Political Philosophy

Classic and Contemporary Readings

Louis P. Pojman

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Editor

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Nature, the art whereby God has made and governs the world, is by the *art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated—that it can make an artificial animal. For seeing life is but a motion of limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principal part within, why may we not say that all *automata* (engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as does a watch) have an artificial life? For what is the *heart* but a *spring,* and the *nerves* but so many *strings,* and the *joints* but so many *wheels* giving motion to the whole body such as was intended by the artificer? *Art* goes yet further, imitating that rational and most excellent work of nature, *man*. For by art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH or STATE—in Latin, CIVITAS—which is but an artificial man, though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defense it was intended; and in which the *sovereignty* is an artificial *soul,* as giving life and motion to the whole body; the *magistrates* and other *officers* of judicature and execution, artificial *joints; reward* and *punishment,* by which, fastened to the seat of the sovereignty, every joint and member is moved to perform his duty, are the *nerves,* that do the same in the body natural; the *wealth* and *riches* of all the particular members are the *strength; salus populi,* the *people's safety,* its *business; counselors,* by whom all things needful for it to know are suggested unto it, are the *memory; equity* and *laws,* an artificial reason and *will; concord, health; sedition, sickness;* and *civil war, death*. Lastly, the *pacts* and *covenants* by which the parts of this body politic were at first made, set together, and united resemble that *fiat,* or the *let us make man,* pronounced by God in the creation.

To describe the nature of this artificial man, I will consider

First, the *matter* thereof, and the *artificer,* both of which is *man*.

Secondly, *how* and by what *covenants* it is made, what are the *rights* and just *power* or *authority* of a *sovereign,* and what it is that preserves and *dissolves* it. Thirdly, what is a *Christian commonwealth*. Lastly, what is the *kingdom of darkness*.

—Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Dedicated to

Ruth Freedom
and
Sergei

Preface

As we enter the twenty-first century, with the nations of the world experiencing more interconnection through an increasingly global economy, communications, and environmental problems—a world in which one nation's political problems are likely to affect many other nations—political philosophy takes on a renewed and vital importance. Whereas moral philosophy dominated philosophical interest from the 1960s through the early 1990s (including applied ethics, such as medical and environmental ethics), a shift is now taking place—spurred on by debates over the welfare state, affirmative action, and national health insurance—toward political philosophy. We want to know what justifies the State and how governments should be organized to maintain order, peace, liberty, and justice. Should the State exercise paternalism and aim at economic equality? Should the State be involved in making citizens moral, or should it be neutral with regard to visions of the good? What is the moral basis for our obligation to obey the State? What, if anything, justifies the existence of the State? And, even if the State is legitimate, is the Nation-State, as a sovereign institution, morally justified, or should we be moving toward some form of world government? How global should our moral vision be? Should it include sacrificing some State sovereignty, providing aid to underdeveloped countries, intervening in international crises? Is patriotism a provincial chauvinism, or does it have an ethical warrant in human affairs? These and similar questions have exercised the minds of political philosophers for decades, if not millennia, but now they are becoming so vital to our everyday social and political life that philosophy must address them with new urgency and concentration. This book is an anthology of the modern classics (beginning with Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Locke) and contemporary readings that sets forth a wide spectrum of theories about the justification and shape of government, including the ideals of liberty, justice, equality, and human rights, as well as the related issues of State paternalism and desert.

There are anthologies that cover ancient and modern classics, but, as far as I know, none that cover both modern classics and contemporary works. The issues covered in this work are what seem the burning philosophical issues of our time: the justification of the State; theories of justice and liberty; State neutrality versus moral perfectionism; equality and equal opportunity; the nature and scope of rights; national sovereignty, cosmopolitanism and world government; international politics, including foreign aid, military intervention, and immigration. I have endeavored to select the most cogent and accessible essays on various sides of these issues and to present them in a way that will engage the intelligent student.

General Introduction

If men were angels, no Government would be necessary.
If they were devils, no Government would be possible.
—Alexander Hamilton

Political philosophy inquires into the meaning of political concepts and the justification of theories about the nature and purpose of government. It seeks to provide understanding regarding such questions as, Why should I obey the laws of the State? How should the State be constituted? What is the justification of the State? What are the principal functions of the State? Should the State be a national or an international entity? Should the Nation-State be sovereign, or should we create a cosmopolitan government, transcending nationalism?

