THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF MACHIAVELLI AND FANON
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by

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This thesis will attempt to show that the political writings of Niccolò Machiavelli and Frantz Fanon are based on non-transcendental goals, which are therefore realizable.

In the introductory section of the paper it is contended that a similarity of situations confronted both writers, mutatis mutandis. The sixteenth century imperialism of France and Spain and the ineffectiveness of the nascent bourgeois in Italy were viewed as impediments to a national unification in an age of incipient nation states. The twentieth century analogue of Fanon would be colonialism and neo-colonialism and the pandering of the European trained native bourgeoisie.

The second section will deal with the attempts of Machiavelli and Fanon to address themselves to the problems of freedom from oppression, national integration and effective leadership. Fanon's writings will be shown as exhibiting an added psychological dimension; so that liberty and integration will depend upon freedom from a colonised psyche and the acquisition of a cultural and national identity.

In this section, which deals primarily with methods for the attainment of these goals, the concept and role of violence will be examined. If Machiavelli's national cohesion is seen as attainable by a strong leader and a loyal citizenry, Fanon's integration is moulded in the crucible of a dispossessed population participating in the necessitated violence of a national liberation. It is through this cathartic violence that the physical and psychological fetters are struck.

A third part of this paper will examine the underlying ethics
of both writers. Their political realism will be shown as possessing an ethical content; such ethics, however, are based on political action - the inseparability of ethics from politics or their symbiotic relationship. To this end the goal of the good society and the just state is present; but only power can defeat power and the sanction of violence is not only an apologia for this maxim but a guardian of political morality.

The conclusion will attempt to offer an evaluation of Machiavelli's and Fanon's political contributions, and the summation of the thesis hopes to show that the political efficacy of their writings lies in the timelessness of their method of description, generalizations and a theory of probability based upon these generalizations. As such Machiavelli and Fanon are in the realm of political science.
INTRODUCTION

The political philosophy of Niccolò Machiavelli enjoys ubiquitous fame. Its pristine vigour is attested to by the fact that, through the past four and a half centuries, dictators and democrats have embraced its values.

Yet there is no patent contradiction in this if one realizes that Machiavelli deals in what is while not rejecting what ought to be; his Prince is a sort of political Everyman concerned with realizing the Kingdom of Earth.

Machiavelli, then, speaks to all practitioners of politics. But would not this pander to sheer political expediency? He partly recommends this, but to accept this as Machiavellianism would be to neglect the man, his period and his message. All three are inextricably woven together.

To speak of the man, firstly, does not necessarily entail the minutiae of his life, although there is ample evidence to show that his private misfortune impinged on his political writings. What it does entail, however, is an examination of the social and political milieu which permitted a Machiavelli to flourish.

Secondly, the historical period in which The Prince was written could give us an insight into the dynamics of social change as perceived by Machiavelli. The innovational genius of Machiavelli can perhaps be etched against a background of political and military parameters that dictated the social ethos that prevailed. A study of the period could produce a picture of man, the creation of a specific age, yet struggling
within the confines of his history to recreate himself. For Machiavelli's condottiere is the personification of man's will pitted against a seemingly inexorable fate. In short, it is by studying the science of political action that the secret of his virtù is revealed and so may triumph over fortuna.

Ultimately it is this aspect of Machiavelli's political philosophy that stands as his timeless message, a message that subsequent reformers of society have attempted to interpret in one form or another. But it should be noted that the successors of the Florentine have generally specified a moral end while employing "machiavellian" means. What this has come to mean, in the last resort, is a blurring of the means-end distinction once action is demanded. While this would no doubt be an invidious position to those who oppose the politics of Machiavelli it is instructive to note that a significant number of contemporary political theorists, while defending democracy, have argued that democracy is a method. To this end Joseph Schumpeter unequivocally states:

Democracy is a political method, that is to say, a certain type of institutional arrangement for arriving at political - legislative and administrative - decisions... 1

Once this is conceded one is prompted to be critical of the manipulative aspect of elite rule. However repugnant elite rule might be to democratic theorists empirical analysis tends to confirm its presence. To cite one more author who illustrates the necessity of postulating the fact of elite rule in democracy, Harold Lasswell, in his important work

Power and Society, sees his analysis akin to that of Machiavelli. "The present work is much closer to the straight-forward empirical standpoint of Machiavelli's Discourses..."² he states, to which he consistently adds: "Political science, as an empirical discipline, is the study of the shaping and sharing of power."³ Lasswell is therefore not removed from the tradition of Machiavelli; the similarity becomes more pronounced when we read in his Politics: Who Gets What, When, How the following:

The fate of an elite is profoundly affected by the ways it manipulates the environment; that is to say, by the use of violence, goods, symbols, practices.⁴

The above evidence is not an indictment of democracy. It is, rather, a vindication of Machiavelli's science; for his Prince is not a political Hamlet but a man of action whose stimulus lies within his existential condition. Cognizant of his historical predecessors he is not enslaved by the dead hand of the past; he is spurred on to action in the certainty that his past history and future aspirations can only have meaning in the present potentiality of action.

It is within this framework that Frantz Fanon's revolutionary metier finds a parallel. Fanon perceived the history of past colonial oppression and the future aspirations of the oppressed peoples conjoined in the action of the present. The exigencies of the present defy all conventional attitudes that assume the posture of reason. These conventions, in the shape of political parties, constitutions, negotiations, social customs, economic forms and religion, have usurped reason; the ultima ratio, for Fanon, is action, a course that can only be pursued through force and violence.

²Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society, Yale University Press: 1965.x.
³Ibid. xiv.
Both writers may have faced different epochs but they sought to deal with the problem of how to achieve success. It is this emphasis which is the \textit{bête noire} of most of their critics. Success, it is argued, is desirable but other considerations should assume the same, or higher, level of importance if politics is to be considered a worthy human endeavour. To this Machiavelli and Fanon would retort that several laudable considerations are desirable, but do they enhance or impede success? The argument weighing the cost of success in terms of other considerations admits to priorities of preferences; the retort using success as a criterion, simply states the factors inimical or favourable to ultimate success.

But to state that the political philosophies of Machiavelli and Fanon are concerned only with success would be to accept a superficial account of their writings which would reduce their significance to that of mere political tracts. While such an interpretation possesses utility it is politically jejune. Machiavelli wrote at a time when certain social, economic, political and religious norms were in existence; in order to transform the Florentine or perhaps the Italian entity into a cohesive republican state it was necessary to examine the forces that carried the day. A simple appeal to the efficacy of republicanism would have had scant chance of success in the existing \textit{milieu}; the renaissance period had slowly eroded the faith that man had customarily placed in the supernatural. Yet this faith had not been replaced by any articulated secular belief and the hiatus was filled by an amorphous striving to relate reality to human measures. Working within this confusion
Machiavelli presented the value of republican virtue in his *Discourses* but saw his political actor in *The Prince.*

When we turn to Fanon we see a similar yearning for freedom from tyranny and exploitation and a desire for peace and harmony; but Fanon, too, is cognizant of the reality which has to be transformed. He saw the futility of pleading to the better nature of the colonial overlords in whose consciousness the reality of the situation meant the existential facts of parliamentary government catering to the needs and comfort of a privileged few. To argue against this would seem to defy rationality itself; the colonial powers conceded that there should be a change but of an incremental nature; concessions were granted to peripheral demands provided they were in consonance with the ruling ethos. In effect, real power could not be expected to transform itself if it meant its own destruction. Where for Machiavelli a semi-feudal hierarchy maintained itself by virtue of its norms aligned with religion, for Fanon the ruling elite perpetuated its hegemony principally by its economic control, with all its social ramifications, aligned with the religion of liberal democracy.

In order to combat this Machiavelli and Fanon simply asked how does one acquire and retain power? The answers, for both, necessitated an examination of successful power holders of the past and the present, and an enquiry into their methods of attaining power and why their power ultimately declined. The conditions propitious for retaining power are extremely important if we are to appreciate Machiavelli's republicanism and Fanon's Marxists propensities; the methods to be employed contain a psychological dimension which creates the element of success out of
seemingly insuperable odds. A combination of a multitude of factors encompassed in the symbol of Machiavelli's *virtù* will ultimately triumph over conditions imposed by *fortuna*, and the history of success lies in the knowledge of this human capacity. But the lesson gleaned from history has meaning only in practice, for although historical examples will instruct us the same actions do not always produce the same results.

Fanon, writing in the twentieth century with its greater fund of psychological insights and knowledge, advances a more elaborate psycho-existential argument in which action in itself transforms the consciousness of the oppressed peoples of the Third World. Furthermore, the action demanded by Fanon is vested in the masses, especially in the peasants, upon whom devolves the duty of reclaiming their heritage of freedom from the European conquerors. Machiavelli's humanism, therefore, saw salvation in the symbol of a strong man while Fanon's depended upon the concerted action of a whole class.

From the above, therefore, it is argued that Machiavelli treated action that was *politic* in the generally accepted meaning of that word, that is pertaining to what is "sagacious, prudent, judicious, expedient, crafty," as it is defined in the dictionary. Furthermore, he maintained that action could only be politic if it conformed with the times:

I also believe that he is happy whose mode of procedure accords with the needs of the times, and similarly he is unfortunate whose mode of procedure is opposed to the times.⁵

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This did not imply a passive compliance with the times but rather a symbiosis of virtù and fortuna which emerged in the process of action:

And in examining their life and deeds [Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus] it will be seen that they owed nothing to fortune but the opportunity which gave them matter to be shaped into what form they thought fit; and without that opportunity their powers would have been wasted, and without their powers the opportunity would have come in vain.6

Fanon, too, defines action on an existential plane when he asks the question, "...when can one affirm that the situation is ripe for a movement of national liberation?" and answers it by stating:

...reason hesitates and refuses to say which is a true decolonization, and which is false. We shall see that for a man who is in the thick of the fight it is an urgent matter to decide on the means and the tactics to employ....The nationalist militant...discovers in real action a new form of political activity ...and these new facts which the native will come to know exist only in action.7

It is contended, therefore, that the parallel between the writings of Machiavelli and Fanon is not an arbitrary one; there exists the existential motif which binds the three main aspects to be examined in this essay. First, The Historical Conditions which informed their political writings; second, The Political Methods espoused, and finally The Moral Basis implicit in such a political philosophy will be discussed with this in mind. From this it is hoped to be shown that such a philosophy, while dealing with a contemporary exigency, transcends parochialism and so offers a scope for a general theory of politics. Giuseppe Prezzolini perspicaciously sums it up when he remarks that:

6 Ibid. Chapter vii. 20.

7 Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, Trans. Constance Farrington; Grove Press Inc.: 1966. 47 and 117.
Machiavellianism came into being when Machiavelli died.... Contrary to what has been said, he belonged to the future, and made only a slight impression on his contemporaries.... Machiavelli's reality consists not of what he left in writing, but of what readers of his works think of them.... For me, the interpretations of Machiavelli were justified at any stated moment, and possessed a grain of truth, if they satisfied that superficial but constant need of men and social institutions to justify their own actions by means of doctrines. 

This, too, is the nub of Fanon's political writings.

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The Historical Conditions

The historical conditions of sixteenth century Italy and twentieth century developing countries show a remarkable similarity. The political milieux of both eras exhibit the absence of national integration with a host of attendant characteristics. Internally there is lack of a cohesive community of interest; there is practically no identification between the purpose of the rulers and the aspirations of the ruled. In short, whatever solidarity there is exists predominantly through the interplay of power factions unrepresentative of the greater portion of the populace.

Given such circumstances serious political thinkers have, in the past, either succumbed to the temptation of projecting a millenial future or working with the material at hand. Machiavelli, to a larger extent than Fanon,9 adopts the latter course while constructing his imperatives within the final conception of republican institutions.

Addressing himself to a set of existential circumstances Machiavelli set out a vast array of actual and possible situations, culled from history, and explored the potential alternatives. As an individual the choices may be open to certain personal preferences, but as a political actor they are guided by more defined boundaries. The unification of Italy was one of Machiavelli's foremost aims.

9This is necessarily so because whereas Machiavelli's concept of political integration was definitively based upon past and contemporary institutions, Fanon's Marxism compelled him to predicate his future society on new "productive relations". Thus, in this respect, Machiavelli's reputation as a political scientist is fairly secure in the face of challenges, whereas Fanon's suffers from a high degree of speculative content.
In seeking the national integration of Italian states he was searching for the answer to domestic instability caused by the successive rise and fall of political regimes. In order to replace political flux with a relative assurance of continuity and harmony, conditions were sought which were (1) least dependent upon external interference, (2) capable of extracting internal obedience by invincible power and force, (3) viable not solely through forced acquiescence but through the allegiance of a citizenry recognizing the power holders as the legitimate sovereign.

These three conditions informed the theory of politics of both Machiavelli and Fanon. But such a theory emanated from the specific historical conditions themselves and were not a priori considerations. In the case of sixteenth century Italy the bane of national integration was the power configuration of Spain and France in addition to the oscillating and dubious role of the Papacy.

Indeed, Italian city states only existed at the mercy of these two powerful incipient nation states encouraged by the machinations of pontiffs more interested in temporal interests than spiritual aspirations. While Machiavelli lauds religion in antiquity for the role it played in fostering a unifying value system in society, he devotes many passages to the excoriation of its corrupting role in fragmenting Italy. In his History of Florence he traces this calamitous trend even from the time of Theodoric, king of the Goths.

