Chapter 15. One of the shortest chapters of the book, and also one of the most resounding. We know on the testimony of the greatest thinkers of the century to follow, the century that saw the blossoming of modernity as an intellectual movement, that they experienced it as a call to arms. The chapter title points to its breadth; one of only two that describe the subject as human beings as such. Mach’s not just talking about princes, giving advice that we can take or leave, depending on whether or not we are or want to be princes: he is describing the human situation. "Of those things for which men and especially princes are praised or blamed." Meaning? [Virtues and vices.] Good. So why doesn't he come out and say so.

"It remains now...I depart from the orders of others." Stresses the newness of his argument; a progress not a return. The mention of the orders of others reminds us of the new modes and orders of the armed prophets of Chapter 6; Machiavelli himself a bringer of new orders. "But since my intent...than to the imagination of it." Like all philosophers Machiavelli is concerned with the truth, but he distinguishes himself from all previous ones by suggesting that he is concerned with the effectual truth, as opposed to merely some imagined truth. Hence today’s study question. Now what do you think that he means by effectual here? A truth which gets results. And so, getting results as the criterion of truth. You know that it’s true if it works, if it can be shown to have an effect; if it can’t be shown to have an effect, discard it on the trash heap of imaginary truths. Now, are we familiar with that model of truth? Modern science, in which the criterion for theory is
strictly practical, in which a theory is merely an hypothesis unless it can be shown to work in the laboratory -- and therefore in the world outside the laboratory. The effectual truth: a truth that transforms the world. Truth not for its own sake but for the sake of its effects; knowledge for the sake of power. Theory for the sake of practice. Of the thinkers whose minds were shaped by Machiavelli, the most important may have been Francis Bacon, the theoretical founder of modern science, who made his debt explicit in his work the *New Organon*, I, 129, where he presents the great scientist as the true founder and benefactor.

"And many have imagined republics and principalities ... rather than his preservation." Who are these authors of imaginary principalities whom Machiavelli has in mind? Good. Imagined principalities go together with imagined truths, with a concern with theoretical and not merely practical truths; Machiavelli, who is concerned only with effectual truths, discusses only actual principalities. "For a man...according to necessity." The most common interpretation of Machiavelli: that he acknowledged the distinction between the good and the necessary, between what we should do and what we have to do, but regretfully and sorrowfully recognized that it was sometimes necessary to be bad. The tragic Machiavelli; the half-Christian Machiavelli, the moral Machiavelli.

But let's see if this is where he ends up. He proceeds to run through a list of what appear to be virtues and their corresponding vices, although he never calls them that. Ten or eleven pairs: ten for the ten commandments, eleven for Aristotle's virtues. But not commandments; merely choices; and not virtues and vices, merely qualities. He speaks only of "the above-mentioned qualities that are held good;" thereby reserving judgement as to whether they are. It would be swell, he says, it really would, if a prince could have them all. But he can't, so it is necessary that he be more
concerned to avoid a reputation for the vices that would cost him his state than for those that would not. "And furthermore one should not concern ...results in one's security and well-being."

[Re-read.] What is Machiavelli saying here about the tension between the good and the necessary, between what is virtuous and what will bring you success? Is there any such tension? No, there merely appears to be. Certain seeming virtues may lead to failure and certain seeming vices to success, the implication being that a virtue that brings failure is only a seeming virtue and a vice that brings success only a seeming vice. Whatever success requires is virtuous; whatever precludes success is vicious. Much more radical than the teaching with which he is usually credited. Virtue no longer a goal of political life, as it had been for Plato and Aristotle and Christianity, but merely a means to political success: virtue for the sake of power and glory. The means become the ends; the end is demoted to the means: the great watershed in the history of political thought. From here on in political theorists concern themselves not with virtue but with something else -- security, prosperity, liberty -- and with virtue only as a means to that something else.

Chapters 16-18: apply the teaching of chapter 15 to specific virtues critical to political life. Chapter 16: liberality, the virtue having to do with giving, closest to what we would call generosity. Well known to Machiavelli's readers through Aristotle's teaching in his *Ethics*. Giving the right amount to the right people on the right occasions; a mean between two extremes, meanness or stinginess, on the one hand, overspending on the other. Like everything in Aristotle, begins from common sense.

