Introduction

Sankar Muthu

European political thought from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century has long been associated with theorizations of a few key social, political, and economic developments: the rise of "the state" and its primary subinstitutions and practices, such as standing armies, central banks, and bureaucratic administrations; the reordering of relationships among religious institutions and political powers, at times leading to governments' greater or lesser toleration of diverse religious practices and denominations; the development of commercial systems of trade, mass manufacturing (eventually industrial production), chartered companies with transnational operations, and related debates about consumption, luxury, and the social and political effects of growing merchant classes; and the ideologies of natural (or human) rights and of republican (or democratic) forms of governance. Many of the political events that are taken to be constitutive of this period, from the Thirty Years War to the Edict of Nantes (and its revocation) to the upheavals of 1688, 1776, and 1789 were both influenced by and shaped modern political discourses. When one adds to these developments the significant impact of the rise of modern science, including the experimental sciences, on moral and political writings as well as the technological breakthroughs that made accurate oceanic navigation and industrial manufacturing possible, the profound transformations in social thought in this period cannot be underestimated.

The global and imperial dimensions of this period, however, and in particular the self-conscious theorization of them in past centuries, have been relatively neglected by historians of political thought when compared to the vast amount of scholarly work in political theory about,

for example, modern political philosophies of revolution, toleration, and the state. While historians of modern political thought have occasionally turned to the global dimensions of this period, only in the past roughly dozen years has a critical mass of such scholars analyzed the importance of territorial expansion and transcontinental (often imperial) networks of direct or indirect imperial governance, naval and military activity, and trade in the writings of modern European political thinkers. In addition, such scholars have attempted to understand how, if at all, such ideologies interacted with statist, religious, commercial, republican, and revolutionary developments and discourses. To be sure, historians working in areas other than intellectual history, postcolonial theorists in various disciplines, and scholars of literature and literary theory, among others, have been working in large numbers on such global and imperial issues for a longer period of time. Only fairly recently, however, have significant numbers of historians of political thought as well as contemporary political theorists turned to global matters.[1] Given this scholarly turn in the study of modern political thought, this set of original chapters has been commissioned to offer a range of interpretations about European thinkers' writings from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries about conquest, colonization, and the various institutions and practices that have come to be grouped under the term "empire."

No single-volume study along these lines can come close to capturing the vast range of writings that treated such issues across a few hundred years; moreover, even the thinkers who would likely be considered to be the most philosophically astute or historically influential could not all be covered in the space of one volume. Ideally, this book will spur further scholarly analysis not only about the thinkers and writings under study, but also about the many figures and themes not covered, or only briefly mentioned, here. While the long chronology of this book cannot provide the coherence of a collection that focuses on a particular ideology or concise period, the wide range of perspectives analyzed here allows one to discern both stark differences and occasionally similar preoccupations across multiple intellectual traditions and centuries in the modern era. The chronological range of the chapters is extensive, covering political and philosophical debates from Renaissance republican writings about conquest and liberty and sixteenth-century writings about the Spanish

[1] For a survey of the recent imperial and global turn in the history of political thought and contemporary political theory, with an extensive bibliography, see Chapter 13 of this book by Jennifer Pitts.

conquest of the Americas, to Enlightenment debates about global empires, to nineteenth-century writings about the development of social theory in the context of imperial debates, the French colonization of Algeria, Napoleonic conquests, and British imperial activities in India and elsewhere. The emphasis in this book is on European thinkers of the modern period, but one hope that underlies this volume is that the many connections and tensions among European and non-European thinkers' perspectives about conquest, occupation, and imperial rule can be researched and investigated in ways that will be enhanced by the following chapters.

