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I.

The final section of Plato's *Phaedrus* that criticizes writing and praises oral speech has long been a source of interest for commentators (274b6-279c8). They have focused especially on two related topics. First, Socrates' argument that the spoken word is superior to the written word is of inherent philosophical interest. Second, the contrast between Socrates' criticism of writing and the fact that Plato wrote dialogues has been a fruitful tension for understanding Plato's own approach to the written word. If Socrates criticizes writing within a written Platonic dialogue, perhaps Plato understood the dialogue form as somehow overcoming these limitations of writing (cf. Burger 1981; Cole 1991; Ferrari 1987; Griswold 1986).

However, this section of the *Phaedrus* has received relatively little attention with respect to its relation to the writings of Plato's own contemporaries on the contrast between writing and speech. Socrates' remarks on writing and speech are part of an ongoing conversation in Athens about the relative value of speech and writing. Both the orator Alcidamas in his work "On those who write written speeches" and the speechwriter Isocrates in "Against the Sophists" address the nature of speech and its relation to the written word, as well as the effect of writing upon the writer.[i] Analyzing these two other written works can assist us in better understanding the *Phaedrus*, for they allow us to see the other sides of the conversation in which Plato is engaged. In particular, they show the ways in which not only Plato, but also each of these other Greek thinkers, was carving out a distinct notion of philosophical rhetoric.

My aim in this paper is not to offer a comprehensive account of all that could be said about speech and writing in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Instead, I focus on Alcidamas', Isocrates', and Plato's competing conceptions of philosophy, particularly how each links philosophy to good rhetoric.[ii] Plato shares some concerns with his contemporaries as to the debilitating effect of writing upon memory and the flexibility of the speaker, and the primacy of the spoken word. I suggest that Plato's distinct contribution to the discussion of speech and writing is his claim that philosophical rhetoric, whether oral or written, encourages a love of the forms. In making his argument, Plato refashions some of the ideas and images about speech found in Alcidamas and Isocrates.[iii]

Alcidamas was a rhetorician who worked from the end of the fifth century BC to approximately the first third of the fourth. Like Isocrates, he was a student of Gorgias (although Isocrates is also said to have been a "student" of Socrates as well). Although it is impossible to date Alcidamas' work with exactitude, one commentator places the date of composition at 390 BC, approximately the same year as Isocrates' "Against the Sophist."[iv] Plato's *Phaedrus* cannot be dated with any precision, both because so much of the interpretation of chronology depends upon the interpreter's understanding of the Platonic corpus as a whole, and because Plato is said to have revised his dialogues throughout his lifetime. Still, those who date the dialogues place it around his later middle period; this would place it shortly after the accepted dates of composition for these other works.[v] Because it is difficult to order these three written works reliably, I shall not make my interpretation rest upon an exact chronology. Regardless of whether Alcidamas, or Plato, or Isocrates was the "first" to start the conversation, my aim here is to show understanding Plato's concept of philosophy in the *Phaedrus* is enhanced by

consideration of Plato's contemporaries. However, as I will note below, the way in which Plato builds upon and combines images found in Alcidamas and Isocrates is suggestive of the possibility that Plato writes in response to them or to participants in a larger oral debate in which these images were used.

II.

In "On those who write written speeches" (also called "On the Sophists"), Alcidamas provides a defense of the spoken word over the written word. Rather than summarizing the whole of Alicidamas' argument, I shall focus on three salient features that prove to be helpful for illuminating Plato's understanding of writing and philosophical rhetoric in the last sections of the *Phaedrus*. First, Alcidamas argues that genuine λόγος is spoken rather than written by its very nature. Oral speech not only better achieves its practical aims than the written word and improves the human person; it also has the status of being an original of which the written word is only a representation (28). Second, like Socrates, Alcidamas uses the image of good speech as like a "living thing." A good speech must be "ensouled" and lively so that it might better adapt to the changing circumstances of the surrounding world. Third, Alcidamas uses the vocabulary of philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry in order to build up a normative picture of philosophy as a practice centered upon a person's capacity to speak well with attention to καιρός (the opportune moment).

