A Critical Interpretation of Leo Strauss' *Thoughts on Machiavelli*

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Abstract: Strauss's analysis of Machiavelli is both about his argument and action. He looks Machiavelli's argument through the lens of classical political philosophy especially Plato's political philosophy. He believed Machiavelli had not achieved important theoretical innovation. He looks Machiavelli's action through the lens of modernity. He believed Machiavelli's political thought did not perform a good function as it did in the last several centuries any more. Moreover, Strauss supplement Machiavelli's political thought with a discussion of the problem of technique. Strauss's caution of the technical innovation makes sense, but his distinction between theoretical science and technique is not convincing.

Keywords: Leo Strauss; Machiavelli; Classical Political Philosophy; Modernity

Introduction

There was a disputation between Harvey C. Mansfield and J. G. A. Pocock about Leo Strauss' *Thoughts on Machiavelli* (hereafter as *TM*). In his "Strauss's Machiavelli," Mansfield enumerated and defended against several critiques of Strauss' interpretation of Machiavelli.[1] Pocock begins his "Prophet and Inquisitor" with a critique of Mansfield's defendant attitude. Then Pocock focused on the problem of "esoteric writing". Pocock believed that *TM* can be read like other exoteric

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[1] Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. Strauss's Machiavelli. *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Nov., 1975), pp. 372-384.

books, and Strauss' esoteric reading of Machiavelli is not always necessary or correct.[2] Mansfield's response to Pocock was brief, and had leaved a question open to his readers: what Strauss' true or esoteric teaching about Machiavelli really is?[3]

To answer this question, we have to analyze Strauss' argument. Strauss' argument in *TM* is hard to understand.[4] This is not only because Strauss' exercising of his special writing method or esoteric writing modes, but also because the complexity of the subjects he dealt with. In this book, Strauss dealt with many important subjects, including ancient and modern, philosophy and religion or Athens and Jerusalem, republic and principality, democracy and aristocracy, esoteric writing, justice, and morality and so on. Maybe we could say that these subjects exist at several different levels, have many connections with each other and are dynamic rather than stable. Therefore, Strauss has to develop a very complex dynamic picture or argument to imitate this very complex dynamic whole, even if he does not exercise the esoteric writing.

However, there are simplicities in this complexity. Near the beginning of TM, Strauss said that, "We did assume that there are fundamental alternatives, alternatives which are permanent or coeval with man...Our critical study of Machiavelli's teaching can ultimately have no other purpose than to contribute towards the recovery of the permanent problems."[5] The fundamental problems or the fundamental alternatives, because of their fundamentality, should be simple. This article wants to catch *TM*'s complexity through its simplicity. Part 1 will handle the first simplicity: Machiavelli's intention. Part 2 will provide a complete analysis of *TM*'s paragraph-structure. Part 3 will discuss Strauss's analysis of Machiavelli's teaching. Part 4 will present some critiques of Strauss' argument. Part 5 will be the conclusion.

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[2] J. G. A. Pocock. Prophet and Inquisitor: Or, a Church Built upon Bayonets Cannot Stand: A Comment on Mansfield's "Strauss's Machiavelli". *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Nov., 1975), pp. 385-401.

[3] Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. Reply to Pocock. *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Nov., 1975), pp. 402-405.

[4] Mansfield said that, "But if Machiavelli scholars had read Kendall's enthusiastic review, they would have been chilled by his insouciant remark that in order to come to terms with this book, it was necessary to kiss goodbye to six month's of one's life." Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. Strauss's Machiavelli. *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Nov., 1975), p. 377.

[5] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.14.

1. Strauss on Machiavelli's Intention

In his "Political Philosophy and History," Strauss states "Political Philosophy is not a historical discipline. The philosophic questions of the nature of political things and of the best, or the just, political order are fundamentally different from historical question." [6] This means Political Philosophy cares about the future, while the History only pays attention to the past. Political Philosophy always cares about what the political society should be *in the future*. Strauss distinguish this kind of Political Philosophy from 1950's Political Science, which believed that "the substance of social science is radically historical",[7] and "social science can answer questions of facts and their causes; it is not competent to answer questions of value."[8] The modern western man, stands with modern political science, "no longer believes that he can know what is good and bad, what is right and wrong".[9] In contrast, "Until a few generations ago, it was generally taken for granted that man can know what is right and wrong, what is the just or the good or the best order of society - in a word that political philosophy is possible and necessary."[10]

Therefore, when Strauss claim in *TM* that Machiavelli is not a political scientist but a political philosopher,[11] he is claiming that Machiavelli believed there is a best political order. It could be supposed that Machiavelli's basic or first intention in his major books is to reveal this best political order. However, this simple hypothesis costs Strauss half book to demonstrate. [12]

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[6] Leo Strauss. Politcal Philosophy and History. in *What is Politcal Philosophy? And Other Studies.* The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p.56.

[7] Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History*. The University of Chicago Press, 1965, p.38.

[8] Leo Strauss. *Natural Right and History*. The University of Chicago Press, 1965, p.40.

[9] Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, p.81.

[10] Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, p.81.

[11] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp. 11-12, 232-234. Leo Strauss. What is Politcal Philosophy?. in *What is Politcal Philosophy? And Other Studies.* The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p.40.

[12] Strauss said in Chapter 3 that "But whereas the *Prince* conveys the wholly new teaching regarding the foundations of society, the *Discourses* conveys the wholly new teaching regarding the foundations of society, i.e. the best society." Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago:

Firstly, the difficulty is coming from the fact "Machiavelli presented his political teaching in two books, the *Prince* and the *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy*," and "their relation is obscure."[13] Specifically, the *Prince* seems like in favor of the principalities while the *Discourses* seems like advocate the republic. So, which is Machiavelli's best political order?

Strauss compares these two books to answer this question. He saw that, "Machiavelli presents in each of his two books substantially the same teaching from two different points of view, which may be described provisionally as the points of view of the actual prince and of potential princes."[14] But there are further questions to answer: "does he regard the distinction between princes and tyrants as ultimately valid or not? does he regard the common good as the ultimate criterion or not? or does he think that these questions do not permits of a simple answer but require for their answer a distinction?"[15] For scholars who study Machiavelli's teaching, even for those who do not believe in Strauss' interpretation of Machiavelli, these questions are hard to ignore. And, it is sure that "the question which we raised can be answered only by reading Machiavelli's books."[16] However, what is extremely shocking in Strauss' interpretation is that, in order to answer these questions, we have to change our ordinary understanding of the basic terms like prince, people, virtue, republic and principality. Eventually, the question is not whether republic or principality is better any more, but had changed as what kind of society or political order "is most conducive to the well-being of the large majority of the people and of the great"[17] This new order could not be considered as a traditional republic or a traditional principality.

Moreover, what Machiavelli wants to reveal is "new modes and orders" rather than a simple best political order. [18] While the orders are stable, the modes are

The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.116. However, considering its context, this is only a provisional statement. Strauss still had to demonstrate its revised version in the next many pages.

[13] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.15.

[14] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.29.

[15] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.29.

[16] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.29.

