CHAPTER VI

LIMITS OF THE THOUGHTS OF KAUTILYA AND MACHIAVELLI

Originality of the authors:

Kautilya has not been given due credit for the originality of his ideas by certain scholars. However, most of the scholars regard the Arthasastra as decidedly being the most significant work that Hindu Political thought has produced. Much of the criticism of those who criticise him is based on an idea that Kautilya did not create something new but only followed the path already trodden. This view does not seem to be correct. He has, no doubt, mentioned other great teachers who lived before him but mere reference to their names and to the ideas they held does not justify the view that Kautilya stepped into their shoes. Kautilya, before giving his own views, just referred to the views held by older teachers but did not accept them on most of the occasions. He critically scanned their views but frequently gave his own verdict. His preponderance and excellence is, indeed, proved by the survival of his work. Ancient teachers like Kāmandaka realised his importance and said that Kautilya "churned the nectar of the science of polity from the ocean of political sciences ... From the scientific work of that learned man who had reached the limits of knowledge, the favourite learning of the kings, brief yet intelligible and useful in the acquisition and maintenance of the earth, we are going to extract and teach
kings". From Ms description of Kamandaka it is too apparent that Kautilya was a past-master of statecraft. It further appears from Kamandaka that Kautilya avoided dealing with the less important topics of political science which were dealt with in detail by the older teachers for, he has described Kautilya's work as a brief but intelligible one.

The study of political science had begun long before Kautilya but the survival of only of his Arthasastra and Kamandaka's appreciation of it lead us to suppose that the Arthasastra dealing with political science and different from the Dharmasastras, which avowedly dealt with the religious and social features of the Indian folk, assumed the final shape in the hands of Kautilya. Thus only after the discovery of Kautilya's Arthasastra D.R. Bhandarkar could opine, "it is no longer correct to assert that the Hindu mind did not conduce to the development of political theories, and that the Indians never set up politics as an independent branch of knowledge."  

Indeed Kautilya's Arthasastra was the solitary weapon in the hands of the nationalist Indians to fight the remark of some of the famous western scholars that the Indians knew nothing of "political or material speculation, ... feeling of nationality".

Such criticism made before the discovery of the Arthasastra evidently was because of the many books of the Dharmasastras, the Vedas and the Epics which, notwithstanding
touching occasionally the material aspects of the human society, finally endeavoured to uphold the supremacy of religion and ethics. But the discovery of Kautilya's *Arthāśāstra* has made the situation altogether different. Apparently, never failing to stress on the moral side of human life, Kautilya was able to realise that political theories and practical governance were to be guided by *dandasāti* and that, the *Arthāśāstra* should not deal with social and religious matters only after the traditional Hindu fashion (of Manu and others).

The word "Artha", as defined by Kautilya himself, means "human population", that is to say, territory with human population. The code of Artha is a code dealing with the means of acquisition and growth of that territory. This materialistic attitude toward the science of politics is, in the absence of any other extant source material, may be regarded as having had brought India on threshold of a new era in the field of her political studies. Those who belittle the originality of Kautilya by arguing that he merely followed other teachers commit a serious mistake because, in the vastness of his treatise, Kautilya's reference to the older teachers seems to be very insignificant. Further, even though Kautilya had the greatest respect for Śukra and Brihaspati—who had led two different ancient schools of thought—he never followed their footsteps though he started his work with salutation to them. Mere reference to the views of the older
teachers should not be construed to mean that Kautilya had no originality of his own. Indeed such references must have been present in his work for, Kautilya, seeing that there were a very large number of schools — which, being diverse in opinion and verdict, led pupils or political science including princes into troubles — undertook the task of laying down the final truth as he understood.

His originality is certified by himself when he says in the concluding verses of his treatise that "having seen discrepancies in many ways on the part of the writers of commentaries on the śāstras, Vishnugupta (Kautilya) himself made (this) sutra and commentary." We should be able to grasp the significance that the words "Vishnugupta himself" involve. This can contain two meanings only. The first is that, although it is not the duty of Vishnugupta to write down political treatise he undertakes the responsibility as he is dissatisfied with the views of the older teachers. The second is that the book has been written by as great a personage as Vishnugupta who is beyond the scope of being contradicted by any other (this is the latent meaning). Either or both of these meanings may be correct but whatever might be the case it is certain that with the appearance of Kautilya's Arthasastra the works of all other ancient teachers were destined to be consigned into oblivion. This was Kautilya's hope and conviction also. Indeed Kautilya had earned such great fame or ill-fame for alleged crookedness both in his treatise (particularly in connection with his views on inter-State
relations and employment of spies in each and every branch of administration signifying thereby that he was cynical of the human nature) and political life that even about ten centuries after him one great dramatist accepted his crookedness as the main theme of his drama while another used the historical force of the author of the Arthaśāstra and showed reverence to him by accepting him as his master during the period of Hindu revivalism under the Guptas.

Kautilya showed sympathy for the Brāhmaṇical mode of life by laying stress on the necessity of maintaining the purity of the caste system i.e., Varnasrama dharma. But this aspect of his thought, never attracted the attention even those of his followers who had the greatest respect for him, not to speak of his ordinary countrymen. He was always conceived by later writers as a perfect embodiment of all shrewdness and crookedness. In the spiritual sphere of the Indian life more conspicuous teachers are remembered but in the world dealing with materialism the only man who has been able to transcend the barrier of time is Kautilya.

The spirit in which he is remembered is indisputably one of immorality. This is because of Kautilya's undeniable success in the separation of ethics from politics which, though cannot be readily understood in its real significance in the modern age of secularism, was an outstanding contribution in his age. It is the diplomacy, wickedness and the theme of
political immorality current in his treatise that have always impressed and attracted the scholars who desire to dwell on ancient Indian political thought. He discarded all religious practices that stood in the way of the expansion of the State and wielding of the king's sceptre and put forward, for the first time, a theory of the State to be grasped by the Purāṇas, much later only.