In seeking to answer, or at least understand, these questions and the conflicting answers to them, we encounter a series of secondary concepts and theories, including the nature and value of justice, liberty, equality, political obligation, moral perfectionism, nationalism, globalism, and sovereignty. In this book we will examine most of those concepts and the theories surrounding them.

Political philosophy, unlike political science, is not primarily descriptive, concerned with an explanation of why government exists the way it does (though it does consider this question), but is prescriptive or normative, dealing with how political institutions *ought* to function, concerned with setting forth arguments and justifications for the best or most morally justified ways of organizing society.

Before we can engage in considering the justification of political theories we need to clarify some concepts and inquire what we mean by *State, nation, justice, liberty, equality, sovereignty,* and the like. Those terms are examined in detail in this book, but here we may undertake an initial attempt.

Consider the fundamental concepts, *the State* and *the nation*. The State is an association that includes such formal ideas as a legislative body with an executive and judicial component. The State is the ultimate authority, a sovereign entity, having sole comprehensive authority over a geographical domain. A nation, on the other hand, is a group of people who are tied together through common sources of meaning and identity, through ethnic similarity, language, literature, history, myth, religion, and other cultural phenomena. A State may be made up of many nations, and one nation may be divided by many states. For example, Great Britain is a State made up of the nations of England, Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Canada is a State made up of two nations, the French-speaking people of Quebec and the English-speaking people of the rest of Canada. Until the early 1870s, when Bismarck united the German people, the German nation was divided into several separate States. After World War II, until the fall of the German Democratic Republic in 1991, the German nation was divided into two States, East Germany and West Germany. One could argue that Austria makes up yet another State of Germans. The ancient Greeks (a nation) were divided into several city-states, yet they joined in a military federation to defend their cities against the Persians. The distinction between *State* and *nation* is sometimes vague. Is Switzerland, with its three cultural and language groups, one State with three nations or one Nation-State or several mini-canton states? The goal of every nationalist is, in the words of the eighteenth-century Italian nationalist Giuseppe Mazzini, "Every nation a state, only one state for the entire nation."[1] When we read of the conflicts in Israel between Jew

and Arab, in Northern Ireland between Protestant and Catholic, or the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia or Kosovo, we get a sense of just how penetrating and volatile nationalism can be. We shall examine these issues more closely in Chapter VIII.

In the nineteenth century, the German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies (1855–1936) distinguished between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellshaft* (society). The former refers to the natural, communal ties (such as friendship, family, and clan) that cause people to commit themselves to a common cause or way of life; the latter refers to those features of social organization constituted by contract and formal rules. Tönnies said that *Gemeinschaft* is formed by natural will, whereas *Gesellshaft* is formed by rational will. *Gemeinschaft* is constituted by a covenant rather than a contract, something informal and deeply rooted in human relationships, even sacred to its members, as is a religious heritage or a sacred myth. In the Old Testament, God does not contract but covenants with the people Israel. Indeed the very term *testament* means *covenant*. There is a relationship of personal loyalty, obedience, and trust on the part of the people of Israel that Yahweh will honor by his guidance and protection. When Israel becomes a formal State in I Samuel, choosing Saul as their king, the prophet Samuel deplores the act as a betrayal of the covenantal relationship between Yahweh and Israel but permits it as a concession to human weakness. It would be better to live in a relationship of direct trust in God, as a special community of faith, but since Israel's faith is weak, formal rules and an executive branch are permitted as a distant second best. The State, as a formal society, typically emerges from the nation or community when a formal structure of rules and a separation of powers are desired. Spontaneous acts of beneficence, as well as a notion of reciprocity, characterize the morality of the community, but it lacks the impartiality and consistent application of behavior. The State or society goes beyond such "natural morality" and formalizes rules of law, enforcing them impartially with sanctions. Whereas life in the community is characterized by virtue (or vice) and loyalty, society superimposes laws, rights, and contractual obligations.

