii, p.45.

(2) Quoted by R. Roeder, op.cit., p.208.

and in the final test, when the multitude began to falter in its belief, he failed to resort to arms, and brought about his own downfall (1).

In short, such attemps as Savonarola's were sure to be unsuccessful, nor were they desirable in themselves. Religions, like states, must return occasionally to their first principles, to the source of their original strength. The Franciscans and Dominicans brought Christianity back to its "pristine principles and purity".

> "By means of confessions and preachings (they) obtained so much influence with the people that they were able to make them understand that it was wicked even to speak ill of wicked rulers, and that it was proper to render them obediency,..... and thus wicked rulers do as much evil as they please". (2)

Such are the political results of pure Christianity. It is a sad dilemma for European states, to find that the only religion that they can observe is so dangerous to the republican spirit, but since nothing better is available, they must maintain it. Nothing is worse than a state without any religion at all. In Switzerland and in the German principalities, Machiavelli thought, religion and patriotism had survived together, and even contributed to each other's growth.

> "Princes and republics who wish to maintain themselves free from corruption must above all things preserve the purity of religious observances, and treat them with proper reverence; for there is no greater indication of the ruin of a country than to see religion contemned." (3)

A religious people is always well-conducted and united, hence the importance ancient lawgivers attached to miracles. Rome was particularly fortunate in the power that religion had over the people's minds. "It

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xi, pp.149. Ibid., bk.I, ch.xiv, pp.229-230 & Prince, ch.vi, p.22.

(2) Discourses, bk.III, ch.i, p.401.

(3) Ibid., bk.I, ch.xii, p.149.

served in command of the armies, in uniting the people and in covering the wicked with shame". (1) The hoaxes that military leaders perpetrated on their soldiers, by exciting their superstitions, and making false auguries, Machiavelli applauds, since they gave the warriors great self-confidence. Altogether he feels that paganism is much more adapted to sustaining the spirit of good government than is Christianity.

> "In ancient times people were more devoted to liberty than in the present ... (because of) the difference of (their) education, founded upon the difference of their religion and ours. For our religion teaches us ... to attach less value to the honors and possessions of this world; whilst the Pagans, esteeming those things as the highest good, were more energetic and ferocious in their actions ... Besides this, the Pagan religion deified only men who had achieved great glory, such as commanders of armies and chiefs of republics, whilst ours glorifies more humble and contemplative men". (2)

His great hope lies in a complete reinterpretation of Christianity, not according to the principles of St.Francis, but according to the civic spirit of ancient days. In short, he wants to endow Christianity with all the political virtues of paganism, without changing its external practices, rites and customs. It amounts to a spiritual revolution, hidden beneath traditional appearances.

> "For if we were to reflect that our religion permits us to exalt and defend our country, we should see that according to it we ought also to love and honor our country, and prepare ourselves so as to be capable of defending her". (3)

The new prince will have to unite the people under his leadership without the aid of religion, but once that is accomplished he must give

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.xi, p.147.

(2) Ibid., bk.II, ch.ii, p.285.

(3) Ibid., bk.II, ch.ii, p.286.

them a religion, if his state is to endure. The sort of religion Machiavelli hopes for is clearly a retention of the old exterior customs, invigorated by a new nationalistic and belligerently civic spirit. The truth of any religion simply does not concern him. While the phrase, "Our religion teaches us the truth and the true way of life", is not necessarily ironic, it is not an expression of real religious feeling (1). Machiavelli was entirely absorbed in "effectual truths", in the small world of the state, and ultimate truths cease to be of importance, as political utility becomes the only criterion of judgement. Moreover, we saw that he was not personally religious, and on the contrary, enjoyed a reputation for outspoken impiety.

While traditional beliefs seem to have left Machiavelli cold, superstition found him far more receptive. In this respect he again shared the spirit of his time. Ever since the thirteenth century superstition had flourished greatly in Italy. Frederick II already refused to travel without his astrologer. All the popes employed them; Leo X considered their prevalence under him a sign of his own greatness, while Paul III never held a Consistory until his stargazer had fixed the hour. Necromancy, pyromancy and chiromancy were widely practiced, while popular belief was captured by charms, love-potions and the fear of the evil eye. More intellectual persons devoted themselves to alchemy, and to the study of the formulae of Pythagoras and the secrets of the Cabala, so to discover the secret ways of God and nature (2). By the latter half of the sixteenth century superstition declined considerably in Italy, but many of these practices, particularly witch burning, took a new lease on life as it moved north in the wake of the Reformation.

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(1) Discourses, bk.II, ch.ii, p.285.

(2) Burckhardt, op.cit., part IV, pp.313-341.

