

---

## The Qualities of the Prince: Rhetorical Strategies

Many writers create a book to influence a particular audience and to accomplish this, they use different rhetorical methods to persuade. "The Qualities of the Prince" written by Niccolò Machiavelli discusses the qualities he believes a prince should have to be a strong leader. Some qualities a prince should have been is to be love, fear, hate, and use cruelty to get the best outcome. Machiavelli intended to write this novel towards the Medicis to save Italy from being controlled from France and Spain. This guide can be used today because it can be pass along from leader to leader. Throughout the novel, Machiavelli uses rhetorical methods such as logos, ethos, and aphorism to get his message across.

Logos is in every section in "The Qualities of the Prince" he gives advice and then ends it with what he concludes or what he can take away from what past leaders have done. He is being brief and straight to the point. The use of logos helps his argument because he gives facts but also 'his' opinions. Machiavelli uses induction. He identifies negative and positive patterns that past leader have done. "Francesco Sforza became Duke of Milan from being a private citizen because he was armed; his sons, since they avoided the inconveniences of arms, became private citizens after having been Dukes,' (86). This passage shows the reader the advice that Machiavelli knows what he says due to the actions of Francesco and is saying Francesco would fight, but his sons would not, and that can cause losing power. He also says a leader should be feared rather loved. He notices a leader who is known to be cruel and has a strong well rounded army is respected by people and wonever turn their back on their own. He uses Hannibal for example "-having a very large army, made up of all kinds of men, which ther among themselves nor against their prince, both during his good and his bad fortune," (92) unlike Scipio, who was "remarkable man during his time and all recorded history" (93) but his army went against him because he was not very well respected. Machiavelli says "I conclude, therefore, returning the problem of being feared and loved, that since men love at their own pleasure and fear at the pleasure of the prince, a wise prince should build his foundation upon that which belongs to him, not upon that which belongs to others: he must strive only to avoid hatred, as has been said" (93), it shows he is stating his personal opinion along with other past leaders actions to back up his claim.

In addition, Machiavelli uses ethos to establish his credibility, which we can conclude that he is a trustworthy person and he acknowledges opposing viewpoints without being biased. The use of historical precedents to other leaders such as Alexander the Great, Caesar, Scipio, and Cyrus makes him look he knows what he is talking about and is educated since the "Qualities of the Prince" is a guide about what leaders should do, and their qualities they must have. One of the examples of ethos presented is in this passage "-for with a very few examples of cruelty he will be more compassionate than those who, out of excessive mercy, permit disorders to continue, from at large, while the executions that come from the prince harm one individual in particular"(91), he knows a leader can't be harsh all the time, so he points out the other side which is being merciful at times. Cesare Borgia is a leader he mentions to give us an example of someone who was considered cruel but was merciful. It worked for Cesare because it created peace for his country. Another example is "I know that everyone will admit that it would be very praise worthy thing to find in a prince, of the qualities mentioned above, those that are held to be good, but since it neither possible to have them nor to observe them all completely because

---

human nature does not permit it”(89), this shows that Machiavelli is giving guidance for leaders but recognizes a person can't have all the qualities.

Along with the other methods, aphorism is used in his argument. Aphorism is the accepted truth. If it's delivered in particular way they can gain acceptance even when it might not be the truth. He wants to tell us the truth even when it can come across in a harsh way and not the imaginable truth we make up, “it seemed more suitable to me to search after the effectual truth of the matter rather than the imagined one”(88). This passage “and if men were all good, this rule would not be good; but since men are a sorry lot and will not keep their promise to you, you likewise need not keep yours to them”(94)

eduzaurus.com