View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by Digital Commons at Oberlin (Oberlin College)

Oberlin

Digital Commons at Oberlin

Honors Papers

Student Work

1984

Political Language and Trust: A Study in Machiavelli and Hobbes

Lauren Wenzel
Oberlin College

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/honors

Part of the Political Science Commons

Repository Citation

Wenzel, Lauren, "Political Language and Trust: A Study in Machiavelli and Hobbes" (1984). *Honors Papers*. 635.
https://digitalcommons.oberlin.edu/honors/635

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Digital Commons at Oberlin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Papers by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Oberlin. For more information, please contact megan.mitchell@oberlin.edu.

Political Language and Trust:

A Study in Machiavelli and Hobbes

Lauren Wenzel
Political Theory
Honors Thesis
May 3, 1984

Table of Contents

I. Introduction..1

II. Language: An Overview............................6

III. Language as Power: The Ruler's View............15

IV. The Place of Persuasion..........................33

V. The People's Perspective..........................52

VI. The Search for Standards.........................61

Whoever gets around you must be sharp
and guileful as a snake; even a god
might bow to you in ways of dissimilation.
You! You chameleon!
Bottomless bag of tricks! Here in your own country
would you not give your stratagems a rest
or stop spellbinding for an instant?

-Athena to Odysseus in The Odyssey

"'When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean-neither more nor less.'
"'The question is,' said Alice, 'whether you can make words mean different things.'
"'The question is,' said Humpty Dumpty, 'who is to be master - that's all.'"

-Alice in Wonderland

"The use of force alone is but temporary.
It may subdue for a moment; but it does
not remove the necessity of subduing again;
and a nation is not to be governed which is
perpetually to be conquered."

-Edmund Burke

It is not possible to discuss politics without assuming a degree, however minimal, of trust. To deny the existence of any trust at all is to assume, as Hobbes does, a war, whether hot or cold, of all against all. While it is possible for people to live in such a condition, they cannot live together in any sense that can be called political. Even in societies which are divided into hostile groups, people either align themselves with a group, expressing their loyalty to its goals. Alternatively, they may withdraw from the political sphere, rejecting it completely, or wait until a stable government emerges which they may trust. If government is based entirely on force,it is, as Burke points out, not governing, but subduing. For others, who focus not on force as it may supplant trust, but on a commonly shared vision of politics, trust may almost seem to be a negative starting point because it is something that many political thinkers accept as a given. To speak of trust is to call into question all of the other possibilities that politics might offer, as it is the precondition for them.

Yet for thinkers like Hobbes and Machiavelli, political life is one in which serious inconveniences must be weighed against each other. It is not a simple matter for people to live together, or to be governed.

Choices often must be made which are the lesser of two evils. For these reasons, which stem from the psychological asssumptions made about human beings, Machiavelli and Hobbes are often seen as cynical or pessimistic theorists. Yet both thinkers want to convince people that the kind of political life he describes is a worthwhile enterprise. Consequently, individuals are invited to consult their self interest in order to decide how they could be served by Hobbes' or by Machiavelli's scheme. Still, neither theorist confines himself to a discussion of individual interests, for both realize that these can only be attained when there is a stable political situation. Hobbes calls this condition peace. Machiavelli refers to the citizens' need for security. Both of these terms are a way of expressing the need for a public trust that is necessary for stability.

Order may be kept through force. But trust is an expression of the relationship between a ruler and a people, or between the people. And because any relationship must be developed through communication, one that involves a whole society necessarily relies on language. Through language, parties represent themselves, promise, persuade, educate and even threaten. Through language people make themselves known to each other. This is not to say that language is the only way in which this can be done. "Actions speak louder than words" is a truism precisely because language is so often used to obscure reality from others, or from oneself. But actions inevitably are supplemented by language in politics, for without it, they are inadequate content for politics. The most radical gesture or daring act may have no public impact if it is not recognized by the people, discussed and

communicated.

Both Machiavelli and Hobbes accept Aristotle's dictum that speech is necessary for politics. But what they point out is what Aristotle, who accepted people's political nature as a given, does not - that speech is necessary for politics because trust is developed through language, and trust is the groundwork for politics. Speech may also be necessary for deliberation, for determining what justice is, and for making laws, but all of these can only follow once the groundwork is laid.

While language is obviously not the sole content of politics for Machiavelli or Hobbes, it is considered by both to be equally as important as force. The question that now arises is how language is to be used to accomplish what force cannot, and whether the realm of language in politics can remain separate from the realm of force, or if language too becomes a form of coercion. Trust is a political condition that depends on the use of language. While personal relationships may rest upon a trust that is unspoken, a public trust which forms the basis for all political actions must rely on language. Yet obviously, not all language is conducive to trust. Lies, threats, and broken promises are all uses of language which work to destroy trust. I want to explore the ways in which Machiavelli and Hobbes use language in politics. How far is their use of language compatible with the amount of trust that they see as necessary to maintain political order? And if it is compatible, are there any other standards by which we might still judge it to be an illegitimate use

of language?

What exactly is meant by the notion of an illegitimate use of language? Does it mean going beyond the boundaries that these thinkers see as legitimate for language? Or can we look at the use of language by applying standards that these thinkers do not? Hanna Pitkin points out that deciding between these two approaches is somewhat analogous to the controversy created by Max Weber's redefinition of the term "legitimacy". Opposing the usual definition of "legitimacy", (conforming to certain standards or principles), Weber defined the term to mean "what is considered to be legitimate,"[1] presumably by the subjects within any state. In politics, therefore, subjects or citizens would determine legitimacy by their behavior (obedience). The questions involved in exploring the uses of language are similar. Is language used wrongly only when it is felt to be so? Or is it possible to discuss criteria for language apart from people's perceptions of the way language is being used? In order to address these questions in Machiavelli and Hobbes, we must first examine both thinkers' conceptions of language and the ways in which it is to be used. Language as a way of exercising power must be a particular focus, for it is in this area that the issue of possible misuse becomes clearest.

Persuasion is a political skill which is clearly, temptingly powerful, but it is a form of power that may seem innocuous. It can have the paradoxical quality of seeming not to exist at all when it is being most effectively used. Finally, it is the tool that is most effective for bringing political ideas to a personal level. It

addresses itself to the personality and individuality of the subject or citizen far more than any kind of force could do, for persuasion must win over the mind, while force merely subdues the body. Persuasion, both Machiavelli and Hobbes recognize, is power, and power of a very effective sort since it is exersised not negatively, by repression, but positively, by tapping into a reservoir of passions and intellect, and channelling them in a certain direction.

Exersising power in politics through language can be done in may other ways as well - the making of contracts, deception, and education are only a few. But before we can look at these possibilities, we must first look at Hobbes' and Machiavelli's views on language in general. For language, as well as being the stuff persuasion is made of, is also for both the source of political knowledge. Language thus can be seen as the basis of politics. Yet it can also be seen as a microcosm of politics, for the terms in which language and politics are described are for both Machiavelli and Hobbes strikingly similar. Perhaps in looking from these two view points, we can understand how their views on language shape their attitudes toward politics, and how politics may set the ends for the use of language.

II. Language: An Overview

This double perspective is part of the nature of language. Consciously we make decisions about what to say, and how it is to be said. Yet we also think in language. It is something we have already learned by the time we begin to think about politics, and which necessarily influences the way we think. Knowledge is first formulated through language, then must be expressed in words in order to be shared. Thus language is the link between public and private, between the internal workings of the individual mind, and the voices of other individuals that make up the community. How this relationship is described by Machiavelli, and by Hobbes, largely dermines how language is to be used in politics.

For Machiavelli, reliable political knowledge is obtained through personal experience and through the study of history. Machiavelli suggests these sources as the best tutors for the new prince, as well as stressing in the introduction to _The Discourses_ and the preface to _The Prince_ that they are the sources of his own insights:

> . . . I have been unable to find anything which I hold so dear or esteem so highly as that knowledge of the deeds of great men which I have acquired through a long experience of modern events and a constant study of the past.[1]

Every important point that is asserted is illustrated with the proper historical example - either modern, or, far more often, from Machiavelli's historical ideal, the Roman republic. While experience seasons a ruler, and gives him sharper judgement, history is reliable because the passions of men remain the same, and events, while not

likely to repeat themselves exactly, recur in similar ways to events of the past.

> . . . all cities and all peoples are and ever have been animated by the same desires and the same passsions; so that it is easy, by diligent study of the past, to forsee what is likely to happen in the future in any republic, and to apply those remedies that were used by the ancients, or, not finding any that were employed by them, to devise new ones from the similarity of the events.[2]

History, then is a kind of collective experience. The diligent student of history may gain from all the personal experiences of the great leaders of the past by studying their actions and the results of those actions, learning what kinds of measures to adapt in different circumstances.

Language is a basis of politics because learning from experience for Machiavelli means being able to draw out maxims for action from incidents. This is true both of history and of personal experience. But language, more importantly, <u>contains</u> history. Without language we would have no record of the past and no experience, other than personal, to draw upon. This is discussed in a chapter of <u>The Discourses</u> entitled, "The Changes of Religion and of Languages, Together with the Occurrences of Deluges and Pestilence, Destroy the Record of Things." Discussing them in turn, Machiavelli points out how each might destroy an entire culture. Yet a new language he recognizes as different from the other dangers to a culture.

> [the Christians, proceding against the heathen religion] destroyed all its institutions and its ceremonies, and effaced all record of the ancient theology. It is true that they did not succeed in destroying entirely the record of the glorious deeds of the illustrious men of

> the ancient creed, for they were forced to keep up the Latin language by the necessity of writing their new laws in that tongue; but if they could have written them in a new language . . . there would have been no record whatever left of preceding events.[3]

This would have been a tragedy for Machiavelli, for it is to those "glorious deeds" that he constantly refers, and he recognizes that the whole past to which he appeals as a political ideal could have been eradicated by the loss of the language. Indeed, this was the fate of Tuscany, who, as Machiavelli points out, "was once powerful, religious, and virtuous; it had its own customs and language; but all this was destroyed by the Roman power, so that there remained nothing of it but the memory of its name."[4]

Language contains history, and in doing so contains knowledge and political ideals. Through language we can appeal to possibilities not perceived in the present by pointing to the past. Yet political knowledge and possibilities are not contained within language like fish in a sea, but are dissolved within its very structure for Machiavelli. In "Dialogue on Language", Machiavelli, in examining the nature of Dante's writings, makes many observations on language in general which are strikingly similar to his description of politics.

First, Machiavelli discusses particular languages - Florentine, Bolognese, Latin, and the "court language", rather than speaking of language as a generic, abstract concept. Just as he does not discuss "the nature of politics" but Florentine, or Italian politics, Machiavelli speaks of particular tongues, analysing not what language is, but what it <u>does,</u> what it says, and how it says them. Language is a common bond between a particular people, and it is used to express

their culture and their values. Machiavelli is keenly aware of how language expresses nationality, just as Italian politics was often the expression of the ambitions of each particular city state.

And as the assertions of the city states led to conflicts in the political realm, Machiavelli sees language, not as passive or static, but as continually shifting, words from one language passing into another. Language too is a struggle. He discusses the ways in which languages may become bastardized by foreign phrases, and eventually may lose their own identity. To avoid this, new words must be conquered:

> Now a country's language is one which presses words borrowed from elsewhere into its own service and is powerful enough to subdue, and not be subdued by, the words it borrows, grappling the foreign matter so tight that it seems a part of itself. [5]

Just as politics is largely comprised of power struggles, so is language.

