

Points of machiavelli in the prince

Profession, Writer



Part 15 of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, entitled *Of the Things for Which Men, and Especially Princes, Are Praised or Blamed*, states that, in order for a man to maintain control of a government and better that territory, he must engage in certain actions that may be deemed immoral by the public he serves.

Machiavelli argues a valid point, that the nature of man is twofold, encompassing good and evil, right and wrong. The effectiveness of his argument, however, relies on the fact that the person reading his essay is an objective observer of human nature.

Not leaving this to chance, Machiavelli plays a psychological game with the reader in order to convince them of his argument. Machiavelli prefaces his thesis with commentary that attempts to place the reader in a subordinate state-of-mind. He confesses to the reader that he fears sounding presumptuous for writing about a subject covered many times before by others and differing from their opinion in the matter. This statement places the author at the mercy of the reader and prepares them to hear an idea that may not be popular.

Having been asked forgiveness for the pride of the author, the reader drops barriers that he may have against arguments driven by ego and opens his mind to Machiavelli on a personal, sincere level. By placing himself at the feet of the reader, Machiavelli puts himself and his argument in a position of power. He wastes no time in using this power to gain more control over the reader. In the next sentence he states that his intention is to create an outline for behavior in public office "of use to those who understand".

This statement compels the reader to agree with the points that the trustworthy, forthright Machiavelli argues, or be relegated to the ranks of those ignorant dullards that do not understand. Machiavelli then presents his thesis, that a ruler must use both good and evil in order to maintain his power over the state. The reader has almost no choice but to accept this idea before any proof has been given. With the reader in the palm of his hand, Machiavelli needs only to make a very general argument of his point to convince the reader of its validity.

The author states that there are actions for which a prince is either praised or blamed. He lists many examples of good qualities and their opposing attitudes. Instead of labeling them good and evil, however, Machiavelli titles them imaginary and real. By calling the good traits and the leader who possesses them imaginary, he removes the bite that the mention of evil doing may have on the reader. Removing this emotional punch makes his thesis, that evil behavior is necessary to properly rule, obvious. Machiavelli applies the rules he sets out for successful management of a nation to his own writing.

He is cautious not to offend the reader with a statement that is too specific. He manipulates the mind of the reader in order to quell his emotions and make him more accepting of his opinion. He seems weak when he is most powerful and seems powerful when he has no legs to stand on. He is cautious and polite when his foe's defenses are up and attacks with all of his resources at his foe's weaknesses. Machiavelli writes a strongly convincing essay. The proof for his opinion lies not only in the words he speaks but in the flow and

believability of the work itself through the utilization of the very techniques he exhorts.