

Lionizing Machiavelli

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Machiavelli scholarship is prolific but claustrophobic. Even though chapter 18 of The Prince advises the aspiring leader to emulate both lion and fox, commentators ignore or devalue the lion and focus on the fox. Machiavelli is thereby depicted as a champion of cleverness and deception, and not much else. This article takes up the lion. It argues that Machiavelli's lion is not a simple and violent beast, but is rather a complex tutor that complements clinical and lonely foxiness with crucial injections of virility and community.

Just why did Plato write *The Republic*? Was the Academy failing to recruit the most promising youngsters? Or was it just an easy way to extract eighty talents from Dionysius the Younger? Perhaps Plato was merely indulging a nascent passion for spelunking? Of course, we do not ask these questions of our icon of metaphysics. Niccolò Machiavelli, in contrast, suffers incessantly the indignity of similar suspicions. Various, he is the sycophant who solicits his republican soul for aristocratic patronage (Godman 1998). He is the nerd whose revenge is delivered vicariously in the form of macho prose (Pitkin 1984). Or he is a feeble lecher trying to impress a fetching young actress (Ridolfi 1954, 312). It is hardly surprising that we impute Machiavelli's motives. A scholar by default, he could not help but educate his cloistered forebears as to the advantages of hidden agendas and false promises. Understandably stupefied by his venality, commentators regroup, whispering exotic speculations regarding his true intentions.

Friedrich Meinecke (1965, 25–48) leads a contingent that detects a moral residue in Machiavelli's unprecedented dissimulation (see also Chabod 1980; Dotti 1979; Foscolo 1972; Russo 1983; Zanini 1984). Troubled by the incompatibility of the normative and the feasible, Machiavelli is said to dilute a nonetheless sincere attachment to moral behavior, or “universal norm” (Derla 1980, 35), for emergency reasons. Gramsci (1966, 10), for instance, refutes the alleged “scientific disinterestedness” in Machiavelli, claiming that his true intention is to leak proprietary strategies of the privileged to “the revolutionary class of the time, the ‘people’ and the ‘Italian nation,’ the democratic citizen who feels in his breast the Savonarolas and the Pier Soderinis and not the Castruccios and the Valentinos”¹ (1966, 10). More recently, Dietz (1986) argues that *The Prince* is diabolical to end the diabolical, a sophisticated trap into which an unsuspecting Medici boob might fall, thus opening a republican window of oppor-

tunity. Wolin (1960, 207) detects “an essentially moral response inspired by a concern for man in an age of political corruption” (see also Derla 1980, 27–8; Sasso 1980, 293–327; Struever 1992, 164–81). Berlin (1982, 55–6) ventures that Machiavelli's endorsement of power politics is no less than an alternative morality.

The opposing position promotes a more literal, morally uncluttered reception of Machiavelli's calculations and is often associated with Benedetto Croce ([1914] 1993; see also Cassirer 1944, 167; de Sanctis 1956, 511; Gentile 1968, 118; Hulliung 1983; Kahn 1986; Mansfield 1985). Croce argues that Machiavelli has little interest in a concept of goodness transcendent of the will of the strongest. His politics precedes morality as base precedes superstructure, and morality is no more than a luxury afforded the politically comfortable. But where Croce detects anguish in Machiavelli regarding the sacrifice, Cassirer's Machiavelli is more venal. And Strauss (1958, 11), of course, goes so far as to say that Machiavelli is a “teacher of evil.”

That scholarship is limited to variations on Machiavelli's moral status is tribute to the strange charisma of his meditations on expediency. Whether one embraces the more sensitive Machiavelli of Meinecke or the more clinical Machiavelli of Croce, a claustrophobic element persists in an investigative focus that presupposes compromise as Machiavelli's overweening interest. We obsess over the extent to which such exquisite human qualities as integrity and charity succumb to trickery and deceit. The debate is over whether the moral justification is only highly leveraged or just nonexistent. Sasso (1964, 47–51) argues that the only significant exchange among modern scholars of Machiavelli regards the extent to which he laments his unprecedented duplicity.

Due to this focus on concession and cleverness in the face of difficult surroundings, Machiavelli is a magnet for critics of modernity, who indict his claims of success by exposing what are thought to be his shallow aspirations. By focusing on expediency, Machiavelli is credited with turning politics toward its eventual depiction as “who gets what when how” (Laswell 1936). The “why,” which for Machiavelli's Greek and Latin foils provides politics its essence, is left to the “historian, the lawyer, or the philosopher” (Laswell 1936, 23). According to his critics, Machiavelli escorts politics down to the Piraeus never to return to the rarefied atmosphere of the Acropolis. His contempt for the good and the frail in favor of the commoner currency of selfishness

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¹ “disinteressata attività scientifica,” “la classe rivoluzionaria del tempo, il ‘popolo’ e la ‘nazione’ italiana, la democrazia cittadina che esprime dal suo seno i Savonarola e i Pier Soderini e non i Castruccio e i Valentino.”

and force is seen as a minor revision from the banality of Hobbes and Locke. Chance can be eliminated from human life by pursuing an existence of not taking chances.²

This is the ironic sense in which Machiavelli is labeled the founder of the Enlightenment, the first modern.³ The indictment is bipartisan. From the Right, Strauss (1962) identifies Machiavelli as charter concertmaster of the modern orchestra that fiddles while Rome burns.⁴ From the Left, Horkheimer (1982) accuses Machiavelli of orchestrating the stifling regimentation of industrial reason. Whether one attributes to him the loss of philosophy (Strauss) or the loss of poetry (Horkheimer), Machiavelli is said to have abandoned the exquisite in favor of “statecraft” (Butterfield 1940); he is the precursor to Lasswell’s political “science,”⁵ the purported value neutrality of which masks a craven surrender to vulgar, perfunctory, or even evil “whys.”

So, notwithstanding a secondary debate about the relative importance of a remote moral interest, Machiavelli has come to represent the quintessential tactician. Political success, we are told, depends upon the prince’s ability to hide in the bushes, studying and countering the ambitions of malefactors. We are drawn to that most famous passage in that most famous chapter,⁶ in which Machiavelli advises his prince to emulate the fox, the cleverest of animals. The fox ratifies the underlying consensus in Sasso’s scholarly dichotomy. The fox is sly, not above employing its intelligence in service of the ignoble.

Machiavelli also asks his prince to consider the demeanor of the lion, but that is dismissed by his analysts as an uninteresting or unimportant accessory, even though Machiavelli grants equal proportions to both of the animals in his hybrid. Kahn (1986, 65), for

instance, finds a “particularly forceful articulation in chapter 18” of “the aim of *The Prince* as a whole,” which is nothing more than the “redefinition of representation as ruse and thus of mimesis as power”; Machiavellian *virtù* is tantamount to “mere cleverness.” Dietz (1986, 78) mentions only the fox in her depiction of *The Prince*: “In short, whether the subject is love, war, or politics, Machiavelli recognizes the advantages of crafty assault in any form, be it trickery, stratagem, or artifice.” Hulliung (1983, 214) at least admits the lion’s existence but asserts that Machiavelli reserves his deepest admiration for those who are able to dominate by resorting to “the subtle methods of the fox rather than the crude methods of the lion.” Similarly, Sasso (Machiavelli 1963, 152, n. 7) associates the fox with “shrewdness and cunning prudence” (*astuzia e accorta prudenza*), the lion with only primitive traits of “impetuosity and violence” (*impeto e violenza*) (see also Bacon [1869] 1973, 84). Pitkin (1984, 46) argues that “the lion is not a standard of manhood Machiavelli ever takes seriously, either for himself or for those he admires.” Although Rebborn (1988) suggests equal treatment in the title of his book, *Foxes and Lions*, he immediately undertakes an exposé of Machiavelli’s “trickster figures . . . in short, foxes of every species” (p. x). Machiavelli’s heros, according to the book’s subtitle, are no more than “confidence men.”

In this article, I consider the lion. I show that the successful prince needs more than trickery, stratagem, and artifice. In our haste to sensationalize Machiavelli’s foxy reduction of the classical attachment to exquisite moral standards, we overlook the extent to which the lion represents a widening rather than a lowering, a recognition that Socrates’ contemplative priorities helped him die well but did not always help him live well. Politics is about life, and Machiavelli, invoking the lion, would counsel escape from prison. Although the escape involves a foxy plan, it demands some of the virility, comradery, and innocence of the lion. Ironically, Machiavelli anticipates and addresses the same deficiencies of modernity for which he is held responsible, as an examination of the lion will show.

A BEASTLY HUMANISM

Machiavelli prepares for the lion, and the fox for that matter, with preliminary discussions that establish the importance of animal traits in princely comportment. Indeed, as respected editions of *The Prince* remind us (Borsellino 1989, 99, n. 1; Burd 1891, 301, n. 1; Machiavelli 1960, 72, n. 2, and 1963, 151, n. 2), Machiavelli’s ratification of princely animalism is reinforced with allusions to a classical humanist source, the *De Officiis* of Cicero, in which the Roman aristocrat informs his departing son that there may come a time when the human method for settling disputes may not be available to him, and he may need to resort to tactics of the beast (*beluarum*) (Cicero 1913, 37 [*De Officiis* 1.11.34]). Although there may be scholarly consensus regarding the involvement of Cicero and classical humanism in chapter 18, there is controversy regarding the nature of that involvement. This controversy is

² For J. G. A. Pocock (1975, 31–80), the “Machiavellian moment” occurs when human ingenuity is of such confidence that it is willing to assume the responsibility of human destiny. Thus, for Pocock, *virtù* consists of the extent to which human cleverness can avoid or overcome the vicissitudes of *fortuna*.

