Lethal Freedom: Divine Violence and the Machiavellian Moment[1]

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"For all their boasting, practical men do not know either men or the world; they do not even know the reality of their own works. [If they could return to life], the geniuses of pure politics, the fatalia monstra recorded in histories, would be astounded to learn what they have done without being aware of it, and they would read their own past deeds as in a hieroglyph to which they had been offered the keys."
(Benedetto Croce)

Introduction:

"The coming of this event exceeds the condition of mastery and the conventionally accepted authority of what is called the "performative". It thus also exceeds, without contesting its pertinence, the useful distinction between the "constative" and "performative"."[2]

The structure of this essay's argument is simply put. It comes in the form of a number of related propositions concerning the nature of modern freedom, a freedom first expounded for 'us' by Machiavelli.[3] The essay opens with an account of this freedom as factical freedom; one whose condition of possibility is a radically contingent time without warrant. Factical freedom conditions the deciding which those like Carl Schmitt, for example, problematise in terms of sovereignty. Without freedom there is no decision to make, no exception to determine and no friend/enemy distinction to draw. Without signification there is similarly no formulation or articulation of such a decision.

Preoccupied with the problematic of order and its entailments, Schmitt largely elides the problematic and entailments of the freedom of signification which are logically anterior to it. Factically free, modern man does not discover the law, Schmitt agrees, but he makes the law, Machiavelli maintains, by finding within himself the republican virtue *(virtù*), rather than the unmediated decisional will, required to do so. Freedom's *virtù* is ultimately underwritten by the polysemous freedom of the sign - that radically contingent undecidability which ultimately defines evental time itself. The Schmittean sovereign is somehow supposed magisterially to transcend the sign. Criticizing traditional definitions of sovereignty as, "the highest, legally independent, underived power," for example, Schmitt argues that this "is not the adequate expression of a reality but a formula, a sign, a signal. It is infinitely pliable, and therefore in practice, depending on the situation, either extremely useful or completely useless."[4] Continuously stressing the "concrete situation",[5] as if it arrives un-signed, Schmittean sovereignty unaccountably escapes the undecidability of the sign, however, as it decides the exception.[6] "The exception in jurisprudence is analogous to the miracle in theology"[7]; a miraculous seeming without seeming which Machiavelli would immediately see-through. Machiavelli knows that lethal violence is never unmediated. Indeed 'cruelty well-used' is precisely this; killing as political signification. Machiavellian man enacts his freedom, instead, therefore, through his capacity not simply to read but also, and above all, to constantly re-write the signs of the times via a continuous calculus of necessary killing. Sign and sex are always powerfully related in Machiavelli also. *Virtù* is violent political semiotics as sexual potency; indeed, if we follow Machiavelli the dramatist, sexual potency is a play of political semiotics. For that reason I deliberately maintain the vocabulary of 'man.

Subsequent sections analyse the nature of this Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom. They do so, first, as a strategic moment. That strategic moment is acted-out, second, in the form of a war for, and through, the radically undecidable power of the sign. Factical freedom as semiotic battlespace is continuously required to signify how much killing is enough. But it can never resolve this strategic predicament because the very contingency of evental time upon which its freedom relies denies it the possibility of ever securely computing the strategic calculus of necessary killing which ultimately defines its moment. When asked to say how much killing is enough, whatever it replies, factical freedom is equipped to give only one answer: more.

Locked in a strategic predicament which it can neither escape nor resolve, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is therefore analysed, also, as an aporia. This section nonetheless also explains that aporias are not passive conditions. Their very lack mobilises powerful political desires. Such desires

are acted-out in performative figures of political speech; of which the friend/enemy distinction might be said to be one. It is not however the one I am most interested in here.

Many tropes characterise the performative enactment of the aporia of politics as factical freedom. Before going on to analyse divine violence as the definitive trope of factical freedom, however, a further section analyses an additional aspect of the Machiavellian moment. Strategic and aporetic, rather than chronological or dialectical, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is also promissory. That is to say, it is kairological. Its promise is the promise of the future itself. What is always already at stake in the promissory economy of the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is not only the future **of** factical freedom, it is the future **as** factical freedom. No factical freedom, no future.

Delivery is not, however, the only requirement demanded of factical freedom. Its killing is necessary not arbitrary. What establishes that necessity is a strategic calculus of necessary killing capable of computing how much killing is enough to realise, refresh and secure factical freedom against all the forces which threaten it; principally, in fact, those of the very time which enables it. If it cannot secure a strategic calculus of necessary killing, the Machiavellian moment becomes guilty of mere murder. It must therefore also deliver without being guilty of homicide; failing to establish the necessity of its killing. Its violence must therefore somehow expiate as it prevails. In want, however, of a strategic calculus of necessary killing which would do precisely that, by determining how much killing is enough, the only violence capable of meeting its requirement of 'cruelty well-used' is one so great that it will prevail without application; since any and every application, in practice, is subject to the fallibility of any and every strategic calculus in force. Such violence is the messianic violence which Walter Benjamin called 'divine violence'.

In conclusion, while the paper proceeds by engaging Machiavelli through some of his most distinguished contemporary commentators, notably John Pocock and Miguel Vatter, it is nonetheless also written as a dark political allegory for our own times. The paper therefore concludes by posting a suspicion about those thinkers – Althusser, Badiou, Ranciére, Nancy, Agamben and Deleuze, among others - who seek a progressive politics from an evental account of time. An irony is intended to surround the conclusion's Deleuzean epigraph: "Philosophy's sole aim is to become worthy of the event."

Factical Freedom

"The alternative to action is delay and temporisation, and once time has become the domain of pure contingency, it is impossible to temporise because there can be no secure assumptions about what time will bring about; or, rather, the only assumption must be that, unless acted upon, it will bring change to one's disadvantage."
(Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: 166)

The essay first assumes that Machiavelli inaugurates the modern understanding of politics in general and of freedom in particular. [8] To analyse the predicament posed by Machiavellian freedom is therefore to analyse our own predicament as politically free in the modern way. Along with many commentators, the essay also acknowledges that this modern understanding of freedom is critically dependent upon Machiavelli's understanding of time. Time, here, is unaccountably given. It is governed by no law and it issues in no law. Here, ontologically speaking, Machiavellian time takes place as an event. 'Event', "not [merely] as a temporal punctuality or an instance of presence but, instead, as a dynamic open-ended field of forces, whose historicity prevents experience from closing into representational constructs, psychic spaces, or lived instances."[9] Machiavelli's figure for this radical ontological contingency – a statement of the real in the form of temporality itself, expressed through a traditional divine personage - is *Fortuna*; capricious, indeterminate but, to a degree, seducible. [10] Machiavellian man is free, then, not because he is a bearer of rights but because the time in which he exists takes place without any divine, natural or historical warrant.

Machiavellian time (modern political time) is itself, however, also comprised of evental encounters; correlations of historical forces and circumstances inviting intervention to change the course of time. The Machiavellian term of art for such encounters is *riscontro.* Intimately allied with a family of related terms including, in particular, *occasione* or historical events, *rinnovazione* or renewing, *mutazione* which is usually translated as adaptation, and *modi,* which is usually translated as 'manners' or 'modes' that permit

adaptation to the radical contingency of *Fortuna, riscontro* captures the kairological character of the Machiavellian moment as well, about which more shortly.[11]

Modi are, in effect, performative figures of political speech. They bring a world into play. They might also be called political affects; capacities to move, as well as be moved by, the signs of the times. Time might be radically contingent and evental but it also comes to presence for Machiavelli, a playwright as well as diplomat and theoriser of the political, in language; a language of political signification finding its expression, especially, in rhetorical and literary tropes.[12] The political 'modes' of factical freedom are therefore always modes of signification. No extra-discursive domain of existential enmity, for example, secures the political. Comprised of the freedom to signify, nothing in fact secures the political because the very power to signify politically lies in the radical undecidability of the sign. **That** there is an 'enemy' is not the issue, politically or analytically. Machiavellian man hardly needs to be reminded of the ever present reality of "killing", "combat", "fighting", "battle", "the possibility of conflict", or "publically disposing of the lives of men".[13] This contrived realism is beside the point. The point is always and everywhere: **which one** becomes the enemy, and **how**?

Machiavellian man is thus freed by the indeterminate nature of time to act into time to change the course of time if he contains within himself the wherewithal to do so. Indeed, if he is to enjoy his factical freedom, he must do so. In a Heideggerean sense Machiavellian man is therefore thrown: thrown into what Heidegger calls facticity, the experience of life as factical. "What is called 'factical life experience'? Heidegger asks.

He answers:

> 'Experience' designates (1) the experiencing activity, (2) that which is experienced through this activity...the experiencing self and what is experienced are not torn apart....'Experiencing' does not mean 'taking-cognisance-of', but a confrontation-with, the self-assertion of the forms of what is experienced....Factical does not [therefore] mean naturally real or causally determined, nor does it mean real in the sense of a thing. The concept of 'factical' may not be interpreted from certain epistemological pre-suppositions, but can be made intelligible only from the concept of the historical."[14]

Facticity is simultaneously therefore both historical and significatory. Along with Miguel Vatter, whose extraordinary work on Machiavelli is the primary inspiration for this essay, I therefore call the Machiavellian moment of modern freedom, factical freedom.[15] An iron-bound necessity, finally, also attaches to the evental contingency of Machiavellian time. It arises through a revision, also deployed by Machiavelli, of the ancient correlation of contingency and necessity.[16] Contingency is a predicament which cannot be escaped; but, one way or another, it is in some degree not simply appeaseable but calculable.

To elaborate, then, factical freedom is not a negative or a positive form of liberty. It is neither a 'freedom from' nor a 'freedom to'. It is a 'freedom for'; for the assumption of one's throwness into time without law in order to bring law to time; a freedom to act into time to change the course of time, or not.