[17] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.281.

[18] Niccolo Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy*. trans. by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov.

dynamic. Machiavelli's modes are the modes of dynamic human action, especially of the dynamic human action which could establish and maintain the orders. [19] According to Strauss, the classical political philosophy only cares about the best order rather than "modes and orders", because the establishment of the best order "is truly a coincidence – something for which one can wish or hope but which one cannot bring about." [20] Thus, Machiavelli's "modes" is a new factor in history of political philosophy. Strauss has to try his best to deal with this new factor. In fact, Strauss thinks Machiavelli's order is simple, and maybe only spends two paragraphs to describe it.[21] What makes *TM* so complex is Machiavelli's sophisticated "modes".

What Strauss found so ironic is that Machiavelli actually had found no new modes of human action. He concluded in *TM* that, "in fact, however, Machiavelli does not bring to light a single political phenomenon of any fundamental importance which was not fully known to the classics."[22] What are new to the political philosophy are not some modes but only one mode of human action: the propaganda. At the end of TM's Chapter 3, Strauss said that, "Machiavelli is the first philosopher who believes that the coincidence of philosophy and political power can be brought about by propaganda which wins over ever larger multitudes to the new modes and orders and thus transforms the thought of on or few into the opinion of the public and therewith into public power. Machiavelli breaks with the Great Tradition and initiates the Enlightenment." [23] Thus, what makes *TM* so complex partly is the mode of Machiavelli's propaganda, or the mode of Machiavelli's writing. In other words, Strauss had to walk through Machiavelli's propaganda to his theoretical core, or walk through Machiavelli's writing mode to his new orders. We could confirm this assertion by analyzing the structure of *TM*.

The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.5.

[19] Niccolo Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy*. trans. by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov. The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.290. Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.28-29.

[20] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.173.

[21] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.279-282.

[22] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.295.

[23] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.173.

2. The Structure of *TM*

TM contains one Introduction and four Chapters. Chapter 2 and Part 1 of Chapter 3 both contains 26 paragraphs. Since Strauss himself had fully recognized the importance of the number 26, this could not be a simple coincidence. [24] It could be assumed that Strauss had arranged the paragraphs deliberately. In order to discover Strauss' argument, we should analyze *TM* paragraph by paragraph.

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[24] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.48.

The Introduction contains 3 parts and 12 paragraphs.

1-2. The old fashioned and simple opinion.	1. Machiavelli is a teacher of evil.
	2. Its deficiency
3-6. The more sophisticated views.	3. Machiavelli is a passionate patriot or a scientific student of society or both.
	4. Machiavelli' thought is universal and normative.
	5. Patriotism and evil.
	6. Scientism and evil.
7-12. Strauss' own views.	7. Machiavelli' teaching is immoral and irreligious.
	8. The pre-modern point of view, both Biblical and classical.
	9. The considerate ascent from the old opinion.
	10. Machiavelli vs. America.
	11. Machiavelli in America.
	12. The purpose of *TM* is to contribute towards the recovery of the permanent problems.

Table 1 The Structure of The Introduction

Chapter 1 contains 37 paragraphs which could be divided into 3 parts. Both the Part 1 and Part 2 could be divided into several subsections.

1-15. The relation of Machiavelli's two books.	1-4. The relation of his two books is obscure.	1. Question.
		2. Answer: They devote to different subject.
		3. Continue.
		4. It is not based on Machiavelli's own statements.
	5-7. The conformity of his two books.	5. Each book contains everything that he knows.
		6. His teaching in each book is all-comprehensive.
		7. Their subject-matters.
	8-15. The inconformity of his two books.	8. Their different audience.
		9. The differences caused by the different audience.
		10. Continue.
		11. Continue.
		12. The *Prince* is superficially more traditional than the *Discourses*.
		13. The *Prince* is superficially more reserved than the *Discourses*.
		14. The *Discourses* cannot be altogether unreserved.
		15. The *Prince* is in some respects more outspoken than the *Discourses*.
16-36. The manner of Reading Machiavelli.	16-17. The proper manner of Reading Machiavelli.	16. The question of his two books' relationship.
		17. The question can be answered only by reading Machiavelli's books.
	18-27. Four reading rules.	18. Rule 1. The silent fact is unimportant.
		19. Application of Rule 1, the devil, hell and soul are unimportant.
		20. Application of Rule 1, against the revealed religion.
		21. Rule 2. The importance of incomplete silence.
		22. Application of Rule 2.

		23. Rule 3. The reader must travel the last part of the road.
		24. Continue. The manifest blunders indicate his intention.
		25. Continue. The truth could be concealed among many lies.
		26. Application of Rule 3. Misquotations and so on.
		27. Rule 4. The titles are unrevealing.
	28-31. Bewaring of Machiavelli's intention.	28. It is important to understand his intention.
		29. It is uneasy to understand his intention.
		30. His deliberate self-contradiction.
		31. He reveals his teaching in stages: ascends from first to second statement.
	32-36. Bewaring of Machiavelli's use of examples, numbers and terms.	32. Examples.
		33. Terms.
		34. Numbers: 142 and 26.
		35. Continue.
		36. Other numbers.
37. Summary.		

Table 2 The Structure of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 contains 26 paragraphs which could be divided into 2 symmetrical parts.

1-13. The character and structure of the *Prince*.		14-26. Machiavelli's intention in the *Prince*.	
1-3. Its character.	1. A treatise.	14-18. The new prince.	14. Its Subject: The new prince.
	2. Both a treatise and a tract.		15. The founder of new type of society.
	3. Its Movement.		16. Romulus and Moses.
4-7. Its structure.	4. Its Section 1: 1-11.		17. Impossible to imitate Moses.
	5. Its Section 2: 12-14.		18. The liberator of Italy must be an inventor of new modes and orders.
	6. Its Section 3: 15-23.	19-26. Machiavelli as a new prince	19. Machiavelli's intention
	7. Its Section 4: 24-26.		20. He's teacher of princes and "the young".
8-13. Its twofold character.	8. Its traditional surface and revolutionary center.		21. One teacher of princes, Chiron.
	9. Continue.		22. Princes' private interest and common good.
	10. The difficulty of liberating Italy.		23. His teaching and his patriotism.
	11. The liberation needs brutal modes.		24. As teacher of the young.
	12. The liberation means a complete revolution.		25. He is a prophet or a new founder.
	13. The liberation and the Church.		26. How can he reasonably hope for the success?

Table 3 The Structure of Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 contains 59 paragraphs which could be divided into 2 parts.

