

Words Poorly Used #13 — Machiavellian (Update)

OK, I stand corrected. Niccolo Machiavelli is not the culprit here. Although I still have a bit of a bone to pick with him as a court hanger-on, a minion of the ruling class. One of my greatest creative heroes, it's true, also lived as a courtier, but Mozart did not advise on affairs of state, nor the behaviors of statist

My actual complaint is toward the Machiavellites who have used Niccolo's views as cherry-picked justification for doing damage in service of self-promotion. A reliable philosopher-friend tells me that M. used irony far more than flattery, and that he wrote for the ages not for the day.

The term, "Machiavellian," however is an excellent example of how some words have all the depth flattened out of them in general usage. If one ever says something is "Machiavellian," then one is obliged to support that with an extended demonstration of how so. Seldom is that the case.

Kilgore.