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The Virtue of Vice: A Defence of Hypocrisy in Democratic Politics

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Abstract

This essay suggests that Machiavelli's claim that the moral vice of hypocrisy is inescapable in politics constitutes a real issue for democratic politics today. Indeed, it concludes that democratic societies are implicated in creating the impetus to hypocritical behaviour. The essay questions the prevalent conviction that a liberal democratic polity should be premised on transparency and candour, not on hypocritical manipulation – a conviction which is paradoxically shared by the dirty hands thesis which is mostly owed to Michael Walzer and which purportedly takes Machiavelli's insights on the moral messiness of politics seriously. Attempts to deny the necessity of political hypocrisy misconstrue the realities of democratic politics – the messy context in which politicians operate and what is distinctive of political friendships. Democratic politicians operate in a context riddled with conflict and dependence which renders hypocrisy a necessary political virtue and one of the strings that hold together a virtuous political life.

Keywords Machiavelli, hypocrisy, political virtue, moral conflict, democratic politics, dirty hands

'It is necessary to a prince', Machiavelli wrote, to learn how 'not to be good': practitioners of politics should cultivate and exhibit certain ordinary vices – the cruelty of the lion and the dissimulation and hypocrisy of the fox (1998, XV: 61; XVIII – XIX). Whilst philosophers have expended a lot of energy trying to explain, vindicate or admonish Machiavelli's general teachings, they have paid little attention to his particular insights on political hypocrisy and their relevance to our seemingly mundane democratic politics¹.

Yet, hypocrisy is ubiquitous in politics. The problem, however, is not just that hypocrites abound. The question is to discern what to do with hypocrisy and with those who practice it. For some philosophers and commentators, this question welcomes a pithy answer. 'Hypocrisy', Judith Shklar observes, 'remains the only unforgivable sin, especially among

¹ There are exceptions to this, but even those who defend political hypocrisy in contemporary democracies (i.e. Shklar and Runciman) distance themselves from Machiavelli's thought. Shklar (1984) perceives Machiavelli as an enemy of liberal democracy and Runciman (2008) suggests that it is easier to capture the problem of hypocrisy by drawing on the resources of liberalism. My reading of Machiavelli suggests that his thought has more affinities with Shklar's and Runciman's liberal realism than they assume. Amongst the few philosophers who read Machiavelli along these lines is Ruth Grant (1997). However, unlike Grant, I argue that Machiavelli's defence of hypocrisy is grounded on his conception of politics as a distinct practice and way of life, with its own goods and standards of excellence. Moreover, contra Grant, adequately capturing political reality does not just entail acknowledging the existence of plural, conflicting interests but also the existence of a plurality of antagonistic and incompatible conceptions of the good and aspirations. It is because of this deep pluralism, I claim, that hypocrisy is inescapable. Finally, unlike Grant, I maintain that hypocrisy, whilst uncongenial to moral integrity or the consistency of the saint, forms a crucial aspect of political integrity – the glue that holds together a virtuous political life.

those who can overlook and explain almost every vice' (1984: 45). The desire to extirpate hypocrisy, David Runciman adds, features even in 'the most sophisticated discussions of its role in liberal politics' (2008: 196). These remarks, one could retort, are inflated with exaggeration. Yet, some of the recent public reactions to the hypocrisies of our politicians suggest otherwise. For instance, when Bill Clinton was reported having illicit sex, much of the public outrage was not directed against the cheating of his spouse: 'it was the hypocrisy that bothered them' (Waldron, 2011: 13 – 14). This aversion to hypocrisy is not just displayed by moralists who conceptualize democratic politics in too idealistic terms. Rather, it is even shared by some of their critics who profess to adopt a more realistic view of the moral messiness of politics – the proponents of the dirty hands thesis who purportedly build on Machiavelli's teachings². Whilst the dirty hands thesis claims to embrace Machiavelli's recognition that political excellence might require the practice of certain vices, such as lying and even cruelty, it is paradoxically censorious over the practice of hypocrisy in democratic politics – or, at least, some of its core manifestations: the art of concealing one's vices.

This essay suggests that Machiavelli's claim that hypocrisy is inescapable in politics, is not of an abstract, historical interest, but it constitutes a real issue for democratic politics today. Indeed, it concludes that democratic societies are implicated in creating the impetus to hypocritical behaviour. Democratic politicians operate in a messy context which renders hypocrisy a necessary political virtue and one of the strings that hold together a virtuous political life.

Whilst I shall provide a more general consideration of hypocrisy, my defence of it will be fundamentally political³: it is couched on the recognition that making sense of political ethics requires us to conceive of politics as a distinct practice and way of life. Differently put, an adequate account of political ethics should give more autonomy to certain distinctively political concepts: we should consider more carefully the realities of politics, the goods which are intrinsic to a virtuous political life, the context in which politicians operate and the peculiar character of political friendships. It is, in short, certain inalienable features of political life – the struggle for power and the capacity to manoeuvre amidst a messy context characterized by perpetual conflict and dependence – which shape the standards of political

² I use the term dirty hands thesis to refer to Walzer's (1973) and Thompson's (1989) position.

³ I do not deny that hypocrisy might be also displayed by ordinary citizens or that the hypocrisy and dirt of politicians are not shared by democratic citizens, but I focus on professional politicians. On hypocrisy and democratic citizenship, see Bellamy (2010), Shklar (1984), Hollis (1982) and Hatier (2012).

excellence and which render hypocrisy a necessary political virtue and an integral aspect of political integrity. To be clear, I do not deny that hypocrisy poses problems to our politics or that certain manifestations of it are dangerous for democratic politics – for instance, when democratic politicians hypocritically deny the abuse of public funds. Nor do I wish to suggest that democratic politics is impossible. Rather, I wish to carve room for hypocrisy in democratic politics. I want to argue that attempts to deny the necessity and value of political hypocrisy altogether, misconceive democratic politics; they misconstrue the standards of political excellence because they rest on an unsatisfactory idealization of the context in which democratic politicians operate and the nature of political friendships.