The central thesis of Alicidamas' essay is that oral speech is superior to writing for practical reasons. But these practical reasons turn out to be grounded in an account of λόγος in which spoken words are primary and written words are mere representations of

spoken words (27-28). In the second section of his essay (3-8), Alcidamas claims that mastering writing is easier than mastering good speech, and therefore a less worthy activity. He particularly emphasizes that the adept speaker must possess the ability to speak about whatever topic might present itself at the moment, i.e., the capacity for καιρός (3). Writers, in contrast, are able to take their time to mull over words, to copy phrases they have heard or read elsewhere, and to make changes in light of their own and others' reflections on their writing (4). Because good writing is easier than good speech, it is a less worthy thing to pursue. Alcidamas focuses on the difficulty of speaking and reacting extemporaneously with the appropriate words, in contrast to the leisured task of revision. To this extent, Alcidamas identifies oral speech with the excellence of an active, political man rather than a more private intellectual.

However, the longest section of Alcidamas' essay focuses on the greater utility of the spoken λόγος and the negative effect of practicing writing on the human soul (9-26). Alcidamas reminds us that the spoken word is of great use in a variety of circumstances: public addresses, private gatherings, court, and many other situations. There are too many cases in which the swiftness of speech is necessary, for example, in the courtroom "when the water clock is running," or in the Assembly when the herald asks if anyone wishes to speak on a political matter (11). The written word is not only inconvenient, but also less effective: Alcidamas notes that a written speech that sounds as though it is written in advance is less likely to be trusted by an audience than a spoken one. Although one might attempt to write in an extemporaneous style, Alcidamas asks, who would be better suited to imitate such a style than one who can also speak well in the moment (12-13)? He adds that one cannot have a written speech ready and prepared for every topic and, in fact,

practicing writing actively hinders the ability to speak well, as one becomes accustomed to the leisure of writing and reworking speeches (14-16). Alcidamas elaborates:

> But, just as those who have been released from their chains after a long period cannot adopt a mode of walking like other people but keep being drawn back to those actions and patterns of movement with which they had to walk when they were tied up, so, in the same way, writing, rendering processes in the mind slow and exercising the practice or speaking in an opposite set of habits, puts the soul too in a state of perplexity and bondage and gets in the way of all that easy flow to be found in extempore speeches (17).

Here Alcidamas moves away from the utility of speechwriting to writing's effect upon the soul. The writer is not as free and as flexible as the speaker; while the latter must adapt his speaking constantly to the changing circumstances of the moment, and so gains a sort of suppleness of speech, the writer becomes just the opposite through his practice, more and more dependent upon his need for time, precision in wording, rhythm, and what Alcidamas calls a "slow mental process" (βραδείᾳ τῇ τῆς διανοίας) (16). Alcidamas' use of this image of prisoners—excluded from the rest of the world and its social links—evokes a sense of the separation of the isolated writer from his larger social world. Written speeches can be composed apart from other people, while the spoken word frequently takes place in the presence of others and so immediately links the speaker to his community.

Alcidamas also examines the destructive effects of writing on memory. Those who memorize written speeches do so with great difficulty and often find themselves embarrassed when they forget portions of a speech. The extemporaneous speaker, in contrast, need only remember the few basic points that he wishes to make, and then express them in the appropriate words as the moment demands (18). If he should forget a particular point, he can go on to the next one with little or notice on his audience's part,

and even return to it later if he recalls what he had intended to say. Those who memorize written speeches often break off their speech in silence, helpless (19-21). Again, Alcidamas' aim is to emphasize the freedom, independence, and increased power of the able speaker in relation to the political community.