On the whole, it can be said that Machiavelli and the practitioners of the black arts were part of the same intellectual atmosphere. Both represented a break with traditional religion, both were basically interested in the same thing - power, the conquest of the world about them, and the ruling of it by the will of man. Marlowe's Doctor Faustus explains it beautifully:

> "A sound magician is a mighty God".
>
> "O what a world of profit and delight,
> Of power, of honour, of omnipotence,
> Is promised to the studious Artizan". (1)

Machiavelli admits to the power of God, and above all of Fortuna, in the life of men, but like the powers of nature, they must be explained, and ultimately, handled in such a way as to serve human designs. The most remarkable thing about the will of Heaven and of Fortuna is its malignancy, and the directness and simplicity with which it interferes with the plans of man. When God wishes to warn men of their wickedness, he sends down a hurricane. The Florentines in 1456 were bad, but not so wicked that God wanted to destroy them; so he merely devastated the countryside of Tuscany, to remind them of His existence (2).

Moreover, He wills it, often for no good reason, that men "should not provide against certain accidents". Thus the Fabii took it into their heads to insult the Gauls, and bring about a war at a time when Rome was entirely unprepared for such an adventure (3). What more is needed to prove the"power of Heaven in human affairs"?

It is quite certain that the occurrence of important events is preceded by signs of warning. Thus Savonarola predicted the invasion of Italy

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(1) Hiram Haydn, op.cit., ch.IV, pp.176-190.

(2) History of Florence, bk.VI, ch.7, p.301.

(3) Discourses, bk.II, ch.xxix, pp.330-331.

by Charles VIII, the dome of Florence was struck by lightning before the death of Lorenzo de' Medici, and the palace was similarly destroyed before Soderini was exiled. Machiavelli has an explanation ready for all this: "The air is peopled with spirits, who by their superior intelligence foresee future events, and out of pity for mankind warn them by such signs". (1)

The power of God, however, is not so great as to exclude all human self-determination. "God will not do everything in order not to deprive us of our freewill and the portion of the glory that falls to our lot". (2)

> "The belief that by remaining idle upon thy knees thou canst leave all to God has brought ruin to many kingdoms and states ... He is mad who would deny the people religious ceremonies, for these are the seed of union and good order, ... but let no man believe that if his house fall down God will straightway save him, for he will be destroyed with it". (3)

On the whole, God does not have the importance in Machiavelli's world that Fortuna has. At times she appears as only an agent of God, at others as the sum of natural hardships confronting man, but most frequently she is talked of as an independent deity. No single unchristian belief was more widely held in the Renaissance than that of Fortuna. For some she was an equivalent of the Stoic fatum, but most frequently she was little more than a pagan goddess. Innumerable books were written about her powers, while studies in the iconography of the period further reveal the goddess, and the Wheel of Fortune, to have had an immense hold on the popular imagination. Many people held her to be omnipotent, while others thought that she could be overcome by human powers. Machiavelli inclines to the second, and more popular belief, asserting that foresight and audacity

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(1) Discourses, bk.I, ch.lvi, pp.257-258.

(2) Prince, ch.xxvi, p.96.

(3) The Golden Ass, quoted from E. Janni, op.cit., ch.ix, p.200.

can save man from her decrees. Leonardo da Vinci wrote:

"Seize Fate, if you would hold her enthralled,
By the forelock, behind she is bald".

And Machiavelli merely repeats this apparently common sentiment.

"Chance is my name, whom few men know,
Hair have I none upon my nape,
Who toils after me toils too slow,
Whom I overtake I escape".....(1)

At times Fortuna was identified with retributive justice, and so associated with Providence. On the whole, she was an odd mixture of the unfathomable ways of God, and a sum of various superstitious beliefs. In a more light-hearted mood, however, Machiavelli could dispose of her by calling her a mischievous woman, to whom one must show a determined hand to subdue her. At all times hers are powers that must be taken into account by states and individuals. The wheel of history is at her command.

"Laziness and Necessity turn (the wheel) about,
The second puts the world in order and the first disorders it". (2)

This would indicate that Fortune's wheel is made up of natural, human qualities which we must consider in making our plans, but Machiavelli goes on to refer to her as the "cruel goddess, this "inconstant goddess" and "restless divinity", her favorite sport being to lift persons and states to immoderate heights, and then to let them drop down with a particularly violent thud. "So Fortune in her furious onrush many times transfers the things of the world now here now there". (3) Her actions seem to follow no set pattern; she is inordinately fond of surprises. "She arranges the Times as suits her; she raises us up, she puts us down, without pity, without law or reason". (4)

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(1) Ralph Roeder, op.cit., p.231.

(2) Capitolo on Fortune, tr. by A.H. Gilbert (Chicago, 1941). p.212.

(3) Ibid., p.214.

(4) Ibid., p.211.