My argument has crucial implications for the questions of how to conceptualize democratic politics and what it means to lead a virtuous political life in this context. It contributes to the recent claims that we are witnessing a moral crisis in political life – that, the shenanigans and immoralities of our politicians suggest that moral goodness has been displaced from democratic politics and should be, somehow, restored (Bunting, Lent & Vernon, 2010; Osborne, 2005; Sandel, 2010). My defence of hypocrisy suggests that this idealistic vision of democratic politics is inconceivable; the innocent quest to sanitize democratic politics and wriggle free from hypocrisy might have dire political implications. Further, my discussion contributes to the tradition of political realism. As suggested, whilst the appeal of this tradition stems from its rejection of moralism – a moralism which, I argue, also permeates the contemporary dirty hands thesis – political realists have said little on the more positive account of political ethics which emerges from their critiques (Galston, 2010; Horton, 2010). It is not my intention to provide an all-encompassing alternative to moralism here, but the argument I articulate is a nascent, more positive framework of political ethics which takes the grubbiness of politics seriously and which incorporates the realist concerns. In particular, whilst my case for hypocrisy builds on the realist tradition and has affinity with realist defences of this vice in public life (i.e. Shklar, 1984; Runciman, 2008; Grant, 1997), my claim that hypocrisy constitutes the glue that holds together a virtuous political life provides us with a novel insight on the nature of political integrity. Finally, my argument informs debates on the dirty hands problem; it uncovers a neglected divide in the dirty hands tradition: between those who subscribe to the moralistic way of thinking about hypocrisy and democratic politics (Michael Walzer and Dennis Thompson) and philosophers labelled as dirty hands theorists (Stuart Hampshire, Bernard Williams, Richard Bellamy and Martin Hollis) who have a more

realistic understanding of democratic politics – one which takes Machiavelli’s insights on political friendship and conflict seriously.

The discussion proceeds as follows. First, I provide a brief illustration of hypocrisy. Second, I consider in more detail the way in which hypocrisy is typically received in the context of democratic politics, which is paradoxically shared by the dirty hands thesis: the hopeful claim that, at least in theory, democratic politics should be inhospitable to hypocrisy. I shall then upset this claim. I draw on Machiavelli’s insights on the realities of political life and political friendships and project these onto democratic politics. Political friendships are relationships of conflict and dependence: they are forged amongst public figures whose substantive interests and aspirations are plural, conflicting and irreconcilable and who may despise one another. In light of this recognition, I argue that hypocrisy constitutes a ‘lesser vice’, an inevitable by-product of our ordinary democratic practices and the glue that holds together political friendships and a virtuous political life.

Hypocrisy: A Preliminary Consideration

Without doubt, hypocrisy is an elusive concept. It is not my intention to provide an all-encompassing definition of hypocrisy here, nor is it possible to do justice to philosophical debates on how to capture this vice. I merely want to sketch a particular type of hypocrisy which I shall defend as inescapable in democratic politics: Machiavelli’s calculated, cunning hypocrite⁴. I want to begin by highlighting the literal meaning of hypocrisy, which originates in theatre: hypocrisy meant to ‘pretend to be something one is not’ (Szabados & Soifer, 2004). The ancient usage of the term has links with the modern understanding of hypocrisy, insofar as the language of the theatre remains central to our conception of it. It also explains some of the negative connotations the term acquired. For, in real-life, the audience is often unaware of what is being witnessed; individuals who play a part are untrustworthy: they hide behind the mask they wear (Runciman, 2008). Hence, playing a part whilst the audience is unaware of one’s acting is bound to involve some form of deception.

The question which merits scrutiny though, concerns the point of the hypocrite’s deception. The prevalent conception of hypocrisy – which arises from the extension of the term from the theatre to avowals of religiosity by individuals who failed to practice what they preached – is

⁴ Though other manifestations of hypocrisy might exist (i.e. the self-deceived, innocent hypocrite), I focus on the self-conscious, experienced hypocrite.

suggestive. Hypocrisy, according to the Oxford English Dictionary (1901), involves ‘a false appearance of virtue or goodness, with dissimulation of real character’. It is this type of hypocrisy Machiavelli defends in politics. For, whilst Machiavelli contends that a virtuous political life requires certain vices, he simultaneously suggests that a virtuous prince must be able to mimic the moral virtues and publically present himself as ‘all faith, all honesty, all humanity’ (1998, XVIII: 70). To be sure, hypocrisy can include ‘claims to consistency that one cannot sustain, claims to loyalty that one does not possess, claims to identity that one does not hold’ (Runciman, 2008: 8). What unites these manifestations of hypocrisy, though, is that its practitioners construct and publically display a persona which helps them to amass certain goods. This recognition brings to the fore a Machiavellian insight which I explore later on: satisfying certain distinctively political goods – goods which are intrinsic to politics – becomes impossible if the politician does not wear a mask of moral virtue. For, if one cannot and should not be perfectly virtuous in a domain in which moral virtue matters, the accumulation of certain political goods may be impossible without hypocritical dissimulation.

Unlike other forms of dissimulation such as lying – which merely involves a false, short and dry statement advanced with an intention to deceive – what is distinctive of hypocrisy is that it does not just involve incongruence with the truth; the construction of a persona is meant ‘to convey an impression beyond the instant of the lie itself’ (Runciman, 2008: 9). The acting involved in creating a false impression turns on questions of character and is more enduring. The enduring nature of hypocrisy can also be glimpsed by highlighting its relationship with consistency. Even though hypocrisy is related to inconsistency, it is the commitment not to be inconsistent rather than inconsistency per se, that gives rise to hypocrisy – and this, I explain, constitutes one of the reasons why hypocrisy is inescapable in politics. And because hypocrisy involves a theatrical performance, the hypocrite’s acts can be more wide-ranging than those of the liar, whose repertoire of deceitful acts is rather limited. Whilst veracity and hypocrisy are often conceived as opposites (especially by critics of hypocrisy) the putting on of a theatrical act may encompass veracious statements. Consider, for example, Moliere’s *Tartuffe*, where the eponymous character manipulates Orgon by pretending to be a paragon of virtue. The discrepancy between hypocrisy and lying is evident in Tartuffe’s reaction to Damis’s (Orgon’s son) accusation that he is a scoundrel: ‘Yes, brother, I am wicked ... The simple truth is, I’m a worthless creature’ (2001: 6). Tartuffe’s truthful confession that he is a conman does not amount to a genuine, transparent confession (Szabados & Soifer, 2004). Orgon’s reaction, who takes this confession as indicative of Tartuffe’s virtue, is suggestive:

he tries to earn Tartuffe's forgiveness by offering him his fortune. Tartuffe's truthfulness forms part of his plan to appropriate Orgon's wealth; even though Tartuffe's speech is veracious, the appearance of humility constitutes an aspect of his 'performance'.

