DANTE, MACHIAVELLI, AND LUTHER:
THE EVOLUTION OF THE
MODERN STATE

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Rebecca C. Peterson, B.A.
Denton, Texas
May, 1991

The evolution of the State was a process which went through many stages. Analysis of the modern State tends to begin with the Enlightenment; however, Dante Alighieri, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Martin Luther each represented early phases of this evolution. The theories of these men were closely tied to their evaluation of man's nature. Their main objectives were separation of the State from the Church and the definition of the rulers obligations to his subjects. Although humanism influenced all of them to varying degrees, each developed unique views of the State. Elements of these views can be detected in more modern theorists.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of the State was a process which went through many stages. Analysis of the modern State tends to begin with the Enlightenment; however, Dante Alighieri, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Martin Luther each represented early phases of this evolution. The theories of these men were closely tied to their evaluation of man's nature. Their main objectives were separation of the State from the Church and the definition of the rulers obligations to his subjects. Although humanism influenced all of them to varying degrees, each developed unique views of the State.

Some historians view the Reformation as merely a religious movement and the Renaissance as a purely secular movement; however, these eras also had far-reaching political consequences. Studies of the development of the modern State rely on the theories of Thomas Hobbes or John Locke as the basis for the modern State.¹ These men developed their theories in an intellectual climate

influenced by the Renaissance and the Reformation. Previously men such as Dante, Machiavelli, and Luther based their theories on medieval philosophers. The two-pronged issue that emerged was the relationship between the Church and the State and the relationship between the State and its citizens.

Dante, Machiavelli and Luther relied on theories stated by philosophers from the early Middle Ages. In the late fourth and early fifth centuries, Ambrose and Augustine attempted to deal with the struggle for dominance between Church and State. In *The City of God*, Augustine noted the dual nature of man and sought for means to lead and control both the spiritual and secular natures. Later in the fifth century, Pope Gelasius I issued the authoritative statement on the doctrine of the two swords which clarified the dual sources of authority. "Spiritual interests and eternal salvation" became the province of the clergy while "temporal or secular interests and the maintenance of peace, order, and justice" were controlled by the State. During the eighth and ninth centuries the papacy increased in power

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2 Sabine, 188, 189: Hallowell, 24.
3 Sabine, *History*, 194.
and influence as the power of the State decreased and feudalism became more prevalent.⁴

Feudalism removed the king from direct control over many of his subjects. This affected areas of political power such as the army, the revenues and the courts. The lords, who had accumulated strength in land and wealth that exceeded the ruler's own, challenged secular authority. The control expected in a modern State was not evident. The papacy developed as a significant source of power by centralizing the ecclesiastical structure. The papacy claimed direct power over temporal rulers, a position not supported by Gelasius I or St. Gregory. As the rulers began to regain their power, they again challenged the right of the papacy to dominate the State.⁵

In the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, St. Thomas Aquinas and John of Paris wrote in defence of the power of the State based on the doctrine of the two swords. During this period, the philosophy of Aristotle became available to European philosophers again. Both Aquinas and later Dante adopted Aristotle's philosophical method as the best means in which to present their ideas.⁶ Aquinas became

⁴Ibid., 193.
⁵Ibid., 216-7, 235.
⁶Ibid., 251, 256-7.
attempted "synthesis of Aristotle's philosophy of man and nature with Christian conceptions." Although Aquinas recognized the authority of the State, he also thought that: "its purposes must always be secondary to the higher end of spiritual salvation for individuals whose ultimate destiny was not in this world." The ultimate destiny of the universal community of Christians transcended secular authority.

Aquinas noted the superiority of the Church in spiritual matters, but did not attempt to transform this spiritual authority into a legal right to control the State. John of Paris pressed farther by arguing that spiritual power had no legal authority in the temporal world. Its only authority was spiritual or otherworldly. The authority or ability to coerce within the temporal realm actually came from the secular arm of the Church or from the State.

Writing shortly after Aquinas, but on a much more radical theme, was Marsilio of Padua. He blamed the papacy for the lack of unity in Italy, much as Machiavelli would two centuries later. George H. Sabine stated Marsilio's position: "Whatever reverence faith may deserve as a means of eternal salvation, it has become from a secular point of

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7 Hallowell, Main, 26.
8 Ibid.
view simply irrelevant. Being irrational it cannot be brought into a consideration of rational means and ends."  

The Church and the State were therefore completely separate since the State was a rational means to an end. Some areas of Marsilio's thoughts on religion also resembled those of Luther, assigning to the clergy mainly the duties of advice, instruct, and admonishment.  

The papacy attempted to counter these threats to their authority by asserting the infallibility of the Pope and his ability to control temporal authority. Within this atmosphere, however, the infallibility of the Pope began to be questioned. The concilliar movement started as a method to curb the power of the Pope while maintaining the authority of the papacy. The concilliar movement attempted to introduce a form of constitutionalism into the papal hierarchy. Rather than the Pope, the councils claimed infallibility. The movement was short-lived during the early fifteenth century. After the Council of Basel, the papacy reverted to its earlier authoritarian policies. Sabine stated: "the pope in the fifteenth century established himself as the first of the absolute monarchs, and the theory of papal absolutism became the archetype of  

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9 Sabine, History, 294.  
10 Ibid., 299.
the theory of monarchical absolutism."\textsuperscript{11} The councils were maintained without the ability to effectively change the actions or policies of the popes.

The absolute monarchies, such as in France and England, developed after the Middle Ages, consolidating and centralizing the power, once held by the Church, and the nobility.\textsuperscript{12} Jacob Burckhardt viewed this development of the State during the Renaissance as a work of art. In Burckhardt's opinion the despot of the fourteenth century took charge of all aspects of the government. The ruler's ability allowed him to protect his subjects, while making them recognize the need for taxation and restraint. The late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries placed greater emphasis on the merits of the individual ruler. According to Burckhardt, strict rules of lineal succession did not return until the sixteenth century and the Counter-reformation. He associated the emphasis on the ancients with the increase in humanism starting from 1400. Burckhardt suggested that the Renaissance humanists replaced obedience to contemporary authority with obedience to Roman


law and the ancient sources.\textsuperscript{13}

It is based on this background that Dante Alighieri, Niccolo Machiavelli, and Martin Luther developed their theories of the State. They were not the only thinkers who discussed political theory during the Renaissance and Reformation, but their theories showed different stages of development in the concept of the State. Their activities and reputations allowed these ideas to be known both to contemporaries and to later scholars. The State entailed not only governmental institutions, but also the relationship to its citizens, the emotional attachments and the common traditions, as well as, the shared goals or fears.\textsuperscript{14} Participation required the forfeiture of some freedoms to the organization. Laws enforced obedience, protected acceptable actions, and provided the State with the means to rule.

The concept of the State could not be equated simply to the term government. An interdependency existed between the State and the people. The concept of the State legitimized the authority which the government wielded and provided for a common purpose or goal. The state developed

\textsuperscript{13}Jacob Burckhardt, The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy: An Essay (London: Phaidon Press, Ltd., 1951), 5-6, 12 & 121.

\textsuperscript{14}William Y. Elliott and Neil A. McDonald, Western Political Heritage (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1949), 423.
a social and political identity which created additional responsibilities and duties. Lack of governmental organization emphasized the need for a strong state. Dante, Machiavelli, and Luther all lived in communities that experienced turbulence due to rival factions and subscribed to strong state systems. Areas of strong local self-government hindered attempts at the unification of a centralized State in both Italy and the Empire.

During this continued period of struggle between the Church and secular rulers the following theories of the State evolved. Dante sought a system in which spiritual and temporal authority existed in harmony, reflecting the influence of Thomas Aquinas and the humanists. The model provided for distinct separation between the two authorities, with power being absolute in their respective spheres. In The Prince, Machiavelli appeared to support a strong temporal monarchy, but there were indications that he valued the illusion of a constitutional monarchy in which the populace believed that they had influence. Religion worked only as a tool for the monarch, a means of controlling the people. Luther supported a strong and active government which was responsible to the people. He contended that matters of belief could not be dictated; however, the State had authority over the actions generated
by these beliefs if the behavior caused harm to the State. The Church did not have an official position within the State, but Christian rulers protected the welfare of their people. Therefore, the restraint of the Church on the State was not necessary.

Humanism influenced all three men to varying degrees. This philosophy placed emphasis on the beauty and unity of nature through an understanding of the ancients. "Individualism, the influence of classical culture, freedom within the faith or even indifference in religious matters, a relaxation in morals or even a complete rejection of all moral principles - all this was considered to be of the essence of the fifteenth century."¹

Dante experienced the influence of humanism, in spite of his earlier time frame and his medieval outlook. He relied heavily on Aquinas and Aristotle. Dante reflected his earlier time period by his continued desire for harmony between the spiritual and temporal authorities; whereas, Machiavelli and Luther de-emphasized the role of the Church.

Critical study of the ancients enabled the humanists to envision a system of diversity rather than unity, which eventually supported greater temporal power. This diversity

eventually supported greater temporal power. This diversity did not mean rejection of the Church, only some of the claims to temporal authority which had been perpetuated. Dante approached this through his parallel spheres of influence. The humanists did not wish to make a complete break with the Church or with society, instead, they sought to create "the appearance of unity, inasmuch as this can be achieved at all in the world of man."16 The emphasis on the individual and the past encouraged the temporal authorities to challenge the authority of the Church. The Renaissance and the Reformation were more effective movements due to the obvious abuses within the Church, which provided reasons to refute the papacy's absolute authority.

Machiavelli's theory, as portrayed in The Prince, reflected the extensive influence of Florentine or civic humanism. His creation of a Florentine militia was based on the Roman model and the need to protect the city-state. In addition, comparisons throughout The Prince made the predilection for ancient times and methods evident. The work devoted little time to any ecclesiastical power in a theological sense, but perceived religion as an effective tool for the use of the strong monarch. The work encouraged

16Ibid., 229.
a very individualistic and self-centered form of rule, and discussed various methods for maintaining power.\textsuperscript{17}

Luther had similarities with both Dante and Machiavelli, but his combination of the idealistic with the practical was unique. The influence of scholasticism, as well as humanism, appeared in Luther's works, while neither dominated his view of the State. Luther reserved some aspects of human nature over which the State did not have control. These areas tended to fall within the influence, if not precisely the control, of the Church. He did not intend to create the harmony which Dante attempted. Unlike Machiavelli, Luther's concept included responsibilities that accompanied the privileges of power. The good ruler used his power, not to his own ends, but for the good of the people who entrusted him with power.

The development of the state was a gradual process. The three theorists discussed in the following chapters represented some of the phases necessary in the evolution from feudalism to the modern ideal of the State. Dante advocated an idealistic system of parallel absolute authority which provided little practical advice on implementation. Machiavelli's theory of the State supplied

numerous applications but neglected the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the State and the people. Separation of Church and State was not directly addressed by him, since he viewed the papacy solely as a local political entity which hindered the unification of Italy. Luther assigned responsibilities and duties to the secular ruler and the State in exchange for the freedoms surrendered. His emphasis on education also had extensive political ramifications. Education allowed the development of good citizens in addition to training good Christians. An individual who studied and interpreted scripture, might also be able to judge the moral and political workings of his State. The opening of all occupations to the faithful, opened new opportunities for influence within government. Luther's de facto separation of Church and State offered opportunities for participation by citizens, but also eliminated a check on the power of the State. Until the Reformation, the Church acted as an institutional restraint on the king. In theory, the active participation of the populace within the State replaced the Church as a means of restraint, although in practice this restraint has not always worked. The balance which emerged between responsibility and power, as well as, the development of the

18 Ibid., 380.
relationship between the citizens and the ruler influenced the growth of the modern concept of the State in Western Europe.
Dante Alighieri represented a shift in attitude toward the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority. He lived nearly two centuries before either Niccolò Machiavelli or Martin Luther. Although his time period was medieval, his thought represented the early Renaissance. The humanists influenced his thought, and his writings reflected a knowledge of the ancients. Events in the independent city-state of Florence undoubtedly influenced him. Dante's exile also provided exposure to a variety of scholars and rulers.

The political structure of Florence provided insight to Dante's circumstances. Fourteenth century Florence forbade formal, organized parties due to their disruptive nature; nevertheless, the Guelf and Ghibelline political alignments were accepted. The Guelfs supported the power of the papacy and were originally bourgeois, while the Ghibellines supported the Empire against papal dominance and represented the nobility. Although most families declared allegiance to one or the other of the informal parties, divided loyalties
within a family were not unusual.\textsuperscript{1} Certainly some of these divisions were serious in nature; however a split also ensured that the family name and reputation did not disappear when a change in power occurred. The ottimati, literally persons of importance, actively pursued the support of the popolani, or working class, in their political contests. The common people benefitted from the patronage of the ottimati, who expected loyalty in return.

Dante was born in May 1265. Aside from its Guelf tendencies, his family background was relatively obscure. Although some biographers stated that Dante attended the universities of Bologna and Padua, Paget Toynbee maintained that little evidence existed to support this conjecture. Within his work \textit{Vita Nuova}, Dante cited a range of classic authors, from Ovid and Horace to Aristotle and Cicero, evidencing at least passing knowledge of these authors.\textsuperscript{2} During 1295-1296 Dante held membership in the Guild of Physicians and Specialists. In addition to the guild's

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trade in books, they also practiced the art of painting, another of Dante's interests.\textsuperscript{3}

The political differences between the Guelfs and Ghibellines erupted into civil disturbances regularly. Dante entered the Priorate during a period of Guelf dominance. Instability increased with the introduction of a third faction which intensified the possibility of conflict. The city of Pistoia exported a second faction of Guelfs to Florence, the White Guelfs. The Black Guelfs remained loyal to the Pope, while the Whites represented the disaffected in the party, moving away from supporting the papacy. Pope Boniface VII supported the Black Guelfs due to financial interests. After a time of fighting between the factions, the White Guelfs chose to support the Ghibelline cause, which was imperial.\textsuperscript{4} Dante's political activities as a member of the Whites, led to conflict with the papacy.

By May 1300 Dante received appointment as Florentine ambassador to San Gimignano. From June 15 to August 15, 1300 he served as one of the six Priors, the highest office in Florence. Boniface VII excommunicated the city of


\textsuperscript{4}Toynbee, Dante, 101, 103.
Florence while it was under White Guelf leadership. Dante was one of three ambassadors sent to Rome to intercede for the city. Boniface VII seemed to relent; however, he also summoned Charles of Valois to deliver Florence back to the Black Guelfs.  

Dante's political difficulties occurred after he left the Priorate. He failed to appear when the Podesta summoned him in January 1302. The Podesta was a chief magistrate with extensive powers elected in medieval and early Renaissance Italian towns or republics. The charges brought against him were corruption in office and fraud. The Podesta also levied charges against Dante for conspiring against the Pope, refusing to let a papal representative into the city, and disrupting the peace of Florence and the Guelfs. The Podesta required a fine and restitution within three days of the sentence, an order which Dante did not obey. On March 10, the Podesta handed down a stronger sentence for Dante and ten others. The decision provided that the eleven be burned alive if caught in Florence. Dante chose exile in 1302. He wrote De Monarchia (1311-1312), a treatise on the proper sphere of action for the Church and temporal government, during his exile. He

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5 Fergusson, Dante, 32-34.