When we organize a group of friends into a professional association or organization, giving it a constitution with goals and rules or laws, we superimpose society upon community. A group of hikers, trekking together in the mountains, form a community, but not a society, even though they may have a common purpose (say, climbing Giant Mountain); but when they agree upon a common set of rules and responsibilities, they are transformed into a primitive association, say the Adirondack Mountain Club or the Sierra Club, which gradually may lose many of its communal characteristics, becoming more powerful, but also more impersonal, bureaucratic, and legalistic. A group of tenants may constitute a caring community, but they become an association or society when they form a tenant's association with a constitution and a set of rules in order to fight more effectively for reduced rent and better maintenance. We can apply Tönnies's distinction to the concepts of the *Nation* and the *State*. When we refer to a State, we mean a large anonymous entity (the members need not know each other personally) that creates and enforces laws over a geographical area or over a group of people who, usually, reside in the geographical area. A nation, on the other hand, refers to the societal aspects, to the culture, and to the myths and history of the group. Nations, as communities, grow like trees, whereas States, as associations, are constructed like buildings. Typically, States, as artificial institutions, are invented, whereas nations are neither created by our will nor chosen, but are natural, primitive givens, based on shared history, beliefs, love and loyalty, constituting a vital part of our self-identity. One does not choose to be of German, French, or English ancestry with all that goes with that, but, rather, one is chosen by the lottery of nature. One then finds one's identity constituted by these factors. The fate of our nation is our fate, though we may not suffer physically or economically from its defeat or loss of power. In the community or nation, particular loyalties are the dominant motif. We have a special obligation to specific

people, to a common identifiable tradition; whereas the society takes on a more universal aspect, characterized by a constitution, laws, and set of requirements for membership. It constructs rational principles, which have a universal aspect, and so applies impartially without respect for class or status. Whoever meets the abstract requirements is a citizen, a member of the society. Whoever breaches the law suffers the penalty.

Since the seventeenth century, we have been in a situation in which the two types of political groups are combined in the Nation-State. *Gesellshaft* and *Gemeinshaft* become one. The universal and the particular merge into a single political reality. However, it is useful to distinguish between these two aspects.

When we think of a nation, such as England or the United States, we think of its history, its wars, its language, its literature, folk songs, and stories, its architecture, including its churches and skyscrapers, its landscapes and cultural symbols—the flag, the Bald Eagle. When citizens travel abroad, they are soon reminded of their identity. The mores and manners are different in the foreign land and sometimes feel wrong. Travelers become nostalgic for the people, sights, sounds, and even smells and tastes of their native land. Americans abroad search for the *International Herald Tribune* to bring them news from home. And when they return, even if they have had a wonderful time abroad, they say, "It's good to be home." A sense of familiarity and wholeness spreads over them, even compensating for the jet lag they may experience. The nation, not the State provides our roots, our sense of belonging, our identity, our solidarity with others. So deep is this sense of communal covenant that many will risk their lives for the nation and even kill for it.

When we think of the State, on the other hand, we think of the laws, the institutions, including the constitution, that make up the State. These laws are impersonal and abstract though they can have powerful personal effects, especially if one is caught breaking one of them. The authority of the State consists in its *sovereignty*. It alone can make laws and enforce them within its jurisdiction. External associations are forbidden from interfering in its internal affairs, and no internal association may override its statutes. The State is supreme.

Politicians differ in their appeal to the electorate. Some appeal to societal and nationalistic sentiments—say family values, religion, and tradition; others appeal to institutional characteristics and propose changing specific laws, such as those governing Social Security or taxation. Of course, there is much overlap, for some of the laws touch deeply on our heritage, say a law against desecrating the flag. Still, the distinction is valid. Liberals, especially Libertarians, emphasize the formal State aspects, concentrating on the government's role as a protector (from both internal and external harm), whereas Conservatives and Communitarians emphasize the cultural communal aspects such as family values, patriotism, religious and cultural heritage. A Liberal may well tolerate, or even celebrate, wide differences in education, literature, and even language use ("multicultural diversity"), whereas a Conservative or Communitarian will seek to promote the tradition, a single language, "the core curriculum" in education. It is no accident that Conservatives call for immigration restrictions while Liberals promote open borders, or that Conservatives fight for making English the official language, while Liberals tolerate a diversity of language use. Liberals celebrate cultural diversity, whereas Conservatives identify so strongly with their own culture that they tend to be suspicious of diversity until a case for it is made. These distinctions will surface in many parts of this work.