³ Admittedly, the extent to which analysts recognize an irony is variable. The treatments by Strauss and Horkheimer are at the extremes, whereas some are almost congratulatory that Machiavelli can be linked to nationalism, or science, or liberalism. Mansfield (1975, 373) argues that these authors do not raise the question of Machiavelli’s modernity “in sufficiently broad and uncompromising terms.” Perhaps the most categorical depiction of Machiavelli as the quintessential modern is that of Robert Hariman who, employing postmodernist vernacular, accuses Machiavelli of imposing a disembodied metanarrative of cold power that not only envelops constituent “texts” but human desire too (Hariman 1989, 28). A good repository of bibliographic information on Machiavelli’s modernism is, Viroli 1990.

⁴ Of course, Strauss’s (1962, 327) famous indictment of the “science” of politics is even more severe, since political science “does not know that it fiddles and it does not know that Rome burns.” Strauss (1959) holds Machiavelli responsible for endorsing the abdication of considerations of the “why” to expediency.

⁵ Cochrane (1970, 170, translation mine) can say unreservedly that “he is everywhere recognized founder of another discipline, that of political science.”

⁶ According to Sasso (Machiavelli 1963, 150, n. 1, translation mine), “chapter 18 of *The Prince* is perhaps the text most tortured, studied, vilified, and disparaged among those numbered not only in the entire work of Machiavelli, but all of modern political thought.”

informative regarding what I believe to be a misinterpretation of the scope of Machiavelli's "princely animalism" and thus the scope of traits attributable to the lion.

On the one hand, Colish (1978) argues that Machiavelli's references to Cicero are straightforward and deferential (see also Gentile 1968, 365–72; Allan Gilbert 1938, 2; Felix Gilbert 1939, 464; Merleau-Ponty 1964; Olschki 1970; Skinner 1981, 36–41; Toffanin 1921; Viroli 1998, 54). She maintains that the pragmatism of classical humanism remains mostly unappreciated, due to the analytical residue of medieval interpretations, and that Machiavelli's concern for *verità effettuale* is not that far from a similar interest found in classical humanism, which considers the moral good (*honestum*) in terms of the constraints of feasibility (*utile*).⁷ Machiavelli's reference to the beast, then, is a concession to a practicality that he shares with classical humanism. On the other hand, Hexter (1973, 210) claims that Machiavelli invokes Cicero in order to pervert him; whereas Cicero might intermittently divert his moral interest with questions of practicality, he never considers the Machiavellian "dislocation of virtue and reason and nature from their customary relations with each other" (see also Hulliung 1983, 213; Mansfield 1996, 35; Paparelli 1970, 86; Raimondi 1972). For using Cicero's vernacular to such a divergent purpose (Raimondi [1972, 266] calls it a "*deformazione*"), Machiavelli is accused of "one of the most efficient perversions of a writer's intention in the long history of literary hocus-pocus" (Hexter 1973, 208).

If nothing else, this discrepancy substantiates Sasso's assertion regarding the pervasiveness of the debate about moral compromise. The extent of Machiavelli's humanism is depicted as dependent solely upon the degree to which both he and Cicero adjust normative commitments in the face of pragmatic concerns. The controversy centers on whether, and to what extent, there is room in humanism for the occasional suspension of moral constraints. Restricting the debate about Machiavelli's humanism to such familiar territory yields smug conclusions. Skinner (1981, 37–8, emphasis in original), for instance, identifies a "simple" Machiavellian divergence, namely, that "if a ruler wishes to reach his highest goals, he will *not* always find it rational to be moral." Viroli (1998, 54), similarly focused, argues that Machiavelli merely "restricts the range" of Cicero's humanism, admitting moral compromise to a wider variety of political pursuits. But Machiavelli's departure from humanism is simple and restrictive only to those whose analyses are spellbound by traits associated with the fox. Analysts who debate whether there is a place for the fox in classical humanism may miss in Machiavelli a significant expansion of animalism in general as it pertains to princely comportment. That expansion is wide enough to enhance the domain of the lion, and it is wide enough to detach Machiavelli from humanism in ways more complex and

substantial than detected by analysts preoccupied with the morality issue.

That Machiavelli's princely animalism is more complex than enhanced foxiness should be clear, given his employment of the centaur to introduce it. The juxtaposition of appropriate animalism with centaurs is an allusion Cicero does not make. By emphasizing the parity between the human and the animal in the prince's curriculum,⁸ Machiavelli thoroughly betrays the humanist hierarchy, in which the animal is a much less significant human component. Although Cicero recommends resorting to the animal in the resolution of disputes, he never gives the animal and the human traits equal billing. The human approach, discussion (*disceptationem*), is always preferable to the animal, force (*vim*). Furthermore, resorting to the animal has to be justified within the context of the human. The centaur is not an appropriate image for Cicero's distribution of human and animal traits, and Machiavelli's employment of the image leaves little doubt as to the unprecedented importance of animalism to princely success.⁹

Machiavelli's divergence from Cicero does not end with a dispute over the zoological hierarchy, however. More important, Machiavelli redraws the very boundaries ratified by Cicero between the human and the animal. Following his Greek mentors, Cicero places reason (*rationis*) exclusively in the human domain and then deduces that only humans are endowed with a historical consciousness, in which events can be linked to analytical continua (Cicero 1913, 13 [*De Officiis* 1.4.11]). In addition, reason facilitates speech, which promotes community, which then promotes public assemblies along with unusual tenderness and love for one's children (p. 15 [*De Officiis* 1.4.12]). Animal behavior, for Cicero, is reserved for the likes of Thrasymachus, who intrude on civility "like a wild beast" (Plato 1968, 13 [*Republic* 336b]) and scare people out of their wits. Machiavelli is much less generous to the realm of the human. The human environment is one of laws (moral, political, religious), not intellectual or emotional superiority: "You must then know how there are two means of combat: one with the laws, the other with force" (Machiavelli 1960, 72 [*Prince* 18]).¹⁰ The animal dwells in the realm of

⁸ Machiavelli (1960, 72 [*Prince* 18]) is quite precise in describing the centaur as "one half beast and half man" (uno mezzo bestia et mezzo uomo). Viroli (1998, 54), who craves humanism in Machiavelli, hones in on the intermittent depictions of princely animalism as "detestable," to be always avoided when "laudable" human recourse is available. Even if Machiavelli's depictions are sincere, which is highly doubtful, the fact remains that introducing princely animalism with the image of the centaur sends a strong message regarding its importance to appropriate princely comportment.

⁹ That Machiavelli's intention in using the centaur is to deflate anthropocentrism is reinforced by passages in the *Golden Ass*, in which the boar chides humanity for its silly self-aggrandizement (Machiavelli 1965, 299 [*Golden Ass* 8.37–9]). Cicero, however, is not Machiavelli's only target. Pico's ([1496] 1942, 101–65) *De hominis dignitate* is similarly self-absorbed and may be assumed to be yet another object of Machiavelli's derision.

¹⁰ "Dovete adunque sapere come sono dua generazione di combattere: l'uno con le leggi, l'altro, con la forza." The translations of Machiavelli are mine and purposely favor clumsy accuracy over

⁷ Toffanin (1921) makes a similar connection of Machiavelli and humanism, using Tacitus in place of Cicero.

“force,” which now includes all extralegal forms of coercion and persuasion. There is little similarity between Cicero’s *vim* and Machiavelli’s *forza*.¹¹

At first, this expansion of the animal realm, both hierarchically and behaviorally, may not trouble those who focus on Machiavelli’s cleverness. In fact, that animals might metaphorically be endowed with speech and a sense of history—with at most a half-hearted obeisance to moral, political, and religious laws—seems to prepare us perfectly for the fox, who is more sophisticated than the impetuous Thrasymachus. Yet, given Machiavelli’s equal partitioning of fox and lion, we are justified in exploring the possibility that the expanded realm of princely animalism, prepared by a discussion of centaurs, includes an enhanced artillery for the lion, too. If *forza* includes reason, then might it not also include an extreme tenderness toward offspring, a trait more suited to a lion, who prefers the company of the pride to the loneliness of the fox? There is good reason to believe that Machiavelli’s lion is capable of more than Sasso’s “impetuosity and violence.” And there is good reason to believe that Machiavelli’s prince benefits not only from unencumbered cleverness but also from unencumbered physical magnificence.

Our suspicion that the expanded realm for animals in general may extend specifically to the realm of lions is reinforced by the particular centaur selected to introduce princely animalism. Machiavelli chooses Chiron, the complex and compelling tutor to Achilles “and many others of those ancient princes” (Machiavelli 1960, 72 [*Prince* 18]).¹² Chiron is no garden variety centaur. His parentage is of Cronos and Philyras, and his more rowdy cousins are descendants of Ixion. While other centaurs are wreaking havoc,¹³ Chiron teaches Achilles the finer points of medicine and music. For those who transport Plato’s contempt for the animal to Machiavelli’s treatment, the choice of Chiron as princely model is strange; any of his more rambunctious associates would be better prototypes, it is thought. In the tradition of Dietz (1986), the selection of Chiron is viewed as a trick, one more instance in which “Machiavelli does not mean what he says” (Arieti 1995, 389). Chiron, we are informed, could never qualify as a quintessential animal. “How apt a

symbol is Chiron?” asks Arieti. “The answer is that *he is totally, completely, and entirely inapt*. Machiavelli is right that Chiron was the tutor of Achilles, but what he taught Achilles was medicine. Throughout ancient literature, Chiron is the kindly, poetic, artistic, peace-loving centaur, the very antithesis of beast-like qualities” (p. 387, italics in original).