6 Toynbee, Dante, 112-3.
continued to be active politically and represented Ravenna at Venice the summer before his death, in 1321.  

Dante observed a variety of governments prior to, and during his exile. He preferred a monarchy rather than a republic as the best form of government in his work, De Monarchia. There was a temptation to view this choice solely in light of the poor treatment he received from his native republic, but that would ignore other influences, among which were the theories of Thomas Aquinas. In Dante's opinion a monarchy would provide a more stable structure than a republic. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries displayed examples of the papal monarchy working with, and at times dominating, the temporal monarchy of the Empire. The papacy seemed to provide stability. Dante's definition of the empire was more encompassing than the Empire of the Middle Ages because it was universal. "Temporal Monarchy, then, or as men call it, the Empire, is the government of one prince above all men in time, or in those things and over those things which are measured by time."  

This desire to create a balance between spiritual and temporal powers reflected an emphasis on harmony, characteristic of the  

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7 Ibid., 26, 29.
humanists. The Empire dealt with the physical and philosophical needs of its subjects, whereas, the Papacy administered the spiritual aspects and issues that transcended human reason.

The ruler must not merely consider his own interests, but, to fulfill his duty, he must determine and provide for his subjects' best interests. Dante described his concept of an altruistic government:

Hence, too it is clear that although the king or the consul rule over the other citizens in respect of the means of government, yet in respect of the end of government they are the servants of the citizens, and especially the Monarch, who, without doubt, must be held the servant of all. Thus it becomes clear that the Monarch is bound by the end appointed to himself in making his laws.

These instructions applied to both the Empire and the Papacy. Dante accentuated the Empire as the "sole guarantee that he could imagine of justice, peace, and felicity for the whole of mankind." ¹⁰

The comparison between Dante's theory and that of St. Thomas Aquinas reveals several items of interest. Despite the evident similarities, Dante exceeded the intent of the earlier thinker in many cases. St. Thomas stated that each man "has a destiny to which all his life and activities are

⁹Ibid., 201.

directed. . . . Yet the diversity of human interests and pursuits makes it equally clear that there are many courses open to men when seeking the end they desire." The variety of interests and desires tended to be divisive; thus, there is need for a controlling influence. In addition to individual goals, man must also strive toward the well-being of the community, in which man had the capability of achieving more in community than singly. Therefore, there is a need to create harmony from this diversity. Aquinas maintained that "the object for which a community is gathered together is to live a virtuous life." There were strong moral imperatives in secular life for Dante, reflecting the goal of a virtuous life. Once established, there were three requirements for the well-being of a community. First, there must be a peaceful unity among the members. Second, the object of this unity should be a positive goal. Third, a sufficient supply of material goods was necessary. The government accepted the responsibility for leading the community to these goals and


12Ibid., 5

13Ibid., 75.
"Once the welfare of the community is thus ensured, it remains for the king to consider its preservation."\textsuperscript{14}

Aquinas described a continuum from the best to the worst forms of government, created originally by Aristotle. On the positive side, a monarchy was the best form, followed by aristocracy and then a plurality. A democracy was the least abhorrent of the negative forms of government, progressing to an oligarchy, and finally to a tyranny, which was the worst. The best and the worst of government were exemplified in one-person rule. Aquinas noted that "tyranny has more frequently flourished in those lands which had a pluralistic government than in those which were governed by monarchs."\textsuperscript{15} The disorganization of mass rule allowed an individual's rise to power without an examination of his motivations and goals. A king elected under these circumstances gave the people the right to depose him should he prove a tyrant. St. Thomas contended that: "the tyrant lays himself open to such treatment by his failure to discharge the duties of his office as governor of the community, and in consequence his subjects are no longer

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., 81.

\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., 27.
bound by their oath to him."\textsuperscript{16} This placed the king's duty to his subjects in the foreground.

St. Thomas went to great lengths to support his preference for monarchy. "So, therefore, government is the more useful to the extent that it more effectively attains peaceful unity. . . . Now it is clear that that which is itself a unity can more easily produce unity than that which is a plurality. . . So government by one person is more likely to be successful than government by many."\textsuperscript{17} He compared the king to a father. Although the father's authority over his household did not make him king, there were many instances in which the monarch fulfilled a fatherly role for his subjects. Aquinas also likened the ruler to God "since a king does in his kingdom what God does in the universe". The rule of a single individual imitated and should imitate God most closely.\textsuperscript{18} The standard set by God spurred the ruler to exercise justice, tempered with mildness and clemency.\textsuperscript{19} Aquinas allowed the monarch great power to be exercised in the fulfillment of substantial duties and responsibilities.

\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., 31, 33.
\textsuperscript{17}Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 51, 9.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., 67.
Dante did not strictly follow Aquinas' theories, although he showed some Thomistic influence. In addition to separating the Empire and the Church, Dante also separated philosophy and theology. Philosophy guided the Empire, while theology led the papacy. Aquinas placed philosophy below theology in his hierarchy, therefore theology dominated it. He argued that if these two areas of thought remained united, the means of control remained in the hands of the Church. Separation allowed more independent work in philosophy by presenting the opportunity to study some of the ancient thinkers who had been labeled pagan. It did not mean that theologians could not look to philosophy to support their views, but philosophy was no longer under the Church's restraining influence. Gilson maintained that: "In each of these vital matters this alleged Thomist struck a mortal blow at the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas." Dante did not intend to create opposition between these two areas of thought, but it was necessary that each of these realms had mastery over an intellectual discipline for a balance of power. He did not envision a non-Christian state; however, the method which he

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chose to use was different than previous theorists. His universe was a Christian universe, but not a medieval, Christian one. He asserted that the State can be Christian, without being controlled by the Church.

Gilson concluded that since the basic theory of St. Thomas and Aristotle had been accepted by the Church, Dante had to break from tradition to avoid subordinating the temporal to the spiritual. Consequently, the proposal that man had two parallel goals. If there were parallel goals, then there must be leaders of the same calibre to guide man in pursuit of these goals. Intellectual and moral virtues ascended to the level of the theological virtues. Gilson pressed one step further, he saw the need for three sources of authority for man. Philosophy led man to his natural goal, theology guided to the supernatural goal, and political power controlled man's greed. Political power constrained "men, by the force of the law, to respect the natural truth of the philosophers and the supernatural truth of the theologians." Dante did not perceive the need to add a third source of authority. He placed political power in the realm of philosophy, since controlling man's actions and enforcing laws were part of the duty of the Emperor.

\[22\text{Ibid., 196, 193, 195.}\]
Dante asserted that some men were born to rule, while others were meant for subjugation. He supported this idea through reference to Aristotle's *Politics* and the model of Roman society. This view of the natural order of the universe must be considered in the analysis of the relationship between public bodies and the community. Public bodies must be created with attention to their ability to guide the society to appropriate ends "for this fundamental principle of right is inseparably joined to the natural order of things."\(^{23}\) Dante argued that the Romans aimed at the common good of their conquests by creating a single government. He stated: "It is therefore plain that whoever aims at the good of the state, aims at the end of Right; and therefore, if the Romans aimed at the good of the state, we shall say truly that they aimed at the end of Right."\(^{24}\)

The ruler had a certain duty, or a goal, to reach in his position. Likewise, every other man had a goal or conclusion which he strove toward. The dual nature of man existed in both the spiritual and secular worlds, creating the need for leadership in both realms. Success can be attained in the temporal sphere through "moral and

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\(^{24}\) Ibid., 224, 229.
intellectual virtues", as opposed to the more transcendent goals which can only be reached by the "theological virtues, faith, hope, and charity."\(^{25}\) Confusion between these two areas of authority caused conflict in life. Dante envisioned parallel sources of power to prevent this occurrence. Harmony and balance developed, acting as a check against the abuse of authority in either realm.

Dante's evaluation of human nature effected his view of the relationship between Church and State. Man's participation in the spiritual as well as the temporal realms made him a unique creation in the universe. Although these goals were separate, the ideal man strove to reach both, and one need not dominate or overshadow the other. Similarly, the Pope and the Emperor need not compete with each other. Their areas of authority were separate and distinct, since the duties assigned to each were unique. The power entrusted to each came directly from God. Therefore, the Emperor did not derive power from the Papacy, but from God. Dante's image of the Emperor followed the Christian model. The ruler's duty compelled him to "practice charity and justice" while the Pope should "practice spiritual fatherhood and sanctity."\(^{26}\)

\(^{25}\text{Ibid.}, 301-2.\)

\(^{26}\text{Gilson, Philosopher, 179.}\)
The power of both the Empire and the Papacy reigned supreme in their respective spheres. In addition, their superior positions caused them to be related. Dante reasoned that each must have branched off from a single being or unity, that had the essence or characteristics of both. This supreme power then extended to cover the temporal and spiritual rulers. The being or unity was not necessarily God, but could be "something below God, which is higher in the scale of superiority, while differing from the simple and absolute superiority of God."\[^{27}\] Dante did not assert a positive knowledge whether the Empire and Papacy derived their strength from God, or another entity superior to both. This point was not important to his theory, rather, he intended to prove that the Empire and the Papacy did not derive their power from each other.

It was his particular intent to demonstrate that the Empire was independent of the Church. Dante noted "the Empire had its power while the Church was either not existing at all, or else had no power of acting. Therefore the Church is not the cause of the power of the Empire, and therefore not of its authority."\[^{28}\] The Roman Empire existed before the Church realized any substantial power.

\[^{27}\text{Dante, Monarchia, 291.}\]

\[^{28}\text{Ibid., 292-3.}\]
Additionally, the Empire challenged papal authority under Henry IV during the Church's period of growth. Dante wanted to create a balance between a universal Empire and a universal Church to provide leadership in all areas of man's life.

Dante expressed his humanistic tendencies again through references to the Roman Empire. In his opinion, Roman rule was logical since they were the noblest of all people. They also provided an example of monarchy as the best form of government. Dante argued that: "that which is repugnant to the intention of nature, is against the will of God." God indicated his preferred form of government by allowing miracles to happen, such as Christ's birth. Dante also asserted that Christ's actions in living within the Roman culture and obeying the edicts of Augustus implied approval and justification of those laws. Although the Romans were conquered, Dante quickly pointed out that no other people had been able to enforce any measure of universal rule.

The coordinated and efficient functioning of the State required a single government. The Empire consolidated and harmonized the numerous regions and principalities in the same way the brain controlled the various parts of the body.

\(^{29}\) Ibid., 258.

\(^{30}\) Ibid., 216, 220-1, 251-2, 239-40.
In doing so, the ruler enhanced the welfare of both State and man. The nature of man as a social animal led to much interaction, and the motivation of this action must be directed toward the well-being of the community. St. Thomas "insisted on the obligation incumbent on every man to place the resources of his individual reason at the disposal of the community" and concluded that "the best political regime is government by a single person." The combined abilities of the universal community necessitated a strong state. Organizing this immense amount of resources, in such a way that personal interests did not dominate, required great effort.

Dante also utilized the theory of Oneness to support the ideal of universal monarchy. This model proposed that God was the image of unity or oneness. Man strove to duplicate this oneness in his attempt to imitate the supreme being. The greater the unity of the State or the Church, the closer man was to God and the forms he should follow. A community could not accomplish this goal "except when it is subject to one prince." The prince had the task of focusing the energy and actions of the community, which would diminish the damage of individual interests. The

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31 Gilson, Philosopher, 166.
32 Ibid., 190.
prince became the prime mover or motivator. Dante stated: "therefore, if our argument be correct, the human race is at its best state when, both in its movements, and in regard to those who move it, it is regulated by a single Prince, as by the single movement of heaven, and by one law, as by the single motion." Hence, if the best form of government was rule by a single monarch, then rule by a group fell short of this goal. Counsels, republics, and even the numerous monarchs scattered throughout Europe lacked the ability to create the sense of oneness which led to an efficient State. Not only did they fail to reach the indicated goal, but they worked against the natural order by distracting from the aims of the State. Producing the same effect with more agents caused redundancy and detracted from the effective operation of the State.

The order supplied by strong government created an environment in which man exercised the greatest degree of freedom. The first principle of freedom, according to Dante, was freedom of the will. Man must release his will from his natural appetites in order to obtain freedom. Working toward the common good allowed the individual to exercise his will without domination by the appetites. He

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33 Dante, Monarchia, 191.
34 Ibid., 204.
was then more free than when he achieved his own goals. "Good states in this way aim at liberty, that in them men may live for themselves." Consuls and kings assumed the duty of providing stability and curbing their own interests. Dante repeatedly insisted that the people did not exist for the good of the state, but the state existed for the good of the people. Therefore, the king served the citizens not the reverse.

The only model of a universal community in Dante's time was the Church, and Dante assigned it a religious role. Gilson analyzed Dante's development of the concept of a universal community. He found that, for Dante, the Emperor demanded no less respect and honor than the Pope, since the ruler headed a parallel authority. The focal point of a united temporal realm was peace in which to strive for their goals. "This is what Dante propounds as his starting-point. No universal human community, no peace; no peace, no opportunity for man to develop to the highest pitch his aptitude for discovering truth or, consequently to attain his goal." Gilson viewed Dante as a reformer rather than a radical in this perspective. Dante suggested that a

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36 Ibid., 198-9.
serene environment allowed man to advance toward the goals of wisdom and prudence. On a larger scale, tranquility enabled the State to apply itself more diligently to its proper work of leadership and justice. This essential peace can only be achieved through the unity of a universal community or empire. "Hence it is plain that whatever is good is good for this reason, that it consists in unity... it is manifest that it consists in a certain unity as its proper root, the nature of which will appear if we find the real nature of concord. Concord then is the uniform motion of many wills."^38 To achieve uniform motion a universal, temporal state must be created.

Gilson contended that many before had seen the need for a temporal state, but Dante was the first to attempt a theoretical justification for a universal Empire separate from the universal Church. The universal Empire existed for a dual purpose. First, it united and pacified the people, something the Church had been unable to do despite all its power and influence. Second, it provided support and protection for the citizen from the Church. The Empire created "a single universal temporal order with the Emperor playing the part which the Pope fills in the Church."^39

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That man needed protection from the Church was a rather negative appraisal of the papacy, but from Dante's perspective, it seemed a realistic evaluation. He had experienced the power of the papacy when he joined the disillusioned Whites Guelfs against the Black Guelfs. One of the charges against him was the refusal to accept Charles of Valois, the papal representative, on his arrival at Florence. In his perception, the papacy manipulated Charles to further its own ends.