This passage occurs in the context of an "argument" with Dante. Machiavelli has summoned him up to answer charges for rejecting the Florentine tongue as his idiom. Dante insists that he writes in "the language of the court." Machiavelli, however, examines Dante's language and triumphantly concludes that he is <u>really</u> writing in Florentine, but refuses to acknowledge it because of his grudge against his native city. This brings out another important aspect of language, especially as it relates to literature. Machiavelli wants to claim Dante for Florence because he raised the Florentine language to new heights of beauty and eloquence. A great writer like Dante can give new life to a language, just as a great leader can stir his people to return to their pure,

meaning?

uncorrupted states, and to become virtuous citizens. Both are worthy of imitation, but neither can be completely mimicked, for true greatness requires both natural virtue, and experience gained from studying great minds. "It is impossible for art to surpass nature" in creativity, and yet

> There are many who all write well and have the qualities needed for a writer. And this could not have happened before you, with Petrarch and Boccaccio, had written. For aiming to reach this height, but being hindered by their local dialect, they needed someone who by his example could teach them how to forget the original barbarism in which their native tongues steeped them. [6]

Great writers may inspire, instruct and rejuvenate a language as a great leader may do with his people. In fact, Machiavelli invites this parallel by comparing words to Roman soldiers. Though Rome recruited the vast majority of its army from the provinces, they became truly Roman soldiers through strict discipline and instruction. So new and foreign words can strengthen and enrich a language when they are brought into it by a writer who uses them with talent and care.

Finally, the feel of politics pervades Machiavelli's insistence on seeing words within the proper context. Certain actions cannot be advocated apart from the situation in which they must be performed. Words cannot adequately convey meaning and nuance if they are stripped from their context.

> . . .there are many things which cannot be written well without understanding the local, idiomatic usages of whatever tongue is most highly thought of. If native terms are needed you must go to the place where the language had its origin, or you will produce a piece of writing in which one part does not correspond to the rest. [7]

This sensitivity to the local, the particular, is also stressed in

every action a prince or a republic must perform. Part of the reason why Machiavelli is so often judged to be an immoral writer stems from his unwillingness to endorse a moral code apart from the situation. Actions must always be adopted to circumstances if they are to be effective - so must words. Language and politics are intertwined in subtle ways. They are historical, they are sources of nationality, and they hold up great leaders and their works for us to emulate and admire.

Hobbes, on the other hand, is much more straightforward in his reliance on language. It might at first seem strange that one who viewed people as essentially atomistic and isolated should put so much emphasis on language. Yet while it is obvious that Hobbes makes language the cornerstone of his theory, his views upon it are not completely clear. In Chapter 4, "On Speech", Hobbes defines language as a nominalist would. It is not an organic entity shared by a community, but a mechanical device, invented piecemeal, consisting primarily of nouns, and then of other less important words -"connexions", including verbs, adjectives, etc. Words seem to be almost as aloof from each other as people are. Language in the natural condition seems to both cause and reflect people's alienation from each other. They all fear violent death, as each person may use bodily force against any one else, yet language too is used as a weapon of all against all to defend individual interests.

> A man must take heed of words; which beside the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; . . . for one man calleth wisdom, what another calleth fear; and one cruelty, what another justice.[8]

The contract (which will be discussed at length below) involves creating an artificial environment where trust may exist. This is partly created by authorizing one person to wield the power of the sword over all others, but more importantly, by creating an artificial language so that all people may speak of public matters in the same terms. Understanding, for Hobbes, is a technical term, implying precise knowledge of exactly what concept was intended by the speaker.

> When any man, upon the hearing on any speech, hath those thoughts which the words of that speech were ordained and consituted to signify, then he is said to understand it.[9]

Each word stands directly for one concept, and therefore any confusion or ambiguity is avoided. Artificial language creates the conditions for people to understand each other.

Language then is important as the basis of politics, but is also an essential part of its content. Politics rests directly on language. Though consciously departing from most Aristotelian assumptions about politics, Hobbes retains the distinctive emphasis on speech as the cornerstone of his theory.

> The reason man is a being meant for political association . . . is evident. Nature, according to our theory, makes nothing in vain; and man alone of the animals is furnished with the faculty of language.[10]

Their difference concerns the type of language that politics rests upon. While Aristotle assumes that natural language is adequate, Hobbes argue that the true rules of politics can only be discovered by the scientific method, and this method begins with clear definitions. As Hobbes himself puts it:

> . . . the light of human minds is perspicuous words, by exact definitions first snuffed and purged from

> ambiguity; reason is the pace; increase of science, the way; and the benefit of mankind, the end.[11]

Science consists in examining the components of a thing so that it may be completely understood as a whole. Thus concepts must be broken down into words, and the words precisely defined so that there is no room for doubt. "Truth consists in right ordering of names."[12]

Here language is conceived of as a device, "without which there had been among men; neither commonwealth, nor society, nor contract, nor peace."[13] For Hobbes, the primary function of language is to stand for something, so that thoughts may be expressed in words. Of four basic uses of speech, the most important is science, "to register what by cogitation, we find to be the cause of any thing."[14] Only secondly is speech to be used for communication- for sharing knowledge, and even knowledge can only truly be communicated when terms have been ordained by the Sovereign.

Yet Hobbes' attitude toward language is not that of a complete nominalist. Later in Leviathan he departs from the framework which he has set up in Chapter 4, especially in his use of the term "justice". When speaking of the law of nature, Hobbes says,

> All judges, sovereign and subordinate, if they refuse to hear proof, refuse to do justice: for though the sentence be just, yet the judges that condemn without hearing the proofs offered, are unjust judges.[15]

Here "justice" is working on two levels at once. The sentence must be just, because Hobbes defines the word justice to mean obeying the civil laws. The Sovereign cannot perform an unjust action by virtue of how the word works, for the Sovereign is not bound by civil law, and

therefore cannot break it. Yet Hobbes wants to argue that a Sovereign who disregards the law of nature is unjust, even if his actions cannot be said to be so. These two levels of justice reveal a tension in the way Hobbes thinks about language, or at least about certain concepts. Is this tension a recognition that pure artifice cannot adequately encompass the complexities of political morality? This is a theme that must be examined as we look more closely at other aspects of Hobbes' work.

Language for Hobbes embodies all the potentialities of people - the danger of their passions, as well as the beauty and precision of the knowledge it is possible for them to attain. Control of language does mean very real control over people. This is clearly true for Machiavelli as well. What is less clear is now far this control was intended to go. Does it mean changing people, making them into the best possible subjects or citizens they can be? Or is language simply intended to provide a structure within the state, to provide a common ground for those within it and thereby insure a measure of stability?

III. Language as Power: The Ruler's View

Machiavelli and Hobbes are writing for the leaders in the state, giving advice as to how best solve the problems that they describe. Language can be used to provide a key part of the solution. Both thinkers envision a language that can create a bond between people, and between the people and their rulers. This bond is important; it must secure the power of the leaders, and the stability of the state, even when the strains of differing interests weigh against it. How well would the language of Machiavelli or Hobbes establish this bond?

The problems that each describes are familiar. Human nature remains the same throughout history. As long as people have passions, there will be war, ambition, envy, greed, and distrust. Hobbes and Machiavelli describe human nature in very similar ways. Machiavelli explains:

> nature has created men so that they desire everything, but are unable to attain it; the faculty of acquiring discontent with what they have, and dissatisfaction with themselves result from it. This causes the changes in their fortunes; for some men desire to have more, whilst others fear to lose what they have, emnities and war are the consequences.[1]

People are motivated by ambition and fear. Hobbes too sees people as driven by a "perpetual and restless desire of power after power"[2] and by a fear of death. Because people are driven by these passions they are continually at war, even when not actually fighting, distrusting each other so much that it is impossible for them to live peaceably together. With this view of human nature, it is not surprising that both thinkers reject the notion that people in this condition can solve their own problems through popular government. Rather it is necessary for one

person to rule through a judicious balance of force and and reliance on language.

For Machiavelli, solutions change as cirumstances do. "Men in their conduct, and especially in their most prominent actions, should well consider and conform to the times in which they live." [3] This conviction perhaps explains why Machiavelli himself, several times in The Prince and The Discourses gives contradictory advice. An example is his counsel that "a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest." [4] Three chapters later he can urge the prince to make and keep alliances with a powerful ruler because "he is under an obligation to you and friendship has been established, and men are never so dishonest as to oppress you with such a patent ingratitude." [5] This contradiction stems from the two perspectives Machiavelli is adopting. When the prince has power, and it cannot harm him to break promises, he should do so. But when the prince needs a strong ally, he ought not to let the fear of broken promises prevent him from seeking assistance. Machiavelli rarely issues specific absolute dictums. Advice is qualified from every side, for he is more interested in teaching rulers to learn from history and to be flexible, perceptive and decisive in their actions, than in encouraging them to rule in any more specific way.

Machiavelli does outline the types of solutions that are best employed in two extreme situations: what he considers to be the worst and the best forms of government. The prince, and the leaders in a republic represent at one extreme the bottom line on what a leader may

do to maintain political stability, and at the other the full range of possibilities for political society.

The prince relies heavily upon reputation. While he may be required to install certain unpopular or cruel measure, he must always seem to be the Christian paragon of virtue. "To see and hear him, he should seem to be all mercy, faith, integrity, humanity and religion." [6] The prince must keeps his reputation intact, relying upon illusions, lies, and other subtle deceptions so that he may keep the love of the people, while performing the actions that are necessary to preserve the state. But whatever the prince may do, he must not make himself hated by the people. About this, Machiavelli is adamant. Even his famous advice that a prince is better off feared than loved concludes with the warning that he can never afford to be hated. This emphasis on not being hated reveals the importance of a minimal level of trust that must be maintained.

This level of trust is not difficult to maintain in a principality. Hatred is only incurred "by being rapacious, and usurping the property and women of his subjects." [7] So long as these are left untouched, the people, self-interested and materialistic, will be content to live their lives, oblivious to public affairs. At the other extreme, if he is considered despicably weak, his more ambitious subjects may conspire against him. Language enables the prince to shield his unpopular actions from the people, and to represent himself as a strong, virtuous, and fearsome ruler.

In a republic, there are stronger bonds between the people and their rulers. Ties exist not solely out of a desire for stability and

protection, but out of a common love for one's country, and a desire to serve it. And because ties are both more visible, and more important, language takes on a more prominent role. While reputation remains important, and while leaders may rely upon manipulative tactics to gain their ends, they are no longer simply acting in the eyes of the people, but acting with and for the people. In a republic, leaders rely upon the people as princes do not. They do not require passive, but active support. Citizens must be willing to give up their lives for the state. Their active interest in affairs of state make the republic more vital, but it also requires that leaders be reponsive to the people. A republic, especially a republic that is often at war, demands a high level of solidarity that can only be achieved by two-way communication.

