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—GEORGE A. KENNEDY

COLOR. This article focuses on the word *color* in ancient Roman rhetoric as a technical term for a range of strategies supporting a particular line of argumentation, especially in the declamatory exercises known as *controversiae.* Discussed first, however, are wider usages of the word *color* in Latin, along with aspects of Greek rhetorical theory, which cast light on this technical usage. The most relevant ancient texts are Seneca the Elder's collection of *Controversiae* (*Cont.*), assembled in the 30s CE; Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (*Inst.*), written in the 90s CE; and two declamatory collections of uncertain date and authorship, but attributed to Quintilian in antiquity: the *Declamationes maiores* (*DMai.*) and *Declamationes minores* (*DMin.*).

The word *color* first appears in Latin writing regarding rhetoric and verbal art, in a group of rhetorical treatises dating from the early to middle first century BCE, those of the Roman orator and statesman Cicero (106–43 BCE) and the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium.* In these treatises, the word does not yet label any particular technique or strategy of rhetoric itself, but rather participates in one of two metaphors by which rhetoric is commonly modeled. One of these metaphors is painting, verbal representation figured as pictoral representation. In Cicero's *De oratore* (3.96–100), rhetorical ornamentation is compared specifically to a painter's use of color. While colors are brighter and give more immediate pleasure in new paintings than old, in excess these can cause satiety, causing us to turn back to the faded austerity of older paintings. Likewise, in or-

namenting our oratory, we should seek to give pleasure, but without causing satiety (cf. 3.217; *Brutus* 298; *Orator* 65, 169; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.16). This rhetoric-as-painting metaphor is persistent, appearing in later texts such as *Institutio oratoria* (11.3.46), Fronto's *De Eloquentia* (4.7; mid-second century CE) and Gellius's *Noctes Atticae* (14.4; c.180 CE.) [*See* Art.]

The second metaphor, equally common, figures oratory as a human body. Here, *color* refers to skin tone or to the body's overall complexion, and serves as a metaphor for the general "cast" or "complexion" of a speech. Turning again to Cicero, in *De oratore* (2.60) one speaker says that, just as skin takes on color from being in the sun, so his oratory "takes on the color, so to speak" (*quasi colorari*) of books he reads. Later, another speaker remarks upon the "bearing and, so to speak, *color*" of a speech: it is "smooth and slim/plain (*teres et tenuis*), but not without muscles and strength" and it "should have a certain pleasing *color*—not smeared on with makeup (*fucus*), but infused with blood/vitality (*sanguis*)" (3.199, cf. *Brutus* 162; *De optimo genere oratorum* 8). In *Orator* 42, eloquence is said to be "raised upon the nourishment" provided by rhetorical exercises in school and "derives its *color* and strength" from them. This metaphor of speech (or text)-as-body also persists into the imperial age (cf. *Inst.* 8 pr. 18–20, 8.3.6). Perhaps related is the common use of *color* to mean directly the "overall complexion" or "style" or "tone" of speaking. Seneca says that Labienus spoke with the "*color* of old oratory, and the vigor of new" (*Cont.* 10 pr. 5); Quintilian likewise discusses how the *color* of a speech can be either varied or consistent throughout (*Inst.* 6.3.107, 110; 12.10.71). The painting metaphor, then, presents *color* as overtly added on, artificial, and ornamental, while the body metaphor usually presents it as (seemingly) inherent, natural, and essential—sometimes in contrast to *fucus*, "dye" or "makeup," that is applied on the surface.

Yet *color* is always recognized as a product of the orator's art, and acknowledged as being no less carefully contrived for a given rhetorical situation when it seems completely natural (as the body metaphor has it) than when it is more transparently added on (the painting metaphor). Consequently, *color* sometimes implies "falseness," indicating an appearance that is unrelated or contrary to an underlying reality. Quintilian notes that persons on trial must "have the *color* of worry," that they must appear thus, whatever their actual feelings (*Inst.* 11.1.49), and that a speaker must maintain a certain *color* throughout his speech "in order to appear not just to speak, but to speak truly" (11.1.58). Similarly, Apuleius (*Apologia* 19, c.160 CE) observes that the wealthy assume "the *color* of poverty" when they wish to seem down-to-earth.