1-26.The writing manner, structure and intention of the *Discourses*		27-59. Authority and Innovation.	
1. The writing manner.	1. The writing manner.	27-29. Reject authorities.	27. His subdued criticism of Livy.
2-12. The imitation of ancient authorities.	2. New modes and orders actually are old.		28. His criticism of Cicero.
	3. Imitating the ancients and the influence of Christian.		29. Reject authority on principle.
	4. His intention is to reduce the lessons implicitly or even unconsciously conveyed by Livy to general rules easily understood.	30-32. Innovation.	30. In other words, "princes" are the founding or innovating or rational element in a society, while the people is the preserving or conservative element
	5. The ancient Rome could and should be imitated by modern man.		31. He is a revolutionary.
	6. He has to show in each case that the Roman practice was sound and the corresponding modern practice is unsound.		32. The relationship of his two books; the problem of religion and new prince.
	7. Every reference to Livy (or to any other writer) and every quotation from Livy requires an explanation.	33-37. Criticism of Livy's authority.	33. His use of Livy.
	8. He argues dialectically or ironically.		34. His own authority.
	9. The reason to establish the authority of Livy.		35. He disagree Livy on the power of Fortuna.
	10. He fails to imitate Biblical antiquity.		36. The difference between Livy and Livy's characters.

	11. He has to establish the authority of ancient Rome and Livy firstly.		37. The relationship of Livy and him.
	12. His intention cannot be identified with Livy's.	38-43. Use Livy to criticize the Biblical tradition.	38. He use Livy's work first as a counter-Bible; thereafter he explicitly questions the authority of Livy.
13-17. Its structure.	13. The structure of Book 1.		39. His praise of ancient is an essential element of his wholly new teaching, but it is a mere engine of his criticism of the Biblical tradition.
	14. The structure of Book 2.		40. His criticism of the Bible.
	15. The subject of Book 3.		41. Continue.
	16. The structure of Book 3.		42. Bible is a human creation.
	17. The last section of Book 2.		43. He assimilate Livy's *History* to the Bible.
18-21. References to and quotations from Livy	18. First reference.	44-47. Livy is his character (*Discourses*. 3. 32-39).	44. Roman religion.
	19. The first four Latin quotations.		45. Continue.
	20. The next quotations.		46. The difference between Machiavelli' and Livy's intention.
	21. First reference and first quotation.		47. The difference between Livy' and Livy's character.
22. His intention.	22. The *Discourses* conveys the wholly new teaching regarding the foundations of	48-54. Challenge the highest authority.	48. First sermon on Livian texts.

	society, i.e. the best society.		
23-25. The criticism of Rome.	23. The criticism in Book 1.		49. Second sermon on Livian texts.
	24. The criticism in Book 3.		50. Third sermon on Livian texts.
	25. The criticism in Book 3.		51. The Tacitean subsection (*Discourses*. 3. 19-23).
26. The writing manner again.	26. The highest writing art has its roots in the highest necessity.		52. Continue.
			53. Continue.
			54. Criticism of Bible and the classical political philosophy.
		55-59. The establishment of his own new orders.	55. He had found fundamentally new modes and orders.
			56. His relation to the young: a potential conspiracy.
			57. It is the purpose of the *Discourses* to prepare this rebirth through awakening primarily the Italian-reading youth.
			58. The new modes and orders, which are supported only by reason.
			59. Answer the question presented at last paragraph of previous chapter.

Table 4 The structure of Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 contains 87 paragraphs which could be divided into 3 parts. Part 2 and Part 3 both consist of 7 subsections.

1-2. Philosophy and Machiavelli.		44-87. Machiavelli's Philosophy.	
	1. The philosophy.	44-45. His moral philosophy.	44. He makes a distinction between religion and justice or between religion and goodness.
	2. He is not a pagan but one of "the wise of the world," a philosopher.		45. His normative teaching; a well-ordered commonwealth.
3-43. Machiavelli and religion.		46-51. Reject the mean or middle course of the classical moral philosophy.	46. Outline of what is generally said about goodness.
3-6. The essence of Christianity.	3. The conflict between his political science and the teaching of the Bible.		47. The middle course.
	4. Whereas the Roman Church is the greatest enemy of the well-being of Italy, the pagan auguries were the cause of "the well-being of the Roman Republic."		48. He tacitly rejects the view that virtue is a mean between two vices.
	5. The weakness and servility prevailing in the Christian world.		49. He denies that the virtuous mean is possible.
	6. The renewal of "our religion"; its prohibition against resisting evil.		50. Prudence (judgment) and strength of mind, will or temper are the only generally recognized virtues.
7-12. Ancients and moderns	7. The difficulty: The moderns actually are not weaker.		51. He rejects the mean to the extent to which the notion of the mean is linked up with the notions of a perfect happiness that excludes all evil and of the simply perfect human being or of the "universal man."

		52-60. Necessity.	52. Can virtue control nature and necessity as it control chance?
	8. The weakness of the modern world is chiefly the weakness of the modern republics.		
	9. Christianity stems from the servile East, particularly from a weak Eastern nation which had a very defective policy.		53. Necessity makes it impossible for men always to obey what we would call the moral law.
	10. Compare the status of priests and augurs in the Roman polity with that of priests and prophets in the Biblical polity.		54. The question whether man can control nature an necessity is identical with the question regarding the precise character of man's ability to control chance.
	11. The victory of Christianly: to inherit the Roman empire and make the Roman modes and orders not been restored.		55. His praise of a particular kind of necessity: it is fear, the fundamental fear, which makes men operate well.
	12. Political freedom and strength, ancient and modern.		56. The necessity which makes men operate well is the necessity rooted in the concern for mere life.
13-19. The necessity to sin.	13. It is then ultimately the nature of man and of man's situation which accounts for the necessity to sin.		57. Men living in society can be made good and kept good only by such compulsion causing fear as originates in other men.
	14. The necessity to sin and the inseparable connection between sinning and everything noble and high.		58. Not the strong but only the weak operate well by virtue of that necessity which stems from compulsion, fear or hunger.
	15. His teaching regarding the conscience. He tried to replace the conscience or religion by a kind of prudence.		59. Ambition arises with necessity as soon as the primary wants are satisfied and exerts a compulsory power.
	16. Divine punishment. God literally govern the world as a just king governs his kingdom.		60. Only he subjugates chance or is master of his fate who has discovered the fundamental necessities governing human life and therewith

			also the necessity of chance and the range of chance.
	17. God in *Florentine Histories.*	61-68. The common good.	61. Aristotelian best regime: the morally rule of gentlemen or mixed regime.
	18. His doctrine regarding providence. Virtue and the chance take the place of providence.		62. Morality can exist only on island created or at any rate protected by immorality.
	19. Refusing to use the terms "soul", "the other life" or "the other world."		63. Necessity renders the practice of moral virtue impossible in important areas. Virtue in the true sense (the republican virtue) is a dedication to the well-being of one's society.
20-25. The essence of Religions.	20. The creation of the world vs. the eternity of the visible universe		64. "The factual truth" of moral virtue is republican virtue.
	21. The Averroists.		65. The common good is the ultimate end. Every means, regardless of whether it is morally good or not, is good if it is conducive to that end.
	22. The beginnings of revealed religion.		66. There is not good without its accompanying evil, and this is true even of republican virtue.
	23. The beginnings of Judaism. Religion belongs to the desires and humors which are always the same in all nations.		67. Continue. The Italian case.
	24. Biblical religion and pagan religion are both of merely human origin. Their essential difference is political. Christianity was originally a populist movement which failed.		68. Two kinds of republican virtue as dedication to the common good.
	25. The difference between Biblical and pagan religion.	69-75. The self-interest.	69. The defective character of the common good and of virtue, and the superiorities of