Looking at Chiron in Machiavelli’s terms, however, one begins to see an animal par excellence. Chiron is an apt model for *forza* broadly understood, as extralegal persuasion and coercion. Achilles lacked not ferocity but the subtlety of the animal, which tutoring in medicine and music could provide. “The son of Philyra made the boy Achilles accomplished on the lyre, and by his peaceful art subdued those savage passions” (Ovid 1929, 13 [*Art of Love*, 1.11–2]). Chiron’s animalism is a sophisticated force, which involves both thinking and acting. Achilles learns how to plan an attack, how to execute it, how to enjoy the victory properly, and how to lament defeat.¹⁴ As his name suggests (“Chiron” is an affectionate derivative of *cheirosophos*, “skilled in hand crafts”), Chiron teaches Achilles the most complex of the “touching” arts: music and medicine.¹⁵ Achilles’ physical presence is rendered formidable and versatile. He can seduce and heal as well as he can fight.

The choice of Chiron from among the other centaurs is not the only telling component of the tutoring scenario. By alluding to others but not naming them, Machiavelli distinguishes Achilles from Chiron’s other formidable students. Had Machiavelli wanted to focus on strength, he might have mentioned Chiron’s student Hercules; had his context called for only a healer, he might have employed yet another student, Asclepius. But if the intention is to highlight the sophistication and breadth of the Chiron curriculum, then Achilles is the apt choice. Of these three, only Achilles receives a balanced education in the sensual arts, using his hands to heal and to perform as well as to slay (see Mackie 1997).

It is no surprise that Machiavelli chose Chiron for the cover of his comedy, *Mandragola*. If Chiron represents a much broader concept of sensuality than that of brute force, then it makes sense to have him introduce Machiavelli’s literary masterpiece. Fido (1977, 109–22), although convinced that Machiavelli personally chose the cover illustration,¹⁶ offers multiple complex explanations of how Machiavelli might hold two simul-

fluidity. The original Italian, from the Feltrinelli editions, is included in footnotes.

¹¹ I am not the first to recognize the modesty of Machiavelli’s exclusively human aptitudes. Appreciating what he describes as a compelling honesty, Merleau-Ponty (1964, 212) apprehends Machiavelli’s less special human by focusing on the distinction of chapter 18. Although she succumbs to the humanist bias that laws are superior to force, Pitkin (1984, 46) also notices Machiavelli’s reduction of the human domain. Indeed, his less exquisite humans reflect a medieval bias, which held that the differences between animals and humans lay in their relative tameness, not relative intelligence (Yamamoto 2000, 24–5). Tameness is akin to “law-abidingness.”

¹² “e molti altri di quelli principi antichi.”

¹³ The contrast is best preserved in art. The western pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia depicts the abduction of the Lapith women by the vulgar centaurs. Yet, when Chiron is depicted without his boorish associates (Roman fresco, National Archeological Museum of Naples, no. 9109), he is seen with a harp and in affectionate embrace with Achilles.

¹⁴ “Lighten every ill with wine and song, sweet consolations for unlovely sorrow” (Horace 1914, 397 [*Epodes* 13]). Chiron also showed unusual tenderness (for Cicero a human trait) for his daughter and wept upon hearing of her forced metamorphosis. And this: “The Centaur was rejoicing in his foster-child of heavenly stock, glad at the honour which the task brought with it” (Ovid 1916, v. 1, 107, 105 [*Metamorphoses* 2.676, 2.633]).

¹⁵ As for Chiron teaching music to Achilles, the tutoring is implied in *The Iliad* (see Mackie 1997, 8) and is explicit in Horace (1914, 397 [*Epodes* 13]) and Ovid (1929, 13 [*Art of Love* 1.11]). As for medicine, see Homer 1924, 543 (*Iliad* 11.832).

¹⁶ That Machiavelli did indeed make the choice is not as certain as Fido would have it, however. For an excellent treatment of the publication history of *Mandragola* and Machiavelli’s other works, see Bertelli and Innocenti 1979, esp. xxi–xxviii.

taneous visions of Chiron, one the fierce tutor of Achilles, the other the musical accompaniment to comedy. He does not consider the possibility that the Chiron of *The Prince* is precisely the musician of *Mandragola*.

CHIRON'S OBSOLESCENCE

Although my ultimate intention is to link Machiavelli's lion to the sophisticated sensuality of Chiron instead of the anthropocentrism of Cicero and classical humanism, a preliminary discussion of Machiavelli's transition from centaur to lion (and fox) is in order. Why is Chiron, an appropriate teacher for Achilles, not sufficient to explain appropriate animalism to the budding prince? Why, after exploiting the centaur to establish the importance of animal traits, does Machiavelli choose to dissect his ancient prototype into the more specific constituent elements of lion and fox? Of course, a simple and pertinent influence would be the popularity of lions and foxes in Renaissance imagery, and I will return to that issue. Here I want to discuss a more profound instigation for Machiavelli's choice of these particular images. I want to show that the insufficiency of Chiron and Achilles is related to a more formidable discrepancy between simple and complex societies, between ancient Rome and Renaissance Italy.¹⁷ I also want to show that the discrepancy necessitates even closer attention to the lion traits.

In chapter 19, just after the discussion of animals, Machiavelli introduces the concept of corruption with the advice that it be attended by princely scrutiny. He goes on to argue that in ancient times princely scrutiny was best directed at the military, but now the common civilian class is more in need of it, since "they can do more" (*possono più*) than the armed forces (Machiavelli 1960, 83 [*Prince* 19]). Corruption has afflicted the people and made them more formidable, threatening princely endeavors. I believe it is this new climate of popular corruption that compels Machiavelli to subdivide his ancient tutor. The prince must hone some particular behaviors that, although they may have been part of Chiron's arsenal, can draw undistracted attention when isolated in the image of the lion.

As for how it is that corruption is precipitated and thereby necessitates a keener attention to leonine traits, *The Prince* responds only with an evasive, tantalizing latinism, *quodammodo* (somehow) (Machiavelli 1960, 80 [*Prince* 19]). Why *The Prince* is so blatantly unanalytical will be discussed later. Only in consulting the *Discourses* and the *Art of War* do we learn that the

corruption of the people is the result of communal experience, in both the political and natural environments.¹⁸ Civilization has chipped away at the people's innocence,¹⁹ and they have taken on characteristics that are resistant to princely influence. Numa has an easier time of it, as would a prince among mountain dwellers, since civilization is for both in a primitive state (Machiavelli 1960, 161–2 [*Discourses* 1.11]). The inhabitants of mature civilizations, however, suffer a potentially debilitating cynicism. Referencing Plutarch (1909), who is considered "the most serious writer" (*gravissimo scrittore*) (Machiavelli 1960, 275 [*Discourses* 2.1]), and quoting Livy directly on the subject (p. 164 [*Discourses* 1.12]), Machiavelli describes a decline of innocence: People have gone from eager acceptance of leaders' nobility to a crass skepticism of anything but mundane claims to leadership.

Perhaps the most intriguing analysis of popular corruption appears in the *Art of War*, in which Machiavelli directly connects two phenomena: the tendency of ancient populations to fear eclipses and earthquakes, and the ability of military leaders to exploit that fear with clever interpretations attached "to their purpose" (Machiavelli 1961a, 487 [*Art of War* 6]).²⁰ Recalling a humorous anecdote from *The Twelve Caesars* (Suetonius 1957, 35 [sec. 59]), Machiavelli exposes an audience so simple that it can be hoodwinked by Caesar's cute recovery when he fell down upon disembarking in Africa and decreed: "Africa, I have taken you" (Machiavelli 1961a, 487 [*Art of War* 6]).²¹

Things are different in Machiavelli's Italy, where the blunders of Caesar's descendants are received with cynical smugness. To believe that an earthquake portends a political disaster, the populace needs to trust the statement of the leader making the connection, and it needs to be ignorant of the science of earthquakes. In the case of Italy, both requisites are missing. As for the issue of trust, Machiavelli complains that leaders now use their powers of deception indiscriminately. Whereas ancient rulers invoked augurs and oracles during times of military crisis, modern Italian rulers have stretched their credibility beyond all limits. In the Romagna, before the intervention of Alexander VI and Valentino, rulers resorted to venal trickery casually and frequently, and it did not take many such episodes to alienate the population (Machiavelli 1960, 465 [*Dis-*

¹⁷ The disconnection is not often recognized and is part of a much wider syndrome that mistakenly assumes Machiavelli's admiration for the past demonstrates his interest in reviving it. Machiavelli is said to have been "indoctrinated" in the pagan revival (Sabine and Thorson 1973, 335; see also Plamanatz 1963, 1:32; Skinner 1978, 1:182; Strauss and Cropsey 1972, 281). Russo (1983, 15) does not even notice the switch from centaur to lion and fox, claiming that Machiavelli intended the centaur to be the appropriate model for the modern individual. I will show that Machiavelli recognizes contemporary developments that make a return impossible. For a systematic treatment of the distinction between admiration and revival regarding religion, see Lukes 1984.