The above descriptions could easily be set aside as mere facetiousness and poetic fancy, were it not for the fact that Machiavelli repeats them all in his more serious writings. Everywhere we find comments of Fortune's "dark and devious ways", the fact that men only "second (her), but cannot oppose her". (1) "Good is achieved with difficulty, unless we are so aided by Fortune that she overcomes by her power the natural and ordinary difficulties". (2)

Thus she is, after all, more than a collection of natural obstacles, but an independent supernatural force. One of the abilities of Fortuna is that of clouding men's minds so as to make them carry out her designs. Thus she led the condottiere, Niccolo Piccinino, to drive himself to his own downfall, by making him rush into a quarrel with the Duke of Milan.

> "Fortune, never destitute of means to assist her favourites or to injure others, caused the hope of victory to operate powerfully upon Niccolo Piccinino and made him assume such a tone of unbounded insolence that he lost all respect for himself". (3)

Powerful as Fortuna is, she can, nevertheless, be conquered by human valour. Our greatest chances in life are offered by her grace. She selects the moment for great deeds, and finds the man who is capable of recognizing his opportunity, and making the most of it, but if men rely on her alone they are fools. "Where men have but little wisdom and valor Fortune more signally displays her power". (4)

Fortune is much like a river against which men can build dykes and banks to make her run into canals, or at least prevent her from developing

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(1) Discourse, bk.II, ch.xxix, p.380.

(2) Ibid., bk.III, ch.xxxvii, p.318.

(3) History of Florence, bk.VI, ch.i, p.258.

(4) Discourses, bk.II, ch.xxx,p.388.

into a disastrous deluge (1). Machiavelli is never quite certain whether the art of ruling Fortune consists in clear defiance or in pliability, and a perpetual conformity to her will and to "the times". Probably it is a mixture of both techniques, presuming the talents of strength and quickness, force and intelligence, the "lion and the fox".

"According as you are in harmony with Fortune the temperaments that make you act are the cause of your good and your ill". (2) Men must not be fixed in their ways, nor must they trust Fortune. Her variability keeps the world in a state of constant fluctuation, but this need go on only, "until some ruler shall arise who is so great an admirer of antiquity as to be able to govern.... states so that Fortune may not have occasion to display her influence and power". (3)

It all depends, then, on the energy of the great leader, who must combat the morals of corrupt men, the necessities imposed upon him by nature and other states, and lastly, the tricky goddess Fortuna. His virtue meets its severest test when he must triumph over the powers of Fate. That accomplished, he becomes a veritable God on earth. In a sense Machiavelli's world is a labyrinth, a maze of difficulties against which human ingenuity must assert itself. In the struggle against this conspiracy of obstacles, man's power develops to such heights that he can impose his own laws on the world about him, and even maintain them. Not for long, however; this tremendous exertion is spent on an achievement that cannot last forever.

> "This order of things is permitted and willed by the Power that govern us, that nothing beneath the sun is or will ever be stable and thus it is and ever was and ever shall be, that evil follows good and good evil and that the one is ever the cause of the other". (4)

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(1) Prince, ch.xxv, p.91.

(2) Capitolo on Fortune, p.213.

(3) Discourses, bk.II, ch.xxx, p.388.

(4) The Golden Ass, quoted from E. Janni, op.cit., ch.ix, p.213.

It is an infinitely long way from the fantastic antics of Fortuna to the simple Protestantism of Rousseau, and one would suppose that persons with such completely different personal beliefs, could not even have a common basis for a discussion of religious matters, much less find any sort of agreement on the controversial question of the relation of religion to the state. Nevertheless, in spite of this dissimilarity of religious temperament, Machiavelli and Rousseau are in substantial agreement as to the type of religion required for the well governed state. From their political compatibility stems a common attitude of criticism towards Christianity in general, and towards the practices of Roman Catholicism in particular. It is only because the origin of their religious views is as disparate as is possible, that their ultimate concurrence seems so startling.

Rousseau's own religious beliefs are perhaps best expressed in the Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar. It consists, roughly, of a respectful philosophical doubt, natural religion, which is a simple deism, and a Christianity that is not dogmatic, but purely moral in application, and sentimental in its literary expression. It is almost devoid of dogma or formality, and concentrates on practical action. Thus Julie, the heroine of the Nouvelle Heloise, on her wedding day renounces the external and empty religion of her childhood, and adopts one that has an inner, more personal meaning, finding its realization in a moral everyday existence. Rousseau trusts in the omnipotence and benevolence of God, to whose justice he attributes the immortality of the soul, and his own and all mankind's salvation. Like the Savoyard Vicar he condemns "the rage of system and the futility of metaphysics". In nature he perceives a harmony that strengthens his belief in the existence of God, but beyond that he refuses to go, rejecting any postulate that is contrary to his reason, such as,

for instance, the occurrence of miracles. As for evil, its prevalence is due to man's misguided will, not to the designs of Providence, which, he is sure, are entirely good, but beyond human comprehension. He does not accept the dogma of original sin; for though vanity and pride are the sum of all sinfulness for him, man can and must save himself from them by the free exercise of his will. The essence of religion is found in virtuous living, in the action of the free will and in the strictest obedience to the voice of conscience (1).

