

Partial Reading List and Reflections

November 2018 – February 2019

Lawrence C. Chin

2018

17 November

Studied seriously the case of Alessandro Strumia.

19 November

Studied the case of Jennifer Pan. Karen Ho, Toronto Life, 22 July 2015.

26 November

Read about *Indiana* in Hortense Dufour's *George Sand la somnambule*. In Jean Fuzier's introduction to *Indiana*, he notes that Sand denies that Indiana is she herself. Fuzier notes however:

Néanmoins, et quoiqu'elle s'en défende, George Sand a exhalé dans ce livre le flot des rancœurs accumulées et contenues pendant dix ans contre la servitude des femmes. *Indiana* est une profession de foi féministe, à laquelle rien ne manque; droit au bonheur, réforme du mariage, avènement de l'union libre, tel est le programme que défend George Sand... 'La femme est imbécile par nature,' fait-elle dire à Ralph, et elle ne pense pas autrement, tout en luttant, dans *Indiana* ou dans *Lélia*, contre la tyrannie égoïste de l'homme et la rigueur des lois qui font violence à la nature...

30 November

Read chapter 1 of Ange-Marie Hancock's *Intersectionality : An Intellectual History*.

1 December

Downloaded the 2017 translation of Boltanski-Chiapello (Verso): *The New Spirit of Capitalism*.

2 December

Browsed Lynne Cheney's new biography on James Madison.

Checked out Benoît Groult's *Pauline Roland: ou comment la liberté vint aux femmes* (Robert Laffont, 1991). And Philip F. Gura's *American Transcendentalism* (Hill and Wang, New York, 2007).

? December

Checked out Amy Larkin's *Environmental Debt*, Palgrave MacMillan, 2013.

7 December

Watched Laurent Mermet's lecture "Théorie de la justification". Read about Boltanski's early life in Tanja Bogusz, *Zur Aktualität von Luc Boltanski: Einleitung in sein Werk* (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010).

Reading *Mittelpunkt neu B-2* with Carmen (Albert Daniels et al, Klett). Very interesting articles in the book: Ina Lau, "Schönheitsideale", and Kersten Fels, "Die Macht der Schönheit".

15 December

Finished reading Boltanski-Chiapello's *Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme*. Watched ARTE "Le monde selon Xi Jinping".

16 December

Watched Colin Goldner's lecture, "Hinter dem Lächeln des Dalai Lama".

Blavatsky's aim (*The Secret Doctrine*): "... to rescue from degradation that archaic truths which are the basis of all religions, and to uncover, to some extent, the fundamental unity from which they all spring..." This is precisely what I have tried to do in Scientific Enlightenment. The archaic truth and fundamental unity in my case is however the law of conservation of energy.

17 December

Reading Harvey Mansfield's English translation, *Discourses on Livy*, along with the Spanish translation.

18 December

Read Bob Jessop's "Regulation Theories in Retrospect and Prospect". Then watched Al Jazeera's "Investigation: Generation Hate", Part 1 and 2.

Downloaded, and started reading, Ortega y Gasset's *Historia como sistema*, along with the English translation in *Toward A Philosophy of History* (1941).

20 December

Downloaded and read Arlie Russell Hochschild's *Strangers in Their Own Land*.

24 December

Read Martin Leuenberger, "YHWH's Provenance from the South", in *The Origins of Yahwism*, ed. Van Oorschot, de Gruyter, 2017.

And Gloria Martinez Dorado's review of Ana Martinez Arancon's translation, *Maquiavelo, Discursos*.

Downloaded Carmela Gutierrez de Gamba's translation, Leo Strauss, *Meditacion sobre Maquiavelo*.

Watched “On the Basis of Sex”. This is liberal white women’s Deep Story: although she has so much talent to make the world a better place, white men, who control society, reject her and look down on her, believing erroneously that women couldn’t possibly possess any talent. She is thereby prevented by male chauvinism from expressing her talent and making the world a better place. In this way, it’s actually very similar to the southern working class white men’s Deep Story. (The difference is that the line is leading to a better world, the World Dream, rather than to the American Dream, and that the woman is pushed out of the line because of her gender.) But she eventually overcomes the obstacle and demonstrates her talent causing white men to recognize her as their equal. This Deep Story is related to my previous psychoanalysis that liberal white women act as if society has owed them and must therefore pay them back by treasuring them and including them.

27 December

The lesson from Machiavelli’s *Discourses* (1.11, “Of the religions of the Romans”). The purpose of human beings’ belief system is not to capture the truth – people do not form their belief systems in order to understand reality or know the truth – but in order to keep their social system functioning. The Romans didn’t know that, if they violated their oath, nothing would in fact happen: their belief about the supernatural power of the oath was erroneous. But such belief really made the Roman society function smoothly. Hence many philosophers have observed the function of the belief in God in keeping society in order.