In sum, the State is distinguished by its sovereignty, its authority to rule over its subjects, and its right to create laws and enforce them by coercive means. It is formal, abstract, legalistic, and dominated by the universal, but, because of its coercive authority, also potentially powerful for ill as well as for good. A nation, on the other hand, represents the communal, voluntary aspects of social life, stressing the particular over the universal. Whereas membership in the State is a matter of legal status, membership in a nation is a matter of passion or emotion, of personal commitment, which evokes the sentiment of patriotism.

You should review these concepts and distinctions and develop their implications as you go through this work, culminating in Chapter VIII, in which issues of global politics are examined.

OUTLINE OF THIS WORK

Chapter I consists of a set of modern classics in political philosophy, beginning with Niccolò Machiavelli's tract on political realism, *The Prince,* then turning to Thomas Hobbes's classic *Leviathan,* with its description of the state of nature and explanation of the need for a sovereign. Next, we examine John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government,* in which a natural rights theory of the justification of the State and political obligation is set forth, essentially arguing that we have an obligation to obey the State because we have tacitly consented to obey it. After this we present *The Social Contract,* Jean-Jacques Rousseau's version of democratic contractualism and, after that, David Hume's discussion of the origin of government and his critique of contractualism and the consent theory. Following this, we examine Edmund Burke's critique of French revolution egalitarianism, written prophetically before the Revolution got under way. Burke's essay may be the clearest defense of essential conservatism ever written. Thereupon follows Mary Wollstonecraft's nineteenth-century essay on why women should be given equal political rights. Then we examine Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' *Communist Manifesto* and Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program,* in which he rejects strong egalitarianism. Finally, we read the first chapters of John Stuart Mill's classic *On Liberty,* which sets forth the case for social liberty against all forms of state paternalism. These classics may be read separately or in conjunction with readings under the various topics in this book. For instance, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, and Hume are relevant to Chapter II on political obligation; Mill to Chapter III on liberty; and Wollstonecraft, Marx, and Engels to Chapter IV on justice.

Chapter II consists of essays on political obligation. It begins with Robert Paul Wolff's challenging essay on anarchism, which seeks to answer the question Why should I obey the law? Chapter III examines the value of liberty versus State paternalism. Chapter IV sets forth some of the most important readings on the nature of distributive justice, the principal political virtue. Chapter V examines the question of how deeply the State should involve itself in personal morality (moral perfectionism) or whether it should be neutral regarding the good. Chapter VI considers the concept of equality together with its related categories, equal opportunity, inheritance, and multicultural diversity. Chapter VII examines the nature of human rights and asks whether there really are any. Chapter VIII has to do with nationalism versus internationalism, or national sovereignty versus world government. We look at the arguments for world government and for national sovereignty, as well as the issue of patriotism.

I have tried to set before you the best argued, most accessible selections in the literature, representing many opposing points of view. I hope the book serves the purpose of advancing the discussion on these important and difficult issues.

As a kindness to modern readers, I have changed some punctuation and spelling, especially in the readings written in earlier centuries. Some notes have been edited or deleted. Unless otherwise noted, all endnotes were in the original.

[1]Quoted in Eric Hobsbawn, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 101.

Contents

CHAPTER I

Modern Classics

There are a select few works of political philosophy with which every student should be thoroughly familiar. In the Ancient period these would include Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics. In the modern period, a period stretching from the late Renaissance until the late 19th century, nine works stand out. These are not only intrinsically significant but have been influential in shaping the nature of the succeeding debate, stretching into the present. They are very much living works, part of our patrimony. The first classic work is *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), wherein a new political vision is expounded, one which departs from the idealism of the Greek and Roman classics in favor of Realpolitik, a realistic assessment of human political intrigue, conspiracy and fallibility. The term "Machiavellian" has become synonymous with shrewd, cynical political realism, which deals with people as they are rather than as we might wish them to be. *The Prince* is a guide to one who governs, explaining how political power is acquired and how it's maintained. According to this vision, Reasons of state justify deception and fraudulent behavior which we would condemn in everyday human interactions. Machiavelli's claims and cynicism may not be the ultimate truth about human society, but they contain enough truth to warrant continued study.