Although recent political developments and philosophical discourses – about globalization, military interventions and occupation, terrorism and responses to it, and the rise of the United States as the most powerful hegemon or, arguably, as the dominant imperial power in international relations – no doubt helped to turn the attention of some political theorists to possibly analogous debates and writings in earlier centuries, the contributors to this volume have not examined past writings primarily with a view to the present. To be sure, many dilemmas that confront citizens and states today about humanitarian intervention, national sovereignty, conquest and occupation, empire, and human rights in a global context have a long, intriguing, and complex intellectual history. Accordingly, some of the authors have occasionally noted what might or might not be reasonably seen as analogous assumptions, concepts, and arguments in the writings of modern and contemporary political thinkers and actors. A key purpose of this book, however, is to investigate what some modern European thinkers sought to analyze, to justify, and to criticize as they wrestled with what they saw as the political and intellectual challenges raised by territorial, oceanic, and commercial conquests and their aftermath.

In surveying the many ethical and political questions that the development of overseas empires and European encounters with the non-European world occasioned among theologians, historians, philosophers, merchants, and political actors in Western Europe from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, what emerges most clearly is that what were perceived to be fundamental issues and concepts changed over time and were formulated in different terms and that certain perspectives gained or lost importance, depending upon shifting intellectual, political, and historical concerns. The following chapters will, among other things, investigate the distinctive and sometimes overlapping manner in which each political thinker, or set of thinkers, under study understood and assessed the social, economic, and political relationships between

the occupiers and the occupied; in this book, usually this corresponds to various European powers, on the one hand, and particular non-European rulers and peoples, on the other.[2] Notwithstanding this diversity of perspectives and histories, particular instantiations of more general questions will no doubt arise in one form or another in several chapters. What moral and legal principles and assumptions were used to theorize conquest and occupation, and to what philosophical and political ends were such concepts applied? To what extent and precisely how did these thinkers' arguments draw upon the existing ethnography about foreign peoples in order to understand how European states should or should not interact with non-European peoples? What European and extra-European religious, political, and commercial developments influenced these thinkers and, in turn, how did these thinkers seek to justify, criticize, or transform such developments? Indeed, as suggested at the outset, in addition to transformations such as the formation of centralized states and disputes over the changing role of religion in political life, the creation of vast European empires and imperial trading networks played a key role in the development of modern European political thought. The rise of what we now classify as modern empires raised fundamental questions about human nature, property, sovereignty, international justice, war, commerce, trade, rights, duties across borders, sociability, civilization, citizenship, and progress – indeed, about virtually the entire set of contested concepts and ideas that are now retrospectively grouped together as "modern political thought."

If one aim of this book is to understand how some European thinkers from 1492 onward understood and evaluated the extraordinary developments by which a small group of Western European countries came to rule or to dominate much of the non-European world, then today the language of empire seems most appropriate. While "empire" is used in the title of this book for precisely this reason, it is important to appreciate that contemporary uses of "empire" and "imperial" differ markedly from the use of such terms for much of the period under study in this book, and that the cognate concept of "imperialism" emerged only in the nineteenth century. One scholar has recently noted that an "empire in the classic sense is usually believed, first, to expand its control by conquest or coercion, and, second, to control the loyalty of the territories it

[2] The conception of "Europe" and what ought to be thought of as properly European or extra-European was in flux and vigorously contested during this period, as indeed it is today. See Anthony Pagden, ed., *The Idea of Europe: From Antiquity to the European Union* (Cambridge and Washington, D.C.: Cambridge University Press and Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2002).

subjugates. It may rule these subject lands directly or it may install compliant native leaders who will govern on its behalf, but it is not just an alliance system among equal partners."[3] The use of "empire" to identify control over an extensive assemblage of lands that resulted at least in part from conquest, occupation, and at times significant colonial settlements ("territorial empires") and/or to delineate a commercial network of trading posts, small colonial establishments, and often indirect rule over foreign populations ("maritime empires," "naval empires," or "empires of the sea") begins to emerge only in the eighteenth century.

