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Political Theory

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### Reading Response: Machiavelli

In Machiavelli's *The Prince*, he writes about how rulers/princes can gain and maintain their political power. He explains how an effective ruler should act and tries to guide Lorenzo on what is necessary during his reign even if it's not all the way moral. He points out on page 76 that it is much safer for a ruler to be feared than loved, even though one may want both; if they had to choose, to be feared is the better option because it ensures obedience. Being loved would depend on the people's loyalty, which can change at any time. Machiavelli also touches on how rulers must learn to act, being cruel at times if it means protecting themselves/the people. Successful leadership overall requires an individual willing to change things up and take control when it is needed. What makes this book pretty interesting is how straight forward Machiavelli is, it almost seems sarcastic or condescending. The ideas he discussed seem relevant to what goes on in today's politics; politicians seem to go back and forth between their own morals versus what will be effective, either for their own benefit or the people. Though, thinking about it in terms of reality and the book, that kind of manipulation and cruelty could raise ethical concerns about the kind of leadership and values that a ruler has and would honestly lead to a distrust between him and the people. Machiavelli argues that rulers must also learn how not to be good in order to maintain their power. Do you think it's possible to make immoral decisions even if they can be justified by a good outcome?