Nearly all the wars which the northern barbarians carried on in Italy...were occasioned by the pontiffs; and the hordes with which the country was inundated, were generally called in by them. The same mode of proceeding still continued, and kept Italy weak and
Jacob Burckhardt in writing of the foreign policies of the Italian states saw that for the princes:

...the King of France was alternately a bugbear to themselves and their enemies, and they threatened to call him in whenever they saw no more convenient way out of their difficulties.11

Machiavelli's brief against the Church, therefore, was its impediment to unification; as such it lent itself, in its historical context, to those conditions contributing to the external influences militating against a viable Italian political system. He was not averse to a strong Papal prince who might have been capable of unifying Italy.

The Church, then, not having been powerful enough to be able to master all Italy, nor having permitted any other power to do so, has been the cause why Italy has never been able to unite under one head...which occasioned her so many dissensions and so much weakness...12

The significance of this apparently detached view of Italian unification is the fact that Machiavelli was primarily concerned with the concept of unification and its feasibility in relation to the existing forces. It is this conceptualization of a new state that makes it possible for Machiavelli to abstract from reality the essence of statecraft and attribute it to historical figures. More pointedly, Machiavelli was able to portray Cesare Borgia as the epitome of his new man because Borgia personified the concept of the Italian "redeemer" who would bring about unification through principles of leadership indispensable for such a task.

12Discourses, Bk.I. chap.xii: 152.
It would be somewhat amiss, therefore, to argue that Machiavelli's political philosophy "...was never meant except for Italians, and Italians too of a given period; indeed, we may go further, and ask whether it was ever intended even for all Italians; it certainly bears the stamp of...an esoteric treatise."\(^\text{13}\) Such a narrow interpretation of Machiavelli's purpose misses the attempt of *The Prince* to construct a set of political elements that would encompass the realm of nation building in general while applicable to Florence and Italy in particular. It is conceded here that *The Prince* and *The Discourses* were written in response to a number of contemporary problems; in fact, it is the contention in this paper that the historical conditions were the major determinants of Machiavelli's writings. What is argued is that the response to these historical conditions were formulated in a cold appraisal of the facts and projected to deal with factors imperative to the theory of what we call today nation building.

Seen in this light Cesare Borgia who exemplified the cruelty, corruption and despicable characteristics of the Italian renaissance, and whose actions were of immediacy to Machiavelli, evoked his admiration because Borgia's qualities were congruent with the qualities of leadership.

...This cannot be explained by a personal sympathy for Cesare Borgia. Machiavelli had no reason to love him; on the contrary

he had the strongest reasons to fear him...Machiavelli knew very well that the triumph of Cesare Borgia's politics would have meant the ruin of the Florentine Republic...the real source of Machiavelli's admiration was not the man himself but the structure of the new state that had been created by him. Machiavelli was the first thinker who completely realized what this new political structure really meant...He anticipated in his thought the whole course of the future political life of Europe.14

In speaking of unity Machiavelli was speaking of a conscious national development which was something quite new in his epoch. Yet this conscious approach to a politics of national development was the function of his prince, his raison d'etre. For the pivotal force of the principle which was to mould Italy into a unified entity was Machiavelli's virtù by which his prince would manipulate his environment, or fortuna. Far from being a metaphysical concept it was a force possessed by a man of the highest rationality who sought at all times to maximize his gains and minimize his losses. From the existing realities he was expected to calculate his every action so as to diminish the impact of chance upon his outcome.

The prevailing condition of disunity, dissension, internal cleavages and confusion leading to internecine struggle and violence impinged upon the politics of Machiavelli's prince. With these forces to contend the political actor is compelled to address himself to solutions that are replete with appropriate action. Political leadership can only succeed if it is capable of commanding the constellation of forces that produces the prevailing ethos.

It would have been incongruous, therefore, to have erected a prince as a national unifier while prescribing political action not in keeping

with the environment he was called upon to mould. This aspect is a distinct break with the Medieval notion of philosophy which either professed to speak of man's actions determining his future other-worldly status, or sought to recreate a nobler man in an ignoble world.

Machiavelli did seek to create a superior man but this man would not exist outside of the contemporary political arena, he would, instead, participate and would master the very conditions that brought him into being. Such a political philosophy spoke of the times yet transcended its customary concepts. As Machiavelli put it:

...I fear that my writing about it (methods and rules for a prince) may be deemed presumptuous...differing from the opinions of others...it appears to me more proper to go to the real truth of the matter than to its imagination; and many have imagined republics and principalities which have never been seen or known to exist in reality; for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done for what ought to be done, will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation.15

If the regeneration of Italy was therefore Machiavelli's driving ambition, and he wished to "go to the real truth of the matter than to its imagination", that is to examine the existing conditions and build his political foundation upon such an empirical base, then an analysis of contemporary events placed in relief of the historical past seemed a valid framework for realism. Even his method of writing history was a manifestation of his political perspective.

The prescribed form to which Machiavelli had to adjust his work also had the effect of giving his Florentine History its unique value and of making it an expression of his political thought...

15The Prince, Chapter xv: 56.
In the history of Florence Machiavelli found again and again private ambitions, egoism, and thirst for personal power. He had seen these vices at work when he had served the republic in the chancellery. It was in the light of the knowledge he had gained then that he saw the Florentine history of the preceding centuries.16

Writing in the throes of his own misfortunes, in "the great and unmerited sufferings inflicted on me by a cruel fate",17 Machiavelli reflects upon the impermanence of all societies and particularly upon an enfeebled Italy and an humiliated Florence. These reflections must have contained the general conditions that prevailed in Europe at the close of the fifteenth century: the increasing obsolescence of the concept of the Holy Roman Empire. Centrifugal tendencies were manifested in the forming of nascent nationalities most evident in Spain and France. This process of national grouping impressed Machiavelli in its possibilities toward the theory of a totally viable state, and one of the components of this process he especially singles out for praise. "Among the kingdoms that are well ordered and governed in our time is France, and there we find numberless institutions on which depend the liberty and security of the king; of these the chief is the parliament..."18

A number of factors excluded Italy from this process. A tenuous suzerainty of an alien German monarch with its endless feud with the Papacy resulted in a factional struggle between the Ghibellines and the Guelphs; to this was added the geographical factors which lent themselves

16Machiavelli, History of Florence, xv-xvi.
17The Prince, 4.
to the fragmentation of Italy into a series of dubious political entities. Flowing from this volatile condition Milan, Venice, Florence, the Papacy and Naples assumed a dominance in the Italian political landscape. Naturally any approach to unification was prone to a host of considerations which impelled one or several of these states to form coalitions against hegemonial tendencies of the others.

Added to this general picture of Italian disunity which in itself invited foreign interference were the domestic conflicts that ensued in these states. Florence, which was of pressing concern to Machiavelli, provided a rich example of a state suffering from the vicissitudes of political ineptitude, social crises, and enormous wealth which predisposed its rulers to purchase its independence through diplomatic transactions that were short-lived.19 As Burckhardt put it:

Florence not only existed under political forms more varied than those of the free states of Italy and of Europe generally, but it reflected upon them far more deeply. It is a faithful mirror of the relations of individuals and classes to a variable whole ...The rule of the nobility, the tyrannies, the struggles of the middle class with the proletariat, limited and unlimited democracy, pseudo-democracy, the primacy of a single house, the theocracy of Savonarola, and the mixed forms of government which prepared the way for the Medicean despotism...20

These were the general historical conditions which confronted Machiavelli and to which he addressed himself in his works. Whether

19Felix Gilbert's "The Nationalism of Machiavelli" in Problems in European Civilization cites innumerable historical evidence to show that the Florentine policy makers consistently placed their economic interests above all other considerations. On the particular question of French intrusion into Italy "...they regard the maintenance of the French alliance a necessity because of the Florentine economic interests in France." 39.

20Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy.
such conditions were good or bad did not enter into his analysis of the
conditions themselves:

He never blames or praises political actions; he simply gives
a descriptive analysis of them - in the same way in which a
physician describes the symptoms of a certain illness. In such
an analysis we are only concerned with the truth of the de­
cription, not with the things spoken of. 21

However, this does not imply that his political writings are
devoid of prescriptive content; further, it does not mean that he did
not desire remedial measures for Florence and Italy - just as a physician,
to continue the analogy, is not indifferent to the health of the patient.
Machiavelli appealed to the compelling nature of his political diagnosis.
It was hoped that the Medici would act on the basis of such a cogent
analysis as that of The Prince which set out a wealth of contemporary
description with a parallel of past historical events from which to
adduce a theory of political action: such action could now be evaluated
in terms of juxtaposing the condition of Florence and Italy to the clearly
formulated questions in The Prince. How independent from external inter­
ference was a state? In the last resort how capable was the state in
extracting internal obedience? Was the legitimacy of the sovereign power
recognized through sheer force, or through a high degree of shared values?
Failure to examine one's political existence in these terms would be
to submit virtù, man's ability to control his destiny, to the whims of
fortuna.

When we turn to Fanon we find a more ringing urgency and a desire
- an exhortation - to use the very historical conditions themselves as
grist for political and social change. These historical conditions,

21Cassirer, The Myth of the State, 154.
conceptualized as external influence, internal control and citizen allegiance, motivated Fanon's political critique of existing societies in the developing countries. But there is an added dimension to Fanon's consideration of external interference in the affairs of the Third World.

Where for Machiavelli the external factors were cast in the light of raw power dictating its terms by sheer physical force, Fanon's era had inherited the historical product of subsequent international development. The late nineteenth century marked the plateau of imperial aggrandizement in those spheres outside of Europe and North America and the succeeding twentieth century, particularly after World War II, saw the erosion of certain imperial assumptions accompanied by the rising independence of states in Africa, the East and Latin America. Consequently, Fanon's fulminations are directed against the remaining bastions of direct colonial control, such as France's action in Algeria, and more significantly "les zones d'influence" maintained by the departed colonial powers.

Pour les nations comme l'Angleterre et la France interfère l'importante question des zones d'influence. Unanimes dans leur décision de briser la revendication nationale des peuples coloniaux, ces pays mènent une lutte gigantesque pour l'accaparement des marchés mondiaux. Les batailles économiques entre la France, l'Angleterre et les États-Unis, au Moyen-Orient, en Extrême-Orient et maintenant en Afrique, donnent la mesure de la voracité et de la bestialité impérialistes...ces batailles sont la cause directe des stratégies qui...secouent les États nouvellement indépendants...Chaque lutte de libération nationale doit tenir compte des zones d'influence.?

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22Frantz Fanon, Pour la révolution Africaine. Cahiers Libres Nos. 53-54. Francois Maspero; Paris: 1964. 144
The added dimension for Fanon, therefore, is not the sole aspect of naked aggression which initiated the imperial era of nineteenth century Great Powers; it is rather the transformation of a patent military dominance into the more subtle form of economic imperialism. Behind this new imperialism, Fanon asserts, is the ultima ratio of physical intervention. He cites the Monroe Doctrine as a prime example of a Great Power maintaining its hegemony by force, as it sees fit: "L'article unique de cette doctrine stipule que l'Amérique appartient aux Américains, c'est-à-dire au Département d'Etat." 23

Fanon, like Machiavelli, faced the problem of national development. His political approach while differing in several aspects contains the fundamental consideration that for political action to be efficacious it must discover the springs of present political forces. The desired end in a theory of political development must take into account the existing conditions that are to be transformed; such conditions and their relational components form the matrix from which rational choices are generated.

Yet while a theory of political development should lend itself to a sui generis application its cogency mainly derives from the general utility of its statements or prescriptions. Fanon purports to speak of the concept of decolonisation and the form in which it manifests itself; the many facets of this phenomenon lead him to explore the past history of colonisation, its temporary successes and predicted demise. Within this historical movement he predicates a dialectical process working inexorably towards a synthesis of freedom of the colonised from the colonial powers:

23Ibid.
Decolonisation, as we know, is a historical process: that is to say that it cannot be understood, it cannot become intelligible nor clear to itself except in the exact measure that we can discern the movements which give it historical form and content. Decolonisation is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature...In decolonisation... 'The last shall be first and the first last'...That is why... all decolonisation is successful.24

There is a striking similarity in Machiavelli's exhortation to liberate Italy from her present condition where she is "without a head, without order, beaten, despoiled, lacerated, and overrun"25 and Fanon's call to the Third World to "start a new history of Man" but such a history will not forget "racial hatreds, slavery, exploitation and above all the bloodless genocide which consisted in the setting aside of fifteen thousand millions of men."26 The concept of decolonisation, for Fanon, is therefore a total process of liberation from the yoke of colonialism, national independence of former colonies and the unification of the Third World into an entity conscious of its past history of oppression and future aspirations of total freedom.

The historical condition of the Third World is therefore a recognition in itself of the political and social changes that are imminent. Where this is a clear unequivocal assertion of Fanon the same historical necessity is not explicit in the political philosophy of Machiavelli. The obvious explanation for this difference in emphasis lies, of course, in their fundamental conceptions of the historical process. Fanon, writing

24Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 29-30.

25The Prince, Chapter xxvi. 95.

26Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 255.
in the middle of the twentieth century and as a self-proclaimed spokes-
man for the oppressed peoples of the Third World, sees his contemporary
condition as a synthesizing point in the dialectical movement of history.
This view of history moving inexorably forward predisposes him to pre-
scribe a high degree of commitment to action in itself, optimistic in
the view that such action coincides with, and is demanded by, history.

