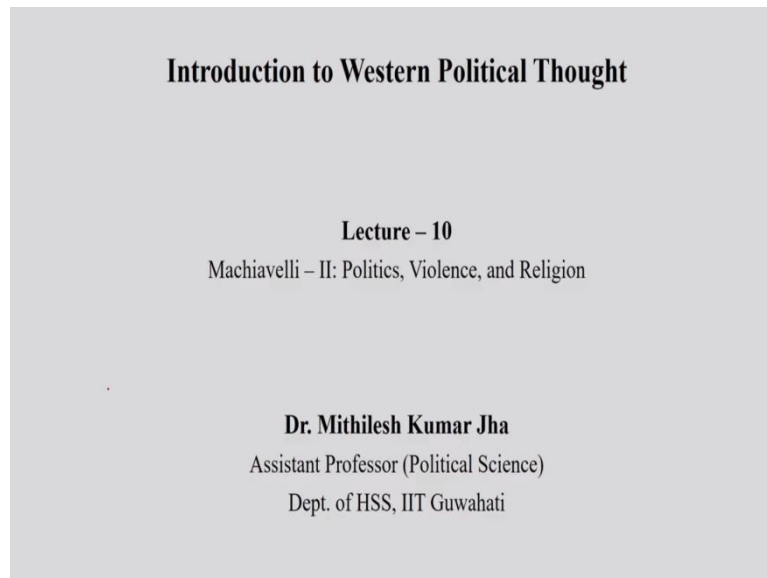


Introduction to Western Political Thought
Professor Mithilesh Kumar Jha
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati
Lecture No. 10
Machiavelli- II: Politics, Violence and Religion

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Hello and welcome friends. This is the second lecture on Machiavelli. Today, we are going to focus on his advice to the prince. The main focus of today's lecture would be his advice to the prince based on the text which is widely read and based on the characterization of Machiavelli as a theorist who justified immoral treacherous actions in politics.

So, today's lecture will be focused on the prince, the advice that he gave to the prince, and how to rule the principality or polity effectively. How to preserve and defend them, given the fact that the men are treacherous, wicked, and evil. Thus, given this understanding of human nature or the prevalence of evil all around. Then how to establish a rule and to govern them effectively is the central concern of defends.

In the previous lecture, we looked at Machiavelli in the political and intellectual context, where there was a kind of shift away from the religious thinking or Christian ideology of politics as impermanent and imperfect to the transcendental which is religious and men should submit to the will of God.

So, in Machiavelli, there was a decisive shift and citizens of politics in an autonomous domain with its own set of morality and ethics. We have also discussed how he defined Virtù

and how Fortuna played a decisive role in human affairs even when human beings or rulers are having the necessary Virtù to rule the polity or principalities.

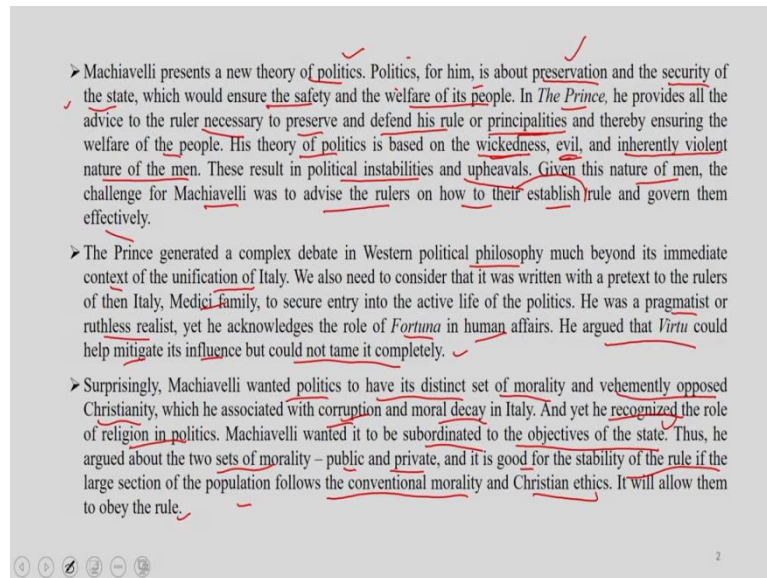
Machiavelli's conception of Virtù was different from Christian ethics, virtues, or Greco-Roman understanding of virtuous action. Machiavelli defined it in a more ethical neutral or morally neutral sense, where it required the ability to know the moment and what should be the appropriate action to respond to that particular moment. And that requires a ruler to be bold, to have temperance or the necessary foresight to intuitively understand the exact nature of the moment and then respond to that accordingly.

It is a kind of value-neutral understanding of Virtù that gives the ruler to limit the influence or decisive role that Fortuna played in human affairs. The other half would be the rule of Fortuna and the other half would be the Virtù that the Prince or the ruler can develop or inculcate in the citizen. This we have discussed in the previous lecture.

In the concluding lecture, we will focus more on his idea of Republicanism or how to rule a republic. How citizens can play a decisive role in governing the city-state by developing what he calls civic virtù. That is based on his text *Discourses*. We will conclude Machiavelli's contribution to political thought and political theorization in the western tradition.

Today, our focus is mainly on his text, *The Prince*, and the advice he gave the prince to rule the principality more effectively given the nature of human beings who were treacherous, evil, and sinful.

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- Machiavelli presents a new theory of politics. Politics, for him, is about preservation and the security of the state, which would ensure the safety and the welfare of its people. In *The Prince*, he provides all the advice to the ruler necessary to preserve and defend his rule or principalities and thereby ensuring the welfare of the people. His theory of politics is based on the wickedness, evil, and inherently violent nature of the men. These result in political instabilities and upheavals. Given this nature of men, the challenge for Machiavelli was to advise the rulers on how to their establish rule and govern them effectively.
- *The Prince* generated a complex debate in Western political philosophy much beyond its immediate context of the unification of Italy. We also need to consider that it was written with a pretext to the rulers of then Italy, Medici family, to secure entry into the active life of the politics. He was a pragmatist or ruthless realist, yet he acknowledges the role of *Fortuna* in human affairs. He argued that *Virtu* could help mitigate its influence but could not tame it completely.
- Surprisingly, Machiavelli wanted politics to have its distinct set of morality and vehemently opposed Christianity, which he associated with corruption and moral decay in Italy. And yet he recognized the role of religion in politics. Machiavelli wanted it to be subordinated to the objectives of the state. Thus, he argued about the two sets of morality – public and private, and it is good for the stability of the rule if the large section of the population follows the conventional morality and Christian ethics. It will allow them to obey the rule.