These events affected his theory of the ideal relationship between Church and state. Dante's own experience revealed that "Florence alone against the Pope faces defeat, but Florence represented by a universal Emperor against the Pope finds the chances once more in her favour."⁴⁰ Dante viewed the state as an able counterbalance to a Church, which abused authority. At the same time, he did not consider a universal Empire without a Church to check temporal authority. A multitude of states created a myriad of interests, no matter which form of government was followed. The maintenance of separate states encouraged the personal goals of the ruler, over those of the subjects, since there tended to be competition between the states. Only a single State with a universal ruler achieved an

⁴⁰Ibid., 173.
understanding of freedom and community. "The authority of a single Monarch is therefore absolutely essential if it is desired that men should be governed with a view to their own good instead of being exploited for particular ends which are not their own."\(^4\)

Dante identified three classes of people who worked against the truths contained in his theory. He anticipated opposition from the Pope and other pastors. "These all, perchance from zeal and not from pride, withstand the truth which I am about to prove."\(^4\) He foresaw that, through a sense of duty or by pursuing their perception of duty, a priest might stray into the temporal realm in an attempt to do good. Dante did not condone this possibility, but accepted a positive motivation rather than assuming an attempt by the Church to garner more power. In contrast, those who pretended to be of the Church, but were actually controlled by the devil, caused quarrels on this issue, because they despised the office of the prince. The third faction which argued against his theory were the decretalists. They based the authority of the Church on tradition. Dante responded that the traditions receive their authority from the Church; therefore, the Church's

\(^{41}\)Ibid., 178.

\(^{42}\)Dante, Monarchia, 260-1.
authority cannot be proven through tradition. Dante concluded his argument against the decretalists stating "therefore, the men of whom we speak, seeing that they have nought but traditions, must be excluded from the debate. For those who seek after this truth must proceed in their inquiry from those things which flows the authority of the Church." 43

He did not hold in high regard any of those who challenged his theory, and he perceived any deviation from the basic design as usurpation of authority. The Church trespassed on a God-given right to rule if it ventured into the arena of temporal power. Dante did not consider valid the argument that the Church placed the Emperor on the throne and therefore had the right to rule over him. He noted that the Emperor Otto I was influential in restoring Pope Leo VIII to the Papacy and deposing Benedict V. Taking this line of reasoning to its logical conclusion, the Emperor also had the right to rule over the Papacy. Neither situation was acceptable to Dante. 44

An important aspect in Dante's theory was the duty of the State to execute justice. Again, Dante contended that a universal Monarch was best suited for this function.

43Ibid., 263, 261.
44Ibid., 288.
Justice was "a certain rightness or rule of conduct, which rejects on either side all that deviates from it." He reasoned that the Monarch exercised justice best, because he was the strongest, therefore, less tempted to misuse this power. The universal Monarch would not contend with the problems of boundaries, hence, his appetite would not effect his freedom of will. Smaller princes, limited by boundaries, and motivated by greed would judge unwisely in dealings with other states. The unity of the State allowed the Monarch to judge more fairly. Justice was not hard and unyielding, for the lack of opposition enabled the Monarch to judge with mercy. The Monarch manifested this equanimity because his authority came directly from God. Centralization was pivotal to Dante's theory.

Dante's system hinged on the separation of Church and State under the supreme authority of God. A recurring argument existed that secular authority stemmed from the Church. Specifically, that Peter's power to bind and loose extended into the temporal realm rather than remaining in the spiritual realm. Dante argued that a man cannot create authority in another man. A man can only receive power and pass it to another. The power was his to exercise only for

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46 Ibid., 194-5.
his time in that position and during its proper exercise. Peter could not accept secular authority, because his power was in the spiritual realm. Thus, he could not convey power in the temporal one. Dante continued: "I say then that although the successor of Peter has power to bind and to loose, as belongs to him to whom the office of Peter was committed, yet it does not therefore follow that he has power to bind and to loose the decrees of the Empire."47 As the types of power were distinct, they could not be generated one from the other.

In addition, Dante addressed the Donation of Constantine. In the Donation, Constantine theoretically bequeathed his temporal authority to the papacy. Dante did not attack the validity of the document, but demonstrated that the transfer of authority was not possible. He argued that the Emperor was ordained for the Empire, not the reverse. Since the Empire existed before the man, the ruler owed his position to the Empire rather than his position creating the Empire. "Therefore it is clear that the Emperor, in so far as he is Emperor, cannot alter the Empire; for it is to the Empire that he owes his being."48 If he was not the Emperor, then there existed no basis from

47 Ibid., 277, 275.
48 Ibid., 285-6.
which to transfer authority. As Emperor, he was equally powerless to transfer the authority to the Church, because this action would diminish the Empire, and thus his own power.

The State that Dante described was not a modern State, nor was it medieval. The theory took an early step toward a more contemporary view of the State. Any change of this sort must be gradual in order to avoid destroying the system that existed. Dante did not intend to destroy the system that existed, which would lead to greater disorganization, but to modify it. As Gilson indicated, Dante was a reformer, not a revolutionary. He preferred to work, at least to some extent, within the system already established. The theory was important because it relied on the accepted theory of St. Thomas while expanding its implementation. A comparison of these two revealed that Dante did break from the traditional medieval attitude toward Church and State. He initiated a move to distinguish between the authority of these two entities. True separation was not dealt with until much later when the State became consolidated and strengthened.

Even the minimal separation that Dante suggested was significant. The distinction allowed the study of the State as a peculiar entity, not as merely another arm of the
Church. Luther echoed this duality of goals to some degree. Although Luther did not reserve as much influence in affairs of the State for the Church, he did maintain that there were areas of man's life that the State could not dictate. Dante still allowed a great extent of activity between the Church and the State, since the Church was always there to participate in the spiritual life of the citizens of the State. In Luther's theory the Church, whether represented by Catholic or Protestant hierarchies, tended to be overwhelmed by the State. In contrast, Dante's theory still allowed the papacy to exercise considerable influence over the State.

The moral and religious overtones in Dante's theory of the State cannot be ignored. Dante and Machiavelli used the Romans to support their theories with the same end in mind, but with quite different results. Dante admired the Romans for the unity they displayed, whereas Machiavelli directed more of his interest to their military might. The rather amoral State that Machiavelli created diverged greatly from Dante's Christian ideal. Likewise, Luther's theories of statecraft would not receive approval from Dante, since harmony was not maintained between the two autonomous spheres of influence. Neither of the later theories were
based directly on Dante's, but he did indicate a shifting in perspective of the role of the Church in secular activities.
MACHIAVELLI: THE PRAGMATIST

Niccolò Machiavelli became more readily recognized as a political theorist than either Dante Alighieri or Martin Luther. His theory differed greatly from the medieval overtones of the earlier thinker. A true child of the Renaissance, he lived in Florence during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.\(^1\) Machiavelli and Dante both fall within the humanist tradition; however, an examination of their theories revealed vast differences in their evaluation of man. Dante was one of the early Christian humanists. Although attempting to separate the Church from the State, he still worked within acceptable theological bounds. He wanted a temporal State controlled by Christians. This State provided Christians guidance within a secular world without the Church becoming a political entity.

In contrast, Machiavelli was a member of the civic humanists. He agreed with Dante's goal of minimizing the

Hallowell thought that Machiavelli was distinctively modern because he attempted to divorce the Church from the State.\(^2\) Machiavelli was not the first to view the function of the Church as political in the temporal world. Marsilio of Padua attempted a similar feat in the fourteenth century; however, "Marsilio defended the autonomy of reason by making Christian morals other-worldly; Machiavelli condemns them because they are other-worldly."\(^3\) Machiavelli did not base his theory on theologically acceptable principles. Machiavelli portrayed the Church as an exclusively political rather than religious entity. Whereas Dante viewed man's nature as being basically good, with many possibilities for improvement, Machiavelli perceived only man's more base qualities and destructive tendencies. Dante and Machiavelli shared the goal of a strong, independent State, however, their means of attaining that goal varied greatly.

As a young man during Girolamo Savonarola's regime, Machiavelli did not agree with the activist's theological teachings; however, the management of power fascinated him. Machiavelli learned Latin from Paolo de Ronciglione, and may have attended the lectures of Marcello Adriani at the


University of Florence. Machiavelli relied on his background in the classics and made frequent references to them when explaining his theories of statecraft and militia. In July, 1498, he received an appointment to the Ten of Liberty of the Second Chancery, where he came into contact with many document dealing with the government of Florence. Machiavelli occupied this post during most of Piero Soderini's term as gonfaloniere, literally standard bearer for the republic. This position gave the clerk ample opportunity to observe and analyze the actions of the republic.

Throughout his tenure in government, Machiavelli showed a marked interest in the diplomatic activity of Florence. Soderini's influence enabled Machiavelli to travel to both France and the Empire. Francesco Guicciardini indicated that by sending Machiavelli, the gonfaloniere looked after the city's interests, as well as, his own. The

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negotiations needed a personal touch, rather than merely the exchange of documents. Although chosen by the gonfaloniere, the agent reported to the Signory. During his mission to France, Machiavelli wrote the first of his diplomatic reports, which reflected an unusual style. "In these reports he was extremely reticent in passing judgment. He pictured the flux of politics and the shifts of disposition as if he could measure them with a yardstick and weigh them in a scale."\(^7\) He believed that the safest way to convey information was by quantifying human actions. Machiavelli had to assure the Signory that he took no undue initiative, nor could he take any action which might be interpreted as presumptive by any of the members.\(^8\) In the end, Soderini's influence was limited and Machiavelli's "removal is equally a clear indication of the relatively low social standing he enjoyed."\(^9\) For all the self-important airs, he was still a lower level government functionary.

\(^7\) Marcu, Accent, 111.


Soderini's fall resulted from a conflict between Pope Julius II and Louis XII of France. The situation forced Florence to choose between these two great powers, which previously had been her allies. The city was not strong enough to defend herself alone against either power. The Florentine government decided to cede Pisa to France in exchange for protection of the city-state. This assumed that the papacy was the weaker of the two powers. Unfortunately, Spain was in ascendancy and chose to support the papal state. The papacy, with Spanish aid, defeated France at Lombardy, leaving Florence without a protector. The papacy then aided the return of the Medici to power in the city-state.\(^{10}\) Machiavelli criticized Louis XII's actions in Italy, noting several errors which led to his failure. Among the errors were the extinguishing of minor powers, failing to set up direct rule, and neglecting to set up colonies.\(^{11}\) Soderini and the republic's government received censure for relying on another power's protection and not taking decisive action earlier.

When Soderini left power in 1512, Machiavelli also lost his post. The former clerk faced charges of treason and improper behavior before he departed Florence for his

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\(^{10}\) Ibid., 309.

\(^{11}\) Machiavelli, Prince, 13.
country estate. He made repeated attempts to return to public life, all unsuccessful. His death passed relatively unnoted in June, 1527.\textsuperscript{12} Machiavelli's influence on statecraft did not occur until many years after his death. His most famous work was \textit{The Prince}, although \textit{The Discourses} dealt more extensively with the analysis of the State. Many scholars disagree on how to interpret \textit{The Prince}. James Burnham considered Machiavelli to have been a very straightforward writer, simply describing events as they occurred. Herbert Butterfield thought that Machiavelli did a good analysis of the State but that he was too far ahead of his time. John Hallowell portrayed him as being indifferent to the issue of morality.\textsuperscript{13} Some followed a very strict literal interpretation of the work, while others perceived it as a less serious work than \textit{The Discourses}. Although most emphasis in the pages that follow is placed on \textit{The Prince}, some comparisons and contrasts with \textit{The Discourses} are included for a more complete example of Machiavelli's theories.

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid., 304.

Machiavelli could be used to represent the quintessence of the Italian Renaissance. According to Sabine, "No man of his [Machiavelli's] age saw so clearly the direction that political evolution was taking throughout Europe. No man knew better then he the archaism of the institutions that were being displaced or accepted more readily the part that naked force was playing in the process."\textsuperscript{14} Political conditions in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries made a study of the State both interesting and necessary. The French invasion of the Italian peninsula triggered a chain reaction of power struggles among the many city-states. Independent states felt threatened, and looked toward the papacy or one of the larger European governments for support and protection. In addition to the threat of outside invasion, there was a marked characteristic of the population to willingly accept a change of masters. Machiavelli asserted the necessity of a strong monarchy, but also emphasized the need to maintain popular support, or at least acquiescence, to the regime. He had no qualms over the use of deception or artifice to maintain order and protect the State.\textsuperscript{15} James Burnham agreed that Machiavelli was not conventionally ethical. "Machiavelli divorced

\textsuperscript{14}Sabine, \textit{History}, 335.

\textsuperscript{15}Butterfield, \textit{Statecraft}, 73, 75.
politics from a certain kind of ethic -- namely, from a transcendental, other worldly" ethic. He argued that Machiavelli was as ethical as Dante, possessing a more practical set of ethics. Standards meant for use, not for idealism.

Jacob Burckhardt noted several weaknesses of Renaissance Italy, which he associated with the strong emphasis on the imitation of ancient forms. The ruler became a despot by following the pattern of ancient Rome. His subjects, when tired of his rule, practiced the violent custom of tyrannicide as the chief means for removing an oppressive leader. Burckhardt argued that the growth of humanism stopped any new native cultural impulses. Rather than searching for creative new ways to solve problems, the humanists slavishly looked to classic solutions for contemporary challenges. He contended that, in this way, humanism did not represent a rebirth, but a subjugation to an unchanging authority, based on ancient Rome.

He stated: "Henceforth men looked only to antiquity for the solution of every problem, and consequently allowed

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16 Burnham, Defenders, 38-9.

literature to turn into mere quotation." Renaissance Italy submitted to oppression and unrest rather than experiencing an outburst of creativity. Burckhardt's evaluation appeared both harsh and biased, but they were accepted for many years. Undoubtedly, some of his criticisms had a basis, but all the problems of that period could not be blamed on the humanists and their study of ancient Greece and Rome.

Humanism often aimed at literary interests and descriptions of an ideal at that time. The humanists became more politically active as the situation deteriorated. Men like Machiavelli, Francesco Guicciardini, and Leo X took active political roles. In The Prince, Machiavelli relied most heavily on Aristotle, although specifically naming Titus Livius more frequently. Aristotle's description of city-states and tyrannies proved very applicable to Florence. References to classical individuals and events appeared throughout Machiavelli's work. He proposed that the past stored much useful information and advised rulers to study historical figures in order to learn the reasons for their successes and failures. In addition, he suggested

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18 Ibid., 121.
19 Marcu, Accent, 41.
20 Ibid., 258.
that rulers should "imitate some eminent man, who himself set out to imitate some predecessor of his who was considered worthy of praise and glory, always taking his deeds and actions as a model for himself."\textsuperscript{21} This emulation of a predecessor established stability and continuity. Man only repeated earlier mistakes when he ignored these examples from history.

Both medieval and humanist writings provided the foundation for Machiavelli's method of creating a princely model. A long tradition existed in literature of creating a model or mirror of a prince.\textsuperscript{22} This model, however, changed over time. Egidio Colonna's description portrayed the prince as "the intermediary between God and man. . . . The Prince, he says, must set an example to his subjects, both in the conduct of his private life and the ordering of his court and household."\textsuperscript{23} These ideas implied that a prince, who was a proper model for his realm, had no difficulty maintaining control. This presented a positive view of human nature which in Machiavelli's opinion was not

\textsuperscript{21}Machiavelli, Prince, 53.