In contrast, Hobbes sees only one solution to the chaos of people's natural condition. "The skill in making and maintaining commonwealths consisteth in certain rules, as doth arithmetic and geometry; not, as tennis play, on practice only." [8] Just as people's passions have put them in this predicament, they have tendencies which predispose them to peace; tendencies which they will act upon when they grow weary of war. This longing for peace leads people to make a contract with each other agreeing to "be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself." [9] Yet this contract would be useless without anyone to enforce it, so they further agree to choose one person, and to give him authority over them. They surrender to this Sovereign their wills, and their voices, so that his actions becomes theirs. Their

wills are united in him, and his voice is the voice of the commonwealth. Speech is no longer a weapon used to defend the interest of each, but a nuetral tool ordained by one person whose interest is the interest of all.

These are the solutions that are offered: two opposite approaches, one emphasizing flexibility, often mixed with political sleight of hand, and the other advocating a method claiming to be as precise and unquestionably true as geometry. Hobbes and Machiavelli each claim a style of approach best suited to mediate the inherent contradictory passions in human nature. But they also offer minute advice on a number of particular areas. We must now turn to these, for Machiavelli's and Hobbes' attitudes toward areas like law, poetry, and ordinary language reveal how well their views on political language meet the specific needs of people in the state.

Law

If the aim of political speech is to create a bond between the people and their rulers, law is one effective means of reaching this end. By instituting guidelines for all, and punishments for transgressors, legal language creates the formal structure for communication between leaders and people. While many other types of speech also contribute to political language, law provides the framework for when and how they may be spoken.

The best possible laws for Machiavelli are those which are given to a community by a wise legislator, and which keep the people honest and uncorrupted. Government began when people, "to prevent . . .

evils, set to work to make laws, and to institute punishments for those who contravened them. Such was the origin of justice."[10] But as governments inevitably degenerate, and people become corrupted, laws can no longer perform this function. They are no longer expressions of justice, but rules to be manipulated by those in power. Laws then lose their power to make people better citizens, and become simply boundaries upon their behavior. When the situation has reached this state, it becomes very difficult and dangerous to try to institute new laws.

Machiavelli realizes the need for laws to change as people change In addition he is adamant that laws must be obeyed by all, even by those who make them, or they will cease to be respected. If a new prince finds old laws hindering his plans, he should not violate them, but destroy them and institute new ones in their place. At best, law teaches people to be good citizens, but even at its worst must be respected as a code of behavior. Machiavelli stresses that people cannot be expected to live in a state of perpetual uncertainty. They need to know that they are secure, and what acts they may safely commit,

> for men who are kept in doubt and uncertainty as to their lives will resort to every kind of measure to to secure themselves against danger, and will necessarily become more audacious and inclined to violent changes.[11]

Laws in this sense are a clear message from the prince to his people that they may consider their private lives safe provided they remain within the structure of behavior he has determined.

? This is also Hobbes' definition of civil law. Laws are restricted solely to the regulation of behavior. They are "the rules whereby every

man may know what goods he may enjoy, and what actions he may do."[12] There are also natural laws which are immutable and eternal, identical to moral law. In the natural condition, natural laws are not properly laws because there is no possible way of enforcing them. But when a commonwealth is settled, they becomes laws "because it is the Sovereign power that obliges men to obey them."[13] Law for Hobbes, civil or natural, can only be compelling when there is a coercive force behind it to require obedience.

Yet Hobbes also argues that the Sovereign, though not bound by civil law, is bound by natural law. This is an important part of his argument, for he wants to convice people that binding themselves to the Sovereign is not more inconvenient than the horrors of a civil war. He must find some way of asserting that the Sovereign is not completely free to behave as caprice might dictate toward his subjects. Yet how is the Sovereign bound by any coercive force to obey natural law? Hobbes argues:

> The office of the Sovereign . . . consisteth in the end for which he was trusted with the Sovereign power, namely for the procuration of the safety of the people; to which he is obliged by the law of nature, and to render an account to God, the author of that law, and to none but him.[14]

Apparently the fear of God is the "coercive" power that keeps the Sovereign in line with natural law. God and only God can punish the Sovereign for his transgressions. Hobbes argues that "there can be no contract where there is no trust"[15]. Yet though he admits that for the Sovereign to break the laws of nature is a violation of his subjects trust; he maintains that the Sovereign's violation of the conditions of

the contract does not allow his subjects to break it. Subjects may not rebel against a Sovereign, even if he breaks natural laws, because it is not for them to judge him. Yet his actions have destroyed the trust that the contract was based upon.

Though breach of trust cannot provide grounds for disobedience, fear for one's life can. Hobbes' logic requires him to concede that "the obligation to subjects to the Sovereign is understood to last as long, and no longer than the power lasteth by which he is able to protect them."[16] Since self preservation is the end of government, when it can no longer be insured, subjects are released from their obligations. But how is the degree of protection to be evaluated? Hobbes admits that the subject himself is the best judge of his own danger. He is obligated "as much as in him lieth, to protect in war the authority, by which he is himself protected in time of peace."[17] Thus, men of "feminine courage" may run away form the battlefield when they fear for their lives, not unjustly, but dishonourably.

But imagine a less urgent example: a commonwealth, at peace, being ruled poorly by a weak king. Hobbes would want to argue that even if a king were an incompentent ruler, subjects would not be justified in defying or usurping him. First, these actions are not, like running away on the battlefield, the absence of assistance, but an actual attack on the Sovereign power. Second, though law requires power to enforce it, Hobbes would not want to admit that mere lack of power without urgent danger would nullify either civil or natural law. He is thus forced to employ the unreasonable logic that a person should not defy

laws even if he could get away with it, for if everyone acted thus, the commonwealth would be destroyed, which would ultimately be in no one's self interest. This is something like trying to convice a practiced shoplifter to refrain from theft because it raises prices for everyone. Hobbes originally appeals to self-interest in order to create the basis for the right of the Sovereign to govern, but there is an uneasy tension between the two that would reveal itself in individual choices when people have the power, but not the right to commit an illegal act.

Law, then, for both thinkers, is an articulation of what is to be considered proper behavior. But the power of law lies outside itself. For Machiavelli, laws are only effective when they are administered by a competent ruler. The relationship between the prince and the people gives the law power. For Hobbes, law is the primary relationship between the pepole and their Sovereign. It is the Sovereign's word. Yet law derives its power from the consent of the people. Though law is stressed by both Machiavelli and Hobbes, it must be supplemented by other types of language. People must trust the prince, fearing his punishments, or believing in his good judgement, and they must have consented to the Sovereign, or believe they have consented. Both thinkers recognize that legal language, though important, cannot embrace all of the subtlety and diversity of politics.

Poetry

Machiavelli, a poet and playwright himself, recognizes literature as a needed outlet for expression, an amusement, and a critical tool

enabling people to look at everyday actions and events with a heightened awareness. He defines the purpose of comedy in the classic Aristotelian manner:

> The aim of comedy is to hold up a mirror to domestic life . . . so that the men who came eagerly to enjoy themselves taste afterward the useful lesson that lay underneath.[18]

For Machiavelli this meant working out many of his political themes in his poetry and plays. In the play Mandrangola , for example, a young man passionately desires to possess a virtuous lady, married to a foolish gullible husband. Assisted by a friend, a corrupt priest, and the lady's morally lax mother, the youth convinces her husband that his wife's infertility can only be cured by a does of mandrake potion. Yet because the potion is poisonous to the next man who sleeps with her, a stranger must be found to "draw off" the poison, so that her husband may safely sleep with her. Naturally the stranger is the passionate young man. All conspire against the lady's moral objections for their own selfish or foolish reasons, and she submits.

Not only does Machiavelli reveal how people can be manipulated when they are too dense or selfish to see things as they are, and how people's actions often belie their words, but the lady's final sigh that she is "not strong enough to refuse what Heaven wills me to accept"[19] is a recognition that he stresses again and again in his political works: actions must conform to the situations in which people find themselves. Mandrangola satirizes human foibles, yet it also points out that follies and passions often cannot be overcome, even by intelligence and goodness.

Hobbes, too, translated and wrote poetry, yet he has no such high opinion of its ability to stimulate thought. Of the four uses of language, poetry is the last, used "to please and delight ourselves and others, by playing with words, innocently."[20] Poetry requires a combination of fancy and judgement so that it may "please for the extravagancy, but . . . not displease by indiscretion."[21] On the positive side, then, poetry is pleasant, harmless amusement. But Hobbes harshly criticizes poetic language when it is used in serious discussion, especially condemning metaphors. "For seeing they openly profess deceit, to admit them into counsel or reasoning, were manifest folly."[22] Poetic language cannot be understood. Its words do not always refer to one precise concept, but attempt to awaken the passions, appealing to emotion rather than reason. Poetry is an amusement, and it is both foolish and dangerous to make more of it than this.

Yet Hobbes himself is a very creative writer. Leviathan (the "artificial man" metaphor extended throughout the book) is filled with evocations of the terrors of civil war and the beauty of a peaceful commonwealth. The tone often turns from "scientific" explication to dry irony or scorn, and the final comparison in "The Kingdom of Darkness" of the papacy to the kingdom of the faeries is a brilliant satire. Hobbes obviously held these qualities of language to be valuable, and yet he wished to bar their influence on political discourse. Why? It is linked to his conviction that politics was no place for passion. "For the understanding is by the flame of the passions, never enlightened, but dazzled."[23] Once it has led men into a commonwealth, it can give them no further useful political knowledge. Passion can

only discontent them with their lot, making them desire change in the hopes of illusory republics and liberties.

Hobbes shares his distrust of poetry with Plato, who also attacks it for appealing to lower human capacities, and undercutting the potential for truly critical philosophical thinking. For Plato, poetry not only appeals to the passionate, sensual nature of people, but it purports to teach political knowledge. He needs to displace poetry in order to make room for philosophy as the true source of knowledge. The rhythm of poetry lulls people's minds toward unthinking acceptance of the satus quo. It leads them toward imitation, speaking without thinking, and above all, quoting poetry as a final authority on political problems. Like Plato, Hobbes advocates a new kind of critical thinking that is active, seeking, and not resting upon simple acceptance of popular wisdom. Yet as Plato criticized poetry to make room for philosophy as the source of wisdom, Hobbes criticizes Greek philosophy in order to clear the ground for a new philosophy based on the scientific method He criticizes Plato's philosophy for being "rather a dream than a science, and set forth in senseless and insignificant language."[24] For all his emphasis on questioning in philosophical dialogue, and his condemnation of the poetic mindset, Plato was still too much of a poet for Hobbes.

For Plato does rely on myth, on evocation, and images. He speaks of "the Good", but never describes it in detail, believing that the highest possible knowledge cannot be adequately expressed in language. Plato did reject poetry as the authority for political knowledge, but

he relied on myth in a different way. Myth was not, as poetry often was, a threat to critical thinking, but represented a different kind of thinking in which truths could be intimated and understood as they could not be through logical discourse. The cave allegory could make the quest for knowledge and the position of the philosopher among men vivid and intelligible in a way that simple exposition could not.

Hobbes' mixed attitude toward poetic language is different from Plato, though like him he does officially reject myth as method.

> Those arguments therefore that the whole universe is governed by one God; that the ancients prefered the monarchical state before all others, ascribing the rule of the gods to one Jupiter; . . . although, I say, these do hold forth monarchy as the more eminent to us, yet because they do it by examples and testimonies, and not by solid reason, we will pass them over.[25]

But, unlike Plato, Hobbes never concedes a place for myth in the realm of thought. He does not use fables to illustrate, but to frighten or threaten. While smoothly passing over Biblical authority above as not rational, he then condemns the killing of kings thought of as tyrants with the following:

> Who told thee that he was a tyrant? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat? For why dost thou call him a tyrant, whom God hath made a king, except that thou, being a private person, usurpest to thyself the knowledge of good and evil?[26]

Private opinion becomes equated with Original Sin. Hobbes sees in poetic language an appeal to passion, and never sees any more potential in it that that, even when he uses it himself.