Factical freedom is therefore construed also as a difficult freedom. It is not easily practiced and it is easily lost or, indeed, given up. For the moment we do not need to go into all the manifold reasons which Machiavelli gives for why it can be lost or surrendered. Suffice to say that, according to Machiavelli, the greatest threat to factical freedom is its own self-corruption: "for *virtù* brings forth tranquillity; tranquillity idleness; idleness disorder; disorder ruin; and similarly from ruin rises order; from order *virtù*; and from this, glory and good fortune."[17]

Men are therefore continuously in danger of losing, or conceding, the art of practicing factical freedom. They become soft. They become corrupt. They may be inexpert and ill-advised, or lack the vigilance required to continuously maintain factical freedom through renewing it. They may simply become incapable of reading the signs of the times correctly or lack the courage and skill to act upon them. Necessarily both martial and imperial, how else could it prevail,[18] factical freedom nonetheless commonly over-reaches itself. Freedom to legislate itself, factical freedom is therefore continuously both fallible and vulnerable. Thus weakened, it becomes prey to tyranny and loses its capacity for self-governance.[19]

One common Jeremiah of factical freedom is to bemoan its imperial overstretch, as if more judicious policy would somehow save it from the logic of its imperialising self-corruption. [20] Fear of the loss of political *virtù* consequent upon the detumesence of republican potency is another constant republican trope.[21] Revolution is continuously therefore required to renew factical freedom, because every form of rule atrophies freedom through the indolence it progressively instils in men. Factical freedom must therefore maintain a constant watch on itself and its condition or it will perish.

In this account of freedom, "the notions of 'right' and 'virtue' can also never be reduced to a common meaning."[22] Rights are ultimately a juridical phenomenon to which one lays claim, the virtue required to practice factical freedom is an affect which factically free men may or may not find within themselves, cultivate and practice.[23] Roman *virtus,* 'Tuscanised' by Machiavelli as v*irtù,* is the political affect for the Florentine. There is, however, a crucial difference between the two. The difference is this. "Romans," Pocock explains, "knew of *virtus* as a characteristic of the citizen and thought of it not only as exercised within a public discipline but as consisting in a religious respect for that discipline as a good in itself." In Machiavelli, however, "*Virtù* is capable of being used when the capacity is not disciplined by moral or political restraints. That is why Machiavelli can write of the Prince's *virtù* when it is being exercised illegitimately." "It denotes the individual's capacity for action," Pocock goes on, "including the political and the military."[24] If there was, as Pocock says, "something primal about *virtus*"[25] *virtù* extends and intensifies that primal quality. No longer simply part of a wider cult of civic religion, however, *virtù*, the capacity to act into time to change the course of time, itself becomes civic religion to factical freedom. In short, whereas *virtus* was part of a wider social and political cult, *virtù* itself simply is a cult.

Appearance to the contrary, then, and despite the political anthropology of human cupidity which Machiavelli is also famed for proclaiming, the copula in Machiavelli does not ultimately concern 'man'. It concerns the nature of existence as historical time.[26] Substituting history for divinity - Horkheimer amongst others noting that Machiavelli's new 'political science' is also "furnished primarily by the past,"[27] - the Florentine interrogates how the problematic of politics must be posed and resolved when time is evental and freedom is unconditioned. Since no external law legislates the law of evental time, and no transcendental rule authorises rule, law and rule are the revolutionary historical accomplishments of political innovation which are not so much warranted by an order in nature, or history, as called for by its absence. [28] Their very possibility is afforded in time by time as the historically contingent event of what Vatter calls 'no-rule'.[29]

For Machiavelli, the law does presuppose that individuals are bad or culpable by nature as a condition of positing that, "the law makes them good." The law is thus often figured in Machiavelli as a cure for the originary cupidity of man. But acknowledging the facticity of freedom, taking place in time as event, one must gloss the priority which is ordinarily accorded to this reading of Machiavelli. The factical freedom of the people, recognising the originary violent contingency of rule, is ultimately founded in the desire for 'no-rule'; rule both materialises factical freedom as political form but also vitiates factical freedom as originary freedom from rule. The more rules rulers make, the more the people are therefore compelled to 'cheat' and ultimately to revolt. Freedom must therefore redeem itself against the 'corrupting' effects of political form by returning to its origins in the desire for no-rule.

This impulse finds its figure in 'the people' and, as Machiavelli observes: "The people ask nothing except not to be oppressed,"[30] An opening of time to be seized by a factical freedom continuously threatened by its own political accomplishments, but renewed by its political *virtù,* evental time conditions all that is politically possible for time conceived as history, and for man thus conceived as the free agent of his own mis-fortune. By means of this onto-political logic, Machiavelli institutes a novel account of the circulatory character of political time. Natural law must ultimately return to 'God'; the providential source of what John Locke called the original grant of dominion and governance in common which institutes the civil society of contract.[31] With Schmitt, sovereign law must ultimately return to existential enmity; a miracle freed from the radical undecidability of the sign which simultaneously founds and expresses a decisional political will. Machiavellian man returns neither to God nor the Enemy. He returns to the origins of freedom in the temporal event of time as 'no rule'; a continuous re-turning, *riddure ai principii*, that posits all political authority in continuous polemical

tension with the unconditioned freedom, expressed as signification, which simultaneously both founds and subverts it.[32]

Strategic

"It is the use of an engagement for the purpose of the war."
(Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, Book One, "Strategy": 177)

It is precisely here in Machiavelli, therefore, that we first hear the modern assertion that the primary characteristic of political action is strategic behaviour; that the man of *virtù* is a *strategos*. Politically grounded in the question posed most starkly by another political strategiser, Lenin, in terms of, "What is to be done?" this strategic 'what' nonetheless also demands a strategic 'how'; a reliable strategic calculus.
There is, nonetheless, a profound difference between the strategic situation of Leninist man and that of Machiavellian man. That difference further illuminates the character of factical freedom, in as much as Machiavellian man confronts an aporetic strategic challenge. Leninist man labours under the illusion that he is indemnified by the dialectic of history. His tropes, of good and evil, are in a sense already pre-inscribed. If his strategic predicament is not already fully resolved, an historical movement is, however, said to be underway which guarantees that it is resolvable, at least in principle.

Machiavellian time is not providential time. That we understand. But neither is Machiavellian time dialectical time. This we do not necessarily understand, because so many commentators including his most astute commentators persist in labelling Machiavellian time dialectical when their very own most sophisticated interrogations establish that it is not.[33] However much the wheel of fortune turns, it is perfectly evident from Machiavelli, and indeed his commentators, that time is not dialectical and that *Fortuna* is no dialectician. The time of the event has no unity and the factical freedom which it grants enjoys no guarantees of any spiritual or temporal description. Factical freedom is instead condemned to rely upon its own continuously changing political artifice to figure-out how to act into time to change the course of time in order to renew its freedom in circumstances which are challenging in continuously novel ways, because time, and the times themselves, are radically contingent.

To repeat, such contingency is both ontological and historical. There is no order to time here, and time issues in no order. Order is a human accomplishment. It is, as Hobbes was later to put it, artefactual. Thus, as Vatter acutely observes, there is no rule to rule. The contingency of any and every rule may, therefore, be revoked in favour of the necessity of another rule, which necessity is demanded by continuous change in the signs of the times.[34] If the factical freedom of the Machiavellian moment is to have a political calculus, it has therefore to be fashioned from historical examples which display *virtù* - "Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, Theseus and the like"[35] - rather than from those attuned to some *telos* or dialectic of time.

In addition, however, men's actions compound, they do not resolve, the ontological contingency of time historically. Men do what they do, but they cannot command the outcome of what they do. Human action itself creates contingency as well. Thus, by the 17th and 18th centuries, the radical contingency of factical freedom was argued-out in Atlantic societies, and especially through Anglo-American political discourse, in terms of the crisis of political obligation it posed, and the many novel devices, such as covenant and contract, by which the passions and the interests, in which contingency was by then said to lie, might be transformed into what Victoria Kahn appositely called, "binding political significations".[36]

Factical freedom's condition is therefore strategical not dialectical. In fact, the dialectic is not strategic at all. In its concern with the transcendent unity and historical order of time it is, of course, profoundly onto-theological. The difference is summarised succinctly by Foucault. "Dialectical logic", he says, "is a logic which plays with terms which are contradictory but within the element of homogeneity...which promises to dissolve them into one unity." Strategic logic is concerned instead, "to establish the possible connections between disparate terms which remain disparate". "The logic of strategy", he continues, "is the logic of the connection of the heterogeneous and it is not, repeat not, the logic of the homogenization of things which are contradictory."[37] Strategy is thus an *ars combinatoria*, rather than an *ars differentia*. It reads the heterogeneous signs of the times in order to fashion timely interventions into the course of time, continuously seeking to secure itself against all the changing correlation of forces which distinguish the

changing nature of the times, not least those at play within the play of factical freedom itself. It does so, quintessentially, renewing time by making time. It is ultimately creative rather than reactive. It must be. For time itself provides no order or law to be represented. Rule is made, and applied, not discovered. Factical freedom does not, therefore, simply encounter strategic predicaments. Factical freedom **is** a strategic predicament.

