



Machiavelli's Secret: The Soul of the Statesman

Raymond Angelo Belliotti

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Uncovers clues regarding the inner life of Machiavelli's political leaders.

The political statesman, Machiavelli tells us, must love his country more than his own soul. Political leaders must often transgress clear moral principles, using means that are typically wrong, even horrifying. What sort of inner life does a leader who “uses evil well” experience and endure? The conventional view held by most scholars is that a Machiavellian statesman lacks any “inwardness” because Machiavelli did not delve into the state of mind one might find in a politician with “dirty hands.” While such a leader would bask in his glory, the argument goes, we can only wonder at the condition of the soul they have presumably risked in discharging their duties. In *Machiavelli's Secret*, Raymond Angelo Belliotti uncovers a range of clues in Machiavelli's writings that, when pieced together, reveal that the Machiavellian hero most certainly has “inwardness” and is surely deeply affected by the evil means he must sometimes employ. Belliotti not only reveals the nature of this internal condition, but also provides a springboard for the possibility of Machiavelli's ideal statesman.

“Belliotti identifies an important cluster of philosophical problems, including the extent to which statesman should bend the moral rules for the collective good and what implications such decisions might have for the statesman. Moreover, using Machiavelli to tie together this discussion both illustrates the timeless quality of the problem and provides a fresh way of thinking about the problem. The book nicely demonstrates the ways that contemporary philosophers can benefit from knowing more about history and also how historians can make use of contemporary discussions.” — John Draeger, State University of New York College at Buffalo

Raymond Angelo Belliotti is SUNY Distinguished Teaching Professor of Philosophy at the State University of New York at Fredonia. He is the author of several books, including *Jesus or Nietzsche: How Should We Live Our Lives?* and *Jesus the Radical: The Parables and Modern Morality*.

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