If Kautilya's pre-eminence is due to the presence of materialistic elements in the political philosophy of a predominantly religious country Machiavelli's reputation likewise owes its origin to the treatment of politics from an entirely new angle the main theme of which is "politics for politics' sake" and that no ethical considerations are to be allowed to interfere in political speculation. The watchword of Machiavelli is success and any means which ensures this, is to be pursued. It is not that he is against the use of religion in politics; it can be used provided it leads to material success. In other words, religion and morality have no special qualification by themselves in Machiavelli's mind. Everything, moral or 'unmoral', religious or 'un-religious', ethical or 'un-ethical', can be used not however, for the sake of morality, religion or ethics but for the sake of politics. This way of political thinking also involved a new method of studying political science and making prediction from the knowledge of past events. In fact, Machiavelli's appearance as a political theorist coincided with the beginning of a new
era in the study of political science in the West. He had a few precursors but they were not eloquent like him. In fact Machiavelli was the most elaborate exponent of the new approach to political studies, and it is only when he fell upon the subject that the significance of politics bereft of religion began to be seriously felt in the circles of western political thinkers. 12

The mediaeval age was the age when religion guided politics and the mediaeval society of the West was in fact a Christian Commonwealth which prescribed laws for the subject people sharing in general the Christian religious faith. The disappearance in practice and finally also in theory of this dependence of the society in political matters on religious guides marked the end of the medieval age in the West. What is strange is that while there was a movement towards treating politics by divesting it from religion it did not speak for any scope for political liberty for the masses. Machiavelli admired only the powerful princes. As such he also could not keep any provision for political liberty. The theory that the prince was answerable to God and not to any human community or individual was put forward by Gregory, the Great, in the sixth century but was set aside in the mediaeval age only to be revived in the sixteenth century. 13 It is to be admitted to the credit of Machiavelli that while he allowed for the prince's seizure of unlimited power he did not recede to the ancient notion of the divine right theory though in reality his prince could
assume rights which were hardly different from those of a prince believing in divine right. Neither he upheld the divine right theory nor, like Calvin, did he dwell upon the theory of passive obedience to an unjust and tyrant king. Machiavelli's eyes were firmly fixed on the prince who would work for the salvation of Italy and, on nothing else. He was very cynical of the human nature and was convinced from the experience of contemporary Italian affairs that the prince could be successful only if he knew how to be unwisely prudent for the people had become so corrupt that any alternative measure on the part of the prince was bound to breed nothing but failure.

This open declaration of the prince's duty of pursuing a course directed to make material gain and bereft of all senses of morality was an entirely new concept in the study of political science in the West and offered a very conspicuous place to Machiavelli amongst the western political speculators. One may like or dislike his views but cannot afford to ignore him in the study of political science and it is because Machiavelli laid bare the human nature and its inherent motives and did not show the least sign of hypocrisy that caused him to be widely read in the West. He did not cherish the idea of an ideal or a Utopian State but concentrated his attention on the actual characteristics of a real state and tried to provide solution of the problems as they were and not as they would be. This was rendered amply clear
in chapter XV of *The Prince* where he uttered "but since my intention is to say something that will prove of practical use to the inquirer, I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in real truth, rather than as they are imagined". Machiavelli thus removed himself from the queue of those who later earned fame and eminence by dwelling on the abstract character of political science. His path was, in fact, new both to his predecessors and those who followed him. Those predeceasing him saw and accepted the undetachable relationship between the Sacerdotium and Regnum while the later political theorists with few exceptions — those who upheld the dogmatic theory of divine kingship — spent their energy by insisting upon the secular nature of politics and hence in this context Machiavelli's period may be considered as offering the phase of transition from Sacerdotal superiority to Imperial authority. Obviously Machiavelli did not conceive secularism in the sense modern politicians do by disallowing religion to play any role in State politics and claiming to show equal respect to all religions. In private life, Machiavelli was not antagonistic to the good qualities of religion and even seems to have believed in God but in politics he spoke against any room for religion because from the knowledge of the past experiences he learnt that such things would only hasten the ruin of Italy. Yet he advised the prince to make a show of it if he felt that such show would give him the desired results. His intention was different but he sowed the seed later to
germinate in its true spirit. In this context, we cannot afford to ignore his implied advocacy for absolute kingship also. The prince with absolute temporal powers in his hand denied all other authorities and, detachment of ethics from politics was its derivative only. Machiavelli resembles here Kautilya very closely who also knew nothing save the success of his king. Both spoke for absolute kingship, one politely

**Similarities between the authors' views** the other openly but, both of them believed that absolute kingship could not be imagined with religion holding sway over it. Hence came the attack on religion. It is to be admitted however, that this attack on religion did not come in the form of censuring it but was in the form of an attitude of indifference so far its connection with politics was concerned. All that Kautilya and Machiavelli did was that while Kautilya assigned an insignificant status to the priestly class by allowing the king to act according to his will, Machiavelli simply ignored the theologians in political matters. The establishment of the superiority of rational over the sacred law was the first serious endeavour by any Indian political theorist to show in what line future politics should work and what form it should assume. Likewise, Machiavelli is given credit for having invented modern politics—politics which has its own autonomous sphere needing to show no regard to the dictates of the Church or of the theologians.
Isaiah Berlin mentions that there is evidently something peculiarly disturbing about what Machiavelli said or implied, something that has caused profound and lasting uneasiness. Indeed, it is difficult to reconcile the republican sentiment of The Discourses with advice to absolute rulers in The Prince, and in the words of Isaiah Berlin "there is a difference of tone between the two treatises, as well as chronological puzzles; this raises problems about Machiavelli's character, motives and convictions which for three hundred years and more have formed a rich field of investigation and speculation for literary and linguistic scholars, psychologists and historians." Like the disagreement among scholars about the real meaning of certain terms in Kautilya's Arthasastra, there are also wide disagreements about the meaning of particular terms in Machiavelli's works and there is even a startling degree of divergence about the basic political attitude and central view of Machiavelli.