28 December

Ana Martinez Arancón’s translation of Machiavelli’s *Discourses* is centered on this important observation: “Esta famosa obra... contempla la vida politica, no desde el punto de vista de los diversos grupos de individuos, sino desde el punto de vista del Estado, el interes de este constituye asi el punto de partida del pensamiento de Maquiavelo....”

Read Gloria Martinez Dorado’s commentary on Arancón’s translation. (Critica de libros.)

29 December

Downloaded, and reading, Walter Lippmann’s *Public Opinion*. (Introduction by Michael Curtis.) Continued reading the Spanish translation of Machiavelli’s *Discourses* along with Harvey Mansfield’s.

2019

2 January

Heard audio book: Will Durant, Francis Bacon. Checked *The Story of Civilization: Part VII: The Age of Reason Begins*. Francis Bacon, p. 169 – 180. This is a shorter version of the audio book.

Checked out Walter Lippmann’s *Public Opinion*, *Maquiavelo: Obras selectas: El Principe, Del Arte de la guerra, La Mandragora* (Carlos Alberto Samonta, Buenos Aires, Distal, 2003), and the translation of *Mandragola* by Anne and Henry Paolucci.

4 January

Downloaded Mansfield's *Machiavelli's Virtue*. Read "Strauss's Machiavelli". Also his *A Student's Guide to Political Philosophy*. And Laura F. Banfield and Harvey C. Mansfield, tr., *Florentine Histories*.

"*Machiavelli's Virtue* is a comprehensive statement on the founder of modern politics. Harvey C. Mansfield begins by analyzing Machiavelli's radical notion of virtue, which culminates in his own personal virtue. Machiavelli shows that princes need a new morality that only he has supplied. Mansfield argues that Machiavelli intended to rule the world through his thought; though a prince without a state, his subjects were the princes who would follow his writings on founding and ruling. This new 'perpetual republic' is Machiavelli's own sect – and a remedy for the failures of all previous republics." "Mansfield reveals the role of sects in Machiavelli's politics, his advice on how to rule indirectly, and the ultimately partisan character of his project. Following the method of Leo Strauss, he takes up Machiavelli's individual works as wholes and shows him to be the founder of modern institutions that came later, such as the impersonal state and the energetic executive. Mansfield thus makes the case that Machiavelli is alive for us and full of the wisdom we need. His thought cannot be dismissed as quaint and obsolete; it is disturbingly relevant for our delusions and our complacency."

5 January

Downloaded, and reading, Christopher Lynch's translation of Machiavelli's *The Art of War* (along with his Introduction and Commentary), the University of Chicago Press, 2003.

7 January

Reading Heather MacDonald's *The Diversity Delusions*.

8 January

The lesson from Mansfield (*Machiavelli's Virtue*): the exhortation for princes to release themselves from morality while ruling is only the apparent message of Machiavelli.¹ The purpose of the apparent message is to hook them onto Machiavelli's teaching so that they will end up accomplishing his hidden

1 The turn-away from morality and toward what is effective or power is the essence of Machiavelli's famous exhortation in Book 15 of *The Prince*: "... since in disputing this matter I depart from the orders of others. But since my intent is to write something useful to whoever understands it, it has appeared to me more fitting to go directly to the effectual truth of the thing than to the imagination of it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that have never been seen or known to exist in truth; for it is so far from how one lives to how one should live that he who lets go of what is done for what should be done learns his ruin rather than his preservation. For a man who wants to make a profession of good in all regards must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence it is necessary to a prince, if he wants to maintain himself, to learn to be able not to be good, and to use this and not use it according to necessity." ("... partendomi, massime nel disputare questa materia, dalli ordini delli altri. Ma, sendo l'intento mio scrivere cosa utile a chi la intende, mi è parso più conveniente andare dritto alla verità effettuale della cosa, che alla immaginazione di essa. E molti si sono immaginati repubbliche e principati che non si sono mai visti né conosciuti essere in vero; perché egli è tanto discosto da come si vive a come si dovrebbe vivere, che colui che lascia quello che si fa per quello che si dovrebbe fare, impara piuttosto la ruina che la perservazione sua: perché uno uomo che voglia fare in tutte le parte professione di buono, conviene rovini infra tanti che non sono buoni. Onde è necessario a uno principe, volendosi mantenere, imparare a potere essere non buono, et usarlo e non usare secondo la necessità.")

design without knowing. His hidden design is carried out by a secret sect which cuts across national boundaries and whose mission is to defend the world against weakness (in his time, Christianity).