Common Language

Machiavelli's attitude toward the ordinary language people speak is evident from the exploration above. He understands its diachronic nature, how new words seep into a language, and how it may degenerate if it loses its own distictive character. While Machiavelli speaks of some tongues as "barbaric", he never thiks of ordinary language itself as such. He never speaks of a specific jargon for politics, or anything else for that matter. The one puzzling thing about his attitude toward common language is his own vocabulary. Machiavelli never defines the terms he uses. Their meanings must be gathered from the context. An example is his use of the word "virtu". This is not meant to refer to Christian virtues, but to the personal qualities of a person, such as strength and wisdom, that enable him to overcome the caprices of Fortuna, and accomplish what he sets out to do. That the root of the word is "vir", suggests the "manly" qualities that enable one to overcome fortune, who is like a woman, and needs to be mastered.[27] This explains how Machiavelli can refer to Hannibal's "extreme cruelty and other virtues."[28]

If we understand virtue in this sense, it becomes clear that Machiavelli was not changing the meaning of the word, but using it in an older, though still accepted, classical sense. Machiavelli's virtue is very like what the Greeks means by "arete". "The citizen of the polis aimed above all at the ideal which Phoenix had taught Achilles: to be a speaker of words and a doer of deeds."[29] Virtue was personal excellence, and the rennaissance usage of the term encompassed both this

and the Christian meaning of the word.

For Machiavelli does not change the meanings of words. His honesty, even when he advocates cruel measures, is perhaps his most striking characteristic, as well as an ironic one, in view of the deceptions he advocates. He does not seek to soften outrageous acts by glossing over them, using euphemisms, or seeking to morally justify them. He merely says, "a prince who wishes to maintain a state is often forced to do evil"[30], or even more plainly, "it is necessary for a prince . . . to learn how not to be good."[31] While particular terms, like virtue and fortune are complex, and have a specific personality within Machiavelli's writings, words in general are used as people use them.

In constrast, Hobbes distrusts ordinary language. He calls it vulgar, considers it sloppy and imprecise, and therefore unfit for political use. "How fallacious it is to judge of the nature of things by the ordinary and inconstant use of words."[32] Because "truth consists in right ordering of names", <u>Leviathan</u> begins with the definitions of important terms. Only when the correct names are assigned can the "connexions" be made. Hobbes creates a specific political vocabulary that must be learned by each subject. But new definitions of words means more than simply rejecting ordinary ambiguous language, for it also means imposing guidelines for what can be expressed.

An examples is the tension in Hobbes' use of the word "justice" noted in Chapter 2. When justice refers to civil laws, no act of the Sovereign can be unjust. But justice may also refer to obedience to divine laws. Hobbes does not want to wholly abandon the idea that

justice <u>means</u> something: something beyond what any given ruler might say it means. He wants justice to continue to refer to traditional notions of fairness and equity. But though this conception of justice is implied when Hobbes speaks of the duties of the Sovereign, it is not a definition to which a subject may appeal. For though a subject always retains the right to protect himself from bodily harm, he has no right, no matter what his situation, to justify his actions, or his principles, should the Sovereign oppose him. Consent entails giving up the right to use language as the subject might understand it, and accepting the definitions ordained by the Sovereign. While he may act with iniquity towards his subjects, they cannot complain of being treated unjustly.

Hobbes cites the example of David, who had an innocent man, Uriah, put to death. Uriah had authorized his Sovereign's actions, and therefore was not injured by his own death. In fact, he willed his own death, for he had surrendered his will to David. But the first psychological assumption Hobbes makes is that people fear death, and that they can never surrender their right to live. A man, like Socrates, who refused the chance to escape death, Hobbes would consider mad. Therefore, according to Hobbes' definitions, the condemned man is similtaneously willing and resisting his own death. This contradiction points to a problem in Hobbes's ideal political vocabulary. Terms are defined by the Sovereign, but although Hobbes refers to this language as scientific, there is no reason why the Sovereign's language should be rational.

Hobbes argues that when the Sovereign is a monarch, he is more likely to be rational. "Where the public and private interest are most closely united, there is the public most advanced. Now in monarchy, the private interest is the same as the public."[33] Thus, for example, the Sovereign would not tax his subjects too heavily. This would make them weak, weakening the state, and not be in his interest. But Hobbes' argument here is like his reply to the fool - self interest is defined so broadly that it encompasses the good of the entire state. While it would ultimately be in the Sovereign's self interest to rule rationally and justly, it would take a very wise, fair and level headed person to recognize this.

But if the Sovereign shares the psychology Hobbes describes, reason will simply serve his passions. Hobbes makes no claims for the Sovereign's intelligence or rationality. He does not speak of the Sovereign thinking but willing. This suggests that perhaps consistency and the enforcement of definitions is more important than their content. But even the former is not guaranteed. If we find in Hobbes' vocabulary examples that are neither reasonable nor consistent, the Sovereign might do much worse.

We began looking at these areas in which language is discussed in order to discover if there might be some gaps between the solutions Machaivelli and Hobbes offer and the needs or expectations of their subjects. Such gaps have begun to emerge. Machaivelli often relies upon illusions and fraud within politics - forms of language which presume upon a trusting relationship, yet work to destroy it. Tactics

like these must balance on the fine line between political expediency and the need for a sense of solidarity, or, at the least, security. Yet Machiavelli's attitude's toward ordinary language, poetry and law prove less problematic than Hobbes'. While Machiavelli does assume a separation of the people and their rulers, this is caused by a monopoly on privileged information, rather than a fundamentally different attitude toward politics, or toward language. But Hobbes is describing a political system in which the Sovereign sets up political institutions and a vocabulary which involve a different way of looking at language. Hobbes demands that people not only change their speech, but change the way they think about language. As Norman Jacobson puts it, Hobbes wants to provide through language "an incessant structuring of the world within and about us."[34]

Perhaps the largest difference between these two approaches toward political language is that Machiavelli openly recognizes the need for persuasion when the aims of the princes and the people do not coincide. The need for differences to be overcome can be achieved much more fruitfully through words than force. Hobbes, on the other hand, refuses to openly admit the need for some sort of reconciliation between his scientific principles and the everyday situations in which they might prove inadequate.

reminders of consent?
No consent in Mach.

IV. The Place of Persuasion

It may seem extraneous to focus on persuasion in the writings of two thinkers who are commonly described as primarily concerned with technique and method. Sheldon Wolin speaks of Machiavelli as the first modern political theorist, offering "the new science of statecraft"[1], and entitles his chapter on Hobbes "Political Society as a System of Rules." Habermas pinpoints Machiavelli as the instigator, and Hobbes as the culmination, of a "revolution in approach", rejecting, among other classical ideas, the notion that "politics was always directed toward the formation and cultivation of character."[2] And Leo Strauss, who defines political philosophy as the pursuit of "knowledge of the good life and of the good society," cites Machiavelli and Hobbes as principle figures in the "degredation of man."[3]

Is it true that neither Machiavelli nor Hobbes are concerned with people's souls, but only with their behavior? In exploring this question we will come to the heart of what persuasion is and what it does for Machiavelli and Hobbes; where they stand in relation to classical rhetoric, and what that relationship can tell us about language, knowledge, and trust in politics. For the classical theorists, persuasion mediates the gap between the people, governed by their passions, and their rulers, who have political wisdom, by enabling the people to believe what they cannot know. Right belief might have the same content as knowledge, but it is less secure because it is not fully grasped or understood. At the root of the classical conception of rhetoric is the conviction that people have different capacities for wisdom, and that rhetoric provides the means

for reaching those who could not rationally understand. As Aristotle puts it:

> Rhetoric is useful because . . . before some audiences, not even the possession of the exactest knowledge will make it easy for what we say to produce conviction. For argument based on knowledge implies instruction, and there are people whom one cannot instruct.[4]

Although Machiavelli and Hobbes both reject many classical assumptions about human psychology, and the nature of politics, conceptions of knowledge and passion remain the determining factors in understanding the meaning and uses of persuasion.

While both agree that unruly passions are responsible for the state of chaos in which people find themselves, they do not dismiss all passions as bad. Yet, not surprisingly, the type of passion each admires is diametrically opposed to the other. Hobbes sees the hope and basis for good government in the passion for peace, the longing all people have for a stable, quiet, trustworthy society in which each person can pursue his own private goals. For Machiavelli this would signal indolence and corruption. Hobbes' ideal is in his opinion the lowest form of government. Yet Hobbes would think no better or Machiavelli's favorite passion: public spiritedness. While Machiavelli sees in it the source of a strong and vital republic, Hobbes dismisses it as vain ambition.

It is clear that these two thinkers do not use "passion" in the same sense. Yet, different as their notions are, they do have similar ideas about the relationship of knowledge to passion. For both, the intellect is not something that exists above and aloof from the

passions, but is intricately connected with them. Hobbes describes reason as the servant of the passions. The contract and the recognition of the laws of nature, the ultimate expressions of reason, are the direct result of the passion for peace. For Machiavelli, political knowledge does not arise out of detachment, but from the passionate desire to accomplish something, either for the sake of one's country or oneself.

The proper relationship of intellect to passion leads for Hobbes to detachment from politics, for Machiavelli, to passionate involvement. These, then, would be the ultimate goals for which persuasion could be used. Yet because of their fundamentally different views on what constitutes knowledge, and how it is attained, persuasion would mean something radically different for each. Hobbes, taking geometry for his model, progressing from simple to more complex truths, would appeal to the reason of his listeners, knowing that infallible logic would lead them to accept his conclusions. But for Machiavelli, knowledge means not only a wide background in history, but the personal experience and perceptiveness to understand what measures are needed in particular cirumstances. It is not something that can be easily taught or acquired. Thus people must be shown the right beliefs, as one cannot expect them to grasp the complexities of the knowledge held by their leaders.

But epistemology is not the only determining factor for styles of persuasion. Hobbes and Machiavelli are also addressing very different audiences. Writing in the midst of a civil war, Hobbes wants to

convince individuals, first, that ito be rational is to be governed by self interest, and second, that their self interest lies in the maintenance of the established order. Hobbes uses a rational, orderly method to convince people to be rational and orderly. Machiavelli has other objectives: to demonstate his own ability as an astute political advisor, to urge for the unification of Italy, and to reawaken the striving after ancient virtue. He wants to appeal to the self interest of the prince, but also to his vanity and ambition, for awakening the longing for glory is the first step toward the imitation of ancient virtue. Machiavelli both shocks and captivates his audience, almost as though he is daring the prince to be daring, or stirring republicans to love their country more than their own souls.

For Machiavelli, persuasion can take as many forms as there are ends for which it is used. Depending on the circumstances, persuasion may be the wise counsel of leaders to their people, or a tactic the prince uses to safeguard his power, or both. History, as well as being the source of knowledge, is also important for producing belief. It provides not only examples of technique, but a tradition which may be used to strike an emotional chord, evoking a common heritage.