Every facet of the contemporary historical condition for Fanon,
therefore, is inextricably linked in a Weltanschauung which predicates
the interdependence of external and internal factors. National inde-
pendence in the under-developed countries is therefore seen as a tenuous
term when confronted with international realities; independence may even
be a luxury:

...in fact you may see colonialism withdrawing its capital and
its technicians and setting up around the young State the
apparatus of economic pressure. The apotheosis of independence
is transformed into the curse of independence, and the colonial
power through its immense resources of coercion condemns the
young nation to regression.27

Fanon does not hesitate to advance examples of external pres-
sures upon the domestic viability of the new states. The United States
is singled out as the main transgressor in this respect: Cuba and Latin
America are indicated as "an object lesson for Africa", and the danger
of physical intervention is shown to be ever present by the allegation
that "the United States is now [1961] organising counter-revolutionary
brigades, puts together a provisional government...and generally has
decided to strangle the Cuban people mercilessly."28 He sees the

27Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 76-77.
28Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 77. Parenthesis mine.
"almighty dollar" guaranteeing the continuance of slavery and subjection "all over the globe, in the oil wells of the Middle East, the mines of Peru or of the Congo, and the United Fruit or Firestone plantations..."29

In such an international milieu Fanon sees the necessity of intensifying the anti-colonial struggle from every vantage point. While The Wretched of the Earth is closely identified with that genre of contemporary writing called "revolutionary literature" - usually associated with the names of Mao, Giap, Che Guevara and Regis Debray - the scope of Fanon's analysis ranges far wider than such literature. The corpus of Fanon's writings cuts a wide swathe through such problems as economic development, social and psychological conditions, race, nation, revolutionary strategies and tactics, political organizations, religion, literature and other engrossing desiderata that are necessary to be examined if one is genuinely concerned with societal change and all its ramifications.

There is, furthermore, a dual dimension to the internal national efforts of embryonic nation states struggling for independence and freedom. In one area there is the problem of a European settler government - Rhodesia and South Africa today - which is the patent distillation of colonial oppression; the other area is manifested in the "bourgeoisified" native elite who by its very training and past association have internalized the norms of its colonial masters and so perpetuate the ethos of colonial rule under the guise of a mere symbolic and hollow independence.

For Fanon, the native middle class which has come to power under nationalist slogans displays "the shocking ways of a traditional bourgeoisie, 29Ibid.
of a bourgeoisie which is stupidly, contemptibly, cynically bourgeois. "

And so it is that not even the national bourgeoisie, who alone were capable at the start of mobilizing the masses, not even they are the true bearers of the new order of things:

Because it [the national middle class] is bereft of ideas, because it lives to itself and cuts itself off from the people, undermined by its hereditary incapacity to think in terms of all the problems of the nation as seen from the point of view of the whole of that nation, the national middle class will... take on the role of manager for Western enterprise, and it will in practice set up its country as the brothel of Europe. 

Writing in the late 1950's Fanon's interpretations of historical conditions are pregnant with the idea of "historical necessity" working itself out under his very eyes. Yet it is not hard to see the plausibility of his decolonisation thesis, for the political atmosphere was rife with anticipations and preparations for the transfer of colonial power to a native ruling class, particularly in the West Africa colonies of Nigeria and Ghana. Furthermore, the year 1960 witnessed the independence of the members of the French Community, which Fanon viewed as only a superficial independence with the national leaders remaining as clients of France. And just as Machiavelli had exalted Cesare Borgia as the epitome of his "redeemer", so does Fanon view Patrice Lumumba

30 Ibid. 123. Because the underlying imperative for Fanon is the transformation of society by the masses he needs to argue against any independence that is achieved by a non-violent transfer of power: "Non-violence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around a green baize table...before any blood has been shed." Ibid. 49. Instead, the only genuine independence, for Fanon, is that which was "led by revolutionary elites who have come up from the people" and which necessitated violence. This emphasis on violence is in itself anti-bourgeois.

31 Ibid. 125.
in the liberating role.

In Lumumba, Fanon saw perhaps the embodiment of a revolutionary ideal he could not find elsewhere on the continent; and although he criticised Lumumba's policies (especially his initial trust in the United Nations), he clearly identified himself with this son of Africa who led a people and became a martyr...32

But the historical condition for Fanon contained more than the seeds for a realization of territorial independence. His entire works seek to exhibit the "Manichean" aspect of the colonial situation where the parcelling out of the world by the colonial powers was done on the basis of "belonging to or not belonging to a given race, a given species ...you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich."33 When Fanon views the underdeveloped countries he is confronted by this white thesis against a black antithesis; the present situation therefore informs his political writings and compels him to resolve this opposition by engaging in an historical process which will negate the cumulative effects of the past.

While it is true that Machiavelli lamented the fate of a subjugated Italy and wished to see Italy return to the pristine glory of Rome, he does not see its regeneration as dependent upon a racial vindication. The present state of Italy, for Machiavelli, lies in its ineptitude for rationally marshalling its forces; if a great leader should appear with the necessary qualities described by Machiavelli Italy would regain her place in the list of nations to be reckoned with. Fanon's political development possesses a much wider scope with which to deal. It embraces


33Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 32.
a universal dimension which is now being perceived by all the colonised peoples of the underdeveloped countries. Colonisation, Fanon argues, is not merely physical oppression, it is also psychological.\(^{34}\)

That Frantz Fanon was black and a psychiatrist does have bearing on this aspect of his analysis of colonialism. "There are essential facts in the career of the political thinker which began with the publication in 1952 of Peau Noire Masques Blan..."\(^{35}\) This does not imply necessarily an ad hominem argument in its pejorative sense. What it does imply is a new perspective.

Hobson, Hilferding, Bukharin, and Lenin formulated hypotheses about imperialism from the vantage point of relatively advanced nations which were themselves colonial powers. They were most concerned with the political consequences for the home country. Fanon tries to extend and develop... His analysis...from the point of view of the native peoples.\(^{36}\)

As a native himself, and from the perspective of the native peoples, Fanon sees that:

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\text{Il n'est pas possible d'asservir des hommes sans logiquement les inférioriser de part en part. Et le racisme n'est que l'explication emotionnelle, affective, quelquefois intellectuelle de cette inferiorisation.}^{37}
\]

\(^{34}\)Fanon, a black citizen of the French West Indian island of Martinique, depicts the plight of negro Martiniquais who knew no other culture or identity than that of France, yet discovered that they were considered inferior in the eyes of the French. This psychological dimension is graphically delineated in his Black Skin White Masks, trans. Charles Lam Markmann; Grove Press, N.Y.: 1967.

\(^{35}\)Zolberg, Encounter. 57.


\(^{37}\)Frantz Fanon, Pour la révolution Africaine. 47.
Where one will find in Machiavelli the assertion that a state founded upon the deprivation of liberty cannot achieve greatness, there is not that deep realization of a cultural imposition of one people over another that we find in Fanon's writings. And one would hardly have expected to see this dimension in Machiavelli's writings for his conception of liberty reflected assumptions based on the social order of the sixteenth century.

One would expect, therefore, that Fanon's analysis of contemporary historical conditions would contain a greater wealth of interconnections between the factors described by him. He is not content, as Machiavelli would be, to simply describe the past and present historical phenomena with clinical detachment. For while Machiavelli did see the interconnectedness of factors as determining the success or failure of certain actions, he saw these factors as isolated in their given historical period and connected to another period solely by their being replicable.

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38 The Discourses. Machiavelli appears to be simply using a commonsensical measurement of greatness, a mere material criterion; "But as all these cities are at their very origin deprived of liberty, they rarely succeed in making great progress, or in being counted amongst the great powers...Florence, thus built under the Roman Empire, could...have no growth except what depended on the will of its masters." Bk.I, Chapter i. 107.

39 Machiavelli, for instance, accepts the distinction of those that are free and those that are servile: "For it is as difficult to make a people free that is resolved to live in servitude, as it is to subject a people to servitude that is determined to be free." The Discourses: Bk.III, Chapter vii. 440. Fanon, of course, would reject this one sided and pessimistic view of man preordained to a fixed category. No doubt his argument would follow a Marxist interpretation which would see man's willingness to remain servile as the "false consciousness" perpetuated by "bourgeois ideology".
and not as underlying historical causal factors as a "moment" in history.40

This is the reason why Machiavelli's vision of Italy has to be related to the Rome of Titus Livius' history and whatever change in present circumstances must be brought about with the precepts of ancient Rome in mind "imitating" her "noble actions". But having posited this static view of history, Machiavelli nevertheless steps back and grants that half of men's actions are guided by fortune and half by virtù thereby granting man's capacity to effect change.

The historical condition for Machiavelli, therefore, is comprised of a replicable number of features and combinations which may be exploited or neglected as the existential historical actor sees fit.

For Fanon, on the other hand, such detachment is not possible since he is aware of an historical movement, of which he is part. He is aware that as a subject he is also an objective product of history struggling within its past confines - in this case the confines of colonisation. This consciousness of the march of history leaves him two choices (1) an acceptance of his historical condition and so to work within its predicates or (2) to reject the history of colonisation within the context of decolonisation. Fanon selected the latter stance.

Machiavelli, too, caught within the historical condition of the Renaissance selected the symbol of a strong man as the "redeemer" of

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40This is so because Machiavelli's conception of history differed from ours. As Ernst Cassirer put it: "He was interested in the statics not in the dynamics of historical life. He...sought for the recurrent features, for those things that are the same at all times.". The Myth of the State, 125. However, this does not preclude the treatment of the dynamics of social change in Machiavelli, an examination which will be pursued in the succeeding sections of this paper.
Italian fortunes.

The historical condition for both Machiavelli and Fanon is the matrix from which political action is postulated. This existential motif provides both writers with their formulae for a future regeneration of a fragmented peoples. In applying themselves to this task they espoused a certain political framework which is to be examined in our next section: The Political Method.
The Political Method

In accepting the task of describing the realities of their respective epochs Machiavelli and Fanon advanced the first step towards understanding a basis for probable change. For both writers the existing conditions warranted measures in keeping with the realm of practical politics. The element of power therefore entered their considerations as a prime factor in effecting a remedial course of action. Not unexpectedly their treatment of the acquisition of power and its several dimensions have invited the severest barbs from their critics. 41

While it is difficult to separate the advocacy of any political method from the overall ethical view of the advocate, for analytical purposes it is necessary to do so at this juncture. 42 The difficulty increases, moreover, when we view the aspect of power in two phases: (1) how to acquire maximum control over one's environment and (2) how to ensure the permanence of such control. Machiavelli and Fanon addressed themselves to these two problems in seeking to transform their respective environments.

41 The diatribes against Machiavelli are now legend; from Frederick I l's "defense of humanity against this monster who wants to destroy it," to Jacques Maritain's accusation that Machiavelli's "grammar of power" was the blossoming of "delightful and poisonous flowers". Both Klein and Zolberg, while generally sympathetic to Fanon, single out his "obsession" with violence as a fatal flaw.

42 See my next chapter The Moral Basis.
Having described the environment both writers attempted to formulate methods whereby national integration and stability could be implemented:

As in Italy nearly five hundred years ago, the immediate goal to be pursued in the contemporary developing nation, beset as it is by deep internal cleavages, is creation of order and stability ... Expectations of the establishment of a democratic political system in new nations have been repeatedly betrayed. Law as a method of suasion, which Machiavelli considered to be the means to ... stabilize ... conduct and regulate ... mutual relationships, has indeed failed. The other alternative ... is violence, the method of combat of "beasts" ...and here, too, a similar paradox emerges: violence, instead of achieving the end for which it is used, often becomes a permanent institution and substitutes itself for the end sought. 43

The initial stage in securing national cohesion is that of controlling the forces which militate against a condition of unity. Under the prevailing circumstances extraordinary measures are necessary:

As to reforming these institutions all at once, when their defects have become manifest to everybody, that also is most difficult; for to do this ordinary means will not suffice ... therefore it becomes necessary to resort to extraordinary measures, such as violence and arms, and above all things to make one's self absolute master of the state, so as to be able to dispose of it at will. 44

Fanon, too, sees the necessity of root change. For him colonial institutions represent the nadir of human relations, "It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence." 45 It is not just a question of eradicating the


44 The Discourses, Bk.1, ch.xvii: 170-171. My emphasis.

45 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 48.
"defects" of corrupt institutions; this would extend the oppressive rule of the colonial machinery. Even an independence that did not eliminate every vestige of the colonial condition would be an empty shibboleth:

Independence is not a word which can be used as an exorcism, but an indispensable condition for the existence of men and women who are truly liberated, in other words who are truly masters of all the material means which make possible the radical transformation of society.46

In the first stage of national development the question of power, for both thinkers, revolves around the use of violence as a means of securing mastery over the environment. It is a sine qua non if one wishes to eventually transform society; in the case of Machiavelli and Fanon the political conditions which their description presented offered no other method but violence once action was intended and success was desired. To have espoused any other method would have been to display either political naivety or an idealism incongruous with the rigour and intensity of their description. The analyses of their respective societies were sufficiently clinical and detached to lead one to believe that their prescriptions for any immediate political action would escape the charge of naivety. Yet while the detailed descriptions of sixteenth century Italy and the twentieth century under-developed countries were inscribed with clinical detachment it does not imply a lack of passion. There is an intensity of passion, particularly in Fanon's case, which allows them to strike at the heart of the problem while, like highly skilled surgeons, remaining in control of the matter under investigation. Such an underlying passion informed their writings with a depth of perception without permitting shallow moral considerations to impede effective methods of political action. Both writers

46Ibid. 251. My emphasis.
were therefore cognizant of the fact that to confuse one's goals with the means of achieving them would vitiate one's chances of successful action.