¹⁸ Although I do not believe that the *Discourses* or any other of Machiavelli's works can be considered mere chatty versions of *The Prince*, to be casually exploited for clarification of the shorter work, connections can be made cautiously, especially when linking unequivocal assertions in *The Prince* to more reserved analyses elsewhere. In fact, I will argue that special attention to traits of the lion in *The Prince* precludes Machiavelli's employment of lengthy analytical treatments. Because I can only offer that explanation after an examination of the lion's curriculum, I will postpone the discussion that justifies consultation of works outside *The Prince*.

¹⁹ "A sculptor will create more easily a beautiful statue of rough marble than of one poorly hewn by others" (Machiavelli 1960, 162 [*Discourses* 1.11]). (Uno scultore trarrà più facilmente una bella statua d'un marmo rozzo, che d'uno male abbozzato da altrui.)

²⁰ "a loro proposito."

²¹ "Affrica, io t'ho presa."

courses 3.29]). Modern Italy has succumbed to an imbalance of cleverness, of foxiness.²²

In a striking admission, Machiavelli identifies the other part of the cynicism equation, that issuing from a more educated perception of natural phenomena. In so doing, he objects to the facet of modernity for which he is accused of being unthinkingly responsible. He notices that people become cynical and lethargic “when more knowledgeable about natural things” (Machiavelli 1960, 164 [*Discourses* 1.12]).²³ Science is no panacea; it can sap practitioners of their energy. Lightning and earthquakes are more likely to be inspirational when they are thought to issue from angry gods. This disrupts the depiction of Machiavelli as a paragon of cleverness and founder of the scientific study of politics. If the source of the debilitating popular corruption is cynicism, which comes from more clever apprehensions of leaders and nature, foxiness cannot be enough to succeed in a political environment that suffers from growing corruption. By giving the lion a separate identity, Machiavelli attempts to address the deficiencies of the fox and isolate the necessary countervailing traits.

We may now appreciate the importance of the dissection of Chiron. The constituent parts may have been in harmony in the ancient (or mountain) setting, but recent history reveals a discontinuity. Thinking and acting, seeing and touching, cleverness and vigor are not always, indeed not often, in equilibrium. Achilles represents a simpler, more noble, past, in which princes such as Camillus need only request sacrifices of their subjects, and compliance is forthcoming (Machiavelli 1960, 254 [*Discourses* 1.55]); or in which Pompilius Numa can claim to be on friendly terms with a nymph (p. 161 [*Discourses* 1.11]). Clever leaders could count on the good “feelings” of their constituents and thus could elicit devotion even when employing intermittent deception. Modern princes encounter no such environment. Crude and excessive cleverness now prevails,²⁴ and before the affective resources available to the prince are overwhelmed, Machiavelli isolates and protects them in the image of the lion.

Other scholars have paid special attention to modern corruption. Moravia (1964, 125), Paparelli (1970), Sasso (1980), and Wolin (1960) all resist Machiavelli’s reputation as the cool and clinical political scientist; instead, they trace his drastic suggestions to a fear that the environment in which humans must survive is growing ever more inhospitable, and therefore serious tactical measures must be taken to ensure functionality. But these scholars tend to bemoan or rationalize

what they concede is a necessary ascent of the fox rather than deal with the complexity of Machiavelli’s response to popular corruption. The cynicism attendant on political exposés and the deciphering of nature is mostly immune to foxy therapy and is in fact its byproduct. To succeed, founders and their constituents must be “happy” (Machiavelli 1960, 31 [*Prince* 6]), and thus they require some freshness and emotion not found in the fox.

Even though foxiness is in need of refinement, and Machiavelli certainly offers his suggestions, *The Prince* is not just about foxiness. It is not just an introduction to Lasswell’s political science and to classical liberalism. Indeed, Machiavelli precedes Strauss and Horkheimer in lamenting a politics that has been detached from its “why.” The corruption Machiavelli identifies, particularly citizen cynicism, puts the “why” in jeopardy. And rather than endorse a method that exacerbates the loss, Machiavelli offers the lion and its affective arsenal in an attempt to rescue politics from an excess of foxiness.

As to why the lesson of the lion may not be as accessible, or at least as “visible,” as that of the fox, Nietzsche, whose connection to Machiavelli has not gone unnoticed,²⁵ may have something to say. That analysts bypass the widening of the Platonic agenda for its lowering is a tribute to Plato’s seductiveness, not a sign of his defeat.²⁶ In addition, if the lion is more sensual than intellectual, we may have to look elsewhere than to systematic prose for the lessons. Inspiration is not a matter for traditional instruction, and it may be contained more in impressions than in specifications. Indeed, the brevity of *The Prince* is evidence that its message may be as much in what is not said as in what is said. But I am not offering just one more conjecture about hidden meanings and secret messages. The lessons concerning the lion are in *The Prince* for all to see, and I will identify a few of them. If the fox is the part of *forza* that is intellectual, then the lion reasonably can be held to represent the sensual part. And if the lion is of Chiron’s ancestry, then there is much more to the lion’s sensuousness than ferocity.²⁷

²² Machiavelli discusses one of Aesop’s fables in a letter to Vettori. It concerns the fox’s encounters with the lion: “The first time he was dying of fear, the second he stopped himself to observe him from behind a bush, the third he spoke to him” (Machiavelli 1961b, 292 [*Letters* 138, 26 August 1513]). (La prima volta fu per morire di paura, la seconda si fermò a guardarlo dritto un cespuglio, la terza gli favellò.)

²³ “quanto più conoscitori delle cose naturali.”

²⁴ Merleau-Ponty (1964, 217) seems to recognize the imbalance when he emphasizes Machiavelli’s interest in emotional reward: “The prince must have a feeling for these echoes that his words and deeds arouse.”

²⁵ Of course, there is Nietzsche’s (1966, 230–1 [*Beyond Good and Evil* 28]) famous tribute to Machiavelli that celebrates his particularly non-German *allegriissimo*. Adams (Machiavelli 1977) includes passages from Nietzsche in his edition of *The Prince*, but he connects the two only in terms of their dissection of morality. Hulliung (1983) devotes a good deal of discussion to comparison of the two.

²⁶ The Platonic agenda is maintained in Berlin’s (1953) famous essay, “The Hedgehog and the Fox,” in which nary a mention of the lion occurs in a discourse that locks political philosophy in a continuum characterized by intellectual rather than active, affective relations with reality.

²⁷ Oblivious to Machiavelli’s connection of Chiron and the lion, Allen Gilbert (1938, 120–1), in a single passage, underestimates both the aptitudes and the importance of the lion: “Nor is the lion here the lion accompanying the virtue of Fortitude, as the portal of the cathedral of Amiens; it is the lion of inhuman cruelty such as might typify Hannibal, who succeeded by detestable measures. But the concern of Machiavelli is not so much with force as with another sort of brutish conduct, characterized by craft.”

MACHIAVELLI'S LION

Even though I focus on the image of the lion, my primary intention is to identify in Machiavelli concerns that will challenge his reputation as simply a proponent of deception and violence. A demonstration that Machiavelli intends all his departures from foxiness to be associated with the lion is less important, or feasible, than a recognition of the inadequacies of only tactical advice in princely comportment. It certainly can be established that Machiavelli's Renaissance audience might be disposed to associate the lion with complex sensual characteristics (like those associated with Chiron), instead of with mere ferocity. The lion had long since lived up to its regal etymological roots, especially for Florentines, whose "Davidian"²⁸ insecurities were frequently teased by the imperialistic Venetians, whose mascot was the winged lion of San Marco.²⁹ Of course, the Florentines could respond with their own lion, Marzocco, and Machiavelli made certain of the rampant lion's image on the parade grounds of the city's militia (Bayley 1961, 255). Even on the cosmic level, the lion assumed prominence in Machiavelli's time through linking the nurturing sun to the constellation Leo (Klingender 1971, 456).

More pervasive, however, are two literary traditions that provide Machiavelli and his readers rich leonine depictions.³⁰ The first is that of the bestiary, the intriguing synthesis of biology and mythology containing pictures and descriptions of animals that combine the clinical with the whimsical. Descended from the Greek and Latin *Physiologus*, the continental bestiaries were remarkably consistent (Barber 1993, 12). Italian versions appeared in the thirteenth century (Dardano 1967, 29), a subdivision of which has come to be known as the *bestiario toscano* and a connection with Machiavelli has been noted (Haist 1999, 8). Even Machiavelli's purported collaborator, Leonardo da Vinci (see Masters 1996), tried his hand at a bestiary (da Vinci [1939] 1974), and Machiavelli's own robust appreciation of animal tropes is reinforced in his *Dell'asino d'oro* (Machiavelli 1965, 267–302). The lion in that poem is first described as fierce and bestial (p. 275 [*Golden Ass* 2.58]), but it is later revealed to be susceptible to great pride and sadness (pp. 300–1 [*Golden Ass* 8.79–81]).