To Garrett Mattingly Machiavelli's The Prince was nothing but a political satire. To Spinoza it is a cautionary tale, i.e. to warn men of what tyrants could be and do. Luigi Ricci, who introduces The Prince to the readers of The World's Classics by his famous preface, endorses the above opinion of Spinoza. A.H. Gilbert thinks that The Prince is a typical
piece of its period a mirror for princes of that time. Hiram Haydn\textsuperscript{30} considers it as an anti-Christian piece and sees in The Prince attack on the principles of the Church and also a defence of the pagan view of life. On the other hand, Roberto Ridolfi, the noted biographer of Machiavelli,\textsuperscript{31} the English translator Cecil Grayson, and Leslie J. Walker\textsuperscript{32} in his introduction and notes on two volumes English translation of the Discourses again and again mention how Machiavelli was a Christian, though a somewhat peculiar one. Canon Louis Machon in his Apology for Machiavelli, or the anonymous compiler of Religious Maxims faithfully extracted from the works of Nicolo Machiavelli, as referred to by Roberto Ridolfi in his biography of Machiavelli, regard him as a sincere Catholic.

Not only Benedetto Croce, but E.W. Cochrane consider Machiavelli a moralist who 'occasionally experiences moral nausea'\textsuperscript{33} in contemplating a world in which political ends can be achieved only by means that are morally evil. For Cassirer\textsuperscript{34}, Olshki,\textsuperscript{35} and Keith Hancock\textsuperscript{36} Machiavelli is a cold technician, ethically and politically uncommitted, an objective analyst of politics, a morally neutral scientist, who anticipated Galileo in applying inductive methods to social and historical material, and had practically no moral interest in the use of his technical discoveries either by despots or by others. J.G.A. Pocock\textsuperscript{37}, Felix Raab,\textsuperscript{38} Zera S. Fink\textsuperscript{39} mention Machiavelli's positive influence in seventeenth century England, with Bacon and
Harrington at the top of his admirers. On the other hand, the commonest view of him is that he is "the devil's partner in crime", "a dishonourable writer and an unbeliever", or to quote Bertrand Russell's word The Prince is "a handbook for gangsters". T.S. Eliot opines that Machiavelli "saw only half of the truth about human nature". Thus there is a mass of conflicting theories and it is very difficult to find out the truth from this jungle of opinions. Hence it seems wise for a student of political science to simply ignore the Discourses while reading The Prince and vice versa.

**Historical Method of Machiavelli**

It is said that the first successful use of the historical method in discovering the mature of political truth was made by Machiavelli. This method consists in enunciating political theories by looking back into the past as contained in history-books. Man can expect to find like events occurring in the past and being in possession of historical knowledge can also understand what steps are necessary for tackling problems in similar situations. Machiavelli's continuous gathering of practical knowledge of State-craft for fifteen years was very instrumental to the making of the diplomat-Machiavelli. In fact, it was the period of public service which enabled the 'amateur' Machiavelli to attain 'professional' outlook in political matters. Particularly the four years, 1500 to 1503, are very important because it was during this period that he undertook diplomatic missions to the courts of foreign
rulers. For some time he studied under Virgilio Adrian and is believed to have achieved some proficiency in Greek and Latin but was he not appointed a public servant after the execution of Savonarola we would not have probably got our Machiavelli. He himself admitted that he utilised the entire period of service in the study of statecraft. An ardent student of history he however, found the real interest in its study during the period of his exile when he was financially very much embarrassed but like a real genius sought solace in reading. He wrote to his nephew Giovanni Vernaccia: "when evening comes, I return home and go into my study. On the threshold I strip off the muddy, sweaty clothes of everyday, and put on the robes of court and palace, and in this graver dress I enter the antique courts of the ancients where being welcomed by them, I taste the food that alone is mine, for which I was born. And there I make bold and speak to them and ask the motives of their actions. And they, in their humanity reply to me. . . ." Significant to note is Machiavelli's proud reference to his dress. There is a latent hint that by wearing such dress he felt himself as the equal of the ancient monarchs with whom he made conversations.

But in spite of Machiavelli's acknowledgement of his debt to history critics are not unanimous on whether or not his may be called a true historical method. However, if the greatest masters of political thought were philosophers of some kind e.g., metaphysics, theology and psychology. Machiavelli was obviously
a philosopher of the last kind having a special idea in mind of the utility of history in assessing the human nature. In revealing the nature of political truth Machiavelli did not follow the track of Dante who spoke for arriving at theories through deductive process. This process provides that theories should be based on a supposed general principle that governs the human nature, the society and the world. Machiavelli discards this process in a political study and introduces the inductive one which enables one to arrive at conclusions through approach to facts. In other words, the previous philosophers believed and had confidence that human beings had an instinct of being guided by good principles and that even if it was seen that facts disagreed with the principles, then it was the facts that were to be condemned, not the principle. But Machiavelli did not agree with such things and applied the method of science to politics. Just as scientists put theories which are tested by observations Machiavelli provides that all questions are to be answered by appealing to facts and observations. The canon and the civil law were entirely outside the purview of his work and he felt nothing to do with the injunctions and opinions of the Church authority. All speculations are to be made from facts and as a serious student of history he sincerely believed that like examples could be found in history for all the occurrences of his day. If it is established from fact that successful rulers often lie and break treaties then these are to be accepted as political principles,
not the "unexamined hope that in the long run truth triumphs over lies".

