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From "Socratic logoi" to "dialogues":

Dialogue in Fourth-century Genre Theory

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This paper argues that we can only have a just appreciation of the rise and early development of philosophic dialogue in Greece by bracketing the immense influence that the Platonic version of the form has exerted and turning instead to tracing how "Socratic logoi" came to be recognized as a new prose genre in fourth-century Athens. A consideration of the early terms used to name the form suggests that dialogue should not be derived from fifth-century mime or drama but should be understood in the context of the burgeoning rhetorical literature of the period; in particular, dialogue will be shown to be one of many innovative kinds of fictional speech-texts that were proclaiming new and special powers for written prose.

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οὐδὲ γὰρ ἂν δήπου πρέποι, ὦ ἄνδρες, τῇδε τῇ ἡλικίᾳ
ὥσπερ μειρακίῳ πλάττοντι λόγους εἰς ὑμᾶς εἰσιέναι.

Nor would it be seemly for one of my age to come before you
making up speeches like a schoolboy.
Plato *Apology*

The question of why Plato wrote dialogues is an irresistible one that I shall resist in this essay. Part of what makes the question irresistible is that Plato himself posed it as a paradox: it by no means escaped the ancients that, as a character in Athenaeus indignantly puts it, Plato "threw Homer and mimetic poetry out of the city in his *Republic*, when he himself wrote mimetic dialogues!"[1] The question of genre is also irresistible because it can seem fundamental for interpreting Plato: it will make a great deal of difference if we take the dialogue form as expressing a philosophical position, a way of avoiding dogmatism for example,[2] or as a pedagogical device to model

[1] Athenaeus 505b-c (αὐτὸς δὲ τοὺς διαλόγους μιμητικῶς γράψας), discussed below. Cf. Proclus' commentary on the *Republic* (§§ 161-3).
[2] E.g. H. Gundert, *Dialog und Dialektik* (1971) and M. Frede, "Plato's Arguments and the Dialogue Form" in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and his Dialogues* (*OSAP*. Suppl.) James C. Klagge and Nicholas D. Smith eds. (Oxford 1992) 201-220. M. M. McCabe, "Form in the Platonic Dialogues," forthcoming in Blackwell's *Companion* to 000: the dialogue form in varied ways is meant to encourage reflection on the

philosophy as a cooperative enterprise (and one quite different from passively taking in sophistic *epideixeis*).[3] For these and other reasons, readers of Plato may well wonder why he did not, for example, deliver himself of his views on excellence by writing *Peri aretês* at the top of a page and then filling up the rest with what he thought.

But two problems deter me from approaching this question directly. The first is that I am not sure there is a single answer. Obviously Plato may have had a number of reasons for choosing the form, and these reasons may have changed along with the considerable changes in his writing over a long career (to say nothing of possible changes in his philosophical views).[4] The second problem is that I do not see how this question can be isolated from the fact that many other writers also elected the dialogue form—not only Xenophon but a host of Socratics including Aeschines and Antisthenes of Athens, Euclides of Megara, Phaedo of Elis, and the genre's alleged inventor, Alexamenus of Teos (on whom more below).[5] Now I willingly grant the possibility that Plato, genius that

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principles of argument; so too John M. Cooper, "Introduction," pp. xviii-xxi in Plato: Complete Works, John M. Cooper and D.S. Hutchinson, eds. Indianapolis, Ind. Hackett Pub., 1997.

[3] As in H. Görgemans, "Dialogue" in *Brill's New Pauly* Vol. 3.352: Dialogue "opposes the didactic lectures of the sophists and demonstrates that knowledge is not merely transferred but acquired by each individual for himself." Among recent discussions, R. Blondell, *The Play of Character in Plato's Dialogues* (Cambridge 2003) argues that in order to draw his readers in to participate in philosophic thought Plato composed dialogues as "scripts" for enactment, with each interlocutor modeling a distinct way of responding to Socratic interrogation. A further issue, pressing for some, is how the dialogue form compromises attempts to reconstruct Socrates' philosophy, on which see Charles Kahn, "Did Plato write Socratic Dialogues?" *CQ* 31 (1981) 305-20.

[4] So Richard Kraut, "Why Dialogues?" *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato/). André Laks, "Sur l'anonymat Platonicien et ses antecedents," in *Identités de l'auteur*, ed. C. Calame and R. Chartier (Paris 2004) stresses that it is not clear that we can assume that such a varied corpus falls under a single literary formula.

[5] C. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge 1996): the title is the thesis, though I think its clear-cut and hierarchized distinction between philosophy and literature begs the question. Ch. 1 presents a good, albeit somewhat skeptical review of the Socratics. On their works, collected in Gabriele Giannantoni's *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (1983 Second edition, Naples 1990), see P. Vander Waerdt, ed., *The Socratic Movement* (Ithaca 1994). On Phaedo, see Cf. L. Rosetti, "'Socratica' in Fedone di Elide," *Studi Urbinati* n.s. 47 (1973) 364-381.

he was, transformed the genre when he took it up. But that does not make these other writers—some his predecessors—irrelevant in considering why he did so. Understanding why Plato wrote dialogues involves understanding why the Socratics did.

The usual explanation for the rise of the Socratic dialogue is to say that Socrates' students invented the form as a way of preserving and disseminating the master's unique mode of philosophizing.[6] Herwig Görgemans, for example, goes from the observation that "dialogue as a genre was a creation of the first generation of Socrates' pupils" to the inference that "Undoubtedly, the main motivation for their creation was the visualization of Socrates' personality and his teachings as a holistic entity."[7] Those who take thus view must concede that the alleged effort to capture Socrates' distinctive style in writing produced some rather different Socrates's in Plato and Xenophon. But we have good evidence from contemporary comedy that Socrates was an unusual and striking figure, in particular for his "prattling" (*Frogs* 1492: λαλεῖν). And the case of Jesus of Nazareth, so often adduced as a parallel to Socrates, confirms the possibility that an historical personality could inspire a new literary genre, and that the genre could by strongly marked by his particular style of teaching. But even the most striking personality cannot account, by itself, for the development of a new literary kind. The assumption that dialogue was the obvious choice for representing Socratic teaching is rather pat, given that prose dialogues had apparently never been written in Greece. To redress this

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On the agora shoemaker's house sometimes ascribed to Simon (see DL 000), see D. Thompson in *Archaeology* 13.3 (1960): 234-40, *The American School* volumes (Agora 14), and 000, "Living and Working around the Agora" in *Greek Houses and Households* Nevett & Ault 2005). Cf. too Hock, "Simon the Shoemaker as an Ideal Cynic" GRBS 1976(?) and Sellars, "Simon the Shoemaker and the Problem of Socrates" CP 2003. Thanks to Rob Sobak for these references.