In Machiavelli, what we have is a kind of a new theory of politics. And politics for him is not about ethical or philosophical speculations and contemplation. But it is about basically the preservation and the security of the state. That we can understand by the historical context of Machiavelli, where there was a lot of instability, upheavals, or insecurities in the Republics of the Italian Peninsula. They were constantly subjected to external aggression by Spain or France and other states.

For Machiavelli, the main role of politics or knowledge of politics was the preservation and the security of the state which would ensure the safety and welfare of the people. The welfare and safety of the people were unimaginable without a secure state governed effectively. So, the role of politics for Machiavelli was to preserve the state, to defend the state, and to secure its order.

In *The Prince*, he provided all the advice to the ruler that was necessary to preserve and defend his principalities and thereby ensuring the welfare of the people. The welfare of the people was connected with the welfare or security of the state. The main concern for Machiavelli was to advise the ruler in statecraft where they could ensure the security of the state and thereby the welfare of the people. Thus, the security and welfare of the people were not disconnected from the security of the state.

In a secure state, human beings can live a safe life and their welfare can be secured. If the state is subjected to external aggression, automatically, the lives of the individual and their welfare are also subjected to those changes or instability.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli provided that advice which was necessary for the prince to rule their principalities effectively and defend it from the external aggression, the conspiracies within and thereby ensure the safety and welfare of the people. His theory of politics was based on the wickedness, evil, and inherently violent nature of the men. And this understanding of human nature was there in Christian ethics.

We have discussed how Saint Augustine or Thomas Aquinas argued that human nature is innately immoral or bad and on its own through their reason or intellect, they cannot achieve redemption. So, they must subject to the will of God.

Machiavelli shared that understanding of human nature as wicked, sinful, evil, and inherently violent which would result in political instabilities and upheavals. And the Italian cities or the principalities were constantly subjected to such kind of political instabilities and upheavals. When Machiavelli's personal life was also suffered or influenced by such political instabilities. He based his theories or advised the prince based on human nature that is wicked, evil, or inherently violence.

And of course, he did not go into the details of human nature as we find in Hobbs and other thinkers. His prime concern was not to define what is good or bad for the individual, but how to ensure the security of the state and preservation of the rule. And once, the security and preservation of the rule are maintained, the human being's life and their welfare can also be secured.

The primary concern for Machiavelli was the preservation of the state and its defense. So, given this nature of the men, the challenge for Machiavelli was therefore to advise the rulers, how to establish their rule, and govern them effectively. That was their major concern of Machiavelli.

The Prince generated a complex debate in western political tradition or political philosophy which was much beyond the immediate context in which this text was written. In *The Prince*, Machiavelli also expressed his patriotism to unify Italy and bring back the classical Roman Republican form of government. The immediate context of writing *The Prince* was the unification of Italy. And we have to take into account that with *The Prince*. Machiavelli was trying to rejoin the active life of politics.

He regarded the writing or philosophical speculation as subordinated to the active life in politics. And he wrote this text, *The Prince*, and dedicated it to the young prince of Medici

family, the former ruler of Italy who returned after the upheavals or external aggression with the support of the Pope, the Spanish monarchy, and the young prince, Lorenzo. He wrote this text and dedicated it to him with the hope that it would allow him to re-enter politics. So, the new ruler of Italy would grant him the opportunity to rejoin the active politics of Florence or Italy.

This text was written in the immediate context of Italian politics and the real pragmatic politics that Machiavelli had earlier experienced and wanted to rejoin. However, in the western political thinking and theorization, such immediate context was not taken seriously as his imagination or characterization as a theorist of evil. The brand of Machiavellian politics was associated with the treacherous life or anything immoral, unethical, treacherous, or dubious, and many tyrants or politicians drew lessons from this text,

The Prince out of its context in which it was written, where there was constant warfare between different principalities. There were political instabilities and upheavals in that context. Machiavelli was trying to create an order or establish a rule and govern them effectively. So, who is going to do that? And what is the necessary advice to rule that principality effectively was the concern of Machiavelli which he expressed in this text.

When we theorize or interpret this text, we need to keep into consideration the context in which it was written often taken out of context. And then, we characterize Machiavelli with everything dubious, evil, and immoral. He was a pragmatist and ruthless realist, and yet he acknowledged the rule of Fortuna in human affairs. He argued that Virtù could help mitigate its influence or stating influence. But could not tame it completely.

This point we had discussed earlier that the Fortuna would play a decisive role in the fate of human affairs or human life or the life of a ruler. No matter how much Virtù or how much courageous or foresight a king or ruler is, the Fortuna would have its role to play. And how it plays, we have discussed in the previous lectures.

Here, one has to understand that despite being a pragmatist or a realist thinker, Machiavelli acknowledged the role of Fortuna or how Virtù could limit the role of Fortuna. Yet the Fortuna would decide the fate of the ruler, and the fate of principalities. And that is the kind of circular understanding of human nature or polity or government.

Machiavelli had acknowledged the role of Fortuna as well. And we will see today, in the lecture, how he also acknowledged the role of religion in governing the city effectively.

Surprisingly, Machiavelli wanted politics to have its distinct set of morality and mentally opposed Christianity which was associated with corruption and moral decay in Italy.

So, everything that was immoral or corrupted for Italian life, he associated with Christianity. And as we have discussed in his political and intellectual context that the Christian ethics or Christian morality did not provide enough motivation for the subject or for the ruler to govern their principality effectively. It was the moral or political degeneration all around that resulted in the fragmentation of polity or republics.