Considered in this light Machiavelli adopted the historical method as the true method for knowing the actual nature of politics. He said "I have heard it said that history is the teacher who determines our actions, and above all our principles, and that the world has been inhabited in all ages alike by men who have always been subject to the same passions and that there have always been those who serve and those who command ...". Thus Machiavelli was not only convinced that "human nature through all ages remains the same" he was also aware of the nature of both the governing and the governed classes. For the ruin of Italy he held the princes responsible; at the same time he held the same opinion about the common people: "Men are wicked, ungrateful, fickle ... greedy of gain". In the Discourses also he held no different opinion: "the affairs of the world are carried on by men, who are, and always have been, governed by the same passions" and "wise men say and not without reason, that whoever wishes to foresee the future must consult the past; for human events ever resemble those of preceding times." This obsession irresistibly led him to one single conclusion: the study of the past makes it possible for getting into the real-politik as, basically, "the past and the present situations are the consequences of the same passions, same actions which do not change in any age". Machiavelli took pride for having discovered thereby the 'true
relation* between politics and history which as he himself said was an entirely a new approach to the study of politics. He would base his conclusions not on abstract considerations but on the analysis of historical facts. But evidently the past which Machiavelli studied and from which he seems to have drawn his conclusions was the past of classical antiquity. And this also he used not to a great extent. His method is historical rather in appearance than in reality. 53

Machiavelli does not seem to be alone in believing that human nature remains the same in all ages and that the historical method is the best one for making speculation. Guicciardini also wrote: "past things throw light on things to come, for the world was ever of the same sort and all that which is and will be has been in other times and the old things return with different names and colours." 54. However, it is to be admitted that whatever might have been the beliefs and convictions of the contemporaries in this regard it is Machiavelli who sincerely believed and applied history as a clue to a meaningful study of political science.

But still a question remains. Human nature may remain the same in all ages but there is little possibility of the circumstances in different ages being same. Machiavelli nowhere attempted to compare the condition of ancient glorious Rome with that of Italy of his day. It was not that he started with the
facts of history and reinforced his theories with examples from history. Rather he started with an ab initio conviction — which definitely came into his mind from the notoriety of contemporary Italian politics — that "men are by nature wicked, selfish creatures". Chapter XVII of The Prince dealing with the wicked nature of human being shows it clearly that history was not the force working in his mind when he was putting his views. As Allen has said "perception played a much greater part in bringing about Machiavelli's conclusion than any sort of reasoning". Machiavelli's experience from the daily observations led him to believe: political man is to be studied as he is on the earth and not as what he is to be for, success attends only those who know how to govern by not being virtuous. History came only to fortify the views he already had begun to cherish under the pressure of the existing circumstances. Even in the Discourses, he used Livy for the purpose of sustaining and not for discovering political principles. We hardly find an instance where in deriving the political principles Machiavelli depended on a critical analysis of the past events which is essential to assert that historical method was really followed. Rather all his principal ideas viz., selfish nature of man, easy success belong to the tyrants, need of playing of political games without reference to ethics had origin in contemporary Italian politics. Machiavelli's chief credit lies in his success of strengthening his views by reference to like events and motives available in history which
other historians had failed to do. The wisdom gathered by him from long experience in the capacity of public servant and from the numerous missions to foreign courts needed a supporting force to make his views easily intelligible and acceptable to others and this he obtained, during the days of his exile, from a serious study of history. The style of The Prince is itself a proof of the author's tendency of arriving at conclusions empirically but there is a further convincing proof of this in the preface of the masterpiece where he admitted that The Prince emerged "from a long acquaintance with contemporary affairs and a continuous study of the ancient world ..." In fact, history gave him the energy to strengthen his watchwords, 'action' and 'power' already picked up from experience.

In the words of Berlin: "Machiavelli's theories are certainly not based on the scientific principles of the seventeenth century. He lived a hundred years before Galileo and Bacon and his method is a mixture of rules of thumb, observation, historical knowledge and general sagacity, somewhat like the empirical medicine of the pre-scientific world." However, in spite of his limitation in the true use of the historical method Machiavelli's genius cannot be questioned. It should be kept in mind that he was writing in an age when the importance of history as a method of studying politics was little understood and historical texts were used mainly in religious controversies. To quote Allen, "he (Machiavelli) had endeavoured to show what makes for success in war and in
diplomacy. In attempting to do all this by means of observation of and inferences from undisputed facts of the past and the existing, he was doing what had never been done before, since, at all events, the classical days of antiquity. By assuming a permanency of essential conditions he had, indeed, illegitimately avoided one of the greatest practical difficulties of the use of history. But however partially and faultily, he had applied, if he had not invented, what was practically a new method of dealing with problems of politics. It is clear that this method possessed a high degree of validity in relation to such questions as he asked. And in fact, it had a great future before it.60

** Historical Method of Kautilya **

The nature and scope of the *Arthasastra* are such that it has to do more with practical politics based on accepted, tested and established truth related with wider aspects of social existence and, little with theoretical politics. Yet, in a limited degree, Kautilya also adopted the historical method.61 To speak more precisely, if Kautilya used any method it was none but historical. Like Machiavelli he also emphasized that monarchs should possess a wide knowledge of history evidently to learn from the nature of the past events the wisest measures to be taken in future. Thus Machiavelli writes:

"As for intellectual training, the prince should read history, studying the actions of eminent men to see how they conducted themselves during war and to discover the reasons for
their victories or their defeats, so that he can avoid the latter and imitate the former. Above all, he should read history so that he can do what eminent men have done before him ... 62.

Almost the same opinion was expressed by Kautilya in reference to the value of the study of history. He ranked history (Itihasa) as a Veda 63 and laid stress that the prince should utilise the hours of the afternoon for studying it. This history included among other things purana, akhyayika (tales), udsharana (illustrative stories) etc. 64 If the prince failed to understand the latent meaning he was to read them again and again.