That hypocrisy is (rightly) seen as the antithesis of innocence or moral goodness is unsurprising. 'The virtuoso of hypocrisy', Shklar writes, 'is an experienced crook with a long criminal record' (1984: 51). An experienced hypocrite is aware of his vices: what lies beneath his mask is clear-eyed. Putting on a theatrical act and exploiting others' trust requires a capacity for manipulation and guile which innocent individuals lack. Nor is it surprising that hypocrisy is often derided as the ultimate vice. For, other vices – lying and cruelty for instance – are easier to detect (Shklar, 1984). Hypocrisy, in contrast, operates in two layers. As gestured following Machiavelli, hypocrisy is not just one of the necessary vices that politicians should cultivate whilst unlearning a portion of their virtue or relinquishing their innocence and exhibit for strategic purposes. It also forms a mechanism for concealing the rest of the vices. And, even though the masquerading of vice as virtue is problematic as it accumulates vice and limits our capacity to detect injustice, it is this function, I argue, which holds together a virtuous political life: the preservation of a moral front enables practitioners of politics, princely and democratic, to cultivate the support necessary for satisfying certain political goods – to marshal on amidst a domain ridden with conflict, in which mutual antipathies, immoralities, betrayals and inconsistencies are inescapable. Before elaborating on this, I shall sketch the typical, moralistic way of thinking about the relationship between hypocrisy and democratic politics.

Hypocrisy and Democratic Politics: Some Contemporary Reflections.

The position I have in mind is underpinned by the hopeful conviction that, in the context of democratic politics, ordinary and political morality can, at least in theory, be reconciled in a perfect and harmonious whole. Differently put, democratic politics is thought to be ethically superior to its alternatives, partly because it renders the vices in general and hypocrisy in particular unnecessary and undesirable. This moralistic vision of democratic politics lurks in the background of discussions of democratic theory (Dovi, 2007; Ramsay, 2000; Shugarman, 2000; Cliffe et al, 2000), examinations of hypocrisy (McKinnon, 1991; Davidson, 2004) and recent attempts to revive moral virtue in political life (Bunting et al, 2010; Sandel, 2010; Osborne, 2005; 2011). At its core lie three arguments which sit well with our understanding of democracy and its value. The first argument postulates that, in democracies, governmental

power – and temptations for its misuse – must be controlled with accurate information. Hypocrisy, because of its affinity with concealment and deception, compromises these values. The second argument postulates that democratic government is a trust: since the people are the source of a government's authority, the latter should be accountable to the former who must be aware of what politicians are doing or intend to do. Hypocrisy violates the relationship between the trustee and people. Finally, such arguments appeal to our ordinary democratic practices – in particular, the rituals of elections. In Peter Osborne's words:

Citizens ... are entitled to be informed about their political choices.... Politicians who lie to voters deprive them of the ability to come to a well-informed decision about how to cast their vote. In so doing, they convert them into dupes (2005: 120).

The point of such rituals, as argued, is to enable citizens to reach an informed judgement and cast their vote; hypocrisy during political campaigns compromises such practices and the value of each citizen's vote. These claims, I should add, are often accompanied by an explicit side-note that the shenanigans advocated by Machiavelli are not just undemocratic; they are also anachronistic. Machiavelli's thought, Maureen Ramsay suggests, is 'inappropriate and outdated in the non-Machiavellian political context of relationships ... within liberal democratic states'⁵ (2000: 159). What is striking, however, is that this conviction is shared by theorists who seek to upset the purity of this picture of democratic politics. The moralistic aspiration to extirpate political hypocrisy is espoused even by those who purport to present a messier, more realistic picture of democratic politics. This puzzling conviction is advanced by the modern dirty hands thesis which is mostly owned to Walzer. It is to the provision of a schematic sketch of that thesis and its insights on hypocrisy in democratic politics I now turn.

Hypocrisy, Democratic Politics and the Dirty Hands Thesis

To suggest that the dirty hands thesis sits well with the abovementioned moralistic conception of democratic politics seems to be a mistake. This is because of the purported lineage of the dirty hands thesis and a certain utopian vision which it is allegedly committed against. The key insight of the dirty hands thesis, Walzer explains, is traced to Machiavelli's recognition that politicians should 'learn how not to be good' (1973: 164). This recognition relates 'not only to the coherence and harmony of the moral universe, but also to the relative ease or

⁵ Defenders of Machiavelli's insights in contemporary politics, Shugarman similarly argues, erroneously presuppose that politics 'has changed little from the lawless, embattled atmosphere of Machiavelli's Italy' (2000: 231).

difficulty—or impossibility – of living a moral life’ (Walzer, 1973: 161). The dirty hands thesis suggests that the belief that morality and politics can coexist in a perfect, harmonious whole constitutes an idealistic delusion: it deforms our fragmented morality and the complex realities of politics. The key claim of that thesis, then, is that it takes the complexity of politics seriously. It acknowledges that, in certain inescapable circumstances, politicians might be required to act immorally and thus dirty their hands. For instance, they may have to lie and condone acts of cruelty.

The affinity between Machiavelli’s thought and the dirty hands thesis is taken for granted (de Wijze, 2005; Shugarman, 2000; Philp, 2007; Hampshire, 1989). Indeed, it might appear that the latter constitutes an expression of Machiavelli’s insights in the democratic context. There exists, however, an overlooked rift between the two – the product of dirty hands theorists’ dissatisfaction with Machiavelli’s account– which is worth emphasizing. For, it raises the question as to whether the dirty hands thesis is, in fact, that different from the moralistic account of democratic politics to which it is often opposed. Machiavelli ‘is suspect’, Walzer says, ‘not because he tells political actors they must get their hands dirty’. Rather, the problem is that Machiavelli’s politician ‘is the sort of man who is unlikely to keep a diary and so we cannot find out what he thinks’. Yet, ‘we do want to know’ Walzer maintains: the democratic community is entitled to an open, transparent revelation of the politician’s dirt (1973: 176). The democratic context, the values of accountability, trust and transparency, should steer the politician to reveal his vices. Hence Walzer’s moral politician whom we, the people, know by his dirty hands: ‘if he were a moral man and nothing else’, Walzer argues, ‘his hands would not be dirty; if he were a politician and nothing else he would pretend that his hands were clean’ (1973: 168). What emerges from the dirty hands thesis, then, is an odd paradox: whilst it purportedly endorses Machiavelli’s recognition that politics, princely or otherwise, requires the practice of certain vices it seems allergic to the vice of hypocrisy in democratic politics.