> A free city . . . can always find a motive for rebellion in the name of liberty and of its ancient usages . . . so long as the inhabitants are not separated or dispersed, they do not forget that name, and those usages, but appeal to them at once in every emergency.[5]

Machiavelli warns that the new prince must always either find a way to make an old tradition his own, or destroy it, for it contains powerful emotional elements which are remembered and shared by the people. He realizes that names and events become symbols for people, symbols that

are powerful, and must either be embraced or destroyed.

The prince uses persuasion to instill in his people the beliefs he wants them to have. In war he must overcome his subjects' weariness or indifference by "now raising the hopes of his subjects that the evils will not last long, now impressing them with fear of the enemy's cruelty."[6] The prince works to make himself appear to be trustworthy, strong, and good so that his subjects will believe in him, but he will find them even more malliable if he can convince them that their interests too are at stake.

In a republic, Machiavelli speaks of using persuasion in the Aristotelian sense: to lead people to right beliefs. This too may be manipulative, but any action may be justified by the results it produces. A leader may bring a people back to their first principles by evoking a sense of loss and of shame, glorifying the past in order to move toward a better future. He may also be able to correct people's mistaken beliefs, for though they are taken in by appearances, and will puruse any plan that promises glory, they can be perceptive when shown the particulars of a situation.

While all persuasion involves an appeal to passion for Machiavelli, Hobbes distinguishes between two kinds. One, "an elegant and clear expression of the conceptions of the mind," based on properly used words, and the other

> A commotion of the passions of the mind . . . derived from a metaphorical use of words fitted to the passions. That forms a speech from true principles; this from opinions already received . . . the art of that is logic, of this rhetoric; the end of that is truth, or this, victory.[7]

The distinction for Hobbes is perfectly clear: logic is the best form of persuasion because it appeals to reason, and reason leads all people to the same conclusions, "for all men reason alike and well, when they have good principles."[8] Most passions lead to strife, smothering the voice of reason, so that people act only for their immediate gratification, with no thought for their ultimate self-interest. Though harshly critical of Aristotle's Politics and Ethics, Hobbes conceded that "his Rhetorique was rare."[9] Perhaps one reason for his admiration is that in the Rhetoric, Aristotle recognizes that "men are persuaded by considerations of their interest, and their interest lies in the maintenance of the established order."[10]

The skill of producing conviction in people, usually for a particular end, is best judged by the results it produces. We can better understand the preconceptions and ultimate interests that lie behind notions of persuasion in Machiavelli and Hobbes by looking at some areas in which it proves a problematic issue.

Religious Interpretation

Both Machiavelli and Hobbes had strong criticisms of the religious practices of their time. They felt these practices inculcated the wrong values in the people, values which proved dangerous to the welfare of the state. Recognizing the power that religion represented, both wanted that power to be instituted in such a way as to strengthen and unify the state.

Machiavelli criticized the Christianity of his day for teaching people to hold the fate of their souls as more important than the fate

of their country. They become weak, disinterested in public affairs, and "easy prey to evil minded men, who control them more securely."[11] Interestingly, he does not condemn Christianity itself, but the way it has been interpreted. His creative and pragmatic streak will not allow him to abandon such a powerful source so easily. If thousands of people are Christians, they cannot be easily persuaded to reject their religion. Perhaps if it were interpreted differently, they could be taught to be more worthy citizens, and still call themselves Christians. Machiavelli pinpoints the fault of Christianity in "the baseness of men, who have interpreted our religion according to the promptings of indolence rather than those of virtue."[12]

Both The Prince and The Discourses give examples of how Christianity might be so interpreted. To stress his point that opponents of the law must be silenced or killed in order to maintain peace, he remarks:

> Whoever reads the Bible attentively will find that Moses, for the purpose of insuring the observance of his laws and institutions was obliged to have a great many persons put to death who opposed his designs.[13]

Throughout the Prince Moses is described with admiration from a secular point of view, compared with pagan leaders, and judged as a man with an extraordinary capacity for leadership. At another point, Machiavelli cites the story of David and Goliath to illustrate the importance of fighting with one's own arms, no matter how small or inadequate they may seem. He can find plenty of material in the Bible (especially by ignoring the New Testament) to provide authority for his political advice.

Machiavelli's views on religious interpretation are developed further when he discusses the pagan religion of Rome. Early on in The Discourses, he devotes four chapters to it, stressing that religion is "the most necessary and assured support of any civil society."[14] It is not necessary that the leaders of a republic believe, but that they feign belief, and use religion to further their own purposes. "There never was any remarkable lawgiver amongst any people who did not resort to divine authority, as otherwise his laws would not have been accepted by the people."[15]

People are naturally superstitious- it is easy to make them religious believers, and once they are, they can be easily controlled and disciplined in the name of the gods. Machiavelli has no problem with religion making people into "easy prey", he simply wants a different sort of prey, more appropriate for his ideal republic. His religion would not encourage privatization, so that a prince could easily control the state, but would combine religion with patriotism, making people more anxious to march off to war. The Roman practice of manipulating the auspices before battles, telling the soldiers they were favorable, when in fact they were not, is an example Machiavelli quotes with approval, for "this system had [no] other object thaan to inspire the soldiers on the eve of battle with that confidence which is the surest guarantee of victory."[16]

For Machiavelli, religious interpretation is not held above "the end justifies the means" formula. Indeed, this maxim is all the more applicable because there is so much at stake. While he does not discuss

the crusades, surely they reinforced his belief that religion is perhaps the surest way of obtaining the passionate obedience of a people.

Hobbes, on the contrary, seeks to interpret religion to quiet the passions. He wages a religious war on two fronts, against the papacy, and against the sects which claimed divine inspiration contrary to Anglican teachings. Both represented a threat to the authority of the Sovereign. While Catholicism required temporal obedience to the Pope, thereby splitting a subject's loyalties, sects which claimed to communicate directly with God, and to hold obedience to Him over their duties to the civil Sovereign gave subjects a divine sanctions for disobedience.

In order to combat this heresy, Hobbes offers his own understanding of what constitutes a properly Christian commonwealth. Naturally, he begins by examining the vocabulary of those who claim divine inspiration. Focusing on the word spirit, Hobbes argues that the word does not refer to an "incorporeal body", for these words taken together are absurd. Rather, "spirit" is simply an indication of God's power working in a way we cannot understand. Hobbes attacks private inspiration both as a form of madness, a result of the vanity of men who think themselves worthy to speak directly with God. These criticisms reveal Hobbes dual reaction to this phenomena. One the one hand, he considers such inspiration foolish and irrational, based on a false understanding of words, and therefore comtemptible. But he also recognizes such sects as a powerful and dangerous force of rebellion.

As an alternative, Hobbes insists that "the nature of God is incomprehensible; that is to say, we understand nothing of what he is,

but only that he is."[17] In refusing to discuss the nature of God, Hobbes shifts the emphasis to the historical record of God's actions in the world, and the actions of people who have believed in Him. "The Scripture was written to shew unto men the kingdom of God and to prepare their minds to become his obedient subjects."[18] Just as Christianity is an affirmation of the acts God has performed, and the promises He has made, the subject's duty is to obey the laws of his Sovereign in all his actions. What is actually believed is left entirely up to the individual, as long as contrary opinions are not expressed.

> A private man has always the liberty, because thought is free, to believe or not believe in his heart . . . But when it comes to confession of that faith, the private reason must submit to the public, that is to say, God's lieutenant.[19]

God's lieutenant must be the Sovereign, for in all the history of God's kingdom "the supremacy of religion was in the same hand with that of the civil sovereignty."[20]

Early on in Leviathan, Hobbes drily defines religion as "tales publically allowed"[21] and deplores superstition:

> If this superstitious fear of spirits were taken away, . . . by which crafty ambitious persons abuse the simple people, men would be much more fitted than they are for civil obedience.[22]

Here, it seems Hobbes would class Machiavelli's leaders as "crafty ambitious persons", and would much prefer people clearly guided by reason, understanding precisely the reasons why they should obey, and why they should worship as the Sovereign does. Christianity must be recognized as a different kind of knowledge: the word of God revealed through the prophets and interpreted by the Sovereign. It cannot be

understood as science can, but must be accepted through faith. This emphasis on faith, rather than seeing God in terms of human reason, as the Deists did, illustrates that religion is distinct from what can be known through science. But it is still, for Hobbes, as well as for Machiavelli a wealth of material, authoritative and familiar to all, that could be made politically instructive.

Where religious interpretation in concerned, Machiavelli and Hobbes are more alike than they are different. Religion is a kind of raw power, a force that touches people on a fundamental level, and one that is all the stronger for not being rationally examined. For all Hobbes' reasoning and explicating, stories like that of the Fall, and of Job are calculated to touch a chord of awe and fear. When this response is shared, religion can be far more powerful than mere self interest, for it can persuade people to act both unselfishly and communally to accomplish what their leaders deem necessary for the salvation of their souls.

Private Opinion

While religion may unify a people, enabling them to share a collective set of beliefs, private opinions are those that are neither official doctrine nor necessarily shared, but are personal. The classic defense of freedom of speech, made by John Stuart Mill, argues that a diversity of opinions not only strengthens a society, but is necessary for the development of theindividual. It enables him to develop a distinctive voice through self expression, and his faculties of judgement through listening to others. But Mill is not a theorist

of power. He envisions an open marketplace of ideas in society rather than a state in which freedom of speech could pose a serious threat to political order. Certainly he is never put in the position of deciding between free speech and peace. What place does personal expression have in theory primarily concerned with order?

Machiavelli, as the style of his writing clearly attests, felt a wide variety of opinion to be a sign of a healthy vital state. Reflecting upon Roman history, he speaks of a "golden age when every one could hold and defend whatever opinion he pleased."[23] He insists upon the importance of open procedures so that citizens may freely speak their minds about other citizens or policies. For when outlets such as these are not provided, passions will burst out in more dangerous ways.

But more important than simply providing a safety valve, free speech gives a republic the advantage of the wisdom of all the minds that make themselves heard. "To advise men to be silent and to withhold the expression of any opinion would render them useless to a republic."[24] Still, though wise counsel makes for a healthy state, it is not always conducive to the health of the counselor. Machiavelli warns that counselors, even in corrupt principalities should be given leave to speak freely, but from their point of view this is not always wise. In advocating a certain policy, they may find themselves punished for its failure. In a principality, none but the privileged would dare openly speak their minds in opposition to the prince, and these would do so only with the strictest care.

Machiavelli would not offer much succor to the idealist who held

his beliefs more important than his safety. An ardent republican himself, he wrote *The Prince* to gain favor with Lorenzo di Medici after the the republican coup with which he had sympathized, failed. For him, being useful was more important than holding on to ideals in idleness. Holding on to ideals when decisive and perhaps cruel measures are called for is equally inadequate. Machiavelli describes Pietro Soderini, who believed he could rule through "patience and gentleness" in a state with dangerous enemies, as "the dupe of his opinions."[25] The freedom to hold and act upon one's opinions is admired, but like all other admirable qualities, must adjust itself to time and circumstance.

Hobbes is most sensitive to private opinion in the form of sectarian religious beliefs, but is also keenly attuned to the dangers of private opinion in other forms as well. For him, conscientious objection to the laws of the commowealth would be a contradiction in terms, for "law is the public conscience, by which ¼the subject hath already undertaken to be guided."[26] Hobbes speaks of law as a the expression of reason, and reason as "certain", "scientific" and "infallible". Knowledge is unquestionable, dissension is a sign of ignorance.