			principalities.
26-28. Aristotle and him.	26. His criticism of the Bible is Aristotelian, except the replacement of humility by humanity.		70. Republics are not always possible. The new prince or new founder must possess the virtue as prudence and manliness. Its ground is not the common good but the natural desire of each to acquire wealth and glory.
	27. His doctrine regarding God and his attributes.		71. There is no essential difference between the motives of the prince and the motives of the ruling class in the republics.
	28. He replaces God, not by heaven, but by Fortuna.		72. The common good consists in a precarious harmony between the good of the many and the good of the great. A certain middle course between justice and injustice is required.
29-37. His theology.	29. Weakness is not only the effect but the very cause of the belief in angry gods.		73. His advice to the tyrant is innocent of any consideration of the common good.
	30. Replace "heavenly signs" by "accidents."		74. He pays equal regard to public advantage and to private advantage.
	31. Fortuna takes the place of all gods.		75. The movement from unselfish patriotism to criminal tyranny.
	32. Replace Fortuna by accident.	76-80. His theory.	76. Men are by nature selfish or prompted by self-love alone. The only natural good is the private good. The natural affection for wealth and honor or of natural hostility toward human beings all are equally self-regarding passions.
	33. Fortuna belongs to the same domain to which art and prudence belong. The case of Rome.		77. The society which is most conductive to the well-being of the large majority of the people and

	Machiavelli's Fortune.		of the great is the good republic.
	34. Replace "chance" by "accidents."		78. He was moved "by the natural desire which was always in (him), to do, regardless of any other consideration, those things which, as (he) believe(s), bring about the common benefit of everyone." But there is no good however great which is unqualifiedly good.
	35. Fortuna in the *Prince*. She ought to be beaten and pounded rather than worshipped.		79. *Mandragola*. The common good and the private good.
	36. His analysis of morality will prove to be incompatible with a teleological cosmology. From god to Fortuna, from Fortuna via accidents to chance understand as a non-teleological necessity which leaves room for choice and prudence, for chance understood as the cause of simply unforeseeable accidents.		80. *Mandragola*. Machiavelli's desire for the immortal glory.
	37. *Life of Castruccio Castracani.* Aristotle is kept in bounds or overwhelmed by Bion and the periphery of which consists of a shocking moral teaching.	81-87. Classical Political Philosophy and him.	81. Plato.
38-42. Function of religion.	38. Religion belongs to the art of peace as distinguished from the art of war. They opposed to and supplement each other.		82. Xenophon.
	39. Continue, the Roman case.		83. Classical hedonism; the sophist; Thucydides.
	40. A prince needs not to be religious.		84. He had forgotten the soul.
	41. Republics on the other hand stand or fall by		85. While the supra-political is everywhere and

	religion.		always present and effective in Machiavelli's thought, he analyses the political as if it were not ordered toward the supra-political or as if the supra-political did not exist.
	42. Function of religion.		86. The new philosophy.
43. His intention.	43. The importance of the problem of religion.		87. The classical philosophy.

Table 5 The structure of Chapter 4.

3. Strauss on Machiavelli's Teaching

According to above analysis of the structure of *TM*, Strauss' argument could be summarized as below:

Chapter 1: The relation of Machiavelli's two books is obscure. In order to discover their true relation, we have to read Machiavelli's books carefully. There are four reading rules. And we need to pay attention to Machiavelli's intention and his use of examples, terms and numbers.

Chapter 2, Part 1: The *Prince* is both a treatise and a tract. It consists of four parts: 1) the various kinds of principalities (chs. 1-11), 2) the prince and his enemies (chs. 12-14), 3) the prince and his subjects or friends (chs. 15-23), 4) prudence and chance (chs. 24-26). Chapter 6 is the central part of the first part, which discusses the highest theme (new principalities acquired by one's own arms and virtue) and the grandest examples (Moses, Theseus, Romulus, Cyrus). In the second part, he ascends quickly to the origins of the traditional understanding of the greatest doers. At the beginning of the third part, Machiavelli begins to uproot the Great Tradition. Chapter 19 marks the peak of the third part. It completes the explicit discussion of the founder while chapter 6 had begun it. Hence it is the peak of the *Prince* as a whole. It reveals the truth about the founders or the greatest doers almost fully. The last chapter is a call to an imitation of the peaks of antiquity within contemporary Italy (a call to liberate Italy), while the greatest theoretical achievement possible in contemporary Italy is "wholly new." It has a traditional surface and a revolutionary center. The liberation of Italy needs brutal modes and means a complete revolution. The liberation of Italy which requires the unification of Italy eventually requires the secularization of the Papal states.

Chapter 2, Part 2: The subject of *Prince* is the prince but especially the new prince. The new prince may be the originator of new modes and orders, or a radical innovator, the founder of a new type of society, possibly the founder of a new religion – in brief, a man like Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, or Romulus. Machiavelli expects the addressee of the *Prince* to imitate Moses in the last chapter. However, he did not regard this practical proposal with which he concludes the *Prince* as a practicable.

The liberator of Italy must be an inventor of new modes and orders. The primary purpose of the *Prince* is not to give particular counsel to a contemporary Italian prince, but to set forth a wholly new teaching regarding wholly new princes in wholly new states, or a shocking teaching about the most shocking phenomena. The particular counsel in the last chapter serves the purpose of justifying the novel general teaching before the tribunal of accepted opinion. The immoral policies recommended throughout the *Prince* are not justified on grounds of the common good, but exclusively on grounds of the self-interest of the prince, of his selfish concern with his own well-being, security and glory. The final appeal to patriotism supplies Machiavelli with an excuse for having recommended immoral courses of action. It is not denied that Machiavelli was an Italian patriot. However, there is a tension between his Italian patriotism and his Florentine patriotism: the unification of Italy requires the destruction of the Florentine state. His love for Italy is connected with his trans-political thought: if the greatest political achievement which the world has ever known (the glory ancient Rome) was a fruit of the Italian soil there is ground for hope that the political rejuvenation of the world will make its first appearance in Italy. The political rejuvenation is bound up with a radical change in thought. The liberation of Italy which Machiavelli has primarily in mind is not the political liberation of Italy from the barbarians but the intellectual liberation of an Italian elite from a bad tradition. The ruthless counsels given throughout the Prince are addressed less to princes, who would hardly need them, than to "the young" who are concerned with understanding the nature of society. Those true addressees have been brought up in teachings which are too confident of human goodness, if not of the goodness of creation, and hence too gentle or effeminate. Machiavelli, the discoverer of the all-important truth, can conquer posthumously. After all, there are questions unanswered in the *Prince*: how can he reasonable hope for the success of his enormous venture-enormous in itself and productive of infinite enormities- if unarmed prophets necessarily fail? How new modes and orders can be maintained throughout the ages? For the answer to it, we must turn to the *Discourses*.