Now let's look at Machiavelli. Begins by paying lip service to liberality as intrinsically good. But then raises the question of reputation. If you practice it "virtuously," which here and only here in the *Prince* appears to mean as recommended by Aristotle, you won't gain a reputation
for it. [Elaborate.] But wait a minute. Would this faze Aristotle? [No.] Why not? Good. For Aristotle what matters is the reality, not the appearance, and there is a reality to virtue, the standard for which is not how big a political splash you make.

Suppose then that you do practice the virtue so as to gain a reputation for it, giving indiscriminately and in a big way. In that case you will quickly exhaust your resources and thereby menace your reputation. If you are going to continue to give, you will soon have to resort to taking; to support your addiction to liberality you’ll actually have to practice rapacity, . So better, Machiavelli argues, to practice meanness from the beginning, so as not to have a reputation for liberality which can only be maintained by such drastic and counterproductive measures. He even comforts us by suggesting that through the practice of meanness (which let us now call thrift) you can gain a reputation for liberality, because people will be so grateful to you for not taking anything from them. The joke is on Aristotle: not by practicing the mean but only by practicing either one of the extremes -- either extravagance or stinginess -- can one gain a reputation for the mean. Extravagance is risky, stinginess is safe, so better to be stingy or thrifty.

Just one little question. Do people in fact gain reputations for thrift merely by refraining from rapacity; that is, for giving simply by refraining from taking? No. And at the beginning of the next paragraph, Machiavelli concedes this: "Therefore...which enable him to rule." So merely refraining from taking does not gain you a reputation for giving, and Machiavelli now must field objections based on great figures of the past who really did enjoy a reputation for giving. (READ).

Machiavelli has come full circle. From recommending against concerning yourself with a reputation for liberality because this will drive you to rapacity, he ends up recommending that you practice rapacity to gain a reputation for liberality. The appearance of being a big giver necessarily
depends on the reality of being a big taker. The crucial distinction to bear in mind: us and them, domestic and foreign. If you take from the majority of your own people to give to a minority, the majority will hate you. But if you take from as many outsiders as possible to give to all of your own people, then they will love you. The Leninist theory of imperialism. And they will even do most of the work for you: you just form them into an army of takers. True liberality is the worst alternative, stinginess is second best, but best of all is rapacity practiced in the biggest possible way, for practiced in that way it no longer incurs a reputation for rapacity, but rather one for liberality. And only the reputation matters. What Machiavelli recommends here: a policy of steady economic growth. In the circumstances of his day, endless imperialism, with all of the risks and inconveniences.

But substitute, as Locke will do, nature for man as the enemy to be exploited, and armies of entrepeneurs, workers, scientists, and economists for armies of the old fashioned kind, and you have what remains a cornerstone of modern politics: liberality not as the distribution of existing wealth, but as the creation of new wealth through an expanding economy, an ongoing and endless project. This Machiavelli’s chapter on economics which clearly foreshadows the modern economic project.

[The modern reservations concerning acquisition versus the Aristotelian ones. We ask only if its just (equitably distributed, non-exploitative) and feasible (ecologically sound); Aristotle asks whether it’s good. He doesn't JUST question the justice of a city or an individual enriching itself through trade: he questions the goodness of it, as measured by the standard of virtue.]

Chapter 17. "Of Cruelty and Mercy, and Whether It Is Better to Be Loved Than Feared, or the Contrary." Of Cruelty and pietas (in the Latin of the title) or pietà (in the Italian of the body
of the chapter). Pietà: where have you heard that term before. Gli italiani non devono rispondere. Lasciarlo agli stranieri, per favore. The moral attitude appropriate to Christians; pity and piety. "For pitty's sake." (Par pitié, per pietà). As chapter 16 was a parody of Aristotle and his notion of virtue as a mean, so chapter 17 takes on Christianity.