The reason for that was the inability of Christian ethics or morality to provide enough motivation to the rulers. There was a kind of all-around moral political corruption and degeneration which Machiavelli associated with the catholic church or Christianity. And yet he recognized the role of religion in politics.

And he, thereby, understood the political role of religion as not something which was good in itself or which gives the absolute truth to the individuals or seeker as Christianity believed. But for Machiavelli, it had a role in politics. He wanted it to be subordinated to the objectives of the state.

Thus, a wise ruler must know how to use religion for political purposes and to ensure obedience among the masses. He argued about the two sets of morality that were public and private. It was good for the stability of rule if the large section of the population followed the conventional morality and Christian ethics. It would allow them to obey the rule and thereby in the sustenance of the kingdom.

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The Prince: How to retain and win the territories

- In *The Prince*, Machiavelli first makes a distinction between principalities and republics. He discussed the republican form of government in *Discourses*, which we will discuss in the next lecture. The Prince deals with different kinds of principalities and how to secure them and govern them effectively. First, he set out to describe different types of principalities. The examples he provides are – hereditary principalities, mixed principalities, new principalities, civic principality, ecclesiastical principalities. He argues that there is greater scope for glory for the new prince than the existing or hereditary prince.
- The single-most concern for Machiavelli in *The Prince* is to not take a moral-ethical position on the nature of the polity – ideal or perverted as it is there in Aristotelian classifications of constitutions. His stance is moral and ethically neutral, and his concern is entirely focused on the preservation and sustenance of the existing principalities. In the concluding chapter of the text, Machiavelli's Florentine patriotism becomes much more clear where he advises the future prince on how to unify Italy and reestablish the glory of the classical roman republic.

Knowledge of History

- According to Machiavelli, history provides 'a storehouse of great achievements to imitate, and a gallery of great men to emulate.' The knowledge of the past is necessary for a ruler to govern effectively. For a ruler to preserve his rule, it is critical to understand everchanging events in politics and to seize it by responding to them appropriately. Failing in this ability could be disastrous for the king and his kingdom.

In *The Prince*, Machiavelli first makes a distinction between different kinds of rules. And the two chief forms of ruling a city or polity were the principalities or a kind of monarchy where one person ruled the city effectively and the other was republics where the citizens through their senate or representative government governed the city. He discussed the republican form of government in *Discourses*, another text of Machiavelli which we would discuss in the next lecture.

In *The Prince*, he dealt with the different types of principalities, how to secure and govern them effectively was the major concern of this text, *The Prince*. First, he set out to describe different types of principalities that existed in the Italian peninsula. These were the hereditary principalities where the prince or monarchy inherited the rule from their fathers or forefathers.

Then there were mixed principalities where the combination of the monarchy aristocracy and the popular form of rule in the form of democracy or polyarchy or any other terms that might use for the popular form of government. There were principalities where one person was the ruler. But the effective rule was the combination of all the three elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.

There were new principalities and he focused more on the new principalities than hereditary, mixed, or other forms of principalities. And he preferred that the scope for glory and to achieve something really rewarding was more available to a new prince than the one who inherited or the one who was adjusting the rule of principalities. He added more premium to those who were new in the ruling.

And so, the other forms of principalities were the civic principality or the ecclesiastical principality which was like Papacy, the Pope ruled the principalities, where there was no effective rule. Nor does the population want to be governed effectively. And yet they obey the Pope or the Papacy who were least concerned about the effective governing and govern in the name of God or being representative of God.

There were different kinds of principalities. But he argued that there was a greater scope of glory for the new prince or new principalities. And in the rest of *The Prince*, he argued that how to acquire a new position or principalities and govern them effectively. And that is where he was somewhat different from other kinds of political thinkers in the western tradition, where he allowed political thinking and theorization, not based on inheritance or nobility of birth.

He wanted a ruler or the prince should be the man of the masses. That is to say that he gave an analogy of a painter. To have a proper perspective or coverage of different kinds of landscapes, a good painter should have the access to the top from where he or she could see below or the valley. And he should also have access to the valley. So that he could see the heights of the mountains.

He made a similar kind of advice to the prince, where he should be in a position to see things below. But also, he should live among the masses or people to know about the princes or actions of the princes. This analogy of a new prince or effective prince who could attain glory was something very unique in Machiavellian thought and imagination.

We will see later on that how he advised the prince to seek friendship among the masses, not with the novelty and aristocracy who would constantly conspire or set traps for him. So, for the sustenance of the rule or long term rule, he must seek friendship with the common masses.

Machiavelli argued that there was greater scope for glory to the new prince than the existing or the hereditary prince. And the single most concern, as I have told, for Machiavelli in *The Prince*, was not to take a moral-ethical position on the nature of polity. Unlike in Aristotle's classification of a state, where we have seen that how he characterized a constitution based on ideal type or perverted type.

And this classification of ideal and perverted was based on certain moral judgment or standards. The monarchy is ideal because it is in the interest of everyone, but tyranny is not,

because it is the interest of the ruler, so is the aristocracy, oligarchy, polity, and democracy. There is a kind of ethical or moral position in the classification of constitutions in Aristotle.

In contrast to that, Machiavelli did not take any moral-ethical position while describing what different kinds of principalities were there. His major concern was preserving the principalities and rule them effectively. And he considered the new prince more capable of ruling effectively than having the scope of achieving the glory, or the existing or hereditary ruler and certainly, the ecclesiastical principalities.

His stance was morally and ethically neutral. His concern was entirely focused on the preservation and sustenance of the existing principalities. In the concluding chapter, we will see that Machiavelli's Florentine patriotism becomes much more clear where he advises the future prince on how to unify Italy and re-establish the glory of the classical Roman republic.

That is the overall objective desire of Machiavelli in his advice to the prince or the future ruler who would unify Italy fragmented into different principalities that were at constant war with each other and the external forces interfered in matters of Italian city-states or governing the city-states.