> "I have abandoned reason to its fate and consulted nature, that is to say the internal sentiment which directs my belief independently of my reason ..... I was looking at the unity of purpose ....I have no reason for not believing (the philosophers), except that I do not believe (them) ....I believe in God and God would not be just if my soul were not immortal. There, it seems to me, you have all that is essential and useful in religion.... No man has more regard for the Gospel than I....In my opinion, it is the most sublime of books". (2)

His love for the Gospel is frequently repeated, but he insists that it is, after all, only a book, and one unknown to most men on this earth, who are, nonetheless, dear to God and capable of moral action. Moreover, he refuses to accept any part of it that seems superstitious or mysterious (3). He could say with complete sincerity: "Je suis ami de toute religion paisible, où l'on sert l'être éternel selon la raison qu'il nous a donné". (4) In short, his heart moves him to a belief in God, and a respect for the Bible, which he refuses to give up in defiance of the philosophers ("men not fit to read the Gospels"), but beyond this bare minimum of religious

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(1) Emile, bk.IV, pp.428-478.

(2) Letters to Vernes, February 18, 1758 & March 25, 1758, Citizen of Geneva, pp.197-198.

(3) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.17 & Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre I, p.169, pol.Wr., vol.II.

(4) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.12.

faith his reason forbids him to step. Though he openly accepted Calvinism, of which he wrote that: "It is simple and holy, and there is no religion on earth whose morality is purer, no other more satisfying to reason", his real religion was a Protestantism reduced to its lowest common denominator (1).

Atheism he rejects violently as being destructive of morality, while any form of coercion in matters of religious belief is equally repugnant to him. Dogmatism "has made a battlefield of the religion of peace". (2)

"I do not believe that every persecutor is either a scoundrel or a sheer fool". (3)

"I do not like to have any man's conscience subjected to formulas in matters of faith". (4)

"Nul vrai croyant ne saurait être intolérant ni persécuteur". (5)

His preference for Protestanism is based on these grounds as well.

> "The Protestant religion is tolerant essentially, it is as much so as possible, since the only dogma it does not tolerate is that of intolerance. There you have the insurmountable barrier that separates us from the Catholics". (6)
>
> "Protestants are generally better instructed than Catholics. This is only natural, the doctrine of one requires discussion, that of the other submission". (7)

His own conversion to Catholicism is described in a lurid light, and he can find no excuse for having taken this step, except starvation. Like

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(1) Emile bk.IV, p.257.

(2) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre I, p.171, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(3) Letter to Malesherbes, March 5, 1761, Citizen of Geneva, p.185.

(4) Letter to Vernes, February 18, 1758, Ibid., p.147.

(5) Nouvelle Héloise, pt.II, let.v.

(6) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre IV, quoted from C.F. Hendel, J.-J. Rousseau, Moralist, vol.II, p.294

(7) Confessions, bk.II, pp.65-66.

all dogmatic religions, he states, Catholicism is concerned only with external rites, and as "long as a man goes to mass, does not care whether he is a scamp or an honest man". (1)

His return to the religion of his childhood was occasioned by a short trip to Geneva, and celebrated in his "Dedication" of the Discourse on Inequality. Much as he was to denounce the activities of priests in general, the ministers of Geneva always found a defender in him. He respected their tolerance, their "holiness of manner, severity towards themselves and indulgence towards their neighbours". The fact that the articles of faith are established by law is a cause for rejoicing and above all "it is uncommonly fortunate for the peace of men, when those who look upon themselves as the magistrates, or rather the rulers of a more holy and sublime country, show some love for the earthly country which maintains them". (2) And he repeats the compliment "(Nous sommes) sensibles au bonheur que nous avons de posséder un corps de théologiens philosophes et pacifiques, ou plutôt un corps d'officiers de morale et de ministres de vertu". (3)

We shall later examine the sincerity of Rousseau's tolerance, but it might be well to recall now that such apostles of the theory of toleration as Milton and Locke both excluded Catholics and Atheists from the sphere of the tolerable.

> "While I doubt whether anyone in the world loves and respects religion more sincerely than I do, yet that does not prevent my detesting and despising what men have added to it that is barbarous, unjust and pernicious to society". (4)

The last part of the above quotation is aimed at Catholicism, a religion which Rousseau consistently disparages as a perversion of Christianity, and

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(1) Confessions, bk.II, p.47.

(2) Discourse on Inequality, pp.185-186.

(3) Lettre à D'Alembert, p.17.

(4) Letter to M. Deformey, September 6, 1760. Citizen of Geneva, p.175.

a political menace.