[6] So R. Hirzel, *Der Dialog* (Hildesheim 1895) I esp. 68 ff., and A. Hermann, "Dialog," in *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 3, cols. 928-955, esp. 929.
[7] Görgemans (n. 000 above) pp. 351-2.

imbalance, I propose in this essay to consider the rise and early spread of philosophical dialogue in formal terms, not tying the texts to Socrates' personality or Plato's literary genius. I shall consider what the terms were used to name and characterize *Sôkratikoi logoi* when the form was pioneered in the period ca. 400-350 BCE. This will draw our attention to "Socratic *logoi*" as the genre's original name. Carefully parsing the meaning of this phrase in its earliest occurrences will direct us to the lively experiments in prose at the time, and to specify how the development of Socratic dialogue was influenced by some of these literary dynamics, as well as by the personality of the master. If I sidestep the question "Why dialogue?" I hope that giving a more precise answer to the question "What was a dialogue?" can clarify the challenges and possibilities Socratics faced, and the company they kept and warded off, when they took up their pens.

Defining Dialogue: *dialegesthai*

The word *dialogos* appears in the fourth century as a deverbative noun, not much used at first, from *dialegesthai*, "to talk together, converse." *dialegesthai* is a very common term, almost a *vox propria* for what goes on in such texts as Plato's and Xenophon's Socratica, but in itself it is very much a word for "conversation," less a form of philosophizing than a mode of gentlemanly "association" (*sunousia*) at leisure.[8] The prefix *dia-* characterizes the speech as an exchange between two or more persons, but does not imply that the exchange is particularly "dialectical" or "dialogical." Fourth-century uses of *dialegesthai* define a social rather than intellectual action. As a way to

[8] Hirzel p. 6 regards "conversation" as a decline of dialogue's form. Walter Müri, "Das Wort Dialektik bei Platon," *MH* 1 (1944) 152-168 traces the evolution of the "dialectical" meaning of *dialegesthai, dialektikê* and (what is probably Plato's coinage) *dialektikos* to the *Republic* and some later dialogues. See too David Roochnik, Beautiful City: the Dioalectical Character of Plato's 'Republic' (Ithaca, 2003) Appendix. On *hê dialektikos* see I. Bywater, Aristotle on the Art of Poetry. (Oxford 1909) 139 on 1449a26.

describe a Socratic encounter, "conversation" connoted a casual and leisurely discussion, conducted among those who were, if not precise social equals, equally free to pass their time this way. The sophists had already put a number of such terms into circulation to avoid undesirable suggestions of inequality in the teacher-pupil terminology. Sophists in Plato and Xenophon describe their services euphemistically as "associating" or "spending time together" (*suneinai*, *diatribein)* with their students, and indeed of "talking together" (*homilein, dialegesthai*).[9] A young man who was of the age (and economic class) to attend a sophist would have rather been spoken of as one of that wise man's "companions" or "associates" (*hetairoi, sunontes)* than as his "pupil" (*mathêtês*).[10] Socratics, then, But Socratic "conversations" had this crucial difference: no fees were attached. The Socratics insulted sophists as at once elitist, in picking and choosing those with whom they would condescend to speak, and as slavish, in selling such a thing as intercourse to the highest bidder (e.g. Xen. *Mem.* 1.2.7).[11] Socrates, by contrast, was a "popular" sort (*dêmotikos*, 1.2.60-61) who would talk with anyone for free.

"Conversation" is thus usually the best way to render *dialogos* in Plato, which seems to refer to a less formal interchange than, e.g. *dialogismos*, a "counting up." The word could be given a "dialectical" coloring by Socratics. Semantically, it derives from the middle meaning of *dialegesthai*, but a connection could be asserted with the active *dialegein*, "to sort into classes." The Xenophontic Socrates does so on one occasion to explain why so much of his conversation was involved with definition. The passage

[9] Very revealing is Protagoras' opposition between his own tuition and the "compulsory" education of grammar school (*Prot.* 326a, cf. 318d-e = 80 A 5 DK).
[10] More on this apparently in K. Joël, "Der *Sokratikoi logoi*" *Archiv für Geschichte. d. Philosophie* 8 (1894-1895) 466-483.
[11] David Blank, "Socratics vs Sophists on Payment for Teaching," *Classical Antiquity* 4 (1988) 1-49.

(*Mem*. 4.5.11-2)[12] is a pendant to a defense of self-control, which counts among its benefits the ability to analyze things into their natural kinds (*kata genê*), "sorting them out" (*dialegein*) into the good and bad so as to choose appropriately. This ability is not, however, purely analytic: it makes men "not only extremely happy but also outstandingly good conversationalists" (διαλέγεσθαι δυνατωτάτους). The connection is cemented with a Socratic etymology deriving *dialegesthai*, "conversing," "from people coming together to deliberate about how to divide things (*dialegein*) into their natural kinds." Here then, dialogue comes close to dialectic, but without losing its connection to conversation as a non-technical, non-disciplinary, social activity. Xenophon's down-to-earth Socrates is not insensitive to the social advantages that philosophic training can bring: assiduously pursued, this activity produces men who are "the best, the most influential and the most skilled in discussion" (ἀρίστους τε καὶ ἡγεμονικωτάτους καὶ διαλεκτικωτάτους).

Plato's *dialogos*: an art of conversation

Dialogos is never used by Plato as a name for his genre. There is no passage in his corpus where *dialogos* or *dialegesthai* needs to mean anything more formal or technical than conversation among friends. A few times a stretch of argument is called a "dialogue" (e.g. *Laches* 200e, cf. *Rep*. 354b), but with no noticeable generic force. Plato takes the heart of verb *dialegesthai* to be "discuss" when he concocts an etymologizing

[12] 4.5.11-12: ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἐγκρατέσι μόνοις ἔξεστι σκοπεῖν τὰ κράτιστα τῶν πραγμάτων, καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ διαλέγοντας κατὰ γένη τὰ μὲν ἀγαθὰ προαιρεῖσθαι, τῶν δὲ κακῶν ἀπέχεσθαι. [12] καὶ οὕτως ἔφη ἀρίστους τε καὶ εὐδαιμονεστάτους ἄνδρας γίγνεσθαι καὶ διαλέγεσθαι δυνατωτάτους· ἔφη δὲ καὶ τὸ διαλέγεσθαι ὀνομασθῆναι ἐκ τοῦ συνιόντας κοινῇ βουλεύεσθαι διαλέγοντας κατὰ γένη τὰ πράγματα. δεῖν οὖν πειρᾶσθαι ὅτι μάλιστα πρὸς τοῦτο ἑαυτὸν ἕτοιμον παρασκευάζειν καὶ τούτου μάλιστα ἐπιμελεῖσθαι· ἐκ τούτου γὰρ γίγνεσθαι ἄνδρας ἀρίστους τε καὶ ἡγεμονικωτάτους καὶ διαλεκτικωτάτους. Cf. *Mem*. 4.6.1: Ὡς δὲ καὶ διαλεκτικωτέρους ἐποίει τοὺς συνόντας, πειράσομαι καὶ τοῦτο λέγειν. Σωκράτης γὰρ τοὺς μὲν εἰδότας τί ἕκαστον εἴη τῶν ὄντων ἐνόμιζε καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἂν ἐξηγεῖσθαι δύνασθαι.