10 January

What Machiavelli means by “virtue”: the ability to accomplish “great things”. (Gilbert: “*virtù*... was an Italianization of the Latin word *virtus* and denoted the fundamental quality of man which enables him to achieve great works and deeds”; cited by Mansfield, *M's Virtue*, p. 320.) The same with the existentialist notion: man as transcendence and woman as immanence. With Machiavelli, it's the origin of modernity, i.e. the new preeminence of *effectiveness* (in Boltanski's framework: the Industrial City). Doing “great things” means “to acquire”, “to conquer”, “to expand” (such as an empire). The “virtuous man” is thus similar to Nietzsche's “blond beast”. In this sense, a “virtuous man” is someone who has most expressed his human potentials – but in contrast to the classical notion of the same thing such as is represented by Aristotle. For Aristotle, “virtue” is a matter of self-perfection, and the most virtuous man is the most perfect man, he who has most actualized himself or the human goodness inherent in him. But not in relation to other people and the world, but in relation only to himself. For Machiavelli, the expression of human potentials is considered only in relation to other people and to the world. The most virtuous man is he who has acquired the largest piece of the world and most risen above (even dominated) other people. Thanks to necessity (i.e., the way reality is), the virtuous man must from time to time do evils in order to acquire and rise above. It is thus the shifting of focus from man considered without external relations to the externalized consideration of man which makes it necessary that virtues now include vices and that virtue be only so much as how it is reputed in the minds of other people (as what it brings to the virtuous man). This shift of focus from the internal to the external is the essence of modernity, seen also in the Protestant Ethic (the sign of salvation lies in the external works rather than in the internal, in peace of mind), in Foucault's bio-power, and in the rise of empiricism (only what can be seen, measured, and manipulated has meaning).

Thus it is the same idea about the liberation of human potentials, their maximal expression, which underlies every strand of thinking since modernity: in Machiavelli, in republicanism, in radicalism, etc. And it is this idea which has then infiltrated the Chinese mind in late nineteenth century (e.g. my interpretation of Chen Duxiu). With Machiavelli, Christian morality is bad because it has hindered man from doing the maximum he can to acquire an empire; with Chen Duxiu, Confucian conventions are bad because they have hindered people from maximally expressing the potentials and forces inside them. During the Great Leap Forward, it is the same idea: the maximal liberation of the forces inherent in human beings to result in maximal production and development. (Mao obtained the opposite effect because he neglected the role of industrial infrastructure and technology.)

11 January

“Virtue” means “being strong”. Only the strong can accomplish great things. “Being strong” is contrasted with weakness. Ordinary people cannot liberate themselves from the constraints of morality in order to accomplish great things because they are weak. Being strong means to be able to face up to necessity (reality as it is).

In the context of intelligence: one has a retarded child and somehow one believes (wishful thinking) that the child can nevertheless learn to do all the things which everyone else can do. And yet the child can't. The strong will accept the fact and never expect the child to do any better. The weak however

can't accept it and continue to be "optimistic". The weak, who wish that men and women are really the same (wishful thinking), can't accept the fact that, when people are totally free to choose, fewer women will choose to go into STEM professions. The strong will accept the fact that nature has not made people equal and same in order to satisfy the wishful thinking of social justice warriors. Similarly, the weak can't accept the fact that people of different races have different average IQ scores and that the differences might be due to innate differences. Only the strong can accept it. According to my framework: the weak can never accept the fact that their wishful thinking is only to make them feel morally superior (that they are so tolerant) and to defend their class interests, that the ideology they use to justify their social justice program might not correspond to reality.

There is always a minority in human population who want to learn and want to know the truth instead of simply defending their class interests. These people are the strong, the virtuous.

Machiavelli's "virtue" is what Mansfield has referred to as "manliness", which he defines as the "desire to take charge in risky situation", the desire to take risks, the desire to risk one's life for glory, i.e., the same existential notion of transcendence. (Conversation with Bill Kristol, 17.06.2014, "On political philosophy".)

13 January

Saint-Simon's last words before he died: "Toute ma vie... se résume à cette pensée: assurer à tous les hommes le libre développement de leurs facultés. L'homme et la Femme, voilà l'individu social." (Groult, *Pauline Roland*, p. 59 – 60.)

14 January

Groult on *Enfantin*. « C'est par l'affranchissement complet des femmes que sera signalée l'ère saint-simonienne... » Un affranchissement qui respectait le mariage, mais qui rejetait l'anathème du christianisme à l'égard de la chair et annonçait une société où le plaisir spirituel se complèterait par la jouissance du corps... (p. 67). Plus de privilèges de sexe ni de naissance, l'inférieur n'est plus l'esclave du supérieur, ils sont associés. L'homme n'est plus le maître de la femme, ils sont associés... Les peuples forment une même famille... (p. 70). Il faut déchirer les voiles d'hypocrisie et de pudeur qui étouffaient l'épanouissement du corps (p. 73). Pour les disciples, la nécessité d'une transparence absolue concernant leur vie intime : comment ils font l'amour ou pourquoi ils ne le font pas... Ces séances de confession publique.... (ibid.).

