美术史与观念史

范景中 曹意强 刘 赦 主编

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HISTORY OF ART AND HISTORY OF IDEAS

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目　录

Rhetoric and Renaissance Paintings

Peter Mack

Rhetorical Training and Renaissance European Culture

I am very happy to be here in Hangzhou today and am grateful to Professor Cao for his kind invitation. I hope that my visit will form the second or third step in collaboration between your Institute and the Warburg Institute. I say the second or third step because last year my predecessor as Director of the Warburg Institute, Professor Charles Hope gave the E. H. Gombrich lectures here, and the very existence of those lectures in honour of the fourth Director of the Warburg and the presence of his library here already signifies a link between our two Institutes.

I should begin with a confession. Although I am the Director of the Warburg Institute I am not an art historian by profession. A little in today's lecture and more in tomorrow's I shall talk about some works of art, but my expertise is in the history of rhetoric. In the lecture today I shall argue that rhetoric as a key element of Renaissance culture offers us a privileged contemporary view on Renaissance works of art and I shall try to give you the basic training in rhetoric that will enable you to approach Renaissance paintings from that point of view. So I am hoping to teach you something which will be new to many of you and which will be useful in your studies. I hope that will compensate for any disappointment you feel in listening to someone who is not a real art

historian.

I shall begin by telling you what rhetoric is and describing its place in renaissance culture. In the second place I shall give you a brief training in classical rhetoric, trying to provide an overview of the subject and to identify and discuss some key doctrines which should be especially helpful for analysis. Thirdly I shall discuss the ways in which renaissance scholars added to their rhetorical inheritance from antiquity and set out for you a few key doctrines of renaissance rhetoric. Finally I shall move to an example from painting and I shall try to show how rhetorical ideas are presented in a work of Raphael and how they help us understand what Raphael was doing in this work.

What is rhetoric? Rhetoric is an advanced training in making speeches in public. It was the primary form of higher education in the world of ancient Greece and Rome. In the Roman republic and in the Greek city states the capacity to make a fine speech was an important step to achieving political power. People were willing to pay substantial sums of money in order to be trained to speak effectively. Rhetoric matters in renaissance culture because, alongside grammatical training in reading, writing and speaking Latin, rhetoric was the main subject matter of renaissance schools. In the renaissance educated people expressed their ideas using the techniques of rhetoric. Rhetoric provided them with a framework for investigating the matters that interested them the most, including issues concerned with the visual arts. Rhetoric was also important to the renaissance because it was one of the earliest fields in which renaissance writers produced works of their own to equal or surpass the works of ancient rhetoric. After the invention of printing an astonishing number of books involving rhetoric were printed. According to the *Renaissance Rhetoric Short-Title Catalogue* by Jerry Murphy and

Larry Green, *3842* rhetorical works by *1717* authors in *12325* printings were produced between *1460* and *1700*. This implies a production of around *20* million books of rhetoric in the period.

The most famous ancient definitions of rhetoric were given by Quintilian, who called rhetoric "the art of speaking well", and Aristotle, who called it "the art of finding the available means of persuasion in each case".[1] These definitions were successful partly because their vagueness meant that they could be applied to many different types of activity. Another way of defining classical rhetoric would be connected to the syllabus of doctrines it encompasses. The syllabus of rhetoric was conventionally arranged around three elements: the skills of the orator, the structure of the speech and the types of oratory. There were said to be five skills which the orator had to master: Invention, which means discovering the most persuasive and suitable material to include in your speech; Disposition, which means organizing the speech according to the most effective overall structure; Style, which means finding the most effective and most appropriate language in which to express your ideas; the study of style has many different aspects but it was particularly associated with the tropes and figures which are verbal and mental techniques which a speaker can use to impress or persuade an audience; Memory, which is a technical art to help you deliver the speech without notes; and Delivery, which requires attention to the tones of voice and the gestures you will employ.[2]

I hope that even listing the skills of the orator so briefly can give you an idea of the immense range of techniques taught through rhetoric. Some of these techniques are mainly verbal, having to do with constructing sentences, conveying meaning and displaying virtuosity; others are logical, describing ways of finding proofs, constructing

arguments and telling stories; others are more psychological; how to present yourself in such a way as to win the trust of your audience and how to arouse their emotions; others have to do with the technicalities of law and politics; still others are like the training of an actor. Rhetoric is a complex system which embraces materials connected with many different sciences and forms of training.