The bestiaries are clear in their depictions of the lion as a versatile and complex entity. The texts establish its status as king of beasts and discuss the lion's affect. Snakes, fire, and loud noises are among the lion's phobias, which reinforces the image of a creature of complex and sympathetic emotions. The formidable sensuality of Chiron, along with his medicinal apti-

tudes, reverberate in the lion's capacity to resuscitate stillborn cubs with an invigorating lick (George and Yapp 1991, 48). Perhaps most interesting for my purposes, however, is that by the late Middle Ages the violent and impetuous qualities first attributed to the lion had been mostly transferred to the panther, which provided "a means of isolating and channeling the aggressive characteristics traditionally attributed to the lion" (Haist 1999, 11). The leopard is described as so impatient that it can tolerate only three or four pounces before seeking alternative prey (McKenzie 1905, 394). In Machiavelli's time, the authority of the lion was linked more to courage, respect, and integrity than to aggression and cruelty, thus solidifying the lion's heraldic identity (Yamamoto 2000, 75–131). The bestiary prepared Machiavelli's audience for a lion whose ferocity could be tempered and enhanced with the same complex sensual traits detected, albeit less distinctly, in Chiron.

The more commonly cited source of inspiration for Machiavelli's lion metaphor, however, is the *Fables of Aesop*, one of which is mentioned in a letter to Vettori (Machiavelli 1961b, 292 [*Letters* 138, 26 August 1513]). Najemy (1993, 510–1) notes the similarity of Machiavelli's rendition to that of the Latin version published by Ermolao Barbaro (1977). He fails to mention the influence of a more famous edition, the exquisite "Medici Aesop," a Greek language version almost certainly illuminated by the esteemed artist Gherardo di Giovanni. Although Machiavelli probably did not read Greek, it is impossible that he was unaware of the text, which was assembled to teach the ancient language to the children of Lorenzo the Magnificent (Fahy 1989, 10). The fable in the Vettori letter, on the lion and the fox, is contained in the Medici Aesop and is remarkably similar to it.

The importance of the fables in the education of Machiavelli's potential patrons and protégé, then, suggests a connection to his lion. And, as in the bestiaries, the Tuscan versions of which actually include select fables (Goldstaub and Wendriner 1892), it is clear that the lion's authority is based as much upon character as upon muscle. One fable in the Medici edition depicts an infirm lion, "dying in his cave" (Aesop 1989, 93). All the animals except one come to pay their respects. The exception is the fox, apparently immune to memories of the lion's magnetism. The limits of deception are revealed in another fable, when a donkey disguises himself under a lion skin. The ruse is exposed by the fox, "who knew the difference between a donkey's bray and a lion's roar" (p. 136). In yet another fable, an aging lion turns to guile in hunting when sapped of his youthful speed and strength (p. 161). The lions of Aesop, and of the Medici version in particular, are charismatic as well as fierce. Their qualities are such that they cannot be imitated, and they are capable of foxiness when constrained by loss of virility. For the king of beasts, cleverness is more a retirement diversion than a rare and inaccessible aptitude.

These discussions of Renaissance lions prepare us for a return to chapter 18 and a revised apprehension of the commentary that immediately follows Machiavelli's.

²⁸ Michelangelo's *David* is often associated with the Florentine self-image: small and ingenuous, courageous in the face of giants.

²⁹ Even the biblical lion contributes to the complexity. The lion's association with Saint Mark regards not only the "royal dignity of Christ" but also "a voice crying" (Mark 1:3). Regalness is complemented by pathos and loneliness. See Appleton and Bridges 1959, 60. For the diversity of leonine depictions in the Venetian Republic, see Rizzi 2000.

³⁰ If I were to explore both metaphors instead of just that of the lion, I would need to add a third influence, that of Reynard the fox. See Best 1983.

velli's mention of the animal hybrid. Machiavelli introduces two senses, sight and touch. Clearly, he means touch in the figurative sense of "feeling," since he says that most people are capable only of seeing, and that the prince must therefore attend to appearance. Appearance is the purview of the fox, who in the fables is unaffected even by the imminent departure of the lion, and whose coldness facilitates seeming over being. And the discussion is invariably interpreted to support the preeminence of cleverness in Machiavelli's thinking. Since many more people can see things than can feel them, the argument goes, the aptitudes attendant on the visible must of necessity be the most important (see Blanchard 1984; Feaver 1984; Marolda 1979).

Touch is a rarer but no less important aptitude;³¹ however, the lion's relative obscurity facilitates the faulty syllogism that links importance with frequency. Although individual citizens may not often touch the prince, the capable prince has the capacity to touch the collective and be touched by it. Sight is a sense, but it is not sensual. The observant fox lives a lonely life, dies a lonely death, and is not a fully political animal. It is left to the lion side of the prince to undertake the less accessible but nonetheless crucial sensual aspect of politics, to cultivate the inclination to touch, and to receive and revel in the touch of loyal adherents.

But beyond brute strength and an imprecise connection to the tactile, precisely what sensual elements does Machiavelli's lion bring to the political setting? I suggest that the lion stands for virility and community, traits that are consistent with Machiavelli's generous distribution of aptitudes to animals, with the inclusion of Chiron in the lineage of princely models, and with the animal mythology that surrounds Machiavelli and his audience. They are also traits that appear frequently in *The Prince* but receive inadequate attention. Although I will divide my discussion of community and virility, in the end I will show they are quite interdependent.

Virility

That physical, sensual prowess, the kind that cannot be simulated, is important to the prince may be linked to Machiavelli's preoccupation with the phenomenon of time. The first substantive discussion of virtù in *The Prince* is associated not with cleverness but with time: It cannot be wasted. Referring to the ancient Romans, Machiavelli (1960, 22 [*Prince* 3])³² writes: "Never would it have pleased them that which is in the mouths of all the experts of our time, to relish the benefit of time, so much better was their virtue and prudence;

because time eventually overtakes everything, and can bring with it good as well as bad and bad as well as good."

In *The Republic*, Plato is not very kind to the warrior character, Polemarchus, who is dismissed as a sweet but gullible bumpkin. In Machiavelli's dialogue, *The Art of War*, Luigi, the counterpart to Plato's warrior, is given more sincere respect. Fabrizio, Machiavelli's Socrates, chooses Luigi as interlocutor because his youth predisposes him to action (Machiavelli 1961a, 398 [*Art of War* 3]).³³ That he is more likely to carry out (*eseguire*) the advice makes him more fit to receive it. There is a connection between youth and action, action and politics. A clever plan needs a vigorous proponent. I believe Machiavelli's distaste for the normative, contemplative approach to politics stems as much from its undesirability as from its infeasibility. Glory, courage, and even more common appetitive interests are not "settled for," as self-preservation may have been for Hobbes and Locke. Luigi has qualities and perspectives that are just as important to political success as those of the intellectual, and the intellectual does not have the capacity to appreciate that fully. Hobbes and Locke may have chosen their priorities on the basis of what can be "trusted." Machiavelli's choices are not made by default.

The Prince is written for a Luigi. It is the most optimistic of Machiavelli's works with regard to the susceptibility of fortune to human cleverness. In the *Discourses*, humans are said to be restricted by their natural stubbornness and the comfort they receive from acting habitually. Pocock (1972, 173), relying on these and similar comments, attributes fortune's ultimate superiority to human inertia: "We cannot change our natures as fast as our circumstances change." Yet, we are told that the prince is to have "a spirit disposed to change itself according to the winds and to variations of fortune that command" (Machiavelli 1960, 73–4 [*Prince* 18]).³⁴ And this is immediately preceded by the famous admonition to simulate rather than embrace conventional virtues. The simulator, the fox, is capable of avoiding inertia by remaining emotionally aloof.

It appears that princely vulnerability issues more from physical frailty than intellectual deficiencies. After all, Machiavelli's ancient heroes, Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus, owed to fortune only their *occasione*, that is, the time and place propitious enough to showcase their talents. Had they the abilities to overcome the limitations of time and space, our impression is that they would have owed fortune nothing. They would have found an appropriate venue for their brilliance. Being mortals, however, they depended on fortune for the coincidence of cause and charisma. The association of time with Machiavelli's concept of virtue is thus established. Whereas cleverness may accumulate over time, virility requires timely exploitation.

³¹ Although the details must be saved for another essay, I would say that Machiavelli's interest in moving from a principality to a republic is dependent upon the extent to which the sense of touch can be inspired and transferred from the princely few to the republican many. For a detailed treatment of the sense of touch in Machiavelli, see Blanchard 1996.

³² "Né piacque mai loro quello che tutto dí è in bocca de' savii de' nostri tempi, di godere el beneficio del tempo, ma sí bene quello della virtù e prudenzia loro; perché el tempo si caccia innanzi ogni cosa, e può condurre seco bene come male e male come bene."

³³ Just as the young Callimaco "burns with desire" (Machiavelli 1965, 62 [*Mandragola* 1.1]), so does Luigi in his conversation with Fabrizio (Machiavelli 1961a, 408 [*Art of War* 3]).

³⁴ "un animo disposto a volgersi secondo ch'è venti e le variazioni della fortuna li comandano."