definition of *dia-noia* ("thought"): a thought is defined as a kind of logos, specifically a "conversation" in the soul without audible sound (*phônê*, *Sophist* 263e, cf. 264a).[13]

Two passages in the dialogues have been taken as programmatic for the genre. The most self-referential occurs in the frame to *Theaetetus* (143b-c, cf. Cic. *Tusc. disp.* 1.4.8) in which Euclides the narrator explains how he has composed the book at hand (τὸ βιβλίον τουτί). He has written it down not as it was "narrated" (διηγεῖτο) to him by Socrates, but as a "conversation" (διαλεγόμενον), dropping the tiresome "narrative parts between the speeches" (αἱ μεταξὺ τῶν λόγων διηγήσεις), things like "I said" or "he replied." This entire framing prologue has fascinating implications for Plato's readership,[14] but it strikes me as rather ad hoc and I would not infer from it any general theory of dialogic writing.[15]

Another seemingly relevant passage is *Protag*oras 338a in which Socrates is said to insist on a "form of conversing" (εἶδος τῶν διαλόγων) that proceeds by short question and answer, one way of describing dialogue. But in context, this "short talk" (*brakhulogia*) is simply one mode of conversing among others; it is a mode Socrates undoubtedly prefers, and one that may be pointedly opposed to long sophistical

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[13] Οὐκοῦν διάνοια μὲν καὶ λόγος ταὐτόν· πλὴν ὁ μὲν ἐντὸς τῆς ψυχῆς πρὸς αὑτὴν <u>διάλογος</u> ἄνευ φωνῆς γιγνόμενος τοῦτ' αὐτὸ ἡμῖν ἐπωνομάσθη, <u>διάνοια</u>. Cf. μοι ταῦτα φίλος διελέξατο θυμός Il.11.407.

[14] Harold Tarrant, "Chronology and narrative apparatus in Plato's dialogue," *Electronic Antiquity* (1994) (http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/ElAnt/V1N8/tarrant.html) has inferred from this passage that the pure dramatic dialogue (with no narrative frame) was not previously familiar to Plato's readership, and this passage announces what is Plato's own modification of the genre. On Tarrant's view, the narrative dialogues of the early-middle period (i.e. *Charmides*, *Erastae* (if genuine), *Euthydemus*, *Lysis*, *Parmenides* (to 137), *Phaedo*, *Protagoras*, *Republic*, and *Symposium*) were written to be published, while the purely dramatic ones, without explanatory frames, were at first confined to private readings in the school.

[15] One Platonic discussion of *dramatic* dialogue seems applicable to his texts: in the famous "tripod of the Muses" passage (*Laws* 719c) the poet is out of his wits and, "since his art is representation [i.e. it requires characters] he will necessarily produce differing sorts who will say things contradicting one another, without knowing which one is speaking the truth" (καὶ τῆς τέχνης οὔσης μιμήσεως ἀναγκάζεται, ἐναντίως ἀλλήλοις ἀνθρώπους ποιῶν διατιθεμένους, ἐναντία λέγειν αὑτῷ πολλάκις, οἶδεν δὲ οὔτ' εἰ ταῦτα οὔτ' εἰ θάτερα ἀληθῆ τῶν λεγομένων).

epideixeis,[16] but it is by no means the exclusive concern of Socrates: in fact, he fancifully derives the practice of brachylogy from the Laconic utterances of the Seven Sages,[17] and he presents it, with no apparent irony, as among Protagoras' professed skills: "you are able, on your own account and as your reputation goes, to practice either macrylogy or brachylogy in associating with people."[18] In the work as a whole, the passage on short answers is not a definition of dialogue (which, as *Protagoras* itself shows, can include long speeches) as much as one among many discursive modes that are competing for center stage in the work.[19] That a variety of speaking styles will be on display is clear at the start of the conversation when Protagoras offered to prove virtue is teachable either by a story (*muthos*) or a formal *epideixis*.[20] Socrates then requests he turn from "fine long speeches" and exhibit the rarer skill of answering "shortly" (κατὰ βραχὺ).[21] Protagoras consents, though cannot long suppress the need to break out into an applause-winning speech. Socrates repeats his request that Protagoras "converse" (διαλέξεσθαι) via brachylogy (334E),[22] acidly adding, "I thought there was a difference between having a

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[16] Cf. *Gorg* 448d, 449c, *Rep*. 337a, *Dissoi logoi* 8.1 (quoted below). On *epideixis*, R. Thomas, *Herodotus in Context* (Cambridge 2000) esp. 252-257, Paul Demont, "Die Epideixis über die *Techne* im V und IV Jhdt. *Vermittlung and Tradierung von Wissen*, ed. W. Kuhlmann and J. Althoff (Tübingen 1993).

[17] *Prot*. 342b-343b. The idealization of Laconic brevity can be paralleled in a Peloponnesian tradition in Herodotus 4.77 (Anacharsis: Ἕλληνας πάντας ἀσχόλους εἶναι ἐς πᾶσαν σοφίην πλὴν Λακεδαιμονίων, τούτοισι δὲ εἶναι μούνοισι σωφρόνως δοῦναί τε καὶ δέξασθαι λόγον).

[18] 335B-C: σὺ μὲν γάρ, ὡς λέγεται περὶ σοῦ, φῂς δὲ καὶ αὐτός, καὶ ἐν μακρολογίᾳ καὶ ἐν βραχυλογίᾳ οἷός τ' εἶ συνουσίας ποιεῖσθαι--σοφὸς γὰρ εἶ--ἐγὼ δὲ τὰ μακρὰ ταῦτα ἀδύνατος. This passage may be he basis for the claim in DL (9.53) that Protagoras "was the first to develop the Socratic form of discussion [*eidos logôn*]." Gorgias has the same double competence in *Gorgias* (447c, 449b-c) which he and Tisias are said to have "invented" in *Phdr*. 266.

[19] Simon Goldhill, *The Invention of Prose* (Oxford 2002) 80 notes how often Plato's text constitutes itself by "humiliating" important civic discourses, poetry obviously, but also prose genres such as the funeral oration (*Menexenus*) and "rhetoric and sophistry." A pioneering study of such dynamics is Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the construct of philosophy* (Cambridge 1995).

