

artistic, even alchemical writing, can one find instrumental rationality? Or better, can we make room in this rich thought for the disembodied, detached and abstract functioning of this kind of reason?

Let us close with a quick look at the philosophical implications of these findings. Given the claims and commitments of his position, Machiavelli's view of truth bespeaks a tradition of rhetoric that harkens back to the days of Isocrates' Athens and Cicero's Rome. For the Romans, the true, the just, the beautiful are all products of a consensus at a given moment. In Machiavelli's writing, we see truth being intrinsically tied to concrete, public situations and singular agents. For example, words from Syracuse's criminal ruler, Agathocles, do not produce the same effect as those from Caesar Borgia - they are not true. Speaking of *virtù*, we see Machiavelli forwarding the ancient pagan notion, now long forgotten, that *truth is in action, it is in excellence*. In this view, *when one wins, there is something true in one's actions* and by implication, when one loses, there is something false. This raises important questions about the meaning of truth and value: of rationality itself.

There are anthropological, epistemological and aesthetic dimensions to this view at the center of Machiavelli's thought. Perhaps they can be gathered together in a concept like *style*. A concept popular in the Renaissance, to speak of style, was not to engage in the irrational or obscure. To think along the lines of style was not to abandon any pretense to theory. But style does operate in a philosophical function that is unlike the tools of thought we use today. Style is not predictive for it concerns itself with the individual. *It tracks the movement of form from indeterminacy to performance*. It tracks talent. When seeking to produce an aesthetic event, one enters a discourse to create an expression. This style is *personal* but since it emerges from elements and a context that are always already there, a tradition, it is at once *shared*. In this light, such a performance is really the relationship an agent bears to a horizon of sense. There is invention, risk as well as participation and hence, seduction. In Machiavelli's thought, the flair of action that is *virtù* can be understood as the workings of style - the beauty of the body sewn in a tapestry of text. As such, Machiavelli's writing is Renaissance Humanist almost by definition.

The discussion as to Machiavelli's novelty, influence, and how to classify his thought, will be ongoing. Yet, given what we have discovered in this thesis, perhaps we can bring together our finding with this continuing ambiguity and metaphorically say that Machiavelli is the Kepler of politics. Like Kepler, he opened the way for a new discipline, even a new period but chose to see this novelty as a way of working a recognized tradition. He anchored his invention firmly in the literary, cosmological and astrological discourse of the Renaissance. Machiavelli did not fail in the constitution of his project. If his project possessed a scientific character, this same fact, as we have seen, would deny its very possibility. *Virtù*, his anthropological and epistemological monism is a rich current of thought. Until very lately, it has been wholly unexplored by Philosophy. Ultimately, to investigate what is meant by *virtù* is to see that a thought founded upon aesthetic commitments is wholly absent from, indeed wholly opposed to, the values and parameters of modernity. It will have to be explicitly rejected in order that the modern subject, citizenship and State be instituted. A choice of discourses must be made, and always it entails a loss. Yet, to place Machiavelli, the Humanist, alongside the *episteme* of modernity is not only to better understand this festive but ignored period of writing, it also places the *singularity* of this author in relief. It reveals, as Louis Althusser says, the *unassimilable* character of Machiavelli's thought (Althusser, 1988, 469).

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- Althusser, Louis. For Marx trans. (Brewster). London: Verso. 1977. In this book lies Althusser's paper, "Marxism and Humanism". From out of this paper, I make conceptual use of Althusser's idea of "interpellation", his materialist views on language and his notion that the "human" is something that emerges out of a system of discourse.
- . "Machiavelli's Solitude." Economy and Society trans. (Brewster). 17 (1988): 468-88. This article, relevant to my study, examines the material conditions of Machiavelli's discourse and indeed his patriotism. In passing, Althusser affirms the embodiment through discourse at the center of Machiavelli's thought.
- Arendt, Hannah. The Human Condition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1958. Arendt's classic text serves in my thesis with her analysis of the political organization of the Classic world: in particular the Greco-Roman distinction between public and private and epic ethics.
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- Guicciardini, Francesco. History of Italy and History of Florence, trans. (Grayson). New York: Twayne Publishers, 1964. Guicciardini's two "Histories" serve as close foils to Machiavelli's Discorsi.
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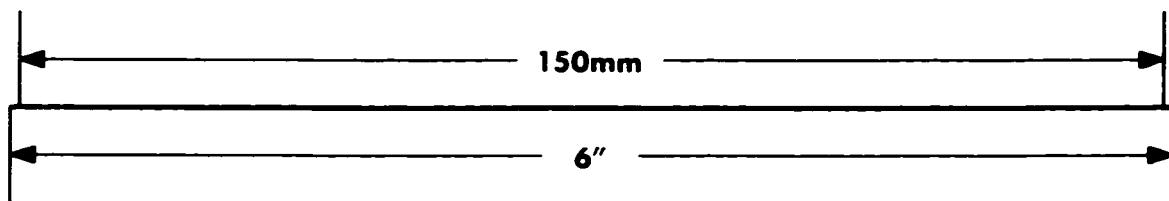
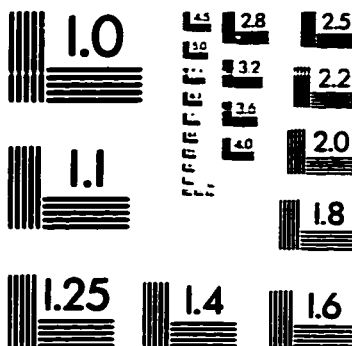
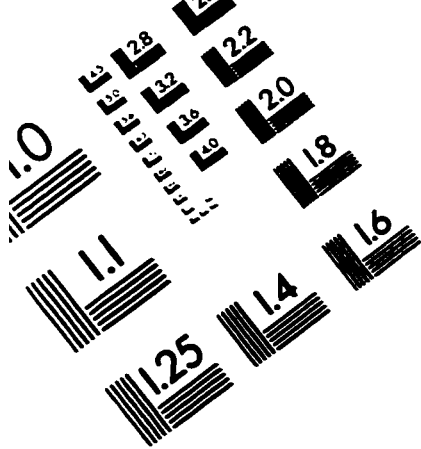
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