The violence which both Machiavelli and Fanon espoused was one of a creative nature; it was a violence that sought to drain the existing disordered society of its divisive elements. The creative role of such a violence is one that is capable of harnessing the cluster of prevailing forces in order to produce political and social goals that normally would not have resulted from an undirected, uncontrolled interaction of such forces. This is the central thesis in the writings of both men.

It must be pointed out that while Machiavelli and Fanon lived in times of flux, disunity, degeneracy and apparent chaos their search for a method to achieve societal and national integration fell within ages in which political and social paradigms dictated solutions that were conversant with an absence of conflict. In the case of Machiavelli, "This emphasis upon conflict represents a radical break with the classical-medieval tradition of political thought, and is distinctively modern. Machiavelli must be credited for first assigning a positive social and political value to domestic conflict." In fact, Machiavelli predicated the good health of any state upon the presence of conflict. His cyclical view of history embraced the age of peace and prosperity in a downward curve of degeneracy; in this period man, having grown indolent from a settled and harmonious existence, would become unaccustomed to the challenge of crises and thus easily fall prey to more vigorous

opponents:

It may be observed, that provinces...pass from order into confusion, and afterward recur to a state of order again...In the same manner, having been reduced by disorder, and sunk to their utmost state of depression,...reascend...The reason is, that valor produces peace; peace, repose; repose, disorder; disorder, ruin; so from disorder order springs; from order virtue, and from this, glory and good fortune.48

While conflict in human society was a recognizable phenomenon antedating Machiavelli's observations, the Florentine invested it with a content of virtue. Whereas the political thoughts of Plato and Aristotle attempted to examine the fundamental causes of conflict within the polis and thereby erect a foundation for rational politics and a consequent harmony, Machiavelli accepted the premise that conflict was an integral part of human society:

The solution to social and governmental instability must lie in conflict itself. Through proper regulation conflict can be a strengthening, vitalizing, creative, and integrating social factor, a way of freeing man from the domination of man. Galileo performed much the same service for physics that Machiavelli earlier had rendered politics by arguing that the natural state of matter is motion instead of rest.49

Machiavelli's model of the political universe was, therefore, one constructed on the concept of dissensus as a general rule of operation. As a political method of attempting to understand the disparate political forces that were in existence it was grounded in reality. Used as a tool for ordering the political environment Machiavelli's dissensus model offered scope for ample testing in the field of history, as he himself attested. His "dearest" possession is "that knowledge of the

48History of Florence, 204.
49Wood, Political Science Quarterly, 85.
deeds of great men which I have acquired through a long experience of modern events and a constant study of the past."\(^{50}\) In truth, Machiavelli hardly refers to any event without reverting to a spate of historical allusions. He sees that a true leader should have constant recourse to history if his actions are to have a theory based on reality. Writing in the sixteenth century Machiavelli deplored the neglect of an historical test to contemporary politics, "Wishing...to draw mankind from this error, I have thought it proper to write upon those books of Titus Livius...touching upon all those matters which, after a comparison between the ancient and modern events...facilitate their proper understanding."\(^{51}\)

Fanon, too, projected a political philosophy that was antithetical to the accustomed way of perceiving solutions to societal problems. He, too, was confronted with the paradigm of consensus political theories which treated the phenomenon of conflict as an aberration in any serious discussion on political systems. Change, under the aegis of any consensus theory, would be limited to the parameters imposed by existing institutional structures. Writing on the limitations of consensus theories I.L. Horowitz states:

Perhaps the most widespread claim made by the advocates of this theory is that consensus is a necessary condition for social structure. Social structure has been seen to exclude those patterns of human action which are spontaneous...Consensus involves a general acceptance of the authority of the group, common traditions and rules for inducting and indoctrinating new members; while conflict is seen as external to social structure, as

\(^{50}\)The Prince, "Niccolo Machiavelli to Lorenzo The Magnificent," 3.

\(^{51}\)The Discourses, Bk.I: Introduction: 105.
spontaneity, impulsive action, lack of organization, and intuitive response to immediate situations.\textsuperscript{52}

In addressing themselves to the problems of the under-developed countries political writers were guided by this approach and saw change in terms of the rights of opposition parties, better methods of accumulating capital, proportional representation and many other familiar remedies. But, "Fanon is unique for other reasons: He urged revolution, not economic or political liberalism..."\textsuperscript{53} Impelled by the imperatives of political change Fanon saw that real change could not be conceived of in terms of promoting any of the values of European colonial institutions:

Come, then comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different. We today can do everything, so long as we do not imitate Europe, so long as we are not obsessed by the desire to catch up with Europe.\textsuperscript{54}

Fanon's model of conflict, it is true, did not derive its driving force from a view of human nature eternally possessing inherent conflict; his political philosophy embracing the value of conflict stemmed from a view of history which perceived man as having been moulded by the dictates of his environment. The environment produced by the colonial situation is one of economic, political, social and individual subjection of the native to the colonial settler. It is a "Manichean" world in


\textsuperscript{54}Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 253.
which the European values are the criteria for goodness and those of
the native are equated with evil.

The colonial world is a Manichean world...As if to show the
totalitarian character of colonial exploitation the settler
paints the native as a sort of quintessence of evil...Native
society is not simply described as a society lacking in
values...The native is declared insensible to ethics; he
represents not only the absence of values, but also the nega-
tion of values...he is the absolute evil...At times this
Manicheism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanises
the native, or to speak plainly it turns him into an animal.
In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native
are zoological terms.\textsuperscript{55}

And so the battle lines are drawn! There is no coming to terms
in such a world. History has been made in the Third World by the
intrusion of such cataclysmic forces: "The settler makes history and
is conscious of making it."\textsuperscript{56} The native is thus challenged by the
totality of his oppression, his irrevocable past, the deprivation of
a future. Fanon draws this "combat" between native and settler. "We
have seen that it takes the form of an armed and open struggle. There
is not lack of historical examples: Indo-China, Indonesia, and of course
North Africa."\textsuperscript{57}

It is the recognition of such powerful forces which informs the
political writings of Machiavelli and Fanon and infuses them with pre-
scriptive content. The recommendations of force and violence are in
response to their respective situations, and as such violence and force
are but appropriate agents with which to negate their very genesis.

\textsuperscript{55}\textit{Ibid.} 32-33.
\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Ibid.} 41.
\textsuperscript{57}\textit{Ibid.} 65.
Violence as an agent is used to mould its environment and is therefore catalytic. It should be borne in mind that violence is not recommended in vacuo. An attempt to master one's environment must be caused by a condition of absolute decay: "I will suppose a state to be corrupt to the last degree," says Machiavelli. Indeed, Fanon considers Europe and its institutions to be in such a state, "Today, we are present at the stasis of Europe," he warns, and goes on to state:

It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man...let us not pay tribute to Europe by creating states, institutions and societies which draw their inspiration from her. Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature.

Given the political alternatives of a degenerate continuity or a radically transformed regime the political actor is faced with the task of selecting from a variety of means. Now Machiavelli perceived himself to be a realist and he considered his views on human nature to be the ultimate expression of this belief: "...Whoever desires to found a state and give it laws must start with assuming that all men are bad and ever ready to display their vicious nature..." With such an assumption - given a condition of absolute chaos and internecine struggle - the choice, for Machiavelli, was clear-cut. Control of superior force was the only method of overcoming the disparate elements and fragmenting tendencies of the Italian city states, and Florence in particular. It is the man of virtù, therefore, who can recognize the permanence

59Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 254-255.
of conflict in society and prevent such conflict from being controlled by the element of fortuna. These interacting political symbols - virtù and fortuna - are the working parts of Machiavelli's conflict model, a model based on the concept of society in constant flux. His prince is the successful manipulator of all the constituents in such a model and is therefore meant to be an organizing principle, an ideal type, a combination of all past leaders who have manifested those qualities necessary for political action.61

Taking the two writers together one may observe that there is an exhortation to change radically the existing order of things. Yet there are important differences in their conceptions of the reality to be transformed. Where Machiavelli worked within a framework of institutions which needed only to be restored to its pristine vigour, Fanon saw the very structure of prevailing institutions and their source of origin as fundamentally causing the corruption of the Third World. Both writers postulated the seizure of the existing powers but the renaissance man would benefit from a rejuvenation of former principles, while the native of the Third World would issue forth from his colonial confines a cleansed man; the individual and his society, for Fanon, would present a tabula rasa upon which to create new experiences. Hence Fanon's

61 Federico Chabod, Machiavelli And The Renaissance, Trans. David Moore: Harper Torchbooks; Harper & Row, N.Y.; 1965. Professor Chabod at one point refers to Machiavelli's prince as "the supreme creation of Italian history." (41) Further on he observes that "...the Prince, formerly a criterion for the interpretation of events, is not transformed into an ideal, a historical type..." (108) Antonio Gramsci emphasizes this aspect when he states that "the Prince did not exist in historical reality...but was a purely doctrinaire abstraction, the symbol of a leader, the ideal condottiere..." Antonio Gramsci, The Modern Prince, trans. Louis Marks; International Publishers, N.Y: 1967. 135.
man, although a product of history, recreates himself from the present, "I am not a prisoner of history. I should not seek there for the meaning of my destiny. In the world through which I travel, I am endlessly creating myself."  

Machiavelli's man and society, on the other hand, achieve their ideal state from the examples in an historical golden period:

...I say that those changes are beneficial that bring them [republics or religious sects] back to their original principles...It is necessary then (as has been said) for men who live associated together...often to be brought back to themselves...either by external or internal occurrences. As to the latter, they are either the result of law...or some man of superior character arises amongst them.

This principle of restoration is not wholly operative in Fanon's prescription for change; for while they both ultimately see that a good state will produce good citizens, Fanon's new state creates new principles and discards those upon which the regimes of the Third World were founded - liberal democracy with its attendant parliamentary structures. His role of violence must consequently be more pervasive than Machiavelli's, for it must be the means by which les engagés will perceive the necessity and participate in the process of liberation and the subsequent setting up of new structures. The violence of Fanon's thesis is intended to change man who in turn will change his environment.

This difference places Fanon's prescription of violence much closer to his moral end than Machiavelli's does. The first stage for both is to secure power, but the evolution of this stage, for Fanon, coincides


63 Machiavelli, Discourses, Bk.III: ch.i: 397-399. My emphasis.
with the transformation of the community to be controlled. Further, violence is an indispensible instrument for "true" decolonisation. The function of violence is initially a release of all the frustrations caused by colonial oppression; it is cathartic. Sartre recognizes this in his trenchant introduction to The Wretched of the Earth. He warns:

They would do well to read Fanon; for he shows clearly that this irrepressible violence is neither sound and fury, nor the resurrection of savage instincts, nor even the effects of resentment: it is man recreating himself... no gentleness can efface the marks of violence; only violence itself can destroy them. The native cures himself of colonial neurosis... he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself in that he himself creates his self.64

This is the added dimension to Fanon's advocacy of violence as a method of transforming society. The appeal to force is not merely a means of securing the ruling apparatus of the nation. It is a signal for the re-making of man. It is true Machiavelli envisioned the plasticity of the environment in the element of fortuna, and he extolled that prince, endowed with the quality of virtù, who could shape his political universe. With typical renaissance masculinity he asserts that "fortune is a woman, and it is necessary, if you wish to master her, to conquer her by force..."65 However, Fanon extended this plasticity to those who were engaged in shaping their environment so that man himself is the transformer and the transformed.

It was Jacob Burckhardt who first pointed out that Machiavelli's statecraft was designed as a work of art. Machiavelli's prince was one who worked upon the material at hand and formed it to his desired image.

64Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, "Introduction" 18. My emphasis.
65Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter xxv: 94.
The prince who recognized this artistic method of statecraft would be in control of his political destiny, and would be constantly aware of the various forms that his material might assume. As an artist, then, the prince must recognize the inherent qualities of his matter; he must be sensitive to the shifting possibilities underlying all reality; consequently, he must be dexterous in his approach and apply the appropriate tools. Hence, when Machiavelli states, "If men were all good" it would not be necessary to act in bad faith, "but as they are bad, and would not observe their faith with you, so you are not bound to keep faith with them", he is making a cold appraisal of the nature of the material upon which he is working. He is not recommending a view of politics founded upon bad faith; it is merely an "if...then" observation that posits an open-ended approach to political action.

From this approach Machiavelli advocates two methods by which the prince may proceed. Since one may act "by law", the method of man, or "by force", the method of beasts, then a prince who is compelled to "act as a beast must imitate the fox and the lion." Clearly, one is enjoined to act within the context of one's own times; the means that we employ should be appropriate to the task at hand. Force is not recommended as a totally necessary instrument; cunning may be used where it will be effective, but should be replaced by force as soon as the success of the undertaking demands it. In short, Machiavelli's model of politics is one in which all facets of political behaviour are

66Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter xviii: 64.
67Ibid.
considered. It is a rational model in which it is incumbent upon the actor to select those means that are propitious to his goals.