The second major organizing element of the rhetoric course was the structure of the oration itself. Students were taught that the formal speech should have four main parts: introduction, narrative, argument and conclusion. A large section of the rhetoric manual was devoted to explaining the contents of these four parts. The aim of the introduction was to prepare your audience to listen carefully to your speech. The narrative would tell the audience what had happened preparing the larger context for the points that the speaker wanted to prove and showing how the main issues would fit into a coherent and credible presentation of the sequence of events. The argument, which would normally be the longest part of the speech, would prove your key points and refute the arguments of your adversary. In the conclusion you would sum up the main points you had made and try to arouse the emotions of the audience by showing them the importance of the decision they had to make and the necessity of their agreeing with the case you had presented.

The third major organizing element of classical rhetoric was the notion that there were only three types of speech. This division is very important for the content of the speech since each type of speech involved a different kind of audience and privileged different types of argument. The first of the three types of classical oration was the judicial oration, given in a court case before judges or a jury, in which the orator aimed to prove that a certain crime had or had not taken place. This involved

arguments about what exactly happened and about the nature of the law. The second type of case was the deliberative oration, given before the public assembly and devoted to proposing laws or making policy, for example in relation to foreign affairs and war. This type of oration was concerned mainly with arguments about justice, honour and practical effectiveness. The third type was the epideictic or demonstrative oration, concerned with praise or blame, delivered before a social gathering, for example, at a wedding, a public ceremony or a funeral. Here the topics would be the nature of the person's life or the city's history, and the aim would be to show that they were virtuous and excellent.

From this very wide range of doctrines I now want to speak in more detail about eight specific types of teaching promoted by classical rhetoric and taught to influential renaissance people in their schools and universities. First, rhetoric gives considerable importance to the introduction. An introduction must make the audience well-disposed, attentive and receptive. The orator aims to win the good will of the audience by presenting himself in an attractive way, for example, by appearing to be modest and by praising the audience. Attentiveness will be encouraged by showing the importance of the issue. Then the orator will try to make the audience receptive by giving an outline of the argument that would be made so that the audience could see the significance of the different parts and the way in which the speech was going to fit together. These ideas remain very good advice for writers and speakers, but they can also easily be applied to the visual arts. At first and more distant view the painting should be attractive; it should seize the attention of the audience; it should depict a subject in such a way as to convey its importance to the audience; and it should present a clear and comprehensible shape.

Secondly, every oration is addressed to an audience. The orator always needs to keep the point of view of the audience in mind while composing the speech. In classical oratory the issue of the audience is dealt with mostly through the genre of the oration, since each of the three genres has a different type of audience, but there are also general principles and many individual pieces of advice. Here, too, I think the relevance to painting is plain. Some genres of painting presuppose a particular type of audience: a small Madonna and Child has a different audience from a large altar painting; some paintings are in parts of the church which only the priests enter; others are visible to the whole congregation. Sometimes the audience of the painting will be indicated through the act of the patron, the person or organisation which commissions the picture, but the painter will always do well to think also of other audiences, including the audience of experts and the audience of other painters. In discussing renaissance paintings we should always think about the audience, that is to say the people whom the painter could have expected to see the painting. A key determining factor here will be the place in which the painting is expected to hang.

Thirdly, across the different parts of the syllabus and cumulatively rhetoric very strongly promotes the importance of both local coherence and clear and strong overall structure. Arguments must be constructed so that they fit together exactly; narratives must be organised so that the essential information is presented in such a way that it suits the people, times and places involved. At the same time the speech must have a clear overall shape with a strong focus on the main points that need to be proved. These types of consideration also apply to painting. The individual limbs need to be joined in such a way that they seem to fit together naturally; the crucial information for understanding the picture

must be presented, but at the same time there should be a clear and strong design which presents itself to the viewer. Sometimes the painter has to work out a conflict between the number of figures required to tell a story or make a point and the need for a clear, strong overall structure.