Chapter 3, Part 1: Machiavelli's new modes and orders actually are old. He needs

to prove that the moderns can imitate the ancients. He has to establish the authority of ancient Rome and Livy firstly. However, the ancient Roman polity was a work of chance. Machiavelli achieves for the first time the anatomy of the Roman republic, and thus understands thoroughly the virtues and the vices of that republic. Therefore he can teach his readers how a polity similar to the Roman and better than the Roman can be deliberately constructed. The *Discourses* conveys the wholly new teaching regarding the foundations of society, and the structure of society, i.e. the best society. [25]

Chapter 3, Part 2: Machiavelli has criticized the authority of Livy and Cicero. He actually rejects authority on principle. He wants to defend his opinions with reasons, and don't wish to use in such defense either authority or force. He uses Livy's work first as a counter-Bible. His praise of ancient is an essential element of his wholly new teaching, but it is a mere engine of his criticism of the Biblical tradition. Machiavelli attempts to impress his new orders and new modes on "the Christian republic." He is certain that the Christian republic has reached an advanced stage of corruption: its end may be near. Machiavelli saw that the Christian modes and orders might be destroyed by the rejuvenation of the West. It is the purpose of the *Discourses* to prepare this rebirth through awakening primarily the Italian-reading youth. The new modes and new orders, which are supported only by reason, emerge essentially in opposition to specific old modes and orders which are supported only by authority and force. Machiavelli's critique of the old modes and orders therefore takes on the character of a war waged by an unarmed man, of a spiritual war. This war can be described a war

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[25] Strauss' long analysis of Machiavelli's plan of the *Discourses* should be put in a note: The plan of Book 1: 1) origin of cities: 1; 2) the polity: 2-8; 3)founders: 9-10; 4) religion: 11-15; 5-10) six further sections dealing alternately with founders and religion: 16-18, 19-24, 25-27, 28-32, 33-45, 46-59 ; 11) earliest youth: 60. The plan of Book 2: 1) 1-5 (the Roman conquests and their consequences, viz. the reduction of the West to Eastern servility); 2) 6-10 (roman warfare in contradistinction to the kinds of warfare waged by the conquerors of the Roman Empire, by the Jews and by moderns); 3) 11-15 (the origins); 4) 16-18 (the fundamental triad: infantry, artillery, cavalry); 5) 19-22 (the false opinions); 6) 23-25 (the reasons); 7) 26-32 (the passions); 8) 33 (the Ciminian Forest). The first ten chapters also deal with "the causes" of modernity. The plan of Book 3: 1) the founder-captain: 1-15; 2) the republic or the multitude: 16-34; 3) How to make oneself the head of a new thing which concerns many people, to manage it, to bring it to consummation and to maintain it: 35-49. Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.97-107.

of the Anti-Christ or of the Devil who recruits his army while fighting or through fighting against the army led by God or Christ. His hope for victory is grounded on two things. First, his having discovered the new modes and orders and their ultimate ground merely through the use of his natural faculties makes it certain that others, if only a few, can be fully converted to the truth. Second, the corruption of the established order makes it certain that at least his proposal of new modes and orders will receive a friendly hearing from a large audience. It is certain that one of the two parties of which the Christian republic consists of will be attracted by his proposals: the men who, driven and perhaps blinded by passion for the liberty of their fatherland, are more attached to their earthly fatherland than to the heavenly fatherland, or who are lukewarm Christians. By far the most important model for Machiavelli was the victory of Christianity. Christianity conquered the Roman empire without the use of force, merely by peacefully propagating its new modes and orders. Machiavelli's hope for the success of his venture is founded on the success of Christianity. Just as Christianity defeated paganism by propaganda, he believes that he can defeat Christianity by propaganda. Machiavelli is the first philosopher who believes that the coincidence of philosophy and political power can be brought about by propaganda which wins over ever larger multitudes to the new modes and orders and thus transforms the thought of on or few into the opinion of the public and therewith into public power. Machiavelli breaks with the Great Tradition and initiates the Enlightenment.

Chapter 4, Part 1: Machiavelli is not a pagan, but one of "the wise of the world," a philosopher.

Chapter 4, Part 2: (1) Machiavelli's analysis of Christianity is connected with his analysis with politics. He did not really believe that Christianity had led the world into weakness, but did believe that the weakness and servility are prevailing in the Christian world. When Machiavelli speaks of the weakness of the modern world, he has chiefly in mind the weakness of the modern republics. In classical antiquity as long as it was incorrupt, the West was predominantly republican, whereas the modern West, the Christian republic, is predominantly monarchic. There was a essential

connection between Christianity and monarchy: Christianity stems from the servile East, particularly from a weak Eastern nation which had a very defective policy. [26] While the oriental princes are the destroyers of countries and waster of all the civilizations of men,[27] the direct or indirect rule of the Christian priests is essentially tyrannical and even, in principle, more tyrannical than any other regime. In other words, Machiavelli appears to judge Christianity with exclusive regard to an end which is not specifically religious, namely, political happiness, i.e. strength and freedom combined. (2) Christianity believes that it is the God rather than priests who literally governs the world as a just king governs his kingdom. Then Machiavelli not only needs to deny the legitimacy of the rule of priests, but also needs to deny the legitimacy of the rule of God. He believed it is ultimately the nature of man and of man's situation which accounts for the necessity to sin. Necessity rather than god or necessity governing god or necessity in god, not to say chance, and not human merit or demerit, is the cause of blessings or sufferings which are not due to man's own prudence or folly. God is not a judge or even an arbiter but a neutral. We find just retribution only where just men rule. Every other just government is imaginary. The effective rule of just men depends on good arms, on human prudence and on some measure of good luck. If it is true that extreme injustice arouses men's hatred, resistance and desire for revenge, it is also true that perfect justice would paralyze the hands of governments; states can only be governed by a judicious mixture of justice and injustice. Virtue, i.e. man's own virtue, and chance take the place of providence. (3) Not only the state should be governed by men rather than God, but also the Biblical religion and pagan religion are both of merely human origin. Religion is not coming from God. Religion belongs to the desires and humors which are always the same in all nations. As for the essential difference between different religions, he is primarily concerned with its political aspect. The contrast between priests and soldiers indicates the essential difference between Christianity and the paganism. Since the

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[26] In other word, the root of the difference between ancients and moderns is political-structral rather than religious or cultural.

