

The language of politics in Machiavelli's *Discorsi* **Epistemological, analytic, and rhetorical value of the "examples" in political discourse**

Do the examples (paradigms) that are used in what was called "deliberative discourse" and in what we call today "political discourse" have a value in terms of knowledge? Or are they just nonsense? From the time of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, we know that the example (paradigm) is analogous to the induction, as well as the enthymeme is analogous to the syllogism. This means that the use of examples is committed to persuade by evidence. What is the case is similar to a number of clear examples that are argued during deliberation for determining what should be done now. It is not a proper inductive reasoning, but it works in a very similar way. Already in the rhetorical works of Aristotle, Cicero and Quintilian, we are told that "the example does not imply a relationship between the part and the whole (as opposed to induction), nor between the whole and the part (as opposed to deductive syllogism), but only between the parts, from what is similar to what is similar, where both terms are part of the same gender, one of the two better known than the other." (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1357b). In other words, an example is the clearest case that is used to show ostensibly that what we are saying is true. The statement is supported through this mechanism of political or deliberative discourse.

In this presentation, we shall not reflect on the use of examples in the Ancient rhetoric. The aim, on the contrary, is to recover the tools of rhetoric (some of which are already part of the theoretical body of Critical Thinking) to analyze the political discourse and its problematic epistemological value. Analyzed from an analytical point of view, any political or deliberative discourse contains all sorts of fallacies, and thus brings little knowledge. However, the rhetorical tools allow us to contextualize and better understand what is actually done through such discourses. The Machiavellian moment in the Renaissance and the Florentine Humanism offer a very interesting context for rhetorical discourse and its reappraisal. The Machiavelli's *Discorsi sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* and Guicciardini's *Considerazioni intorno ai 'Discorsi' del Machiavelli sopra la prima deca di Tito Livio* will be the subject of this political and rhetoric analysis about the value of examples (paradigms). The discussion between both Machiavelli and Guicciardini is brought about by way of the study of examples. And we have to suppose that it is by no means a nonsensical debate.