In the *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (published initially in 1711), one of the most reprinted English books of the eighteenth century, Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, wrote of the "Advantages" that "powerful States" have found "in sending Colonys abroad," and immediately followed this assertion by contending that "Vast Empires are in many respects unnatural: but particularly in this, That be they ever so well constituted, the Affairs of many must, in such Governments, turn upon a very few[.]"[4] Edmund Burke, in 1793, referred to the combination of British trading activities and territorial conquests in India – at the time conducted by the English East India Company and well before the sovereign declaration of India as a subject territory ruled by a queen who would be declared the "empress of India" – by asserting succinctly that "Our Empire in India is an awful thing."[5] In the *Wealth of Nations*, published initially in 1776 with significant additions in the 1783 edition, Adam Smith discussed European activities in the non-European world from 1492 onward, including territorial expansion, the planting of colonies, and aggressive commercial trading networks of joint stock companies all under the traditional heading "Of Colonization," but he ultimately concluded his book with an assertion about the need to dismantle what Smith himself termed the "British empire."[6] This was an

[3] Charles Maier, *Among Empires: American Ascendancy and Its Predecessors* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 24–25. See also Jane Burbank and Frederick Cooper, *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), chap. 1.

[4] Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2001; reprint of the 6th ed. [London: J. Purser, 1737–1738]), p. 71.

[5] Edmund Burke, "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies," in E. Burke, *Three memorials on French affairs written in the years 1791, 1792 and 1793 by the late Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (London: F. and C. Rivington, 1797), p. 182.

[6] Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. R. H. Campbell and A. S. Skinner, textual ed. W. B. Todd (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), bk. V, chap. iii, p. 946.

agglomeration that, for him, included both the colonies of America and the trading outposts and territorial seizures (either as tributary states or as direct dependencies) of the English East India Company. Similarly, a contemporaneous British author analyzed the "emigrations to America, to Ireland, and other more distant settlements, belonging to the British Empire" and considered "those lost in defence of ourselves and of our colonies, and in carrying on our extensive commerce to all parts of the globe," concluding later that "an extended empire must ever prove pernicious."[7]

The eighteenth century, then, is a transitional period in the history of the concept of empire, for the traditional understanding of *imperium* as simply sovereign or military rule – or, at times, such rule over a fairly large, though contiguous, territory – increasingly became mixed with the languages of colonization, conquest, and overseas commerce.[8] Hence, given the chronological scope of this book that spans the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, "conquest" is a more historically apt term for this entire period, though only the contemporary use of "empire" covers the full range of activities and institutions that the thinkers under study in this volume usually theorized as they pondered what they took to be among the key transcontinental developments of their age. Among the issues that were thought to demand analysis and judgment were the seizure of many non-European lands; the establishment and escalation of vast systems of slavery, most notably (but not only) the transcontinental Atlantic slave trade; the attempted religious and cultural conversion of conquered peoples; the emerging institutions and practices of global commerce; and the increasingly complex networks of transnational alliances and modes of transcontinental governance. The impact of these developments on both European and non-European societies and global relations has been, and continues to be, profound. An examination of a substantial subset of the philosophically rich and ideologically influential modern European intellectual debates about these developments, therefore, illuminates – perhaps simultaneously in unsettling and hopeful ways – both the past and the present.

[7] James Anderson, *The interest of Great-Britain with regard to her American colonies, considered. To which is added an appendix, containing the outlines of a plan for a general pacification* (London: T. Cadell, 1782), pp. 86, 102.

[8] For a classic study of the languages of *imperium* and "empire" (from ancient Rome to nineteenth-century Europe), see Richard Koebner, *Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966). See also James Muldoon, *Empire and Order: The Concept of Empire, 800–1800* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