[20] 320C: μῦθον λέγων ἐπιδείξω ἢ λόγῳ διεξελθών;

[21] 329B: Πρωταγόρας δὲ ὅδε ἱκανὸς μὲν μακροὺς λόγους καὶ καλοὺς εἰπεῖν, ὡς αὐτὰ δηλοῖ, ἱκανὸς δὲ καὶ ἐρωτηθεὶς ἀποκρίνασθαι κατὰ βραχὺ καὶ ἐρόμενος περιμεῖναί τε καὶ ἀποδέξασθαι τὴν ἀπόκρισιν, ἃ ὀλίγοις ἐστὶ παρεσκευασμένα.

[22] 335A: ἐμοὶ διαλέξεσθαι, τῷ ἑτέρῳ χρῶ τρόπῳ πρός με, τῇ βραχυλογίᾳ. Socrates claims to

conversation together and demagoguery" (336B: χωρὶς γὰρ ἔγωγ ὤμην εἶναι τὸ συνεῖναί τε ἀλλήλοις διαλεγομένους καὶ τὸ δημηγορεῖν).[23] It is when things threaten to fall apart over the question of "What is to be the mode of our conversation?" (336b: τίς ὁ τρόπος ἔσται τῶν διαλόγων;) that Callias tells Socrates not to insist too closely on "this kind of conversation consisting in very short answers" (μήτε σὲ τὸ ἀκριβὲς τοῦτο εἶδος τῶν διαλόγων ζητεῖν τὸ κατὰ βραχὺ λίαν); but he also advises Protagoras to trim his rhetorical sails (338a). Throughout, "conversing" is what they both do together (335d: σοῦ τε καὶ Πρωταγόρου διαλεγομένων).

The foregoing suggests, and the next section will confirm, that what we call Socratic or Platonic "dialogues" were not called *dialogoi* when they were being written and published. Indeed, I have found but two possible fourth-century uses of *dialogos* as a genre term, one an Isocratean slur and the other a dubious reading in a fragment from Aristotle (72 Rose, see below). It remains true of course that Xenophon as well as Plato thought that Socrates practiced a special kind of conversation, in some respects a dialectical one. But readers eager to get instructions in a certain kind of argument, what some called "dialectic" and others called "antilogic" or "eristic," would seem to be directed to other texts.[24] The examples that come to mind are not dialogues but paired antithetical speeches, such as Protagoras' "Knockdown speeches" (*Kataballontes logoi*), the dual *logô* stored up in Socrates' Thinkery (Aristophanes *Clouds* 114), the *dissoi logoi* of around 403-401, and the paired pairs of speeches constituting Antiphon's

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have heard it once demonstrated by Parmenides (*Sophist* 217C).

[23] *Dissoi logoi* 8.1.§§ 27: <τῶ αὐτῶ> ἀνδρὸς καὶ τᾶς αὐτᾶς τέχνας νομίζω κατὰ βραχύ τε δύνασθαι διαλέγεσθαι, καὶ <τὰν> ἀλάθειαν τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπίστασθαι, καὶ δικάζεν ἐπίστασθαι ὀρθῶς, καὶ δαμαγορεῖν οἷόν τ' ἦμεν, καὶ λόγων τέχνας ἐπίστασθαι, καὶ περὶ φύσιος τῶν ἁπάντων ὥς τε ἔχει καὶ ὡς ἐγένετο, διδάσκεν.

[24] Plato's insistence that *dialegesthai* is not *erizein: e.g. Rep.* 454a (cf. 511c), *Tht.* 167e.

Tetralogies.[25] To move beyond "conversation" in the direction of a conception of "dialogue" as a literary form we shall have to turn from Plato and the Socratics to Aristotle, and turn as well from *dialogoi* to *Sokratikoi logoi*.

The *logoi* in Socratic *logoi*

The final step in this study may be described as asking just what the *logoi* signifies in *Sôkratikoi logoi*. Obviously the word is polyvalent and in most passages is sufficiently underdetermined to refer to Socratic "discourse" "argument" or "conversation." In addition, the *logoi* in the phrase could sometimes designate the genre as a form of "prose" as opposed to poetry. Nor can one exclude the concrete sense of "a body of writings" (as in *mathêmatikoi logoi*), for the need to name a genre becomes acuter the more a growing body of texts makes that genre noticeable to the culture. My purpose in this rather brisk section, however, is not to give one answer to the question as much as to call attention to how open it must remain as we try to specify some forces that impinged on the definition and development of Socratic dialogue in the first half of the fourth century.

The dialogues emerged at a time of unprecedented expansion in writing prose, that is, a time when new forms of un-poetic speech were thought worth preserving. This shift began in the fifth century and is illustrated by contrasting Herodotus' presentation of his history as an *apodeideixis,* a long oral performance,[26] with Thucydides' pointed

[25] On eristic literature and the dialogue, Jean Laborderie, *Le dialogue Platonicien de la maturité* (Paris 1978) 27-40.
[26] E.g. Bruno Gentili and Giovanni Cerri, *History and Biography in Ancient Thought*, tr. D. Murray and L. Murray (Amsterdam, 1988) Ch. 1; R. Thomas, 260-1.

rejection of "display pieces designed to win competitions" (1.22) in favor of the "possession for all time" that he had "written" (1.1). It is well to recall that Thucydides could have been writing not much earlier than our first Socratics.

In fact, the period from 420-320 was one unparalleled in the production of written prose texts on or concerting the topic of making speeches. Gagarin describes Antiphon as helping to "open the way for the public performance of oratory to replace drama as the dominant Athenian cultural institution fo the 4th century"[27] This may exaggerate—performing dramatic *rhêseis* was still a popular pastime—but points to the wide appetite this literature fed.