Posed by the radical contingency of evental time, the strategic predicament of factical freedom is therefore also a continuously emergent "concrete situation". Such a continuously emergent situation is simultaneously also, however, an emergency; hence the immediacy, urgency, and brutal instrumentality, of Lenin's rendition of it. From Machiavelli and many others of course, we also understand that the *ultima ratio* of such strategic behaviour is force and violence. Strategy does not simply concern the application of force; it expresses the purely instrumentalised will to power of free agents in a universe construed as the *spielraum* of their factical freedom. As a strategic predicament, factical freedom is therefore intimately allied with violence. This is not a contradiction. Violence is not a paradox of freedom. Neither is violence one political instrument among others for the factically free. If factical freedom is essentially strategical, and the essence of strategy is violence, to be factically free is to be violent - strategically. Every strategist of the modern period, including also, iconically, von Clausewitz, has proclaimed as much.[38]

The very grid of intelligibility which governs the strategic problematic of modern freedom, being factically free, is therefore that of modern war: specifically; will to power as the deployment of force for the realisation of the political objective of exercising factical freedom. Machiavelli is no more acute, no more remorseless in his analytic of factical freedom, than in his frank recognition of the violence required to be factically free. Famously, he calls it the art of 'cruelty well-used.' Says Machiavelli: "Well used cruelties (if one may speak well of evil) are those that are done all at once, when it is necessary to secure oneself, and in which one does not persist, but are converted into the greatest possible advantage of the subjects."[39] Continuously reading the heterogeneous signs of the times, paying special attention for example to those historical exemplars who are claimed to have done so successfully in the past, particularly by excelling in the arts of war, strategy is a martial semiotics concerned not only with reacting to the times but with taking charge and reshaping them; signalling a new order for the times. As archetypal republicans, modern Machiavellians, in the second Bush White House, for example, embraced precisely the same idea: "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality - judiciously, as you will - we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors . . . and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do."[40]

Factical freedom is thus a semiotic battlespace.[41] Contemporary military strategic discourse, and the "effects based operations", of the so-called 'information age', in the US and the UK especially but more widely also across the Atlantic world, now frankly describe it as such.[42] Weaponising information as much as it informationalises weapons, factical freedom in the 21st century explicitly proclaims itself as war pursued for the power of the sign through the very undecidability of the sign.[43] Its significatory devices - *modi* - are demonstratively constitutive and experimental.[44]

Thus the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is not only a strategic moment rather than a dialectical moment; it is also a continuously emergent moment, one which enacts a permanent crisis. The emergency of the historically emergent freedom of republican *virtù* is, then, evental not juridical. It concerns that universalised, sexual and gendered potency, expressed historically as pro-active politically strategic intelligence, or *virtù*, the loss of which would eventuate in the loss of freedom as such. This political trope is no arcane theoretical issue. It is endlessly played-out in the popular culture as well as the politics of Atlantic societies; that of the American Republic in particular.[45]

Significatory

"Must heaven speak? It has already manifested its will by striking signs....It is up to us to do the rest."[46]
(The Prince, Chapter xxvi)

First entering on stage as a metaphor referring to an autonomous force outside the subject, by chapters 6-7 of *The Prince*, Machiavellian contingency - *Fortuna* - is redefined as that which is produced by a lack of *virtù*. Factical freedom's very condition of possibility, contingency becomes an alibi also for political failure; the loss of *virtù*.[47] Contingency will only prevail over the freedom which it grants if factical freedom becomes deficient in *virtù;* "[*Fortuna*] exercises her power when no barriers are erected against her; she brings her efforts to bear upon ill-defended points."[48] Thus, v*irtù* is no slave of time; not least because time as event is an opening not a determinant. *Fortuna* ultimately becomes a sign of the violent non-coincidence of actions and times; a symptom that *virtù* has given up the goal of changing the times.[49] Freed from blind chance as much as from providence, and possessed of *virtù*, this critical Machiavellian revision of the classical problematic of the necessary and the contingent[50] allows factical freedom the potent polemical force to act into time to change the course of time by virtue of the potent freedom which evental time itself makes possible.[51]

The advent of a new form of political discourse here, the opening of time as significatory event in Machiavelli, also concerns the very eventalness of the sign itself. As temporality becomes historicity so the historical becomes archival and the archive becomes the inevitable subject of interpretation.[52] Machiavelli himself is a master of this interpretive art. Everything in his world 'signifies', but nothing comes with stable meaning pre-installed. No sign is certain and no sign signifies unless it is circulated and read. In this respect Machiavelli was a man of his times and might well have been familiar with Lorenzo Valla's historically grounded linguistics, together with its attack on referential understanding of language: "Words uttered by Men are indeed natural, but their meaning is determined by conventions." [53] Ultimately there is no controlling the circumstances of its reading. Posing as mere historical observer, but understanding that in this cockpit of factical freedom the sign must be successfully instrumentalised, if *Fortuna* is to be mastered, so that time can be bent to political intent, Machiavelli struggles to divine how the radical undecidability of polysemous signification itself can be tamed politically.

Signification is thus the discursive currency of all political intercourse. Machiavellian man is thereby compelled to struggle with the currency of the sign - in Greek *sēmē* means 'coin' as well as 'sign' or 'word'[54] - in ways which recall Renaissance, as well as our own, understandings of the equally uncanny power of money.[55] While disavowing rhetoric through a nonetheless rhetorically powerful discourse of the real, itself a classic rhetorical trope, even within *The Prince* Machiavelli cedes the radical polysemous instability of the sign and the absent presence of the real he continuously invokes.[56] Since the timing of signing is everything, the exemplars of political reputation of which he continually invokes are unmasked. They are not real historical examples at all; but counterfeited species of political exchange coined, circulated and deployed by Machiavelli himself to buttress an account of freedom – the Machiavellian moment - which conditions our own political times.

But he was perhaps too much the dramatist, and too much the Renaissance man, to be entirely seduced by the idea that such a manoeuvre could master the sign. In any event, ontologising as he historicises he writes the very ontology of the real, which he claims merely to discover, back into the history from which he claims to draw it out; so that he can discover it there. Thus does he underwrite the political freedom he espouses as he claims simply to record it. Machiavelli's 'real' is the virtuoso product of his own art of political signification.

It is not, however, simply a matter of the referent of 'the real' escaping the web with which signification seeks to ensnare it because the polysemous power of signification renders the sign undecidably contingent on the unpredictable circumstances of its circulation and its reading. The referent of 'the real' continuously escapes the web of signification because the very power of the sign, as such, lies in the fact that it cannot in fact be securely represented against any so-called 'reality' if it is to continue to signify.[57] Rhetoric besides, Machiavelli's political reality is plainly an effect of the deconstructive power of signification itself. For that very reason it is radically undecidable.

Whereas *virtù* is an affect of character, all character nonetheless presupposes a related form of skill or intelligence.[58] Some form of expertise, however crude, correlates with character, however simple. *Virtù* is allied to what the Greeks called metistic intelligence; the cunning of 'seeming'.[59] Notoriously proclaiming himself a realist, then, what Machiavelli actually does is describe how political *virtù* might be capable of

conjuring the effect of 'the real' on command through the metistic arts of political invention. The very metistic intelligence of political *virtù* nonetheless always requires something in excess of itself to make it work, the sign itself; the deconstructive donation of evental time in the form of *Logos*. It is unaccountably given to man, and yet also contingently shaped by man. Given time, Machiavellian man is also obliged to make time for himself metistically.[60]

Albeit deception is one of the arts of the Machiavellian prince in particular, whether or not deception is intended the sign is fated to dis-simulate if it is to fabricate. Machiavelli knows this. Politics thus unfolds in a continuous experimental play of appearance; **"...**when it is a matter of judging the inner nature of Men, above all of princes, since we cannot have recourse to courts we must stick only to consequences."[61] Consequences themselves are, however, subject to political interpretation; such, indeed, is Machiavelli's own historical game. Politically speaking, then, polysemic signs are a force to be conjured with. Machiavellian man is more Magus than rational analyst, strategist or political scientist.

Free to act into time to change the course of time by a radical contingency which can never be mastered yet must be artfully played, because time's arbitrary giveness continuously subverts its translation into history via political fabrication, Machiavelli's political exemplars are archetypes. Abstracted from their age, their own conjunctures of time and place, these exemplars are entirely unreal. It is only in the form of maxim and cliché that they can ever be made to appear politically effective at all. Machiavelli's Moses, for example – a standard Renaissance trope, implausible from start to finish as a 'real' historical character – can be taken to stand for them all.

Moses first appears in Chapter 6 of *The Prince* which is concerned with those who acquire new princedoms by dint of their own *virtù* and military self-sufficiency. Thereafter, he last appears in the *Discourses*, where Machiavelli gives a slightly more extended account of the political lessons to be drawn from a comparative analysis of the fate of Moses, Savonarola, and Piero Soderini a contemporary Florentine political operator.

Moses was, however, neither a prophet nor a prince. He did not, as Machiavelli maintains, found a religion, a people, or a state. The Jews had followed a law - having observed a covenant with *Yahweh* from the time of Abraham - before Moses became the reluctant conduit for transmitting another to them. What sort of leader was this biblical Moses? asks one humanist scholar. She replies: "Accidental, reluctant, obstinate, despairing, - and in the worst Machiavellian fate hated, thus ruined by the people."[62] A killer, reluctant also to deliver his people from Egyptian bondage, contesting his election by *Yahweh*, Moses, "died alone in a foreign wilderness, divinely obstructed from entering the Promised Land."[63] By Machiavellian standards of effective leadership, "biblical Moses was incompetent"[64]; and, "fatuous [especially] for the Exodus" incident on which Machiavelli drew.[65] More to the point, Machiavelli's Moses, claimed to be derived from "continuous study of the ancient world...diligently analysed and long pondered"[66] was a hackneyed cliché of renaissance rhetoric.

> A parade of authors had conscripted Moses name for ideological political ends with flattering but false comparisons to Plato's philosopher-king, the Bishop of Basil Caesarea, the emperor Constantine, the king Mathias, and a procession of popes. Machiavelli the opportunist inserts his artifice into this convenience. Yet, however, preposterous their extrapolations from Scripture, the allegorists did not boast of historical purpose or erudition, as he did, but specified their contemplative intentions. Machiavelli's abuse of scripture is fabulation."[67]

In thus positing 'significatory realism' shot through with undecidability, and not merely political fraud, Machiavelli's evental time re-problematises knowing as much as doing. For all he proclaims it realist, Machiavelli's politics is strategic experimentation inflected with more than a touch of magical realism. Outputs are always fated to become outcomes; the often unintended consequences not simply of what men do but of the unpredictable impact of their actions on the wider evental political economy of reputation and seeming into which their factical freedom throws them: "For a prince then it is not necessary to have in fact all the above-described [virtues] but it is very necessary to appear to have them."[68]

The Florentine's vocation was nonetheless at least as political as it was philosophical.[69] Within the compass of such an evental understanding of time, Machiavelli was primarily concerned with telling us how men

act-out their factical freedom. In particular, he was concerned to tell us what men are required to do if they are to retain their freedom by resolving their strategic predicament; determining how and when to act into to time to change the course of time by specifying how much killing was enough to do so. For time as event does not simply free Machiavelli's man, or time, from cosmological determination. Reposing both the nature of man and time Machiavelli ties them back together in a novel, historically political, relationship. Time becomes the radically contingent history that free men make in necessarily violent pursuit of their mis-fortune.