\textsuperscript{23}Ibid., 155.
applicable. The humanists in the early fifteenth century tended to follow the example of Colonna and others, but became more detailed in the descriptions of princely attributes. Felix Gilbert contended: "Like the medieval authors, the humanists attempted to discover a norm and to describe the ideal prince. . . . the tasks of the quattrocento prince were exclusively confined—like those of his medieval predecessor—to the administration of justice and the maintenance of peace." The pattern continued of portraying the ideal, rather than the reality, of a prince's position and tasks. The humanists did not merely imitate their medieval predecessors, but built on their tradition by adding detail and more realistic description.

The later fifteenth century humanists tended to be more analytical. They concentrated, not only on the prince as an ideal person, but also on the ethical problems of rule. The humanists identified the success of a government with the prince's personality. The Prince followed this model by emphasizing the abilities of the ruler. If the prince did not have the appropriate qualities to rule, his tenure was short. Machiavelli described the range of qualities a successful ruler must have, rather than describing the positive qualities of an ideal prince. He expanded the

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24 Ibid., 156.
simple description of positive qualities by recognizing that some of the qualities of a strong ruler did not parallel the qualities of an ideal person or citizen. In Gilbert's opinion, Machiavelli stated only what was already accepted in practice and he contended:

And one can say that the famous chapters of The prince [sic], in which Machiavelli investigates the qualities that make the successful prince and in which he falls most foul of conventional morality, were but a consequence of pushing to its logical conclusion the argument that first appeared in the writings of the humanists: whether the virtues and characteristics of the prince ought to be different from those of the private citizen.  

Although The Prince argued that the qualities of an effective ruler were, indeed, quite different from a private citizen, the form of the presentation reflected previous models. Machiavelli's style in The Discourses of Niccolò Machiavelli also displayed this tendency. In describing the six types of government, he paralleled those used by Dante Alighieri in De Monarchia, which had even earlier roots. He listed the positive forms as principality, aristocracy, and democracy, with the negative forms being tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy.  

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25 Ibid., 57-8.
The author of *The Prince* created a forceful work with his devotion and strong sense of purpose. Historians and political scientists have sought to define the intent of this work, but encountered difficulty in achieving this goal with any degree of certainty. Among Machiavelli's possible motivations for writing this work was his desire to regain public office. Others, like Herbert Butterfield, stated: "The essence of his teaching was the promotion of a more scientific statecraft and he made it clear that he wrote his book in order to produce an actual change in the practice of his day."\(^{27}\) James Burnham found *The Prince* to be very straightforward. He determined that Machiavelli had no hidden goals, unlike the multiple levels of meaning which he perceived in Dante. "Machiavelli's chief immediate practical goal is the national unification of Italy."\(^{28}\) He also viewed *The Prince* as a very scientific piece of literature. Machiavelli wrote about both historical and contemporary figures to demonstrate his theories. He acknowledged strengths and weaknesses, drawing reasonably accurate portraits.

\(^{27}\) Butterfield, *Statecraft*, 16.

\(^{28}\) Burnham, *Defenders*, 31.
Machiavelli failed both in his bid for employment, and in his attempt to change sixteenth century Florence. Only later were his recommendations put to the test. His work proved useful from a historical point of view. He described Florence as he viewed it and suggested means for improvement. Since he dealt specifically with new states, The Prince "was likely to be found appealing in those time and places... in which the fragility of existing or new states was most apparent and the requirement of force most clearly observed." Sixteenth century France and Benito Mussolini's Italy found the theories equally interesting. Although some of his suggestions seemed logical, Machiavelli received criticism, among other reasons, because they were not immediately practical for that period in Italy.

Machiavelli's theory of statecraft focused on his evaluation of human nature which diverged greatly from Dante's view. Machiavelli was pessimistic and found man untrustworthy. Force, either mental or physical, was the only means for controlling the populace. According to

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29Ibid., 19; Butters, Government, 225.


31Ibid.; Butterfield, Statecraft, 92-3.

32Skinner, Prince, xxviii.
Machiavelli, human nature created people who were "ungrateful, fickle, feigners and dissemblers, avoiders of danger, eager for gain."\textsuperscript{33} Burnham presented a different view, asserting that Machiavelli merely described his observations without commenting on human nature. Burnham stated: "but he is usually charged with a libel upon mankind, with having a perverted, shocking, and detestable notion of what human beings are like. . . . Machiavelli has no views on human nature; or at any rate, none is presented in his writings."\textsuperscript{34}

This predisposition toward more base qualities made interaction between men tenuous and often dangerous. Rulers, who relied exclusively on popular support, experienced increased hazards. When the citizens perceived a benefit, they were devoted to the ruler:

But when you are hard pressed, they turn away. A ruler who has relied completely on their promises, and has neglected to prepare other defences, will be ruined, because friendships that are acquired with money, and not through greatness and nobility of character, are paid for but not secured, and prove unreliable just when they are needed.\textsuperscript{35}

On this basis, suggestions arose that "for the first time in the history of political speculation the edifice of a state

\textsuperscript{33}Machiavelli, \textit{Prince}, 59.  
\textsuperscript{34}Burnham, \textit{Defenders}, 49.  
\textsuperscript{35}Machiavelli, \textit{Prince}, 59.
is reared which either has no morals or which manufactures its own." Religion became the tool of the ruler rather than the prince being an instrument for the Church.\textsuperscript{36}

Machiavelli referred to the term State many times in his work. His definition moved away from the traditional medieval view of the State, and created a new perspective. A new concept of morality developed with regard to the actions of the State and an awareness of a different rationale for decisions which must be made. Survival was the main goal, particularly in Northern Italy.\textsuperscript{37} The numerous city-states of the Italian peninsula worked hard at independence and expansion which brought them into conflict regularly. "For Italian cities without independence, or inner freedom, life had no meaning. For centuries Italy had possessed the loftiest of human dignities; loss of liberty meant death from shame. Without liberty the cities became mere shadows of their former substance."\textsuperscript{38} For the smaller state, the unification of the Empire, France, and Spain made independence even more difficult to maintain.

In \textit{The Prince}, Machiavelli often suggested the illusion of popular participation to avoid the risk of rebellion. He

\textsuperscript{36}Elliott, \textit{Western}, 448.
\textsuperscript{37}Dyson, \textit{Tradition}, 26; Butters, \textit{Governments}, xi-xii.
\textsuperscript{38}Marcu, \textit{Accent}, 98-9.
used the examples of Cosimo and Piero Medici to display the benefits and dangers of dealing with the populace. Cosimo "permitted the Florentines the appearance of liberty, the appearance of participation in government, the appearance of equality."39 By doing so, Cosimo manipulated the people, and maintained his position even though he was a tyrant. In contrast to this model were the actions of Piero, who provided the example of a poor ruler. Not only did he squander the assets of the Medici bank, but he surrendered to the French invaders without consulting the Signory. He neglected to preserve Florentine independence and dismissed popular involvement in his decision to surrender. Machiavelli thought that Piero's only chance of maintaining power was to make the same decisions after consultation with at least the upper classes.

Although Machiavelli disliked the religious overtones which Savonarola brought to government, he supported many of the political institutions introduced during this period. During the monk's rule the Great Council replaced the noisy, unorganized meetings of Parliament. After 1494, the Great Council became the stronghold of the politically privileged and the dominant force in government.40

39Ibid., 10.

40Butters, Governments, 22.
times, reached over three thousand. The gonfaloniere, Soderini suffered criticism from his clerk, because Machiavelli thought that Soderini did not understand the use of power, and therefore, would be unable to defend the Great Council in a challenge against its authority.¹¹

Just such a challenge came in 1512. Machiavelli thought that, with the correct use of power, the lower class would not aspire to join the upper class. Soderini found himself unable to satisfy the disparate goals of the two groups and chose to work mainly with the nobility. In the end, his government fell, due to the dissatisfaction of the lower classes in combination with papal interference.¹²

Machiavelli portrayed a state in decline and recommended methods for extending the life of the State. Since he could not hope for the expansion of Florence, he advocated unceasing vigilance in an effort to stop or reverse the decline. Machiavelli viewed the Florentine government as reactive rather than assertive. She was no longer a premier power on the Italian peninsula, often waiting to observe the response of others before deciding on a course of action. Worse still, she depended on other states for her protection. A cursory reading of The Prince

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¹¹Ibid.; Marcu, Accent, 80-1, 195.
²²Butters, Governments, 1-3.
revealed Machiavelli's negative opinion of such alliances. One state was always stronger; thus, if it protected the weaker state, there would always remain a debt. Should the stronger state be unsuccessful in its defence, the weaker would still be taken over by its enemy. Florence approached France and the Empire for their protection, in addition to establishing dependent relationships with various Italian states. The great difference in size impaired the ability of Florence to negotiate with the non-Italian states. The city-state did not negotiate from a position of strength and fell victim to the competing aims of these larger countries.43

Machiavelli described at some length the characteristics desirable in a monarch. The ruler must recognize and reward talent, and should also encourage those who work to improve the city or country. The people ought to be entertained with feasts at the appropriate times of the year to keep their affection for the prince alive. Most importantly, prestige must be preserved in order to rule effectively. Machiavelli viewed the selection of ministers as the best method for evaluating a ruler. "The first indications of the intelligence of a ruler are given by the

quality of the men around him. If they are capable and loyal, he should always be taken to be shrewd, . . . But if they are mediocre and disloyal, a low estimate of him will never be mistaken."44 These men implemented the ruler's wishes and reflected his character. The loyalty of even a good minister should be cultivated by providing honor and position. To continue receiving benefits, loyalty must be maintained, therefore, a change in power would be feared.45

Machiavelli dealt, not only with the more positive aspects of a ruler's character, but also with the vices a ruler would find profitable. Virtue could not always be exercised and still retain effectiveness. He must be prepared to "act immorally when this becomes necessary."46 Machiavelli stated: "Yet one should not be troubled about becoming notorious for those vices without which it is difficult to preserve one's power. . . doing other things that seem vicious may strengthen one's position and cause one to flourish."47 He contended that once a ruler secured the loyalty of his subjects, he need not worry about a reputation for cruelty. Harshness to a few prevented the

44 Machiavelli, Prince, 80.
46 Ibid., 54-5.
47 Ibid., 55.
disorders that come from laxness. A new ruler in particular could not escape the necessity for harsh methods.\textsuperscript{48}

Machiavelli repeatedly addressed the need for military prowess in the leader. "A ruler, then should have no other objective and no other concern, nor occupy himself with anything else except war and its methods and practices."\textsuperscript{49} Control of arms became necessary in order to protect power. Lack of military prowess left the ruler at the mercy of the people, a stance not recommended by Machiavelli. Control of the military was important, for "Only those defences that are under your control and based on your own ability are effective, certain and lasting."\textsuperscript{50}

Machiavelli noted the attributes of republican government in \textit{The Prince}, although he viewed it as an ideal rather than a practical method of rule. Butterfield stated "He did not admire ancient Rome because the Romans had a republic; he admired republican government because it was the form under which ancient Rome had achieved unexampled greatness and power."\textsuperscript{51} Republics proved difficult to control once conquered or annexed. Machiavelli stated: "But

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., 58.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 51-2.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 84.
\textsuperscript{51} Butterfield, \textit{Statecraft}, 43-4.
\end{footnotes}
in republics there is greater vitality, more hatred, and a stronger desire for revenge; they do not forget, indeed cannot forget, their lost liberties.\textsuperscript{52} The transformation from a republic to an absolute regime presented difficulties, so the ruler must ensure the dependence of the citizens on him and the installed government. An attempted overthrow of the government attracted less support if the population depended on the government's power for safety.\textsuperscript{53}

Republics based on the Roman style were admired by Machiavelli and the civic humanists, but Florence did not fit this model. The city was neither fully a republic, nor a principate. The citizens would not abandon the freedoms they enjoyed under the modified republic to create a principate. "Although the threat of tyrannicide was to Machiavelli liberty's act of desperation, her final uncertain attempt to escape extinction, he felt that dictatorship by law was her constant protection against internal and external dangers."\textsuperscript{54} Consequently, a strong form of government (i.e. dictatorship) protected the liberties of the citizens more capably. A dictator commanded the resources needed to defend the State. The

\textsuperscript{52}Machiavelli, \textit{Prince}, 19.

\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., 17-8, 37.

\textsuperscript{54}Marcu, \textit{Accent}, 261.
people would rebel only in extreme cases, since rebellion risked the stability of their lifestyle. If the situation deteriorated to this level, the ruler probably had indulged in vices that detracted from his power rather than those which advanced it.\footnote{Butters, Governments, 224.}

Machiavelli applied the advice for the individual states to Italy as a whole. A single government or dictator best served the goal of preserving liberty throughout Italy. A unified government combated both external enemies and internal disruption with less difficulty.\footnote{Marcu, Accent, 266.} He hoped the unity of Italy would enable them to throw off the yoke of foreign influence.

Machiavelli perceived two basic criteria for any form of government; "The main foundation of all states (whether they are new, old, or mixed) are good laws and good armies."\footnote{Machiavelli, Prince, 42-3.} A prince or dictator maintained better direct control over both laws and armies, thereby providing a more stable form of government. The situation in Florence, at that time, reflected neither a strong, nor a decisive government. The city remained in a defensive stance. Florence continued to attempt alliances for protection.
This lack of diplomatic strength, coupled with almost nonexistent military power, combined two of Machiavelli's characteristics of a weak state. The strength of France and Spain could not reasonably be expected to be resisted by the small city-state. However, the republican government's vacillation and hesitation made the outcome unquestionably bad.

Some students of statecraft argued that if a ruler were loved by his subjects, he would not need a standing army. Machiavelli denied the validity of this theory and insisted on the merits of maintaining an army, while criticizing the use of mercenary soldiers. The defense of a city or realm should be prosecuted by its inhabitants if at all possible. The citizens would be more motivated and, if not loyal to the ruler, certainly have an interest in the maintenance of a stable State.\textsuperscript{58} The ruler must be able to prosecute a war. Machiavelli noted that the Romans did not ignore perceived problems to avoid war. Instead, they fought at a time of their own choosing, and at a stage, where the disturbance could be contained. Repeatedly, Machiavelli asserted that "wars cannot really be avoided but are merely postponed to the advantage of others."\textsuperscript{59}

\textsuperscript{58}Ibid., xiv.

\textsuperscript{59}Ibid., 11.
outward rather than inward diminished internal dissension. A country must either expand or contract, "since to stand still was to allow internal dissensions to arise which could be diverted by constantly arousing the people's fear of an outside enemy." Machiavelli indicated that perceived threats from an outside source allowed the ruler more freedom of action. He was forgiven more indiscretions, since he must lead the defense of the country.