Among the forms of discourse that were being written down for the first time were what the Greeks called *logoi*, speeches. In Socrates' home town, this is said to have begun with the courtroom speeches and exercises of Antiphon (*obit.* 411). A direct connection between this rhetorical literature and the Socratics is provided by Antisthenes—some 20 years Plato's senior and the author not only of Socratic *logoi* but of the demonstration speeches *Odysseus* and *Ajax.*[28]

Previously, some elder sophists had written out model speeches on imagined legal situations and circulated them among pupils as "playthings," treating mythological subjects or defending paradoxical or trivial theses.[29] Such texts were never the primary vehicle for sophistic teaching and, with a very few exceptions, did not survive.[30] But by the time of Isocrates and Plato, this trend was still going strong, and some professors of

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[27] *Antiphon: The Speeches* (Cambridge 000) 3.
[28] But U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Platon* 2nd ed. (Berlin 1920) vol. 2, 26-27 is skeptical that Antisthenes can be credited with *Socratic* dialogues.
[29] Cf. Isoc. *Helen* 8-13, *Panath.* 1. Aristotle *NE* 7 1146a. On the literature of praising small things: O'Sullivan (1992) 84, Lausberg (1998) 104, Arthur S. Pease, "Things without honor." CP 21 (1926) 27-42.
[30] T. Cole, *Origins of Rhetoric* (Baltimore 1991).

rhetoric, whom they agree in calling "sophists," were producing texts on such topics as the virtues of salt or encomia of figures from myth. It is also clear that such literature had a passionate following among the young, and the controversies surrounding it can be seen in that trio of speeches condemning the "written speeches" of "sophists" by Alcidamas, Isocrates, and Plato.[31]

As great as was the popularity of this literature, so was the dispproval to which it exposed its authors.[32] In *Parmenides* Plato represents Zeno as half apologizing for his book of eristic paradoxes as the fruit of a youthful love of contentiousness that was published surreptitiously without his consent (*Parm*. 128).[33] Ambitious prose authors of Plato's day were stimulated to present their texts as something quite different from what some spurned as "sophistic" practice speeches. They were moved to innovate prose forms in order to proffer what they insisted was a valuable *logos* but which was decidedly not a rhetorical *tekhnê*, just as they were something other than "sophists." Isocrates affords an example. His persona is the paradoxical one of a self-declared "weak-voiced" orator; he composes speeches he can't deliver, and yet these *logoi* ("speeches," here used for non-speeches, texts) are worth circulating and studying repeatedly (*Busiris* § 34, *Antidosis* § 78, *Evag*. § 74).[34] Such is his determination to distinguish himself from common rhetors that on one occasion he invents a new form of prose, as he assures us: Isocrates presents his *Evagoras* as the first prose eulogy for a contemporary (§ 5). Although "philosophical purveyors of *logos* have essayed practically every other theme, none has tried to an

[31] More at Ford, *Origins of Criticism*, Ch. 12.
[32] H. Ll. Hudson-Williams, "Political Speeches in Athens" *CQ* NS 1 (1951) 68-73.
[33] Cf. A 14 DK, Wilamowitz (1920) 28.
[34] On which, cf. Yun Lee Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates* (Cambridge, 1995) 113-150.

encomium of a man in prose (*dia logôn*)."[35] We have only Isocrates' word that this was the first prose encomium by a contemporary,[36] and it was a topos of the *epitaphios* to say that the speaker was handicapped by an audience's reluctance to be impressed with the excellence of their contemporaries.[37] But *Evagoras* is a typical example of a willingness to try new blends of form and function to take the task of encomium over from poets like Simonides and Pindar and to outdo the old prose encomia of fictional figures like Helen, Busiris or Heracles.

Even good old Xenophon was open to experiment. Among his varied writings, his putative "memoirs" of Socrates have no direct precedent, and *Agesilaus* follows the revolutionary footsteps of Isocrates in composing a prose eulogy for a contemporary. The *Cyropaideia* is something of a proto-novel. Xenophon attributes his *Memorabilia* and *Apology* to a pious desire to preserve the truth about Socrates. This fits current aetiologies for dialogue, and we need not doubt his sincerity. But a glance at Plato's own foray into *Apology* literature shows that proclaiming one had captured the "real" Socrates was one of the earmarks of the form. Loyal Socratic though he was, Xenophon was not averse to trying his hand at one of the popular rhetorical sub-genres.

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[35] *Evag*. 8: *Οἶδα* μὲν οὖν ὅτι χαλεπόν ἐστιν ὃ μέλλω ποιεῖν, ἀνδρὸς ἀρετὴν διὰ λόγων ἐγκωμιάζειν. Σημεῖον δὲ μέγιστον· περὶ μὲν γὰρ ἄλλων πολλῶν καὶ παντοδαπῶν λέγειν τολμῶσιν οἱ περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν ὄντες, περὶ δὲ τῶν τοιούτων οὐδεὶς πώποτ' αὐτῶν συγγράφειν ἐπεχείρησεν. For my gloss "philosophical purveyors of *logos,*" cf. § 9 τοῖς δὲ περὶ τοὺς λόγους, in opposition to the encomia by poets mentioned in § 4: οἱ δὲ περὶ τὴν μουσικὴν καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀγωνίας ὄντες, itself opposed to ὁ δὲ λόγος.

[36] U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, "Lesefrüchte" *Hermes* (1900) detects an implicit refutation of Isocrates' boast in Aristotle's *Rhet*. 1368a17 (on an encomium to Hippolochus of Thessaly). But Aristotle routinely praises the speech at 1399a6. More on *Evagoras* in Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (Cambridge, Mass. 1971) 46 and Nightingale (1995) esp. 98-99 with n. 16 and generally of forms of encomia at the time, 94-104. On Isocrates' claim see the essays by Sykutris ("Isokrates' *Evagoras")*, Münscher ("Isokrates' *Evagoras")* and G. Misch ("Isokrates' Autobiographie") in *Isokrates*, Wege der Forschung 351, ed. F. Seck (Darmstadt 1976)

[37] Cf. Thuc. 2.35.2, 45.1, with a saying in Socrates' epitaphios: *Menex*. 235d, cf. *Rhet*. 1415b31. See Race (1987) 133-5 for Pindaric precedents, including the reluctance to praise the living.

I use the term sub-genre because "Apology" literature continued to generate new forms, such as Isocrates' *Antidosis*, whose "novelty" (§1) consists in its being a "mixed *logos*" (§12), but we should not be too systematic about terminology here. What people's ways of talking suggest is that there were a number of specific *logoi* genres—rule-bound speeches: An important part of the meaning of Socratic logoi was to distinguish this form of writing from others on offer. Wilamowitz mentions "Simonidean *logoi"* and "Aesopic *logoi*" (Rhet. 2. 1393a30). Each form of discourse promised a certain ethos (wise and controversial for Simonides, tricky and table-turning for Aesop). These are not so much genres as brand names, and Plato let's us notice many other such genres and sometimes their names. Such as "love speeches," such as Lysias' text that Phaedrus is studying; the terms were not iron clad. We have noted *erôtikoi logoi*[38] (Pol. 1262b11) and (*Rhet.* 1415b31) *epitaphioi*. There were countless other discourses that Plato is modeling such as *protreptikoi logoi*[39] or encomia.[40] Consider the two speeches in *Laches* of Nicias and Laches for and against the teaching of fighting in armor (*hoplomakhia*).