Similarly, in Machiavelli's setting, the hero of the day, Cesare Borgia, found "only opposed to his designs the brevity of Alexander's life and his own illness" (Machiavelli 1960, 39 [*Prince* 7]).³⁵ Even Borgia's monumental mistake in judgment, endorsing della Rovere for pope, was subtly linked to his health rather than deficiencies in cleverness. Just before discussing the "mistake" that was the cause of Borgia's demise, Machiavelli mentions a discussion with Valentino in which the duke claimed he had considered his father's premature departure and was ready with a clever plan. What Borgia could not have anticipated, or overcome even if he had anticipated it, was his own mortality: "To everything he had found remedy, except that he never thought, upon his [Alexander's] death, to be also himself dying" (Machiavelli 1960, 39 [*Prince* 7]).³⁶ Borgia's cleverness was compromised by his mortality, not by debilitating intellectual deficiencies.

In these discussions we encounter a sense of urgency. Borgia is of "great spirit," and he has "great intention" as well as "so much fierceness" (Machiavelli 1960, 39 [*Prince* 7]).³⁷ These are transitory elements in his princely arsenal. Machiavelli is hesitant to distract his young students with merciless analytical scrutiny of Borgia, like those included in *Legazioni* (Machiavelli 1964, 599 [*Legations* 1]).³⁸ Luigi and his ilk (Lorenzo) are inspired to act, to take advantage of what is a limited window. A few errors in cleverness are not nearly as disabling as an occasion lost in analytical paralysis.

It is not surprising, given the scholarly focus on Machiavelli's foxiness, that some commentators assert that Machiavelli's nemesis, fortune, can be overcome by literary fame. Although Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus may depend upon "occasione" for their successes, Machiavelli's eventual triumph is guaranteed as long as he has readers (Strauss 1958, 168; see also Flaumenhaft 1978). Cleverness is cumulative, and all one needs is eyes to take it in and an intellectual aptitude to employ it. It can be passed from generation to generation, perhaps most effectively in the form of books. Even death, it is argued, can be outfoxed.

Yet, although Plato and his acolytes might suggest that talking and thinking about wine are superior to drinking it (Strauss 1959, 31), Machiavelli insists that the thought is deficient without proximate action. In appreciating the youth of Luigi, and the corresponding qualities of spirit and courage, Machiavelli, rather than escape intellectualism, addresses its limitations. The lion feels, and a victory without the ability to be present to revel in it is hollow indeed (see Machiavelli 1965, 300 [*Golden Ass* 8.76]). Until Machiavelli's banishment, writing was ancillary to his political endeavors. Prowess cannot be experienced vicariously, and unlike

cleverness, is not cumulative. Rather, prowess is a perishable commodity. It is powerful only when it is fresh, and it is difficult, if not impossible, to simulate freshness. As his friends joked and worried about the depth of Barbera's affections, Machiavelli himself, in the autobiographical character of *Clizia*'s Nicomaco and in his poem to Barbera, considers the limits of simulation. In this context, then, even the bawdiest of Machiavelli's letters may be consulted with motives more respectable than salacious.

Machiavelli (1960, 101 [*Prince* 25]) states that fortune favors the young; he does not write "he who seems to be young." The advantage of seeming over being is reserved for the foxy characteristics. In terms of the lion, being young is preferable to seeming young,³⁹ and the passion and vigor of youth, and youth's followers, cannot be replicated in lifeless fame. Pertinax, regardless of his leadership skills, drew not just hatred but "contempt" (*disprezzo*) from a constituency disenchanted with his advanced years (pp. 79–80 [*Prince* 6]). In this sense, then, politics involves more than the Socratic rather than less. Certainly, Machiavelli gave up on *The Republic*, but as much because of deficiencies of the model as because of deficiencies of the raw materials. For Machiavelli, intellectual rewards are not especially compelling, and they certainly are insufficient to sustain a vibrant polity or an effective politician.

I now may address just why Machiavelli's analytical discussions (in the case of this article, the corruption of modern societies) must often be sought outside *The Prince*. Helpful are the works of those scholars who resist the mainstream notion that *The Prince* and the *Discourses* together form a seamless, synthetic treatment of comparative regimes (see Mansfield and Tarcov 1996, xx–xxvii; Strauss 1958, 17–53). Especially helpful are the insights of Felix Gilbert (1953, 153–6; see also Dionisotti 1980, 257), who shows that *The Prince* is a timely discussion of contemporary concerns, whereas the *Discourses* is more reserved and historical in focus. Gilbert's analysis, however, attempts to explain Machiavelli's migration to historical analysis with biographical details (see also Godman 1998). Machiavelli turns to history, we are told, because of the influence of his comrades in the Orti Oricellari.

I believe Machiavelli's approach changes not because of the influence of his audience but because of his recognition that potential princes require a message different from that needed by the erudite but politically impotent aristocrats of Machiavelli's garden conversations. *The Prince* is a handbook of action addressed to those capable of acting; the *Discourses* is a work of reflection addressed to those whose opportunities betray their intelligence. Reflection alone can be dreary, counterproductive to princely inspiration. There may be at least some accuracy to Machiavelli's facetious

³⁵ "solo si oppose alli sua disegni la brevità della vita di Alessandro e la malattia sua."

³⁶ "a tutto aveva trovato remedio, eccetto che non pensò mai, in su la sua morte, di stare ancora lui per morire."

³⁷ "l'animo grande e la sua intenzione alta," "tanta ferocia."

³⁸ For a full treatment of Machiavelli's various positions on Borgia, see Sasso 1966. Gilbert (1965, 170) also discusses the treatment of Borgia in *The Prince* compared to other of Machiavelli's works.

³⁹ Machiavelli's two plays, *Mandragola* and *Clizia*, make the point. *Clizia*, an adaptation of Plautus's *Casina*, enhances the wit of the main character, Nicomaco (Stalino in *Casina*), and emphasizes his age. This leaves no doubt that the operative distinction between the successful Callimaco in *Mandragola* and the humiliated Nicomaco of *Clizia* is the difference in their ages. See Lukes 1981.

claims regarding the tedium of the *Discourses* and that he was “forced” to write them.⁴⁰

But when Machiavelli sees in his audience a potential for action, he tempers the lengthy, dry, historical analysis appropriate for the intellectual audience of the *Discourses* with the “spirited” policy recommendations of *The Prince*.⁴¹ That *The Prince* is a shorter, less analytical work does not mean it is less profound than the *Discourses*. Machiavelli (1960, 274 [*Discourses* 2.Preface]) is quite sincere when he states that even though older men are more prudent, their physical weakness clouds their judgment. Full “cognition” can be achieved only when affairs can be “handled” (*maneggiare*) as well as seen (p. 272 [*Discourses* 2.Preface]). Politics, a balance of fox and lion, shirks analysis when it disrupts or deflates action. In the *Discourses* we encounter the ambiguity of two competing theories regarding the founding of Rome (p. 128 [*Discourses* 1.1]), but princely resolve is boosted in *The Prince* with only one (p. 31 [*Prince* 6]). Ambivalence is intellectually sophisticated; politically, it can be deadly. It should not be surprising that the scholar must leave *The Prince* to find a more analytical treatment of the corruption that I argue provokes Machiavelli’s migration from centaur to lion and fox. It is important for the budding prince to adopt lion behavior. Precisely why two separate animals are more appropriate models than one mythical creature is a discussion left for the other, more contemplative, audience of the *Discourses*.

From this perspective, *The Prince* does not “forgive” Borgia his impetuosity. That is an aspect of his princely character, of his virility. Although Machiavelli may not necessarily believe Borgia when he says he could have conquered everything, Machiavelli does enjoy hearing him say it, and he is certain that Borgia’s followers and even *Fortuna* herself, who prefers the “audacious” (Machiavelli 1960, 101 [*Prince* 25]), are equally impressed with his hubris. Machiavelli admires Borgia not only because he is clever but also because he has the strength and inclination for tactile experience of the “hills, the valleys, the plains, the rivers, and the swamps” (p. 63 [*Prince* 14]).⁴² These are princely specifications not often mentioned by those preoccupied with Machiavelli’s focus on cleverness. When they are mentioned, interesting maneuvers ensue. Kahn (1986, 64), who notes the foxy recommendation to the

prince to read history, suggests that Machiavelli “makes the humanist claim for textual imitation even more forcefully by comparing skill in government to skill in reading, by making the ruler’s landscape into a text and the text into a realm of forces. The prince is advised to read the terrain (*imparare la natura de’ siti*).”

Indeed, the prince is to learn about nature by subjecting his body to nature’s inconveniences (*disagi*) (Machiavelli 1960, 63 [*Prince* 14]). But *imparare* (to learn), Machiavelli’s term, is rendered “to read” by Kahn. To conflate the reading of history and trudging through the bush into one type of exercise is to miss the counterposition of the fox and the lion. Machiavelli (p. 63 [*Prince* 14]), after all, encourages the prince to learn the countryside by hunting in it, a far cry from reading about it. For him, landscape is not a text to be read and manipulated to fit some princely metanarrative. Rather, the landscape provides limitations to cleverness and demands the less fungible traits of youth and vigor.⁴³ It takes more than an intellectual plan to bring down a wolf and maintain a domain. The prince is not just consummate cleverness. He is, rather, a difficult synthesis in which youth and vigor must participate.