Because Hobbes envisions a close relationship between theory and practice, he is wary of differing opinions, "The actions of men proceed from their opinions; and in the well governing of opinions, consisteth the well governing of men's actions."[27] He does not consider the possibility that people might learn from each other, for knowledge can only be attained through the scientific method. But before knowledge can be acquired, false opinions must be rooted out, and the mind cleared

of all nonsense so that true knowledge may be understood without the challenge of misguided beliefs.

Both Machiavelli and Hobbes are unconcerned with the notion that free speech is essential for personal development. When a diversity of opinions is valued, as in Machiavelli's republic, this is because it strengthens the state as well as its citizens. While both thinkers stress the importance of educating subjects and citizens, the freedom to discuss a variety of ideas is not considered important for political instruction.

Education

Education, for Machiavelli and Hobbes, means teaching people to be good subjects and citizens. Both thinkers conceive of education as the process of teaching people correct values. What values are to be taught, and how? The classical theorists saw education as working toward the perfection of the individual soul, and the unity and harmony of the polis, for the two were seen as directly relateds. Each person had a particular place to fill in the polis, and education prepared them for that place. What does education do for Machiavelli's and Hobbes' subjects? What sort of knowledge does it provide? Does teaching people to be good citizens make them better people?

The topic of education is entirely omitted from The Prince. Where there is no public life, there is no need for education. But in a republic, education is essential. For Machiavelli, the goal of education is "to enable [people] to know the world better, and to

teach them to be less elated in good fortune, and less depressed by adversity."[28] Education teaches temperance, it teaches people to quell their passions so they may look beyond the sensations of the present. Machiavelli most often speaks of education in terms of learning restraint, much as the Greeks spoke of conquering the passions and living moderately. Yet moderation must never be taken so far as passivity. The ideal citizen is one who can think clearly, and act decisively. → excellence (virtù)

Though Machiavelli recognizes the educational power of literature and drama, in The Discourses his discussion of education focuses almost entirely on military training rather than cultural factors. Education does not involve the pursuit of wisdom, but the formation of a certain character. The ideal citizen is valorous without being arrogant. This training can only be done by one who is both respected and admired, a leader who wins hearts through his words and deeds. "For nothing so certainly secures . . . the public esteem as some such remarkable action or saying that . . . is of a nature to become familiar as a proverb among the subjects."[29] Citizens are best taught by example.

For Hobbes, education is simply "the instruction of the people in the essential rights which are the natural and fundamental laws of sovereignty."[30] It is essential that they understand, for left in ignorance, people could easily be seduced into believing dangerous doctines. People would be forced to acknowledge these laws as necessary if they honestly looked into their own hearts. But their passions and

secret thoughts are easily kept from them, as "the characters of a man's heart are blotted and confounded with dissembling, lying, counterfeiting and erroneous doctines."[31] Because people are so adept at avoiding the truth about themselves, self education is not an option.

> It is annexed to the sovereignty to be judge of what opinions and doctrines are averse, and what conducing to peace; and consequently what men are trusted withal in speaking to multitudes of people, and who shall examine the doctrines of all books before they are published.[32]

Fortunately, education is as simple as telling people what their duties are: "an unpreducated man needs no more to learn it than to hear it."[33] The key for Hobbes is that all are educated. He suggests calling people to gether weekly to have their duties read to them, as well as having the rules of sovereignty taught to the young in universities.

Hobbes is confident that, once led to an understanding of their true self interest, people will not hesitate to accept the necessity of the Sovereign. "The common people's minds . . . are like clean paper, fit to recieve whatsoever by public authority shall be imprinted in them."[34] Not only will they be taught to obey all of the laws of nature, but they will be taught "to do all this sincerely from the heart . . . for not only the unjust facts, but the designs and intentions to do them, though by accident hindered are injustice."[35]

Here again the double meaning of "justice" surfaces. Hobbes has made it clear that justice can only apply to actions, yet here he breaks from his emphasis on behavior to intentions. He clearly saw that actions are motivated by the thoughts behind them, the reason for

his insistance that the Sovereign must decide what doctrines may or may not be taught. Yet he also insists that thought is free. Can these two assertions be made compatible?

Are Hobbes and Machiavelli interested in changing people's souls? Both of them, for all their emphasis on action and motion, see people's minds as surprisingly passive. They do not take part in their own education, but are molded by their leaders into the desired shape. The active critical questioning of the Socratic method, for example, would be foreign to both educational systems. Quoting Cicero with approval, Machiavelli notes: "The people, though ignorant, yet are capable of appreciating the truth, and yield to it readily when it is presented to them by a man whom they esteem worthy of their confidence."[36] Hobbes, though criticizing mere belief for its passivity, still implies a difference from the active and rigorous science of politics, and the precepts of reason as discovered by the people. Metaphors like "minds like clean paper, fit to receive", and the fact that the end of reason is passive obedience, seem strangely inconsonant with his assertions that knowledge is active and seeking. For though it is, it can only seek one answer; that answer discovered, knowledge ceases to be of further use.

Both thinkers obviously expect people to change under good government. But how radical is this change? Machiavelli speaks of bringing political and religious institutions back to "first principles." He outlines, almost in mythic form, the origins of government, when people chose the wisest and most just to be their leaders. The return to first principles involves a people becoming

again what they once were. But this formula means that only those cities that have a history of liberty may recapture that liberty. Cities that have corrupt origins are destined to remain corrupt, unless, by some amazing chance, a good man emerges who has the power and skill to institute liberty, and reform the people so they may guard that liberty after his death. But Machiavelli admits "I know not whether such a case has ever ocurred, or whether it possibily ever could occur."[37] History once again proves essential. It not only contains the past, but also the future; for the future must spring from the past. Machiavelli cannot be credited or accused of changing people's souls. He simply describes the changes that necessarily take place, just as events take place. History's cycles bring different forms of government to the fore, and the character of a people may shape, and be shaped by those forms of government.

Hobbes argues that he is not trying to change people's souls at all. He points out again and again that thought is free, and that no one, save God, can judge a man's beliefs. Civil laws are not instituted

> to bind the people from all voluntary actions; but to direct and keep them in such a motion, as not to not to hurt themselves by their own rashness or indiscretion; as hedges are set, not to stop travellers, but to keep them in their way.[36]

I have already noted the remarks on education that must be placed in the balance with comments like these. How are these different factors to be weighed? Perhaps the best way of examining the kinds of changes Hobbes and Machiavelli intend, or must necessarily entail, is to

imagine their subjects' response to their doctrines. Would they consent to live in such a state? Would they support such rulers? Would they be convinced?

persuade = convince ?

V. The People's Perspective

In Lying, Sissela Bok draws out the moral issues implicit in deception by exploring the radically different perceptions of the liar and the lied to. While the liar can always justify his deceptions, naturally assigning to himself the most benevolent and rational motive, the one who has been decieved often cares very little about motive at all, but feels betrayed by such a deliberate breach of trust. This emphasis on perspective can illuminate many other areas in which language is used. Since Machiavelli and Hobbes both write from the privileged perspective of those in power, we must look at their ideas from the other side, from the perspective of the people, in order to get a complete understanding of the kind of relationship each describes between the leaders and the people of a state.

I have described how Machiavelli advocates manipulative tactics, even in states where citizens are uncorrupted, and genuinely seeking to serve the republic. He justifies himself by arguing that:

> The great majority of mankind are satisfied with appearances, as though they were realities, and are often even more influenced by the things that seem, than by things that are.[1]

People are so often blind, they may prefer actions that seem courageous and bold, refusing to recognize that such plans are also foolish and dangerous. People need to be guided; yet, governed by their passions, they may refuse to accept good counsel. For Machiavelli, deceptions are necessary. If the people insist upon looking at illusions rather than reality, then the most constructive illusions should be created for them to believe in. While reputations are carefully created, essential

information withheld, or religious auspices "interpreted", people remain oblivious to the machinations behind the scenes, accepting actions and events for what they appear to be.

But Machiavelli also realizes the dangers of this course.

> The people often, deceived by an illusive good, desire their own ruin, and, unless they are made sensible of the evil of the one, and the benefit of the other course, by someone in whom they have confidence, they will expose the republic to infinite peril and damage. And if it happens that the people have no confidence in any one, as sometimes will be the case when they have been deceived before by events or men, then it will inevitably lead to the ruin of the state.[2]

In order for the people to be guided, they must respect and trust their leaders. Yet deception itself works to destroy trust.

The leaders of a republic would doubtless argue that these deceptions were only practiced for the right reasons. On these grounds, Sheldon Wolin formulates a convincing and positive reading of Machiavelli: since politics for him is necessarily concerned with the administration of violence, he is trying to formulate guidelines for "the economy of violence." It is tragic that violence, and, I shall add, fraud, must be a part of politics, but they are necessary, and to renounce them is to cause even more harm. It is the political leader's challenge to accept fraud and violence as the tools he must use, and to do his best to use them responsibly.

Yet Bok would question the notion that benevolent motives are enough to justify such acts. The leaders may give themselves the benefit of the doubt when examining their own motives, but the people are harldly in a position to do this. Ultimately, Machiavelli is

describing a state based upon a double standard: the people must trust, but are not to be trusted. With this assumption at the core of even the most vital republic, how substantive can its claims to a public life be?

Machiavelli argues that this assumption is not a matter of choice:

> many have imagined republics and principalities have never beeen see, or known to exist in reality; for how we live is so far removed from how we ought to live, that he who abandons what is done, for what ought to be done will rather learn to bring about his own ruin than his preservation.[3]

He holds that it is simply a matter of fact that people need illusions. Yet his description of the loss of confidence and the sense of betrayal people feel when they discover deceptions argues that whether or not people have the capacity for knowing it, they expect to be told the truth.

At first glance, Machiavelli's republic seems worlds away from the principalities he describes. People are not afraid to speak out, to voice their opinions, to debate in the political arena. Everyone's voice is recognized, and all are encouraged to make themselves heard. But free speech and the right to take part in decision making are empty if people are not granted access to the information necessary to make these choices. If people cannot ultimately be trusted to take part in governing themselves, then a republic is not qualitatively different from a principality,

> For government consists mainly in so keeping your subjects that they shall be neither able, nor nor disposed to injure you; and this is done by depriving them of all means of injuring you, or by bestowing such benefits upon them that it would not be reasonable for them to desire any change of fortune.[4]

While Machiavelli considers people "uncorrupted" in a republic, this is not the same good life toward which the polis aimed, for the improvement of the citizenry is always incidental to the true aim of all that Machiavelli advocates: the preservation of power.

In Hobbes, the central issue from the subject's perspective is "Did I really consent?" Given the degree of obligation which consent entails, it is extremely important that each subject consider himself to have consented. Hobbes describes two types of consent: by institution or by conquest. He also makes the distinction between express and tacit consent, yet this latter distinction does not necessarily correspond to the first. In short it is not always clear exactly what constitutes consent.