It was crucial that the ruler be able to take the field against attackers, whichever means of defense chosen. "But a ruler who cannot confront any enemy on the field of battle, and is obliged to take refuge within the walls of his city, and keep guard over them, will always need to be helped by others." This situation made the prince very vulnerable to attack or dominance by a larger, stronger country, a lesson that the Florentines experienced more than once. Their poorly trained militia was unable to defend the city and reliance on outside powers led to problems in other instances. It was not sufficient to build a strong fortress, or turn the city into a fortress. If a ruler did not have the support of his people, he encountered difficulty with this method. "I praise anyone who builds

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60 Elliott, *Western*, 424.

fortresses and anyone who does not, and I criticize anyone who relies upon fortresses, and does not worry about incurring the hatred of the people."\textsuperscript{62}

Machiavelli's accentuation of the militia was understandable since he influenced the establishment of the Florentine militia during Soderini's term in office.\textsuperscript{63} He identified the militia's inability to defend Florence as a problem of the State, not of the militia. In arguing for the militia, the spotlight focused on the problems of the condottieri, with their train of hired soldiers. The political and military establishment could not be organized while the condottieri dominated the scene. Machiavelli viewed mercenary arms negatively and the condottieri were only an extension of this.\textsuperscript{64} He blamed the political position of Italy during the early 1500s on mercenary armies because "they are powerful when among those who are not hostile, but weak and cowardly when confronted by determined enemies; they have no fear of God, and do not maintain commitments with men."\textsuperscript{65} Machiavelli continued to insist

\textsuperscript{62}\textit{Ibid.}, 75-6.

\textsuperscript{63}\textit{Butters, Governments}, 105-6.

\textsuperscript{64}\textit{Marcu, Accent}, 188-9.

\textsuperscript{65}\textit{Machiavelli, Prince}, 43.
that a militia was the best and most consistent form of defense, even after the defeat of the Florentine militia.

Another issue associated with the army's strength was the State's need to either expand or die. A State which lacked strength to defend itself certainly did not have the strength to expand; therefore, it must die. The destructive forces turned inward rather than outward. Expansion, itself, caused problems for the prince. Occupation of a country injured a good portion of the population, either economically or physically. Even citizens from the defeated state who had supported the conquest were difficult to maintain as friends. Loyalty was too costly to buy and the price escalated once the occupation began. The obligation created made this group hardest to deal with.

Although there must be control, good will was also important.\(^6^6\) Control of a conquered area was best managed through colonies, rather than military occupation. Machiavelli cautioned that the expense of military occupation could consume all of the revenues earned from the area. "Everyone suffers this nuisance, and becomes hostile to the ruler. . . . From every point of view then, this military solution is misguided, whereas establishing

\(^{66}\)Ibid., 7.
colonies is extremely effective.”*67 Colonies had a stabilizing influence on the indigenous population and tended to produce less ill will than soldiers. Machiavelli viewed colonies as the best means for rapidly consolidation of a conquest. There was even more reason to quickly consolidate power with a minimum of ill will if the conquered area was a hereditary principality. The people would look to the hereditary prince as soon as the conqueror experienced difficulties.*68

Machiavelli noted the inevitability of repression, when either conquering or reconquering a region. In most circumstances, a reconquered country experienced more severe methods of discipline.*69 This conclusion seemed to be reached on the basis of the author's own experience. When the Medici family reestablished control of Florence, they went to some lengths to discover traitors to their cause. Machiavelli found himself identified as a member of this group. His chance to regain political office under the Medici was severely hampered by this circumstance, and he chose to move to his country estate.

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*Ibid., 9.*

*Ibid., 6.*

*Ibid., 7.*

*Ibid., 7.*
The Prince recommended that the populace should either be caressed or that repressive measures be so severe that retaliation was not possible. Machiavelli reasoned that: "they can avenge slight injuries, but not those that are very severe. Hence, any injury done to a man must be such that there is no need to fear his revenge." The conqueror should evaluate his position before taking any action. The extent of the injuries necessary be decided and all punishment take place at one time. The continual infliction of punishment created a negative atmosphere, leading the people to wonder when the next instance of violence would occur. In contrast, favors should be doled out sparingly, so that they will seem more numerous. Machiavelli stated: "For injuries should be done all together so that, because they are tasted less, they will cause less resentment, benefits should be given out one by one so that they will be savoured more."

Religion did not enter into Machiavelli's system on a theological level. He instructed rulers to use it as a tool to control citizens. In the final analysis, he did find that ecclesiastical principalities were the most stable and least likely to experience rebellion.

70 Ibid., 9.
71 Ibid., 33-4.
Only they have states and do not defend them, and subjects whom they do not trouble to govern; and although their states are undefended, they are not deprived of them. And their subjects although not properly governed, do not worry about it; they cannot get rid of these rulers, nor even think about doing so. Only these principalities, then, are secure and successful.

The leaders of religious States violated most of the rules put forth by Machiavelli, and yet, they maintained their stability by the influence of religion. Secular leaders only attempted a rebellion against an ecclesiastical State if they obtained the support of someone else within the Church. In this way, the revolt came from within the Church, as well as outside, and the religious figure lent a moral flavor to the revolt. "These factions will always cause trouble whenever they have cardinals as leaders, because it is they who foster these factions, inside Rome and outside. . . Thus the ambition of prelates is at the root of the quarrels and tumults among the barons."73 The commentaries on the activities of the papal state served not only as examples of the use of power, but also questioned the moral standards of the clergy. The flexible morality of

72 Ibid., 39-40.
73 Ibid., 41-2.
the papacy regarding their acquisitions opened the way to
the acceptance of a more amoral state. 74

Machiavelli admired the papacy for the combination of
strength and the use of religion. In the ecclesiastical
state, religion held the same place as in the secular state,
that of a tool, only the clerics were better able to
manipulate it. Machiavelli was generally anticlerical. His
perspective did not provide room for a radical like
Savonarola, who placed belief first and power second.
Machiavelli did not intend to fight against the Church but
to make it an useful ally. 75 Machiavelli did not condemn
the Church for its temporal holdings and was particularly
appreciative of Cesare Borgia's strength.

During the early 1500s, Cesare Borgia acted as the
strong arm for the papacy. Prior to that time, the papal
state received its tribute irregularly and the acquisition
of land was one source of stable income. Many of the popes
ascended the papal throne at an advanced age, and were not
able to aggressively defend their holdings. In addition, it
was thought unseemly for the head of the Church to lead on
the battlefield. This action was usually accompanied by
great censure when it did occur. "In this new Europe,

74 Butterfield, Statecraft, 85.
75 Marcu, Accent, 57.
surrounded by these rapacious feudal princes, the papacy had to be militant and warlike in order to survive. Cesare fulfilled this need. He was an administrative device."  

Cesare's actions appeared logical to Machiavelli, as was his end when he had outlived his usefulness and became a threat to the papacy. Burckhardt suggested another motivation for the admiration of Cesare, "He, if anybody, could have secularized the States of the Church, and he would have been forced to do so in order to keep them. Unless we are much deceived, this is the real reason of the secret sympathy with which Machiavelli treats the great criminal."  

Burckhardt's argument was acceptable if extended to include the secularization of the State in general, not only the states of the Church. Machiavelli strongly supported the secular State. Additionally, Cesare posed as a model of strong, direct action, without the hesitation found so reprehensible in Florence.

J. R. Hale suggested that Machiavelli had various reasons for writing *The Prince*. Niccolò knew that the topic was not original and noted his intention to add to that body of literature. The style of the work indicated a hurried task. Hale stated "It was written to satisfy a need, but

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76Ibid., 118, 128.

77Burckhardt, *Civilization*, 71.
the impulse was a personal rather than a specific political
one; the energy with which it was written imposed a unity of
mood rather than of content."^78 There also seemed to be a
desire to justify politics as a science rather than an
indulgence. Throughout the work Machiavelli focused on the
external or foreign affairs of the State. He devoted much
less space to internal concerns, and then only when they
directly effected the stability of the government, not from
an apparent concern for the populace. Only later, in The
Discourses, did internal topics capture his attentions.\(^79\)
The style of the later work was more restrained and
displayed more controlled emotion. The tone of The
Discourses was more Aristotelian than the earlier work.
"Checks and balances and characteristically Aristotelian
recipes against revolution marked the Discorsi with a tone
entirely different from that of the Prince."\(^80\)

In The Prince, Machiavelli argued for strong
principalities, differing from his conclusion in The
Discourses. Having studied the various types of government,

^78 J. R. Hale, "The Setting of The Prince: 1513-1514," in The
Prince: A New Translation, Background, Interpretations,
Peripherica, trans. and ed. by Robert M. Adams (New York: W. W.

^79 Ibid., 144.

^80 Elliott, Western, 420.
he decided in *The Discourses* that none were adequate by themselves. The three good forms were not useful because they could not maintain their positive forms, inevitably transforming into the less acceptable governments. The negative forms could not be accepted based on their evil nature. Rather than these individual forms of government, Machiavelli suggested that a state should "chose instead one that shared in them all, since they thought such a government would be stronger and more stable, for if in one and the same state there was principality, aristocracy and democracy each would keep watch over the other."\(^{81}\)

Within *The Discourses*, he endorsed republicanism as the best type of government, since it contained aspects of all three good governments. This provided a means to check abuse of authority and maintain a positive government. Machiavelli's view of history tended to be cyclical. A repetition of good governments followed by poor. "The degeneration can, perhaps, be delayed; but Machiavelli has no confidence that it could be avoided. The very virtues of the good state contain the seeds of its own destruction."\(^{82}\) Machiavelli had a strong aversion to weak government, whatever classification it fell into, therefore, a strong

\(^{81}\) Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 214-5.
\(^{82}\) Burnham, *Defenders*, 62.
republican government should be established. He noted: "the worst thing about weak republics is that they are irresolute, so that all the choices they make, they are forced to make: and, if they should happen to do the right thing, it is force, not their own good sense, that makes them do it."\(^3\) A government which did not act from strength opened itself to danger from inside, as well as outside sources. He continued by stating: "it is beyond question that it is only in republics that the common good is looked to properly in that all that promotes it is carried out. . . . The opposite happens where there is a prince; for what he does in his own interests usually harms the city, and what is done in the interests of the city harms him."\(^4\) For this reason, the populace chose a form of self-rule over any other type of government.

Niccolò Machiavelli viewed the tendency to hesitate as the republic's greatest weakness. Since the goal of a republic was the dispersion of authority, major decisions required much discussion, hindering immediate, decisive action. The Discourses offered as a solution the appointment of a short-term, limited dictatorship, which would guard against abuse of power, but allowed for freedom

\(^3\) Machiavelli, Discourses, 299-300.

\(^4\) Ibid., 361-2.
of action. Machiavelli stated firmly: "In conclusion, then, I claim that republics which, when in imminent danger, have recourse neither to a dictatorship, nor to some form of authority analogous to it, will always be ruined when grave misfortune befalls them." The term of office, however, must not be extended. Machiavelli only advocated extending the term of a dictatorship for the length of a crisis or until it became ineffective within that crisis. Burnham suggested "that the twilight of the Roman Republic, as of so many other republican states, was first plainly indicated by the practice of extending the terms of officials." Machiavelli thought that Florence found itself in this situation when they extended the term of Soderini's office indefinitely.

For an example of how devastating lack of decisiveness could be, Machiavelli continually turned to his native Florence during the rule of Soderini. He noted problems with European rulers, the Pope, and neighboring city-states. Although Soderini was gonfaloniere for life, he failed to provide the necessary leadership. Machiavelli found no reason to legitimize the granting of long-term power, since

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85 Ibid., 290.
86 Ibid., 291.
87 Burnham, Defenders, 43.
Soderini's appointment to that post was not due to an emergency and he did not provide decisiveness.

Burnham thought that there was no contradiction in advocating different governments. He concluded that Machiavelli wanted the unity of the Italian states which could only be attained under a prince. Burnham suggested that Machiavelli did not actually prefer a monarchy over a republic, but thought the evidence dictated this choice for consolidation and stability. Burnham continued: "If a republic is the best form of government, it does not follow that a republic is possible at every moment and for all things."\(^\text{88}\) He interpreted Machiavelli's thinking to indicate that Italy must use a monarchy to become united, at which point it could revert to a republic.\(^\text{89}\)

Despite the difference in preferred government, many other conclusions drawn in *The Prince* can also be found in *The Discourses*. Machiavelli remained pessimistic about human nature. He continued to consider man's appetites to be insatiable and changeable. He also questioned motivations: "Men never do good unless necessity drives them to it; but when they are free to choose and can do just as they please, confusion and disorder become everywhere\(^\text{88}\)\(^\text{89}\)

\(^{88}\)Ibid., 68-9.

\(^{89}\)Ibid., 36-7.
rampant. Hence it is said that hunger and poverty make men industrious, and that laws make them good."\textsuperscript{90} Machiavelli viewed the formation of a new government as a time ripe for the creation of hostile factions and warned against the ease of reinstating the previous tyranny. He reiterated the edict that a state must expand or die, with special instructions for republics. Machiavelli noted that some republican forms of government did not provide for expansion and would suffer greatly if they attempted to increase their territory, therefore, these republics remained small and weak.\textsuperscript{91} Machiavelli returned to one of his favorite topics, the necessity of providing defense, stating: "Present-day princes and modern republics which have not their own troops for offence and defence ought to be ashamed of themselves,"\textsuperscript{92} The choice of government mattered little if there was no defense to maintain it. His low opinion of the Church as a religious entity reappeared, and his criticism was quite strong: "The first debt which we, Italians, owe to the Church and to priests, therefore, is that we have become irreligious and perverse... . But we owe them a yet


\textsuperscript{91}Ibid., 153, 226.

\textsuperscript{92}Ibid., 266.
Church as a religious entity reappeared, and his criticism was quite strong: "The first debt which we, Italians, owe to the Church and to priests, therefore, is that we have become irreligious and perverse. . . . But we owe them a yet greater debt, which is the second cause of our ruin. It is the Church that has kept, and keeps, Italy divided." The papacy appealed to foreign powers whenever one of the Italian states became strong enough to start uniting other smaller states. A strong State within Italy was a threat to the temporal authority exercised by the papacy.

The Prince can be viewed as both a model and a satire. When interpreted literally, it presented a ruler who was ruthless and calculating. The work lacked any emotion between the ruler and his subjects. Machiavelli instructed rulers to pursue their own interest, the maintenance of power. The term Machiavellian has developed extremely negative connotations. It was employed chiefly to describe enemies or authoritarian rulers. If the work was a satire, however, a means of pointing out the

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93 Ibid., 245.


appeared to contribute practical means for strengthening the State. The advice, however, was not implemented at the time, and more recent political experiments termed Machiavellian have not fared well.
CHAPTER 4

LUTHER; THE PRAGMATIC IDEALIST

Martin Luther's thoughts on the State were utilized much more quickly than either the ideal theory of Dante Alighieri or Niccolò Machiavelli theory interpreted as a practical method. History has subjected Luther's ideas to sharp scrutiny and some modern historians held Luther responsible for factors leading to Nazi Germany.\(^1\) Others hailed him as the champion of the German people.\(^2\) Luther's contemporaries too held widely disparate opinions of the reformer. His followers "hailed him as prophet of the Lord and the deliverer of Germany." His opponents thought he was the "son of perdition and the demolisher of Christendom."\(^3\) Many criticized him for not going far enough with his work. The agrarian agitators called him a "sycophant of the princes" because he did not support their rebellion while

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\(^3\) Ibid.
the children of Israel out of Egypt and left them to perish in the wilderness."\textsuperscript{4} 

Luther was not a child of the Renaissance, nor, for all his study of language and the past, was he a humanist.\textsuperscript{5} He had ties to medieval thought and to the scholastics; therefore, it is difficult to place him in any one category. Moreover, the historian must deal both with Luther's stated thoughts on government and the manner in which these theories have been interpreted and used.