Machiavelli's first argument: often the only effectual compassion is cruelty. "Cesare Borgia ... Pistoia to be destroyed." An argument for public-spirited cruelty. In our century: appeasement; based on hoping against hope that no harsh measures would be necessary, until the most terrible evils resulted which could in fact have easily been averted by timely harshness. Today, in my opinion, we’re in the same situation with terrorism. There are all kinds of people who would like us to meet the terrorists halfway, by addressing their legitimate grievances; just as Neville Chamberlain acquiesced in the legitimate grievances of the Nazis by tossing them half of Czechoslovakia (thus leaving the other half defenseless). But I’m firmly of Machiavelli’s opinion, that violence is only encouraged by concessions and can only be repressed by violence. So it's better for your subjects, and in the long run for you, if you're willing to be harsh when necessary, and willing to bear the onus of that harshness.

But Machiavelli then raises the question of whether it's better to be feared or loved. What do we think about that? Would we rather be feared by the people who know us or loved by them? Why? Is it because we think we can trust people who love us more than we can trust people who fear us? But according to Machiavelli, precisely the opposite is true. Why? Because it is within your power to make people fear you and keep fearing you, whereas it is not within your power to make them love you or keep loving you. This seems to me to be pre-eminently true of relations between teachers and students, of which I have extensive experience as both a teacher and a student,
and also of relations between lovers. A tinge of mutual fear does a lot for a good marriage; I speak here as someone widely reputed to have a good marriage. Much as I love my wife, there are things I would try to get away with if I didn't also fear her. I'll add parents and children to the list; it's not enough for children to love their parents, they also have to fear them; that's what's wrong with the buddy theory of parenthood. "For one can say this generally of men...that never forsakes you."

You can't please all the people all the time, but you can overawe them.

And a prince can be feared without being hated. "This he will always do...than the loss of a patrimony." The nastiest line in the *Prince*? Is it false? Why might men resent the loss of their patrimonies more than the deaths of their fathers? [Because men care most about what is most their own, i.e. most a means to satisfying their present and future desires, and their patrimonies are more thoroughly their own than their fathers are? Because their patrimonies console them for the death of their fathers, but nothing consoles them for the loss of their patrimonies? Because they were anticipating the loss of their fathers any way, but were expecting to keep their patrimonies?]

As in the previous chapter, Machiavelli ends with a discussion of arms: always the ultimate consideration, even or precisely in dealing with one's "subjects and friends." With armies one must be resolutely cruel. [Read.] Hannibal’s achievement: multiculturalism! Canada take note! Ever see those recruiting posters for the Royal Military College, where the smiling South Asian female happily plucks her computer alongside the smiling East Asian male? We want an army just like Hannibal’s. So how did he do it? "his inhuman cruelty, together with his infinite virtues." Where have we heard something like that line before? That’s right: at the end of Chapter Eleven: with Pope Leo, to whose “goodness and infinite other virtues Machiavelli looked for a revitalization of the Church. The contrast couldn’t be starker: from the seeming praise of “goodness” to the
rejection of piety and/or pity and affirmation of cruelty, so repugnant to Christians. But actually it could be starker, couldn’t it: note the disparallelism. Here Machiavelli suggests that possibility that while Hannibal’s cruelty was necessary to his success, still we can’t call it a virtue. He seems to leave us a soft landing. We can remain semi-Christian, regarding cruelty as a distasteful necessity.

Is cruelty a virtue or not? Machiavelli hesitates or teases. "Without that cruelty ... that effect." Cruelty a virtue. The hypocrisy of the writers: they pretend that you can have your cake and eat it. They’ll praise Hannibal for his splendid omelette, but say shame on him for breaking all those eggs, as if he could have had the one without having done the other. What you need to read: an independent knowledge of political cause and effect. You can learn from reading, but only if you can judge the book in the light of your own experience of the world, as Machiavelli judged his continuous reading of *cose antiche* by his long experience of *cose moderne*.

The return of Scipio. A further proof of the necessity of cruelty. The seeming hero of Chapter 14 for being such a swell guy; the actual goat of 17 for having been such a swell guy. For the reality of his niceness was his weakness, and weakness makes bad things happen, for others will take advantage of it. An extraordinary intro tag: "A most rare man not only of his time, but in the memory of all things that are known." A description precisely fitting whom? Jesus Christ! Scipio's vice: excessive pity (or piety), not that he himself did wrong, but that he failed to punish those who did it. He turned the other cheek. "The corrupter of the Roman militia." Unarmed virtue merely fosters rapacity in others. Had Scipio's behavior gone uncorrected, he would have ruined Rome and himself; fortunately, the Roman Senate, which knew how to punish, stepped in and thereby saved his reputation. What is going on here? The Senate = the Church?