It is important to be absolutely clear about the character of the necessity which attaches to killing here. Killing may be said to be necessary for all sorts of reasons. Factical freedom is not distinguished by the fact that it is necessary to kill, alone. If it were, then factical freedom could not be distinguished from any other political regime claiming that it is necessary to kill. Killing is not only instrumentalised, here, it is instrumentalised in the name of freedom. The referent object of this killing is freedom. It is necessary to kill to be factically free. Its strategic calculus of necessary killing is governed by the question how much killing is enough to remain factically free.

As it frees politics from cosmological determination, the radical contingency of evental time thus immanently conditions the very operationality of the Machiavellian moment. Machiavelli offers us both praxiology and an ontopolitical account of this condition. Central to its praxis is command of signification: "Must heaven speak? It has already manifested its will by striking signs....It is up to us to do the rest."[70] Through command of the signs of the times Machiavellian man seeks the command of time: "I also believe that he is happy who can match his way of proceeding with the qualities of the times."[71] Just as no praxis is ontologically innocent, however, no ontology is praxiologically insignificant.

Machiavelli's thus teaches something fundamental also about the co-production of ontology and practice in the reading of the signs of the times. Existence takes place as history in the form of signification.[72] It is therefore pointless to try and decide which comes first: time or sign. What appear to be two things is in fact one, albeit double. In Machiavellian terms, historical events (*occasione*) are encounters (*riscontro*) through which the institution and reconstitution of political form continuously emerge in the significatory *modi* of political action.

Probing the entailments of a political facticity which owes its account of freedom to a radically contingent temporal ontology, itself finding historical expression in the polysemous undecidability of the sign, since factical existence takes place as signification and strategy derives from command of the sign,[73] Machiavelli must struggle to immanentise the rule of meaning in the polyphenous play of political signs in order to secure the success of doing. In the process, he cannot but be ontological as he claims to be practical. He cannot but be practical and historical as he expresses an ontology; an account of the real which demands certain practices. The Machiavellian moment thus acts-out the significatory undecidability through which the materiality of its strategic condition is constructed. It does so through a wide variety of dividing practices and political tropes, including those concerning, for example, sexuality as well as strategy; since *virtù* is nothing if not political savvy as sexual potency. Definitive of it is, however, strategic understanding of cruelty well-used and the 'balls' to use it.[74]

Ontology and historicity thus irrevocably contaminate one another in the Machiavellian moment. (When do they not?) That contamination reverberates throughout the modern politics of the factical freedom of the event which Machiavelli inaugurates. In the event, whatever historical man makes of the Machiavellian moment, his political action is irreducibly indebted to the unaccountable donation of time even as it seeks to make its own time as history. If the very supplementarity of time makes factical freedom, it also breaks it. 'Given time' remorselessly deconstructs historical time, all the time.[75]

Machiavelli is notorious only because he insisted on what other champions of this account of freedom elide. If the Machiavellian moment is, as John Pocock expressed it, a matter of, "...the republican ideal [posing] the problem of the universal's existence in secular particularity,"[76] its political economy of emancipation requires a corresponding political economy of violence. Unless it can specify, historically, who for freedom's sake must die, the killing it does will merely perpetuate a vicious cycle of violence rather than a virtuous circle of emancipation. If we go on to ask from whence derives the strategic purchase of

cruelty well-used, Machiavelli answers clearly and consistently. It is on the minds of men; specifically their capacity to use and read signs. If this theatre of cruelty and politically inspired death is to have its effect it can only do so as the lethally calibrated signification of a power that none will mistake in its effect and in its expiation of the killing that it must do. But we, along with Machiavelli also, know all about the power of the sign.[77] Its power cannot be escaped but neither can it be secured. Neither effect nor expiation is, or can be, guaranteed by it. This is the strategic predicament of factical freedom.

Other regimes may therefore be murderous or genocidal. Their violence may be an expression of some mythic tribal, racial, sexual, gendered, tyrannical, religious, totalitarian, oligarchic, or charismatic essence: what Benjamin calls mythic violence, or, "bloody power over mere life for its own sake."[78] Factical freedom is not like that. It is not power over mere life for its own sake. It is power over life in the event of life to express and enact the evental freedom of life; the very capacity for *vivere civile* which distinguishes it from other forms of existence. Its essence lies in its being free to read the signs of the times to act into time to change the very course of time via a strategic command of signification, a generic weaponisation of the temporal event of *Logos* that renders violence politically instrumental in the cause of freedom. Machiavellian man is therefore not free in this way because he is bad. Though bad he undoubtedly is: "All those who have written upon civil institutions demonstrate (and history is full of examples to support them) that whoever desires to found a state and give it laws must start with assuming that all men are bad."[79] The bottom line is that men are bad because factically they are free.[80]

Enacting a realm of radically contingent time, political timing for the factically free is a matter of being contingently effective throughout time via the art of cruelty well-used.[81] Factical freedom must therefore always be well-played at the limit of its condition, and its condition is always and everywhere at the limit. Republican virtue seeks to instantiate a republican sociality, or world. Its world is a jealous one. Like capital, republican virtue finds that there can only be one world if the republican world is to prevail. In the event, those free men who cannot kill well, politically, will ultimately live and die less well because they will lose their freedom. "I conclude that, since circumstances vary and men when acting lack flexibility, they are successful if their methods match the circumstances and unsuccessful if they do not."[82] Required to kill well politically, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom revolves around the permanent crisis - or emergency - posed by this, its strategic aporia.

Aporetic

"Aporia rather than antinomy."
(Derrida, Aporias, 16)

Here we approach the nub of the argument. Factically free, Machiavellian man – modern man – is continuously confronted with the eternal return of a moment, the Machiavellian moment, which poses the same politico-strategic question. The Leninist formulation of this question was: What is to be done? But having reviewed Machiavelli's insistence on the *ultima ratio* of factical freedom being the art of cruelty well-used, we are in a position to restate this strategic formulation. Put simply, the question is this: How much killing is enough?

What factical freedom ultimately requires to enact being factically free is thus a strategic calculus of necessary killing. But none such is available. Indeed within the orbit of contingent time which enframes factical freedom none such is possible; there is no law to time, time issues no law, and the signs of the times are radically undecidable. It would be profoundly mistaken, however, to think that therefore nothing can be done. Anything may be done. Anything is often done. Indeed, as it turns out, anything and everything must be done, if necessary. Such killing escalates because factical freedom is, in fact, incapable of answering the question how much killing is enough? The point, then, is that, for all the emphasis on his strategic savvy, when he kills Machiavellian man cannot know for sure what he does, does; hence the sobering reminder provided by the epigraph which heads this essay. Crossing the threshold of violence initiates independent dynamics beyond the strategic calculating and pre-cognition which Machiavellian man brings to it. What he views as instrumental, political calibrated violence, is no such thing. It is an independent variable which shapes him more than he shapes it. Admitting as much, biographies and autobiographies of Machiavellian men often depict them as gamblers or tragic heroes; usually a mixture of

both.We are now also in a position to understand two other closely related questions: why *salus populi* becomes the supreme law of republican freedom, and what happens to the discourse of peace when it does so. The Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is practically defined by the requirement to have a strategic calculus of necessary killing which will answer the question: How much killing is enough? A politics thus modelled on war, the logos of war becomes the logos of peace. How? Through the discourse of security: "to act in politics is to expose oneself to the insecurities of human power systems, to enter a world of mutability and *peripeteia* whose dimension is the history of political insecurity."[83] Hence the full tag, *salus populi suprema lex esto.*[84] Discourses of security are the everyday means by which the logos of peace is inscribed with the logos of war. When you hear politics and life described in terms of security, you are listening to politics and life described in terms of war.

In the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom, peace therefore becomes the extension of war through securitisation of the everyday *vivere civile* of republican virtue. This sources the watch which the republic must permanently exercise on and against itself: "That a Strict Watch should be kept on the Doings of Citizens," titles Machiavelli in one of his discourses, "since under cover of Good Works there often arises the Beginning of Tyranny."[85] Directed towards all actual and virtual enemies of the republic – any one and anything can be such – this impetus to instantiate and continuously re-secure the republic through approximating a form of power so great that it would work without use, and in thus prevailing without bloodshed thereby also expiate, bears down most, therefore, on the republican *persona* itself; individual and collective. For it is there that the Machiavelli teaches us that republican *virtù* is continuously won and lost.

External threat may therefore aggravate and excite, or otherwise provide an outlet for, but it does not constitute the originary fear which constitutively stalks, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom. That fear is sourced, instead, from the very ontopolitical conditions of evental temporality which provide factical freedom with its original warrant.[86] Nothing is more corruptive of this freedom, however, in its continuous cycle of exhaustion and renewal, than the relentless surveillance and limitless violence required to reproduce and secure it. Herein, then, lies the intense aporia which also defines it.

If the radical contingency of time frees Machiavellian man for the task of continuously reinventing and renewing his freedom in the incalculably contingent correlation of forces which comprises time, ontologically and historically, it simultaneously also therefore deprives him of the very possibility of the strategic calculus required to secure his freedom politically. Factical freedom thus poses an irresolvable problem to itself. Its strategic predicament is therefore also an aporia. To be factically free is to be in want of a strategic calculus of necessary killing; one which would resolve the problem of cruelty well-used, which is to say answer the question how much killing is enough.