From the above opinion of the author of the Arthashastra it can be well presumed that Kautilya widened his horizon of knowledge by studying history. This must have been true for, as a member of the priestly class also his duty was to teach and, we can well imagine the extent of the knowledge of the master-politician if we remember that he was originally a native of the famous city of Taxila, "a seat of advanced studies and not elementary education". 65 Like Machiavelli however, Kautilya also, sometimes, derived his conclusions empirically and then fortified them by examples from history. Chapter VI of Bk I is an example at hand to prove that Kautilya used the historical method. The references to the numerous kings who lived in different ages and to the names and activities of Ravana and Duryodhana 66 make it clear that he not only studied
history but the Epics also. The study of the Mahābhārata, besides the dignified opinions of Kauṇapadanta (Bhisma), definitely had a hand behind the formulation of his ideas and precepts. Like Machiavelli however, Kautilya nowhere openly boasted that he was going to invent a new line of approach to the study of politics. The reasons are not far to seek. The ancient Hindus showed more interest in logic, philosophy and theology and except the Arthasastra and Śāntiparva we do not find any other work of importance dealing with political matters only. As the other Arthasastras have all succumbed to the cruelty of time it is not possible to speak with any degree of certainty as to what were the 'methods' of the early thinkers? In the absence of any extent source-material in this context we may presume that Kautilya — who realised the importance of history in political speculation and who did not mention any other predecessor in this respect — was the first Indian to use the historical method.

However, like the Italian Kautilya also used the method superficially only. We have noticed that like Machiavelli he was also greatly perturbed by the prevailing political condition of the country. That he was personally involved in the affairs of the State becomes known from the Buddhist sources. The author's anxiety was also laid bare when he wrote in the concluding verses of the treatise: *this sastra has been made by him who
from intolerance (of misrule) quickly rescued the scriptures and the science of weapons and the earth which had passed to the Nanda king. What then worked in his mind — history or contemporary political condition? During the days of his exile Machiavelli sought consolation in the preparation of The Prince only. We must admire and praise the anxiety and prowess of Kautilya who endangered his person for liberating his motherland from misrule. He took upon himself the entire responsibility, yet did not cease to cultivate his creature genius. Kautilya here shines forth over Machiavelli. However, both were influenced by the forces of the prevailing circumstances and refuge in history was sought only for support.

The last similarity in their method is their dialectical style, Kautilya often arrives at his conclusion by referring initially to the views of other teachers. Both used dialectical style, "Bharadvaja or Pisuma says so, but my teacher opines that ... No says Kautilya ..." This way of writing remarkably resembles the style of Machiavelli who, however, argues not with the views of his predecessors but with imaginary antagonists: "And if you were to say ... I should say ..." Both Kautilya and Machiavelli appear to have been fully aware of the fact that their views would be accepted only if the opposing voice was silenced and as such they tried to obliterate the existing opinions.

Machiavelli boasted for inventing new theories of politics. Likewise, Kautilya's sentiment in the concluding
verses proves beyond doubt that he was conscious of his greatness. It is as if he bequeathed to the posterity the command that henceforth the precepts of Kautilya only would have to be followed. However, if he has not been a serious user of the historical method we can equally say that his Italian counterpart is also not always consistent and has been often led away by the passion of patriotism and the use of history in such cases is unconvincing only.69

A Few more points of Similarity:

Both Kautilya and Machiavelli seem to be apprehensive of the caprice of fortune which may undo the prospects of a monarch and also cause his destruction. While Kautilya opines that the king's calamity is the most dangerous thing70, Machiavelli knows that the extraordinary and inordinate malice of fortune may undo the enterprise of even a man of the calibre of Caesar Borgia about whom he has such great fascination that he writes that he knows "no better precepts to give to a new prince than ones derived from Caesar's actions". Kautilya advises his king to guard against own calamity as failure to do that will destroy all other elements of sovereignty as stated in the Saptainge theory. This means that a Kautilyan king can hope to avert calamities if he tries.71 Similarly Machiavelli believes that "fortune is the arbiter of half the things we do, leaving the other half or so to be controlled by ourselves."72
Vitality of The Prince and its influence on posterity

Scholar like Ferrari has described the author of the 'text book of usurpers' as the "anti-pope of the universe, the true satan, the master of the world and of the Nations ... impelled by the petulanté of his genius, he creates a political necromancy which distributes crowns at will among the elect of human reason." The above quotation gives a true picture of the Italian who was both admired and cursed for his 'criminal outlook' in political speculation. He was admired for laying bare the true nature of political games; was cursed for providing the tyrants with an "ethical book" of which they were badly in need. However, though there may be some justification in the argument that The Prince had a certain hand in the sanctification of the tyrants' activities by its politico-ethics it will be a serious mistake to suppose that the so-called 'text-book of usurpers' was responsible for the appearance of the successful tyrants. To quote Macaulay again "the term in which he is commonly described would seem to import that he was the Tempter, the Evil Principle, the discoverer of ambition and revenge, the original inventor of perjury and that before the publication of his fatal Prince there had never been a hypocrite, a tyrant, or a traitor, a stimulated virtue or a convenient crime. One writer gravely assures us that Maurice of Saxony learned all his fraudulent policy from that execrable volume. Another remarks that since it was translated into Turkish, the Sultans have been more addicted than formerly to the custom of
strangling their brothers. Lord Lyttelton charges the poor Florentine with the manifold treasons of the house of Guise, and with the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Several authors have hinted that the gunpowder plot is to be primarily attributed to his doctrines, and seem to think that his effigy ought be substituted for that of Guy Faux, in those processions by which the ingenious youth of England annually commemorate the preservation of the Three Estates. The Church of Rome has pronounced his works accursed things. Nor have our own countrymen been backward in testifying their opinion of his merits. Out of his surname they have coined an epithet for a Knave, and out of his Christian name a synonyme for the Devil. 73