This peculiar distaste for hypocrisy is not restricted to Walzer’s account; it is also echoed in the earlier writings of Dennis Thompson:

The vices of concealment – deception, secrecy and manipulation – are the most insidious of all ... The possibility of judging dirty handed decisions – at least judging with any claim to democratic authority depends on keeping decisions clean in one respect. The wrongs they effect cannot include concealment that would preclude accountability (1989: 39).

Thus, the dirty hands thesis, which claims to take Machiavelli's insights on the realities of politics and the fragmentation of morality seriously, does not stray from the popular moralistic way of conceiving hypocrisy and its relationship with democratic politics. Hypocrisy, on this view, is unnecessary and undesirable in democracies. The Machiavellian apologist of hypocrisy stands for a different conception of politics, one which is anachronistic and threatening to our democratic arrangements. Hypocrisy is anathema to democratic politics and its practice should be avoided. Or, so it is thought.

In what follows, I shall vindicate Machiavelli's insights on the necessity of political hypocrisy. The popular way of thinking about the relationship between hypocrisy and democratic politics, I argue, displaces the complex realities of democratic politics. It is underpinned by a vision of societal harmony which is inconceivable and which mischaracterizes the messy context in which democratic politicians operate and the peculiarity of political friendships; as such, it also misconstrues the standards of political excellence and what it means to lead a virtuous political life in the contemporary democratic context. Even though hypocrisy poses serious challenges to democratic politics, democratic societies, partially by virtue of some of the values and practices its critics invoke to vilify it, are implicated in creating the impetus to it.

The Political Virtue of Hypocrisy

Machiavelli's case for hypocrisy is premised on the recognition that making sense of political virtue (*virtù*) requires us to approach politics as a distinct way of life –as an on-going activity with its own peculiar demands and standards of excellence⁶. It is on this point I shall build here. Hypocrisy, I argue, is crucial in securing certain distinct political goods (i.e. order, stability, trust and power) and in sustaining a virtuous political life; it constitutes the glue that holds a virtuous political life together as its effective practice enables politicians to rise to power and remain in it.

What I shall additionally emphasize, is that because for Machiavelli, the standards of political excellence arise from within politics, his political ethic in general and defence of hypocrisy in particular go to the heart of the grubby context in which politicians operate and the peculiar nature of political friendships. If it can be illustrated that transparency and candour are not

⁶ Pace Alasdair MacIntyre (2003), questions of character and virtue are central to Machiavelli's thought. Indeed, my reading of Machiavelli has parallels with MacIntyre's (2005) account of practice-based virtues.

always conducive to a virtuous democratic politics, no further justification surrounding the need to cultivate and occasionally exhibit hypocrisy is necessary. For, Machiavelli's defence of hypocrisy, I shall suggest, is also sustained by the recognition that it is a 'lesser' vice: when the alternative to unconditional transparency – which is undesirable and not always possible – is to amass support by exhibiting either the cruelty of the lion or the hypocrisy of the fox, the latter is often more feasible and alluring than the former. The necessity of hypocrisy however, depends on the impossibility and undesirability of perfectly transparent democratic politics in the first place – something which moralistic accounts of democratic politics contest. And, this question depends on a certain understanding of the realities of democratic politics – the context in which democratic politicians operate and the nature of political friendships in democratic societies. I shall now outline Machiavelli's insights on the realities of politics and project these on to our seemingly mundane democratic arrangements and rituals.

Leading a Virtuous Political Life amidst Conflict: Machiavelli's Defence of Hypocrisy

Machiavelli's case for hypocrisy is advanced in Chapter XV of *The Prince*, in which he signals his intention to 'depart from the orders of others' and 'go directly to the effectual truth' of politics. For:

Many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation ... [I]t is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity (Machiavelli, 1998: XV, 61).

Whereas for conventional accounts of political morality – those propounded by Plato, Aristotle and their moralist heirs – political "virtue is shown in politics", for Machiavelli, political "virtue is defined there (Mansfield, 1996: 22). The standards of political excellence arise from within politics, not from an external, abstract moral standpoint. Making sense of political ethics, then, requires us to approach politics primarily on its own terms: this involves considering more carefully certain ends and goods which are intrinsic to politics and the qualities of character necessary for securing these. Differently put, politics should be conceived as a distinct practice and way of life with its own peculiar demands – the securing of order and stability, the capacity to compete for, rise to and remain in power; to establish, secure and maintain one's state amidst a grubby context ridden with conflicts and power-struggles.

Machiavelli's thought, I should highlight, challenges the hopeful, value-monist Platonic conviction that a morally admirable and a virtuous political life can, at least in theory, coexist in harmony. The moralist contention that 'all truly good things are linked to one another in a single, perfect whole' (Berlin, 1969: x), erroneously entails that the cultivation and exhibition of the vices in politics should be always traceable to avoidable, irrational human mistakes – conflict and vice are pathologies in philosophical thought, surmountable via the exercise of reason. To be sure, Machiavelli does not reject the conception of the morally good man as incoherent in toto; he does not deny that honesty, generosity and faithfulness for instance are morally admirable and 'praiseworthy' qualities (Machiavelli, 1998, XV: 61 – 62). What Machiavelli (1998, XV: 62) condemns, is the contention that a virtuous politician should 'wholly' possess and display these qualities. 'If one considers everything well', Machiavelli writes, 'one will find to be virtue, which if pursued would be one's' ruin and something else appears to be vice, which if pursued results in one's security' (1998, XV: 62). Thus, in delineating political virtue, Machiavelli highlights that moral 'virtue' needs 'its contrary' – the 'brightness that comes from contrast with and through the cultivation and occasional practice of vice' (Mansfield, 1996: 18). Virtuous princes should know how to utilize 'laws' – 'proper to man' – and 'force' – proper to 'beasts' (Machiavelli, 1998, XVIII: 69).