> "Jamais Jésus-Christ, dont le règne n'était pas de ce monde, n'a songé à demander pouce de tene à qui que ce soit et n'en a point possédé lui-même, mais son humble vicaire, après s'être approprié le territoire de César, distribua l'empire du monde aux serviteurs de Dieux". (1)

When the pagans persecuted the early Christians they thought of them as traitors to the state, of their humility as a mere guise, and of their spiritual realm as a spring-board for more earthly conquests. Their fears, Rousseau feels, were justified by later events. The division of the political and religious spheres has resulted in the tyranny of the servants of the spiritual realm, the priests. "This so-called kingdom of the other world turned, under a visible leader, into the most violent of earthly despotisms". (2)

> "Le Pape est le vrai roi des rois dans l'Eglise romaine. Toute la division de peuples en Etats et Gouvernements n'est qu'apparente et illusoire. Dans le fond il n'y a qu'un Etat dans l'Eglise romaine. Les vrais magistrats sont les Evêques, le clergé est le souverain,les citoyens sont les prêtres; les laiques ne sont rien du tout". (3)

Wherever the clergy is a corporate body it becomes master and legislator in its own country, with fatal results to political unity and public morality. Oddly, he makes few suggestions regarding the Catholic clergy in his plans for Poland and Corsica. Of the latter country he had been told that its clergy was simple, patriotic and not disposed to interfere with political matters. He merely advocates the establishment of civic, rather than ecclesiastical, holidays, but leaves the Church its tithes. (4)

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(1) Fragments, Economie Politique, p.277, Pol.Wr., vol.I.

(2) Social Contract, pp.131-132.

(3) Première Version du Contrat Social, liv.IV, ch.viii, Pol.Wr., vol.I

(4) Projet pour la Corse, p.351, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

In Poland education was to be taken out of the hands of priests, and managed entirely by the state, but Rousseau seems not to have anticipated that this step might cause any great controversy or difficulty. The intense patriotism he prescribed would in itself be enough of an infringement on religious feeling. Nowhere does he disregard his maxim that a division of loyalty, created by a separation of state and religion, "has made all good polity impossible in Christian states". (1)

Roman Christianity, like the religion of the Japanese and the Lamas, is "a mixed and anti-social code", which subjects men to contradictory duties, giving them two countries and two rulers, and making them unfit for both religion and citizenship. It is the religion of priests. In its political effects it is very bad; for "all that destroys social unity is worthless, all institutions that set man in contradiction to himself are worthless". (2)

Only Hobbes seems to have realized the full danger of this situation, and to have made useful suggestions for its remedy, according to Rousseau, and he often merely repeats the former's words. "Dans tout Etat politique il faut une puissance suprême au centre où tout se rapporte, un principe d'où tout dérive, un souverain qui puisse tout". (3)

> "The State is a moral person whose life is in the union of its members, and if the most important of its cares is the care for its own preservation, it must have universal and compelling force. (4)

Rousseau makes it quite evident that his return to Protestantism was not the result of a religious conversion, but of a revived civic enthusiasm.

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(1) Social Contract, p.132.

(2) Ibid., p.134.

(3) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre IX, p.217, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(4) Social Contract, p.28.

He recognized that in each country "the Sovereign alone had the right to define the manner of worship and to settle this intelligible dogma", and, as a good citizen, he felt compelled to join the religion prescribed by the law (1). From these sentences alone it can be seen that Rousseau, too, judged the worth of religions, not by their theological content, but by their moral and political utility. This was entirely consistent with his personal belief, which as we saw, was very simple in itself, and found its meaning only in morality. However, it led Rousseau not only to a rejection of Catholicism, but also, to a highly critical attitude towards Christianity as a whole. His own faith is too simple a deism to be considered specifically Christian, although his moral outlook is in many respects that of orthodox Puritanism. It is just because he feels that in practice the spirit of Christianity makes men neglect these stern moral and political duties that he objects to it. Christianity does not make "republicans or warriors", and these are the best types of humanity in an imperfect world. The Christian society, like the absolutely democratic and egalitarian state, must be regretfully rejected; for a society of Christians would simply not be one of men.

> "Society at large, human society in general, is founded on humanity, on universal benevolence; and I say and I have always said, that Christianity is favourable to that society. But particular societies, political and civic societies have an entirely different principle. They are purely human institutions, from which Christianity consequently detached us, as it does from all that is merely of this earth. Only the vices of men make these institutions necessary, and only human passions preserve them. Take from your Christians all the vices and they will have no further need of magistrates or laws; no more competition, glory, no more desire for preference and private interest is destroyed, and in default of a suitable support, the

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(1) Confessions, bk.VIII, p.404.

> political state falls into decay, A vigorous political society of Christians, all strictly perfect, is absurd.....Will it be more perfect than that of the Apostles? Yet there was a Judas amongst them....My book is not written for Gods". (1)

The spirit of the good republic is that of Sparta, exclusive, self-centered, patriotic and agressive, and to the extent that this unites a state, and creates civic devotion among its citizens, Rousseau supports it as the millenium for men in a faulty world.