Now, we will move on to understand what is the advice that Machiavelli gave to the prince. The first advice that he gave to the prince was that he should have the knowledge of history and Machiavelli understood the role of history in having the correct understanding of the situation and to respond to that. According to Machiavelli, history provided a storehouse of great achievements to imitate. It is a gallery of great men to emulate.

Thus, a prince must learn from history which was a storehouse of great achievements in the past and the great rulers. A prince in his governing or ruling the principalities learned lessons from the past and knowledge of the past was necessary for a ruler to govern effectively.

For a ruler to preserve his rule, it was critical to understand the ever-changing events in politics and to seize it by responding to them appropriately. It might seem commonsensical that a ruler should understand what was the situation or necessity in the given situation and how to effectively respond to that situation?

Now, in the political life of the national state even today, you will find that the leaders often fail to understand what is the situation, what is the demand of the situation, and how to respond to them effectively? So, as I have discussed in the previous lecture that for the human being and the rulers, it is easy to reflect upon the past and predict the future.

The toughest and hardest thing was to understand the present constantly at flux. And now, in such an ever-changing situation, the ruler must understand what exactly is the situation and how one should respond to them effectively. A ruler who understand the situation and how to understand that effectively becomes great.

They achieve glory for himself and his principalities. And if he or she fails, then it brings doom or calamities for them, for his rule and his principalities. So, it was necessary to understand the moment and to respond to them appropriately. And failing in this could be disastrous for the king and his kingdom.

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➤ The king or the ruler must know when to be kind or generous and when to be ruthless. These lessons he could learn only from the examples from the past rulers. Without that knowledge, a ruler is bound to fail in preserving his rule and defending the principalities. He despised the contemporary rulers in Italy for not caring about and learning lessons from the past. However, this interest in history is not like that of a historian's attention.

Knowledge of Warfare

➤ Machiavelli was well aware of the military weakness of Italy, which resulted in the internal fragmentation and warfare within and aggression from outside. He wanted the rulers to have both political as well as military *Virtu*. According to Machiavelli, it was the lack of military *Virtu* that Roman republics or principalities could not defend itself from the external aggressions. He writes that 'a ruler should have no other objective and no other concern, nor occupy himself with anything else except war and its methods and practice, for this pertains only to those who rule.'

➤ So he wanted the prince or the ruler to devote exclusively to warfare. His *Art of War* also provides the significance of military *Virtu* and warfare that Machiavelli associated with the preservation of the polity. He wanted the rulers to have their army and continuously seek to expand their territory. Such expansion of territory could be achieved through the help of others' army too. But without the military power, there is no defense for the rule. Through winning wars and gaining reaches alone, a prince could achieve glory and command respect from the people.

So, the king or ruler must know when to be kind or generous and when to be ruthless. So, in contrast to the Christian conventional morality or advice of the rulers like Cicero or the philosophers like Cicero that a ruler must be honest and truthful in all the contexts. Machiavelli advises the ruler to know when to be kind, generous, and ruthless.

For example, if a ruler is too generous with the people, then when there is a time of drought or a situation of scarcity, he will not have enough resources to be generous when the situation demands. He wanted the ruler to be economical and knowledgeable of when to become kind or generous and when to become ruthless. And again, this knowledge of determining or deciding when to become generous or kind comes from the understanding of history.

These lessons he could learn only from the examples of past rulers, where there are examples of many rulers ruining their empire or principalities because of their over generousness or over kindness which resulted in envy or conspiracies and upheavals from the aristocracy or

novelties. Thus, a ruler must know how to balance or behave generously in a particular situation and ruthlessly in other situations depending on the necessity or requirement of the situation.

So, there is no kind of a priory ethical or moral position for the ruler in the Machiavellian theory of politics. Without that knowledge of when to be generous and when to be ruthless, a ruler was bound to fail in preserving his rule and defending his principalities. He despised the contemporary rulers in Italy for not caring about and learning lessons from the past.

One of the criticisms that Machiavelli had about the rulers of his time as they were not knowledgeable in history and did not draw lessons from the history necessary for a ruler to govern his principalities effectively. However, this history in Machiavelli was not that of a historian's attention to detail or correction of the fact.

For him, the role of history for a ruler was to draw lessons to respond to the unfolding situation in the present and not to be concerned about the accuracy or correctness of the interpretation or facts of the history as that was the rule of historians. Now, the other advice that he gave to the prince was the knowledge of warfare. And military Virtù is something that is regarded as necessary for the effective rule of the principalities.

Machiavelli was well aware of the military weakness of Italy of his time which resulted in internal fragmentation and warfare within, and aggression from the external forces. So, the situation in Italy where Machiavelli was thinking or writing this text had constant warfare and political instabilities, or constant fighting within different principalities. Also, the interference from the external forces.

And on top of that, there was a Catholic church that was confined to their pleasures without really bothering about governing or ensuring the governing of the city. So, they were more about lavish life and enjoying the pleasure. There was corruption all around. And all the corruption and political-military degeneration of Italy. Therefore, Machiavelli was associated with the church. So, he regarded the military weakness as the reason for fragmentation and political instabilities in Italy. He wanted the rulers to have both political as well as military Virtù.

According to Machiavelli, it was the lack of military Virtù that Roman republics or principalities could not defend itself from external aggression and internal warfare. So he writes that a ruler should have no other objective and no other concern, nor occupy himself

with anything else except war and its methods and practices, for this pertains only to those who rule.

For a ruler or a prince who cares about the effective rule, there should be no other concern than the warfare and how to prepare for the war. What is the effective method of conducting a war and winning them should be the only concern for the rulers? For a ruler concerned about the ruling, the only concern was constantly developing the military Virtù or military capability.

So, the warfare and he wrote a text called *Art of War* is necessary for the ruler to govern effectively. He advised the prince that he should derive pleasure in hunting. Because the hunting would develop his skill for warfare and killing. He wanted the prince or rulers to devote exclusively to warfare and his *Art of War* provided the significance of military Virtù and warfare that Machiavelli associated with the preservation of polities.