In the large corpus of Greek-language declamations surviving from the second to fourth centuries CE, the word *chrōma* (color) is used in broadly the same ways as its Latin counterpart color. However, the technical usage of *color* to label specific argumentative strategies in declamation may have originated in Greek rather than Latin. For the acolytes of the rhetorician Hermagoras (c.150 BCE) are said to have used *chrōma* as a shorthand for "shift of cause" (*metathesis tēs aitias*)—the declaimer's attempt to mitigate the case against a defendant by arguing that his actions were morally right, or that he was seeking to forestall a worse outcome, or that he was retaliating for a previous injury, or that someone else was actually to blame (Matthes, 1962, pp. 25–30; Fairweather, 1981, pp. 166–167; Russell, 1983, pp. 48–49). Precisely such arguments are called *colores* in Roman declamation too, which took on its distinctive terminology a century later, in the 40s or 30s BCE (Fairweather, 1981, pp. 124–131; Bonner, 1949, pp. 20–31). This Latin usage, then, may derive most directly from the Hermagorean usage of *chrōma*, while also exhibiting features of the earlier, metaphorical Latin usages.

Color in its (Latin) technical sense first occurs in Seneca the Elder's collection of *controversiae*—fictive legal cases providing training in forensic oratory. [*See* Forensic genre.] In the 30s CE, Seneca (c.55 BCE–c.39 CE) assembled this collection from recollections of declamatory performances he had heard over his long life. He offers few transcripts of sustained declamation, but instead gathers the most striking expressions (*sententiae*) produced by the declaimers who spoke on a given theme, shows various ways they distinguished the issues at stake (*divisiones*), and lists the *colores* they used. *Controversia* 9.5 illustrates the meaning and function of *color* in Seneca. The *thema*, or

"facts" of the case by which all declaimers must abide, is this: three boys live with their father and stepmother (their mother having died); two fall ill and die with symptoms indicating either indigestion or poison; the (natural) mother's father is excluded from visiting the sick children; he kidnaps the remaining boy; the father prosecutes him for perpetrating violence (*vis*). Arguing the father's side, the declaimer Porcius Latro uses this *color:* the father and his erstwhile father-in-law had always disliked one another, even when the boys' mother was alive; he was violent and abusive and couldn't be permitted to visit sick children (*Cont.* 9.5.9). Another declaimer's *color* is that the grandfather arrived inopportunely, and so was told "not now"; he then became abusive, but Latro criticizes this *color* for controverting the *thema,* which, he says, must be taken to mean that the grandfather was told "never," not merely "not now" (9.5.10). Still another *color* for the father is, "I turned him away, for I had been told that he came with the intention of kidnapping" (9.5.11). On the grandfather's side, one *color* is that he took the surviving boy to safety, since the stepmother had assuredly murdered the others (Roman stepmothers are stereotyped as hostile to their stepchildren); another is that the boy himself, fearing for his life, asked his grandfather to take him away (9.5.12).