> "Je trouve (le pur Evangile) trop sociable, embrassant trop tout le genre humain, pour une législation qui doit être exclusive, inspirant l'humanité plutôt que le patriotisme, et tendant à former des hommes plutôt que des citoyens". (2)

> "Far from binding the hearts of the citizens to the state (Christianity) has the effect of taking them away from earthly things. I know of nothing more pernicious to the social spirit". (3)

No state can thrive without religion, but Christianity is not suitable for national particularism, while the state must not give up its narrowness of spirit in favour of Christian universalism. The Christian civilization has caused men's"hatred of other nations (to diminish), but (their) patriotism dies with it". (4) A truly Christian republic could never hope to defend itself against its less pious neighbours. Sparta or Rome could conquer it without effort. "(Christians) know how to die but not to conquer....In this vale of sorrows what does it matter (to them) whether (they) are free or serfs?" (5)

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(1) Letter to Usteri, July 18, 1763 . Citizen of Geneva, p.203.

(2) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre I, p.172, Pol.Wr., vol.II.

(3) Social Contract, p.135.

(4) Discourse on the Arts & Sciences, p.149.

(5) Social Contract, p.137

When Christian soldiers show valour, they act not as Christians, but in "honourable emulation of pagan troops", and Rousseau adds with regret, that "when the Cross had driven out the eagle, Roman valour wholly disappeared". (1) He frequently condemns the attitude of contempt that the Church fathers took to the pagan virtues, but he never goes so far as to suggest a return to pagan religious practices as a substitute for Christianity. He admires the qualities in paganism that teach men to love laws, and to "make (their) country the object of the citizens' adoration" by making "service done to the State (a) service done to its tutelary God". (2) However, it is made up of too much empty ceremonial, and it makes men too superstitious, as well as excessively bloodthirsty. If Christianity ends by loosening the unity of that moral body, the state, paganism is too dangerous to humanity at large.

Rousseau defines a national religion as one, whose "dogmas, rites and external cults (are) prescribed by law .... (for which) the duties of man extend only as far as its own borders". (3) Now, pure Christianity, unlike that of the present, has no relation to the body politic, and is purely private in nature, and as such, is not necessarily harmful. It becomes pernicious only when it assumes the position of a national religion, as, for instance, it does in Roman Catholic States.

> "Ceux donc qui ont voulu faire du Christianisme une religion nationale et introduire comme partie constitutive dans le système de la Législation, ont fait par là fautes nuisibles, l'une à la religion et l'autre à l'Etat. Ils se sont écartés de l'esprit de Jésus-Christ.....et ils ont blessé les saines maximes de la politique". (4)

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(1) Social Contract, p.138.

(2) Ibid., p.135.

(3) Ibid., p.139.

(4) Lettres de la Montagne, Lettre I, p.170, Pol.Wr., Vol.III.

At first sight one might consider this an attack on the system of Calvin. Surely nowhere were politics and religion tied more inseparably together. However, these shafts are not directed at Geneva, where, as we saw, Rousseau felt that a dogma-less and totally tolerant religious spirit reigned.

What substitute does he offer for the too barbarous spirit of paganism, the intolerance of Catholicism and the excessive other-wordliness of all Christianity? It is a civil religion which embraces nothing but the principle of tolerance, and the essential maxims of morality. In fact it is nothing but the sum total of Rousseau's own beliefs, and those he ascribed to Geneva.

> "Il y a une sorte de profession de foi que les lois peuvent imposer, mais hors les principes de la morale et du droit naturel elle doit être purement négative, parce qu' il peut exister des religions qui attaquent les fondements de la société, et il faut commencer par exterminer ces religions pour assurer la paix de l'Etat. De ces dogmes à proscrire l'intolérance est, sans difficulté le plus odieux". (1)

The great tolerance of the civic religion involved the legal exclusion of Catholics from the state. The same proscription was to be applied to atheists, whom Rousseau disparaged quite as much. Was not scepticism at the root of the moral degencracy of the group whom he most distrusted, the Parisian philosophers? "Quand aux incrédules intolérants qui voudraient forcer le peuple à ne rien croire, je ne les banirais pas moins sévèrement". (2)

What Rousseau wants to achieve by his civil religion is the pagan tribal spirit tempered by a Christian gentleness. "Il vaut donc mieux

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(1) Letter to Voltaire, August 18, 1756, Pol.Wr.,vol.II.