Notwithstanding Machiavelli's suggestion that a prince should rely on his 'own arms' and his seeming preference for minimizing dependence and relying on force (Machiavelli, 1998, XII – XIV), what emerges from Chapters XV – XX of *The Prince*, is that neither the minimization of dependence nor mere reliance on brute force are always possible or desirable. Whilst a virtuous prince should 'make his own foundations' and whilst being 'acquisitive means to be acquisitive for oneself', one 'cannot do everything with his own hands: he needs help from others' (Mansfield, 1981: xix). Relying on one's 'own arms', is not always possible; 'good friends', domestic and otherwise, are also necessary (Grant, 1997). And, it is in relation to his discussion of the prince's relations 'with subjects and with friends', where Machiavelli (1998, XV: 62) notes that, whilst a virtuous prince should occasionally exhibit the vices, he should also 'know how to avoid incurring infamy of those vices that would take his state from him'. Being perfectly morally virtuous is impossible, but seeming to be so is all-important; wearing a mask of virtue is crucial in building and maintaining political friendships (Machiavelli, 1998, XV: 62; XVI: 65, XVII: 70 –71). Note that this insight is not restricted only in

principalities. It also extends to republics⁷. ‘Force alone’, Machiavelli writes in *The Discourses*, is never ‘enough’ but ‘fraud alone is often found to be quite enough’. And, like ‘a prince who wishes to do great things’ should ‘learn how to deceive’, republics are also necessitated to employ hypocritical deception ‘until they have become powerful and force alone is enough’ (Machiavelli, 1996, II, 13: 155). Rome was exemplary in ‘befriending’ neighbouring cities by cultivating trust, faith and feigning virtue to subjugate others, only to renege on the alliance when she had amassed sufficient power and the friendship was no longer politically fruitful.

The necessity to forge and sustain political friendships is partly premised on Machiavelli’s conception of politics as a grubby domain which is ‘unstable and subject to flux’ (Wolin, 2004: 202). Hence, Machiavelli does not depart from moralism by merely challenging its vision of harmony in individual political morality; he also rejects the hopeful Platonic conviction that it is plausible to conceive of a perfect, rationally harmonious society (Hampshire, 1989; 2000) – a conviction which, I argue, paradoxically underpins the abovementioned moralistic conception of democratic politics. For Machiavelli, this conviction is an innocent fairy-tale; turmoil is the natural condition of the political realm; political practitioners operate in a context in which ‘all things are in motion and cannot stay steady’ (1996, I, 6: 23). Machiavelli’s cosmos is ‘a battlefield’ ridden with ‘conflicts between and within groups’, each with its own distinct conception of the good, interests and aspirations which cannot be harmonized in any final synthesis (Berlin, 1980: 41). This is captured most clearly in Machiavelli’s recognition that, even within a single community, there exists a perpetual, insurmountable rift between ‘two diverse humours’ – the people who aspire not to be oppressed by the great, and the great who aspire to oppress the people (1996, I: 4 – 5; 1998, IX). It is this point – Machiavelli’s suggestion that the moralist vision of societal harmony is implausible; that agreement on a set of substantive values and aspirations is inconceivable – that helps us to capture what is peculiar about political friendships. And, it is the peculiar nature of political friendships which creates the impetus to hypocrisy.

What is distinctive of political friendships is that they are forged out of necessity between actors with conflicting interests, aspirations and conceptions of the good. Unlike family ties, political alliances are about creating politically useful partnerships with people whose aims

⁷ Note that this point flies in the face of Mattingly’s (1960) claim that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* as a satire, seeking to challenge the Medici and advocating a turn to republicanism. Machiavelli’s political ethic is consistent throughout his work and applies to principalities and republics.

and aspirations conflict with your own – ‘with people who are ultimately your competitors’ (Grant, 1997: 21). And, unlike private or true friendships which are based on solidarity or ‘greatness and nobility of spirit’ (Machiavelli, 1998, XVII: 66), political friendships are characterized by suspicion, rivalry and contempt⁸. Hence the oxymoron of political friendships: whilst such relationships are marked by competition for power, even the most successful prince cannot embark on the quest for politics without allies; ‘finding yourself uncovered and without friends’, entails that you shall be ‘ruined’ (Machiavelli, 1996, I, 41: 90). Political relationships are relationships of power and dependence (Grant, 1997). This recognition challenges the Platonic conception of man as an independent, autonomous and self-sufficient actor – a conception which also seems to permeate the moralistic account of democratic politics. Leading a political life places one under constraints: political actors are constrained by the acts and aspirations of their ‘fellows’ and the context in which they operate. Politics is practiced within complex webs of dependencies and conflict which virtù should exploit.

In contrast to true friendships, a virtuous prince should approach his ‘friends’ with suspicion and with the knowledge that political friendships cannot be always sustained and honoured. ‘A prince who has founded himself entirely on their words’ Machiavelli writes, ‘is ruined’. Political friendships ‘are not owned and when the time comes cannot be spent’ (1998, XVII: 66). Or, he emphasizes later on:

The princes who have done great things ... have taken little account of faith and have known how to get around men’s brains with their astuteness ... A prudent lord ... cannot observe faith, nor should he, when such observance turns against him, and the causes that made the promise have been eliminated (1998, XVIII: 69)

Machiavelli’s account on friendship need not exhaust the range of relationships we might observe, in politics or private life. Nor does Machiavelli rule out the possibility of true friendships in politics. However, true friendships, by virtue of their rarity and fragility, tend to be unattractive models for the prince’s relations. The virtues we associate with ‘an admirable private life, such as loyal friendships’, Hampshire writes, engender ‘political powerlessness’ (1989: 165). Only an innocent prince relies on lifelong, unconditional loyalties. An experienced prince, in contrast, is ‘flexible, not bound by principles or by theories’

⁸ This applies to relationships in the domestic and international realm. See Machiavelli’s account of the natural ‘enmity’ and ‘hatred’ between the people and senate (1996, I, 4 – 6), between neighbouring princes republics (1996, III, 12) and Skinner’s (2000) discussion of Pope Julius’ hatred towards Borgia.

(Hampshire, 1989: 163). Machiavelli's warning is clear: the prince must 'ruin among so many who are not good'; and, since your fellows 'are wicked and do not observe faith in you, you also do not have to observe faith in them' (1998, XV: 61; XVIII: 69). The very features of political life which necessitate political friendships – the precariousness of order, the struggle for power amidst a grubby domain – render such relationships fragile and hypocrisy necessary. This is glimpsed by Leo Strauss: 'Machiavelli', he notes 'contends that the same needs which make man dependent on other men compel him to form political societies the preservation of which requires the practice of those virtues no less than that of their opposites'(1978: 264 – 265).

