

Machiavellis rationalization

Philosophy



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Teacher There are a number of things for which princes can be either praised or blamed Machiavelli s. He also argues that since princes are men as well, they can not possibly attain complete goodness. Thus, they should not even bother to aim for such a thing. Instead they should only work out such a scheme which allows them to highlight their virtues and simultaneously sideline their flaws. But though the Machiavellian argument supports blind throne domination in authority, it has its own drawbacks; it fails to account for the repercussions one faces for indulging in vices for the sake of remaining in power.

Machiavelli's rationalization is deeply flawed. He argues that rulers should do all to maintain his power and what is most desirable is for them to indulge in vice. Further, He assumes that a ruler who adheres to the 'cult of personality' will escape all consequences of his actions. His is not a fool proof plan. Vice is not the key to power and authority and clandestine motives do not remain so indefinitely.

For one, the argument is that there is a difference between the real and the ideal. The Machiavellian ruler is aware of this discrepancy and does his/her best to make the best of both ends. They must know how to be good but also how not to be good. But what of the consequences of not being genuinely good? If this were really the case and such rulers lived in the world of real, then the truth of apparent consequences should also be realized by them. All actions have consequences. And there is a price to pay even for bad things done with the intention of good. Even if the people can not rebel, that does not necessarily mean that there is nothing to fear. Countless beloved leaders have even been assassinated throughout history such as Abraham Lincoln, King Faisal, and Benazir Bhutto to name a few. This sort of approach to <https://assignbuster.com/machiavellis-rationalization/>

responsibility fosters a false sense of contentment. Despotism is eventually disposed of, either by their own people or foreign governments. Some resort to suicide, as did Hitler, but for sure the outcome is not good. Twentieth century dictators are a good example of this, the best example being Saddam Hussein, whose public execution sums up the outcome of power hungry rulers.

Further, the 'shrewd Prince' must put on a public air of goodness, while maintaining a power structure which enables him/her to do as they like. This is in reality nothing more than a public face, a persona which the ruler needs to adopt in order to stay in power. It is proposed that that which seems as vice is actually helpful and that which is deemed good would cause the prince to lose rulership. This is obviously not the case. If listening to the people and pleasing them is considered 'good', it would be best for a ruler to indulge in this activity often. But if the ruler need only show that he/she is free of vice and not truly be so, this is a very difficult façade to keep up. Eventually the truth would come out and the image that the ruler in question worked so hard to keep untarnished would suffer deeply. Besides from questioning integrity, this would also lead to questions of the ruler's capability of being in power. Authoritarian rulers like Stalin of Russia and Mussolini in Italy employed these tactics. However both of them were eventually exposed and removed.

In short, for a ruler to be free of blame and constantly praised, the ruler must realize that this just can not be. In realizing this, Machiavelli is correct. Reputation is an important part of a ruler's identity. But it can not be constantly held up as 'good' under a layering of falsehoods in the public

eye. Some honest compromises must be made. No ruler can truly remain an angel and nor should one expect to be understood as one.