Fanon's political actor is also charged with a rational task. He too has to select means that are appropriate to his goals; but Fanon's epistemology which places subject and object, intention and action in such interdependency, imposes a psychological dimension to his model which makes it impossible for the actor to understand his situation in contemplation. It is no less rational on this account. For as Karl Mannheim writes:

...There can be knowledge where men, while thinking, are also acting, and finally, that in certain fields knowledge arises only when and in so far as it itself is action, i.e. when action is permeated by the intention of the mind, in the sense that the concepts and the total apparatus of thought are dominated by and reflect this activist orientation. Not purpose in addition to perception but purpose in perception itself reveals the qualitative richness of the world...68

As a consequence of this composite view of the political actor and his historical and existential environment, Fanon approaches the task of nation building with the perspective that the leadership of the developing nations is beset with a colonised psyche, and is therefore predisposed, perhaps unconsciously, to perpetuate the colonialist oppression under the guise of nationalist and other slogans. This is the reason for his fulminations against the native bourgeoisie. He fears that its leadership will usurp the true leadership that should ensue from the cathartic method of a violent process of decolonisation.

A formal independence is therefore no guarantee of freedom for a people whose very mode of thinking and acting is determined by centuries

of cultural as well as physical subjugation: "Fanon's 'wretched' have yet to find true freedom...in spite of the so-called 'sovereignty' granted one nation after another in Africa."69

When Fanon died at the age of thirty-six he had witnessed the dubious victories of nationalism in Africa, and other parts of the Third World. In his political analysis these victories were Pyrrhic because the expectations of the native populace - whetted by pre-independent promises of their native leaders - were doomed to unfulfilment. Fanon's ability to transcend a shallow xenophobic stance gives to The Wretched of the Earth a balanced political worth.

As a result, fierce hatred - to hell with the merciless exploiters, still bleeding their victims - is qualified by an alarmed recognition that native tyranny can replace its foreign predecessor. Indeed, the author systematically exposes such dangers as ultranationalism in the newly liberated countries; the cult of the leader; the kind of excessive regard for the "spontaneity" of the people that results in disorder all around; the mystification that ideas like "negritude" can produce; and the extreme betrayal threatening millions in the countryside of Africa at the hands of the colonial-trained civil servants...70

Fanon is therefore interested in the political community to the extent that the regime is identifiable with the community's aspirations. To accomplish this the element of violence must be the agent which rids the Third World of its European oppressors, its native Europeanized leaders and its psychological heritage of colonial dependence. Fanon's native, reduced to the level of the beast employs cunning and force. In fact, the native survived and maintained his humanity throughout


70 Ibid.
the centuries of colonial rule by the exercise of cunning. However, once action became imperative the nature of the colonial milieu evoked the only effective response, that of violence: "The violence, the brute force that once enslaved people and still holds them at sword's point is relentlessly exposed. The violence in the violated, potential vengeance run amok, is not neglected either."

Frantz Fanon's violence and its exaltation has something of the Sorellian myth, to the extent that it becomes at some points "a creation of concrete fantasy which works on a dispossessed and pulverised people in order to arouse and organise their collective will." This is a necessary condition if the peoples of the Third World are to arrive at an awareness by which they are able to take meaningful and concerted action; other than this, all attempts to free themselves will be sporadic and isolated. Violence as a method is therefore an attempt to create shared values, which allows for a community of interests that is indispensable for collective action. Violence is the socializing process in a shattered community, from which emerges a society imbued with norms that allows the nation-state to function in necessary harmony.

The onus borne by violence, in Fanon's revolutionary scheme, is total in nature because of several factors in his Weltanschauung. Central to his world-view is the material basis of man's thought and action: man is made by his environment, even though his ideas can change his future environment. Flowing from this is the imperative that man

71Ibid. 21.
must engage in action to be transformed; his relation vis à vis his society must be one of reciprocity, so that his actions producing an equitable community will lead to the more humane individual. In short, it is the Marxist inseparability of theory and practise. Writing of Algeria in 1959 Fanon declares:

The thesis that men change at the same time that they change the world has never been so manifest as it is now in Algeria. This trial of strength not only remolds the consciousness that man has of himself, and of his former dominations or of the world, [but places it] at last within his reach.73

Thus we see the concept of plasticity, adumbrated by Machiavelli in a less comprehensive manner, now explored by Fanon in all its dimensions, so that the nature of man becomes coeval with his environment.

The conditions which confronted Machiavelli and Fanon were not political aberrations; they were not unique in the history of man's development through the ages. The history of political thought can furnish, no doubt, ample speculation on the gestation of certain political ideas from their surrounding milieux. Political thought has always been presented with a congeries of inherited situations, rational and irrational responses to contingencies and a measure of anticipated outcomes. Where these elements have been rigourously examined before the choice of alternatives is made a resultant theory of action may be said to approximate the demands of reality and so offer more scope for success.

It was Machiavelli's theory of action, rather than Fanon's, which offered more scope for political success. For while Fanon assures the "wretched" of the Third World that their liberty will be the inevitable outcome of the inherent contradictions of colonialism, such assurances

are predicated upon psychological assumptions which, even if they are correct, must first hurdle the formidable obstacle of the successful communication of the general will to action. Further, the solidarity which is necessary for success, in Fanon's case, must come out of the peasantry. It is the peasants who have retained their purity, and who are therefore most capable of identifying with the revolutionary spirit indispensable to the reclamation of true freedom.

Contrary to the classical tenets of Marxism, which postulates the emergence of an urban industrial proletariat preceding radical change, Fanon's peasants are a surrogate for this revolutionary force, and the urban group is not to be trusted, "...This peasantry precisely constitutes the only spontaneously revolutionary force of the country." Even while conceding to the revolutionary potential of the only trustworthy urban element - the lumpen-proletariat - ("It is within this people of the shanty towns, at the core of the lumpen-proletariat that the rebellion will find its urban spearhead.") he nevertheless expresses a scepticism towards this class:

...Any movement for freedom ought to give its fullest attention to this lumpen-proletariat. The peasant masses will always answer the call to rebellion, but if the rebellion's leaders think it will be able to develop without taking the masses into consideration, the lumpen-proletariat will throw itself into the battle and will take part in the conflict - but this time on the side of the oppressor.

74Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 99. My emphasis.
75Ibid. 103.
76Ibid. 109. My emphasis.
While one may agree that the bulk of the masses in the developing countries is principally composed of the peasants it is a non-sequitur to conclude that the fate of successful revolution rests entirely, or even primarily, on this segment. Even if numbers are disregarded, and the untarnished quality of the peasant mass is the focus of a revolutionary theory, one would still question the idealism of Fanon on his own grounds that the level of consciousness is the pre-eminent criterion for concerted action. Is it realistic to expect a pre-literate, disparate (in terms of work association), group of people to embrace a concept of general action which requires a fairly high degree of political consciousness?

Fanon's theory on the universe of political action would appear to suffer from an excess of idealism, which would present a distortion of the reality to be worked upon. In his Jacobinic zeal to preserve the purity of the revolutionary ideals and goals he diminishes his scope of political action. But while his panegyric to the peasantry may detract from a hard-headed program for action it can be construed as a symbolic vehicle with which to mobilize the oppressed Third World. As a rallying cry a peasant jihad may well serve the purpose of establishing the concept of a popular democracy, once the colonial enemy has been destroyed.

Yet it is in the post-revolutionary stage that his idealism appears to his critics as being unrealistic, sometimes millenial. Samuel Rohdie writing in Studies on The Left has this to say:

Violence can alter consciousness and social relations, but Fanon's existentialism is inadequate to perceive the permanence of such change or the possibilities of its institutional maintenance after national war...Fanon regarded the
temporary as permanent. He saw present needs as a program for the future. 77

In the same magazine, while paying tribute to Fanon's incisive analysis and method of generating a social transformation, anthropologist Norman Klein offers this critique:

What begins as a love for and empathy with the peasant revolutionary, produces in the end an idealism which is self-defeating. Fanon confounds the long-run social and political ends of revolutionary warfare with the immediate and individual rewards of striking down one's oppressors. 78

If Frantz Fanon's thesis on social transformation is sedulously examined it might appear to fall short of the rigour expected by the standards of contemporary social science. His incisive description of the colonial situation is coupled with the advocacy of extraordinary remedial methods. His political method centres around the theme of violence with its phoenix-like concept of rejuvenation. It is one's recognition of the thraldom of the Third World which will bring about the necessity of action. Action, manifested in violence, is the only method that will revitalize a colonized people.

This violence, having created the desired national unity, subsides in its transformed milieu. The first stage of a national development - the creation of a truly free and independent national state - having been achieved, the next stage - the administering of its affairs - confronts its architect. Cohesion through collectivity, at first the result of shared action, must translate itself in the day to day process


78 Klein, Studies On The Left, 82.
of ordering the nation's sustained existence. The new nation is faced with deploying its capabilities for economic development, industrialization, bureaucracy and a host of other perennial problems. Fanon's fear of the West's past history drives him to reject the centralization that is seemingly incumbent upon any modern state.

His great alarm is for the preservation and perfection of revolutionary democracy. Mindful of dictatorship, bureaucratization and the dehumanized routinization of administrative detail, Fanon is convinced that there must be some genuinely democratic methods for achieving the desired economic ends.79

As a consequence, Fanon underscores all his prescriptions with the theme that "the duty of those at the head of the movement is to have the masses behind them...it is absolutely necessary to oppose vigorously and definitively the birth of a national bourgeoisie and a privileged caste."80 All post-national attempts to put the new nation on an operative basis should, for Fanon, be cast in a communitarian framework. He speaks of the intermediary sector of the economy as the most important sector in the colonial economy and so

if you want progress, you must decide in the first few hours to nationalise this sector. But...such a nationalisation ought not to take on a rigidly state-controlled aspect. Nationalising the intermediary sector means organising wholesale and retail cooperatives on a democratic basis; it also means decentralising these cooperatives by getting the mass of the people interested in the ordering of public affairs.81

Whatever aspect Fanon touches upon lends itself to such egalitarian principles: the economy, the political party, the civil service,

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79Ibid. 81.
80Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 159.
81Ibid. 145.
the army, the militia; even the place of women in the newly created society ("Women will have exactly the same place as men, not in the clauses of the constitution but in the life of every day...").\textsuperscript{82}

In addressing himself to a colonial situation in which authority rests upon the relationship of European superiority \textit{vis à vis} a non-European inferiority, Fanon exposed the cancerous nature of this dehumanizing power nexus. His \textit{cri de coeur} stemmed from the recognition of its pervasiveness as he explored layer after layer of colonial history, institutions, assumptions and behaviour. The only antidote was violence.

Because of the corrupting nature of colonialism the native had been tainted, and only that segment of the population which had escaped from its economic dependence could truly recognize its liberating task. The peasantry, therefore, was the handmaiden of the revolution. Its task accomplished, the peasantry would remain the bulwark of a Rousseauean society in which the decentralized government apparatus would ensure that the general will of the nation would be legislated.

The second stage of national development is directly linked to the environment produced by the first stage of achieving independence. This second stage is one in which there is a populist community as opposed to a pluralist one. The latter would represent a society built upon autonomous interest groups while the former would reject any such division of society that would spell a competing of wills and subsequent destruction of a mass participatory base.

Although Machiavelli acknowledges the necessity of force, and

\textsuperscript{82}Ibid. 161.
extols that prince who has enough virtù to employ it in controlling an environment that is hostile to him, the Florentine ultimately wished for a republican form of government. For him the people were the best arbiters of liberty; addressing his remarks to the example of the Roman republic he states:

...and doubtless, if we consider the objects of the nobles and of the people, we must see that the first have a great desire to dominate, whilst the latter have only the wish not to be dominated, and consequently a greater desire to live in the enjoyment of liberty; so that when the people are intrusted with the care of any privilege or liberty, being less disposed to encroach upon it, they will of necessity take better care of it; and being unable to take it away themselves, will prevent others from doing so.83

Hence, if one regards the emphasis on force and violence in The Prince as Machiavellian, then the manner of sustaining a state through the judicious distribution of power could also be considered Machiavellian.

Machiavelli's most important insight into the problem of internal power politics came when he began to explore the implications of a political system based on the active support of its members. He grasped the fact that popular consent represented a form of social power which, if properly exploited, reduced the amount of violence directed at society as a whole. One reason for the superiority of the republican system consisted in its being maintained by the force of the populace, rather than by force over the populace.84

Here we have the similar desire for employing force in order to rid society of the destructive element that inheres in that type of coercion which is not controlled by the power of the communal good. Not only was the common good the final arbiter of the use of force, but


optimum conditions of societal control persuaded Machiavelli that one would be wise to obtain the allegiance and support of the people, through a common involvement in the political process.

It is true that I regard as unfortunate those princes who, to assure their government to which the mass of the people is hostile, are obliged to resort to extraordinary measures; for...he who has the masses hostile to him can never make sure of them, and the more cruelty he employs the feebleer will his authority become; so that his best remedy is to try and secure the good will of the people.\textsuperscript{85}

Consequent upon this Machiavelli, like Fanon, advocates those measures which will strengthen the post-national state through the solidarity of the citizens. He fulminates against the evils of the nobility class, "for that class of men are everywhere enemies of all civil government."\textsuperscript{86} He advises against employing mercenary troops and recommends a strong citizen army; he recognizes that the laws should reflect the desires of the people; and the institutions that are set up should be so done that they ultimately produce good habits, and so good citizens.