There could not be a proper defense of the existence of proper polities or principalities without the Army or military Virtù. He wanted rulers to have their Army in the auxiliaries or the citizen's army and continuously seek to expand their territories. The advice that he gave to the prince or future prince of Italy was to seek constant acquiring or conquering of the new territories to expand his rule and principalities.

And such expansion of territory could be achieved through the help of others' army too. But without the military power of one's own, there was no defense of the rule and principalities. So, it is through winning wars and gaining new territories and resources that a prince could aspire to achieve glory and command respect for the people.

What is necessary for the ruler to seek new territories, to expand one's principalities and military preparedness or the knowledge of warfare is the absolute necessity for the preservation of principalities and an expansion of territories.

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Lion and Fox

- Like Aristotle, animal kingdom and species did guide Machiavelli's understanding of men's political world. However, according to Machiavelli, to be successful, a prince must behave like particular animals – lion and fox. For Machiavelli, a lion is easily trapped but not a fox. Thus he advises the prince to combine the virtue of a lion by being bold, courageous, and ruthless with the virtue of a fox by being cunning or have the foresight to preempt the deceptions and traps set by others.
- For Machiavelli, a ruler or the prince 'must know how to act like a beast. He should imitate both the fox and the lion, for the lion is liable to be trapped, whereas the fox cannot ward off wolves. One needs, then, to be a fox to recognize traps and a lion to frighten away wolves'.
- Thus Machiavelli recognizes the presence of evil in the political life of the nation. He did not downplay or set aside its devastating consequences. And advise the king to learn the art of manipulation by being ruthless and having the knowledge to understand the traps set by others to rule or govern effectively. Men in politics are like wolves whom a prince could tackle by combining the virtue of a lion and fox. Political events are always in flux. So a king must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing circumstances to be successful.

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Now, the next advice he gave to the prince is to learn the virtue of lion and fox. So, it is similar to Aristotle's views on human nature which if you recall that he considered human beings as Zoon Politikon which means human beings are animals. But this animal is someone who wants to live in the community and has a rational faculty. It has a sense of moral justification and unjustness.

So, like Aristotle, animal kingdom and species did guide Machiavelli's understanding of men's political world which was full of treacherous or dubious actions and behaviors. Machiavelli regarded human beings and their collective lives through the analogy of animals. Life in the jungle or the animal kingdom. And he differed from Aristotle in the sense, he was not taking any moral or ethical position to judge human nature – good and bad, moral, ethical, rational, or irrational.

His only concern was how to preserve the polity, how to govern effectively, and to govern effectively also wanted the prince or ruler to learn from animal's behavior or Animals virtue or the characteristics. According to Machiavelli, to be successful, a prince must behave like a particular animal. That particular animals were the lion and the fox.

For Machiavelli, why a ruler or prince should imitate and learn from lion and fox was that a lion was easily trapped but not a fox. And a ruler must understand the trap with having the virtue of a fox. So, the fox because of the cunning behavior, foresight and intuitiveness were capable of protecting itself from the traps set by wolves and others.

Similarly, a ruler to effectively rule must know when trap or conspiracies were set for him by others. But he should have the virtue of a lion to effectively fight or have the military Virtù to fight in the open with enemies. He advised the prince to combine the virtue of a lion by being bold, courageous, and ruthless like a lion with the virtue of a fox by being cunning and have the foresight to preempt the deceptions and trap set by others.

The political instabilities and political ruling are also simultaneously about the presence of evils or the treacherous behavior of others. Now, for a ruler to preserve his rules, and to govern effectively must have the boldness, ruthlessness of the lion, and the foresight to preempt the conspiracies and traps set by others.

For Machiavelli, a ruler or a prince must know how to act like a beast or a lion. He should imitate both the fox and the lion, for the lion is liable to be trapped. So the lion is bold, assertive, ruthless but it can be trapped. But the fox is not bold, not ruthless but it is very difficult to trap a fox.

For Machiavelli, the ruler or prince should know how to act like a beast and he should imitate both the fox and the lion. Because the lion is liable to be trapped, whereas the fox cannot ward off wolves. One needs to be a fox to recognize traps and a lion to frighten away wolves. There is the kind of constant competitiveness or envy in the polity particularly from the Aristocrats and novelties who would constantly conspire against the ruler.

Now to rule effectively, a king or prince must behave ruthlessly and boldly. But he should be aware of the traps, conspiracies, and learn and imitate it from the fox. So, Machiavelli recognized the presence of evil in the political life of the nation. He did not downplay or set aside its devastating consequences. In other political philosophers, we find that they will not engage with the evil that is prevalent or exists in the society that is part of human nature. He wanted to engage with the evils and yet to ensure the order, and how to govern the principalities effectively.

That was the chief concern of Machiavelli. In that advice, he did not downplay or undermine the presence of evil that was there in society and human nature. And which has devastating consequences for the principalities. So, if a prince or the ruler was unaware of the traps and conspiracies, it would bring ruins to his rule or principalities.

So, advise the king to learn the art of manipulation by being ruthless and having the knowledge to understand the traps set by others to rule and govern effectively. So, men in

politics are like wolves whom a prince could tackle by combining the virtue of a lion or fox. The political events were always in flux and a king must be flexible enough to adapt to the changing circumstances to be successful.

The reason why he wanted the prince and rulers to be like a lion or fox to have the attributes or the virtue that combines the virtue of the lion or fox. So, this is to rule effectively. And to rule effectively is to understand the evils, the treacherous behaviors of others, and to respond to them effectively, one needs to have the virtue of the lion and also that of the fox.

This is also to do with the changing nature of the political life where there are the constant traps or conspiracies to the rulers or to the king set by the others, particularly those who are nobles and aristocrats who would always be envious of a prince. So, to respond to different situations and the necessity of different situations appropriately, a king must be flexible enough to know when to be ruthless and generous and to do that he needs to have the virtue of both lion and fox.