Fourier : « En thèse générale, les progrès sociaux s'opèrent en raison du progrès des femmes vers la liberté, et les décadences d'ordre social s'opèrent en raison du décroissement de la liberté des femmes. L'extension des privilèges des femmes est le principe général de tout progrès social » (p. 101).

Downloaded Mansfield's translation of *The Prince* along with Angeles Cardona's Spanish translation (*El Principe*).

15 January

Christina Hoff Sommer's speech at Hillsdale College (published 11.06.2015). "Victims everywhere: trigger warnings, liberty, and the academy".

Lindsay Shepherd, “The Tampon String Enthusiast of British Columbia” (published 15.01.2019).

Sommers describes the “safe space” which the social justice warriors have created on campuses. Whenever a conservative comes to speak on campus affirming the non-existence of patriarchy, women victims of patriarchy, already so traumatized, can seek refuge in the “safe space” (where pillows and comforting objects are provided) in order to avoid being hurt by the words which are flying out of the conservative’s mouth in a remote room. To avoid PTSD symptoms being triggered by these unkind words. Sommers rightly compares the fabricated rape statistics (as if there were such epidemic of rape) with the witchcraft craze back in the 1600s: all the hysteria over a non-existent reality.

Shepherd describes a gender-transitioning man who lodges complaints about human rights violation at the British Columbia Human Right Courts because female estheticians refused to wax his penis. (Hate crime against trans-gender people!)

Wes told of another story: a woman poisons her child and then advertises that her child has cancer. People shower her with sympathy and donate a ton of money to her. She is able to buy a home and live a luxurious life with all the money donated to her.

All these instances of social justice are instances of “weakness” (Machiavelli’s target). Pretending to be victims is the social justice warriors’ way of gaining power. People have learned to pretend to be victims as a way to become powerful and rich. Pretending to be weak and victim is itself weakness, and pretending to be weak and victim as a way to gain power (to manipulate a third party to beat down your enemy or enrich you) is weakness extraordinaire. Namely, people without virtue and talent and who couldn’t gain power or become rich by doing something positive and amazing can nevertheless gain power and become rich by pretending to be weak and victims. The tactic works because weakness permeates society, because everyone else is also weak. Weak people are more motivated by scenes of weakness and victimization than by expressions of virtue or manliness. Moreover, they are always taken in by the appearance of weakness and victimization (“fake victims”) rather than by any real weakness and victimization.² Today virtue – manliness – is actually discouraged. If society were permeated with virtue or manliness, nobody will care much about victims, let alone glorify them and put them on the pedestal. Today, a little girl who is a victim of something gets far more attention than a virtuous man who has invented some great thing. Such is the age of weakness from which it is my Machiavellian project to deliver humankind. Weakness has gained control and domination over the strong or the virtuous – the way in which slave morality has won over master morality (Nietzsche’s *Genealogy of Morals*). How did this happen? This parallels Machiavelli’s question: if Christianity, being weakness, was able to conquer the Romans, being strong and virtuous, how could this have happened? In my case, I have provided a historical materialist explanation.

Both Machiavelli and I want the same thing: to deliver mankind from weakness and restore virtue or manliness. Strangely, it is precisely the manliness (masculinity) which Machiavelli has initiated (lasting from Protestant ethic to 1960s) which is suppressed by the social justice revolution in the past 30 years and which I wish to restore.

2 Note the problematic here: the weak, i.e., the talentless, pretend to be weak and victim as a way to gain power and wealth. They are not really weak and not real victim. But, in a deeper sense, they *really* are weak, since they can’t do anything positive or amazing and gain power and wealth in that way.

Mansfield explains Machiavelli's objective in this way: by persuading all princes to become virtuous (i.e. be able to ignore moral constraints while pursuing glory and acquisition), that is, by making virtue the norm *contra* the weakness perpetuated by Christianity, he could improve the whole mankind. The world will be better for everyone when people in general prefer manliness and effectiveness to stupefying moral constraints and effeminate behavior. When Christianity teaches everyone to be moral, to love neighbors and repay evil with goodness, to be humble and meek – such is weakness – the world paradoxically becomes full of corruptions, selfishness, hypocrisies, and immorality. Adam Smith and John Locke and so on have followed Machiavelli in this way: when everyone pursues his selfish interests, somehow the combined results will be the improvement of conditions for everyone.

19 January

Announcing to Wes:

Lawrence's Machiavellian project (*la mia empresa*):

Our last conversation has made me better able to clarify my new position. From now on you should refrain from addressing me as a “bigot” but instead as “Machiavellian”. From now on, when I express bigotry, I'm in fact promoting “manliness” and “virtue”. My Machiavellian project (*la mia empresa*) is to deliver humanity from weakness and restore virtue. If people call this project “bigotry” it is because they are weak and they want a world in which weakness reigns. My project on the other hand is to make sure that the world belongs to the virtuous rather than to the weak. I shall now use Mansfield (“manliness”) as my mouth-piece to legitimate my bigotry, just as Mansfield uses Machiavelli as mouth-piece to legitimate his conservatism (“manliness”) and Machiavelli uses Livy and the other ancients as mouth-piece to legitimate his “virtue”.