[27] Niccolo Machiavelli. *Discourses on Livy*. trans. by Harvey C. Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov. The University of Chicago Press, 1996, p.133.

character of a society is determined by the character of its ruling element or of its "prince," the difference between paganism, or at any rate Roman paganism, and Christianity must be traced to the fact that in Rome a warlike nobility predominated whereas Christianity was originally a popular and not war0like movement. The difference between paganism and Christianity would then seem to be rooted in the fundamental difference of political "humors," the "humor" of the great and that of the people. The preponderance of the great and exalted over the weak and humble is essential to the strength of society. (4) His criticism of the Bible is basically Aristotelian. But he replaces humility by humanity, not by Aristotle's magnanimity. And he replaces God, not by heaven, but by Fortuna. (5) The movement of fundamental thought which finds expression in both books consists in a movement from god to Fortuna and then from Fortuna via accidents, and accidents occurring to bodies or accidents of bodies, to chance understand as a non-teleological necessity which leaves room for choice and prudence and therefore for chance understood as the cause of simply unforeseeable accidents. There is a thought at the core of which Aristotle is kept in bounds or overwhelmed by Bion and the periphery of which consists of a shocking moral teaching. (6) Although religion is untrue, it does perform an important function in the society. Religion is a human art. It belongs to the art of peace as distinguished from the art of war. They opposed to and supplement each other. If men were not both appeased by religious hopes and frightened by religious fears, society would be in a state of perpetual unrest, or else in a state of constant and ubiquitous repression. Therefore, republics stand or fall by religion. (7) Machiavelli and a whole series of political thinkers who succeeded him, indented to fight the kingdom of darkness, as Hobbes called it. That fight was more important to them than any merely political issue.

Chapter 4, Part 3: (1) Machiavelli claimed that his teaching which is comprehensive or concerns the foundations is new. He opposes to a wrong normative teaching, i.e. the classical political philosophy, the true normative teaching. From his point of view, a true analysis of political "facts" is not possible without the light supplied by knowledge of what constitutes a well-ordered commonwealth.

(2) Classical political philosophy claims to be in fundamental agreement with what is generally said about goodness. Goodness is the habit of choosing good means for the good end. There are two kinds of good: the common good and the private good. Common opinion on the one hand condemns the fraud as a mean to achieve private good, and on the other hand praises the fraud as a mean to achieve the common good. The goodness of means depends on our choice of the good: the common good or the private good. It is too selfish to only seek one's private good, while it is too unselfish to only seek the common good. Then the common understanding of virtue is the middle or mean between two faulty extremes. Machiavelli tacitly rejects the view that virtue is a mean between two vices. In his most comprehensive enumeration of virtues and vices, each virtue appears as the opposite of a single vice. To acquire the good things, one has to use the virtuous and vicious means alternatively. This alteration must be guided by prudence and sustained by virtue. Prudence and strength of mind, which are different from the moral virtues, are the only generally recognized virtues. However, even the prudence and strength cannot only bring goodness without badness. There cannot be a political order which satisfies all reasonable demands nor a state of the individual which satisfies all reasonable desires. The best regime and happiness, as classical philosophy understood them, are impossible. Every good is accompanied by its own evil. No man is complete; the "universal man" of the classical political philosophy is an imagined being. The conclusion that excellence, and every kind or degree of excellence, necessarily carries with it its peculiar defect or evil is strengthened if excellence consists in an alternation between moral virtue and moral vices.

(3) Machiavelli teaches throughout his two books what man ought to do. Moreover, he also teaches that in history men are actually compelled by necessity to do many evils he ought not to do. The question is could men be made to do good rather than evil? Men in general have no natural inclination toward goodness. Therefore they can be made good and kept good only by necessity. It is fear, the fundamental fear, the fear of hunger and poverty, which makes men operate well. The security afforded by society would remove the necessity to be good if the primary

necessity to be good were not replaced by a necessity to be good which stems from laws, i.e., from punishment or threat of punishment-by a necessity originating in men. This necessity could come from the men of supreme virtue or prudence. They are compelled by their desire for glory to operate in the perfect manner. Machiavelli has discovered the fundamental necessities governing human life and therewith also the necessity of chance and the range of chance. Man is then subject to nature and necessity in such a way that by virtue of nature's gift of "brain" and through knowledge of nature and necessity he is enabled to use the necessity and to transform the matter.

(4) The classics concluded that the best men, to be rewarded with outstanding honors, ought to rule the many bad by coercing them with immunity to badness. Machiavelli pointed that necessity renders moral practice impossible in international areas. Therefore the best regime of the classics is merely imaginary. The most respectable states pursue the common good conceived of as consisting of freedom from foreign domination and from despotic rule, rule of law, security of the lives, the property and the honor of every citizen, ever increasing wealth and power, and last but not least glory or empire. There exists in every republic an antagonism between the people and the great, the people desiring not to be oppressed by the great and the great desiring to lord it over the people. It is in the best interest of the people that It be confronted and led by a virtuous and warlike nobility with which it shares political power in due proportion. Only if political power is shared by the great and the people in due proportion, or in other words if there is a proper proportion between the force of the great and the force of the people, will there be public liberty and proper consideration for the common good. What that proper proportion is depends decisively on whether the republic in question wishes to found an empire or is content with preserving it. In fact, there is no choice: every republic may be compelled by circumstance to engage in a policy of aggrandizement and must therefore prepare itself for such contingencies. Accordingly one of the ends of every republic is to make acquisitions. Finally, the imperial republic destroys the freedom of all other republics and rules over them much more oppressively than any non-barbarous prince would.

There is no good without its accompanying evil.[28]

(5) Since the common good is imperfect, the private good or the self-interest should be valued. The prince concerns with his security and freedom. Exclusive concern with his own well-being, i.e., with his security and glory, as long as that concerns guided by intelligence and sustained by strength of will or temper, is sufficient to make a prince a good prince and even to earn him eternal glory. The prince need not possess virtues in the sense of such dedication to the common good as excludes ambition. But he must possess that virtue which consists of "brain" and manliness combined. This kind of virtue's ground is not the common good but the natural desire of each to acquire wealth and glory. There is no essential difference between the motives of the prince and the motives of the ruling class in the republics. The common good consists in a precarious harmony between the good of the many and the good of the great. A certain middle course between justice and injustice is required. Even more, his advice to the tyrant is innocent of any consideration of the common good. He pays equal regard to public advantage and to private advantage. Since man are always seeking their private good, the oppression, or injustice, is the coeval with political society. Criminal tyranny is the state which is characterized by extreme oppression. There is then in the decisive respect only a difference of degree between the best republic and the worst tyranny. This difference of degree is of the utmost practical importance, but is not a difference of kind.

(6) Man is by nature compelled to oppress. It is man's nature to be envious, ambitious, suspicious, ungrateful, discontented and predatory. Man is by nature selfish or prompted by self-love alone. The only natural good is the private good. Even those who appear to be wholly dedicated to the common good or to forget themselves completely in the service of others are driven to such conduct by their peculiar natures and their natural desire to see themselves obeyed or to acquire reputation or to be pleased by pleasing. While everyone is by nature concerned only with his own

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[28] Here I have to skip over Strauss' important discussion of the question of confederacy of equal republics in 67th paragraph. See Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.262.