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Politics and violence

- According to Sheldon Wolin, Machiavelli is a theorist of the 'economy of violence' in the statecraft. Considering the wickedness of the men, Machiavelli regarded violence as inevitable and even justified to secure the state. However, such use of force must be reasonable.
- Machiavelli makes a difference between the appearance and the actual nature of the prince. He wanted the king to have the appearance of a loving and caring ruler than a ruthless one. It makes him trustworthy and commands obedience from the people. However, when the situation demands the prince or ruler to use violence ruthlessly, he should not hesitate. A king's action is judged not based on the means – moral and immoral that he deploy but the consequence it brings. So, according to Machiavelli, the good and glory of the state – in other words, the ends that justify the means.
- Machiavelli spends considerable time in *The Prince*, arguing that how generosity and kindness had ruined various rulers in the past. Thus he wanted the ruler to be loved by the people. However, in the long run, it is only good for the ruler and the principalities if he is feared than loved. So, according to Machiavelli, if a ruler has to choose between being loved or being feared, he should prefer to being feared than loved but should not be hated or despised by the people.

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The next is about the use of violence and according to Sheldon Wolin, Machiavelli is a theorist of the economy of violence. So, violence is necessary for effectively ruling and he wants the prince to be ruthless. In the statecraft, the Machiavellian theory is also regarded by Sheldon Wolin as the theorist of the economy of violence. Thus, considering the wickedness of men, Machiavelli regarded violence as inevitable and even justified to secure the state, to defend the state. Without violence, it is very difficult to rule effectively. However, such use of force must be reasonable or judicious.

In Machiavelli's theory, violence was not just for the sake of it. But it must serve certain political ends or for the preservation of the state. Machiavelli made a difference between the appearance and actual nature of the prince. He was the one regarded as the theorist of manipulation. And in politics, this art of manipulation was necessary for the success of the ruler or prince who wanted to govern effectively.

He wanted the king to have the appearance of a loving and caring ruler than a ruthless one. So, it is always good for the prince or a ruler to have the appearance that he or she is benevolent or caring for the people. But he should also be ruthless. However, the appearance of being trustworthy or being caring or loving is helpful for the ruler in the long term for the preservation of the state.

So, it makes him trustworthy and commands obedience from the people. However, when the situation demands the prince or ruler to use violence ruthlessly, he should not hesitate. And that is the necessary responsibility for a ruler to become caring or loving for the people if it helps him to preserve the state, to maintain the security of the state.

But if the situation demands him to behave ruthlessly or to use violence, he should not hesitate. So, a king's action, for Machiavelli is judged not based on the means whether it is moral or ethical that he deployed. But the consequences that it brought. Therefore, the famous dictum is said that ends justify the means.

According to Machiavelli, the good and glory of the state are what matters for a king. So, any action he does or not is just based on the consequences it brings and not based on the means he deploys. Thus, anything for the preservation of the state is justified in Machiavelli's thinking or theorization.

Machiavelli spends considerable time in *The Prince* arguing that how generosity and kindness ruined various rulers in the past. And thus, he wanted the future kings to be cautious about being generous and kind. And it better to be ruthless than kind and generous. Thus, he wanted the ruler to be loved by the people. However, in the long run, it is only good for the ruler and the principalities if he, there is the prince or ruler feared than loved.

According to Machiavelli, if a ruler has to choose between being loved or being feared, he should prefer to being feared than loved. But should not be hated or despised by the people. There is a kind of economy of violence as Sheldon Wolin said that first violence is necessary for ruling effectively.

Now, such deployment of violence is not justified for the sake of it. Only when it helps in the preservation of the state or welfare of the state, violence is justified. Now, a ruler must know the art of manipulation by appearing as loving and caring. Because it helps the citizen to have respect or trust in his rule and prevent rebellious activities. But it is good for a king, in the long term, to be feared. Or in other words, if he has to choose between loved ones and being feared, he should always choose feared than the loved ones.

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Politics and Religion

- Although Machiavelli argued for an independent and 'secular' sphere of politics, he also recognized the use of religion in preserving the state and binding the people together in obedience to prevent rebellions. Much of his discussion on religion is in *Discourses on Levi*; however, it also guides his arguments in *The Prince*.
- Strangely, he recognizes the value of religion, given his critic of Christianity and its pieties. Machiavelli associated the Catholic church with all the corrupt practices, and political and moral decay prevalent in Italy. He argued that Christianity teaches individuals otherworldliness, humility, and docile behaviour in the face of trouble, which resulted in the lack of necessary political and military *Virtu* to defend the republic. It was his tussle with the Church that resulted in enlisting of *The Prince* as prohibited literature by the Catholic church in 1559.
- Machiavelli argued about the two kinds of morality – public and private. The private lives of the citizen should be governed by conventional morality and Christian religious ethics. But it should not guide the action of the prince. Machiavelli writes that 'for when the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention should be paid either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious. On the contrary, every other consideration being set aside, that alternative should be wholeheartedly adopted, which will save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country'. Thus Machiavelli does not regard religion as a system of truth. Its values lie in the preservation of the state and serving its purpose. Hence, he wanted to subordinate the role of religion in politics.

Now, the final point that we are going to discuss in this lecture is his views of politics and religion and the role of religion in politics. Although, Machiavelli argued for an independent and secular sphere of politics, yet he was the first who said that morality and ethics that governed the political sphere should be different from morality and ethics that govern the conventional Christian lives.

So, Machiavelli argued for an independent and secular sphere of politics. But he also recognized the use of religion in preserving the state and binding the people together in obedience to prevent rebellions. For Machiavelli, religion could serve the purpose of the state in bringing the people together and then inculcate in them the value of obedience and thereby prevent any kind of rebellious activities or upheavals or threat to the existing rule and principalities.

Much of his discussion on religion is in *Discourses on Levi*. However, it guided his arguments in *The Prince*. So, strangely he recognized the value of religion, given his critic of Christianity and its priests. He was the ruthless critic of anything associated with the Catholic

Church. All the immoral activities or lavish life which resulted in the conspiracies or political instabilities in Italy. He associated it with the Catholic Church or the papacy.