Chapter 18. "In What Manner Faith Should Be Kept By Princes." The ambiguity in the
Latin between faith and the faith.

Typical beginning: fidelity is fine, but. "Thus you must know...one must have recourse to the second." The difference between men and beasts? Different modes of fighting proper to them. Law as a means of fighting, i.e., of imposing your will on others; [law as understood by Thrasymachus.] Both men and beasts primarily fighters, i.e., man has no distinctive end which sets him above and apart from the beasts? "Therefore it is necessary...with his discipline." The traditional interpretation of Chiron. The traditional interpretation of man. "A little lower than the angels;" i.e. a composite of the divine and bestial. Machiavelli’s interpretation of Chiron [and of man]: somehow rehabilitates the beast in man. But we can’t really understand this until we grasp what teacher Chiron is replacing. Who is the teacher for Machiavelli’s readers, as well as for millions of people today? Christ. Good. And was Christ a hybrid of beast and man? The Beast-Man replaces the God-man. Machiavelli as Chiron?

"Thus, since a prince is compelled of necessity...do not understand this." Earlier, Machiavelli has said that the successful prince must know how to use two natures, those of beast and man. Now, what does he say. [That he must know how to use two natures, those of lion and fox.] Good. From man to part man, part beast, to all beast. The human disappears. Or rather, it is drastically re-interpreted. How? How does a prince differ from a lion or a fox? [In his ability to act as both.] The distinction of man: his adaptability or versatility. No distinction between man and beast in terms of their respective ends, but man more resourceful as to means: Machiavelli’s interpretation of human reason, as man's distinctive weapon, his claws and teeth. Read from Anacreon’s Ode “On Women.” Man the most cunning, the most dangerous, the most powerful of beasts.
Appropriately, chapter 18 now concludes with a reprise of the argument of chapter 15: virtue as a means, a virtue is a virtue only insofar as it is effective as a means. He begins by treating faith in that light. (Read.) If success as a ruthless deceiver is possible, it’s only because so many people are so eager to be deceived. Why: “Present necessities.” Dominated by their own needs and wants, and incapable of supplying them themselves, they want desperately to believe that you will supply them for them. The scam artist’s view of the world: there’s always a chump out there just longing for someone to deceive him. Chronic dependency -- dependence on the virtue of others -- renders men stupid. And so as with faith, so with other virtues, the people want to believe that you possess them, so indulge their fantasies. It pays. The only virtue is adaptability, a willingness and ability to do what circumstances require, while maintaining as much as possible the appearance of virtue in the older sense. The crucial virtue to appear to have: religiosity. The appearance of devotion to Another to mask the reality of devotion to oneself; the appearance of faith to mask the reality of faithlessness. Reprise on the ambivalence of faith in the title.

Machiavelli’s humanism? Whht do we mean by “humanism”? Don’t we mean some belief in the dignity of man? Let’s expand briefly on the implications of Machiavelli’s substitution of the beast-man Chiron for the god-man Christ as the model of virtue and the teacher of the human race, with the suggestion of course that Chiron is Machiavelli himself, whose book thereby replaces the Bible. Both classical and Christian thinkers had conceived of man as a composite being, a distinctively human soul, conceived as rational or divine, yoked with a body conceived as bestial. The higher part of man did not serve the lower, but pointed to a way of life unique to man and proper to him: philosophy, said the ancients; love of God and of one’s fellow man, according to the Christians. What we have in common with beasts, pleasures and passions, were to be reined in;
mere life was, as much as practicable, to serve the good life.

This is what Machiavelli inverts: human reason is to be re-interpreted as a weapon in the service of self-preservation, just like the various strengths of beasts: beasts fight with force, men with laws which is to say fraud. But then that distinction between fighting with force and fighting with guile is reinterpreted as the way of the lion and that of the fox: nothing distinctively human remains, except for the greater versatility or adaptability that permits us as human beings to fight now as lions, now as foxes. Man the most dangerous beast, the most powerful beast, the scourge of other beasts and of one another. The soul disappears, and reason ceases to be conceived as having a goal of its own – understanding – rather it serves the goals that we share with beasts. Life is an endless struggle for survival in which reason is our teeth and claws, in which, in other words, all differences between man and the other beasts are differences of degree, not kind.