The second classic work selected is the *Leviathan* of Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), a work which sets forth a comprehensive political theory within the framework of a systematic account of human nature. Hobbes, a Royalist whose perceptions of the chaos and violence of the English Civil War (1641–44) led him to conclude that even an orderly *absolutism* is preferable to a *state of nature* in which life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. . . . a war of all against all," sets forth a contractualist theory of political obligation. Without the Sovereign State, in which subjects agree to sacrifice some liberties for peace, there is no hope of living a good life.

John Locke (1632–1704), the author of our third selection, the second of his *Two Treatises of Government* (1690), had a more optimistic view of human nature than Hobbes. In the work before us he sets forth a "natural rights" theory which became the intellectual foundation of our nation's Founding Fathers. For Locke all humans are endowed by God with the inalienable rights to life, liberty and property, the right to property adhering to anyone who mixes his labor with a segment of nature. Government rests on the consent of the governed, so that if it fails to meet its part of the bargain it may be dissolved by the citizenry. Locke also believed in an original contract which was the legitimate ancestor to all legitimate authority, a thesis rejected by David Hume in Reading 5.

Our fourth classic is the *Social Contract* (1762) by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). If Locke's work is the manifesto of the American Revolution, Rousseau's is that of the French Revolution. He begins with the incendiary proclamation, "Man is born free but is everywhere in chains." Man is good by nature (a "Noble Savage") but social institutions corrupt him. Direct democracy is the only justified form of political decision making because it alone can express the General Will of the people in concrete form and for the common good. A form of majoritarianism dominates his thought which Mill (Reading 9) will later label "The Tyranny of the Majority", for it enables the majority to "force" the minority "to be free" by coercive action.

Our fifth classic author is the Scottish philosopher and historian David Hume (1711–76) whose two political essays, "On the Origin of Government" and "Of the Social Contract", break with the contractualism of the three previous writers. Hume argues that there never was an original social contract and that the idea of "tacit consent" is inapplicable to society. The poor uneducated peasant who knows no other language or set of customs is not free to leave his country for another, no matter how dissatisfied he becomes with it. "We may as well assert that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master, though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean and perish, the moment he leaves her." Political obligation is not based on any abstract or *tacit* consent but on the fact that the government is the best institution for preserving our property and enforcing the law. That is, it has a broad utilitarian justification.

Edmund Burke (1729–97), the British statesman and philosopher, is the author of our next classic, *Reflection on the Recent Revolution in France.* In it he sets forth his brilliant but unsystematic defense of modern political conservatism. He not only predicts the course of the French Revolution, as an odyssey of violence ending in despotism, but shows how it loosens the citizen from his patrimony, the heritage which helps define an individual person. Radicalism is not only dangerous to life and limb but a form of social suicide. Burke rejects the radical egalitarianism embedded in the French Revolution, urging a benevolent, hierarchical aristocracy instead. Tradition is a treasure, which may be reformed, but ought never be abandoned.

Our seventh reading is a short selection from Mary Wollstonecraft's (1759–97) *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), written only two years after Burke's work and a critique of it. Wollstonecraft defended the French Revolution as a move forward in defending civil and religious liberty and, hopefully, extending it to women. In this selection she argues for equal rights for women, contending that her lower level of ability is largely the consequence of inferior education and opportunity.

Our next selection, "The Communist Manifesto" (1848), the joint product of the German philosopher Karl Marx (1818–83) and Friedrich Engels (1820–95), is the *locus classicus* of the communist worker's movement. It is a wake-up call to the proletariat to rise from its slumber and overthrow the capitalist minions who enslave him. "Workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains." It outlines the "specter" that haunted Europe until the end of the twentieth century. I have also included an excerpt from Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) in order to show the classical enlightenment (meritocratic) motif in his thought. Until the Communist Utopia is formed people should be rewarded according to their differential social contribution.

Finally, I have included a large selection from John Stuart Mill's (1806–73) *On Liberty* (1859), the classic defense of liberty which defends the principle that except to defend others from harm, one's personal liberty should be absolute. "The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with liberty of action of any of their number is self-protection." All paternalistic reasons fail to override this absolute principle. Mill grounds his libertarianism in a broader utilitarianism in which liberty becomes the indispensable instrument to individual self-realization.