Much of the criticism of The Prince is baseless because it is more often cited than read and also because it is often read without reference to the circumstances of the time in which it was composed. 74 It is true, however, that so severe an attack on the human nature and so cynical an attitude toward the nature of the governing class on the part of Machiavelli will, understandably shock every man of wisdom because most of those who read and criticise him are neither usurpers nor tyrants but men of letters believing in Dante’s philosophy that in the long run truth triumphs over lies. 75 But they have failed to realise that the book was produced in a spirit of hope to liberate Italy from the yoke of barbarians. It was a product of personal as well as national tragedy and Machiavelli, from his own experience, knew it well that if Italy was to survive
her people must have rallied under the banner of men like Francesco Sforza or Caesar Borgia. It is to be kept in mind that Machiavelli was writing primarily for Italy and not for the world outside it and consequently his ideas and precepts should not have a universal value in the eyes of the followers of men like Dante. Indeed, such people should not regard the piece as a disinterested "summary of moral and political principles, appropriate to all situations." It is well said that the readers began to criticise Machiavelli only when he began to be read outside Italy and when it was found that the notorious activities of the rulers of the lands of the readers have sanctions in his work. Lord Acton rightly praises Machiavelli in these words: A sublime purpose justifies him, and he has been wronged by dupes and fanatics, by irresponsible dreamers and interested hypocrites.

Machiavelli was not successful in worldly life. He was also not a very successful diplomat and could not even secure the favour of the Medici to whom the book was dedicated. But the supremacy of his pen in the field of real-politik is apparent from the severe criticism which The Prince often meets. He was in all sense a true Florentine of the sixteenth century — cultured and learned on the one hand and on the other, adept to adopt vicious course in temporal matters if that was expected to be attended with success. Florentine life in particular and Italian life in general at that time was both cultured and vicious and the precepts of Machiavelli
were not something novel to the contemporary Italians. Not unjustified is the observation of Meinecke: they (the ideas of Machiavelli) were indeed not new as regards content; but they were new in the sense that he dated to express them, and to combine them into a system which embraced a universal outlook. This must have been the case for, Machiavelli was a realist and, never a doctrinaire. He said at the outset of chapter XV of The Prince that his intention was to give to the inquirer something that would prove of practical use. To discredit Machiavelli for his alleged sympathy for absolute monarchy is like criticising Einstein for the formulation of the theory that ultimately led to the making of the nuclear bomb. If my father is accused, Einstein's son once said, the inventor of the motor-car should also be blamed for the accidents it meets with. The same can be spoken in the case of Machiavelli. Yet his views have been severely censured.

"In one sense, Machiavelli in Europe is a single story: the impact of pagan, secular political thought on an accepted Christian ideology ..." As Felix Raab points out, Machiavelli's denunciation owes its origin partly to the re-Christianisation of Europe when Machiavelli was found as a serious foe to the spirit of Catholicism and, as Professor Butterfield points out, partly to his attempt to find solace in the glory of ancient Rome, Rome of classical antiquity and pre-Christian days. The causes of his denunciation are now really understood!
However, Machiavelli has survived and will survive the ordeal of time for the simple reason that he has stated the truth which if difficult to admit openly is also difficult to throw away as nonsense. If so worthless, he would not have been so widely studied nor would the critics also think it too indispensable to denounce him. The criticism itself speaks of Machiavelli's influence over the readers of political science. Western Europe is indebted to mediaeval Italy for the Renaissance-culture while in the field of political thought the representative of the Renaissance - Italy is undoubtedly Machiavelli. Considered as a whole his influence upon posterity is undeniable and he can be said to have not only delivered "upto Europe the blue-print of two hundred years of her history" but "certainly he gave to posterity far more than he directly intended". Oliver Cromwell who was neither a theorist nor a doctrinaire but always an opportunist assumed the image of Machiavelli's new prince by killing his master with a Machiavellian game and it is said that he always used to keep a copy of The Prince in his pocket. The Chancellor of Henry VIII rose from obscurity by the favour of circumstances and his virtu revealed the real aspects of Machiavelli's doctrine by a conscious treatment of politics devoid of religion. Machiavelli's concept of absolute power i.e., wielding of supreme power by a single hand was abundantly noticed in the rule of Charles I, Charles II and Napoleon.

If Machiavelli succeeded to penetrate into the minds
of successful absolute rulers of the late mediaeval period
he is equally successful in the modern age. Questions have also
arisen as to what extent he influenced Mussolini who wrote an
introduction for The Prince and, de Gaulle, the late President
of France? Machiavelli wrote for princes and not for any
powerful minister. But if tackling of political situation by
immoral means is considered as a basic tenet of his political
philosophy then we cannot afford to ignore Bismarck who,
although himself not the absolute ruler, was the king-maker
and adopted such step for the consolidation of Germany that
befits a Machiavellian way of aggrandisement only. Finally,
it may be said without hesitation that Machiavelli's influence
is visible not only in the de facto rulers wielding absolute
powers but also in the eminent philosopher like Harrington
and even Hobbes who however, never cited any authority. In
England, Raleigh and Bacon promptly followed him while in
France the politique school did not fail to be benefited by
his precepts.

Many scholars regard Machiavelli as having ushered in
a new era in the field of the study of political science by
striking a breach in the trend of mediaeval political thought.
He well deserves this credit for, apart from separating politics
from theology and thereby, outlining the course which future
politics was to follow, he raised by attacking the theologians
a question of grave concern for all. He happens to be the first
man in the field of political speculation to teach us that in
politics there is no room for accepted assumption as was the case with the mediaeval theologians and that there is no question that must not be asked even if that involves the question of piety and impiety, morality and immorality. In fact, Machiavelli in one sense or the other, is still exercising his influence though his name is execrated by many.