There is no escape from this predicament, for the factically free, and there is no solution to it. That is precisely what an aporia is: an inescapable and irresolvable predicament. This does not mean to say that nothing happens in an aporia. As Richard Beardsworth brilliantly explains, in his still unrivalled account of *Derrida and The Political*:

> "An aporia demands decision, one cannot remain within it; at the same time its essential irreducibility to the cut of the decision makes the decision which one makes contingent, to be made again. The promise of the future (**that there is a future**) is located in this contingency."[87] (emphasis added)

In this specific instance, factical freedom lacks the strategic calculus of necessary killing which would secure its freedom and differentiate its killing from mere murder.

This lack is, however, the well-spring of its complex and most powerful political desire, the desire not only to capitalise instrumentally on the event of its very own eventalness but to relive it also of the guilt imposed by its necessary killing. The Machiavellian moment is not only therefore strategic, significatory and aporetic. To realise one's power, while expiating oneself of the guilt associated with the violence necessary

to it, effects a conjuncture which is as much auspicious as it is decisional. The Machiavellian moment of factical freedom is therefore also kairological.

Without a strategic calculus of necessary killing equal to the task of teaching it how much killing is enough to continuously renew the promise of freedom, modern freedom founders in its own murderous adventure. What it requires as a condition of its very operationality is precisely what it can neither fashion nor discover without invoking the divine; a power which not only prevails, but also expiates as it does so. *Pace* Carl Schmitt, and others, the theological absolutism of Christian divinity upon whose model this necessity must ultimately draw is not only all powerful; it also has the power to forgive sin and expiate guilt which the freedom to make law entails. In this instance, the guilt associated with necessary killing in want of that strategic calculus which would teach factical killing how much killing was enough; the guilt, in short, of the strategic aporia of the Machiavellian moment itself. For all it proclaims itself religiously sceptical, and politically secular, therefore, modern freedom invokes the all-powerful expiating force of the sacred in the process of enacting its necessary killing, not simply to prevail but to prevail legitimately; expiating the guilt of killing without sufficient reason because no such reason is ultimately available to it. Here we approach the question of how 'divinity' continues to operate as an integral part of the strategic aporia of the Machiavellian moment.

Kairological

"...what we take hold of when we seize kairos is not another time, but a contracted and abridged chronos." (Agamben, The Time That Remains: 69)

In an "Afterword" written for a new edition of the *Machiavellian Moment* almost thirty years after the book's initial publication, John Pocock gave more attention to the idea of a 'moment' than he had in his original text. In fact he identified several different ways in which the concept of 'moment' was deployed and might be further deployed. Elucidating the concept of moment, however, raises more questions about the strategic and aporetic character of the Machiavellian inheritance of the Atlantic tradition than Pocock addresses. We have to go through and beyond Pocock to get to them, and, by this means, to the last two points of my argument concerning the kairological nature of that moment and its characteristic appeal to 'divine violence'.

The first understanding of moment Pocock tells us is the original or what he calls, "the historic 'moment' at which Machiavelli appeared and impinged upon thinking about politics."[88] A second is the methodological concept of moment characteristic of the Cambridge School of political thought, which advocates "the return of texts to the contexts in which they were first written."[89] A third moment extends this methodological application of moment to the mobility of texts in time: "the fortunes of texts, and the discourses they may be said to have conveyed as they travel from one context to another," specifically the fate of Machiavellian texts as they moved, "from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century and from Florence to England, Scotland and Revolutionary America."[90] None of these moments especially concern my argument.

A fourth account of moment, however, and the point at which Pocock's analysis begins fruitfully to exceed the historical confines he nonetheless tries to set for it, derives from what he calls the two "ideal" moments indicated by Machiavelli's writings: "the moment at which the formation or foundation of a 'republic' appears possible"; and, "the moment at which its formation is seen to be precarious," entailing a "crisis in the history to which it belongs."[91] These turn out to be a single moment, "The 'Machiavellian moment' as that in which the republic is involved in historical tensions or contradictions which it either generates or encounters."[92] Pocock then provides a succinct account of the aporetic character of this moment: "Here we might say, was the original 'Machiavellian moment'; the free republic set itself problems it might not be able to solve."[93] But there is an additional quality to this Machiavellian moment. Pocock touches upon it when recognising 'something primal' about the character of *virtus* and, *a fortiori,* also of *virtù*.[94]

In this elaboration of 'moment', Pocock himself thus takes us beyond the idea that the Machiavellian moment is a simply an historical moment. Everything Machiavelli says, and everything incidentally that Pocock also says, establishes that there is no *telos* to history, and no dialectic at work within it, access to whose logic would guarantee the success of strategic interventions into the course of time. The

Machiavellian moment is therefore not simply an historical moment, chronological or dialectical, since, as Pocock observes, it is also, for Pocock at least, an 'ideal' moment. It refers to an account of what it is to exist, and what is entailed by existing, in which there is always already an excess of existence as such over particular historical forms of existence; the unaccountable giveness of time and its taking place historically. Strategic and aporetic, in which the aporia contains the very promise that, in Beardsworth's terms, there is a future to come, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is ultimately not only a strategic and aporetic, it is also a kairological moment.[95]

The French historian, Monique Trédé, lays out in great detail the various senses of the term *kairos* that emerge from the time of Homer to end of the 4th century B.C., and their employment in both rhetoric and politics.[96] She carefully analyses, in particular, the political sense of the *kairos* as that moment of opportunity, decision and promise which must be seized by timely strategic interventions characteristic of the practices of rhetoric, medicine and politics alike. As Pierre Aubenque also put it, *kairos* is, "the moment when the course of time, insufficiently directed, seems as if to hesitate and vacillate, for the good as well as for the bad of man,"[97]

It was no coincidence that *kairos* was especially associated with rhetoric and with medicine in the ancient world, for it was concerned with reading signs in order to fashion timely interventions. It called for a symptomology of audiences in rhetoric, as much as it called for a symptomology of the body in medicine. The same also obtained in its application to politics and war. In Greek the *strategos* was the one who held the sign which men followed in battle.[98] Thucydides similarly described *kairos* as a situation which elicits political and military leaders to act at a strategic or appropriate time in order to achieve the optimum result. The *kairos*, then, understood as that right time to act or to make political decisions, consists in both the perceiving and the seizing of the moment.[99] *Kairos* nonetheless also assumed a powerful Judeo-Christian inflection. That inflection emphasised the promise which also lies within the kairological moment.[100] This promissory inflection is powerfully at work within the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom.

A spatio-temporal event of time without warrant, *kairos* is not (simply) chronological and it is not dialectical, but neither is it an expression of time as duration.[101] In its persistent recurrent eventalness, kairological time is a kind of 'now' time, a suspension of time in expectation of a future always to come. In as much as it requires that the ways in which we live are fashioned by the requirement to live in anticipation appropriately of it, *kairos* too demands its own related form of governance.[102] The time of the instant, indeed of time itself as the 'time that remains', kairological time is the eternal return of the same recurrent moment in which human being must assume its factical freedom and engage the mis-fortune offered by its indeterminate existence. One is thus always in the position of deciding and of being decided in the kairological time of factical freedom.

Something else is, therefore, going on here. The Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom not only necessitates strategic decision. It not only poses an inescapable condition and an irresolvable problem as well. And, it is not simply the fact of its lack – the impossibility of a strategic calculus of necessary killing - which propels its political desire. If it were only a strategically aporetic moment its problem would be epistemological; lack of the strategic competence to resolve its predicament. However, its lack is not the impossibility of secure knowing.[103] To be sure, there is a 'not knowing', or to be precise an impossibility of secure knowing. But structure of the lack which propels the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is ultimately not epistemological. It is not, simply, the absence of secure knowing.

Factical freedom is, in addition, an auspicious moment, because factical freedom is not only always yet to come, it is a yet to come in which the power that will prevail prevails not only over other powers but does so in expiation also of the guilt associated with the exercise of the violence of that power itself. Strategic and aporetic, the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is therefore also, and most definitively, a kairological moment. Hence, the lack which drives the strategic and aporetic character of the Machiavellian moment of modern freedom is 'promissory'. It is precisely this promissory auspiciousness which makes the event of factical freedom – its very temporality - messianic.[104] More to the point, however, such a moment requires its appropriate mode (*modi*) of governance. The object of *vivere civile*, the very cult of the civic *virtù* of the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is ultimately to secure Machiavellian man for the coming of factical freedom.

The promise is not simply that it is possible to be free in this factical way. Much more than factical freedom ultimately also depends upon factical freedom. What is always already at stake in the promissory economy of the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom is not only the future **of** factical freedom, it is the future **as** factical freedom. For the promise of factical freedom is that only factical freedom can deliver the future: that the future arrives through the factically free. For good reason, then, the messianic promise of the *kairos* of the Machiavellian moment requires that the people remain constantly worthy of the event of factical freedom. If they do not, then the very opening of the world itself is endangered.

Let us be clear. The messianic moment, is not the Messiah. No one comes. No one has come. No one will come; necessarily so. In the Machiavellian moment of modern factical freedom there is only political becoming; the crisis condition of the emergency of guiltless emergence in which the politics of freedom must continuously revolutionise its own re-formation by returning to its radically contingent foundation in the rule of no-rule, evental time, or founder. What kind of force is then required for factical freedom to discharge this historic mission?

Divine Violence

"Necessary wars are just wars, and when there is no other hope except in arms, they too become holy."
(Livy, quoted in, The Prince, 88n.)

Machiavelli's realism notoriously expels God from the affairs of the state. His interest in religion is evidently conditioned by his preoccupation with what empowers political action and strengthens civic *virtù*.[105] Commentators miss the point of the divine in Machiavelli's political thought, as much as they do in our own, however, when they pose the issue in terms of the sociological relation of politics to religion.