Now to define the currently reigning condition of weakness. Weakness is presently most clearly manifested in the social justice revolution. The current social justice revolution is about pretending to be weak and victim as a way to gain power and wealth. Because weakness is the norm, people have learned to pretend to be weak and victims as a way to become powerful and rich. Pretending to be weak and victim is itself weakness, and pretending to be weak and victim as a way to gain power (to manipulate a third party to beat down your enemy or enrich you) is weakness extraordinaire. It is those people without virtue and talent and who couldn't gain power or become rich by doing something positive and amazing who have learned to gain power and become rich by pretending to be weak and victims. This tactic works because weakness permeates society, because everyone else is also weak. Weak people are more impressed by scenes of weakness and victimization than by expressions of virtue or manliness. Moreover, they are always taken in by the appearance of weakness and victimization (“fake victims”) rather than by any real weakness and victimization. Note the problematic here: the weak, i.e., the talentless, pretend to be weak and victim as a way to gain power and wealth. They are not really weak and not real victim. They are fake victims. But, in a deeper sense, they *really* are weak, since they can't do anything positive or amazing and must resort to pretending to be weak and victims as a way to gain power and wealth. The weak are unable to manipulate other people to impart power and wealth upon them simply by remaining the weak that they are (having no talents); they have to pretend to be weak and victim in another fashion (sexism, racism, hate crimes against transgender people) in order to achieve the effect they aim for.

I attach two videos here: (1) Mansfield's presentation of "manliness" ("virtue"). (2) Lindsay Shepherd presents the "Tampon String Enthusiast of British Columbia" as an exemplary instance of "weakness": this guy, obviously a pervert, can't express his perversion in a straightforward fashion and so decides to "transition" to womanhood (to pretend to be a woman) as a way to impose his sexual perversion on womankind (such as forcing female estheticians to wax his penis by accusing them of hate crime against transgender people and human rights violation if they don't do it). And many people of British Columbia are so weak as to support this pervert believing strangely that they are fighting against oppression and unable see the truth that this is disguising perversion and domination under the cover of fighting for social justice.

Mansfield: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BJABkuFUMo>.

Shepherd: <https://youtu.be/MXXbK3EtsA0>.

Now how to define "virtue". It only *seems* that I have identified "virtue" with Mansfield's "manliness" just as Mansfield has identified "manliness" with Machiavelli's "virtue". But, according to Mansfield, when Machiavelli identifies "virtue" with Roman manliness he in fact doesn't mean it: his "virtue" is a new thing which only superficially resembles Roman manliness. He was merely trying to fit into the Renaissance humanists' reversion to the ancients as a way to cover himself. In the same way, my "virtue" shall have only superficial resemblance to Mansfield's "manliness" because I'm using conservatism to cover myself. When I espouse the opposite of the currently reigning weakness, I'm in fact espousing something brand new. What this "virtue" really is in my schema shall be worked out in the future. Suffice to say that, while Mansfield takes Thatcher as an instance of a "manly woman", I admit Rosa Park as an instance of "virtuous woman". Lindsay Shepherd who sees through social justice deception is also "virtuous" and "manly" in my schema. And Putin is another instance of "virtuous man". He devotes his life to making Russia a world-power again, and, for this end, he circumvents democracy and human rights and all the other good things which weakness glorifies and makes domination and acquisition the priority in everything he does. He is an exemplary instance of Machiavelli's prince: preferring effectiveness in domination and acquisition to morality (considerations for democracy and human rights and all that kind of stuff).

Wes, when I qualify Putin as a Machiavellian prince rather than as a brutal dictator, do you suddenly have a positive view of him? The question is important. When I denounce Women's March or "Kirsten Gillibrand for President" or "the fight for LGBT rights" as master promoters of weakness, does it sound less like bigotry and more noble now that it is defined as "Machiavellian"? Does the strategy of mouth-piece work? Especially since the Machiavellian project of deliverance from weakness and restoration of virtue is as much about the improvement of humankind in general as about making the world favorable to the virtuous.

The next step is certainly to recruit disciples and form a sect and send them to various positions of power where they can implement policies and exert influences to make the world virtuous again. Since my historical materialism has taught me that the current condition of weakness is caused by the disappearance of the manufacturing sector in society, my disciples should infiltrate the right and help Steve Bannon implement his dream of economic nationalism as the precondition for cultural change.