And this poses the problem of humanism, for although man may no longer have to look up to the Ideas or to God, may be as the most powerful beast the master of all he surveys, where is the dignity in that? Where is the basis for understanding him as capable of a truly worthy life or as subject to moral restraint? This has been a problem for modern thought from the beginning, and despite the efforts of the greatest modern philosophers, it is, if anything, a greater problem today than ever. Now I know that modern thought has given rise to many high ideals, above all that of human freedom. But it has also in the end invariably subverted these very ideas, because if there is no qualitative difference between men and beasts, and beasts are, as they so obviously are, unfree, then how do we sustain the notion of human freedom? I’m going to end this part of my presentation with a poetic flourish: you see how we love you in this course, seeing to all parts of your education.

A few minutes ago I quoted a poem from the 6th C. BC; this time I will read from one penned in
1944 by the American poet Richard Eberhart. Eberhart was a gunnery instructor for naval aviators in World War II: this verse is from a poem called “the fury of aerial bombardment.” In his despair at the senselessness of war the poet asks:

*Was man made stupid to see his own stupidity?*

*Is God by definition indifferent, beyond us all?*

*Is the eternal truth man’s fighting soul*

*Wherein the Beast ravens in its own avidity?*

Eberhart has grasped the new Machiavellian world. The eternal truth is indeed just “man’s fighting soul, wherein the beast ravens in its own avidity.” I know that the world in general and Canada in particular are full of people (professors and journalists, mostly, and I have to admit to being both) who spout on about human dignity, human values, human rights, etc., but this is just edifying twaddle. It sounds good on public occasions, and it may be necessary for a decent politics -- we have to find something that distinguishes us from the Saddam Husseins of the world -- but there’s not one person who talks this way (not one) who can back it up with a philosophic argument. It’s just whistling in the dark. The position of the great thinkers who follow Machiavelli, and who know what they’re about: water the beasts, feed them, defang them, make their cages safer and more comfortable. We know this as liberal democracy.
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Chapter 19. “On Avoiding Contempt and Hatred,” so resuming the theme of Chapter 17, as the first paragraph reminds us. The longest chapter in the *Prince*. Having argued that a prince who wishes to be safe from conspiracies should rely on the people, and having offered an example in support of this argument that clearly refutes it, Machiavelli backs away from the people, suggesting various balancing acts between the people and the great, concluding with the warning that "a prince should esteem the great, but not make himself hated by the people." The people, it seems, now take a back seat to the great. But here, where the argument seems complete and we might expect the chapter to end, in time for us to finish it quickly and not fall further behind schedule, he conjures up an objection. "It might perhaps appear to many...who conspired against him." Something tells me that this objection probably did not occur to any one of you, and that it seems to you highly contrived. In response to it Machiavelli announces that he will consider the careers of ten emperors, from "Marcus the philosopher" to Maximinus. Now who was this "Marcus the philosopher," does anyone know? (Marcus Aurelius, emperor 161-180, famous for his wisdom, virtue, justice, and gentleness, a philosopher in the tradition of classical political philosophy, perhaps the only true "philosopher king" of whom we know.) And this is Machiavelli's only mention in the *Prince* of philosophy or philosophers.