Hence, it is the recognition that virtuous politics requires forming friendships with agents one may despise and that these friendships cannot be honoured, which renders hypocrisy necessary. Whilst the prince needs the voluntary cooperation of others whose interests and aspirations conflict with his, such cooperation is not always forthcoming. Nor should one expect others to adhere to altruism; for, both parties compete for the same, scarce good: power. A façade of idealism is necessary even for the most prudential political ethic: the prince's dependence on allies compels him to put on a theatrical act: to flatter them and appear before them as morally virtuous and trustworthy. And, if trust constitutes a necessary ingredient for such relationships, forging them becomes impossible if one openly expresses his disdain or honestly declares his intention to betray them. Building and sustaining political relationships requires 'false' promises (Machiavelli, 1998; XVIII). The term 'false' should be underlined. For, an experienced politician, whilst making such promises is aware that their honouring is impossible. Machiavelli's works contain numerous examples whereby 'treaties and promises have been rendered invalid' via 'the infidelity of princes'. For instance, Alexander VI, an astute fox, 'never did anything, nor ever thought of anything, but how to deceive men'; there 'never was a man with greater efficacy in affirming it with greater oaths, who observed it less' (Machiavelli, 1998, XVIII: 70). Note that hypocrisy is not a vice which should be exhibited just for strategic purposes. Rather, it also enables virtuous princes to conceal the rest of their vices and 'keep dancing' amidst conflict; leading a virtuous political life entails the capacity to manoeuvre amidst the morass of politics and build useful alliances by publically pretending to be faithful and loyal, while betraying faith and ignoring loyalty when politically necessary.

Machiavelli's argument is not restricted to relations between states or princes. It also applies to the prince's subjects. Since politics involves a perpetual competition for power, one cannot virtuously engage in its practice without support from the community. Machiavelli condemns 'anyone who, trusting in fortresses, thinks little of being hated by the people' (1998, XX: 86). The need to manage public opinion via persuasion is emphasized in the literature on Machiavelli and rhetoric (c.f. Zerba, 2004; Beiner, 2008). Whilst the 'desire of ordinary people to escape domination and rule, provides the prince with the occasion to seize power', Peter Beiner notes, 'once having successfully won the support of the people and displace the previous rulers' the prince must 'convince the people that his rule will be different – a claim which he cannot make good – whilst facing enemies whom he has injured, particularly among the nobles, who would like better than to exact revenge'. Machiavelli's prince 'must constantly replay the moment in which power has been seized': making enemies he cannot eliminate and promising 'what he cannot provide' (Beiner, 2008: 71 – 75). Hence the need for hypocrisy: a virtuous prince should exploit the gap between moral ideals and the practices necessary for securing his state and rule. Since most people cannot accept the truth about virtù (Mansfield, 1996) they would be unappreciative if the prince openly reveals his vices, throwing their support to one's competitors who might conceal them. And, given that the peoples' aspirations cannot be fully realized – for, they are incompatible with those of the prince and with one another – they must be persuaded that the prince is morally virtuous, trustworthy and has their interests at heart. This demands rhetoric and deceptive claims to an imaginary consistency and harmony of incompatible interests and aspirations. Hence, political friendships are relationships of dependence and require trust but since princes cannot be always trustworthy, consistent and virtuous, hypocrisy is necessary. And because a virtuous politics requires the appearance of morality and neither our substantive conceptions of the public good, nor moral goodness and political excellence can be reconciled in a harmonious whole, hypocrisy is inevitable.

Hypocrisy is thus a 'lesser vice'. Perfectly transparent politics are not politically virtuous. So, too, is boundless cruelty. Machiavelli's concern, Wolin (2004) explains, is to secure the ends and goods of politics 'with an economy of violence'; popular support, if skilfully exploited, reduces the need for cruelty. This need not deny the need for cruelty altogether – especially when security is jeopardized. However, a virtuous prince should, again, know how to 'whitewash' his dirt. Machiavelli's praise of Borgia's capacity to effectively employ cruelty and manoeuvre amidst a messy web of dependencies is suggestive. Whilst the imposition of

order to Romagna required the utilization of cruelty, Borgia's dependence on the people was such that his cruelty could not be openly displayed – Borgia had to publically pretend to be morally righteous. This added a further layer of dependency and hypocrisy: Borgia had to find a scapegoat – someone like Remirro de Orco, who would, via hypocritical manipulation, be persuaded to carry out the necessary task of imposing order via cruelty and then take the blame and be disposed of. Open, unlimited cruelty might provoke hatred – the greatest threat for any government – and is incapable of securing some of the goods of politics and sustaining a virtuous political life (Machiavelli, 1998, XIX). This would be the lion without the fox and it would be lacking in virtù – especially in democratic politics.

Projecting Machiavelli's Insights on to Democratic Politics

The obvious domain in which Machiavelli's insights on political friendships and hypocrisy apply is international diplomacy. The betrayals, rivalries and shifting alliances between modern states in a realm that seeks to avert the descent into warfare provide a fertile ground for illustrating Machiavelli's ideas (Grant, 1997). This may suggest that, in certain circumstances, political hypocrisy is necessary but it does not warrant the more specific argument I wish to pursue: that hypocrisy is an inevitable by-product of ordinary democratic practices and the glue that holds a virtuous political life together. It is, however, not hard to see how Machiavelli's insights relate to democratic politics. Whilst our politics is seemingly more mundane than in Machiavelli's era, it is no less complex and demanding. Democratic politics involves a struggle to secure some level of order and security, to transform power into authority, to achieve certain goals and policy outcomes which stem from one's particular tradition or party and to preserve tenure against competition and public opinion (Williams, 1978, 2002; Philp, 2007). Excelling in democratic politics, requires politicians to 'compete for the limited good of elected office', to have 'considerable capacities to win allies' and 'make good bargains' (Kis, 2008: 28). Democratic politicians are embedded in complex webs of conflict and dependence. The necessity to 'build coalitions' and 'mobilise the base' constitutes the democratic manifestation of the prince's need for political friends.