The question still to be asked is one which would elicit some answer as to whether Fanon and Machiavelli, in positing the political methods of violence and force, could still lay claims to a moral basis. This is the task of the following chapter.

\textsuperscript{85}Machiavelli, \textit{Discourses}, Bk.1: chapter v: 121-122.

\textsuperscript{86}Ibid. Bk.1: chapter iv: 255.
The Moral Basis

...What is good and evil no one knows yet, unless it be he who creates. He, however, creates man's goal and gives the earth its meaning and its future. That anything at all is good and evil - this is his creation.

(Nietzsche, Thus Spoke Zarathustra)

Given that the political ends of Machiavelli and Fanon are moral ones, why are the means of achieving them generally classified as immoral - at best amoral?

The general conditions which prevailed, during the period under observation by both writers, are accepted as having been inimical to the true interests of society, the community and the individual. The political methods which they espoused were directed towards securing an alternate set of conditions, which were envisaged as conducive to the summum bonum - on earth.

Merely to dredge up the trite maxim, "the end does not justify the means," is inadequate. For while it might very well be a commendable moral injunction, its lack of cogency is clearly demonstrated by innumerable historical examples which have served to show that it is mainly honoured in the breach.

However, argument by historical examples do not find ready acceptance as such examples are open to various interpretations. If, for example, one were to examine "the end does not justify the means," through the classic historical actions of the period of the Inquisition, it would
appear patent that the Catholic Church, and the Jesuits in particular, observed the very opposite of this rule. It is notable, however, that the Inquisitorial practises, while condemned in themselves, do not deter the defenders of the Catholic Church from strongly maintaining that this institution operated on the principle that "the end does not justify the means"; but that the individual officials displayed their human weaknesses. A less partisan explanation of the Inquisition is one which saw this phenomenon as relative to the standards of justice at the time.

It had to use methods which we would condemn;...But given the premises which most thirteenth-century men accepted, it was not completely unfair....In spite of the prejudice against heretics and the weighting of the procedure against the accused, the Inquisition honestly sought the truth as it saw the truth.

The two excuses, or explanations, of the morality of the Inquisition, the weakness of man in action and the historical dimension to the ethics of man's actions, serve to show that the actor is at all times limited by his response to his environment. For while an almost infinite range of possibilities exist in a situation, that which emerges is the result of a particular interaction between the actor and his environment. This result, or outcome, is independent, though not exclusive, of any aspect of morality; morality is but one of the components in the complex, and even if it weighs heavily in the choice of the actor it is but one aspect. It is within the existential process itself that a crystallization takes place. Within this process the actor's ends confront his means and find their synchronization in the choice of the actor.

This brings us to the focal point of the ends-means debate. The gravamen of the argument is this: in human actions there can never be a straight, undeviating line from means to ends; the means are susceptible to change in accordance with existential needs. Even Machiavelli, whose reputation has been based on the primacy of ends in any undertaking, recognized the necessity of adapting one's actions to the special needs of the immediate situation. Consequently, he offers numerous cases of advice favouring action rather than inaction in a moment of uncertainty. Offering advice to Francesco Vettori, on the threat of French military incursions in 1527, Machiavelli could write: "Here there must be no limping and hopping. We must rush madly in, for despair often finds devices that cold choice has failed to find."\footnote{Carlo Sforza, The Living Thoughts of Machiavelli, Trans. Doris E. Troutman and Arthur Livingston; Fawcett World Library, N.Y.: 1958. 158. My emphasis.} This is no advice of one who is unswervingly committed to fixed rules; rather it manifests a recognition that circumstances possess their own dynamics. Of course, Machiavelli does not pretend to understand the philosophical subtleties: he is content with knowing that the ends of the actor have their truth in ever changing circumstances.

One same purpose can be realized by different procedures, much as one can arrive at one same point over many different roads. Many different people reach identical ends by following very different policies....Many people succeed in their designs by weighing and measuring everything. This present Pope has no scale or gauge to his name; but, acting aimlessly and unarmed, he succeeds in doing things that he could hardly do with the best laid plans...Just why different procedures should now help and now hinder I do not know, but I would like to know;...That man is successful, that man, in other words, attains his purposes according to expectations, whose manner of acting happens to fit in with the times and the circumstances....there being as many sets of circumstances as there are places and countries....
and circumstances are ever changing in general and in particular... 89

It is true that Machiavelli observes that "men's temperaments and manners of procedure remain what they are." Yet, one can argue that he is just stating the human factor as a constant element in itself; just as time is objectified by history in its particular events, yet for analytical purposes, it remains a constant in itself.

Further, in the ends-means debate, there can not be any ultimate principle whereby all historical actions are judged in terms of good and evil. For even if there is a moral criterion its genesis lies in some historical context, and is consequently subject to evaluation in itself. As E.H. Carr admirably put it in his What is History?:

This is the real indictment of those who seek to erect a super-historical standard or criterion in the light of which judgement is passed on historical events or situations - whether that standard derives from some divine authority postulated by the theologians, or from a static Reason or Nature postulated by the philosophers of the Enlightenment....Moreover, when we examine these supposedly absolute and extra-historical values we find that they too are rooted in history. 90

Machiavelli addressed himself to the existential question of political action. Granted that he spoke of man as being disposed to evil; that historical evidence showed man ever acting out this assumption; that his man of virtù would not shirk from committing evil, if circumstances warranted such action; still, Machiavelli did not recommend evil. His prince was beyond good and evil. 91 Nor is Machiavelli's prince amoral;
rather, like Nietzsche's Übermensch, he saw morality and immorality as phenomena in an ever changing order of things of which he was a participant. The highest morality was the recognition of this fact and the act of "overcoming". Such a morality goes beyond the illusions that circumscribe man. The core of such thinking manifests itself in the proposition that man's definition of himself can only flow from what he makes himself to be. 92

Man is hobbled into inaction, and it is the recognition of the truth of this servitude and its "overcoming" that will free man's creative capacities, and ultimately man himself. 93

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, Trans. Walter Kaufmann; Vintage Books, N.Y.: 1966. 12. Thus Machiavelli's prince "must have a mind disposed to adapt itself according to the wind, and as the variations of fortune dictate, and, as I said before, not deviate from what is good, if possible, but be able to do evil if constrained." *The Prince*, Chapter xviii: 65.

92 At the root of this argument is the theme that man is what he makes himself to be, and the only morality that is unambiguous is one that rests in the process of man creating himself, as Sartre put it: "What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means that, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards, defines himself....Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself....there is nothing in heaven; man will be what he will have planned to be....In fact, in creating the man that we want to be, there is not a single one of our acts which does not at the same time create an image of man as we think he ought to be. To choose to be this or that is to affirm at the same time the value of what we choose...because we can never choose evil." Jean-Paul Sartre, "Existentialism Is A Humanism," *Existentialism Versus Marxism*, Ed. George Novack; Dell Publ.Co.Inc., N.Y.: 1966. 74-75. My emphasis.

93 That the key to man's highest attainment is the truth about himself is a recurrent theme in man's recorded history. From the biblical statement by Jesus, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32); Socrates' earlier injunction, interpreted from the Delphic Oracle, "Know thyself"; to Plato's *Republic*
The scepticism of Machiavelli, therefore, contained man's freedom from his fetters of conventional morality. The prince would be the liberator and the symbol of this new man. Conventional morality (what Nietzsche called "the morality of the herd") was in fact the immoral fear of the vulgar masses who cringed before the illusions of the day. Man was impotent in such a posture. Machiavelli's prince was to be the Prometheus of the Italian universe. Possessed of virtù, the prince would rise up and liberate Italy which was "more enslaved than the Hebrews, more oppressed than the Persians, and more scattered than the Athenians;...beaten, despoiled, lacerated, and overrun..."\(^94\)

Certainly, the man who was to do this could not be in the grip of a common morality which denied action on the grounds of pre-ordained principles. For while these principles may be comforting, or even good in themselves, they do not necessarily serve to promote the welfare of man in certain exigencies.

Unable to see the anachronistic and utilitarian aspect of conventional morality; cozened and dulled by habitual deference to a morality long since divested of its pristine vigour and its efficacy, the common man responds to his crises in a common manner. He therefore acts upon appearances and so reality eludes him. Machiavelli's prince, as "liberator" of a bruised and battered Italy, must stand above the enervating "morality of the herd."

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with its search for the ultimate Truth behind appearances; all these, in one form or another testify to man's overwhelming compulsion to penetrate the veil that shrouds his existence. This is man's highest morality and it manifests itself in action. All is subsumed in this perennial burden.

\(^94\)Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter xxvi: 95.
Let a prince therefore aim at conquering and maintaining the state, and the means will always be judged honourable and praised by every one, for the vulgar is always taken by appearances and the issue of the event; and the world consists only of the vulgar...

On the surface this higher morality might appear to be a mandate for the man of virtù to enslave others. On closer inspection, however, it might be a doctrine of total action. That is, a doctrine in which man, envisaging certain ends, frees himself for the purpose of engaging in the attainment of his ends, yet is bound by the moral responsibility of his ends. Man's morality resides in his capacity to act in a given situation; for it is in action that he is creative. The initial as well as the subsequent success lies in this moral condition. For Machiavelli's prince to acquire control of the state he must transcend the petty morals of his milieu, while at the same time being sensitive to the forces of common sentiments. It is the man of virtù who symbolizes this attribute. But the acquisition of power, or control, is not the completion of his actions; success can not be measured at this point. Total action demands that he remain in power, and to do this he must be true to the morality inherent in his virtù. The moral responsibility of the man of virtù must ever be informed by the ends he first desired; a free people in control of their political destiny and justice dispensed through good and popular laws. Was not this the end of Machiavelli's republic?

It is necessary for a prince to possess the friendship of the people; otherwise he has no resource in times of adversity.... Therefore a wise prince will seek means by which his subjects will always and in every possible condition of things have need of his government, and then they will always be faithful to him.  

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95 Ibid. Chapter xviii: 66.
The denigrators of Machiavelli are apt to say, at this point, that his prince will subscribe to these sentiments or endorse any method that will ensure his lien on state power. Indeed, Jacques Maritain's trenchant essay, "The End of Machiavellianism," inveighs against the Florentine on this very point. He says:

He knows that no political achievement is lasting if the prince has not the friendship of the people, but it is not the good of the people, it is only the power of the prince which matters to him in this truth perversely taught. 97

However, any state must ultimately depend on the fact that power is in the hands of some person or institution, and that it can be effectively deployed in the case of a defiance to the holders of power. Until such time as the arrival of the millenium, states will continue to rule through a balance of coercion and consent. Machiavelli was merely making a statement on an observable fact. In fact it could be construed, in a more generous light, as a caveat to those rulers who might be tempted to ignore the wisdom of this recommendation. With the passage of some four hundred years political scientists still find this notion of the power-consent nexus a crucial one. Andrew Janos' *The Seizure of Power: A Study of Force and Popular Consent* is a reminder that Machiavelli's concern is very much contemporary. Here is a passage from Janos which shows a striking similarity to the above penultimate quotation from Machiavelli:

The seizure of power is the seizure of a balance of coercion and consent, and it follows from the dual nature of authority that the effective seizure of power involves not only the capture of the instruments of force in society, but also winning a certain

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degree of popular acceptance.98

From Machiavelli's stated ends, and the concept of virtù as that belonging to one that is extraordinary, we may venture to say that should the prince, having come to power through the mastery of his environment, sink into petty despotism, he would forfeit any claim to a higher morality. For in the same manner that Machiavelli condemned Savonarola as the "unarmed prophet" and consequently doomed to failure, he castigated those petty tyrants in history who secured power through force yet used their power for their own selfish aggrandizement.

It is true that Machiavelli's prince would appear to have a carte blanche by the very nature of his super-morality; but, this morality carries its own constraints in at least two ways. It is judged by its own success and, more importantly, it bears the burden of its own exacting self-scrutiny.

Because Machiavelli's political universe is half fortuna and half virtù; and because his prince is vested with the severe task of balancing his actions with the existential nuances dictated by virtù and fortuna, the creative aspect of action stands in jeopardy of the destructive elements of cowardice, vacillations, shallow sentimentality, limited vision and a host of other attendant qualities which are antithetical to man's triumph over himself and his environment. For it bears recounting that man's only duty to a morality is one in which his capacity to free himself and his environment is maximized.

When man, by his repeated assertions that he is a rational being, postulates an end, he must perforce imply means in conformity with those ends. It is, therefore, incumbent upon man to work within such a rational framework; but the ultimate morality inheres in his existential choice. It is not a question of whether this or that action is "good" or "evil"; it is rather the imperative of whether or not he chooses to exploit the potentiality that lies within the dynamics of the particular situation.

It is man’s failure to recognize the multi-dimensional quality of the moment that limits him. Acting upon a conventional morality that demands its own unidimensional ends, e.g. "virtue," "goodness," denies man a full range of choices, and ultimately destroys his freedom as a complete being. On the contrary, the degree to which man is conscious of the complexity of his situation, which includes the phenomenon of conventional morality, and is free to act over and above the constraints of this complexity, is the degree to which he is self-creating. This is the new man of which Machiavelli speaks.