21 January

Ana Martínez Arancon names the first Anti-Machiavellian in Spanish political history, the Jesuit Pedro de Rivadeneyra (1526 – 1611) with his *El príncipe cristiano*. (*Historia del pensamiento político español: del renacimiento a nuestros días: Antimaquiavelismo*.)

Mansfield specifies that Machiavelli's purpose is to produce a new cultural and political climate in which the prince who does immoral things to maintain and expand a republic or kingdom will be judged positively rather than negatively. Namely, to provide a new cultural climate in which effectiveness will be valued above morality, so that a prince will no longer feel inhibited by moral considerations when he wants to be effective. Again, such cultural climate will improve human conditions overall. It really is this new prioritization of effectiveness which constitutes Machiavelli's initiation of modernity (*contra* Mansfield). ("Virtue" means "effectiveness".)

Contra Mansfield, modernity is not marked essentially by the search for novelty, but by an obsession with increasing force, maximizing force, squeezing more force out of each individual human being. The liberation of human potentials. To increase the power of the state. Hence Machiavelli's new priority in effectiveness; the Protestant emphasis on tangible performance; empiricism; the radicals' goal of liberating human potentials; Foucault's bio-power and disciplinary technology (to extract maximal force from each human being); Weber's rationalization process (to extract maximal force from the most limited amount of resources). All these hang together: effectiveness, power, force, and the liberation of human potentials.

Saw a very good anthology in Moe's: Ash Amin ed. *Post-Fordism: A Reader* (1994). Amin lists the three approaches in the post-Fordist debate: the regulation approach; the flexible specialization approach; and the neo-Schumpeterian approach.

26 January

If the whole politically correct culture – the feminist culture along with its flexible capitalist regime – is weakness, that means that the Bilderberg's plan is to promote and expand weakness in order to achieve sustainability. My plan – rolling back the politically correct culture – is then to promote and expand virtue in order to achieve sustainability.

Reading Juan Manuel Forte Monge's biographical sketch of Machiavelli (Estudio introductorio).

2 February

Watched "Los orígenes de la lengua vasca" (2012).

4 February

Listened to Cato Home Study Course: John Locke's Two Treatises of Government. (Written by George A. Smith, produced in 1987.)

Checked out, and read the beginning of, Maria Diedrich, *Love Across Color Lines: Otilie Assing and Frederick Douglass* (1990).

Read Tomás Várnagy, "El pensamiento político de John Locke y el surgimiento del liberalismo".

The philosophy of weakness.

In my “McDonaldization and Rationalization” I have posited that the excessive comfortable position provided by technology, the culture of respecting people’s rights, and prosperity has caused dummification in the sense of an inability to recognize another person as intellectually superior and a lack of desire to learn (a sense of oneself as sufficient), a general laziness about using one’s mind, and, in higher education, the expectation of a good grade without putting in any effort and a general switch-over to information-processing as the dominant cognitive style. It has also caused weakness in the sense of a loss of tolerance for unpleasant experiences, an obsession with security, and paranoia that bigotry is everywhere.

This “dummification” is basically “weakness of the mind”, while the other weakness may be called “weakness of the spirit”. A little refinement during my conversation with Wes on 30 January:

The causes of weakness: (1) excessive comfort thanks to economic prosperity, and security thanks to the successful prevention of accidents and crimes, and over-protection of people’s rights, including the “coddling of the American mind”. (2) Technology and increasing dependence on technology, or the convenience offered by technology.

While (1) has resulted in the increasing inability to tolerate the slightest discomfort, or the *weakness of the spirit*, (1) and (2) have intermixed to result in the tremendous *weakness of the mind*.

(1) The perception that bigotry is everywhere is not simply, as I have asserted elsewhere, an ideology which the new capitalism has been perpetuating, but also the result of liberal young people’s increasing inability to tolerate the slightest discomfort or, in the same way, their increasing tendency to exaggerate the slightest offense into horrifying injustice. (The quotation from Peter Berger.) Thus “rape culture”, “trigger warnings”, “micro-aggression”. This is how the *weakness of the spirit* is manifested on the left. On the right it is manifested in the hysteria over terrorism and crimes and, overall, in the sentiment that danger is everywhere and that safety is number one priority.

(2) When one can Google anything and find the answer to anything on one’s phone – over-dependence on technology, the convenience offered by technology – one loses the habit of exerting one’s brain to think. Thinking is already provided for you and you no longer have to do it yourself. *Machine will think for you*. Hence college students today can’t think but only know how to process information. One is spoon-fed for so long that this has become like part of nature and one no longer feels like picking up the spoon to feed oneself. The *weakness of the mind*. (1) The “coddling of the American mind” then reinforces this tendency: over-protection of students’ feelings has spoiled them so much that they have developed the expectation that any unpleasant opinion shouldn’t even exist, or the righteous sentiment that they shouldn’t be expected to exert their brain to reason with another person who disagrees with them – that the latter should simply disappear. The “coddling of the American mind” discourages the exertion of brain power.