Religion, as sociological phenomenon, is precisely not the point. Citing Livy, in his appeal to Lorenzo de' Medici to unite Italy, Machiavelli appears ultimately to intuit that factical freedom must somehow therefore also become holy in the aporia of its strategic necessity if it is not to be lampooned as murderous farce. Indeed must become messianic in its call for the transformation which expiates as it prevails; the double move which defines and distinguishes the saved. The point is instead, then, the religious structure of the Machiavellian moment. To be precise: how its necessity obliges it to become holy. It becomes holy in the necessity of enacting a strategic aporia which it cannot resolve while seeking to realise an emancipatory promise that it cannot escape.

Since neither God, telos nor dialectic is available to do the job, the violent debt incurred by self-enactment must redeem itself through self-enactment. It must itself become divinely violent; for only divine violence is simultaneously both omnipotent and expiatory. Seeking to redeem the emancipatory promise of freedom as self-emergent historical becoming in evental time - guiltless overcoming - factical freedom ingests the godhead; divine violence, "pure power over all life for the sake of the living," [106] The expiating violence of such divine violence is similarly, also, that of self-sacrifice.[107] The factically free are obliged to die for factical freedom in order not only to be free, but to expiate the guilt of having to be so.

Conclusion

"Philosophy's sole aim is to become worthy of the event."
(Deleuze)

As Althusser's brilliant reflections in *Machiavelli and Us* first indicated, the freedom of the event which Althusser first detects in the Florentine remains a continuing source of inspiration for many contemporary political thinkers who seek to revivify the Machiavellian moment of republican freedom as a means also of challenging the global violence of the military and commercial systems which now dominate its contemporary Atlantic expression.[108] At issue in such critical responses to the deeply derelicted state of the Machiavellian moment today is however the aporetic violence of evental freedom itself. For critical thinkers run the danger of eliding the problematic of violence, with which the 'event' of factical freedom is irredeemably contaminated, when seeking to renew the emancipatory promise which it offers. This suspicion prompts caution in drawing on Althusser, Badiou, Ranciére, Nancy, Agamben, and Deleuze,

among others, when appealing to the emancipatory promise of time as event in pursuit of a liberationary politics.[109] For what Machiavelli makes plain, not only in *The Prince* but throughout *The Discourses, The History of Florence* and *The Art of War* as well, is that cruelty well-used is the *sine qua non* of factical freedom.

Variously depicted as scientific manual or revolutionary manifesto, we can thus interpret *The Prince,* especially, as first interrogating the irresolvable state of emergency of freedom as continuous emergence which characterises the politically modern; an emergency of emergence which is as religious as it is political.[110] In as much as Machiavelli offers the first account of the modern project of founding political freedom, of constituting the republic as political form in the aporetic facticity of its historical condition, he is not however instituting grounds for a state of emergency in the ways that Schmitt and Agamben have done, as a function of sovereign power and its necessary suspension of the law.[111] The return to origins which renews political freedom in Machiavelli is a return to the aporetic condition of the radical contingency of the evental time first said to inaugurate it. The state of emergency here is aleatory materialism; the emergent emergency of factical freedom itself.

Once institutional religion became subordinate to the state, an understanding of grace lost and conscience fatally attenuated in its privatisation, factical freedom was thus free to rampage globally as an imperialising cult of 'civic' power. [112] Subverting its very own moral and political precepts of a civic life enacting itself through republican *virtù,* in the American Republic especially, the Machiavellian moment of the Atlantic world is now characterised by the endlessly strategising rule of techno-scientific, capitalistic, media and military oligarchies whose very excess acts-out a Bataillean political economy of violent expenditure rather than a classical political economy of republican prudence.[113]

Aporias, like that of the Machiavellian moment, therefore take place. They are not abstract. They are acted-out. Acted-out in performative figures of political speech is the way in which they come to presence and constitute a world. They circumscribe a grid of political intelligibility and comprise a tropology as well as a topology of political life. Such a terrain of political self-enactment is as mobile as it is material, and it ramifies. For all it requires a strategic calculus of necessary killing, however, it is not possible for factical freedom therefore to determine how much killing is enough, politically, to resolve the emergency of its emergence. Its lethality thus mounts as its return to the promissory facticity of its freedom raises the political stakes by demanding new capacities to kill beyond even the industrial proportions acquired during the course of the 20th century. When it thus resorts to the invocation of divine violence, in the way that its military strategic discourse as well as its electoral and policy rhetoric, especially, now do, factical freedom betrays the very emancipatory promise for which it kills. So enthralled do 'we' seem to have become by the civic promise of the Machiavellian moment, however, that we have hardly begun to address, let alone develop effective analytical mechanisms for interrogating, the abiding religiosity and cultic violence which characterises its aleatory materialism most.[114]

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NOTES

[1] I am deeply indebted, as ever, to the inspiration and encouragement of my colleague Paul Fletcher. My thanks also to Richard Beardsworth, Peter Burgess, Melinda Cooper, Paolo Palladino and Julian Reid who read drafts of this essay, and to Michael Shapiro with whose support and guidance I ultimately kicked it into shape. I also wish to thank Miguel Vatter, Samuel Weber and Vanessa Lemm for their formative discussions during a conference in Santiago Chile in March 2008. Thanks also to *Theoria* at St Andrews

University, Scotland with whose lively members these ideas were originally the subject of debate. Finally, I wish to thank the anonymous reviewer for *Theory and Event*. The reviewer's report was a model of critical and scholarly engagement. Despite its continuing short-comings, the essay has been materially improved in the struggle to respond to the reviewer's comments.

[2] Jacques Derrida, *Rogues*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005, p. xiv.

[3] Luis Althusser, *Machiavelli and Us*, (London: Verso, 1990).

[4] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005, p. 17.

[5] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2005, p. 27.

[6]It is in fact equally evident that Schmitt knows that it does not come unsigned.. In references too numerous to cite here Schmitt recognises that the existential enmity he regards as foundational to the political is not only historical but also significatory; it can also be made by those in a state against the state thereby siding with enemies outwith the state.

[7] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology*, p. 36.

[8] John Pocock would however disagree. But that is because he allows the modern to be identified with *raison d'etat* and sovereignty. See, Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), "Afterword," p. 563. I do not. I see it grounded in the factical freedom of evental time and the aporetic strategic predicament posed by its kairological character. See below.

[9] Krzysztof Ziarek, *The Historicity of Experience: Modernity, The Avant-Garde, and the Event*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2002) p. 13.

[10] The Machiavellian moment of modern freedom is nothing if not preoccupied with politics as potency. For that reason I continue to speak in terms of 'man'. The choice is deliberate. It draws constant attention to the intensely gendered and sexual mode or 'manners' of modern freedom.

[11] Giulio Ferroni, "'Transformation' and 'Adaptation' in Machiavelli's *Mandragola*," in Albert Russell Ascoli and Victoria Kahn, eds., *Machiavelli and the Discourse of Literature*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), pp. 81-116.

[12] Albert Russell Ascoli and Victoria Kahn, eds., *Machiavelli and the Discourse of Literature*; Kahn, *Machiavellian Rhetoric. From Counter Reformation to Milton*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and, Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence and Scepticism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[13] The Conceot of the Political, p. 46.

[14] Martin Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), p.7. It would of course be anachronistic to project Heidegger's *Dasein* analytic back on to Machiavelli. Yet Heidegger's account of factical life as, "ruthlessly dragged back to itself and relentlessly thrown back upon itself," (14) powerfully recalls not only Machiavelli's understanding of human existence but in a certain sense also that 'self-assertion' to which Blumenberg attributes the legitimacy of the modern age as a whole: *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986). The 'authenticity' of Heidegger's *Being and Time,* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), is as different, however, from Machiavellian *virtù,* as it is from Blumenberg's self assertion. But it may not go too far to say that all three are renditions of what follows when the cockpit of existence – Derrida thinks *Khōra* - is understood eventally rather than divinely. Jacques Derrida, *On The Name*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[15] It will become evident, however, that the inspiration of Vatter's Machiavelli is inspiration to the 'auseinandersetzung' which follows. See, also, Martin Heidegger, *Ontology - The Hermeneutics of Facticity*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999); and, *Being and Time*. Jean-Luc Marion refers to 'the event' as, "the always already of facticity," and, "the right now of its occurrence." See, *In Excess. Studies in Saturated Phenomena*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002) p.36. As with "event", however, so also with "facticity" as well, these are less commonly agreed terms of art in continental thought than problematics around which it revolves in dispute. Consider Derrida's more enigmatic observation: "an event, if I understand it right...would have the form of a seal, as if, witness without witness, it were committed to keeping a secret..." Jacques Derrida, *On the Name*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), p. 60. Miguel Vatter is thus indebted philosophically to these debates while employing them in his own unique way in*, Between Form and Event: Machiavelli's Theory of Political Freedom*, (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000).

[16] The correlation of contingency and necessity has a history. For the ancient account, see, Jules Vuillemin, *Necessity or Contingency: The Master Argument*, (Stanford: CSLI, 1996).

[17] *History of Florence*, p. 811.

[18] "[R]epublican humanism...was fundamentally concerned with the animation of moral personality in civic action," *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 518. As Pocock also observes: in his later years Machiavelli weaves, "...his theories of military organisation more and more closely into his theories of citizenship and civic virtue." *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 124.

[19] "...faced the dilemma, born of its finitude, that it could escape neither expansion nor the corruption that followed expansion." *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 524

[20] Mikael Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 74.

[21] As of course is the contrary celebration of republican virility: which is precisely the way to read neo-conservative 'ass-kicking' imperial homilies contrasting American *virtù* with European effeminacy such as that provided by Robert Kagan's in his aptly tiled, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*, (New York: Knopf, 2003). Ignoring its title, for a more sober contemporary analysis of American imperialism see Michael Cox, "The Empire's Back in Town: Or America's Imperial Temptation Again," http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/LSEPublicLecturesAndEvents/pdf/20030602t1717z001.pdf accessed 25 September 2007.