One the one hand, Hobbes stresses the express, verbal nature of consent, arguing "no man can compact with him who doth not declare his acceptance."[5] This explains why the notion of consent is limited to man alone, and why men cannot covenant with beasts. But Hobbes also argues that because "preservation of life being the end for which one man becomes subject to another, every man is supposed to promise obedience to him in whose power it is to save or destroy him."[6] Here consent is assumed when one party is obviously at the mercy of the other, even if nothing is said. This is considered to be tacit consent, which may be

> sometimes the consequence of words, sometimes the consequence of silence; sometimes the consequence of actions; sometimes the consequence of forbearing an action, and generally a sign by inference is whatsoever sufficiently argues the will of the contractor.[7]

This definition is extraordinarily vague and broad by Hobbes usually precise standards. Yet he argues that it is just as valid and binding as express consent. By arguing that consent may take either of these forms, Hobbes can stress the deliberateness and bindingness of the act, while at the same time extending it to all the people living within a commonwealth who have never expressly consented to the compact.

Naturally, the latter category is far larger than the first. They are assumed to have consented because they live under the protection of the Sovereign.

> The obligation of a servant to his lord ariseth not from simple grant of his life, but from hence further, that he keeps him not bound or imprisoned. For all obligation derives from contract, but where there is no trust, there can be no contract . . . There is therefore, a confidence and trust which accompanies the benefit of pardoned life, whereby the lord affords him his corporal liberty; so that if no obligation nor bonds of contract had happened, he might not only have made his escape, but also have killed his lord, who was the preserver of his life.[8]

The use of an analogy to illustrate this point is interesting, for it draws on several assumptions that Hobbes does not explicate in his analysis of consent. By bringing the situation down to the individual level, the master/servant analogy assumes that: 1) the question of whether the servant actually verbally consented is unimportant. 2) the master could have chosen to imprison the servant, while in a commonwealth, this would not necessarily be a realistic option. In a large and complex state, a person could, with relative ease, take advantage of the benefits of society while bearing none of the costs.

3) That there is a trusting relationship between the servant and his master.

The notion of trust fits very uneasily into Hobbes' system. Trust refers to a feeling of certainty, a faith in the judgement and actions of another. But for a rational, self interested person, there must be a reason for trusting another. The Sovereign, insofar as he is an artificial person has no need of trust, for he embodies the wills of all his subjects. Insofar as he is a natural person, he is more likely to trust his own power more than the good will of his subjects, for Hobbes makes clear that the Sovereign does not have more natural rights than his subjects, but that he is the only one who does not renounce them.

Hobbes also argues that the people trust the Sovereign. "There can be no contract where there is no trust" refers to trust on both sides that it will be kept. He refers to the Sovereign's violations of natural law as breaches of trust. But people have no reason to trust the Sovereign. He does not contract with them. They have no assurance that he will rule them wisely and fairly, and perhaps most importantly, there is no personal connection between the Sovereign and his subjects. The Sovereign is not a leader, but a device for unifying many wills into one. Trust requires some knowledge of the object of faith, either in the charater of a ruler, or in the nuetral structure of the political system. Hobbes' Sovereign offers neither.

Then why does Hobbes speak of trust? It is plainly at odds with his principles of self interest, for no viable explanation has been offered as to why subjects should trust their Sovereign. The reason no such explanation is offered is because there is none. The Sovereign is

bound to his subjects by natural law, just as all natural men are bound to each other. But there is no earthly reason why he should respect those laws. Hobbes appeals to trust to try to provide an emotionally satisfying answer where no logical one can be found. But trust is a strangely empty concept when Hobbes speaks of it, for his subjects have no shared life, no common culture, and no common goals. Trust cannot appeal to shared values, nor can it appeal to any personal confidence in the Sovereign, for he is not a leader, but an "artificial man."

Trust, then, is not so much an actual condition to which Hobbes refers, but a concept that is used to buttress the nebulous notion of consent. Not only should the people trust their Sovereign, unquestioningly accepting the mysterious grounds of their "consent", but Hobbes argues in the passage above that having *been trusted* by the Sovereign constitutes consent. Consent then becomes not simply passive and silent, but entirely removed from the hands of the subject.

Hobbes' educational program brings out another facet in the issue of consent: would people consent to be so governed if they knew they were going to be changed? For while Hobbes argues that he is merely making hedges, he also asserts that reason can only be heard by those whose passions have been quieted, that in a monarchy "only the ambitious suffer; the rest are protected from the injuries of the more potent,"[9] and that people must learn to obey all of the laws of nature "from the heart." Yet at the outset, Hobbes posited that one reason it was possible to have a science of politics is *because* man's psychological nature is constant. The "general inclination of all mankind" is a

desire for power "that ceaseth only in death."[10] How then can Hobbes expect men to agree to have their ambitions quieted?

Hobbes changes his description of the conditions of the contract. He argues that rational people would agree to a negative version of the golden rule: do not do that to others, which you would not have them do unto you. But, though the contract would be made on these grounds, in effect people would have relinquished all power over their lives, their relationships to each other, their minds and their words - everything except their bodies, for the "liberty of subjects dependeth on the silence of the law."[11] All this could be done without any subject uttering a word, according to the notion of tacit consent, for the emphasis has shifted from the subject's will to the context in which a persons actions or silences must be construed. To convince readers of the truth of his doctrine, Hobbes urges "read thyself", but in view of the ends of his commonwealth, "revise thyself" would be a more appropriate motto.

In this section I have explored the subject's awareness of how he is being ruled, and how he is personally affected by his government. It is very possible that a perceptive and critical subject might never consent or lend his support to the type of government described by Machiavelli or Hobbes. But it is equally possible that he might never perceive any of the "gaps" I have described, and live perfectly contented in such a state. After all, Machiavelli gives much advice to the prince and the leaders of a republic about how to appear toward the people. Why wouldn't a talented and charismatic ruler succeed in

weaving these illusions? As for Hobbes' subjects, if they were educated as thoroughly as he describes, they would never have enough distance from the political system to quesiton it. Critical distance would be eradicated by the institution of scientific language.*

If subjects have no complaints about the ways in which language is being used, must we then conclude, with Weber, that the government is acting legitimately? Hanna Pitkin points out the obvious problem with this stance.

> [such a definition would mean] that a government may become increasingly legitimate by the judicious and efficient use of secret police and propaganda. Which seems about as accurate as that one can increase the validity of an argument by threatening to shoot anyone who disagrees.[11]

Machiavelli's and Hobbes' manipulation of language is even more insidious, for while holding a gun on someone is a blatant threat of violence, their use of language, when most effective, would be least perceived. Is it possible to find standards for the use of language outside of the perceptions of the people in the state?

*The word tyranny provides an example. Hobbes describes it as the term used to refer to monarchy by its enemies. This word would disappear from "scientific" language. In this sense, Orwell's Newspeak is remeniscent of Hobbes' language. The key is not so much inventing new words as removing problematic ones.

VI. The Search for Standards

What is implied in the assumption that people themselves are not the best judges of their own situation? Does it entail ascribing to them a kind of "false consciousness", revealing the same sort of latent contempt for their natural judgement that Machiavelli and Hobbes both use to justify their manipulation of language? It need not. Realizing the limitations of people within a certain situation does not mean ascribing those limitations to human nature as they do.

These two thinkers represent two opposite ends of the spectrum where the use of language is concerned. Machiavelli does not always respect the ordinary limitations we put upon language in advocating fraud and deception. Bok describes lying as analagous to violence because it comes from outside the realm of acceptable social intercourse. While creativity may challenge people's expectations, it does not violate the basic assumptions people must make in order to communicate with each other. To borrow Wittgenstein's metaphor, if language is a series of games, deceptions are a refusal to play by the rules.

But where is the line to be drawn between creativity and deception? Both violate people's "assumptions" at some level, and both are connected to our ability to imagine something other than what is. But, to return to the game metaphor, rules need not be prescribed beforehand. They can be made up as we go along - as long as there is a recognition that this is what is being done. The crucial difference between creativity and deception is that the latter involves a deliberate _intent_ to mislead rather than challenge other people. All

societies must operate on the assumption that people are telling the truth. Without this assumption, all communication would degenerate into absurdity. We must have a natural duty to play by liguistic rules because society could not exist without them. Hobbes is correct in observing that without trust there can be no relationships. The very fact that Machiavelli needs to urge leaders to use deception, to "learn how not to be good" amounts to a recognition that speaking truthfully is the natural state of affairs.

Hobbes goes to the other extreme. In seeking to impose order upon chaotic natural language, he strips words of their resonance and richness, and language of its full capacity for meaning. He tries to reduce words to one particular meaning in order to eliminate ambiguity, not recognizing that a multiplicity of ideas and explanations is not the fault of language, but a characteristic of the human mind. It does not, as Hobbes thought, operate solely on one track.

Both thinkers circumvent people's ability to communicate. While Hobbes' scientific language would deprive people of the possibility of expressing themselves, Machivelli's deceptions focus on preventing people from having the opportunity to do so. These problems point to the types of standards that must be found.

Hanna Pitkin sets forth criteria for insuring that language retains its possibilities, its full capacity for expression of thought. While words may fail us, or simply be inadequate in a given situation, language as a whole must always be able to refer to possibilities outside of what is. The concept of justice, for example,

> includes in all of us, both form and substance, both conventionalized social practices, and an idea that is an ideal by which to measure them. . . . We are always potentially able to pry the idea loose from some particular example, and reasses its applicability.[2]

This is precisely what Hobbes removes from his vocabulary - the elasticity that allows concepts to refer both to what is, and to what could or ought to be. In silencing private conscience, Hobbes not only deprived personality and creativity of a vocabulary, but also morality, for in collapsing civil and moral law, he does not unify and strengthen them both, as he sought to do, but deprive the former of the needed criticism of the latter.

Machiavelli controls the opportunity for speech in a principality through threats of violence, and in a republic through manipulation of information. Even when people have an open forum in which to speak, this is not a true opportunity for expression if they are deprived of the information necessary for an intelligent, rational decision. The assumption of a psychological makeup common to all persons that Machiavelli posits is forgotten when he begins to speak of political action. Fascination with strategy leads him to place far less emphasis on public trust that is actually needed. The constant references to "the people" reveal a mass analysis rather than thinking of citizens as individuals who are not so different from the rulers themselves.

Bok argues for a standard of publicity for all lies, requiring that good reasons be given for deceptions, and asking whether a group of rational persons would condone lying in a particular situation. If information must be concealed, or lies told for public safety, rulers

would at least be guided by what people deemed to be acceptable action under the cirumstances. All forms of deceptions need not be eliminated, but they must be discussed, prior to any actual situation in which they might be used.

For Machiavelli does not realize the harm lies can do. He thinks of them entirely in terms of what they are able to accomplish, not recognizing how they affect both the liar and those lied to. While he warns that the discovery of deceptions may lead to the dissolution of the state, his worry is the harm done to the rulers' power, and not to the relationship between people and rulers itself.

As Sara Schomer points out, "corruption" for Machiavelli represents privatization, self interest at its worst. It suggests an actual physical or chemical change in the matter of the republic. But lying, even when it is done out of altruistic motives, is one of the most selfish acts a political leader can perform. He is reserving the right to know the truth for himself, while denying it to all others. Bok, in exploring the meaning of the word "integrity", discovers its links to the idea of being untouched or intact, referring to the notion that lying harms those that engage in it. Unless standards for deception can be set, lying does harm, for by virtue of the power and the isolation it bestows on the liar, it corrupts him.