The leftist paradigm, Political Correctness – that suffering injustice should be elevated above doing something positive, that the rights and feelings of children, students, and oppressed people must be meticulously protected (the coddling of the American mind), that bigotry is everywhere – is thus how the condition of weakness caused by comfort, technological convenience, and the culture of respecting

people's rights is manifested on the liberal left. Both the weakness of the spirit and the weakness of the mind.

Machiavelli's critique is that, in his time, it is Christianity which has caused the general condition of weakness: a Christianity which teaches humility and a contemplative life instead of being strong and confronting necessities (doing something great and achieving glory in worldly affairs). The essence of his critique is expressed in this observation:

E se la religione nostra richiede che tu abbi in te fortezza, vuole che tu sia atto a patire più che a fare una cosa forte

And if our religion asks that you have strength in yourself, it wishes you to be capable more of suffering than of doing something strong.

La fortaleza de alma que nuestra religión exige es para sufrir pacientemente los infortunios, no para acometer grandes acciones.

(*Discourses*, II, Ch. 2.)

The leftist paradigm is something like the secularization of this Christian ideal: you have value if you have suffered oppression rather than if you have done something great. The ideal arises, as I have noted, when the masses gain control of society and set their values as the standard for the whole society (since the masses are talentless and can't do anything great).

When the weak masses set their weakness as the standard, the few more ambitious among them can then pretend to be weak in another way (pretend to be victims) as a way to gain power and acquire wealth. While democracy and capitalism enable the weak to dominate society like this, capitalism has especially promulgated racism and sexism as the particular categories in which the suffering of injustice shall express itself. The spiritually and cognitively weak can then pretend to have suffered racism and sexism (either by exaggerating discomfort or by inventing harm altogether) as a way to gain power over their target person. Instead of using their brain to reason with someone disagreeing with them as a way to win the argument, they simply frame the disagreeing person into promoters of hate speech and thereby eliminate him.

There is a tremendous parallel between the weakness of Machiavelli's time and the contemporary weak condition. While Christianity is the parallel in Machiavelli's time to the contemporary leftist paradigm, the sixty years of the Peace of Lodi (1434 – 1494) by which the Florentines became soft and weak – a typical Fascist argument – can be seen to be the parallel in his time to the contemporary condition of excessive comfort and over-protection. Juan Manuel Forte Monge (Estudio introductorio, "La ruina de Italia, la pluralidad de causas y el Estado burgués"):

Para empezar, la causa próxima del declive italiano habría que situarla en los sesenta años de la Paz de Lodi (1434-1494), un período que predispuso a los italianos a una cómoda molición y les hizo olvidar las virtudes militares y la necesidad de la guerra, asunto que dejaron en manos de ejércitos mercenarios y de las potencias extranjeras. Es éste el diagnóstico que aparece en su *Historia de Florencia*, donde se habla de esos sesenta años de paz y preparación de la servidumbre de Italia, años donde no había

sitio para la ‘fortaleza de los soldados, la virtud de los capitanes o el amor a la patria de los ciudadanos’ (*Historia de Florencia*, V, 1). En *El arte de la guerra* se corrobora el diagnóstico y se culpa a los líderes italianos que, con su cultura refinada y autocomplaciente, han preparado la ruina de Italia:

‘Creían nuestros príncipes italianos, antes de sufrir los golpes de las guerras ultramontanas, que bastaba a una persona de su condición aprender a redactar una hábil respuesta, a escribir una bella carta, o mostrar en sus discursos agudeza y rápida comprensión, saber preparar una perfidia, adornarse con joyas de oro y piedras preciosas, sobrepujar a los demás en el lujo de la mesa y el lecho, rodearse de gentes viciosas, gobernar a sus súbditos con orgullo y avaricia, vivir entregado al ocio corruptor [...]. No comprendían los desgraciados que se preparaban a ser víctimas del primero que les acometiera. Ésta fue la causa del gran espanto, de las repentinas fugas y de las sorprendentes pérdidas que empezaron en 1494.’ (*El arte de la guerra*, VII, 388-389.)

Podríamos aducir más textos que redundan en lo mismo (por ejemplo, el capítulo XII de *El príncipe* o el capítulo XVIII del Libro II de los *Discursos*), pero aquí basta con retener que es obvio que Maquiavelo ve la causa de la decadencia italiana en ese ocio propiciado por la Paz de Lodi, en esa especie de molicie que conduce a debilitar los órdenes y virtudes militares y cívicos (con los requeridos sacrificios). Un ocio rodeado de fenómenos concomitantes y coadyuvantes: la ineptitud y la falta de visión de los líderes políticos, el papel negativo del papado para la creación de un Estado fuerte, la debilidad de la religión o su simple ausencia, la excesiva riqueza de los ciudadanos privados y pobreza de lo público (para el caso de Florencia), etcétera. Es así que la Paz de Lodi no se interpreta ya como aquellos buenos tiempos que no volverán, sino como la causa y la antesala del escenario de servidumbre posterior. Y este caso concreto y coyuntural de la servidumbre italiana prueba además que una prolongada paz (*Discursos*, II, XXV) y, en general, los tiempos en que predomina el *otium* (*Discursos*, I, VI), son auténticos disolventes de las virtudes militares y cívicas y, por lo tanto, una de las causas generales más comunes del declive de muchas repúblicas y Estados.