This perspective activates the “much debated question whether the Italian nationalism of the last chapter forms an integral part of Machiavelli’s political outlook” (Gilbert 1939, 483). All too often, the sincerity of chapter 26 is dismissed by those who cannot reconcile the apparent hyperbole with the intellectual aptitudes of Lorenzo, Machiavelli’s second choice (Borsellino 1989, 111; Godman 1998, 300; Prezzolini 1954, 168). Yet, Machiavelli makes it clear that a good prince is not so much brilliant as opportunistic. Taking advantage of an opportunity elicits a communal “enjoyment” (*si godono*) that is capable of distracting him from analytical dissection (*non cercano altro*) (Machiavelli 1960, 97 [*Prince* 24]). And to take such advantage, the prince needs vigor and virility, traits of the lion, as much as he needs cleverness. Indeed, Machiavelli (p. 103 [*Prince* 26]) finds a “genius” (*ingegno*) in the Italian citizenry, and he is not exaggerating. He detects in the people not an intellectual brilliance but an emotional, communal inclination that is in suspended animation. To the lion falls the responsibility of awakening them from dormancy.

Machiavelli (1960, 102 [*Prince* 26]), having introduced the healing arts through Chiron, exploits the surname of *The Prince*’s recipient with a medical analogy in the last chapter: “As if without life, [Italy] awaits that which can be cures to its injuries.”⁴⁴ No doubt the physician need be clever, but the capable practitioner also must carry a supreme confidence to the task. Expertise must be balanced with “feeling,” with the belief that the patient is worthy of the treatment and the physician is supremely qualified to

⁴⁰ Gilbert (1965) argues that Machiavelli’s friend, Francesco Guicciardini, turned away from politics and toward history in response to the disappointments of the optimism and humanism of the early Renaissance. Gilbert argues that Machiavelli retained an interest in politics because the collapse of Florence was not so imminent when he wrote. Yet, surely, Machiavelli experienced the ambiguities of Renaissance life as intensely as Guicciardini. A trusted advisor to the leaders of the Florentine Republic, Machiavelli suffered six drops of the *strappado* and banishment from Florence at the hands of the resurgent Medici. He was immersed in the cultural achievements of Florence, yet he lamented its embarrassing vulnerability to the invading French. Gilbert does not fully recognize that history is not the only recourse to the ambiguity of the present. As a politico, Machiavelli strikes a delicate balance between consulting history and ignoring or reformulating it for the sake of confident action.

⁴¹ Machiavelli (1960, 14 [*Prince* Dedicatory]) literally imbues his gift to Lorenzo with his “spirit” (*animo*).

⁴² “li poggi, le valli, e’ piani, e’ fiumi, e’ paludi che sono.”

⁴³ Machiavelli (1960, 16–25 [*Prince* 3]) reinforces the limitations of cleverness yet again by encouraging the prince to go and live, physically, in conquered territories.

⁴⁴ “Come senza vita, aspetta qual possa esser quello che sani le sua ferite.”

act on the patient's behalf, not to mention the requisite confidence the patient must hold in the practitioner. These are the traits of the sophisticated lion, and if those traits are promulgated in the body of the text, as I demonstrate, then the last chapter is less anomaly and more parting inspiration. In a book normally interpreted as an homage to cleverness, the closing reference to love (p. 105 [*Prince* 26]) may seem incongruous. If the lessons about cleverness are balanced with the references to urgency, vitality, and virility, however, then the references to love and being loved are not surprising.

Community

Youth and vigor may be necessary components of princely love, but they are not sufficient. The lion's virility is complemented by its comradeship. The lion is young and strong but, unlike the fox, is a social animal whose power is charismatic as well as muscular. Achilles distinguishes himself among fellow warriors by sharing his emotions, even suffering, in captivating song (Homer 1924, 395, 397 [*Iliad* 9.186, 189]). Music is a shared experience; it reveals vulnerabilities that lesser warriors must sequester. The lion shares loyalty, love, and passion with its community, whereas the fox remains cold and lonely. Whereas the unappreciated fox may seek redemption in posthumous recognition, the lion and his community thrive on shared experience.

In an otherwise excellent biography of Machiavelli, Sebastian de Grazia (1989) musters only a weak tribute to his motivations. Obviously troubled by Machiavelli's reputation for compromise and banality, de Grazia (p. 175) puts forth "the common good" as Machiavelli's true and compelling passion. But having already described Machiavelli as the life of the party at the Palazzo Vecchio, whose absences are sorely missed by his less lively compatriots, as a master equestrian who could ride tirelessly for days on important diplomatic missions, and as an orator whose skills are not reserved for charming alliances of only the political variety, it becomes even more difficult to accept that for Machiavelli the point of it all is some uncertain and delayed gratification of a distant and nebulous cause. Having preceded "The Point of It All" with chapters titled "Irreverent and on the Go" and "The Fool in Love," we are asked not to allow "these biographical questions . . . [to prevent us] from confronting the teleological issue" (p. 158). There is apparently no place in the teleology of politics for "the sorrow Niccolo expressed at being out of politics, when in it he must have enjoyed it" (pp. 157–8). Essentially, de Grazia joins the Meinecke (1965) camp. Machiavelli's life, like his writings, contains bad and distracting things, and we are asked to suspend our knowledge of them in favor of a more noble concern.

If the common good were sufficient reason to do politics, then Machiavelli's hero would be Ligurio, the clever trickster of his play, *Mandragola*. After all, it was the successful implementation of his plan that prompted Sostrata to crow: "Who would not be hap-

py?" (Machiavelli 1965, 112 [*Mandragola* 5.6]).⁴⁵ Indeed, with few exceptions,⁴⁶ the scholarly consensus is that Ligurio represents Machiavelli.⁴⁷ But Ligurio is a sad and deficient character, described as a parasite, who exploits and manipulates Callimaco's courage and initiative, which are qualities he lacks. In fact, Ligurio is a paragon of those who "proceed coldly" (*freddamente procedono*) (Machiavelli 1960, 101 [*Prince* 25]) and thus fail to seduce fortune. How can Ligurio be considered a quintessential Machiavellian when Machiavelli speaks so vehemently of the deficiencies of mercenaries and cynics?

In fact, Machiavelli's disdain for mercenaries is difficult to explain in the context of a preoccupation with cleverness. Machiavelli makes the point in chapter 12 that mercenaries are immune to foxy manipulation. Indeed, if they were susceptible, princes would be given strategic advice as to how to manufacture fealty. Instead, the prince is counseled to avoid the employment of mercenaries like the plague. That the prince is to rely on a native militia betrays the limitations of cleverness. What a native army can provide, both for itself and for its princely leader, is a feeling of common purpose, which in soldiers inspires courage and in leaders inspires ambition and tenacity. Machiavelli (1960, 54 [*Prince* 12]) wants to maintain the passion of politics, despite its intermittent venality, and the employment of mercenaries debilitates that passion: "They have no other love or cause on the battlefield than their stipend, which is not enough to make them want to die for you."⁴⁸ The retention of fearless troops is, of course, paramount to military success. But the feeling of the prince that his troops are prepared to die for him is also crucial to inspired leadership. In both cases, cleverness is insufficient, and the comradeship and virility of the lion are crucial.

De Grazia is partly right, but the common good ought to be accompanied by a very personal feeling one can derive from the common good being served. Machiavelli's appreciation for the republic is founded on its capacity to condition its participants, with laws and religion, to appreciate something larger than them-

⁴⁵ "Chi non sarebbe allegra?"

⁴⁶ Dionisotti (1984, 644) is not so anxious to equate Machiavelli with Ligurio; he notes the similar life experiences of Machiavelli and Callimaco, which complicates the issue. Cavallini (1973, 79) states that the prince in *Mandragola* is "nessuno in particolare." Although Barber (1984) links Ligurio with Machiavelli's association of radical adaptability with princely virtù, he is not prepared to equate Ligurio with the prince. But ambivalence is the exception. Mansfield (2000, 27–8) offers an unusual vindication of Nicia, the cuckold.

⁴⁷ Sasso (1988, vol. 3, 118) equates Machiavelli with Ligurio, who is able to succeed in the "artificial" environment at what evaded Machiavelli in the "serious" world. Lord (1979, 817) recognizing the influence of Hale (1961, 186), simply states: "Ligurio is Machiavelli's self-portrait." Pitkin (1984, 30) writes: "If one were to select one character in this play with whom Machiavelli might best be identified, the choice seems clear enough. It is not, despite the possible pun on his name, Nicia, nor, as one might conventionally suppose, the hero Callimaco. Instead, it is Ligurio, the author of the plot." See also Baldan (1980, 389), who argues that "Ligurio is the projection of Machiavelli."

⁴⁸ "Che le non hanno altro amore né altra cagione che le tenga in campo, che un poco di stipendio, il quale non è sufficiente a fare che vogliano morire per te."

selves. Not only is the common good served, but also there is induced the kind of emotion that inspires a citizen-soldier to risk his life. Identifying in Machiavelli some hidden attachment to humanist morality, and thus to some nebulous "comunità spirituale" (Olschki 1970, 187) is not enough. The common good must be reinforced by a sense of personal worth, contribution, and grandeur.⁴⁹

An important passage in *The Prince* seems to contradict an interpretation of the lion as complex and communal: "Fortune is woman, and it is necessary, wanting to take her under, to beat her and knock her around" (Machiavelli 1960, 101 [*Prince* 25]).⁵⁰ Of course, our modern sensitivities draw us, mostly critically, to the rhetoric of male domination. At first blush, this is quintessential machismo, and the lion is a stock character. Certainly, Hanna Pitkin believes it to be so. For her, the Renaissance is defined by a sense of autonomy in rebellion against the dependent mentality of the Middle Ages. Machiavelli's apparent machismo, then, is said to represent the hubris of Renaissance autonomy.