Luther came from Thuringia, an area of Germany not much affected by the Italian Renaissance. His family was, strictly speaking, peasantry, although they had enough money for his education. The peasants tended to be the most religiously conservative element of the population and much of Luther's social doctrine reflected this background.\textsuperscript{6} Roland Bainton suggested that: "his faith many be called the last great flowering of the Middle Ages."\textsuperscript{7} his combination of practicality with idealism created a bridge to a more modern outlook.

\textsuperscript{4}Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{5}Ibid., 25-6.  
\textsuperscript{7}Bainton, Stand, 25-6.
Luther originally studied law. Following his conversion experience in the forest, Luther switched to the priesthood. He spent his time as a priest gaining knowledge in many areas, but his interest did not originally turn to a detailed study of the Bible. In October 1512, he was informed that he should study for his doctorate in order to take over the chair of the Bible at the University at Wittenberg. The new position required intensive study of the Bible in Latin.

Luther became a political factor after October 1517 when he posted his ninety-five theses for discussion. The theses were posted in Latin, as a scholarly exercise, not intended for the consideration of the common man. Only through translation by others were the theses made available to the masses in German. Bainton argued that Luther was not set on dissent. "If at once the pope had issued the bull of a year later, clearly defining the doctrine of indulgences and correcting the most glaring abuses, Luther might have subsided... Prompt and straightforward action might have allayed the outburst." Luther, however, had already started down the road to rebellion and quickly gained a following.

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8Ibid., 59-60, 83.
9Ibid., 85.
Between 1517 and 1519, Luther was affected by humanistic trends. He followed the popular style of hellenizing his name, calling himself Eleutherius, the free man. During this period, he also began correspondence with Erasmus, a noted humanist. Erasmus's practice of Christian humanism had much in common with the goals of the Reformation; however, his means and scope varied from Luther's. The humanists and those involved in the Reformation insisted on man's right to free investigation and study. Participants in both movements shared an interest in antiquity and linguistics. The humanists studied the Bible from the perspective of an ancient writing, whereas Luther analyzed it to attain a better understanding of the religious meanings and implications. According to Bainton: "Light broke at last through the examination of exact shades of meaning in the Greek language. One understands why Luther could never join those who discarded the humanist tools of scholarship." Their attitudes toward indulgences produced another source of agreement. "For different reasons Humanism as well as Reformation attacked indulgences. What one called blasphemy

\[10\text{Ibid., 124-5.}\]
\[11\text{Ibid., 64.}\]
the other ridiculed as silly superstition."12 In spite of these areas of similarity, the movements were quite distinct. The humanists, led by Erasmus, chose to work within the established system for reform. Dante's Christian humanism prepared a basis for working within this accepted framework. In contrast, Luther's break with the official Church hierarchy was accompanied by his excommunication, and his followers often tried to make changes within the incumbent governments.

In addition to these similar characteristics, both groups emphasized individualism to a certain extent. Luther's political thought encouraged individualism in the choice of occupation, but he did not advocate individualism in public behavior. He favored the good of society over the good of a single citizen. Luther concentrated on religious issues. A man answered to God for his own actions and beliefs, creating a much more important role for the scripture and each person's interpretation of them. Since the Church could not intercede, the believer's understanding of the Bible became paramount.13 Luther stated:

"Furthermore, everyman runs his own risk in believing as he

12 Ibid., 124.

does, and he must see to it himself that he believes rightly. As nobody else can go to heaven or hell for me, so nobody else can believe or disbelieve for me." \(^{14}\)

When Luther's religious thought extended into the political and social realm he carried the theme of individual rights and responsibilities. He defended "the right of the individual to think and believe in matters political, religious and otherwise, as he sees proper. . . . The search for truth must be untrammelled." \(^{15}\) This stance on individualism extended to thought, but not always to action. Once those thoughts translated into actions, the government did have control and exercised its judgment for the good of the State. Unlike most humanists of his time, Luther disliked Aristotle. He complained of the time spent in study of this ancient writer and stated: "It grieves me to the quick that this damned, conceited, rascally heathen had deluded and made fools of so many of the best Christians

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\(^{15}\) Waring, Theories, 237.
with his misleading writings. God has sent him as a plague upon us on account of our sins.\textsuperscript{16}

Luther did not intend to develop a systematic philosophy of political thought. Religion was his main goal and government had to be addressed since it affected the practice and dissemination of religion. Luther offered spiritual counsel to the rulers so that they might rule their people better.\textsuperscript{17} Sabine stated: "He had in fact very little interest in politics except as events forced it on his attention, and by temperament he had great respect for civil authority; he was always markedly opposed to political pressure exerted through sedition and violence.\textsuperscript{18} The creation of a movement for social democracy was not one of Luther's goals. That trend developed from the presbyterian and congregational traditions of church government,


unintentional offshoots of the Reformation. Ernst Troeltsch contended that Luther departed from Catholic doctrine by demanding the same level of ethical behavior from all members of the Church. He did not advocate withdrawing from the secular world in an effort to be surrounded by a less sinful environment. The State, which was ordained by God, had duties to perform including the maintenance of peace and the well-being of the community. If the State was a Christian government, headed by a Christian prince, then the duties expanded. A Christian government had the duty "to undertake the education and preservation of Society, Christian unity of faith, discipline, and order, and also to care for the Word of God, for purity and for the prosperity of the Church." Calvinism continued many of the same demands on the State; however, the development of Geneva eventually added more emphasis on public participation. The Calvinist ministers used public opinion, stirred by their sermons, to influence the actions of the electors. Some of the other sects which developed from the Reformation, such as the Baptist, continued to expand on the ideas of public participation and popular sovereignty.  

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19 Troeltsch, Social, 551, 512, 548.
20 Ibid., 628.
Luther's theory did not create parallel sources of power similar to Dante's. The Church and the State were separate, but not in the sense that Dante intended. These authorities were of totally different natures, one always trying to dominate the other if they both existed in one area. Luther rejected theocracy as a means of government, thereby opening himself to charges of encouraging caesaropapism.\textsuperscript{21} Lewis Spitz suggested that the Church and the State could interact reciprocally within Luther's construct. Spitz noted: "the government is indirectly helpful to the church by maintaining peaceful conditions so that the gospel can be preached. The church serves the government indirectly by developing subjects of good-will and sound character."\textsuperscript{22} The reformer indicated that a Christian prince, exercising his office fully, made decisions which benefitted his people. In return, his subjects would support the prince through obedience.

\textsuperscript{21} Bainton, \textit{Stand}, 243.

The need for a strong State was very clear in Luther's writings. He believed that God willed every State to be governed since government was a gift from God. "Since the empire has been given us by the providence of God as well as by the plotting of evil men, . . . I would not advise that we give it up, but rather that we rule it wisely and in the fear of God. . . it does not matter to him where an empire comes from; his will is that it be governed." Philip Melanchthon, a follower of Luther, echoed these thoughts on government in his writings. He asserted that it was an incorrect assumption that only the strong and bold could govern and that God's justice played no part in the maintenance of a government.

Luther rejected the supremacy of the papacy. Only in spiritual matters might the pope raise his authority above the State. These spiritual matters only extended to preaching and giving absolution, thus restricting the pope's sphere of influence. In addition, the pope had the right to anoint and crown the emperor or king, but this gave the

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24 Luther, Works, 44:209.

papacy no power over the State. Luther argued that, with the exception of the later Middle Ages and the early Renaissance, the papacy had not claimed this right.26

Although the Reformation began as a religious and political movement within the established Church it quickly spread to other areas of life.27 Unlike the previously discussed theorists, Luther did not select any one form of government which fit his thought best. Additionally, government was not a specifically Christian institution, but a gift from God which could be used by Christian and pagan alike. He did not think that Christian rulers were necessarily better than pagan ones: "On the contrary, he holds that basically they are all alike. In Luther's eyes, government is an institution which God has provided for the benefit of all men. . . . For even in pagan societies God does not abandon men wholly to the Devil."28 Luther tended to support the monarchical form of government, not

26Luther, Works, 44:211, 164-5; Bainton, Stand, 88.
27Waring, Theories, 266-7.
necessarily because it was better but because it was prevalent at that time and provided strong leadership.\textsuperscript{29}

Luther favored the local nobility and the provincial governments over the imperial government and the papacy. He argued: "It seems just to me that territorial laws and customs should take precedence over general imperial laws, and that the imperial laws be used only in case of necessity."\textsuperscript{30} These lower levels of government were, in his view, more responsive to the people.\textsuperscript{31} He also objected to the idea of the emperor as the temporal leader of the world. Luther shared the nationalistic leanings of Machiavelli, but without the support of Charles V, absolute authority in the Empire was dangerous to his young Church. His emphasis was on the unification and strengthening of Germany. He associated absolute rule with tyranny based on the example of the papacy. Luther stated his hope that: "Someday some of the Romanists or some of the good bishops and scholars will take notice of the pope's tyranny and repudiate it."\textsuperscript{32}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31]Bornkamm, \textit{Thought}, 233.
\end{footnotes}
In Luther's mind, absolutism led to the abuses of power as witnessed in the papacy.

Separation must be maintained between the two sources of authority outside of areas that could be reciprocally beneficial. One of the areas that Luther criticized was the dominance of canon law over civil law. Canon law had a place in the spiritual realm, but it possessed no authority in the temporal realm, which he perceived to be the cominance of canon law over civil law.\(^{33}\) Ironically, Luther's major conflict, the Diet of Worms, occurred when a secular assembly took on the authority and function of a council representing the Pope. This was not the Pope's first choice; however, he had been unable to secure Luther's extradition by Charles V.\(^ {34}\)

Luther maintained that the ability of the priest to transform the elements during the sacrament was the theoretical source of superiority of the Church over the State. This gave the lowest of priests a power that the secular State could never have. This unacceptable situation inhibited the functioning of the State. Christian men, and rulers in particular, should take the opportunity to restrict the power of the papacy, since the pope was the

\(^{33}\text{Ibid., 223.}\)

\(^{34}\text{Bainton, \textit{Stand}, 90.}\)
driving force of this domination. Luther contended: "No one can do this so well as the temporal authorities, especially since they are also fellow-Christians, fellow-priests, fellow-members of the spiritual estate, fellow-lords over all things." He stressed the role of the individual as priest and Christian, as well as, the duty of the ruler to claim his proper place in the order ordained by God. "Since those who exercise secular authority have been baptized with the same baptism, and have the same faith and the same gospel as the rest of us, we must admit that they are priests and bishops and we must regard their office as one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community." The temporal ruler must not allow the Church to prevail in matters that did not pertain to faith. However, when the State strayed into spiritual matters or issued a sinful command, the people had the right to object. Bornkamm analyzed Luther's theory of the State and found that "he held that a nation is in duty bound to oppose a wicked government with moral or spiritual weapons, with words of

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35 Luther, Works, 44:137.
37 Ibid., 160.
warning or accusation, with disobedience over against a sinful command...". 38 Bornkamm concluded by noting that suffering might follow in the wake of civil disobedience. 39

Luther, as Dante, recognized the dual nature of man. Although the spiritual and physical natures were distinct, they existed together and at times interacted. Lewis Spitz stated: "For him church and state were not passive associations of people or externally structured institutions, but they were the dynamic, positive, active realms in which the immanent God works through people for good in two different ways." 40 Christians within the State brought justice and caring into the secular system.

The new Church which developed under Luther's leadership needed protection as the Reformation developed. It faced challenges, both papal and secular, yet Luther tried to maintain its independence. 41 Luther faced accusations of subordinating the Church to the State and, in doing so, taking away one of the checks to the power of the State. Realistic evaluations at that time did not allow shunning the protection of the princes. Their protection

38 Bornkamm, Thought, 233-4.
39 Laski, Danger, 19.
40 Spitz, "Christian", 127.
41 Waring, Theories, 253-4.
was necessary and customary during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The organized States protected their official Churches and began to dominate them during this period of the Reformation and Renaissance. The monarchs led the Catholic Church in the various countries and influenced the operation of the Church within their country. The creation of the Church of England and the Gallican Church before it were striking examples of the ruler's ability to dominate the Church within his realm. In an effort to force the Catholic Church's cooperation, Henry VIII discontinued the payment of annates to Rome. Undoubtedly, Henry VIII's break with the Catholic Church was political; however, the Catholic Church could not survive as the official religion of England without his support and protection.42

Luther's writings on the State and authority dealt with specific instances and people in the political setting, rather than abstract concepts, such as social contract theory. At times, his political views, however, were associated with John Locke's theories through a rather extended chain of individuals.43 In contrast to Dante, Luther did not attempt to create an ideal state.44 Luther

42 Bainton, Stand, 242-3.
43 Troeltsch, Social, 634-41.
44 Bornkamm, Thought, 239.
concentrated on the relationship between the people and the State. Bornkamm noted that Luther's view of the State did not materialize during his time: "However, it maintained itself as a moral idea and force, and it was able to develop amid the most varying historical forms, because Luther had endowed it with the requisite elasticity and flexibility." Luther's political thought evolved from specifics ideas to an abstract theory, much the same as Machiavelli's concept of the prince's virtues.

W. D. J. Cargill Thompson indicated that Luther's reforms were within the Augustinian tradition. Thompson found Luther's philosophy, however, to be more definite and practical, less likely to be misinterpreted. Roland Bainton stated: "His domestic ethic was Pauline and patriarchal, the economic ethic Thomistic and mainly agrarian, the political ethic Augustinian and small town." The natural unit of government was the nation-state for Luther. Foreign interference, whether temporal or spiritual, should not be tolerated.

Both the State and the Church had sharply defined limits. The Church must not interfere in State affairs,

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45 Ibid., 257.
47 Bainton, Stand, 232: Thompson, Political, 3.
therefore the State could not extend its authority over spiritual matters. Temporal authority was not qualified to judge souls and should restrict itself to its areas of expertise. Luther did not think that the State could work effectively against heresy. "Heresy can never be restrained by force. . . Here God's word must do the fighting. If it does not succeed, certainly the temporal power will not succeed. . . Heresy is a spiritual matter which you cannot hack to pieces with iron, consume with fire, or drown in water." France in the later sixteenth century could have benefited from a closer reading of this material. The officially Catholic government was unable to stop the Huguenot heresy through forty years of religious and civil wars. In practice, Luther's theory of the State would have authority over the actions of the heretics if not there beliefs.