I suspect there were Socratic logoi too: I take *ta Sôkratika* at Rhet. 1393b5 to be Socratic sayings,[41] abounding in analogies between parallels between humans and animals. Perhaps there was even a sort of *chreia* literature about Socrates—memorable sayings of his in memorable circumstances could perhaps be the common source of Socrates' exchange with Meletus at Plato *Apol.* 127c and Aristotle *Rhet*. 1419a8.

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[38] Cf. Lasserre, François. 1944. "Erôtikoi logoi." MH 1: 169-178.
[39] Cf. Gigon and N. Rynearson.
[40] Cf. Andrea Wilson Nightingale, "The Folly of Praise: Plato's Critique of Encomiastic Discourse in the Lysis and Symposium" *CQ* 43 (1993) 112-130

[41] Cf. Hirzel p. 84.

But "Socratic literature also included apologies, memorabilia, symposia and so forth. Plato played a main role (perhaps the main role) in making Socratic logos equivalent to dialogue.

The numerous *Defense Speeches for Socrates* (including, in the fourth century, Plato, Xenophon, Lysias, Theodectes, and Demetrius of Phalerum) are another sign of the involvement of Socratic literature with rhetoric. This is not to say that the popular genre[42] of *Apologies* was the typical or the source of Socratic speeches (though Socratic apologies began early: Polycrates' *Accusation* is reckoned among the earliest Socratic texts).[43] Comparing the prologues of Xenophon and Plato also shows that part of the competition was in coming up with an explanation of how Socrates, that supreme talker, failed to secure his own acquittal (cf. *Mem.* 4.8.5, 8). Writing the defense speech for the most unexpected loser in court history has something in common with Gorgias' defense of *Helen* or *Palamedes*.

And here the most obvious difference between such speeches and the *Apology of Socrates* reveals, I think, a basic contribution that forensic fictions made to Socratic literature. Unlike Helen, Socrates was a contemporary. To write Socratic literature, then, meant accepting certain constraints of plausibility. This was no war to recover the authentic man (and became ever less so as eye-witnesses dwindled from the audience—Aristotle was born in 384). The very multiplicity of *Apologies* (or for that matter, of

[42] Thucydides (8.68.3) measures Antiphon's defense as "the best defense speech on a capital charge that I know." Cf. Olof Gigon, "Xenophons Apologie des Sokrates," MH 3 (1946) 210-45

[43] See most recently, Gabriel Danzig, "Apologizing for Socrates," *TAPA* 133 (2003) 281–321, with references on 285. L. Rosetti, "Alla ricerca dei logoi Sokratikoi perduti (II)," *Rivista di Studi Classici* 23 (1975) 87-99 on Lysias' *Apology of Socrates* (cf. DL 2.40-41) dating it a little after 393 in response to Polycrates.

Alcibiades's,[44]or *Menexenus's*) made the game about something else. And in the process of writers finding out what that "else" could be, the blend of fictitious speech and historical personage endowed this eponymous figure of the genre with a quasi-real / quasi-mythological status.

From a formal point of view the greatest step the Socratics took may be thought to be question and answer format.[45] But of course one might rather ask, who would not write dialogues after Homer's heroic "speakers of words," after the agons of tragedy and comedy, and the antilogies of the sophists and the speech-riddled historians? The uncanny a-historicity of dialogue, its willful if subtle denials of its own credibility,[46] must be traced to this source, to the fictitious orations behind the *Apology*.

[So in general, Socratic literature might be described as a by-preoduct of the writing down of eristic.< 10 Minute]

To derive Socratic dialogue from fourth-century sophistic oratory may be surprising[47] because literary historians, beginning with Aristotle, have been thrown off by suggestions of these texts that their true rivals were the poets and the great credence they commanded. But it is another aspect of the self-presentation of these gentlemanly prose writers that they would rather be seen as assaulting the citadel of poetry than squabbling over *logoi*.[48] Both Plato and Isocrates may seem to write prose that raids the Muses' arsenal: we have seen that Aristotle found the Socratic *logoi* to be like poetry in

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[44] Apart from Plato's *Alcibiades* I (and Alcibiades' speech in Plato's *Symposium)*, we know of pseudo-Plato *Alcibiades* II, and *Alcibiades*'s by Aeschines of Sphettus and Antisthenes.

[45] One can compare *Dissoi logoi* 1.12-14 below.

[46] Good remarks on this in Herman, Momigliano, Kahn (on Xenophon).

[47] On predecessors, see Schmidt-Stahlin 3.1 219-21, Laborderie 13-42, Hirzel I.2-67.

[48] On dialogue and poetry see Laborderie, 53-66.

important respects, and that he judged Plato's style "half poetic" is well known (fr. 73 Rose = DL 3.37).[49] This appraisal is not simply due to Plato's beautiful writing, but reflects the fact that these speech-writers often would assert the merits of their works against poetry. Who said: "If you took the meter away from the most admired poems, leaving only their thought [*dianoia*] and words, they would have a far inferior reputation than they now enjoy"? Isocrates did in *Evagoras*,[50] but so did Plato (*Gorgias* 505c). The sought-out antagonism is expressed *in nuce* in the paradoxical locution that courses through contemporary prose writers: people who lavished great care on their texts are dismissed as mere "poets of speeches" (ποιητής λόγων).[51] So Isocrates was ever aspiring to a "more poetic and more embroidered style" (*Antid.* § 47),[52] and boasted that his *Evagoras*, even foregoing the advantages of poetry, would make his subject "always-remembered" (ἀείμνηστον, *Evag.* § 4) as poets long had promised.[53]

These heroic wars on poetry were actually dressed battles among prose genres for prestige: this emerges from a passage in which Isocrates gives us his own diaeresis of

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[49] DL 3.37 (= Fr. 73 Rose): "the form of Plato's writings half way between poetry and prose" φησὶ δ' <Ἀριστοτέλης> τὴν τῶν λόγων ἰδέαν αὐτοῦ (Πλάτωνος) μεταξὺ ποιήματος εἶναι καὶ πεζοῦ λόγου.) See Else (1957) 42-3, rightly arguing that this passage has nothing to do with the *mimetic* status of Platonic dialogues. For a collection of ancient attestations to Plato's "poetic" qualities, see Gudeman on 1447b11.

[50] *Evag.* 11: ἦν γάρ τις τῶν ποιημάτων τῶν εὐδοκιμούντων τὰ μὲν ὀνόματα καὶ τὰς διανοίας καταλίπῃ, τὸ δὲ μέτρον διαλύσῃ, φανήσεται πολὺ καταδεέστερα τῆς δόξης ἧς νῦν ἔχομεν περὶ αὐτῶν. Ὅμως δὲ καίπερ τοσοῦτον πλεονεκτούσης τῆς ποιήσεως, οὐκ ὀκνητέον, ἀλλ' ἀπο- πειρατέον τῶν λόγων ἐστὶν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτο δυνήσονται, τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας εὐλογεῖν μηδὲν χεῖρον τῶν ἐν ταῖς ᾠδαῖς καὶ τοῖς μέτροις ἐγκωμιαζόντων.