Having now considered all the things we have spoken of, and thought within myself whether at present the time was not propitious in Italy for a new prince, and if there was not a state of things which offered an opportunity to a prudent and capable man to introduce a new system that would do honour to himself and good to the mass of the people, it seems to me that so many things concur to favour a new ruler that I do not know of any time more fitting for such an enterprise.99

It is within the same ambience that Frantz Fanon throws out the challenge:

If we wish to live up to our peoples' expectations, we must seek the response elsewhere than in Europe....For Europe, for ourselves

99Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter xxvi; 94.
and for humanity, comrades, we must turn over a new leaf, we must work out new concepts, and try to set afoot a new man.  

But it is in the realm of action that Machiavelli's prince, the symbol of the "liberator", and Fanon's native, the energized "wretched", must define himself and so create the new man. For Fanon, "It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man." For Machiavelli, "God will not do everything, in order not to deprive us of freewill and the portion of the glory that falls to our lot." His "new man" will be a break from the spiritual past who will exercise his free will through that quality contained in virtù.

**Virtù** is the concrete exercise of liberty typical of a man of energetic and conscious will-power not to stop or control, but to mold the course of action in which he lives in order to stamp it with his own imprint, for the purpose not only of setting a goal but of translating action into reality.

When "translating action into reality" is manifested in the political realm, it is easy to see how Machiavelli's *raison d'état*, far from being the perfidious doctrine that it is made out to be, is a manifesto that addressed itself to the preservation of a republican order which exists for the good of the individual. Therefore the prince "is to promote the public good, and not his private interests."

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100Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, 255.  
101Ibid. 255.  
It is not possible for Machiavelli's prince to act in the political arena while ignoring the evil component contained in any act. Once action is demanded there is no chance that it will display any one pure form of good or evil; ineluctably, action entails both forms. There is no escape. In its political aspect this dimension increases; consequently, Machiavelli sees the necessity (his necessita) of doing "evil" once there is political action. But is not the very empirical base of democracy founded upon some of the very "evils" which are preached by Machiavelli? Alluding to Piero Soderini's "respect for the laws" as "most praiseworthy", Machiavelli nonetheless cautions:

Still one should never allow an evil to run on out of respect for the law, especially when the law itself might easily be destroyed by the evil; and he should have borne in mind, that as his acts and motives would have to be judged by the result, everybody would have attested that what he had done was for the good of his country, and not for...any ambitious purposes of his own. 106

It is within this context that Machiavelli could praise Cesare Borgia, and "absolved" Romulus of the death of his brother, since

If Machiavelli's raison d'état doctrine is considered repugnant, could not that "prophet of democracy," Abraham Lincoln, be considered Machiavellian? In 1862 Lincoln's famous reply to Horace Greeley's "Prayer of Twenty Millions" ran thus:"If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery...What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save this Union...." A Documentary History of the United States, ed. Richard D. Heffner, The New American Library: 1965. 154.


"what he had done was for the general good, and not for...his own ambition." 108

While, today, such recommendations might offend our sensibilities it is conceivable that, placed within a context of naked colonial oppression and violence, these extreme measures take on the legitimate function of the means of last resort, of self defence. Fanon's writings do indeed make this appeal. His "new man" is unable to issue forth from the womb of a colonial situation without violent pangs. The truly decolonised native knows no peaceful birth. This is so because of the psychic violation that has been perpetrated on him by the inextricable grasp of the colonial power structure.

The moral basis for Fanon's violence is founded upon a doctrine that "the ends justify the means". Like Machiavelli, he values the success of his goals and seeks to impose the morality of his ends upon the action of his means. More telling than Machiavelli his means are invested with the aura, the compelling human necessity, of man reclaiming himself. Fanon's wretched are wretched because they are perceived as without a point of departure from which to assert their humanness; for in the colonial world "the native is not human".

Decolonisation...transforms spectators crushed with their inessentiaity into privileged actors, with the grandiose glare of history's floodlights upon them. It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonisation is the veritable creation of new men. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural power; the "thing" which has been colonised becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself. 109

109 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 30. My emphasis.
Like Machiavelli's Florence and Italy, Fanon's Africa and the Third World are "enslaved," "oppressed," "despoiled" and "beaten." But while Machiavelli could still speak of the Italians as equals or superior to other races, and only lacking in the techniques of organization ("Look how in duels and in contests of a few the Italians are superior in strength, dexterity, and intelligence.") Fanon saw the very manhood, the human quality, the identity of the native as a human being, denied to the native's existence. Exploring the problem within the framework of Hegel's The Phenomenology of Mind, Fanon writes:

Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognized by the other, that other will remain the theme of his actions...It is that other being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed.... the White Master, without conflict, recognized the Negro slave. But the former slave wants to make himself recognized.¹¹¹

In this vein, Fanon copiously draws from a wide range of sources in order to depict the non-human condition of the black man: medicine, psychiatry, art, literature, sexuality. The inferior position of the black man has become an historical reality, asserts Fanon. He quotes a Spanish play, El valiente negro de Flandres, by Andre de Claramunte, which "makes clear that the inferiority of the Negro does not date from this century..."¹¹²

Only the color of his skin there lacked
That he should be a man of gentle blood.

¹¹⁰ Machiavelli, The Prince, Chapter xxvi: 96.
¹¹¹ Fanon, Black Skin White Masks, 216-217.
¹¹² ibid. x: 213.
The Negro in the play is made to say:

What a disgrace it is to be black
in this World!
Are black men not
men?
Does that endow them with a baser soul,
a duller, an uglier?
And for that they have earned scornful
names.

.................................
O curse of color![[113]

On the moral plane Fanon's task was to bring about the transformation of the black man, the colonised. Fanon's wretched had first to see himself as a man before he could physically liberate himself. To Sartre's famous dicta that the "Jew is one whom other men consider a Jew....", Fanon extends the concept to show that the black man is a creation of the white man. Further, the colonised with all his stunted condition was the product of the colonial world and all its supporting aspects of self justification: history, religion, law, morality, reason, aesthetics - the list is inexhaustible.

Flowing from the Hegelian concept that man knows himself through contact with others, Fanon's colonised natives, and minorities in general, have been deprived of this human condition which would permit them to assert their human worth. Minorities and colonised peoples have been dependent on the moralities of the historically powerful groups; every facet of their relations have reinforced this dependency, and the ultimate

[[113] Ibid. 214. The problem extends itself when we consider that the cultural aspect is manifested in language and metaphor, e.g. William Blake's "And I am black, but O! my soul is white." Martin Luther King spoke of "the reconstruction of the English language to upgrade the word black...." Quoted from Philip Mason, "...but O! My Soul is White," Encounter, Vol.XXX: No.4: April, 1968. 57.
justification of this cultural dependency has been force majeure.

This exclusive morality which permitted, supported and perpetuated the colonial powers was by its very role immoral. Not only was it immoral by its own standards, as many of its own reformers asserted, but more perniciously immoral by its very attempt to claim that its immorality was moral. It was a question of colonialism being immoral, and conscious of its own immorality; yet burying this insight through the device of self-deception which finally leads to intellectual and moral decline.

The morality of the colonial power is translated into pragmatic institutions which takes on the aura of universal morality under the guise of constitutionalism and legalism:

Colonial domination, because it is total and tends to oversimplify, very soon manages to disrupt in spectacular fashion the cultural life of a conquered people. This cultural obliteration is made possible by the negation of national reality, by new legal relations introduced by the occupying power, by the banishment of the natives and their customs...by expropriation, and by the systematic enslaving of men and women. 1

Fanon's exhortation, at the close of The Wretched of the Earth, calls for the abandonment of this morality:

Leave this Europe where they are never done talking of Man, yet murder men everywhere they find them, at the corner of every one of their own streets, in all the corners of the globe. For centuries they have stifled almost the whole of humanity in the name of a so-called spiritual experience....today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their triumphs of the mind. 115

The recognition of such a total annihilation of the black man's

114Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 190.

115Ibid. 252. My emphasis.
culture and personal identity led Fanon to the anguished "realization that his destiny had been sealed before his awakening..."\textsuperscript{116} The immorality of the colonial values, buttressed by the almost insuperable network of legal and physical fortifications, compelled Fanon to see that violence was to be the only purifying element. If the end of his philosophy was to eliminate colonial dominance and its conventional morality, then there was no method open to him but outside of such morality. If colonial morality spoke of humility and long suffering, and enforced it through power and superiority, then one would have to accept such morality on its actions rather than on its words. Since colonialism has been "violence which has ruled over the ordering of the colonial world,...that same violence will be claimed and taken over by the native..."\textsuperscript{117}

Here is no question of good and evil in ordinary terms. The human tragedy reaches out for a solution that is denied by the very colonial presence. "The natives' challenge to the colonial world is not a rational confrontation of points of view. It is not a treatise on the universal..."\textsuperscript{118}

It is important, however, that Fanon goes beyond the question of race, and sees morality in the very essence of man's relation to man; not just "black" versus "white".

No, I do not have the right to go and cry out my hatred at the white man. I do not have the duty to murmur my gratitude to

\textsuperscript{116}Irene L. Gendzier, Review of The Wretched of the Earth, by Frantz Fanon, The Middle East Journal, No.20, October, 1966.

\textsuperscript{117}Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 33.

\textsuperscript{118}Ibid. 33.
the white man. My life is caught in the lasso of existence.... I do not have the duty to be this or that....I have one right alone: That of demanding human behaviour from the other. One duty alone: That of not renouncing my freedom through my choices....There is no white world, there is no white ethic, any more than there is a white intelligence.119

Caught "in the lasso of existence" impels Fanon's wretched to choose their human existence. To choose human existence compels its consummation in action; and action can only have its truth within the context from which it springs. Any morality, religion or appeal to reason which is not based on the human condition in its particular existential necessity loses its obligatory character. In a milieu fraught with human oppression and chaos political action receives its imperatives from the human needs within such a context. Alasdair MacIntyre, no friendly critic of Machiavelli, could write:

Finally, there is a lesson to be learned from Machiavelli's example as much as from his explicit teaching. In periods in which the social order is relatively stable all moral questions can be raised from within the context of the norms which the community shares; in periods of instability it is these norms themselves which are questioned and tested against the criteria of human desires and needs.120

Like Machiavelli who questioned the enervating quality of Christianity and its adverse effect upon the vigour of the state, Fanon expresses his animus against the Christian religion: "The Church in the colonies is the white people's Church, the foreigner's Church."121 Comparable to the political institutions the Christian church exemplifies

119 Fanon, Black Skin White Masks, 229.


121 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 34.
the privileged position of a few, "And as we know, in this matter many are called but few chosen."122

The moral basis for Fanon, then, derives from the very foundation of human relations in the Third World. His espousal of violence, at most, is no more heinous than acquiescing in colonial violence. The morality of Fanon's violence is that it asserts the human dimension to life; whereas the immorality of colonial violence (under the guise of stability, law, order, Christian ethics etc.) negates such a dimension.

The violence that Fanon preached was the retroactive violence of the oppressed turning against his oppressor; not merely to avenge the past, but paradoxically, to regain his humanity for the future. It is by the purifying force of their hatred, their only treasure, said Fanon, that the colonized will become human again. By this final overthrow of the colonial behemoth of the West, the dependent world will be finally freed of the force that has kept it in the shadows of another.123

The prerogative that such a morality arrogates to itself is not absolute, except in the sense that human injustice and oppression absolutely demands remedial action. It is a morality whose validity inheres in the very social process itself; it is neither superimposed by some external arbiter, nor is it dictated by metaphysical considerations. As such, man's history has been a continuous working out of this process; his morality has been his response in the participation of the process. Given the element of power in his social and political relations, his freedom resides in the recognition of his condition and his choice, what Sartre calls "authenticity".124

122Ibid. 34.
123Irene L. Gendzier, 541.
124Sartre defines "authenticity" as "having a lucid and truthful awareness of the situation, in bearing the responsibilities and risks
Man's freedom in the political sphere rests upon such a concept of morality. The degree to which this morality is realized, or threatens to be realized by the individual, is the degree to which his society will be responsive to his needs. Indeed, it is this tension that produces political health. Speaking in 1857, that black American Frederick Douglass nicely phrased it:

Those who profess to favor freedom yet deprecate agitation, are men who want crops without ploughing up the ground;...Power concedes nothing without demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what any people will quietly submit to and you have found out the exact measure of them, and these will continue till they are resisted with either words or blow, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.125

It is not the aim of this thesis to elevate violence and force to the heights of super-morality in politics. Were it possible to regulate human intercourse without employing these means, Machiavelli and Fanon, to be sure, would not hesitate to explore such alternatives. But such is not the case, as we are forcefully reminded by history and contemporary events. At the same time, any political philosophy must take into account the necessity of ethics in human relations, even if such ethics is considered on purely utilitarian grounds. Ethics, force and violence are therefore part of a social organism. This organism has meaning only in so far as its parts are considered integral functioning which the situation demands, in taking it upon oneself with pride and humility, sometimes with horror and hatred". Anthony Manser, Sartre A Philosophic Study, The Athlone Press, 1966. 155. Manser is translating and quoting from Sartre's *Reflexions sur la question juive.*

components of the whole. 126 Political and social reality can therefore only have meaning to the extent that it embraces all human activity - at any rate that which is cognizable. Aspects such as morality, force and violence must be accorded a prominent place within the complex of human activity.