Man's sinful nature required the control of the State. A true Christian did not need government to dictate right from wrong, but would act in a manner beneficial to his community. Thompson asserted:

Whereas it is true that the Christian considered purely qua Christian does not need temporal government, since as a Christian he is governed by the word, the Christian on earth cannot be regarded simply as a Christian. For

48Luther, Works, 45:105.
49Ibid.,114 & 111.
he is not perfect. He remains a creature of sin. As such he remains under the law as far as his external life is concerned and he continues to stand in need of temporal government to curb his sinful nature. Luther viewed human nature negatively. Man was naturally depraved, innately sinful. An individual could not always act in a Christian manner, therefore, the need for coercion. Taken further, society could never be sufficiently Christianized to function without government. Luther did not intend to imply that since the State existed because of sin that it was inherently sinful. The State existed to punish evildoers. In addition, Luther believed "that the state served a positive function, working for the good of society and performing certain functions which had been wrongly usurped by the medieval church, which had become a power-mad institution." Theoretically, a true Christian did not need the State. Unfortunately, even a true Christian lived in the world with many sinful people. It was therefore necessary that Christians obey the State. In order to fulfill his duty, a good citizen set an example for those who were evil. Along a similar vein, Luther insisted that no employment

50Thompson, Political, 75: Luther, Works, 45:120.
51Spitz, "Christian", 136; Bainton, Stand, 238; Bornkamm, Thought, 245.
52Thompson, Political, 73: Luther, Works, 45:103.
within the State was bad by its nature. The positions in the temporal government are required for the efficient running of the government, making them acceptable occupations.53

The Christian failed to fulfill his calling if he refused to serve the State, including the functions of punishment and warfare.54 Service in all professions was possible since there existed a distinction between the person and the office. The executioner served his office by executing a criminal, yet it was the office which had the authority to carry out the sentence, not the person.55 Luther contended: "If the governing authority and its sword are a divine service, . . . then everything that is essential for the authority's bearing of the sword must also be divine service. There must be those who arrest, prosecute, execute, and destroy the wicked, and who protect, acquit, defend, and save the good."56 Luther not only asserted the acceptability of Christians within the

53Thompson, Political, 77.
54Ibid., 74.
55Melanchthon, Melanchthon, 333: Bainton, Stand, 240.
56Luther, Works, 45:103.
structure of the State, but believed that they were better suited to carrying out these duties.\textsuperscript{57}

Luther denied the right of the State to dictate matters of conscience. Man was spiritually and intellectually free unless practice of these beliefs adversely affected society. Submission is not a duty and self-defence is a right of the individual in case of tyranny....Religious and civil liberty - of conscience, speech, and press - are inalienable rights belonging alike to every individual subject only to the equal rights of others, the maintenance of public peace and order, and the sovereign power of the state over the external life, where it touches the lives of others.\textsuperscript{58}

When the actions based on these thoughts effected others in the community, then the temporal government had the right to evaluate and react to these actions. "Its authority therefore extends only over man's outward actions. It has no authority over their souls. It can enforce external obedience, but it has no power of itself to make men inwardly righteous or make them believe."\textsuperscript{59}

Luther attributed a large amount of authority to the temporal government and expected a great deal in return. Simply put: "It is the duty of the authorities to seek the

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid., 100.

\textsuperscript{58}Waring, \textit{Theories}, 276-7.

\textsuperscript{59}Thompson, \textit{Political}, 67-8.
best for those they govern." In contrast to Machiavelli, Luther's emphasis was on the people's benefit, rather than the maintenance of a ruler. Luther attempted to free the ruler from the influence of the papacy. Bornkamm thought that: "When Luther thus freed the public official's conscience from every clerical tutelage, he at the same time addressed the most exacting demand to it, namely, strict accountability to God." In addition, some of Luther's followers, such as Melanchthon, extended the public good to include the civil government as moral enforcer, even when the action did not effect the peace of the community. If the action was morally wrong based on the commandments then the ruler must take action. This went against Luther's statements regarding heresy.

The basic statement cited above on the duty of the government could be interpreted many different ways. Luther touched on the same topic often and tended to be more specific. The government was the ruler's personal responsibility. Luther expanded on the specific duties a ruler should fulfill:

61Bornkamm, *Thought*, 255.
a prince's duty is fourfold: First, toward God there must be true confidence and earnest prayer; second, toward his subjects there must be love and Christian service; third, with respect to his counselors and officials he must maintain an untrammelled reason and unfettered judgment; fourth, with respect to evildoers he must manifest a restrained severity and firmness. Then the prince's job will be done right, both outwardly and inwardly; it will be pleasing to God and to the people.

This placed considerable emphasis on the person's, in this case the ruler's, role as a Christian within his chosen vocation. There was a difference between the secular vocation and spiritual life; however, correct faith required serving to the best of one's ability in the temporal world. The attempted separation could not be complete. As recognized earlier, the two realms of influence might be separate but they must interact since the spiritual man must function in the temporal world.

Luther distinguished between Christian authority, or a Christian state and Christians in authority within the State. The first transformed into a theocracy which he did not accept. The second became a State beneficial to the citizens since it attempted to meet their needs without dictating their beliefs. Christians within government worked against evil within society from a moral basis. In addition, since all members of the Church were priests and

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Luther, Works, 45:126.
should have a knowledge of Christian doctrines, they were also called upon to judge matters of false doctrine in instances where it effected the State. "This is a result of his combination of freedom of conscience, which does not tamper with private opinion, and intolerance in public life." The concept that practice of religion endangered the safety of the State is a fairly remote memory to most of the Western world.

Martin Luther was definitely authoritarian. He advocated obedience to the State in almost every circumstance. Violence against the government was the last option for citizens, to be used only when all else failed. However, Luther continued to maintain that the State could not dictate matters of conscience. Disobedience may be justified if the State required actions that were against the individual's conscience or God's will. "If, however, the government makes demands contrary to the love of neighbor, the Christian must in good conscience follow the apostle's counsel to obey God rather than a human being.

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65 Bornkamm, *Thought*, 231.


and to withhold obedience to such a government (Acts 5:29 RSV)."⁶⁸ The standard presented by Luther to measure the acceptability of disobedience was stringent. Merely disagreeing with a policy did not qualify as a reason to disregard a command. "So long as they do not know [if the prince is right], and cannot with all possible diligence find out, they many obey him without peril to their souls."⁶⁹ This pertained to civil edicts as well as the prosecution of war.

There were, however, circumstances that required action by the Christian in society. As mentioned previously, civil disobedience was acceptable when the ruler's commands opposed the religious commandments. Luther would not tolerate domination by the Papists. Their attempts to force the Catholic religion had to be fought. "It is both a right and a duty, under such circumstances, to resist force with force, if the struggle be begun by others. The real rebel is the one who oppresses others."⁷⁰ Should the head of the State chose to participate in this oppression of faith, then

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⁶⁹ Luther, Works, 45:126.

⁷⁰ Waring, Theories, 249.
he must be opposed. In addition, if the prince pursued a manifestly unjust war, then the Christian had reason for disobedience. Luther was more favorable to passive resistance than active resistance, since active resistance did more damage to the peace of the society. Bainton contended: "Servility on the part of the Church to the magistrate was repugnant to Luther. The minister is commissioned to be the mentor of the magistrate." It was the citizens duty, as a member and priest within the Christian body, to advise and warn the ruler of his errors. This first line of attack should be exercised prior to disobedience. The charges of willful subversion of the State were in part based on Luther's work "The Freedom of the Christian Man". This tract generated a strong reaction from the masses. They interpreted the essay as a declaration of their right not to obey government which they considered to be wrong. Luther contended that he did not advocate this action, and, in fact, even a poor magistrate should be obeyed in temporal matters. This reflected the narrow definition of freedom which existed at that time. "It did not in the 16th century situation include the freedom to engage in revolutionary action on behalf of the oppressed. Modern notions of progress had not yet

71 Bainton, Stand, 244.
developed, and the world of human affairs was conceived as fundamentally static."72 Popular sovereignty was not fostered despite the later interpretations of Luther and the congregational influence toward more representative government. Melanchthon, presented a very strong interpretation of Luther's instructions for obedience a few years after Luther. "Deliberate disobedience against the worldly authority, and against true or reasonable laws, is deadly sin, sin which God punishes with eternal damnation if we obstinately continue in it. Faith in God cannot be present in one's heart at the same time as a design to act contrary to the open commandment of God."73 Luther did not present his case so strongly, however, interpretations such as this must be examined when considering the effect the reformer had on the development of the State, particularly the German state.74

Luther presented advice on the social duties of the state, particularly regarding the care of the poor and the education of the populace. He thought that a well organized government should be able to take care of its poor and end begging. Many beggars in the sixteenth century employed

73 Melanchthon, Melanchthon, 333.
74 Bainton, Stand, 188: Bornkamm, Thought, 233.
this method of survival by choice. The mendicant monks begged in their travels, although they often had other trades which could earn a living. Pilgrims begged while they were enroute to their destination. Luther criticized both of these groups, which was not surprising, both were integral parts of the Catholic Church. Luther stated: "Nobody ought to go begging among Christians. It would even be a simple matter to make a law to the effect that every city should look after its own poor, if only we had the courage and the intention to do so." 75

A State in which Christians participated must find some means to address the needs of the poor. Luther suggested that the State or the city appoint someone to oversee the poor. Since the overseer knew the poor, he could determine which were poor by choice and which were unable to provide for themselves. Luther made it clear that he thought many who appeared poor could maintain themselves. He continued: "As I see it, there is no other business in which so much skullduggery and deceit are practiced as in begging, and yet it could all be easily abolished." 76 Although he recognized the problem, he also clung to his belief that man's depraved nature allowed many to claim that which they did not need or

75 Luther, Works, 44:189.
76 Ibid., 190.
In January 1522, Wittenberg issued the first city ordinance of the Reformation. It required that the mass be practiced after the model of Andreas Carlstadt. The ordinance also put into place Luther's social program: "Begging was forbidden. Those genuinely poor should be maintained from a common fund. Prostitutes should be banned." The last restriction being the duty of the government to provide a morally acceptable atmosphere for its citizens.

Luther also argued strongly for the education of all citizens, even if only on the elementary level. Education was a tool to strengthen both the Church and the State. Schooling not only taught the ability to interpret the Bible, but also respect and obedience to authority. Waring summarized: "It is of little use for the state to punish crime that has been committed, if it neglect or refuse to teach and train its youth as to what is right and what is wrong in the relations between man and man." Education provided better citizens and, ultimately, more efficient civil servants. It was, therefore, the responsibility of the officials in the cities and towns to provide basic

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77 Bainton, Stand, 237: Luther, Works, 44:190-1.
78 Bainton, Stand, 207.
79 Waring, Theories, 201-2, 220.
education for all and advanced education for those that merited it. The rulers would be neglecting their duties if they did not institute this reform, since this was one way to improve the life within the State. Luther advocated practical studies in elementary education for all members of the State. The more abstract studies of philosophy and theories were not necessary at this level and should be replaced by subjects which prepared the student for life as a citizen of the State and member of the Church.

In light of later developments within Germany, Luther must be examined for anti-Semitic prejudice. He was inconsistent in his opinion of the Jews, changing to some degree over time, although tending to be unfavorable much of the time. He viewed these people as unrepentant and surmised that their fate was the price for this refusal to believe. Luther's insurmountable difference with the Jews was their refusal to believe in Christ. Bornkamm maintained: "The crime of the Jews is of a religious nature: blasphemy of Christ. And Luther's goal, even though he entertained little hope of attaining it even to a modest degree is also religious: the conversion of individual Jews. Their fundamental sin is disobedience to Holy

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80 Ibid., 195-7.
The Church must accept a Jew who converted to the faith, for he had corrected his error. Luther also criticized the practice of usury among the Jews. In doing so, he did not excuse the German princes for their overspending which forced them to resort to borrowing from the Jews. Luther held little hope of salvation for the Jews.82

Varying interpretations of Luther were already causing unrest during the Peasant Revolt of fall 1524 to spring 1525. Bainton identified the immediate stimulus for the organizing of peasant bands to have been the arrest of Lutheran ministers. Luther objected to the methods employed by the peasants; however, he supported some of their demands.83 The revolt was not very well organized and lacked cohesion. Unity of religion did not exist in many instance. Catholics and Protestants could be found on either side.84 Bornkamm credited Luther with awakening a

81 Bornkamm, Thought, 230-1.
82 Ibid., 227, 231-2.
84 Bainton, Stand, 273-5.
new national consciousness. "The process which transfused
the new national sentiment from humanistic circles into the
masses was decided and accelerated by Luther." Charles V
missed his opportunity to become the leader of the national
movement when he misjudged the situation. He attempted,
first, to bridge the religious problems and then, to
eradicate the new religion, creating greater problems.
"These policies drove the Reformation and the princes
definitely into each others arms and sounded the death knell
of the union of the empire." 

The Reformation definitely affected Germany, as well as
the rest of Europe. Bainton suggested that Luther
reinforced a disintegration of the medieval order that was
already in progress. "Nationalism was in process of
breaking the political unities when the Reformation
destroyed the religious. Yet this paradoxical figure
revived the Christian consciousness of Europe." This
breakdown forced Europeans to reevaluate and redefine their
relationship both to the Church and to the State. According

85 Bornkamm, Thought, 222.
86 Ibid., 257: James Mackinnon, Luther and the Reformation,
Volume IV, Vindication of the Movement (London: Longmans, Green,
and Co., 1930), 367.
87 Bainton, Stand, 21: Brendan Bradshaw, "The Reformation and
Counter Reformation", History Today, 33: 42-5, N 83: Bill Yoder,
to Waring, "The Reformation emphasized the individual and individual rights and powers that cannot be properly or permanently controlled by the state. Any attempt to do so will only weaken the state as well as the individual. There is a limit to the power of the despot as well as to that of the democracy."\textsuperscript{88} The political Reformation changed the expectations of the citizens in a way in which neither Dante nor Machiavelli effected the populace.

\textsuperscript{88}Waring, Theories, 256-7: Luther's Legacy", Commonweal, 110:612-3, N 18, 83.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Dante Alighieri, Niccolò Machiavelli and Martin Luther each approached the theory of the State from a different perspective. They did, however, aim for common goals. These men shared the desire to remove temporal authority from the dominance of spiritual authority. Each wanted the State to provide a stable environment for its citizens. Their theories ranged from the extremely idealistic to the purely practical. Luther’s approach to the state combined aspects of the two extremes. He had practical applications while retaining some of the idealism of Dante. These men and their theories represented three important steps in development toward a more modern conception of the State.

Each of the men discussed held strongly emotional ideas about the State. In the present time, they have been neglected in the study of the development of the modern State in favor of Enlightenment theorists.¹ Studies based

on the scientific methods and attitudes established during the nineteenth century had difficulty in accommodating these less scientific philosophies. Burnham insisted that Machiavelli wrote a scientific analysis in The Prince; however, most works on the modern state gave little of no credit to Machiavelli for his insight or method. In most instances, the origin of the modern State is traced to Thomas Hobbes or John Locke. Earlier theorists tend to be consigned to disuse. "They all are based, in good measure, not on science but on other sources of human scheming, good or bad, such as religious revelation, institutional conviction, world views held in common.... in brief, on ways of thinking or feeling that do not claim scientific rank."² The implication is, if the theory could not be defined scientifically, then it was not valid or useful.