[51] Alcidamas *Soph.* § 34; cf. Plato, *Euthyd.* 305B, *Phaedr.* 234E, Isocrates *Soph.* § 15, *Antid.* § 192.

[52] Cf. *Panathenaic Oration* §§ 2, 135, 271.

[53] Cf. *Antid.* § 165-66: Ἔτι δὲ δεινότερον, εἰ Πίνδαρον μὲν τὸν ποιητὴν οἱ πρὸ ἡμῶν γεγονότες ὑπὲρ ἑνὸς μόνον ῥήματος, ὅτι τὴν πόλιν ἔρεισμα τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὠνό- μασεν, οὕτως ἐτίμησαν ὥστε καὶ πρόξενον ποιήσασθαι καὶ δωρεὰν μυρίας αὐτῷ δοῦναι δραχμὰς, ἐμοὶ δὲ πολὺ πλείω καὶ κάλλιον ἐγκεκωμιακότι καὶ τὴν πόλιν καὶ τοὺς προγόνους μηδ' ἀσφαλῶς ἐγγένοιτο καταβιῶναι τὸν ἐπίλοιπον χρόνον. On Isocrates' relationship with Pindar (*Antid.* 166) cf. William H. Race, "Pindaric Encomium and Isokrates' Evagoras," *TAPA* 117 (1987), pp. 131-155.

prose genres. The passage is in another of his genre-stretchers, the *Antidosis* or *Apologia of Isocrates* in which he imagines himself facing a charge that his writings have corrupted the youth of Athens (§ 56).[54] Isocrates' defense includes a passage vindicating the honor of prose, which he insists has as many genres[55] (τρόποι τῶν λόγων, ἰδέαι τῶν λόγων) as poetry,[56] and starts naming them.[57] It is an odd and admittedly an incomplete list, and is included mainly as a foil to Isocrates' own specialty, the Panhellenic faux-oration,[58] but still it is interesting as a list: antiquarian genealogies, scholarly inquiry into poets, history; finally comes a revealing genre, "those who have occupied themselves with questioning and answering, which they call 'antilogistics'."[59] Surely this is the place that Isocrates would have classified the Socratic *logoi*, including Plato's prose,[60] for he was never one

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[54] Nightingale 29.

[55] For this sense of *ideai* see A. E. Taylor, *Varia Socratica* (Oxford 1911) 208.

[56] On *ideiai* in Isocrates see J. B. Lidov, "The meaning of *ideia* in Isocrates," La Parola del passato, 38 (1983) 273-287 and, for the pre-Platonic writers generally, A.E. Taylor, *Varia Socratica, First series* (Oxford 1911) 178-269, on Isocrates, pp. 201-212.

Aristotle possibly composed a similar *sunkrisis* in *On Poets* Fr. 70 (= DL 8.57) when comparing Empedocles to Homer "in his expression, use of metaphor *and other poetic devices*": ἐν δὲ τῷ Περὶ ποιητῶν φησιν ὅτι καὶ Ὁμηρικὸς ὁ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς καὶ δεινὸς περὶ τὴν φράσιν γέγονεν, μεταφορητικός τε ὢν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις τοῖς περὶ ποιητικὴν ἐπιτεύγμασι χρώμενος. The topos comparing the advantages of prose and poetry is continued in Cicero *Orat*. 67-8.

[57] *Antidosis* §§ 45-47: Πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖνο δεῖ μαθεῖν ὑμᾶς, ὅτι τρόποι τῶν λόγων εἰσὶν οὐκ ἐλάττους ἢ τῶν μετὰ μέτρου ποιημάτων. Οἱ μὲν γὰρ τὰ γένη τὰ τῶν ἡμιθέων ἀναζητοῦντες τὸν βίον τὸν αὑτῶν κατέτριψαν, οἱ δὲ περὶ τοὺς ποιητὰς ἐφιλοσόφησαν, ἕτεροι δὲ τὰς πράξεις τὰς ἐν τοῖς πολέμοις συναγαγεῖν ἐβουλήθησαν, ἄλλοι δέ τινες περὶ τὰς ἐρωτήσεις καὶ τὰς ἀποκρίσεις γεγόνασιν, οὓς ἀντιλογικοὺς καλοῦσιν. Εἴη δ' ἂν οὐ μικρὸν ἔργον εἰ πάσας τις τὰς ἰδέας τὰς τῶν λόγων ἐξαριθμεῖν ἐπιχειρήσειεν· ἧς δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ προσήκει, ταύτης μνησθεὶς ἐάσω τὰς ἄλλας.

[58] *Antid* 46: "For there are men who, albeit they are not strangers to the branches which I have mentioned, have chosen rather to write discourses, not for private disputes, but which deal with the world of Hellas, with affairs of state, and are appropriate to be delivered at the Pan-Hellenic assemblies--discourses which, as everyone will agree, are more akin to works composed in rhythm and set to music than to the speeches which are made in court."

[59] ἄλλοι δέ τινες περὶ τὰς ἐρωτήσεις καὶ τὰς ἀποκρίσεις γεγόνασιν, οὓς ἀντιλογικοὺς καλοῦσιν. On "antilogies," cf. R. Thomas, 252-3, 264-7. On forensic "questioning" (*erôtêsis*), cf. Ari. *Rhet*. 3.18.1, Cope *Introduction* 362-3, E. Carawan, "*Erôtêsis:* Questioning and the Courts*" GRBS* 24 (1983) 214. Brief passages of cross-examination, designed to lead the opponents or witness into absurdity, occur in Andocides 1.14, Lysias 12.25, 13.30-3, 22.5. Cf. the short q-and-a passage in *Dissoi logoi* 1.12-14 which Edwin S. Ramage, "An Early Trace of Socratic Dialogue," *AJP* 82 (1961) pp. 418-424 calls Socratic.

[60] Taylor (1911) 208-9; Blass Vol. 2, 23. Cf. *Sophists* 1-3; *Helen* 2 (tracing contemporary eristic back to Protagoras), 6; *Antid*. 265.

to make a fine distinction between Socratic *logoi* and eristic.[61] The one time Isocrates uses the term *dialogos* it refers to "eristic dialogues" that have become a part of contemporary education but which older people find intolerable.[62] So Isocrates sets up a system of genres in which his own serious, ambitious pan-hellenic compositions, more like works of poetry than forensic rhetoric (*Antid* § 46).