well-being - with his preservation, his security, his ease, his pleasures, his reputation, his honor, his glory- he must be concerned with the well-being of his society on which his own well-being appears to depend. The society which is most conductive to the well-being of the large majority of the people and of the great is the good republic, in which one ought to dedicate oneself to the common good. For the ruled, the link between the private good and the public good is then punishments and rewards or, in other words, fear of the government and love of the government. For the rulers, the link between the private good and the public good is the love of glory. The desire for glory as the desire for eternal glory liberates man from the concern with life and property, with goods which may have to be sacrificed for the common good; and yet glory is a man's own good. It is therefore possible and even proper to present the whole political teaching as advice addressed to individuals as to how they can achieve the highest glory for themselves. To the extent to which Machiavelli's two books are meant for immediate prudent use rather than for rendering secure the basis of prudence, their broad purpose is to show the need for reckoning with the selfish desires of the rulers and the rules as the only natural basis of politics, and therefore for trusting, not in men's good will, but in one's own virtue as the ability to acquire for oneself the highest glory and hence to acquire for one's state whatever makes it strong, prosperous, and respected. The wise rulers who act with a view to their own benefit will enlist the cooperation of the ruled, who likewise as with a view to their own benefit, in such activities as cannot but be detrimental to others. Since the many can never acquire the eternal glory which the great individuals can achieve, they must be induced to bring the greatest sacrifices by the judiciously fostered belief in eternity of another kind. Machiavelli himself was moved "by the natural desire which was always in (him), to do, regardless of any other consideration, those things which, as (he) believe(s), bring about the common benefit of everyone."[29] But there is no good however great which is unqualifiedly good. Machiavelli did not try to benefit everyone literally, but did try to benefit the most fellows and innumerable generations

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[29] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.283.

of their descendants to get immortal glory. Genuine immortal glory is reserved for most excellent artists or writers. The highest glory goes to the discoverer of the all-important truth, of the truth regarding man and society, of the new modes and orders which are in accordance with nature. He can justly claim to be superior in virtue to all men and to be the greatest benefactor of all men.

(7) To some extent, Machiavelli's argument is parallel to the argument in Plato's *Republic*. However, he had forgotten the soul, the tragedy and Socrates or philosophy. While the supra-political is everywhere and always present and effective in Machiavelli's thought, he analyses the political as if it were not ordered toward the supra-political or as if the supra-political did not exist. The consequence is an enormous simplification and, above all, the appearance of the discovery of a hitherto wholly unsuspected whole continent. In fact, however, Machiavelli does not bring to light a single political phenomenon of any fundamental importance which was not fully known to the classics. What Machiavelli achieved is the decisive turn toward that notion of philosophy according to which its purpose is to relieve man's estate or to increase man's power or to guide man toward the rational society, the bond and the end of which is enlightened self-interest or the comfortable self-preservation of each of its members. The new philosophy lives from the outset in the hope of an epoch in which the truth will reign. Propaganda is to guarantee the coincidence of philosophy and political power. Philosophy is to fulfill the function of both philosophy and religion. The necessity which spurred on Machiavelli and his great successors spend itself some time ago. What remains of their effort no longer possesses the evidence which it possessed while their adversary was powerful; it must now be judged entirely on its intrinsic merits. The difficulty implied in the admission that inventions pertaining to the art of war must be encouraged is the only one which supplies a basis for Machiavelli's criticism of classical political philosophy.

We could see that the sixth subsection of Chapter 4's Part 2 stands as the core of the *TM*. In this subsection, Strauss reveals his wholly teaching about Machiavelli. It

seems really simple and exoteric.[30] However, it is actually uneasy to understand. What is so confusing in Strauss' analysis is the twist of Machiavelli's argument and action.

Generally speaking, while Strauss looks Machiavelli's argument through the lens of classical political philosophy especially Plato's political philosophy, he looks Machiavelli's action through the lens of modernity.

In the whole *TM*, Strauss takes extremely seriously about Machiavelli's assertion that he had found intrinsically new modes and orders. Since the political philosophy is about "the good or the best order of society,"[31] then Strauss' analysis of Machiavelli's argument in the whole *TM* is focusing on this question: whether Machiavelli had found intrinsically new modes and orders? According to Plato, or according to Strauss' Plato, there are three kinds or three modes of human action.[32] Because the good "is what every soul pursues and for the sake of which it does everything"[33] and there are three kinds of good (the private good, the common good, and the totally unselfish good), the human action could be divided into three modes. According to Strauss, Machiavelli's analysis of the modes of human actions has not exceeded Plato's analysis. In fact, Machiavelli's analysis only includes the first two kinds (see the fourth and fifth subsections of Chapter 4's Part 2), while has not paid enough attention to the third kind of actions which pursues the unselfish good. "As a consequence he is unable to give a clear account of his own doing."[34] Strauss argued that, while Machiavelli had not found new modes of human actions, he also had not found new orders: "Machiavelli does not bring to light a single political phenomenon of any fundamental importance which was not fully known to the classics."[35] To sum

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[30] Strauss emphasizes the simplification of Machiavelli's political thought: "The consequence is an enormous simplification and, above all, the appearance of the discovery of a hitherto wholly unsuspected whole continent." Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.295.

[31] Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, p.81.

[32] Leo Strauss. Plato. in Leo Strauss, Joseph Cropsey. ed. *History of Political Philosophy. Third Edition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, pp.33-68.

[33] Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1991, p.185.

[34] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.294.

[35] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.295.

up, Strauss eventually denied Machiavelli's assertion that he had achieved some important theoretical innovation.

Even Machiavelli had not achieved any important theoretical innovation, there still is an important question left: had Machiavelli get some practical achievement? In the surface, Machiavelli wanted to achieve two different purposes: he wanted to liberate Italy in the *Prince*, while he wanted to restore the ancient republic in the *Discourses*. Strauss combined Machiavelli's two purposes into one: "It is the purpose of the *Discourses* to prepare this rebirth through awakening primarily the Italian-reading youth."[36] The rejuvenation of the West also means liberation of the Italy. We could say that Machiavelli had achieved his major goals: the Italy had been unified into a free republic, and the West has got both the freedom and glory through its amazing rejuvenation. And no matter how we evaluate, Machiavelli did perform an important role in this long process.

Maybe we could say that Machiavelli's practical achievement is great enough to counteract the evil of boasting his theoretical innovations. Then why Strauss treated Machiavelli so harshly? At a first glance, or at the first paragraph of Chapter 4, Strauss' discontentment is that Machiavelli had made us the moderns forgotten what the philosophy originally is.[37] But at the last paragraph, we are told by Strauss that: "The necessity which spurred on Machiavelli and his great successors spend itself some time ago."[38] Considering Strauss' analysis of the "necessity" (in the third subsection of Chapter 4's Part 2), we could assume what Strauss' implication is that Machiavelli's political thought could not perform a good function as it did in the last several centuries any more.

Strauss does not only see Machiavelli as a rebel of the classical philosophy, but also see him as the originator of the modernity.[39] Strauss believed the modernity had

[36] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.171.
[37] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.174.
[38] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.298.
[39] Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, pp.81-98. Leo Strauss. What is Politcal Philosophy?. in *What is Politcal Philosophy? And Other Studies*. The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p.40.

declined, i.e. the modern West stopped to operate well as they did in the last several centuries. The West started to destroy their civilization by the World War I and II.[40] The West not only did try to destroy their civilization in the first half of the 20th century, but also is now capable of totally destroy the whole human civilization by their techniques developed recently.[41] In this new circumstance, or in this new age, Machiavelli's political thought, because of its teaching of evil,[42] is considered by Strauss that could not play a good function any more.