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Machiavelli's Three Desires

Florentine Republicans on Liberty, Empire, and Justice

Mikael Hörnqvist

While Florence's role as the cradle of the European Renaissance and the great mediator between the ancients and the moderns in the fields of learning, visual arts, architecture, and natural science is firmly established in the scholarly community and the popular imagination alike, the Florentine republic's contribution to the history of empire and imperialist theory is less well recognized. The inclusion of Florence and the Florentine Renaissance in a volume dedicated to empire and political theory may therefore need some explaining. Needless to say, there can be no question of Florence being ranked among the great empires of history. The city on the banks of the river Arno bears no comparison to the Roman, the Spanish, the British, the French, the Ottoman, or the Soviet empires. It can hardly even be mentioned in the same breath as minor imperial powers such Portugal, the Netherlands, Sweden, or Japan. However, in the history of thinking about empire and imperial mythmaking, the Florentine republic of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the self-appointed heir of the ancient Roman republic, must rank among the historically most significant and the most sophisticated. From the fourteenth to the early sixteenth centuries Florentines came to regard Florence, through a strong and intensely felt identification with the ancient Roman republic, as destined for imperial greatness and hegemonic rule over Tuscany, Italy, and, on occasion, even the entire world. As I have argued elsewhere, Florentine republican imperialism was premised on the idea that the republic had two ends: to preserve its liberty at home and to pursue empire abroad.[1] The task of this chapter is to build

[1] Mikael Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. chap. 2. See also Mikael Hörnqvist, "The Two Myths of Civic Humanism," in

on this research by inquiring into the role of liberty, empire, and justice in the Florentine tradition in general and in the political theory of Niccolò Machiavelli in particular. As I hope to show, Machiavelli's rejection of the humanist philosophy of justice takes on its full meaning when studied in the context of his republican imperialism.

In the history of political thought, Renaissance Florence has long been associated with the ideology of liberty and with civic humanism, the embryonic form of liberalism identified by Hans Baron and Eugene Garin in the mid-twentieth century.[2] This emphasis on liberty has highlighted important aspects of Florentine political culture but, at the same time, has made us largely oblivious of the fact that Florentine republicans spoke of their state as an empire (*imperio*), were unashamedly proud of their city's territorial acquisitions, and understood and conceptualized their republic as the modern reembodiment of its ancient forebear, the mighty Roman republic.

In fourteenth- and fifteenth-century representations of Italian city-states, accounts of conquests and victories in battle are commonplace. In the case of Florence, these panegyrics as a rule go back to the fourteenth century, when the Florentine republic began to emerge as an aspiring imperialist state in the pursuit of Tuscan hegemony.[3] As the expansive merchant families tightened their control over the city's government toward the middle of the century, Florence embarked on a series of military adventures that eventually led to the acquisitions of Colle Valdelsa in 1338, Prato and Pistoia in 1351, San Gimignano in 1354, Volterra in 1361, Arezzo in 1384, and Montepulciano in 1390. After a series of protracted wars with the dukes of Milan for supremacy in central Italy, ending in 1402, the republic succeeded four years later in subjugating its bitter rival, the seafaring city of Pisa, which for centuries had blocked its access to the sea. Florentine humanists and patriotic writers celebrated the conquest as the greatest military triumph in the history of the city,

Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections, ed. J. Hankins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 105–142.

[2] Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966); Eugenio Garin, *Italian Humanism: Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975). For a more extensive discussion of the recent scholarship on Florentine republicanism, see Hörnqvist, *Machiavelli and Empire*, pp. 41–44. See also the essays collected in *Renaissance Civic Humanism*.

[3] See, for example, *Images of Quattrocento Florence: Selected Writings in Literature, History, and Art*, ed. S. U. Baldassarri and A. Saiber (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 73, 300.

and Leonardo Bruni, the humanist and future chancellor, later compared it to Rome's triumph over Carthage.