Again, a typical Fascist argument (hence “War is the health of the state”). In the one case excessive comfort, security, and prosperity result in a militarily weak state and corrupt republic – a people unwilling to exert themselves and uninterested in the public good – and in the other in a people who are spiritually and cognitively weak whose only avenue to power and wealth is pretending to be weak in another way (pretending to be victims of sexism and racism). *Otium* is the Machiavellian equivalent to the comfort and convenience (including over-protection of oppressed people’s feelings and rights) which dominates our contemporary society.

Virtue is therefore a strong mind (capable of independent thinking and reasoning rather than simply processing information and repeating slogans), a strong spirit (not exaggerating the slightest discomfort into injustice that other people must right for oneself), and a willingness to exert oneself and do great things as the proper way to gain power and achieve transcendence.

8 February

Watched University of California Television, “Conversation with History: A Conversation with Robert Williams Fogel”.

10 February

Read the remarks on Liang Qichao in: 陈小冲主编, 台湾历史上的移民与社会研究.

Liang Qichao’s works and journals: Before the 1898 exile, edited *Sino-Foreign News* (中外記聞) and *The Chinese Progress* (時務報). Compiled *On Institutional Reform* (變法通議). 茅海建 (<http://www.aisixiang.com/data/99467.html>):

梁启超 (1873—1929) 以《时务报》而声名大著，而他在《时务报》上发表的最著名的政论著述是《变法通议》，部分地表达了他在戊戌变法时期的改革设想。这是他的成名作。然而，如同梁启超许多政论著述一样，《变法通议》是一部没有最终完成的作品，最后一部分是其流亡日本后所写，在《清议报》上发表。从《变法通议》最初发表的文本来看，他本有一个庞大的写作计划，其后又多次改变，最后放弃了。

After exile, in 1989, edited *Journal of Disinterested Discussion* (清議報).

12 February

Peter Zarrow: “He Zhen and Anarcho-Feminism in China”.

The nationalist stage of feminism:

1904. Jin Tianhe (金天翮) published a translation of Sentaro’s *Modern Anarchism*: 自由血. Then, *Women’s Bell*.

1906. The Association of Women Students in Japan. *New Chinese Women’s World*.

The anarchist stage:

1907. He Zhen: *Natural Justice* (天義).

Peter Zarrow: *Anarchism and Chinese Political Culture*.

Centered on Liu Shiwei (劉師培), He Zhen (何震), and Zhang Ji (張繼). Associates: Zhang Binglin (章炳麟), who brought Liu and He to Japan in 1907; Su Manshu (苏曼殊); Wang Gongquan; Jing Dingcheng.

Liu Shiwei, before becoming an anarchist, was very into Huang Zhongxi (黃宗羲) (*Plan for the Prince*: 明夷待訪錄). In Japan, he was close to the Japanese radical Kotoku Shusui (幸德秋水), along with the feminist Fukuda Hideko (福田英子) and the future fascist Kita Ikki (北一輝). “It is the government that obstructs the development of human nature” (p. 54).

Fogel: *Without Consent or Contract*.

The British campaign to end slavery. The effort started with the Quakers in late 1700s, and then was taken over by the Methodists. Parliament's act of 1807 which ended the slave trade. Fogel rejected Eric Williams' claim that the capitalists pushed for the act in the interest of their profits. Fogel: the Whigs and Tories gave in to Methodists' lobbying for the sake of political expediency. The Whigs then passed the law of 1833 to abolish all slavery in British colonies. Fogel again rejected Williams' claim (that the capitalists wanted it). The Whigs did it again for the sake of political expediency: to enhance their political position among Protestant dissenters and to drive a wedge between liberal reformers and radicals (who were suspicious of the antislavery movement and wanted rights for wage laborers). The campaign was greatly supported by upper-class Anglican evangelicals who detested radicalism for the sake of the poor. For Fogel, the condition for the success of the lobbying efforts of the abolitionists is therefore the emergence of ex-parliamentary politics and the broadening of "civility" (the segments of the population capable of influencing the political process) during the early nineteenth century.

15 February

Zarrow. The four anarchists in Paris: Wu Zihui (吳稚暉), Li Shizeng (李石曾), Zhang Jingjiang (張靜江), Chu Minyi (褚民誼).