These nine selections constitute the most significant writings in political philosophy up to the beginning of the twentieth century in terms of philosophical acuity and influence on western society. They are valuable in their own right but can be related to the topics and readings that follow in this book: Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and Hume can be read in connection with Part II, Justification of the State and Political Obligations. Mill connects with Part III, on Liberty; Hume, Burke, and Wollstonecraft with Part IV, on Justice; Mill with Part V on the debate over State neutrality and Perfectionism; Rousseau, Hume, and Marx with Part VI on Equality and Equal Opportunity; Locke with Part VII on Rights; Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke and Marx and Engels with Part VIII, on Nationalism versus Internationalism in Politics.

These modern classics of political philosophy are our patrimony, to be neglected only at our peril.

READING 1

The Prince

Niccolò Machiavelli

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469 – 1527) was born in Florence and served as a diplomat in the court of Caesar Borgia until he was forced into retirement by a change of government.

His most famous work, *The Prince,* (written in 1513, published in 1532) was composed as advice for the young prince

of Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici. In it, Machiavelli sets forth a realist and amoralist political philosophy. Idealism is fine in theory but not practical. He advises that if you want to succeed in office, you ought not to be preoccupied by normal moral rules. He distinguishes between man as he ought to be and man as he is and cautions us to take account of the latter, not the former, in our dealings.

The Prince must do whatever is necessary to stay in power: break promises, make friends of his enemies, betray his friends. To maintain power, he must have a strong military force that is loyal to him and always ready to defend him and his sovereignty when threatened. The successful prince is the political equivalent of the rapist.

Machiavelli is credited with being the founder of modern political realism.

This reading is taken from *The Prince* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1908).

CHAPTER 15. CONCERNING THINGS FOR WHICH MEN, AND ESPECIALLY PRINCES, ARE PRAISED OR BLAMED

It remains now to see what ought to be the rules of conduct for a prince towards subject and friends. And as I know that many have written on this point, I expect I shall be considered presumptuous in mentioning it again, especially as in discussing it I shall depart from the methods of other people. But, it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen, because how one lives is so far distant from how one ought to live, that he who neglects what is done for what ought to be done, sooner effects his ruin than his preservation; for a man who wishes to act entirely up to his professions of virtue soon meets with what destroys him among so much that is evil.

Hence it is necessary for a prince wishing to hold his own to know how to do wrong, and to make use of it or not according to necessity. Therefore, putting on one side imaginary things concerning a prince, and discussing those which are real, I say that all men when they are spoken of, and chiefly princes for being more highly placed, are remarkable for some of those qualities which bring them either blame or praise; and thus it is that one is reputed liberal, another miserly, using a Tuscan term (because an avaricious person in our language is still he who desires to possess by robbery, whilst we call one miserly who deprives himself too much of the use of his own); one is reputed generous, one rapacious; one cruel, one compassionate; one faithless, another faithful; one effeminate and cowardly, another bold and brave; one affable, another haughty; one lascivious, another chaste; one sincere, another cunning; one hard, another easy; one grave, another frivolous; one religious, another unbelieving, and the like. And I know that every one will confess that it would be most praiseworthy in a prince to exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good; but because they can neither be entirely possessed nor observed, for human conditions do not permit it, it is necessary for him to be sufficiently prudent that he may know how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state; and also to keep himself, if it be possible, from those which would not lose him it; but this not being possible, he may with less hesitation abandon himself to them. And again, he need not make himself uneasy at incurring a reproach for those vices without which the state can only be saved with difficulty, for if everything is considered carefully, it will be found that something which looks like virtue, if followed, would be his ruin; whilst something else, which looks like vice, yet followed brings him security and prosperity.

CHAPTER 16. CONCERNING LIBERALITY AND MEANNESS

Commencing then with the first of the above-named characteristics, I say that it would be well to be reputed liberal. Nevertheless, liberality exercised in a way that does not bring you the reputation for it, injures you; for if one exercises it honestly and as it should be exercised, it may not become known, and you will not avoid the reproach of its opposite. Therefore, any one wishing to maintain among men the name of liberal is obliged to avoid no attribute of magnificence; so that a prince thus inclined will consume in such acts all his property, and will be compelled in the end, if he wish