Once we have made the fateful concession of ethics to politics, and accepted coercion as a necessary instrument of social cohesion, we can make no absolute distinctions between non-violent and violent types of coercion or between coercion used by governments and that which is used by revolutionaries. If such distinctions are made they must be justified in terms of the consequences in which they result. The real question is: what are the political possibilities of establishing justice through violence? 127

Indeed, this is the real moral question that must be asked of Machiavelli and Fanon; for given the success of the liberator in the initial stage of the conflict who will be the guarantor of the moral ends? Finally, quis custodiet ipsos custodes?

The political philosophy of Machiavelli is much more instructive than Fanon's at this juncture. It is unfortunate that Machiavelli's reputation as the progenitor of political evil is mainly based on the fame of The Prince. Yet, one should bear in mind that it was The Discourses

126 I am indebted to Georg Simmel's theory on social organization which postulates conflict (Kampf) as a force within the dynamic which attracts and repels individuals and which finally leads to uneasy combinations. Simmel sees stability as a temporary balancing of forces. "Conflict is thus designed to resolve divergent dualisms; it is a way of achieving some kind of unity,...This is roughly parallel to the fact it is the most violent symptom of a disease which represent the effort of the organism to free itself of disturbances..." Georg Simmel, Conflict and The Web of Group-Affiliations, Trans. Kurt H. Wolff and Reinhard Bendix; The Free Press of Glencoe, London; 1964. 13.

which first occupied his mind, and from which he broke off to write The Prince. On reading The Discourses one will find it replete with recommendations for the maintenance of a just republic. In his exposition of a cyclical view of history he puts forward the history of governments as that of one type giving way to another, from monarchy transformed into tyranny to aristocracy declining into oligarchy. Finally there was a popular rebellion which re-instituted monarchy and the cycle begins again. Machiavelli then cites instances of great men attempting to check this change; Lycurgus of Sparta implemented the mixed type of government where all three elements (monarchic, aristocratic and democratic) "will watch and keep each other reciprocally in check."

Again, Machiavelli's concept of a law-giver is that of one who secures the happiness of the people and thus ensures the unity of the state: "In the period under the good Emperors he will see the prince secure amidst his people, who are also living in security; he will see peace and justice prevail in the world,...and everywhere will he see tranquillity and well-being." There is no dearth of examples, if one examines The Discourses, showing Machiavelli's passionate commitment to a well ordered state, popular government, equitable justice and citizenry participation as a means to genuine allegiance. Ultimately, these very same conditions would govern the reign of the prince and the

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128 Max Lerner, "Introduction" to The Prince and The Discourses, xxx.
130 Ibid. Bk.1: ch.x: 144.
Fanon is less rigorous in his political prescriptions. Writing at a time when the One Party State was seen as the answer to the problem of modernization in Africa, Fanon refuted this doctrine and depicted it as a form of dictatorship for the aggrandizement of a dissolute and useless bourgeoisie, "The party should be the direct expression of the masses." The post-independent leader must ensure the close connection between the rulers and the masses; in fact, the leaders must join the masses, reside in the countryside and vitalize the village. In short, the leader must initiate the diffusion of his power and rely on the cooperation of the people. In order to ensure the success of this approach there must be "a very rapid transformation into a consciousness of social and political needs..." Fanon is here postulating the efficacy of ideology as an agent in securing this moral community. The success of such a community will be the safeguard of the revolutionary ends. But Fanon's proposed institutional checks are of a different genre in comparison to Machiavelli's; this is so because Fanon's masses are to be transformed. It is the collective action of a people engaged in violence that is supposed to bring about their freedom, their moral rejuvenation. But one may legitimately question the effect of violence on the post-national state.

There is much evidence that violence may be necessary in African countries which are or were dominated by white settler groups,... But...The outcome of much violent action in Europe and the U.S.A. in recent years has shown that violence as a means of revolution has to be viewed far more discriminately. It is time to think

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131 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 150.
132 Ibid. 162.
afresh about the roots, the efficiency, and the controllability of violence. This means going beyond the ideas of Frantz Fanon...133

This may indeed be true; however, it does not negate the moral necessity of violence as an instrument for freeing a totally subjugated people and a promoter of \textit{esprit de corps}. The political philosophy of Fanon, therefore, lacks the meticulousness of the Florentine diplomat; yet, it possesses a much more profound appeal to the heroic qualities of the political actor than the cold doctrine addressed to the prince.

Conclusion

Are the writings of Niccolò Machiavelli and Frantz Fanon merely personal outpourings of disaffected individuals, scarcely discernible outcrops on the surface of history; or are they recognizable promon­tories from which to chart reliable political maps? Are their political philosophies of a sui generis nature, applicable only to their respective times, limited to a particular problem; or could we see in their treatment of political affairs a general theory of politics?

The argument of this thesis is that both political writers offered a general theory of politics from which the particular can be adum­brated.

Machiavelli erected a political model from which he aspired to guide the destinies of Florence and Italy and lead them to a republican unity. This goal never blinded him to the fact that his model could only be useful and effective if it represented reality. Machiavelli was scrupulously careful in observing this. First, he addressed himself to the present conditions that were in existence; but in doing this he set the political problems within a larger framework. By the profuse use of history he examined the components of his political model and illustrated their roles in an ever changing environment. Using the pivotal concepts of virtù and fortuna he examined the chimerical aspect of politics. This approach allowed him to construct a workable model of a republican state in which the vagaries of political action were tested by historical realities. While his explanations might bear
questioning they served to elucidate the interrelationships between actions that might have appeared disparate in their recorded historical isolation.

This political model of Machiavelli serves yet another function; a function that is central to his emphasis on political success. His model penetrated the penumbra of appearances. His historical allusions show that beneath the shadow of political events there lies the hard reality of power and its votaries; so that one should concur with Thucydides that "it is generally the case that men are readier to call rogues clever than simpletons honest, and are as ashamed of being the second as they are proud of being the first." 134 It is such a world that Machiavelli's model reflected; a world which took cognizance of appearances, yet never lost sight of the realities which dictated political action. Much of the obloquy that has attended Machiavelli's writings has been caused by the comprehensiveness of his model and the recognition of the predominance of "evil" in political interaction. Paradoxically, it is this totality of action, this all-inclusiveness of politics that provides the perennial condemnation of Machiavelli's "divorce of politics from ethics." But the simplifiers of Machiavelli's science of politics should consider that "Machiavelli divorced politics from ethics only in the same sense that every science must divorce itself from ethics. Scientific descriptions and theories must be based upon the facts, the evidence, not upon the supposed demands of some ethical system." 135


135 James Burnham, The Machiavellians, Gateway, Chicago: 1963. 44.
The place of ethics in Machiavelli's political theory did not occur unheralded. It had its precursors in the literati of the Italian Renaissance, for the Humanists were feverishly occupying themselves with the central task of explaining man's place within the workings of the Universe. While this in itself did not represent a break in medieval theology, the Humanists' preoccupation with the question of free will presaged a trend which scientific enquiry later confirmed in scepticism. One of the most famous examples of this trend in scepticism was Giovanni Pico della Mirandola who, in December 1486, published nine hundred theses in Rome and invited all interested scholars to a public disputation in January 1487. For our purposes, his introduction to these theses are revealing. His "Oration On The Dignity Of Man" contains a discourse in which God, the Creator of man, expounds:

Thou, constrained by no limits, in accordance with thine own free will, in whose hand We have placed thee, shalt ordain for thyself the limits of thy nature. We have set thee at the world's center... We have made thee neither of heaven nor of earth, neither mortal nor immortal, so that with freedom of choice and with honor, as though the maker and the molder of thyself, thou mayest fashion thyself in whatever shape thou shalt prefer.136

Machiavelli was therefore well within the literary paradigm of the Renaissance. The place of ethics, for him, then, was one which admitted to the concept of man creating himself through the moulding of his environment. The real contribution of Machiavelli in the political sphere may be seen in his important thrust to a period that was on the threshold of a literary, social and political "take-off".137


137The term "take-off" is used here in the same manner that the economist, W.W. Rostow has employed it in economic terms. It is a
For while his writings were not popular during his lifetime, with the exception of his play Mandragola, succeeding centuries paid homage to him by acknowledging the Machiavellian aspect of political life.

There is yet another dimension to the political philosophy of the Florentine; and that is the symbolic import of his prince. In a recent article Machiavelli's *The Prince* has been examined with particular regard to his themes of "redemption" and "exorcism of fortune." While it is outside the scope of this work to examine the poetic symbolism that is attached to Machiavelli's identification of his "fallen state" with the low condition of Italy, the symbol of the prince as a political "redeemer" is an important element in Machiavelli's political model. It's concept as a unifier has been a recurring theme in all political thought that has been formulated; and in instances where there has been excessive instability this symbolic aspect assumes overwhelming significance.

Notwithstanding Machiavelli's republican sentiments and his vision of an united Italy, he is still criticized for the central role which he bestows upon one man, a powerful prince who may abuse his office. While one could maintain the symbolic aspect of the leader as applying not only to one man but to any group, or even the masses, in an effort simple analogy with that minimum condition of speed required by an airplane before it can be air-borne.


139 Antonio Gramsci's The Modern Prince is a case in point. He states that "Machiavelli makes himself the people, merges himself with the people,...the 'logical' work is only a reflection of the people,
to create a just state, it would be more realistic to observe that while this symbol is applicable to various epochal demands Machiavelli was writing in that particular epoch when the concept of "the masses" had a different connotation than it has in the twentieth century. So that Frantz Fanon, faced with similar conditions to that of Machiavelli's era, had to devise a political model to suit the different psychological, social and political concepts which prevailed in the second half of the twentieth century.

Fanon's political model was created in an era when the multitude has suddenly become visible, installing itself in the preferential positions in society. Before, if it existed, it passed unnoticed, occupying the background of the social stage; now it has advanced to the footlights and is the principal character. There are no longer protagonists; there is only the chorus.140

While Ortega y Gasset wrote this voicing his despair of this phenomenon, Fanon's political writings urged on "the chorus".

The general theory adumbrated by Fanon was one in which the economic, social and political problems of the Third World were merely epiphenomena. Colonialism was the First Cause from which all phenomena were to be examined and explained. Placed in the matrix of history colonialism breeds its own destruction in the form of decolonisation. Fanon does not resort to the enumeration of historical examples as does Machiavelli; history, for Fanon is an ineluctable force in the Hegelian- an internal reasoning which takes place inside the popular consciousness and has its conclusions in an impassioned, urgent cry." 136.

Marxist form. Its movement is determined by the contradictions that inhere in the colonial situation. Yet while he explains the shaping of the Third World through the compelling movement caused by "the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature," he also insisted that "The body of history does not determine a single one of my actions. I am my own foundation. And it is by going beyond the historical, instrumental hypothesis that I will initiate the cycle of my freedom." Much in the same way that Machiavelli saw the man of virtù pitted against fortuna, Fanon saw the individual asserting himself against the environment. However, one should be careful in applying this comparison considering Machiavelli's more rigid acceptance of fortuna's constraints.

There is yet another dimension to the corpus of Fanon's writings which was singular to his epoch, yet discernible in Machiavelli's political model; it is the element of consciousness and its function in changing the environment. When we observed that Machiavelli's writings displayed a cognizance of the underlying political realities and the appearances which masked them, we saw that Machiavelli's intention was to apprise the prince, the liberator, of the necessity of this awareness if success were to attend his actions.

Fanon's leader, and the masses, if they are to be successful, must also be aware of the political realities that lie within the colonial context. Their political consciousness must be heightened so that the

141 Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth, 30.
142 Fanon, Black Skin White Masks, 231.
facade of liberal democracy will be torn off and its oppressive nature will be shown. Fanon advocates violence for this dual task. His leader, possessing the necessary awareness of the colonial reality, employs violence in overturning the regime, which action, in turn, produces the collective spirit of the people and demonstrates their previous thraldom. It is this new consciousness of the people, produced by the collective struggle, which is absent from Machiavelli's doctrine.

When we speak of the functional role of violence in Fanon's political model we see it as the fulcrum upon which all other political elements are supported. It serves as an instrument by which the individual reclaims his humanity; it produces the collective will from previously dissociated ones; it energizes a people who have been enervated by colonial rule; and finally, it clears the way for the new man in a new societal structure.

When we turn to the symbolic quality inherent in Fanon's political thoughts we find a theme that lends itself to the imagination, the courage and the existential needs of all those peoples who perceive themselves as being oppressed. Because the element of power itself remains in any political situation, at all times, Machiavelli's thoughts will always be pertinent. However, his political model, if applied to modern political circumstances, in their particular contexts, might appear anachronistic.

Fanon has come upon the scene. His political concepts, too, serve as a thrust to a period on the threshold of a social, political, economic and cultural "take-off". The Third World is asserting itself. Marxism, existentialism and revolutionary action, once considered as disreputable philosophies, have now become current and valid concepts within a world
of conflict.

Just as Machiavelli's era presented the picture of man attempting to break from the theological hierarchy of the Medieval Church, yet uncertain of his new role, so it is with Fanon's era which is attempting to cast off from the moorings of Natural Law, yet struggling to ascertain the nature of man in a world of unlimited possibilities. Both Machiavelli and Fanon addressed their political writings to the heroic qualities in man. For in the words of William Blake, the poet:

Great things are done when men and mountains meet;
These are not done by jostling in the street.
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