It seems like this new age, an age of decline, needs a new political philosophy or a reborn classical political philosophy. Just as the classical political philosophy is born in an ancient age of political decay,[43] we could expect that it could be reborn in a modern age of political decay. "But there are also a few indications in the *Republic* to the effect that the longed-for reformation [to restore political health] is not likely to succeed on the political plane or that the only possible reformation is that of the individual man."[44] If the classical political philosophy only could influence a few elite, then the most people could only be influenced by religion. The reason why Strauss criticized Machiavelli so harshly is finally revealed: Machiavelli and his successors' modern philosophy wants to fulfill the function of both philosophy and religion.[45] In this new age, this modern philosophy needs to be beaten to retreat and to leave room for the religion or religions.

4. Some Critiques

Only time could judge Strauss' judgments in the practical aspects about the fortune of the West and the future of the religions. However, there are some further

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[40] Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, p.81.
[41] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.298-299.
[42] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.9-14.
[43] Leo Strauss. Plato. in Leo Strauss, Joseph Cropsey. ed. *History of Political Philosophy. Third Edition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.34.
[44] Leo Strauss. Plato. in Leo Strauss, Joseph Cropsey. ed. *History of Political Philosophy. Third Edition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.34.
[45] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.297.

theoretical difficulties in Strauss' argument.

The Best Regime.

We were told that political philosophy is about the best political order or the best regime. But in Chapter 4 of *TM*, Strauss claimed that: "The best regime and happiness, as classical philosophy understood them, are impossible. There cannot be a political order which satisfies all reasonable demands nor a state of the individual which satisfies all reasonable desires."[46] Regarding to Plato, "However, as Cicero has observed, the *Republic* does not bring to light the best possible regime but rather the nature of political things-the nature of the city."[47] In other words, Plato's political philosophy is not about the best regime. Aristotle's political philosophy is also not about the best regime. He speaks openly in the that the political science "begin from and concern the actions of life,"[48] and "We took the end of political science to be the chief good, and political science is concerned most of all with producing citizens of a certain kind, namely, those who are both good and the sort to perform noble actions."[49] If we see Plato through the lens of Aristotle, we could see that the *Republic* is about the justice, i.e. the just actions of human beings. In other words, the classical political philosophy is about actions rather than the best regime.

Strauss' analysis in the *TM* is based on the assumption that Machiavelli intended to abandon the imaginary best regime of the classical political philosophy. Strauss said that, "From Machiavelli's point of view this means that the best regime, as Aristotle as well as Plato conceived of it, is an imagined republic or an imagined principality."[50] However, if the classical political philosophy is concerning chiefly about actions rather than the best regime, then we could not see why Machiavelli could be recognized as a rebel of the classical political philosophy basing on this

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[46] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.243.
[47] Leo Strauss. Plato. in Leo Strauss, Joseph Cropsey. ed. *History of Political Philosophy. Third Edition.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987, p.68.
[48] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004. p. 5.
[49] Aristotle. *Nicomachean Ethics*. Trans. Roger Crisp. Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 2004. p. 16.
[50] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.254.

asserton.

Strauss never explained why Machiavelli cares about new modes and orders, while the classical political philosophy only cares about the orders. We could not explain why Strauss had neglected this obvious chasm between them. However, if we focus on the level of the action rather than the level of the regime, we have to face a new question: the difference between the classical political philosophy, or the difference between Plato and Aristotle.

Plato vs. Aristotle.

In *TM*, Strauss had analyzed Machiavelli's criticism of classical political philosophy. This criticism is both at the level of action and the level of regime. Machiavelli's criticism at the level of regime is very weak: Plato did not really reveal a best regime, and seeing from our point, Aristotle's mixed regime with a strong middle class is superior to Machiavelli's mixed regime of the nobles and the plebs. Machiavelli's criticism at the level of regime is more contentious. At this level, Machiavelli's criticism is mainly against Aristotle rather than Plato.

Strauss had never seriously explored the difference between Plato and Aristotle at the level of action in the *TM*. Aristotle's political science of actions does not include the actions as medicine, cooking, sailing, farming and so on, which Plato has discussed in the *Republic*. [51] In other words, while Aristotle constrains himself in the political sphere, Plato did not separate the actions of political and technical. This is why Strauss eventually found it necessary to supplement Machiavelli's pure political thought with a discussion of the technique.[52]

Science and Technique.

Strauss concluded his *TM* with a discussion of the problem of technique. He claimed in the last paragraph that, the classics "knew that one cannot be distrustful of political or social change without distrustful of technological change. Therefore they

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[51] Plato. *The Republic of Plato*. Trans. Allan Bloom. New York: Basic Books, 1991, pp.8-9.

[52] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, pp.298-299. See also, Leo Strauss. The Three Waves of Modernity. in *An Introduction to Political Philosophy*. edited by Hilail Gildin. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989, p.87-88.

did not favor the encouragement of inventions, except perhaps in tyrannies."[53] "They demanded the strict moral-political supervision of inventions; the good and wise city will determine which inventions are to be made use of and which are to be suppressed. Yet they were forced to make one crucial exception. They had to admit the necessity of encouraging inventions pertaining to the art of war."[54] "From the point of view of the classics, such use of science [for technical inventions] is excluded by the nature of science as a theoretical pursuit."[55] We could agree Strauss that the invention of the atomic bomb could be justified considering the war, and biological research should be supervised considering the techniques as clone. But we have to doubt the distinction of the science as a theoretical pursuit and the technique. Maybe Aristotle did make this distinction, but Plato seemingly never made. In other words, Strauss believed there is a distinction between moderns and classics, but what does matter may be the distinction between Aristotle and Plato.

Conclusion

Strauss claims in the Introduction of the *TM* that, "We did assume that there are fundamental alternatives, alternatives which are permanent or coeval with man...Our critical study of Machiavelli's teaching can ultimately have no other purpose than to contribute towards the recovery of the permanent problems."[56] Only the problems have been forgotten need to be recovery. In the whole *TM*, Strauss only has mentioned one thing that has been forgotten: what the philosophy originally is.[57] Then the question related to the originally philosophy is: "The philosophers and the *demos* in the sense indicated are separated by a gulf; their end differ radically."[58] As a consequence, there could be no best regime which could satisfy all reasonable demands. Therefore, there always exists a conflict between the state and the philosophy. Accordingly, one always has to choose from the fundamental alternatives

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[53] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.298.
[54] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.298.
[55] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.299.
[56] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.14.
[57] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.174.
[58] Leo Strauss. *Thoughts on Machiavelli*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.296.

between the philosophy and the state.

However, the seriousness of this choice is questionable or variable. Even the ice and fire, which are inclining to conflict with each other by nature, could exist in this world at the same time. Then why the philosophy and the state have to conflict all the times? There did exist several violent conflicts between the philosophy and the state, as the trial of Socrates and the prosecution of Rousseau. But the philosophy and the state could exist peacefully with each other in the most times as the history has proven.

Acknowledgments

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