The objector has raised the question of why certain "good emperors" failed, but in what follows Machiavelli proves to be at least as interested in why the so-called bad emperors did not always fail. He begins by noting that besides having to contend with the conflicting demands of the great and the people, the Roman emperors had also a "third difficulty, of having to bear with the cruelty and avarice of their soldiers." "This was so difficult .. which are most powerful." So
Machiavelli’s original advice to princes to build on the people rather than the great was merely provisional because it took no account of armies. But since chapters 12-14 we know that armies and their loyalty are the crucial concern, not just of Roman emperors who find a large army already in existence, but of everyone who aspires to the greatest political accomplishments, which depend entirely on good arms, i.e. on arms which are both powerful and entirely one's own. In this chapter we learn the harsh truths of how one makes an army one's own. The first (necessary but not sufficient) rule: treat them like the army you need, brutal, fierce, and devoted to war, not like the boy scouts they'll never be. Permit them to glut their avarice and cruelty, if need be at the expense of the people. "And so those emperors ... to keep himself in repute with them." In fact, as Machiavelli proceeds to show, of the three of his ten emperors who failed to side with the army against the people, Marcus, Pertinax, and Alexander Severus, only Marcus ended well. Three other emperors, Heliogabalus, Macrinus, and Julianus, were "altogether contemptible" and "immediately eliminated;" Machiavelli doesn't bother to discuss them further. But of Severus, Commodus, Antoninus Caracalla, and Maximinus, all "very cruel and very rapacious," and who "did not fail to inflict upon the people every kind of injury " in order to satisfy the soldiers, it was also the case that only one, Severus, was successful. Marcus and Severus are the only emperors of the ten who succeeded and the only two whom Machiavelli praises as virtuous; they are also the only two whom at the end of the chapter he calls upon us to imitate.

Let's look at the "good emperors first." "From the causes mentioned above, ... came to a bad end." "Lovers of justice:" this is Machiavelli's first mention of justice in the whole book. Note that he does not deny that there are lovers of justice -- he’s not a vulgar cynic. Rather he raises the question of whether one ought to be a lover of justice. Pertinax and Alexander Severus came to ruin
because of their very qualities of goodness, which incurred the hatred of the army which chafed under them, to which was added contempt because of their perceived weakness. Yet Marcus, who shared these same good qualities, "lived and died most honorably."

You don't have to be a monster to succeed in politics, it just helps most of the time. Now what was Marcus' secret? [Hereditary right.] Although Marcus shared exactly the same qualities as the other two lovers of justice, Machiavelli speaks of him alone as virtuous, because qualities that were virtues in his most fortunate of situations (succeeding by hereditary right to an empire whose soldiers were not yet corrupt) were not virtues in theirs. And so maybe they're virtues in yours, too. Breath a sigh of relief; you’re Canadian. The Americans will protect you; live as an honest CA your whole life long. The limits of classical virtue: Machiavelli doesn’t deny that when others have done the heavy lifting, and continue to do it -- Rome still benefitted from good arms during Marcus’ reign, you saw his army defeat the German tribesmen in the opening scenes of *Gladiator* -- nice guys may enjoy the luxury of doing their thing. But virtue conceived as the ancient philosophers did was a luxury, and we can make no more dangerous mistake than to think that it finds support in nature. For that notion of nature is strictly an imaginary principality, as is the notion of a God who protects and rewards goodness. One way of understanding liberal democracy: as an attempt to find a stable basis for just such islands of tranquility, in a world understood as harshly as Machiavelli conceives it, and constructed out of human beings understood as basely as Machiavelli conceives them. Doing a lot with a little; making a silk purse out of a sow’s ear. I may bore you by repeating that expression; get used to it.

Turning to the monsters. "Reviewing now ... reverent and satisfied." Loved by the army, merely gaped at by the people who suffered so much at his hands. "Stupefied:" paralyzed by fear.
Did the Russian people hate Stalin? Do they hate him even now? Severus: a paragon of force and fraud, a model lion and fox, "feared and revered by everyone, and not hated by the army." "For his very great reputation always defended him from the hatred that the people could have conceived of him because of his robberies." Could have ... but didn't. As for the other bad emperors, they were monsters who didn't have what it takes to avoid hatred and contempt.

Let's look at the conclusion: "For to Pertinax and Alexander, ... in his footsteps."

"Therefore ... already established and firm."

The Turk and the Sultan (of Egypt): Muslim leaders who as such combined spiritual and temporal power. Reminds us of: the Pope. The Pope's army: the clergy. Now we see that these armies can do more than peoples, we see that Machiavelli too needs an army.

Machiavelli as Severus. Earlier philosophers had recruited no armies; only sages and saints enlisted; Machiavelli makes ambitious men an offer that they can't refuse. The people may suffer, at least until the power of these princes becomes established and firm. Machiavelli as the prince of princes, the king of kings. The doubleness of Machiavelli's army: ambitious rulers on the one hand, "intellectuals" on the other, a counter-clergy that can wage Machiavelli's war of books against the Christian clergy. That war came to be called the Enlightenment.