Thus, considering his critic of Christianity and its pieties it is very strange that he acknowledged the role of religion in politics or the value of religion in politics. Machiavelli associated the Catholic church with all the corrupt practices, political and moral decay that was prevalent in Italy.

He argued that Christianity and its ethics teaches man or individuals to be otherworldly. They should not bother about their temporal or present life. And it also teaches them to be humble or docile in their behavior in the face of trouble. Because the otherworldly or life after death is more important than this life or present life.

So, such teachings or ethics in Christianity, according to Machiavelli resulted in the lack of necessary political and military Virtù among the citizens to defend the republic. The reason for the lack of necessary political and military Virtù which enabled the man to create a society or to govern it effectively was lacking. Because of Christian ethics or morality of being humble, thinking about the other world, or also being docile. And truthful to God.

In Machiavelli, there was a kind of writing of the Greek classical political if you like so, in Plato or Aristotle, what was the argument? The argument is that human beings through his reason or intellect could not only govern his life effectively. But also, the collective life of the city or community could be better governed through reason and rationality.

Before that, there was a reliance on natural forces or maybe mythological figures and forces. But the classical Greek political philosophers argued that human beings through their reason could govern themselves and their city-states. However, in Christianity with Saint Augustine or Thomas Aquinas, we have seen how they argued that it was not possible for the human being to lead a life truthfully only through the basis of reason.

Therefore, they must subject to the will of God or religion. Machiavelli again was bringing back the classical traits that human beings could through reason by developing the political and moral Virtù, govern the principalities effectively. The identification in Machiavelli was then the corrupting influence of Christianity and Christian ethics which makes human beings docile, weak, and subject to the will of God or circumstances.

Machiavelli wanted the human beings to develop the political and military Virtù, to master the circumstances, to control the circumstances, to govern the city effectively, and to bring

back glory which was humanly possible in contrast to the Christian ethics that it was not for the human being to live a life of redemption. It is only possible when God's willing and God grant redemption to the chosen few depending upon their ethical, honest, and moral behavior, and so on.

There was a kind of tussle between Machiavelli and ethics or understanding of human nature and the church. This resulted in the banning or prohibiting of his text, *The Prince* in 1559. So, the Catholic church prohibited the reading of *The Prince* in 1559. He wrote this text in 1513, it was published after his death in 1527, in 1531 or 32. And in 1559, the church banned this text and much of the Machiavellian crude caricaturing of politics was based on this negative understanding of the text.

Machiavelli argued about the role of religion. But not in the sense of a kind of system of truth that is provided. But a political purpose, it could serve. So, Machiavelli argued about the two kinds of morality which were public and private morality, and the private lives of the citizens would be governed by conventional morality and Christian religious ethics.

In the private life of the citizen, the conventional morality and Christian religious ethics were necessary even desirable for the sustenance. But it should not guide the action of the prince. And Machiavelli wrote that this was very important in Machiavelli's take on religion and how a prince should not subject himself or his actions to the dictates of religion.

He wrote that for when the safety of one's country wholly depends on the decision to be taken, no attention to be paid, either to justice or injustice, to kindness or cruelty, or to its being praiseworthy or ignominious. On the contrary, every other consideration being set aside that alternative should be wholeheartedly adopted which would save the life and preserve the freedom of one's country. So, the central or the major task for a ruler or prince is to preserve the country and thereby defend the freedom of its people.

Now, in defending the country and preserving the freedom of its people, a ruler should use religion if it helps in such preservation and defending the freedom of the people. However, in acting upon those decisions, he should not be guided by the justness or unjustness, cruelty, or the kindness or the praiseworthiness of his action or its moral repugnant nature. The only consideration is preservation. Thus, that is moral or immoral, kind or cruel, praiseworthy, or ignominious.

A ruler must only take those actions which help in the preservation of the state and defense of the freedom of the country. Thus, Machiavelli did not regard religion as a system of truth. Its value lies in the preservation of the state and serving its purpose. Hence, he wanted to subordinate the role of religion in politics. There is this subordinate rule for the religion in politics to serve the preservation of the state.

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➤ Machiavelli spent considerable time in the prince on 'cruelty and mercy: is it better to be loved than feared, or the reverse' (Ch. 17). His answer is unambiguous – 'a prince, to hold his position, must acquire the power to be not good, and understand when to use it and when not to use it.'

➤ Although Machiavelli advice the prince to deploy all the means – moral or immoral to defend the principalities. He advised the ruler not to make the common people his enemy. In comparison to aristocrats or nobility who are prone to conspire against him, the prince should seek friendship with the common people in the long run. The nobles or aristocracy may betray or deceive the king, but the citizens would keep him in exalted high esteem and respect him truly. He could not be secured if the people are his enemy. So in his deployment of violence, which, according to Machiavelli, is necessary and even justified, the prince should consider that he should be feared but not despised or hated by the people.

➤ Machiavelli's political theory thus acknowledges the existence of evil and wickedness of men. Machiavellian brand of politics is often associated with treachery, dubiousness, immoral activities. However, he justified these means, not for their own sake but to establish and maintain order or peace in the polity that would allow the people to live a secure life. How to establish a rule with the autonomy of politics, in which human beings can live peacefully, is the central concern of Machiavelli's political theory.

Machiavelli spent considerable time in *The Prince* on cruelty and mercy as it was better to be loved than feared or the reverse. So, Machiavelli's treatise on politics on whether it is good or desirable for the prince to be kind or cruel. He spent considerable time in chapter 17 to answer this question. It was the unambiguous response that we find in Machiavelli when he said that a prince, to hold his position must acquire the power to be not good and understand when to use it and when not to use it.

And the whole Virtù was dependent on this understanding for a ruler or the prince when to become kind or cruel. And it is necessary or even justified to be feared or cruel than being kind or generous. Because the task of a ruler or prince is to the preservation of the state. And the preservation of the state alone can ensure the freedom of the people and their welfare.

So, the only thing that should bother or concern the ruler is the preservation of the state and in preserving the state, all moral, immoral, just, unjust, kind, or cruel action is justified. Although Machiavelli advised the prince to deploy all the means, moral or immoral to defend the principalities.