The arguments labeled here as *colores* are clearly of the sort the Hermagoreans called *chromata:* retaliating for a previous injury, forestalling a worse outcome, shifting responsibility to another person. All such arguments involve inventing a "back story," a narrative of events preceding those specified in the *thema,* that explains the motivations of the defendant or plaintiff, thereby casting their actions as described in the *thema* in a more sympathetic or invidious light; for example, the grandfather had long been abusive and violent, or the boy asked to be taken. Inventions that contradict the *thema* are impermissible (cf. *Cont.* 2.3.11, 7.7.14; *Inst.* 4.2.28, 90; *DMin.* 316.3). Because *colores* involve invention, credibility and sustainability are crucial. Quintilian says that *colores* must suit the persons, times, and places involved in the case, and must never be mutually inconsistent (*Inst.* 4.2.89–91, cf. *DMai.* 1.14); moreover, in a real court case one must never invent something a witness can contradict (4.2.93). Yet *colores* that cannot under any circumstances be contradicted, such as appealing to dreams or indications of divine will, are also unpersuasive because they are too easy (4.2.94; dreams: *Cont.* 2.1.33, 7.7.15; divine will: *Cont.* 1.3.8–9; *DMin.* 384.1). An effective, credible *color,* the critics say, requires careful, systematic development throughout the declamation: the renowned orator Asinius Pollio asserts (*Cont.* 4.3) that a *color* should be introduced in the *narratio* (the portion of the speech expounding what happened) and developed in the *argumenta* (the formal argument that "proves" the case one way or the other). [*See* Arrangement, *article on* Traditional arrangement.] Latro likewise says that over the full course of a speech even difficult, harsh *colores* can win acceptance (*Cont.* 10 pr. 15, cf. 7.1.20; *Inst.* 4.2.94). "Mixing" *colores*—using more than one in a given speech—is tricky: when speaking of yourself you should use only one (i.e., choose a single back story and consistently describe your motivations in that light), but when speculating on someone else's motivations you can propose several alternative stories (*Inst.* 4.2.90; *Cont.* 4.6). A well-developed *color,* then, appears to partake of the "body" metaphor more than of the "painting" metaphor, for it is an integrated, unitary, natural-seeming part of the argument that persuades by its appearance of truth (*Inst.* 11.1.58–59), while a speech whose *colores* are discernibly "added-on" and not integrated fails to persuade (*Inst.* 4.2.96, 11.1.58, 12.9.17). Indeed, a skilful *color* can save a difficult case when the *thema* is strongly biased in one direction, Seneca closely attends to the *colores* advanced for the harder side (*Cont.* 9.2.18–21; 10.4.15–18; cf. *Inst.* 4.2.100). Not every case requires one, however. Latro, declaring in *Controversia* (7.6.17) that "a defense, not a *color,* is needed," invents no back story but justifies the defendant's actions by enumerating advantages they entail, and adducing historical examples (cf. *Cont.* 7.5.8).

The criticism of *colores* evident in these passages was not merely in the service of rhetorical training. It was also a weapon in the competition for rank and status that was integral to the social dynamics of declamatory performance. Traces of such competition are manifest in Seneca's own connoisseurship: for instance, he declares that Latro and Otho achieved distinction in their vir-

tuoso handling of certain *colores* (e.g., *Cont.* 10 pr. 15; 2.1.34–39), while Gargonius and Murredius are contemptible for their inappropriate, tasteless *colores* (e.g., *Cont.* 1.7.18; 9.4.22).

Because the back story introduces new events, *colores* may be productive, generating new declamations and even new history. Consider *Controversia* (2.4), which involves two brothers, one of whom is disinherited and dies. A common *color* for one side makes the brothers enemies: the one's accusations caused the other to be disinherited (2.4.7), and he even neglected to visit his brother on his deathbed (2.4.3). A declaimer arguing the other side answers these charges: the brothers were close; the one's disinheritance was due to the father's unreasonableness or insanity; the other failed to visit because the father concealed the crisis from him (2.4.10–11). This declaimer's *color* thus preempts the opposition's *color,* as if it were itself a "fact" to be addressed along with the "facts" specified in the *thema.* Such a *color* may eventually be fully incorporated into the *thema,* generating a variant declamation whose *thema* differs from the original only in this detail (compare *DMin.* 252 with 370, and *Cont.* 7.3 with *DMai.* 17; discussion in Roller, 1997, pp. 125–126; cf. *DMin.* 316.3, where a *color* is virtually amalgamated into the *thema*). When a declamatory theme is historical, such invention may (re)write history. For instance, back stories sometimes involve an invented earlier trial that affects the perception of the current case. In *Controversia* (7.2), where Popillius is on trial for killing Cicero, declaimers commonly use the *color,* damning to Popillius, that Cicero had once defended him successfully in court on a charge of parricide. Seneca declares the parricide charge a declamatory fabrication (*Cont.* 7.2.8), and indeed this entire back story is probably invented. Nevertheless, much of this material did enter the historical tradition, in part because the declamatory and historiographical traditions of Cicero's death evolved contemporaneously, and the historiographers, like all Roman aristocrats, were themselves trained in declamation (Roller, 1997). Invented trials are particularly common in declamations of the second to fourth centuries CE on Greek historical themes (Russell, 1983, pp. 117–120), but since these declamations were derivative of a long-established historical tradition, these inventions apparently did not infiltrate that tradition.