Fourthly, from its very origin, the art of rhetoric insisted that argument and narrative both belong in the speech; ideally they should work together; a well-shaped narrative will help to make the points the orator wishes to prove seem fitting and inevitable. Effectively made arguments will confirm the story which the orator wants the audience to remember. In classical rhetoric the point is made mainly by insisting that both narrative and argument are the core of the oration. Renaissance writers devote more time to thinking about ways in which narrative and argument can support each other and can persuade an audience. Many renaissance paintings present themselves as illustrations of narratives from the *Bible* or from Classical literature. Some of them present only figures, but very often the figures depicted are there to remind the audience of particular stories or of points of doctrine. And the Bible stories illustrated will almost always be connected to the teachings of the Christian religion. Pictures and sculptures were placed in churches and in private chapels in order to help the priests and the congregation to meditate about Christian teaching. It is always a good idea to think about a renaissance painting both in relation to stories told or evoked and to teaching intended by the painter. In the classical period and in the renaissance the arts were supposed to convey teaching in a pleasing way. They were meant to give pleasure, but also were meant to teach. Teaching often took place through exemplary stories. In any aspect of renaissance culture, and especially in relation to painting, it is wise to think about the narrative being presented, the arguments being made and

the relations between the two. To think about narrative and argument together is very much a renaissance way of thinking about art.

Fifthly, rhetoric insists that although reason and argument are very important, they are only one of many ways of persuading an audience. Presenting the speaker as essentially trustworthy and arousing the emotions of the audience can be even more effective. If an audience thinks that a speaker, a politician for example, is untrustworthy, they are much less likely to let themselves be persuaded. The same considerations apply to painting. As viewers of paintings, we shall often want to ask ourselves what emotions the painter seems to be trying to arouse. Less frequently shall we want to think about how the self-presentation of the painter. Sometimes the painter does this in an overt way by including a self-portrait or a portrait of someone painting in the scene; at other times the painter may establish a position for himself through the manner in which the scene is depicted. Quite often renaissance contracts stipulate that the whole of a work must be painted by the painter named in the contract; in other cases moderately powerful people are happy to have copies from the studio of a great painter whose original works could only be acquired by great monarchs.

Sixthly and very importantly comes style. For teaching purpose, rhetoric defines three levels of style: high, middle and low. The point here is that works may be marked by different levels of overall style but that also within a work there will be variations to indicate expressive force. So, for example, we shall expect that an epic poem is always written in the high style, but within that cultural expectation some passages will be written in a more elaborate style and others more simply. Rhetoric also provides a list of techniques and strategies which the writer may choose to employ. Some of these involve patterns of

words; some involve ways of conveying meaning; others describe an attitude which the orator may momentarily take to an audience, as when he seems to invite their opinions, or an impression he wishes to give, as when he pauses and stumbles, apparently overcome with emotion. The great art historian E. H. Gombrich called this part of rhetoric, "perhaps the most careful analysis of any expressive medium ever undertaken".[3] I think he wished that someone had written a similar handbook on the techniques of painting, discussing the ways in which a painter might choose to use certain types of brush stroke or certain combinations of colours. A few of the figures of rhetoric, especially the one involving patterning and repetition, can be applied directly to painting. In other cases we need to think about the implications of particular aspects of the technique of painting and the types of expressive force which they may have.

My seventh and eighth categories here are two technical terms from rhetoric which have applications to the other arts: Decorum and *Enargeia*. The principle of Decorum requires the orator to suit the ideas expressed and the words used to both the characters and events described and to the audience addressed. As a speaker it is critical that you adapt what you say to the subject-matter and the occasion. The painter must do the same; certain types of painting are more suited to particular subjects and audiences. By the same token, though, the painter may play with ideas of decorum and may include things which we don't really expect to see in a church or in a particular religious narrative. We need to become alert to the way in which painters may play with the concept of decorum. *Enargeia* means to bring something before the audience's eyes, to express something with such liveliness and force that it is as if the events were taking place in front of your very eyes. This concept is both an idea of

effective expression and a recognition of the overpowering effect of the visual. It is as if the highest aim of writing is to become like painting. But we can also apply the idea to painting: the greatest paintings will depict something with such liveliness and force that the audience will react as if they were seeing those events for themselves, as if, in the extreme case, they were themselves witnessing Christ's crucifixion.