But, to achieve anything at all in democratic politics, politicians need the cooperation of a plethora of others and are far more dependent than Machiavellian princes. Unable to take their support for granted and subject to the frequent rituals of elections, democratic politicians must continuously seek the support of the demos and potential coalition partners. And, because

politics is an on-going activity, they need to be able to count on that support over time by cultivating trust via the difficult arts of persuasion and rhetoric— as opposed to open, brute coercion (Kane & Patapan, 2012). However, democratic societies are cultures of subcultures and contain a multiplicity of conflicting, irreconcilable traditions (Hampshire, 1989; Shklar 1984). In complex societies like ours, support can only be cultivated by appealing to diverse audiences, whose interests and conceptions of the good conflict and are irreconcilable with each other and with those of the politician. Democratic politicians, Hollis writes, have to:

Keep a kind of faith with several groups, who lay conflicting claims of loyalty upon [them] ... [A] local councillor, for instance, must answer doctrinally to party workers in the language of the manifesto, must care pragmatically for the interests of constituents with words of common sense ... must manoeuvre humanely among pressure groups, each with its own single criterion of progress Each claim is legitimate; each sets a standard for what is best, which he will not meet (1982: 396).

Democratic politicians operate in a context where the competing, incompatible claims of different groups and traditions render the paying of lip service to values and the feigning of virtue difficult to avoid. The impetus to hypocrisy here stems from the recognition that our ordinary politics is intertwined with enduring, irresolvable conflicts and difficult choices. Any attempt to accommodate the competing and conflicting claims of each tradition is bound to result in a messy compromise – the abandonment and betrayal of some of those claims. Given that the interests and aspirations of such groups are plural, conflicting and irresolvable without remainder, the politician can only (privately) plead that ‘the best is the enemy of the good’: securing even the basic goods of politics, requires politicians to preserve a moral front and persuade others whom they are dependent on of their ex ante impossible loyalty, trustworthiness and consistency.

But the recognition that democratic politics takes place within a context of dependence and a plurality of competing traditions casts the necessity of hypocrisy farther. No less fervent a proponent of liberal democracy than Shklar (echoing Machiavelli) observes that democratic societies are ridden with conflict-prone public figures: ‘we do not agree on the facts of social life and we heartily dislike one another’s religious, sexual, intellectual and political commitments’ (1984: 78). Members of each tradition are likely to look at each other with suspicion and contempt. Political friendships in democratic politics are characterized by no less disdain than those between Renaissance princes. The point here is not that such antipathies and the messy context in which politicians operate are just practically

insurmountable. Rather, as long as practitioners of politics are affiliated with diverse traditions and have different life-stories, neither conflict nor political enmities should be expected to cease even in theory⁹. History, Hampshire (2000: 34) notes in a Machiavellian fashion, suggests that ‘all determination is negation’: in seeking to distinguish themselves from others, groups have defined themselves in oppositional terms: not merely in terms of who they are and what they espouse but also in terms of who they are not and what they reject.

Pace moralists, the building of political friendships is possible neither because practitioners of democratic politics are motivated by a common set of substantive moral convictions or values nor because unconditional candour is, even in theory, a political virtue. ‘The democracy of everyday life’, Shklar argues, ‘does not arise from sincerity’. Rather:

It is based on the pretence that we must speak to each other as if social standings were a matter of indifference in our views of each other. That is, of course, not true. Not all of us are even convinced that all men are entitled to a certain minimum of social respect ... But most of us act as if we really did believe it, and that is what counts (1984: 77).

Since our ordinary democratic politics is a logocentric enterprise (Markovits, 2008), the cultivation of support and trust necessary is impossible if practitioners of democratic politics do not engage with one another in a way that respects the norms of social discourse – even if they despise their interlocutors and their values; and, even if they do not agree with such norms and customs. Hypocrisy is thus an inevitable by-product of political discourse –in particular, the practices of negotiation, debate and the arts of persuasion and rhetoric which are inherent in any open, pluralistic and competitive political system. In conditions of pluralism and dependence, excelling in such practices requires a certain amount of hypocritical manipulation. These practices – and, consequently hypocrisy – are not only alternatives to open cruelty, which is politically undesirable, but also to a politics of uncontaminated truthfulness which might be equally corrosive. ‘One might well argue’, Shklar suggests, that democratic politics ‘cannot afford public sincerity’ (1984: 78). Zealous truth propounds validity and demands a once-and-for-all settlement; it possesses an undemocratic, apolitical character: it precludes debate, unresolved conflicts and negotiation which constitute the essence of ordinary democratic politics. At best, unconditional sincerity

⁹ Expanding on this is beyond this essay’s scope but this point suggests that the Rawlsian and Habermasian conviction that, at least in theory, it is possible to conceive of societal harmony and consensus on certain universal substantive values is misplaced. See Hampshire (2000).

might lead to a failure to build political friendships and aid the reaching of mutually advantageous agreements on matters of shared importance; it might hinder any possibility of persuading others to cooperate and endorse (even reluctantly) one's proposed policies.

This point is captured in Arnold Schwarzenegger's announcement that, as Governor of California, he had to change the way he would speak in public: 'Attacking people and saying 'girlie men' ... I didn't know any better ... I've learned that there's a better way and that is to bring people together, not insult them' (Skelton, 2007; Kane & Patapan, 2012: 71). Schwarzenegger, Skelton suggests, upgraded his communication: 'upgraded as in some signs of humility'. Skelton attributes this upgrade to Schwarzenegger's fruitless acts of transparent knavery, which were 'thrashed by voters in a special election on his reforms'. Schwarzenegger's blatant honesty jeopardized political success – 'the necessity of selling the public on sweeping health care and costly public works programs' (Skelton, 2007).

At its worst, zealous candour – particularly 'honesties that humiliate' – might jeopardize public order and civility in a society in which public figures have insurmountable differences, antagonisms and deep-seated antipathies (Shklar, 1984: 78). This need not deny that an open expression of contempt is always politically inappropriate. But some hypocritical dissimulation might often constitute a lesser evil: it might keep conversation going and facilitate the building of political relationships and compromise – the advancement of, at least some, of one's policies and substantive aspirations¹⁰.