The technical usage of *color* is not restricted to declamation. Ovid, Seneca's contemporary, uses it to label an argument advanced in an altogether different setting (*Tristia* 1.9.63), and Quintilian speaks of certain arguments in real court cases as *colors* (*Inst.* 11.1.49, 81, 85; also Frontinus *De Aquis* 105, c.100 CE). The *Digest* of Justinian, compiled in the sixth century CE, also shows that the word labeled certain pleas in actual legal contexts during the imperial period (5.2.2.pr., 47.14.1.4). While this usage survives in medieval and Renaissance legal contexts, the more common usage in these periods makes *color* virtually synonymous with *figura* or *ornatus;* that is, it serves as an umbrella term encompassing a wide range of figural embellishments by which rhetoric is "adorned" (Arbusow, 1963). [*See* Style.]

[*See also* Art; Classical rhetoric; Controversia and suasoria; *and* Declamation.]

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—MATTHEW B. ROLLER

COMMONPLACES AND COMMONPLACE BOOKS. In the Early Modern period, commonplaces were a universally understood mechanism for generating structured and amplified discourse (written and oral). It was only toward the end of that period that the term *commonplace* began to acquire connotations of banality and eventually became identical with "trite truism," a degenerative slide that paralleled the disgrace of "rhetoric" on its way to empty verbiage. Since Aristotle, however, in the fourth century BCE, commonplaces, topics, or *loci communes,* had been bound into the construction of cogent argument and the gathering of material to develop composition. For Aristotle, in his *Topics* and his *Rhetoric,* the "places" comprised the most effective ways of arguing from the basis of generally accepted opinions. They provided models for making deductions rigorous enough to satisfy the criteria of dialectic, while in rhetoric arguments could be as loosely formulated as audience response would tolerate. [*See* Dialectic.] "Commonplaces" were ratiocinative procedures, or "places," "common" to a range of disciplines of inquiry or lines of investigation. Cicero (106–43 BCE) also wrote a *Topics,* in which he accommodated Aristotle's commonplaces more specifically to rhetoric, particularly forensic rhetoric. Cicero codified the procedures and gave the Renaissance a language in which to talk about commonplaces. They were the "seats" of argument (*sedes argumentorum*), local habitations, places that anyone drafting a speech should "visit" in order to see whether his material could be effectively extended by drawing on the patterns of argument they contained in outline. Commonplace formulas included arguments to be drawn from definition, genus, species, enumeration of parts, etymology, conjugates, similarity, difference, contraries, adjuncts, antecedents, consequents, contradiction, cause, effect, comparison. These and various other stratagems for proving one's point were to constitute Renaissance descriptions of ways to argue convincingly, and thereby persuasively. They were the abstract formulation of "probable," that is to say "plausible," arguments intrinsic to the development of a speech on any topic. Among "places" to be incorporated into a speech from outside was one that in the future was to have as much importance as all the others, and that was the testimony of authoritative quotation from the writing of respected experts, orators, philosophers, poets, and historians. In Cicero's *De inventione,* as in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium,* foundation textbooks in rhetoric until well into the sixteenth century, commonplaces were fully acclimatized to the genres of oratory. In the process, they became not only templates for argument as yet empty of substance, but containers now filled with suggestions for very specific subjects to be incorporated into particular types of exposition. So an epideictic speech in praise of a person would run through places "common" to that genre—for example, birth, background, physical attributes, and moral qualities—with very precise indications of what topics should be included under each head. The concept of commonplace was clearly veering toward the notion of "general theme," and this was reinforced for the Renaissance when Humanists eagerly absorbed the newly discovered *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian, which dates from the last years of the first century CE. From Quintilian they could learn that ancient orators were trained by doing written exercises on moral themes, such as denouncing typical instances of particular vices, and that they customarily made collections of such themes for all-purpose use. This sense of "commonplace," as a moral topic proposed for rhetorical amplification, was eventually transmitted to the humanist classroom. More influential in the immediate term, however, was the later *De differentiis topicis* of Boethius (c.480–524 CE). [*See* Classical rhetoric.]

It was primarily from Boethius that the Middle Ages got its concept of commonplaces. His sole focus was on seats of argument as a mechanism