He advised the ruler not to make the common people his enemy. And that is his advice to the prince. That the prince should not make the common people his enemy. If the common people are his enemy, it would be a threat to his rule in the long term. In comparison to aristocrats or nobility who were prone to conspiracies against him, that is the ruler. The prince should seek friendship with the common people in the long run. And that is the advice which is unique in Machiavelli which you do not find in others.

In conventional understanding, there was nothing to be learned from the common people and in fact, the platonic idea if you think of mobocracy or democracy as the perverted form. Because the multitude does not know what is good or desirable and they are not trustworthy.

Here in Machiavelli, you will find that he advised the prince to seek friendship from the common people than the Aristocrats and the nobility which was constantly envious or involved in the conspiracies against the ruler. The reason being the aristocrats and the novelties often treated the ruler as one among them. And constantly envy the exalted position that the king or the prince enjoyed.

However, the masses would see him in the exalted position, respected him, and defended his principalities if it ensued their welfare. Therefore, he advised the king not to take the property from the people and expand the territories through winning the war. And not by extracting revenues or resources from their people.

The nobles or aristocracy might betray or deceive the king. But the citizens would keep him in exalted high esteem and respect him truly. Therefore, a prince must seek friendship with the people in the long run rather than nobility and the aristocrats. He could not be secured if the people are his enemy. There is a kind of ethical sense that a ruthless ruler was desirable or justified so long as this ruthlessness was for the preservation of the state and the defense of the state.

What if he is hated by the people or despised by the people? It would lead to upheavals, rebellions and a ruler or prince must know that it is good to be ruthless. But it is not good, not desirable to be despised and hated by the people. He should not make the people enemy. That is the advice that he gave. In his deployment of violence, according to Machiavelli is necessary and even justified. The prince should consider that he should be feared but not despised or hated by the people. That was the advice that he gave to the prince.

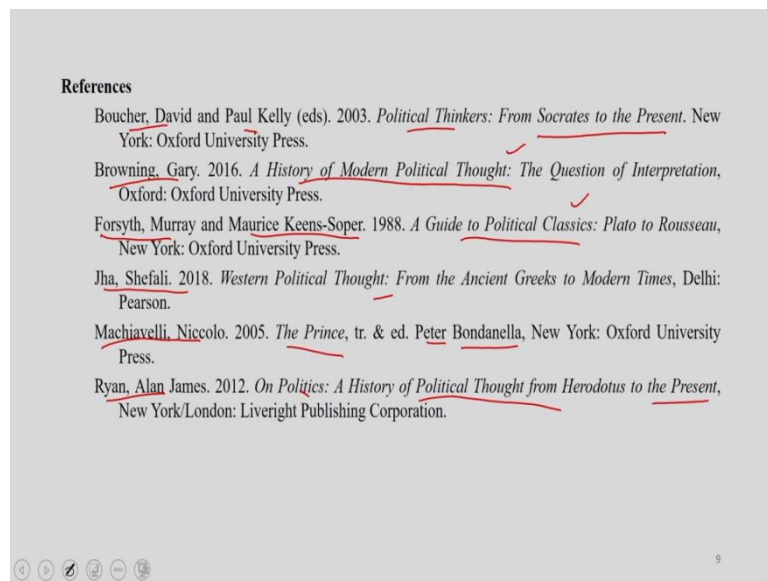
Machiavelli's political theory, if we conclude, is a theory that acknowledges the existence of evil and wickedness of men. And the Machiavellian brand of politics was often associated with treachery, dubiousness, or immoral activities. However, he justified these means, not for their own sake. But to establish and maintain order or peace in the polity that would allow the people to live a secure life.

So, all the negative connotations that we associate with Machiavellian politics were justified by Machiavelli, not for their own sake. But so long as it helps the ruler to preserve his rule and govern the principalities effectively. How to establish a rule with the autonomy of politics in which human beings could live peacefully was the central concern of Machiavellian political theory in which human beings could live a peaceful life. It was possible when a prosperous life was possible and the ruling was done by the effective ruler.

With the knowledge of what to do and when. And this knowledge of what to do when for the preservation of the state was the central concern for Machiavelli. Even the immediate concern for him considering his desire or patriotism was to reunite the different republics or principalities in the Italian peninsula and bring back the Roman republican form of ruling or the glory that was there in the past.

Overall, the Machiavellian theory is about the preservation of the state, defense of the state, and that will lead to a peaceful, prosperous life for the people. And in preservation and defense of the state, therefore, all moral, ethical, just, unjust considerations should be set aside and everything should be done to preserve and protect the state. That is the basic moral or distinct, and unique understanding of morality or Virtù in Machiavellian thought or central concern of his political philosophy.

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That is all in today's lecture. The themes that we have covered, we can refer to, these texts like David Boucher and Paul Kelly's, *Political Thinkers from Socrates to the Present*. And Gary Browning's, *A History of Modern Political Thought* is also a good interpretation of Machiavelli. Murray Forsyth and Maurice Keens Soper's, *A Guide to Political Classics* is also a good text.

Similarly, Shefali Jha's, *Western Political Thought from the Ancient Greeks to Modern Times* is a good text to understand some of the themes that we have discussed today. You should also read this text, *The Prince* by Machiavelli, edited by Peter Bondanella, and published by Oxford University Press.

And this is a very thin text, less than 100 pages to understand for your thinking, or judgment, the advice that he gave to the prince and how far that applied to our present condition or to understand politics in our present time. So, this text you should refer to if you are interested to know about the Machiavellian advice which is less than 100 pages. It will give you enough scope to know the advice that Machiavelli gave to the prince.

And you can arrive at your understanding and your reading of Machiavelli. And so not be guided by the crude caricature understanding of the Machiavellian politics. And you should also refer to James Allan Ryan's, *On Politics, A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present*.

That is all for today's lecture. Do share your comments and feedback. We will be happy to hear and respond to you. Thanks for listening. Thank you all!