(2) Ibid.

attacher les citoyens à l'Etat par des liens moins forts et plus doux et n'avoir ni les héros, ni fanatiques". (1)

The clauses of the civil profession of faith, to be enforced by law, are to include a belief in God, and in an after-life, as well as an oath to uphold the moral and legal system of the state. Lastly, all religious intolerance is explicitly forbidden. The two specifically religious provisions are essential for the keeping of oaths, and for the observance of the moral code. Thus the Corsicans are to take their civic oath on the Bible. Moreover, Rousseau felt that these two maxims were common to all religions, and were so pertinent to the moral life that it did not involve the legislators in an intolerant imposition of spiritual dogmas. The civil religion was to contain only the "social sentiments without which a man cannot be a good citizen". (2)

As for tolerance, there is not much difficulty as to that. Those who refuse to accept the civil oath are to be excluded from the state, not as heretics, but as anti-social beings, which must have made a great difference to the exiles. However, Rousseau insists that:

> "Subjects owe the sovereign an account of their opinions to such an extent as they matter to the community. Now, it matters very much to the community that each citizen should have a religion. That will make him love his duty". (3)

Atheists and agnostics are thus deprived of citizenship, while Roman Catholics are similarly removed from the scene, as Rousseau has made perfectly evident in his letter to Voltaire, in his insistence on civil marriage, in his accusations against the priests and, above all, in his identification of Catholicism with active intolerance. In fact we have

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(1) Première Version du Contrat Social, liv.IV, ch.viii, p.502, Pol.Fr., vol. II.

(2) Social Contract, p.139.

(3) Ibid., p.138.

here nothing but a revised version of the Genevan system. The Genevan citizens, proudly attached to their city and their religion, were not even inclined to accept Protestant dissenters, not to mention "Papists", but Rousseau chose to overlook this displeasing attitude of his fellow-citizens, and in his own scheme most forms of Protestantism would seem permissible. On the whole, Rousseau so much admired the unity of Church and State prevailing in Geneva that he used it as his model. In fact, Calvinism was as much a civil as theological matter in Geneva, where citizenship was completely dependent on religious conformity. No one could be a Genevan citizen who was not a Protestant. If a man abjured Protestantism he lost his citizenship. No Catholic could even own immovable property in the city, and even as devout a Catholic as Voltaire had to live on the outskirts of its territory (1). The Consistory advised the magistrates on general and particular legislation, while the social importance of communion to the citizens was immense.

In substance then, we see that Machiavelli and Rousseau are probably nowhere more alike than in their views on religion. Christianity is heavily criticized, and is held to be permissible only if it can be made to serve the republican state. It is in the exclusive preoccupation with the republican ideal, here and everywhere, that Rousseau and Machiavelli meet. The only serious difference between them arises out of their respective attitudes to paganism. Machiavelli is far more appreciative of the religion of the ancients than is Rousseau, who is disgusted by its cruelty, and by the blind superstition that it breeds. Since its spirit is conducive to success in war, Machiavelli is at once drawn to it, but Rousseau, in his concern for the moral well-being of the individual, could never accept so harsh a fanaticism.

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(1) Gaston Vallette, op.cit., ch.iii, pp.199-200.

Conclusion

Since we have tried to present our conclusions as to the relation of Machiavelli's and Rousseau's thoughts at the end of each chapter, there is little to be said about the specific topics that we have considered. However, a few general questions remain to be answered. First of all, it must be admitted that the pictures we have drawn of these authors, taken individually, are very incomplete. This fact becomes particularly conspicuous when we consider their respective places in the history of political thought.

Machiavelli is, after all, not so renowned for the republicanism of the Discourses, as for the reckless originality of the Prince. While such republicans as Algernon Sidney and Rousseau might admire him as one of their own school, his distinctive contribution does not lie in that field of thought. It is in the much noted elevation of the power of the state above all other values that Machiavelli is remarkable. Machiavelli recognizes only one sphere of political endeavour, that of the various states competing for power. His whole attention is fixed on that one scene. Such an exclusive preoccupation with international affairs does not lead to a very broad or realistic view of political life, but it is one that we would expect a professional diplomat to hold. He has by no means discovered the field of "pure politics", as Croce claims, but he has isolated one aspect of politics, and disregarded all others. It is because of this narrow concentration, that for Machiavelli the state finds its highest function in war, and political virtue, even the republican ideal, is not self-justified, but must find its glory in its superiority in combat with other states. The open admission that the state depends on power is ultimately based on the moral deficiencies of man. But these are so much taken for granted that they form an "inarticulate major

premise" from which Machiavelli goes on to estimate political possibilities. In practice the highest moral effort that man is capable of, is devotion to the welfare of the state. That is the summum bonum, not absolutely or metaphysically considered, but from the standpoint of "effectual truth". It is in the pursuit of the grandeur of the state that individuals find a capacity for self-abnegation. Every human activity is absorbed in that one end. That is why Christianity is rejected, and that is why all considerations of justice and charity are false when they are in conflict with one's country's effort to gain power. Such was the glory of Rome!