So far I have outlined eight ideas from classical rhetoric, which I hope will help you in thinking about renaissance painting. Now I must turn my attention more to renaissance rhetoric, because although the renaissance greatly respected classical rhetoric, producing many editions and commentaries on it, renaissance writers also wrote many new handbooks of rhetoric and I need to give some attention to their new ideas. On the handout I have listed six characteristics of renaissance rhetoric. You can find out more about them from my book, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric 1380 – 1620* [Oxford, *2011*]. I am going to mention only one of these characteristics in the lecture, the fourth one, amplification of expression and the copious style. The most successful and influential new work of rhetoric written in the renaissance was Erasmus's *De copia* which was printed *165* times between *1512* and *1569*. *De copia* taught techniques for varying words, phrases and concepts, in order to provide writers with very large number of different ways of expressing a particular point. The aim of the textbook was first to provide fluency of expression, then to teach students that as a writer one can always choose between many different ways of saying something, and thirdly, to encourage writers to play with the resources of language. Teaching people to express the same idea in over *150* ways encouraged both a sort of virtuosity in the use of language and the development of very dense and full styles of expression. *De copia* laid great emphasis on

detailed description of the circumstances and cause of an event; it taught people how to write comparisons and how to make effective and striking use of examples.

After such a long exposition of ideas I shall turn finally to an example, to a painting about public speaking, Raphael's Tapestry Cartoon "St Paul preaching in Athens". This painting is a design for a tapestry intended to be hung on special occasions in the Sistine Chapel in Rome, the personal chapel of the Pope. The painting is both a narrative and an argument. It tells the story of an episode from the Acts of the Apostles, chapter *17* verses *16 - 34*. Paul is in Athens. He is called to speak at the court of the Areopagus. He reminds the Athenians that they have an altar to the unknown God and he explains to them who this God is, speaking of the creation, God's continual invisible presence in the world, the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement. Some of his audience mock him; some want to hear him again; two believed him and joined the Christian church; Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris.

The painting illustrates this narrative. On the left before the court building Paul preaches; the building on the right may be the Temple of the unknown god; around him a crowd of people listen; some look sceptical; some argue with each other; but on the right a man and a woman listen intently and respond to Paul's words; they are Dionysius and Damaris. The painting shows the audience one of the founding moments of the success of the Christian religion. Thanks to St Paul's preaching, two people are going to join the church and establish it in a new city of the Roman Empire. As a result of St Paul's missionary work Christianity spread across the Mediterranean Sea and established itself in Rome, the capital of the Empire, which would become the capital of

the Popes, where the luxurious tapestry made from this painting would hang. The painting is also an argument because preaching is one of the duties of the Priest, pre-eminently one of the duties of the Pope. In the Pope's own chapel this painting reminds the clergy of the heroic age of preaching and of their obligation to take the message of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and the last judgement to people who do not believe. The painting provides an example to the priestly onlookers. It reminds them of what they should be doing.

This is a painting which emphasizes a variety of gestures: St Paul's preaching, with his eyes firmly fixed on the heavens; the faces of the audience, some sceptical, some bored; some commenting to each other about what Paul has been saying; some staring with rapt attention. The faces of the men and their gestures of argument or puzzlement recall the Bible narrative. In verse *18* we read that St Paul had been called to speak by the philosophers, the Stoics and Epicureans; verse *21* says that the Athenians and the foreigners there spent all their time in argument and in gathering novelty. Raphael takes care to illustrate these verses. He portrays Paul as an orator, as someone who uses the resources of classical Athenian culture to teach something new and who therefore arouses mixed reactions. In a sense the painting reminds us of the parable of the Sower, from the Gospels of Matthew [*13.3*], Mark [*4.3*] and Luke [*8.5*], in which Jesus describes the different reactions of people hearing the preaching of the word of God. But it is also a painting focused on emotion, as we look at the reactions of the different members of the audience, and especially at the emotion on the face of Damaris.

It is a picture with a very clear overall shape, which enables the audience to read the narrative very easily at first glance: a man is speaking before a crowd in an elaborate classical cityscape; two members