But different as Machiavelli and Hobbes' approaches are in these areas, both of them share one basic assumption that is at the root of their conceptions of language, and is the source of their shortcomings. Both thinkers see language as a tool, an external faculty that is used for translating thoughts into spoken words. Wittgenstein's insight was

to point out that language is also an activity. It is something we do something that comes out of who we are, and the situation in which we find ourselves. The metaphor of language games illuminates not only language's active character, but also the idea that it has structure, though rules for the use of language may vary from game to game. Language can neither be codified into one game where all the rules are prescribed, nor can it be spoken with no standards at all.

A major consequence of Hobbes' and Machiavelli's view of langauge as external, as a tool to be used, is that they see thought as separate and distinct from words. For Hobbes, people are considered to be free becuase they may think whatever they wish, though their speech is strictly controlled. In Machiavelli's case, lies and deceptions may be advocated, for what is and what seems to be (i.e. what is the truth, and what is said) remain distinct in the mind of the political actor. The mind of the liar is considered to be unaffected by what he utters. In addition to Bok's criticism of this point, Hannah Arendt notes, "under fully democratic conditions, deception without self-deception is well nigh impossible."[3] This assumption of a gulf between thoughts and words attacks communication on two basic levels: thoughts may not be permitted to be expressed, and words may be spoken in order to deliberately mislead, obscuring the thoughts of the speaker.

Rousseau's view on words and thoughts in politics poses a direct alternative to this view. In order for the Generaal Will to emerge, each person must vote for what he truly believes is the General will.

It must be "general in its object as well as its essence."[4] This concern with "essence" reveals Rousseau's emphasis on the importance of <u>motivation</u> as well as the <u>content</u> of each individual's expression. Both are necessary, and must be consonant for the General Will to emerge. Examining the adaptation of this idea in the French Revolution, Arendt points out the disastrous effects of including the private realm of thoughts within politics.

> The search for motives, the demand that everybody display in public his innermost motivation, since it actually demands the impossible, transforms all actors into hypocrites; the moment the display of motives begins, hypocrisy begins to poison all human relations.[5]

Clearly this opposite extreme is no alternative. Political speech must continue to allow for discretion, self imposed silence, and for the protection of the personal. But between these two poles there must be a middle ground in which language can do justice to personal expression, and to the basic expectations we bring to any interchange. Defining this ground is something that must be done within the context of a political situation, by the people involved, but it must involve a departure from the idea that language is simply a tool we use.

The notion of language as a tool led Machiavelli and Hobbes to see the vast creative potential in language. Viewing the relationship of man to man as naturally chaotic and dangerous, they saw the possibility of imposing order through language. Both sought to harness the passions of men through language in order to generate a strong central power that could be used to control them. Language was to be used to battle the unknown, to conquer fortune and the heart of darkness that lies within the passions of man. For Machiavelli, this meant creating

illusions and deceptions. The prince, as author of these fantasies, has utter control over them. He can mold and shape them in order to form the epic of history. For Hobbes, it meant creating a new language, fashioning the definitions of words so that all would know exactly what they meant. Fiction and artificiality must be constructed by the ruler, for he can ony truly understand and control what he has made.

Both Machiavelli's and Hobbes' manipulation of language stems from their search for certainty in an uncertain world. If one can only understand what one creates, language cannot be governed by common use, and ordinary expectations, but has to be fashioned into a tool which empowered the prince or the Sovereign. Perhaps the only alternative to this state of affairs is to put more trust into language as it is spoken.

This does not mean that ordinary language is perfectly suited to all our needs. It is inevitably ambiguous, and often poorly used. In some situations, speech is simply inadequate. What good is language to a slave? In <u>The Tempest,</u> Miranda reproaches Caliban, a slave, for his revolt:

> I pitied thee,
> Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
> One thing or another: when thou didst not, savage
> Know thy own meaning, I endowed thy purposes
> With words that made them known.

He responds:

> You taught me language; and my profit on't
> Is, I know how to curse.[5]

When the attainment of one's purpose is hopeless, Caliban's bitter reply is apt. But though language cannot solve all our problems, our

response should not be despair or contempt for what language _can_ do. The solution is not to take language out of people's hands (or mouths) by preventing them from understanding what they hear, for if people cannot speak and understand language, using it to fully communicate their thoughts, then it is not fulfilling its most basic function.

Language cannot provide absolute certainty because it is a human quality, and absolute certainty cannot be created where none exists. But neither is language pure chaos. It can be discussed and better understood. This, however, requires a consciousness of how we use words, and a basic agreement about the ways in which language may be used in the political realm. We see in the writings of Machiavelli and Hobbes the creativity language is capable of, and the lucidity with which it may present ideas to us, but the ways in which their theories put language to use is ultimately dehumanizing because they view language as a way of subduing people, rather than an essential, and potentially positive aspect of human nature and relationships.

nice concl

Endnotes

Chapter 1

1. Quoted in Hanna Pitkin, *Wittgenstein and Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972) p.282

Chapter 2

1. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses,* trans. Luigi Ricci (New York: Random House, 1950) p. 3

2. Ibid., p.216

3. Ibid., p. 297

4. Ibid., p. 298

5. *The Literary Works of Machiavelli,* ed. and trans. J.R. Hale (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) p. 185

6. Ibid., p. 190

7. Ibid., p. 189

8. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan,* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1962; Collier Books) p. 40

9. Ibid., p. 39

10. Aristotle, *Politics,* trans. Sir Ernest Barker, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946) p. 6

11. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* p. 46

12. Ibid., p. 36

13. Ibid., p. 33

14. Ibid., p. 34

15. Ibid., p. 208

Chapter 3

1. Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses,* p. 208

2. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* p. 80

3. Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses*, p. 439
4. Ibid., p. 64
5. Ibid., p. 84
6. Ibid., p. 65
7. Ibid., p. 66
8. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, p. 158
9. Ibid., p. 104
10. Machiavelli, *The Prince and The Discourses,* p. 112
11. Ibid., p. 231
12. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* p. 138
13. Ibid., p. 200
14. Ibid., p. 247
15. Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive or The Citizen,* (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1949) p. 104
16. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* p. 167
17. Ibid., p. 504
18. Machiavelli, *Literary Works,* p. 188
19. Machiavelli, *The Chief Works and Others,* trans. Allan Gilbert (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965) p. 819
20. Hobbes, *Leviathan,* p. 34
21. Ibid., p. 60
22. Ibid., p. 22
23. Ibid., p. 144
24. Ibid., p. 481
25. Hobbes, *De Cive,* p. 116
26. Ibid., p. 131

27. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 94

28. Ibid., p. 32

29. Werner Jaeger, Paideia, Vol. I, trans. Gilbert Highet. (New (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965) p. 112

30. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 71

31. Ibid., p. 56

32. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 191

33. Ibid., p.144

34. Norman Jacobson, Pride and Solace. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978) p. 90

Chapter 4

1. Sheldon Wolin, Politics and Vision, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960) p. 201

2. Jurgen Habermas, Theory and Practice, trans. John Viertel. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973) p. 42

3. Leo Strauss, What is Political Philosophy? (Glencoe, Ill: The Free Press, 1959) p. 10

4. Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans. W. Rhys Roberts. (New York: Random House, 1954) p. 22

5. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 19

6. Ibid., p. 41

7. Hobbes, De Cive, p. 138

8. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 44

9. John Aubrey, Brief Lives, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1950) p. 158

10. Aristotle, Rhetoric, p. 55

11. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 285

12. Ibid., p. 286

13. Ibid,. p. 498

14. Ibid., p. 146

15. Ibid., p. 147

16. Ibid., p. 158

17. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 287

18. Ibid., p. 67

19. Ibid., p. 324

20. Ibid., p. 349

21. Ibid., p. 51

22. Ibid., p. 27

23. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 144

24. Ibid., p. 515

25. Ibid., p. 406

26. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 239

27. Ibid., p. 137

28. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 503

29. Ibid., p. 312

30. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 247

31. Ibid., p. 20

32. Ibid., p. 137

33. Ibid., p. 249

34. Ibid., p. 249

35. Ibid., p. 252

36. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 120

37. Ibid., 166

38. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 256

Chapter 5

1. Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, p. 182

2. Ibid., p. 247

3. Ibid., p. 56

4. Ibid., p. 358

5. Hobbes, De Cive, p. 37

6. Hobbes, Leviathan, p. 153

7. Ibid., p. 106

Hobbes, De Cive, p. 101

hapter 6

1. Hannah Arendt, "Truth in Politics", in Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman, eds. Philosophy, Politics and Society. Third Series. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967) p. 122

2. Pitkin, p. 191

3. Arendt, "Truth in Politics" p. 127

4. J.J. Rousseau, Social Contract, trans. Judith R. Masters. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978) p. 62

5. Arendt, On Revolution (London: Penguin Books, 1979) p. 98

6. William Shakespeare, The Tempest I,ii.

Bibliography

Arendt, Hannah. "Lying in Politics" in Crises of the Republic. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1972)

Arendt, Hannah. "Truth in Politics" in Peter Laslett and W.G. Runciman, eds., Philosophy, Politics and Society. Third series. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967)

Aristotle, Ethics, trans. by J.A.K. Thomson. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1953)

Aristotle, Politics, trans. by Sir Ernest Barker. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946)

Aristotle, Rhetoric, trans, by W. Rhys Roberts. (New York: Random House, 1954)

Barker, Sir Ernest, Greek Politcal Theory. (London: Methuen, 1960)

Barker, Sir Ernest, The Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1959)

Bok, Sissela, Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978)

Brown, K.C., ed, Hobbes Studies. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965)

Butterfield, Herbert, The Statecraft of Machiavelli. New York: Macmillan Company, 1956)

Cranston, Maurice and Peters, Richard S. eds, Hobbes and Rousseau. (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1972)

Danforth, John W., Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy. (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1978)

Hobbes, Thomas, De Cive or The Citizen (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, 1949)

Hobbes, Thomas, Leviathan. (New York Macmillan Publishing Company, 1962; Collier Books)

Jacobson, Norman, Pride and Solace. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978)

Jaeger, Werner, Paideia, Vol. I, trans. by Gilbert Highet. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965)

The Literary Works of Machiavelli, ed and trans. by J.R. Hale. (London: Oxford University Press, 1961)

Machiavelli: The Chief Works and Others, 3 vols. ed. and trans. by Allan Gilbert. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965)

Machiavelli, The Prince and The Discourses, trans. by Luigi Ricci. (New York: Random House, 1950)

Oakshott, Michael, Rationalism in Politics. (New York: Basic Books, 1962)

Orwell, George, "Politics and the English Language" in The Collected Essays, Journalism, and Letters of George Orwell (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1968)

Pitkin, Hanna, Wittgenstein and Justice. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972)

Plato, Gorgias, trans. by W.C.Helmbold. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1952)

Plato, Protagoras, trans. by W.K.C. Guthrie. (London: Penguin Books, 1956)

Plato, Republic, trans. by Francis Cornford. (London: Oxford University Press, 1965)

Pocock, J.G.A., The Machiavellian Moment. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975)

Pocock, J.G.A., Politics, Language and Time; Essays on Political Thought and History. (New York: Atheneum, 1973)

Schumer, S.M., "Machiavelli: Republican Politics and Its Corruption," Political Theory 7. (Feb. 1979)

Strauss, Leo, The Political Thought of Hobbes, trans. by Elsa M. Sinclair. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936)

Strauss, Leo, Thoughts on Machiavelli. (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1958)

Weber, Max, "Politics as a Vocation" in From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds and trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980)

Wolin, Sheldon S. Politics and Vision. (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1960)