**Kautilya and Machiavelli: Influence on posterity**

If Machiavelli is so eminent in the western political world Kautilya is his true Indian counterpart. Machiavelli's eminence is however, due mainly to his works while Kautilya's life and work are synonymous in an Indian's mind. What he wrote in his treatise he amply demonstrated in his career. Traditionally, his life is his message. The shrewdness and crookedness which he advocated as essential in political matters were the qualities he himself held and these were all made use of in his political career. Without hesitation it may be said that Machiavellism as known in the West has a real counterpart in Chāṇaka-ñeţī of India. The name of Kautilya arouses the same feeling in the mind of an Indian even two millennium after the death of that great patriot politician as is aroused by the name of Machiavelli in Europe in the field of politics and diplomacy.

In apparent contrast to Machiavelli, however, Kautilya did not deal with politics alone but attempted at a synthesis of all the characteristics of a socio-political people. Hence
at times he sought to bridge the gulf between the spiritualistic religion and the materialistic politics that were not looked upon in India as two opposite forces unable to unite — rather the latter was always conceived of as being subject to the supremacy of the former. It is to the credit of Kautilya that while he realised the significance of religion in India life he was not ready to attach undue importance to it. His work is a synthesis in the sense that unlike the authors of the Dharmaśāstra and the Sāstra he did not feel religion or social codes as exclusive matters of concern but analysed the problems of the Indians in their totality and prescribed their solutions. In this sense he is more elaborate and comprehensive than Machiavelli who never concentrated his attention on anything save the political salvation of Italy.

Machiavelli has estranged the private from the public life and has not questioned the importance of religion in private life. The same is true also about Kautilya who has stressed that the various varṇas should follow the righteous track to make this world more beautiful. He realised it more than any one that any disorder in the caste-system, in those ancient days, would definitely breed political chaos — for the political life has a very close and intimate relationship with the social life — and hence alerted his king to guard against such a thing. Side by side he says that whenever the king's wisdom falls in conflict with the law of religion the former should prevail. It is this materialistic sense of the
Brahmin minister combined with his firm conviction that "it is wealth and wealth alone that is important" that has made posterity to see in him the "stigma of being the symbol of a thoroughly unscrupulous ... statecraft".

It is furthermore interesting to note that while Machiavelli maintained the value of religion in private life, in his own private life he was far from being moral. Without much error it may be said that he preferred to being 'secular' than religious even in his personal life. The greatness of Kautiliya becomes at once visible when it is seen that inspite of his secular approach to politics he was a puritan Brahmin leading a healthy private life yet, was, in the true sense, the most successful exponent of the ancient Indian materialistic school.

There are some scholars however, who hold that Kautilya has been given undue importance to which he is not entitled because he followed the principles that were already there. He did not even repudiate the Brahmanical supremacy in political affairs. It is a serious mistake to make such comments. What Machiavelli felt about politics was also felt by other Italians but no one came forward to put his ideas into well-written theories. It is the open admission, the daring courage to unfold the evil nature of political game and support it with examples and arguments that has made Machiavelli a great personality in the field of western political thought. The same can
be said about Kautilya. He could not afford to ignore the
influence of religion in a land of believers nor could he dare
to attack the priests' hold in matters avowedly religious or
social. Here, like Machiavelli, Kautilya felt as other Indian
felt. But no other Indian dared to come forward. Where the
subject of his concern involved pure political or materialistic
matters Kautilya was unequivocal.

Much of the modern polemical controversy will be
silenced if a serious notice is taken of Kautilya's profound
reliance on the spy system. The king was to depend, in each
step, on an efficient espionage. Had Kautilya held a serious
conviction that theological doctrines guaranteed success in the
business of the king he would hardly have shown such a great
interest in the spy system. Hence it may be argued that he
prescribed for the use of religion in political matters only as
a lever for the furtherance of the king's own ends. Though
predominantly a political work, the Arthasastra has dealt with
other aspects of the society also. But had Kautilya concen-
trated his attention on pure politics only we would have probably
found an excellent commentary on politics from an Indian that
could rival and surpass that of Machiavelli and contest with
him in his proud claim of being the first to speak for the
autonomy of politics. Kautilya seems to have been much more
shrewd and crooked than Machiavelli. He enabled Chandragupta
Maurya to snatch away the kingdom of the Nanda king by a process
nowhere recorded in detail thereby leading us to believe that there must have been some foul play behind the fall of the Nandas and that he was the off-scene architect of the game. This diplomacy, this reliance on method which is termed immoral, is abundantly visible in his work also. No Italian took Machiavelli to task for his 'immoral book'. Rather he was praised by them for his daring courage. This was possible because the Italian mentality did not differ from that of Machiavelli. But such was not the case with Kautilya. The materialistic Chārvāka was much criticised in India and had Kautilya left behind a pure political work imbued with the firm conviction that spies guarantee internal administration and that shrewd diplomacy is indispensable in inter-state relations his work would have probably vanished in the land where the Vedas and Upanishads, though much older, know to survive but the Arthasastra, dealing with materialism meet the face of extinction. Hence a book with both religion and materialism intermingled.

If Machiavelli says that no man with power is to be trusted Kautilya will not lag behind in holding the same opinion. Men are by nature evil creatures and the strong always tend to swallow the weaker. The powerful-in-public always denounces Machiavelli because it is they who play the evil game but will not allow any one to reveal them. Had Kautilya written a book without caring, in public, for religion, his denunciation...
would have been far greater than that of Chārvāka and his school. But this he did not do. He surpasses Machiavelli in shrewdness. By revering religion he pacified the general public; on the other hand, allowing the king's wielding of absolute power at moments of his choice, he fired the first successful cannon that struck a wide chasm between the schools of the theologians and the materialists.