Rousseau's outstanding contribution was undoubtedly the idea of the General Will, and his treatment of the problem of social obligation. It is not in the means that he suggests for making it effective, but in the presentation of the idea of the General Will itself that he is most original. It has been said that Rousseau provided a substitute for the moral restraint that the Roman Catholic Church had exercised in an earlier age. However, the General Will is not a mere secularization of the universal standards of behaviour that the Church imposed on secular rulers. The natural law theories of the seventeenth century presented the closest extra-religious counterpart of such an influence. Unfortunately they were never able to embody themselves in any institutional form, and thus acquired no force as a counterpoise to the will of the rulers of states. The authority of natural law, like that of Catholicism, was based on a belief in its universal validity. This, however, is not true of Rousseau's General Will, which is, in effect, a total repeal of natural law. The force of the General Will is not derived from the public opinion of all mankind, and its application extends only over individual states. The preference for small states, all highly

isolated and parochial in spirit, and each differing in its moral and legal constitution, according to its particular external environment, can lead to only one conclusion, namely, that the General Will is not one and indivisible, but that there are many different wills, whose generality is limited to the territory of each state. Justice has in practice ceased to be a universal concept.

Since in the Social Contract Rousseau is legislating for a community that is initially favoured by the best external and moral conditions imaginable, it must be inferred that variety in the moral law is an accepted ideal, though one made necessary by man's limited moral capacities. It does not necessarily follow that difference must result in conflict. There is throughout the hope that the truly just republic will not quarrel with its equally righteous neighbour. Nevertheless, when we take into account Rousseau's acceptance of military training as an indispensable part of education, his exaltation of the martial spirit and his insistence on national particularism, his admission that to the patriot all strangers are foes, war seems to become the inevitable condition of the republican order. Rousseau is left with the dubious distinction between the just and the unjust war.

The right of self-defence is ultimately highly debatable. Christianity rejects it with its demand of turning the other cheek and its humility. That is why Rousseau accuses it of being contrary to the social and civic spirit. While Rousseau is revolted by all acts of violence and brutality, he also admired the military man, his courage, his physical strength and his devotion to his calling. So concerned was he with maintaining these characteristics that, in proposing a scheme for a lasting peace in Europe, he had to console himself with the thought that Europeans could always fight the Turks to preserve their martial habits. He is also reassured by the belief that this spirit can be maintained without perpetual war. However, he is fully convinced of the

idiocy of conquests, and power, as such, can have no importance for one who believes that only small states could be successful. Rousseau is already faced with the inherent conflict of nationalism, which wants to integrate and preserve the uniqueness of each national group, but finds that when these groups, each convinced of its own superiority, come into contact with each other, they are inevitably driven into conflict and conquests, in which they absorb not only their "irredenta", but also alien groups which threaten the purity of their national spirit.

It has been suggested that with the invention of the sovereign General Will above the government, Rousseau laid the first foundation of modern liberalism. Possibly his belief that the General Will could operate only in a highly nationalistic state is in itself a prediction of the unfortunate alliance of liberalism with nationalism in the nineteenth century. It is also said that, because he had little faith in moral resources of most men, he was the first critic of liberalism as well. This might be demonstrated by the idea of "forcing men to be free", since most of them are disinclined to accept the moral burdens of liberty.

It is, however, quite likely that Rousseau was not at all concerned with liberalism, either as a supporter or as an antagonist. The General Will provides for the freedom of the moral will, not for that of individual political action. Compromise and negotiation in arriving at political decisions are rejected in favour of unanimous submission to the one possible, morally acceptable action. What Rousseau has achieved is an amalgamation of antique republicanism and the Protestant spirit of Geneva. The latter contributed its emphasis on the individual conscience and will, and its practice of the coercion of the individual by the community in all his affairs, all for the greater glory of God. The general outlook

that we have chosen to call antique republicanism shares with liberalism the idea of the rule of law, and that of a degree of popular participation in the political process. Its rule of law involves freedom from governmental arbitrariness, but its attitude to the life of the individual is one of constraint, not of free development. It stresses the subservience of the individual to the state. The individual's contribution to the management of public affairs consists of self-sacrifice and devotion to the state. The individual as such is not important; for in the end he exists for the state, not the state for his betterment. From Protestantism Rousseau inherited the belief in the value of each man as a moral being, but beyond that the individual was of no great concern. Republicanism was not designed to alter that bias.

While Rousseau is in no way interested in power, he is brought into Machiavelli's camp by his insistence that all human activity is absolutely dependent on politics. Moreover, he does not look at all political life from the vantage point of international relations, but on the contrary concentrates on the problem of the individual and the state, and the moral welfare of the former. But in the process of theoretically constructing his ideal state, with Sparta as his model, he is brought close to Machiavelli.

In their major purposes Machiavelli and Rousseau differ so much that they can be said to inhabit different worlds of thought. In their development, however, they have so much in common that it appeared worth-while to place their ideas side by side, and try to make each one's words stand out more clearly by comparing them to those of the other.

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