The lion prevails, however, because fortune "allows" it (*lasciare*). Autonomy is not the key to the lion's force. The lion relies more on a visceral attractiveness that accompanies virility, impetuosity, and sensuality. Fortune, like the rest of the lion's constituency, allows herself to be influenced. This is a much more complex and tenuous matter than sheer machismo or "autonomy," and Machiavelli is not the Renaissance man that Pitkin claims. Cleverness, the fox, may produce a kind of autonomy, but the lion, crucial to princely success, is actually quite vulnerable. The lion's audience is fickle and transitory, but it is willing to forgive mistakes of cleverness among its favorites. Ligurio, the epitome of *freddezza*, despite his superb foxiness, is never going to conquer fortune, not because he is not smart enough, but because he is not erotic enough. At least one perceptive scholar has recognized that the real source of power in *Mandragola* lies with Lucrezia; like fortune, she "allows" herself to be won over by Callimaco (D'Amico 1984), and his princely success depends upon Lucrezia's unpredictable, perhaps impetuous, inclinations. He can only hope he has the sensual characteristics, of which youth is perhaps the most indispensable, to elicit her favors.

Lions are not autonomous. They are communal animals that demand the respect of their enemies and the loyalty of their friends. Autonomy would mean that the lion rapes fortune in *The Prince*, which is Pitkin's impression. But rape is enjoyable to neither assailant nor victim, and both fortune and the prince's citizenry would soon rebel. In fact, Machiavelli frequently discusses, figuratively and literally, the devastating reper-

cussions of rapacious behavior (Machiavelli 1960, 46, 75, 149 [*Prince* 9, 19; *Discourses* 1.7]).

The lion's aversion to rape may help clarify a puzzling section of *The Prince*, regarding the differences between Cesare Borgia and Agathocles the Sicilian. Kahn, stressing cleverness, argues that Machiavelli is testing his audience when he distinguishes the two leaders. The basis for her position is her identification of "striking analogies" in their respective careers (Kahn 1986, 73). The clever reader will see that in condemning Agathocles for his excessive cruelty, Machiavelli is conveying the same message to his readers that Borgia sent to the people of Cesena when he killed his fall guy, Remirro, and left him in two pieces in the piazza. The lesson to the clever is that all actions are amenable to the mollification of cleverness.

Kahn's argument is more compelling than those of scholars who excavate the historical record for factual distinctions that were never mentioned by Machiavelli (Price 1977; Wooton 1994). In fact, it seems that Machiavelli intentionally correlates the deeds of the two men. Nevertheless, we should not overlook the larger discussion in which Agathocles and Borgia are found. There is a third individual in the comparison, Oliverotto da Fermo, who is advertised as a modern Agathocles and whose power issues not only from a parricide but also from a massacre that eliminates "all of the first men of Fermo" (Machiavelli 1960, 43 [*Prince* 8]).⁵¹ Oliverotto does no less than erase the entire context in which his newly gained power could be relished and celebrated. We learn that the father he kills is not his natural father but a generous uncle who had come to love Oliverotto voluntarily. How doubly sweet the celebration would have been had Oliverotto the opportunity to return all the favors.

Although Borgia, Agathocles, and even Oliverotto may have committed similar deeds, we detect distinctions in the portrayals of how they felt about those deeds. If the lion is important, then Machiavelli's prince needs to be able to commit judicious and foxy cruelty (even murder) without succumbing to, or instigating, debilitating cynicism. He needs to do so quickly and then return to an appreciative and receptive audience. Borgia ends up killing Oliverotto, cruelly, but we are content with the deed. And our happiness allows Borgia to maintain an identity not fully defined by his intrigues. As Merleau-Ponty (1964, 213) notes, "pure violence can only be episodic."

The difficulty in distinguishing Agathocles from Borgia, then, stems directly from the difficulty in seeing *The Prince* as more than a handbook on cleverness. The deeds may be strategically similar, but the way in which the perpetrator contemplates them is not. Machiavelli needs the prince to believe he can commit crimes and still feel pride and respect. And regardless of historical detail, Machiavelli portrays Agathocles as a superb fox, who indeed owes nothing to fortune. But in his cruelty, like Oliverotto with whom he is linked, Agathocles deprives himself of the very reason to pursue politics. The interests and aptitudes of the lion must be ac-

⁴⁹ It is Locke, not Machiavelli, who has trouble in this regard. Locke can only advise his self-interested soldiers that a certain death for deserting is more dreadful than an uncertain death for holding firm in battle. See Locke 1960, 407 (*Second Treatise*, sec. 139).

⁵⁰ "Io giudico bene questo, che sia meglio essere impetuoso che rispettivo, perché la fortuna è donna; et è necessario, volendola tenere sotto, batterla et urtarla. E si vede che la si lascia più vincere da questi, che da quelli che freddamente procedono."

⁵¹ "tutti li primi uomini di Fermo."

knowledge, especially when the environment is fraught with foxiness. Agathocles is a rapist, so beneath the civility of his constituents lies at best a resentful resignation to the authority of a lonesome deviant. The lion, conversely, may be macho, but he is not isolated. His machismo demands of his audience a voluntary infatuation, and thus he is dependent on his audience in ways the fox is not.

CONCLUSION

Whereas the *Discourses* more thoroughly dissect the who, what, when, and how of politics, *The Prince* also entertains the why. Recognizing that cleverness alone is not enough to inspire the political enterprise, Machiavelli introduces the lion as accompaniment to the more famous fox. In response to the why of politics, Plato's "idea of the good" is utterly uninspiring, and the "common good" is insufficient. Rather, the lion represents a more satisfying physical component in the political equation. The successful prince may be tutored to avoid recklessness, but he is also young and impetuous, infatuated with his position and attractive to his constituents. He reads books, but he is also restless, traveling and hunting throughout his domain. He studies warfare, but he also relishes joining battle amid an intimate fraternity of compatriots. He seeks fame and glory, but he is also happy in doing so, not driven.

These considerations modify standard interpretations of Machiavellian virtù, at least that which applies to princes. Clearly, fortune can outwit the earnest, and the prince needs to cultivate an aloof mutability. This advice is given soberly and systematically. But fortune is also contemptuous of the lonely and infirm, preferring the company of the alpha. The leonine interests are undertaken within a less programmatic but more pervasive aura of gratification. The depiction of the Italian populace in the last chapter of *The Prince* is that of an unrequited courtesan, aching for a connection with a young and compelling partner. Unlike the precision of his advice regarding the establishment of fortresses or the selection of advisers, Machiavelli (1960, 105 [*Prince* 26]) "cannot express" (*Né posso esprimere*) the emotion awaiting release in this compelling combination. And this crescendo is preceded by a promise in chapter 6 that capable founders, pursuant tactical success, can look forward to honor, happiness, and *venerazione* (p. 32 [*Prince* 6]).

Princely virtue is a balance, then, of the clever and the charismatic. Given the sophistication and cynicism of Machiavelli's contemporaries, the balance is difficult to achieve. Cleverness must be superbly camouflaged and judiciously exploited, lest it dampen the intoxication attendant on charisma. This is the complex message of Machiavelli's quintessential political work. To impart the message he chooses his metaphors carefully. For the Italian prince the targeted images of fox and lion are superior to the more blurry image of the centaur. With this enhanced precision, Machiavelli recognizes and embraces the prospect of shaping mar-

ble that has already been poorly begun by others (Machiavelli 1960, 162 [*Discourses* 1.11]).

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli often employs the informal pronoun to address his budding prince. Puzzled scholars, seduced by the cleverness motif, invariably conclude that this is no more than another "*forma di manipolazione*" (Di Maria 1984, 78; see also Chiappelli 1969, 80; Raimondi 1972, 266). Yet, *tu* is employed in Italian when speaking to the young as well as to intimates. I think Machiavelli has in mind a young and proximate individual, drawn to the prospect of the imminent adulation of intimates. By addressing his young, aristocratic audience in the familiar, Machiavelli is not employing just another clever trick. Rather, he is displaying an honesty whose breadth is not always found in his scholarly tracts. Politics, for Machiavelli, is a delicate balance of acumen and boldness, of knowing and feeling. So it is hardly a trick when he moderates his scholarly inclinations for inspirational reasons. In so doing, he does not simplify or censor what he knows. It is neither ironic nor paradoxical that Machiavelli can claim to have put "all I know" about politics into such a short work.⁵² The princely ingredients derived from the lion may necessitate a shortening of his message, but that hardly prevents the complications often overlooked by his interpreters. There is more to Machiavelli than a debate about just how much he betrays Plato.

⁵² Machiavelli has puzzled scholars by introducing both *The Prince* and the *Discourses* with some sort of statement that what follows is "all I know" about politics (Machiavelli 1960, 13, 121 [*Prince* Dedicatory, *Discourses* Dedicatory]). In *The Prince* the verb employed is *conoscere*, rather than the *sapere* of the *Discourses*. Because *The Prince* contains the enhancements of the lion perspective, it is not surprising that Machiavelli employs the verb that encompasses sensual and personal perceptions as well as intellectual knowledge. He wrote to his friend Francesco Vettori, in his most famous letter, that in *The Prince* he was "as profound as I can be" (*mi profondo quanto io posso*) (Machiavelli 1961, 304 [*Letters* 140, 10 December 1513]).

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