[22] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, "Afterword," p. 560.

[23] Pocock says, "I see 'virtue' and 'right' not as incompatible but as irreducible." "Afterword," P. 561.

[24] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 557.

[25] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 558.

[26] Echoes here also of Heidegger's, *Being and Time,* but Machiavelli's account of evental time is not that of Heidegger's destinal sending of Being. Pocock puts it this way: "a vital component of republican theory – **and once this had come upon the scene, if no earlier, of all political theory** – consisted of ideas about time, about the occurrence of contingent events of which time was the dimension, and about the intelligibility of the sequences (it is as yet too soon to say processes) of particular happenings that made up what we should call history." *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 3, (emphasis added).

[27] Max Horkheimer, "Beginnings of the Bourgeois Philosophy of History," in, *Between Philosophy and Social Science. Selected Early Writings*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), p. 317.

[28] There is no more sustained or sophisticated account of these point than that provided by Vatter, *Between Form and Event*.

[29] **The** refrain of, *Between Form and Event*.

[30] *The Prince*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chapter, ix.

[31] Man as God substitutes for the Judeo-Christian God once the latter is politically killed-off; but God in the form of some singular source of the grant of dominion and governance in common there has to be.

[32] Vatter, *Between Form and Event*. This circulation of time is no longer in other words back to spiritual time but back to the radical contingency of evental time from which factical freedom takes its warrant.

[33] Surprisingly this applies both to Vatter's, *Between Form and Event*, and to John Pocock's magisterial work, *The Machiavellian Moment*.

[34] Vatter throughout, *Between Form and Event*.

[35] *The Prince*, p. 20.

[36] See especially Victoria Khan's wonderful account of the way in which the political discourse of the 17th and 18th century continued to be indebted both to the facticality of freedom and the poiesis of its articulation. Kahn, *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640-1647*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

[37] Michel Foucault, *Naissance de la biopolitique*, Paris: Hautes Etudes Seuil Gallimar, 2004, p. 44.

[38] See, especially introductory essays by Michael Howard, Peter Paret, and Bernard Brodie in, Howard and Paret, eds., *Carl von Clausewitz, On War*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

[39] *The Prince*, viii.

[40]Ron Suskind, "Faith, Certainty and the Presidency of George W. Bush," *New York Times*, 17th October, 2004. Web link: http://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/17/magazine/17BUSH.html?ex=1255665600&en=890a96189e162076&ei=5090&partner=rssuserland (accessed 21 January 2008).

[41] Barbara Spackman, "Politics on the Warpath: *Machiavelli's Art of War*," in Albert Russell Ascoli and Victoria Kahn, eds., *Machiavelli and the Discourse of Literature*, pp. 179-193.

[42] See, for example, the enunciation of 'full spectrum dominance' in *Joint Vision 2020*, US Department of Defense, May 2000, and many other texts on network centric warfare. For an analysis of contemporary

military strategic discourse see, Michael Dillon and Julian Reid, "Global Liberal Governance: Biopolitics, Security and War," *Millennium Journal of International Studies,* vol. 30, no. 1, 2001; and Michael Dillon, Network Society Networkcentric Warfare and the State of Emergency," *Theory Culture and Society*, Vol. 19, No. 4, October, 2002.

[43] Michael Dillon, "Intelligence Incarnate: Martial Corporeality in the Digital Age." Body and Society, vol. 9, no. 4, November, 2002.

[44] See, for example, Edward A Smith, *Effects Based Operations: Applying Network centric Warfare in Peace, Crisis and War*, (Washington: DoD, The Command and Control Research program (CCRP), July 2003); Paul K. Davis, *Effects Based Operations. A Grand Challenge for the Analytic Community*, (Santa Monica, Ca.: RAND, 2001) MR-1477-USJFCOM/AF. (Online version) Available at http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports; and, Maj Z. Jobbagy, *Literature Survey on Effects Based Operations, A PhD Study on Measuring Military Effectiveness*, (The Hague: Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, TNO Physics and Electronics Laboratory, August 2003).

[45] And no more cogently, I would suggest, than in the works of authors like Lauren Berlant, Michael Shapiro and Cindy Weber. See, for example, Lauren Berlant, *Our Monica, Ourselves: Clinton and the Affairs of State, (*New York: New York University Press, 2001); and, *The Queen of America Goes to Washington City: Essays on Sex and Citizenship,* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997). Michael Shapiro, *Cinematic Political Thought*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999); *For Moral Ambiguity: National Culture and the Politics of the Family*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2001); and, *Deforming American Political Thought*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2006). Cindy Weber, *Imagining America at War. Morality, Politics and Film*, (London: Routledge, 2005).

[46] *The Prince*, chapter xxvi

[47] Barbara Spackman, "Machiavelli and Maxims," E.S. Burt and Janie Vanpée, eds. *Reading the Archive: On Texts and Institutions*, (Yale French Studies, 77, 1990) pp. 137-155.

[48] *The Prince*, chapter xxv.

[49] Vatter, *Between Form and Event*, p. 183. This non-coincidence of actions and times is bound to be violent in as much as actions will violate time if they are not in accordance with the times. For the way in which Machiavelli's new account of chance engenders it as *Fortuna,* see Hanna Pitkin, *Fortune is a Woman. Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli*, (Los Angeles: California University Press, 1984).

[50] See, Vuillemin, *Necessity or Contingency. The Master Argument*; and, also, Michael Dillon, "Governing Through Contingency: The Security of Biopolitical Governance," *Political Geography*, doi:10.1016\j.polgeo.2006.08.003.

[51] Vatter is no more scholarly or cogent than in his reading here of how Machiavelli radically revises the classical posing of chance and necessity especially in response to the Master Argument of Diodorus Cronus. See, *Between Form and Event*, Chapter 3, "History as Effect of Free Action: *Fortuna* and *Virtù* in The Prince."

[52] On the ramifications of the archive, see, Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever, A Freudian Impression*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996).

[53] Quoted in, John M. Najemy, "Language and *The Prince*," in Martin Coyle, ed., *Niccolò Machiavelli's The Prince. New Interdisciplinary Essays*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 93. Machiavelli's correspondence with his friend Francesco Vettori also discussed these issues. See Najemy, "Language and the Prince." More generally, see also, Richard Waswo, *Language and Meaning in the Renaissance*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

[54] Marc Shell, *Money, Language and Thought*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1982) p. 2. On the ontology of capital and of money see also: George Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, (New York: Routledge, 1978); Eric Alliez, *Capital Times*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1996); and Godfrey Ingham, *The Nature of Money*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[55] Shell, *Money, Language and Thought*. See also, Geoffrey Poitras, *The Early History of Financial Economics, 1478-1776*, (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2000).

[56] Najemy, "Language and *The Prince*."

[57] Hence the supplement which secures the very possibility of the sign's continuing signification. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976); and, *Writing and Difference*, (London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1981).

[58] Pocock observes that, "..the problem of *fortuna* is a problem in virtue." *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 157. The problem in virtue is thus posed as a problem in character: but no character is without its related intelligence, no intelligence without its epistemology, and no epistemology without its corresponding ontology.

[59] On metistic intelligence see: Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1978); Pierre Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos. Intertextual Readings in the Odyssey and the Iliad*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995); and, Roger Dunkle, 'Nestor, Odysseus and the *Mētis-Biê* Antithesis: The Funeral Games, *Iliad* 23', *The Classical World*, 8, 1989, 1-17; and Dillon, "Intelligence Incarnate."

[60] This precisely what all classical examples of metistic intelligence including the fox, the cuttle fish and Odysseus, otherwise known as *polūmetis,* do. See Detienne and Vernant, *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*; and, Pucci, *Odysseus Polutropos.*

[61] *The Prince*, Chapter xviii. See also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "A Note on Machiavelli," in, *Signs*, (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

[62] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Machiavelli and the Politics of Grace," *Modern Language Notes*, 119, Supplement, 2004, p. 227.

[63] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Machiavelli and the Politics of Grace," p. 227.

[64] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Machiavelli and the Politics of Grace," p. 230.

[65] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Machiavelli and the Politics of Grace," p. 245.

[66] *The Prince*, 257, trans 29; *Discourses*, 76.

[67] Marjorie O'Rourke Boyle, "Machiavelli and the Politics of Grace," p. 245.

[68] *The Prince*, 57-58

[69] Pocock calls the political vocabularies available at that time 'sub-philosophical', *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 4.

[70] *The Prince*, chapter xxvi

[71] Quoted in Vatter, *Between Form and Event*, p. 179; "The formula with which Machiavelli closes his discourse on fortune is unprecedented in the history of political thought. (183) Machiavelli advances the idea that what the times call for, or favor, is precisely to act against the times." (186) "The timely and the untimely are only opposed in appearance." (186)

[72] By which I mean a history that is intelligible as well as a history comprised of human signification. The two do not necessarily go together. Humans may signify but what that amounts to in terms of history could simply be absurd. Hörnqvist provides a detailed summary of the different rhetorical, ideological and, he also says, deconstructive, accounts that have been given of Machiavelli's use of language: *Machiavelli and Empire*, Chapter 1. He himself focuses on rhetoric. The account here draws extensively upon the work of Jacques Derrida.