The approach of the Renaissance and Reformation thinkers is perceived as less scientific than seventeenth and eighteenth century theorists; however, they provided a view of the State which is understandable and useful today. The theories of the State which are classed as scientific tend to be less emotional, more antiseptic. Much emotion is tied

to the concept of the State. It does not seem reasonable to conclude the search for the origins of the modern State in the Enlightenment when these earlier theorists affected the State which Hobbes and Locke were analyzing. Modern evaluations of the State "were sure to enumerate justice, security, order, and the general welfare among the proper ends of state and government."\(^3\) Dante, Machiavelli, and Luther addressed these goals in varying degrees, although with differing conclusions.

David Held maintains that the State did not become the center of political analysis until the end of the sixteenth century. A detailed analysis found similarities between Hobbes, Locke and the earlier theorists which indicate that at least some earlier thinkers focused on the State. Held asserted that theories of the State remain "of abiding interest today precisely because of this tension between the claims of individuality on the one hand, and the power requisite for the state to ensure 'peaceful and commodious living' on the other."\(^4\) Machiavelli, taken literally, directly tied the fate of the citizen to the stability of the State. \textit{The Prince}, evaluated as a critique of the

\(^3\)Ibid., 4.

State, provided many instances in which the State dominated the individual and the people as a whole, and pointed out the need for change in that relationship. Dante addressed the relationship between the individual and the State by maintaining that the universal State, working toward a unified goal, allowed the individual more freedom of action. The State placed restrictions on the unique goals of the individual while the stability of the State provided security in which to pursue these goals. Luther recognized the competing goals of the individual and the State. He placed primary emphasis on maintaining peace within the State. In theory, individuals had freedom of thought in all instances and freedom of action to the extent that the peace of the State was not disturbed. Not all of these theories are used directly today, but the stability and peace of the modern State, particularly as expressed by Luther, reflected fairly closely the ideals of Hobbes and Locke, with their contract theory.

Hobbes and Locke maintained that people are subject to their desires which caused restlessness and disruption in life. They supported strong secular States "above all because of fears about the problems and dangers individuals faced if left to their own devices. People could not live
adequately without a guiding force.\footnote{Ibid., 23, 15.} Dante, Machiavelli, and Luther also acknowledged these desires and ambitions. Dante dealt with these motivations by providing dual leadership in religious and secular life. This leadership was intended to curb the negative goals individuals had and encourage the more positive. Machiavelli's evaluation of human nature is much more negative and he concentrated more specifically on strong preventive measures to curb these negative tendencies. The ruler was better equipped to deal with these base tendencies since the tendencies were openly recognized in all individuals, including the ruler himself. Luther contended that society could never be sufficiently Christian to operate without a State. He instructed christians within society to obey the State as an example to others and as a guard against man's more depraved nature.

Dante, Machiavelli, and Luther had divergent ideas on the actual form and implementation of the State. Dante maintained a very theoretical approach to the creation of a State which was stronger than the Empire of his day. He provided little practical advice or applications. Nevertheless, he provided an early example of a dual system of authority and established the right of secular government to rule separately in the temporal sphere. Dante continued...
to assert strong moral overtones in secular life, while maintaining separation of Church and State. He required that the Emperor provide a Christian model for his subjects. If the ruler strayed from the Christian tenets in his life or in his rule the Church had the right to judge him. Therefore, the separation of Church and State was not entirely complete. Dante also differentiated between the study of philosophy and theology based on the idea that each realm needed an independent area of thought. Philosophy became the support of the State, theoretically removing both from the influence of theology.

Dante devoted much time within the De Monarchia to establishing the independence of the Empire. He insisted that the Empire be universal to counteract the influence of the universal Church. Dante selected monarchy as the most stable form of government, and therefore, the one best able to compete with the papacy. Neither Church, nor State had the right to dominate the other, since Dante traced the creation of both to God. Man's nature made this duality necessary in order to provide the needed guidance in his spiritual and temporal life. Conflict arose when duality remained unrecognized, or when one authority tried to exercise power outside its sphere of jurisdiction.
Dante drew from Thomas Aquinas's and Aristotle's models of government. Dante decided that one-person rule represented the best and worst forms of government. The best form of rule was monarchy, since it supported the theory of oneness and most closely imitated God. He emphasized peace and harmony, an indication of his humanistic background. Man must have strong leadership in all aspects of life to attain unity and harmony. Dante viewed man's variety of interests as being divisive. The State and Church offered control and guidance so that man had a focused goal.

Dante again followed Aquinas's model by assigning great responsibility to those who held the most power. Luther supported a similar idea, while Machiavelli did not directly address the ruler's duty to his citizens. The Prince as a critique of the established government in Florence and Italy provided ample instances in which the responsibility of the ruler was suspect. Dante asserted that the ruler must make decisions based on his subject's best interests. Both laws and government were necessary and good if they attempted to benefit the people.

Dante gave little advice on the method of implementing this idealistic model. His theory was important on a conceptual basis and as a rationalization for separation of
Church and State. In contrast, Niccolò Machiavelli's work, interpreted literally, provided a practical set of axioms. He instructed his readers on the means of creating a more stable state from the viewpoint of the ruler. Like Dante, Machiavelli aimed at unification, first of the smaller states and then for Italy as a whole. Machiavelli however dealt with a purely secular State rather than Dante's moralistic State. Despite the controversy surrounding his intent in writing *The Prince*, the historian must deal with the popular conception of the work when evaluating its effect on the development of the State.

Several aspects of Machiavelli's work reflected secular humanistic influences. He relied on the same model for the forms of government that Dante used. The evaluation of qualities which the prince needed reflected Machiavelli's view of the nature of man, which was essentially negative. Machiavelli faced accusations of encouraging an amoral state based on this aggressive picture of rulers and mankind.

Machiavelli treated the Church as a political entity, another source of temporal power. Religion did not enter his system on the theological level. He viewed it only as a tool of the State, for the ruler use in controlling his citizens. In this manner, the ecclesiastical states made
better use of this tool and, therefore, had the more stable governments.

Machiavelli's main goals were stability and unity, thus, he emphasized strength and power. A republic, although he viewed it as the ideal form of government, did not have enough strength to provide stability, therefore, the State reverted to the use of principalities or monarchies. The very design of a republic caused delay in decision making, and Machiavelli viewed hesitation as the greatest weakness of a State.

Machiavelli did not recognize rights for the citizens within the State, although he did caution rulers to consider public opinion. He recommended a facade of participation or influence within the government as a means to control the populace. He also advocated focusing attention outward to minimize internal tensions. The importance of providing defence from within was repeatedly noted. Machiavelli had little regard for military alliances or the use of mercenaries.

Machiavelli's theory of statecraft, interpreted literally, provided much practical advice; however, it lacked idealism. His goals were very basic and his method for attaining these goals was force. He did not create a relationship of reciprocal responsibility between the
government and the governed within The Prince. Although The Discourses discussed a mutually beneficial relationship, the work did not gain the popularity and influence of the earlier work. In contrast to Dante who dealt with ideals, Machiavelli worked with the practical. Luther united characteristics of both theories.

Martin Luther did not write a single work covering all the aspects of the State, discussing the State and its functioning in many of his shorter essays and sermons. He addressed the State indirectly, primarily in the way it affected the Christian within the temporal world. Luther displayed humanistic and scholastic tendencies within his writings, but was not dominated by either school of thought. Some aspects of his attitude toward the State were similar to Dante's; however, his evaluation of man's nature was much closer to that held by Machiavelli. Luther joined Machiavelli and Dante in rejecting the supremacy of the papacy and restricting the influence the Pope had on the State.

Luther maintained that Church and State were both gifts from God, therefore, both were inherently good. Man needed both Church and State since he had a dual nature. Luther recognized the necessity of interaction while supporting the separation of Church and State. Luther suggested that a
government run by a Christian prince would be more likely to be ruled in a manner beneficial to the people. He claimed that Christians in office made a more caring and just government, although the State was not innately Christian. In some instances, a pagan ruler could rule as well as a Christian ruler.

Luther supported an authoritarian government on the local level, tending to favor local nobility over the imperial government, since absolute government led to tyranny. The protection he received from the local nobility must be considered when evaluating this choice. He maintained that secular government had no power over man's soul, while supporting a strong government with much authority over temporal life. The State had authority over the actions generated by those beliefs, particularly if they effected the peaceful running of the State.

Luther met criticism for subjugating the Church to the State thereby allowing the State too wide a range of authority. Held asserted that one of the new concepts in government for Hobbes and Locke was the contract between the citizen and the State. In this contract the State provided protection. He stated: "The price of this is a duty to obey the law, and obligation to the state, unless the law of nature is consistently violated by a series of tyrannical
Luther maintained that the citizens had the right to object to acts by their government which were morally wrong. Again, should these objections translate into actions, the secular authority had the right of punishment. Luther expected the christians within the State to act as a check on any immoral government, replacing the Papacy in this role. All positions within government were acceptable since government was a gift from God, thus enabling the christian to influence the State from within. A distinction arose between the office and the person. Therefore, the officeholder maintained his christian spiritual life, while his vocation might be executioner.

All citizens gave up some freedom of action to participate in and to maintain the peaceful existence of the State. In return, the citizen expected certain things from the government. The State provided just rule and some social services in exchange for obedience. Based on the works dealt with, Luther certainly expected a measure of care for the poor. He implied the State's obligation to protect its citizens. Luther also recommended mass education, which would be mutually beneficial to Church and State. His theology emphasized the importance of individual interpretation of the Bible. This goal transferred into the

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6Ibid., 21-2.
secular sphere as a means of educating people in order to create good citizens. Luther recognized the usefulness of schools for propaganda toward both spiritual and temporal goals.

The development of the State during the Renaissance and the Reformation varied between extremes before settling on a more modern conception. Dante's theory was interesting and innovative, however, it was far too idealistic to be practically implemented as a whole. A straightforward interpretation of Machiavelli provided a description of the surface of the events. He gave very practical advice for the use and maintenance of power. Nevertheless, he neglected the goals of the State, the ideas and expectation which keep a nation together without the constant use of force. The modern conception of the State is more than merely the maintenance of power. It defines the relationship between the citizens and the government which replaced the feudal relationship between lord and vassal. Expectations are mutual in this relationship. Citizens are unwilling to surrender their freedom without receiving benefits from the State. Not only must a government have the physical power to control the nation, but certain unifying ideals must be recognized. Luther's authoritarian combination of idealism with practical advice was not
directly implemented however, it had strong influences on the development of the State. He created a contract relationship between the State and its citizens; however, his moralistic tendencies overshadow this contract at times. None of these theories can be directly transferred into use in the modern State, but each has provided elements which are important.

There are many aspects of the State in which the moralism and idealism of Dante have been influential. The scientific study of the state neglected the emotional, unscientific citizens which make up the populace. The State to which they are loyal is often as much of a creation of their mind as it is an actually functioning entity. Wars and revolutions are fought over ideas as often as they are fought over land. It is the image that is supported. The French revolution did not bring "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" to the mass of the French people; however, it was around these scientifically unmeasurable ideals that the people rallied. Dante maintained a very high ethical standard for the Emperor. There is a tendency for the populace to cling to this image of the ruler as an ethical model. Citizens expect that their leader has moral values which reflect their own. Although a politician's personal life does not effect his ability in office, it will be
The State is also expected to be moral. The United States becomes involved in many foreign diplomatic activities based on the desire to provide a moral example to the world. Economic sanctions are levied against those countries which do not meet the standards for civil rights. Dante's moralism and idealism still play an active role in the expectations for the modern State.

The Prince is influenced the development of the modern State both from a literal interpretation and as a criticism of the prevailing government. The literal interpretation of Machiavelli provided the modern concept of the a State standard to be measured against. Although there have been attempts to imitate Machiavelli's model, more often those standards have been used to measure negative aspects of a government. A modern State or ruler which is described as Machiavellian receives criticism, not accolades. As a critique, The Prince reveals much by noting what it described, as well as what was omitted. The responsibility of the ruler to his subjects was absent. The work provided a picture of a ruler who neglected the good of his people in favor of his own interests. The work is a reminder to governments that stability is more easily maintained with the support of the citizens rather than in opposition to them. Again, if The Prince was a critique of Florentine
government, the rights of individuals were asserted and a moral State advocated.

In spite of the moral ideal, modern States are authoritarian. The State developed as a means to protect individuals from the aberrant actions of fellow citizens. The goal is a State in which people respect each others rights, but the general perception is that laws and government are needed because society will never be sufficiently moral to provide this security. This concept reflects Luther's attitude toward the State. In an effort to maintain control in the State, it is necessary for the government to act in an authoritarian manner in many instances. Freedom of thought or conscience is asserted, however, when these beliefs transfer into actions the State acquires jurisdiction. Statements and actions which are viewed as a threat to the State are punished or repressed. Freedom of conscience is very much a part of the concept of the modern State although it is often difficult to maintain.

Although the State is authoritarian, it must face scrutiny of its actions by the population of the State. The Church no longer plays a direct role in curbing the actions of the State. That role has been assigned to the citizens within the State. This does not mean that the standards are any less moral than when the Church implemented this role.
The Church that Luther fought against was a political as well as a religious entity. He objected to the dominance of temporal authority by spiritual authority and questioned how far politics had invaded the spiritual realm. Even without the Church, the State is expected to exert a moral influence on the populace. The numerous laws regarding drinking, prostitution and other areas reflect this role in the modern State.

There is some variance in the degree of authority exercised in the modern State. Citizens forfeit many right in an effort to support the State and protect themselves. Luther recognized that these rights would not be given up voluntarily if there were no reciprocal benefits. An equal amount of responsibility is expected of the State in exchange for the forfeit of these freedom. Participants expect that the State will rule to the benefit of the majority of the citizens. The modern State is relied upon to provide social services and protection. Luther anticipated the need for general education and care for the poor. These duties have expanded along with the State's right to regulate action. David Held is correct in maintaining that the modern State is based on the balance between the individual's rights and the power of the State. Nevertheless, he stopped too soon in his attempt to locate
those first to concentrate on this problem. Dante and Machiavelli dealt with this issue to some extent, whereas Luther found it necessary to be more explicit on this subject.

The goals of the Renaissance and Reformation theorists were similar in many instances. All of them attempted to define and establish a stable State which controlled the individual while regulating his effect on others within his community. They all evaluated power and the way it was used. The difference arises over the source of the power which was being evaluated. The earlier thinkers concentrated on wresting power from the papacy, while the latter attempted to wrest power from the absolute monarchs. The involvement of the papacy in the struggle to establish the early modern State produced a tendency for moral comment in the earlier theories which is difficult to reconcile scientifically. Dante and Luther each thought that the State was created by God, but they did not support the idea of divine right monarchy. The institution not the person was ordained. The Reformation and Renaissance theorists rejected absolute power based on their experiences with the papacy which they perceived as tyrannical. The Enlightenment thinkers worked against a monarchy which asserted its right to absolute power and had become a source
of tyranny similar to the papacy of the late Middle Ages and
the early Renaissance. The involvement of religious
thought, stated explicitly in Dante and Luther and implied
in Machiavelli, clouds the evaluation for those using
scientific standards to chart the development of the State.
The abuses and the issues studied in the Renaissance and the
Reformation were quite similar to those studied in more
recent times and these theorists merit credit for the origin
of many modern institutions.


"Luther's Legacy". Commonweal. 110:612-3, N 18, 83.