Inspired by the example of the ancient Roman republic, most Florentine humanists of the early fifteenth century refused to view liberty and empire as contradictory values or pursuits. Instead, they subscribed to the idea that the republic had two ends – one internal, centered on the classical concept of liberty (*libertas*), and one external, aspiring to acquisition of dominion (*imperium*), material goods, greatness, and glory. Prompted by this observation, I have opposed the one-sided characterization of Florentine republicanism as more or less exclusively devoted to liberty, endorsed by Baron, Skinner, and Viroli, arguing that it instead draws on two different but related vocabularies, one internal and liberty oriented and the other external or imperialist. While the language of liberty includes notions such as civic peace (*pace*), concord (*concordia*), security (*sicurtà*), rule of law, equality (*equalità* or *civile equalità*), order (*ordine*), citizenship and the rights of the citizen, and various expressions designating the republican way of life (*vivere politico*, *vivere civile*, *vivere libero*, etc.), the vocabulary of empire is made up of terms that connote growth, greatness (*grandezza*), expansion, acquisition (*lo acquistare*), riches (*ricchezze*), territorial gain, honor (*onore*), dignity (*dignitas*), reputation (*riputazione*), triumph (*trionfo*), fame (*fama*), and glory (*gloria*). These two vocabularies are distinct and based upon different sets of values, perhaps even different views of human nature, but within the overarching framework of Roman republicanism, they are inextricably connected and, in a sense, complementary. Together they constitute the nerve center of the healthy republic so that when one of the categories is neglected, the other is bound to suffer as well, with corruption and tyranny as a result. It therefore becomes paramount to devise a conceptual formula capable of balancing liberty and empire and to develop strategies and policies allowing the republic simultaneously to pursue its two aims.

As attentive students of classical political theory are bound to have noticed, I have in the preceding account omitted one of the most important concepts in the republican tradition: the virtue of justice. If we were to follow the prevailing tendency in recent scholarship, we would remedy this oversight by simply placing justice on the side of liberty, regarding it as one of the distinctive qualities contributing to the preservation of the republic.[4] This chapter will take issue with this view, arguing instead that

[4] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), I, p. 123: "The 'civic' humanists, as well as the

justice, by participating in both vocabularies, being intimately associated with empire as well as with liberty, constitutes an important link between the two concepts, the two vocabularies, and the two aims underlying Florentine republicanism. This argument will prompt us to pose the question of why Machiavelli, who wholeheartedly subscribed to the republican credo of liberty at home and empire abroad, did not also embrace the view of justice as the overarching principle holding these two contrary aims together. As I hope to show, Machiavelli's relative silence on justice in his theoretical works should not be seen as an outright rejection of the concept, but instead should be regarded as part of a radical, but never explicitly stated, redefinition of the role of justice within, or in relation to, the republican project.

The importance that civic humanists and Florentine republican writers in general attached to justice can hardly be exaggerated. Drawing on classical sources, especially Aristotle and Cicero, they saw justice generally as the chief among the civic virtues, the foundation of the *vivere civile*, and the bond that held the republic together. According to the humanist Chancellor Coluccio Salutati, justice embraces all the other virtues and serves "an almost divine end," since it contributes to the edification and utility not just of the individual but of all citizens.[5] Comparing the city that lives without justice to a band of thieves, Salutati claims that justice is the virtue that maintains peace and allows human society to thrive.[6] In his *Laudatio florentinae urbis* (c. 1404), Leonardo Bruni declares that justice is observed and "held most sacred" in the Florentine republic and that it is for this reason that Florence has the right to call itself a city, for, as he lays down, "without justice there can be no city."[7] Throughout his career Bruni continued to hold the Aristotelian and Ciceronian view of justice as the

authors of advice-books for podestà and city magistrates, had all committed themselves to the claim that the preservation of liberty and justice must be taken to constitute the main values in political life." See also Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250–1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 16–69.

[5] Quoted from Daniela De Rosa, *Coluccio Salutati: Il cancelliere e il pensatore politico* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1980), p. 114: "La giustizia delle leggi, abbracciando ogni virtù, è destinata ad un fine quasi divino, non al bene di un solo, ma alla edificazione ed alla utilità di tutti."

[6] Ibid., p. 111: "Essa soltanto permette la sussistenza della società umana, crea le condizioni adatte al mantenimento della pace, vendica i delitti e remunera l'onestà"; ibid.: "Che cosa sono le città prive di giustizia se non grandissime bande di ladroni?"

[7] Leonardo Bruni, "Panegyric to the City of Florence," trans. B. G. Kohl, in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanist on Government and Society*, ed. B. G. Kohl and R. G. Witt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), pp. 135–175, at p. 169.