How many genres of prose there were, then, was an active, and quite loaded subject of discussion before Aristotle, and I conclude with a masterful diaeresis from Plato. To be precise, this is a list not of prose genres but of genres *of writing*, part of the discussion in *Phaedrus* of what makes a text worth keeping. The *envoi* to *Phaedrus* is a message that the only worthwhile texts are the ones composed with knowledge,[63] and it is interesting to note to whom Plato has it sent (278b-c): "Go tell Lysias," he begins, "and anyone else who writes prose works (συντίθησι λόγους), and Homer, and anyone who has composed poetry, either bare or in song form (τις ἄλλος αὖ ποίησιν ψιλὴν ἢ ἐν ᾠδῇ συντέθηκε), and thirdly Solon and anyone who has written political prose, all the while calling his writings 'laws'" (ὅστις ἐν πολιτικοῖς λόγοις νόμους ὀνομάζων συγγράμματα ἔγραψεν)….[64] Plato begins with Lysias, who, as author of the rhetorical

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[61] See Norlin p. xxi. The Platonic texts are such as *Phaedo* 90b-91a, *Sophist* 216b, and *Euthydemus*.

[62] *Panath*. 26: Τῆς μὲν οὖν παιδείας τῆς ὑπὸ τῶν προγόνων καταλειφθείσης τοσούτου δέω καταφρονεῖν ὥστε καὶ τὴν ἐφ' ἡμῶν κατασταθεῖσαν ἐπαινῶ, λέγω δὲ τήν τε γεωμετρίαν καὶ τὴν ἀστρολογίαν καὶ τοὺς διαλόγους τοὺς ἐριστικοὺς καλουμένους, οἷς οἱ μὲν νεώτεροι μᾶλλον χαίρουσι τοῦ δέοντος, τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων οὐδεὶς ἔστιν ὅστις <ἂν> ἀνεκτοὺς αὐτοὺς εἶναι φήσειεν.

[63] "[278c] and heard words which they told us to repeat to Lysias and anyone else who composed speeches, and to Homer or any other who has composed poetry with or without musical accompaniment, and third to Solon and whoever has written political compositions which he calls laws: If he has composed his writings with knowledge of the truth, and is able to support them by discussion of that which he has written, and has the power to show by his own speech that the written words are of little worth, such a man ought not 278d] to derive his title from such writings, but from the serious pursuit which underlies them."

[64] *Phdr*. 278b-c: Λυσίᾳ τε καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος <u>συντίθησι λόγους</u>, καὶ Ὁμήρῳ καὶ εἴ τις ἄλλος αὖ <u>ποίησιν ψιλὴν ἢ ἐν ᾠδῇ</u> συντέθηκε, τρίτον δὲ Σόλωνι καὶ ὅστις <u>ἐν πολιτικοῖς λόγοις</u> νόμους ὀνομάζων συγγράμματα ἔγραψεν. Cf. the comparison of Homer and Tyrtaeus with Solon and others who have

speech on love, has sparked the dialogue; but here he represents the class of writers of prose (*logoi*), for the next class Plato addresses is poets: these are broken down in a way very prophetic (reminiscent?) of the *Poetics*, distinguishing "bare" poetry without melody from "song."[65] To the prose-poetry dyad is added Solon, an eponymous figure, as are Lysias and Homer, representing law writing.[66] Adding law-writers may seem to make for a funny ensemble, but Plato is pointing out that lawmaking is decidedly also a matter of writing, of setting words in stone.[67] As such, it is an art that may have intercourse with other writings—prose or verse—that give ideas about the way people ought to live. The parallelism between this text and Aristotle continues when, having collected this list of writers in prose and in poetry, Plato proposes his own revision of generic terminology: writers who write with proper understanding, they can call themselves "philosophers" and drop whatever title (ἐπωνυμίαν, 278c7) they may have from their writings. But if, on the other hand, they are merely good at cutting and pasting, they can keep the (now degraded) titles of poet, prose-writer, or law-writer (ποιητὴν ἢ λόγων συγγραφέα ἢ νομογράφον, 278e). Plato's attempt to re-name writers by the knowledge with which they write rather than on the basis of the form their writings take is very close to Aristotle's attempt to defy current terminology to re-define poetry as kinds of *mimesis*. There is a great deal in a name, even an ill-fitting generic term. And both Plato and

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written rules for the conduct of life: Laws 8.858E.

On Plato's characterizations of the eristics, see A. E. Taylor *Varia Socratica* (Oxford 1911) 91-128.

[65] Cf. Ari. *Pol*. 1339b31: τὴν δὲ μουσικὴν πάντες εἶναί φαμεν τῶν ἡδίστων, καὶ ψιλὴν οὖσαν καὶ μετὰ μελῳδίας.

[66] It cannot be that Plato is thinking broadly of constitutional literature, for he is clear that the writings in question are called "laws." One may compare, perhaps, the *Nomos* by Theodectes: *Rhet*. 1398b5, 1399b1 or some text of Protagoras' Thurii laws, but Malcolm Schofield suggests to me Plato has in mind that category of text that he will contribute to later with his own *Nomoi*.

[67] For the association of lawmaking as a sort of law-writing, *Phaedrus* 257e; cf. 258c where one with the power of a Lycurgus or a Solon is said to be an "immortal *logographos*" Isocrates *Antid*. 79-83 compares his own *logoi* to laws.

Aristotle go at these terms to show that the nature of prose writing is ill understood in their time, as is its relation to poetry.

Prose dialogues first appeared in Greece among Socrates' followers not long after his death, and he surely inspired their composers. But the new form also had to make sense in its own time, and interest a public with its own ideas about the various literary forms and their various functions. More particularly, a good part of the public, and especially the young had become avid consumers of rhetorical speeches, and in sheer numbers probably the majority of new prose texts that were produced were *logoi*, speeches, of one sort or another. While many of these speeches were composed by writers who found it desirable to adopt personae that were unserious or ironic, some writers sought to use speech (*logoi*) to engage the mind of the city more directly; they were "political" writers in the broad sense that encompassed ethics and encomium as well as lawmaking. Among these writers, the Socratics found that conversations (*logoi*) offered opportunities to address the issues they wanted while avoiding offensive personas.[68] Socrates, of course, can still be given credit in the larger sense that, as he brought philosophy down from the heavens to the agora, he made some of his associates passionate about writing and reading on topics in ethics and social relations that had not been recorded in prose before. But that was just to pose the problem to which dialogue emerged as the answer. Without going further into the ways that different Socratics used the form to produce different personas, I think it fair to say that Socratic dialogue should be regarded more as a product of fourth-century experiments in written prose than as some organic outgrowth of the dead Classical Civilization of the fifth century. In tracking

[68] Nightingale raises the question of the author's status in dialogue: 165

that emergence, we should keep our eyes fixed, as Aristotle knew, on the powers of *logos*.