[73] This argument is detailed in Michael Dillon, "Intelligence Incarnate: Martial Corporeality in the Digital Age." The following extract (p.p. 3-4) summarises the argument made there: "To make sense of a message one must have recognition (noun nóos, verb *noé-o*) of how sema works within its code' (Nagy, 1983: 40). The struggle over the power of signification is thus the struggle over power. Whoever commands the power of signification embodies power. The one who gives the sign is the leader or commander: The leader or commander, in Greek the *strategos*, is the leader or commander precisely because s/he is in charge of the telling of signs: 'Thus, implicit within the language of early Greek poetry is the connection between power, and *sema*, and by extension the association of *sema*, *logoi* and power' (Holmberg, 1997: 29). This fundamental association carries over into the Roman world as well, and made quite explicit there too. The Latin for obey orders is *signa sequi* – literally 'follow the signs'. The word *signum* refers in this context to the military standard carried by the signifier or 'standard-bearer'. *Signum* therefore refers to 'that which is followed'. Thus when the *signum* or 'standard' is planted in the ground by the standard bearer, the soldiers encamp. Roman military order developed this schema to a high degree of precision....In a relational order of things dependent upon telling signs, power as strategy strategises by instituting and commanding a differentiating system of signification." The references in this extract are to the following: Ingrid Holmberg, 'The Sign of MHTIS', *Arethusa* 30(1) 1997: 1–33; and Gregory Nagy, '*Sema* and *Nó-esis*: Some Illustration', *Arethusa* 16(1/2), 1983: 35–55.

[74] "*Virtus* could therefore carry many of the connotations of virility, with which it is etymologically linked; *vir* means man." Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 37.

[75] On the deconstructive force of 'given time' see Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: 1 Counterfeit Money,* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). The theme of time and the given persists of course throughout Derrida's later work especially. See in addition, for example, *The Gift of Death*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992). Of particular influence here are also Derrida, *Aporias*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993); and, *On the Name*, see especially the essay "*Khora*" *op.cit*. See also David Wood, *The Deconstruction of Time*, (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, 1991).
[76] *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 9.
[77] His play "Mandragola" revolves around the very ambivalent and polysemous play of the sign. See, *The Literary Works of Machiavelli*, (trans J. R. Hale), (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).
[78] Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," p. 250.
[79] *Discourses*, 81-82/117
[80] Notwithstanding the way he continually insists on the depravity of Man, Machiavelli's is a temporal ontology of facticity not a political anthropology of fallen nature. Vatter observes: "Human nature in Machiavelli is a function of custom, it is always second nature....a result of certain adaptation between actions and circumstances." *Between Form and Event*, p. 182.
[81] In Clausewitz, *On War,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 1984, "No other human activity is so continuously or universally bound up with chance." (985) Clausewitz sees the inescapable moment of evental undecidability in the "engagement itself", and its corresponding test of moral qualities – "beyond the scope of theory" (185) – in particular those of the 'commander' through his "miracles of execution" (182). "The whole of military activity must therefore relate directly or indirectly to the engagement." Donald Rumsfeld was only reflecting the degree to which contemporary military strategic discourse, ordinarily appealing to science to translate the future into a calculable now, nonetheless also recognises how much its science is an occultic art of divination – "the not knowable".
[82] *The Prince*, p. 87.
[83] *The Machiavellian Moment*, p. 36.
[84] *The Discourses*, Book 3, Discourses, 40-42, "*Salus Populi, Suprema Lex*."
[85] *The Discourses,* Book Three. "Internal Security," Discourse. "28.
[86] What that means is that all political acts, and all political utterances, express – or enact - a view of how things are. They are or invoke statements of the real articulating fundamental presumptions. Ontopolitical means that they fix possibilities, distribute explanatory elements, generate parameters. See, William E. Connolly, *The Ethos of Pluralisation*, (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1995).
[87] Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida and the Political*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 5.
[88] Pocock, "Afterword," *The Machiavellian Moment*, 2003, p. 554.
[89] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 554.
[90] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 554.
[91] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 554.
[92] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 554. I deliberately avoid entering the debate about the Machiavellian moment as an encounter between republican and liberal accounts of freedom. This has petered-out into a truce which accepts that there is a liberal republicanism and republican liberalism. The point is that this debate does not get to the essentials of the Machiavellian moment as an ontological predicament which poses a recurrent historical condition. For an exhaustive summary of the debate, however, see, for example, Alan Gibson, "Ancients, Moderns and Americans: The Republicanism-Liberalism Debate Revisited," *History of Political Thought*, Vol. XXI, No. 2, Summer 2000, pp. 261-307.
[93] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 559.
[94] Pocock, "Afterword," p. 558.
[95] Ronald L Martinez, " Benefit of Absence: Machiavellian Valediction in *Clizia*," in, Albert Russell Ascoli and Victoria Kahn, eds., *Machiavelli and the Discourse of Literature*, p. 135.
[96] Monique Trédé, *Kairos: L'à-propos et l'occasion (Le mot et la notion d'Homère à la fin du IVe siècle vant J.C.)* (Paris: Éditions Klincksieck, 1992).
[97] Pierre Aubenque, *Le Prudence chez Aristotle,* quoted in Éric Alliez, *Capital Times,* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press), 1996, p. 244n. Emphasis added.
[98] Michael Dillon, "Intelligence Incarnate: Martial Corporeality in the Digital Age."
[99] Antonio Calcagagno, *Badiou and Derrida: Politics, Events and Their Time*, (London: Continuum Books, 2007). See also, Eric Charles White, *Kaironomia. On the Will to Invent*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987).

[100] See, for example, Heidegger's reading of St Paul in, 'Phenomenological Explanation of the First Letter to the Thessalonians', *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*. See also, Laurence Hemming, *Heidegger's Atheism. The Refusal of a Theological Voice*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: Notre Dame University Press, 2003).
[101] Heidegger, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, p. 63.
[102] No wonder that, beginning with Heidegger, continental philosophers subscribing to a philosophy of the event ultimately turn to St Paul when seeking to interrogate what kairological time may demand of us. See, for example, Heidegger, "Phenomenological Explication of the First Letter to the Thessalonians," in, *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*; Giorgio Agamben, *The Time that Remains. A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); and, Alain Badiou, *St Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, (Stanford University Press, 2003).
[103] In observations too numerous to cite Derrida continuously reminds us of course that this impossibility is the locus also of possibility.
[104] On the structure of the promise, and in particular its messianic character see Jacques Derrida, especially *On The Name*, (Stanford: Stanford University, 1995); *Spectres of Marx. The State of Debt and the Work of Mourning*, (London: Routledge, 1994); and, "Force of Law," in Drucilla Cornell, ed. *Deconstruction and the Possibility of Justice*, (New York: Routledge, 1992). Derrida's entire approach to the aporia of evental time and its messianic promise is, of course, precisely not strategic.
[105] See especially, for example, "Book One [Discourses 11-15] Religion" in, *The Discourses*, (London: Penguin, 1970). The question of Machiavelli and religion has been debated since the publication of his work. Amongst contemporary commentators, Leo Strauss insists he is a skeptical atheist: *Thoughts on Machiavelli*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1978). Sebastian De Grazia claims he is a Christian: *Machiavelli in Hell*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989). Anthony Parel explores his interest in astrology: *The Machiavellian Cosmos*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992). Peter Donaldson notes his interest in the initiatory mysteries of sacred kingship: *Machiavelli and the Mystery of State*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988). See also Steven Marx, "Moses and Machiavellism," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, vol. 65, no. 3, 1997.
[106] Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in, Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings, eds., *Walter Benjamin Selected Writings. Volume 1, 1913-1926*, (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 250. See also, Jacques Derrida, "Force of Law".
[107] See Pocock, "Fortune, Venice and Apocalypse," in, *The Machiavellian Moment*. Discussing Bruni's. *De Militia*, Pocock observes: "...he thinks of arms as the *ultima ratio* whereby the citizen exposes his life in defense of the state and at the same time ensures the decision to expose it cannot be taken without him." (90).
[108] Althusser, *Machiavelli and Us*. For a recent exchange on Althusser which bears on these reflections see Miguel Vatter, "Machiavelli after Marx: The Self-Overcoming of Marxism in the late Althusser," *Theory and Event*, 7:4, 2004 and Warren Montag, "Politics Transcendent or Immanent?: A Response to Miguel Vatter's 'Machiavelli after Marx'," *Theory and Event*, 7:4, 2004.
[109] This critical reflection on modern freedom requires a more extensive exploration of modern freedom's relation to philosophies of the event than can be encompassed here. There are many philosophies of the event. Most notable today are those derived from Lucretius and Spinoza, including that of Marx, and those derived from Heidegger. There are, however, philosophies of the event which also excite conservative rather than radical politics. This would go for the English political philosopher Michael Oakeshott, for example (*What is History and Other Essays*, Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004)), and perhaps also for the American Alfred North Whitehead (*The Concept of Nature*, New York: Prometheus Books, 2004). Among its most distinguished contemporary and radical exponents must be included not only Deleuze and Badiou but also Derrida.
[110] Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision. Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Theory*, (Expanded Edition, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 204). Luis Althusser analyses *The Prince* as Manifesto in, *Machiavelli and Us*.
[111] Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996); Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Sovereign Power and bare Life*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).
[112] Towards the end of Notebook 1, Gramsci observed that, the, "[Church] is no longer an ideological world power but only a subaltern force." Quoted in Marcus Green, "Gramsci Cannot Speak: Presentations and Interpretations of Gramsci's Concept of the Subaltern," *Rethinking Marxism*, vol. 14, no. 3, Fall 2002, p. 2.

[113] Georges Bataille, *Accursed Share. Volume 1 Consumption*. (New York: Zone Books, 1989). *Accursed Share, Volumes 2 and 3, The History Eroticism. Sovereignty*, (New York: Zone Books, 1993).

[114] There are significant exceptions to this complaint. They are to be found especially amongst those revisiting the problematic of political theology. See in particular, the work of Hent de Vries, *Minimal Theologies: Critiques of Secular Reason in Adorno and Levinas*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005); *Religion and Violence. Philosophical Perspectives from Kant to Derrida*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002); and Hent de Vries and Lawrence Sullivan, eds., *Political Theologies. Public Religion in a Post Secular World*, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006). See also, John Lippitt and John Urpeth, *Nietzsche and the Divine*, (Manchester: Clinamen press, 2000); Ilse Bulhof and Laurens ten Kate, *Flight of the Gods: Philosophical perspectives on Negative Theology*, New York: Fordham University Press, 2000); Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); and, Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).