My defence of hypocrisy, I should emphasize, is intertwined with the recognition that compromise constitutes an inevitable feature of democratic politics and, perhaps, the only democratic way via which politicians can satisfy some of their preferred policies and values amidst conflict and dependence. What I seek to clarify though, is that hypocrisy is not just a necessary ingredient for effecting compromises and building advantageous coalitions with groups one may despise. For, politicians, especially those operating within a democratic context, are also dependent on the demos. And, because compromises are intertwined with inconsistency and entail the betrayal of some of one's commitments and values, hypocrisy has an additional role to play: it enables politicians to conceal their vices, dirt and inconsistencies; to marshal on and satisfy some of the goods of politics. Given that compromise is necessary

¹⁰ In contrast to relationships which are not merely instrumentally valuable and which are maintained via 'politeness' – situations whereby one allows others to form their own views despite one's disagreement with these – hypocrisy is useful in building relationships which are valuable largely for instrumental reasons – relationships forged between public personas who are antagonistic and who feel disdain towards one another.

in democratic politics – especially whilst governing – it is unsurprising that hypocrisy runs rampant during election campaigns.

Consider a politician running for President who declares that one of his priorities is to reform healthcare ... He states his unequivocal opposition to any law that requires everyone to buy health insurance, an approach favoured by his main rival ... He promises that his health care reform ‘won't add a dime to the deficit and is paid for upfront’ [and] offers no concessions at all during the campaign (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010: 1128).

This example resembles Obama in his 2008 presidential campaign. Whilst proponents of the moralistic conception of democratic politics, such as Michael Sandel (2009), saw Obama's election as ‘a great hope for moral renewal’ arising from ‘restless impatience with politics as it is’, Obama's reign was a confirmation of ordinary politics. For, Obama's pledges to healthcare reform were a far cry from the 2010 Affordable Care Act; the latter, was the product of a compromise between Republicans and Democrats and, contained elements to which Obama was opposed during his campaign¹¹. And, even though the cries of hypocrisy were heard loudly, it is hard to imagine political candidates openly proclaiming their willingness to betray some of their commitments once elected.

The reason for this is simple: candidates are ineffective in mobilizing support if they talk about prudent compromises or honestly confess that their pledges will not materialize tout court. Despite our obsession with ‘straight shooters’ (Markovits, 2008) and our apparent acceptance of the platitude that democratic politics is the art of compromise, it seems difficult for us to trust, let alone to be inspired by, a politician who is openly vicious and transparent about her compromises. This is reflected on a recent poll, which reveals that whilst the public appreciates the value of compromise in general, it is less supportive of compromises on particular issues, such as taxation and abortion (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010). Pace Walzer, we may want to know about our politician's dirt but ‘our agent's [political] duty is to conceal it from us’. For, ‘if we know’, the politician ‘has failed’ (Hollis, 1982: 389). Since democratic politics involves continuous power-struggles and politicians' public statements are used in that context, sincerely revealing their dirt and vices might be misused against them. No politician who wants to rise to power or sustain his tenure can allow himself to speak about his vices and dirt without paying attention to the strategic nature of his statements. Virtuous

¹¹ In private, however, Obama declared his willingness to compromise once elected (Gutmann & Thompson, 2012).

politicians should not just get dirty hands; they should also ‘wear clean gloves’ (Bellamy, 2010: 416). Again, the point here is that support cannot be cultivated without some form of hypocrisy – without an appeal to an unattainable idealism or virtue: success in a campaign depends on a public reaffirmation of a consistent commitment to core principles or high-minded ideals, combined with a private acknowledgement that these cannot be fully realized.

More generally, few campaigns would be successful if democratic politicians fail to inspire the majority of a nation with a vision of collective hope (and persuade them that they can be entrusted with the task of its implementation). But, in societies characterized by deep conflicts, ‘there is in principle no basis for collective hope’. For ‘your justice is, not my justice; the fulfilment of your hopes is the disappointment of mine’ (Edyvane, 2013: 118 – 119). Since a homogenous majority based on a harmony of shared substantive values and interests is impossible, democratic politicians must cultivate support on the basis of fictitious commonalities. Hypocrisy is inevitable the cultivation of support requires the public proclamation of, or commitment to, a vision which presupposes shared values, aspirations and interests combined with a private acknowledgement of their hollowness – that the vision is a fiction and that, at best, its realisation would be shabby and compromised. To refuse to exhibit hypocrisy, to borrow Williams’ words, means that ‘one cannot pursue even’ some of ‘the moral ends of politics’ (1978: 62). Hypocrisy, to repeat, is not a vice which should be exhibited just for purely strategic purposes; it constitutes one of the strings that hold together a virtuous political life: it enables politicians to marshal on amidst conflict, to conceal their vices and inconsistencies and satisfy some of the ends and goods of politics.

Conclusion

This essay suggested that Machiavelli’s insights on the necessity of political hypocrisy constitute a real issue for democratic politics. The oxymoron of democratic politics is that, whilst the values of trust and accountability are invoked to vilify hypocrisy, it is partially on account of these values which the impetus to hypocrisy arises. And whilst democratic politics is thought capable of providing transparent political rituals (i.e. elections and conversation), its reliance on such rituals as a means of structuring power-struggles entails that it will continue to generate hypocrisy. Democratic politics takes place in a context of conflicting, incompatible interests and aspirations and is structured in a way that dependencies conducive to hypocrisy are increased. Hypocrisy is a political virtue and the glue that holds together a virtuous political life: it enables democratic politicians to mask their inescapable vices,

cultivate support and advance some of their preferred policies; it can also aid the maintenance of civility amidst conflict.

My argument has crucial implications for the questions of how to conceive democratic politics and what it means to lead a virtuous political life in the democratic context – questions which have received heightened attention following the recent suggestion that we are witnessing a moral crisis in politics; that the shenanigans of our politicians reveal that moral virtue has been displaced and should be, somehow, restored. If hypocrisy is a by-product of democratic politics, refusal to exhibit it is not just intertwined with a failure to lead a virtuous political life. Rather, the moralistic quest to extirpate political hypocrisy – a yearning which is shared by the dirty hands thesis – can have disastrous implications. For, it is underpinned by nostalgia for harmony which misrepresents the realities of politics and the messy context in which our ordinary politics is practised. The incompatibility of democratic politics with perfect candour is such that eliminating hypocrisy from democratic politics would require the elimination of our democratic rituals and political discourse or, at least, the creation of a harmonious polity where politics is displaced. The moralist might find this vision comforting but such societal harmony is inconceivable; the desire to eliminate political hypocrisy altogether might lead to the erosion of public order. The innocent pursuit of utopian ideals, Machiavelli warns us, never succeeds in politics.

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