The work of Kautilya exercised such a profound influence that in one way or the other he found room in the works of later writers. To quote U.N. Ghoshal: "Not only is this influence traceable in the works of classical Sanskrit as well as of Buddhist and Jaina literature, but direct quotations and paraphrases are freely made from his work by writers in such different branches of learning as the sacred law (Smriti), belles-lettres (Kāvya), lexicography (Kosa) and philosophy (darsana)." One might praise while another might criticise Kautilya but no Indian writer of merit could afford to ignore him. Thus while Kautilya's crookedness elicited the admiration of Kāmandaka and Bīshākhādatta, Bāna condemned his science of polity as "merciless is its precepts, rich in cruelty which surrenders the natural and good elements of a social existence to the science of destructive (materialistic) politics." Dandin also quoted him. Kautilya's rejection of the precepts of his predecessors including those of his own teacher established the character of his self as an independent political thinker.
He had really surpassed his predecessors in the novelty of his ideas and so the vitality of his work quite naturally threw the older teachers in course of time into obscurity.

That the book was widely read all over India even as late as in the late medieval period is testified to by the discovery of the Arthasastra by Shamaasastrya in South India. It is interesting to note that though Kautilya was criticised and regarded as immorality personified in the works of many ancient writers modern Indian scholars do not condemn but regard him as the pioneer in the field of real politik. Same is the case with Machiavelli and both them were excellent epitomes of their times. Though he was severely censured in the two centuries immediately following him modern western scholars regard Machiavelli as the pioneer in the field of secular political thought. This must be the case for scholars of modern period have known the art of looking at matters dispassionately and there is no dearth of critics who know how to become critics without becoming hypocrites. To the credit of Kautilya it is to be added that he has survived twenty three hundred years for the excellence and daring character of his ideas and precepts. Future can only speak whether Machiavelli will have such a long life in posterity which his Eastern counterpart, the Bismarck of India, has enjoyed and has been still enjoying.
Notes and References

1. Arth., Shamasastry's trans., Preface, VIII.
4. It is to be noted that Kautiliya had not too many precursors in this field except his own teacher, Arth., Bk. I, Ch. I.
5. Jayaswal, K.P., Hindu Polity, op.cit., pp.4-5; Also see Arth., p.459.
7. Arth., Bk I, Ch.I.
8. Ibid, Bk.XV, Ch.I.
10. Kāmaṇḍaka wrote in the Gupta period, see Hindu Polity, op.cit., p.377, Appendix C.
11. e.g., Agni Purāṇa, for date, see Altekar, A.S., State and Govt. in Ancient India, 4th ed., 1962, Appendix II.
15. Marsiglio of Padua was not eloquent like Machiavelli on this point.
17. The Prince, p.90.
19. Except the Islamic countries.


41. For the mass of conflicting theories see Cochrane, E.W., *op.cit.*, to which we owe a great deal.


44. Hale, J.R., *op.cit.*, p.36.

45. Ridolfi, R., *op.cit.*, Ch.2.


50. See Arth. also for Kautilya's similar views. Discourses, I/II, 43 (422).


52. Discourses, III, 43 (422).


55. The Prince, ch. XV.


59. Burnham, J., op. cit., Part II, II.


61. Ghoshal, U.N., A Hist. of Indian Political Ideas, OUP, 1969, p. 82.

62. The Prince, pp. 89-90.

63. Arth., Bk. I, ch. III.

64. Ibid., Bk. I, ch. V.


68. Chabod, F., op.cit., p.133.


71. e.g. Arth., Bk.VIII; Ch.III.

72. The Prince, Bull's trans., p.132.


74. The Prince, Bull's trans., Intr., p.10, Also, Fl. Hist., Intr., VIII - IX.

75. Burnham, J., op.cit., II. 'It is imperative that those who read it (The Prince) should realise that they were not meant to do so. Prof. Hearnshaw, quoted from Allen, op.cit., p.466, f.n.

76. The Prince, Bull's trans., p.20: From the pages of The Prince strides the figure of the autocrat, the new man, ruthless, efficient, and defiant, the literary forerunner of the new monarch of the sixteenth century. Also, Fl. Hist. Intr. VII, Also Macaulay, op.cit., p.30.


*Ibid.*, p.286. Also see George Novack’s forward in *The Marxist Theory of the State* of Ernest Mandel, ed. by Dassi, A.R., Bombay, 1979: At the dawn of the bourgeois era, long before Marx, Engels and Lenin, that astute political scientist Machiavelli had expounded the view that the State was the supreme, organized and legitimate expression of force.  

Meinecke quoted from Chabod, F., *op.cit.*, p.120.  
Burnham, J., *op.cit.*, V.  
*Buell’s trans.* *The Prince*, Intr., p.22.  
Raab, F., *op.cit.*, p.188.  
Arth., Bk.I, Ch.IV.  
Sharma, R.S., *op.cit.*, p.236.  
*Buddhist Logic, Vol.1*, quoted from Verma, V.P., *op.cit.*, p.64.
96. Varma, V.P., op.cit., Appendix II.
97. Capponi quoted from Ridolfi, R., op.cit., ch.I.
98. e.g., Bhāradvāja was in some respects a precursor of Kautilya.
100. Artha, Bk.I., Ch.IV.
101. Burnham, J., op.cit., V.
104. Artha, Shamasāstry's trans., Preface, X.
107. Prof. Jacoby finds in the last sentence of the Arthasāstra "the prudish self-consciousness of a great statesman, the Indian Bismarck." Quoted from Varma, V.P., op.cit., p.65, i.e. Kangle writes: "... the teaching of the Sāstra would in actual practice be followed by the nations, though it may be unknown to them and though it may be openly condemned by those that know it." See The Kautilya Arthasāstra, Part III, A Study, 1965, p.283.