The extemporaneous speaker can also adapt to his audience in a way that writers cannot: for example, he can lengthen or shorten his speech depending upon how his audience is responding, or better make use of their desires (ἐπιθυμίαι) (22-23). In the courtroom, he can add in a new idea if it occurs to him as his opponent is speaking, while those who work from written speeches cannot adapt them to new inclusions due to the precision (ἀκρίβεια) of their written words (24-26). Alcidamas concludes by asking who in their right mind would take up the practice of writing when it sets itself in opposition to so many desirable things, unlike other arts that improve human life?[vi] In short, it is less the *product* of a particular speech than the *process* of speaking that is important to living well. Alcidamas' main concern is with the effect of the spoken and written λόγος on the human person living in a dynamic social and political context. The practice of good speech improves us as human beings by stretching our flexibility, adaptability, and memory. Moreover, the practice of speaking orally gives the human person a freedom to respond to the social world to which he belongs as a member of the political community, while writing produces a kind of bondage that can potentially place one at a greater distance from political engagement.

Alcidamas then shifts away from practical and psychological questions and towards a brief reflection on the nature (φύσις) of writing. He reflects on the status of writing as a mere imitation of the spoken word:

> And I do not think it is right that speeches written down (γεγραμμένους) should even be called speeches (λόγους), but should be thought of as images (εἴδωλα) and patterns (σχήματα) and imitations (μιμήματα) of speeches, and we could reasonably have the same opinion about them as we have about bronze statues and stone monuments and depictions of animals. For, just as these are imitations of real bodies (μιμήματα τῶν ἀληθινῶν) and give delight to the view but offer no use in human life, in the same way the written speech, having a single form (ἑνὶ σκήματι) and arrangement, produces certain striking effects when it is conned from the book, but, being fixedly unable to respond to critical moments (τῶν καιρῶν), is of no use to those who have got hold of it. Just as real bodies (ἀληθινὰ σώματα) present an appearance far inferior to that of fine statues but yet are many times more useful for getting things done, so too the speech spoken straight from the heart (τῆς διανοίας) on the spur of the moment has a soul in it (ἐμψυχός) and is alive and follows upon events and is like those real bodies, while the written speech whose nature corresponds to a representation of the real thing lacks any kind of living power (ἐνεργείας) (27-28).

Alcidamas' use of terms such as εἴδωλα, σκήματα, and μιμήματα is fascinating for its Platonic overtones: as in much of Plato's writing, Alcidamas suggests that artistic and poetic objects are removed from the realities that they imitate (cf. Plato, *Republic* Book IX). Just as statues are delightful but only imitations of the reality that they are shaped after, Alcidamas says that written speeches are mere images and patterns of a more fundamental reality. That is, rather than regarding writing as simply a *different* kind of speech, Alcidamas presents the nature (φύσις) of written speech as a mere copy of “true" λόγοι (28). His reasons for giving spoken words primary status are concerned with their capacity to attend to καιρός. Just as a statue looks beautiful but always remains the same and so never possesses the beauty of the living and moving body, written speeches are amusements, but never as beautiful as the "ensouled" speech of the moment. The spoken word has vitality altogether lacking in writing; the responsiveness and lifelike quality of the spoken word that give speech primacy.

For Alcidamas, λόγος is by its very nature oral. Alcidamas is not willing to grant written speech the same status as the spoken word, which is not simply more useful, but also more "real" than its counterpart in writing. Alcidamas' language is striking on this point: he says of the spoken word that it "follows upon events and is like those real bodies [τοῖς ἀληθέσιν ἀφωμοίωται σώμασιν]" while "[t]he written speech whose nature corresponds to a representation of the real thing lacks any kind of living power [ὁ δὲ γεγραμμένος εἰκόνι λόγου τὴν φύσιν ὁμοίαν ἔχων ἁπάσης ἐνεργείας ἄμοιρος καθέστηκεν] (28).

That is, Alcidamas claims that oral speech is like a genuine living being, and written things like an imitation. At its best, spoken λόγος is a way of responding to diverse circumstances in the political and private realms and a way of eliciting active engagement from others. At its best, the written λόγος is merely a reminder of the capacities of a speaker; it shores up the few shortcomings of oral speech but can never substitute for the "real" or "true" λόγος itself. Alcidamas even suggests that the term λόγος is not quite appropriate for describing writing in the passage quoted at 27-28 quoted above: he states that written speech is better described as "things that have been written" (γεγραμμένοι), than as speeches (λόγοι). Alcidamas never addresses the further question as to how a λόγος is connected to the things about which it concerns itself, i.e., what the relationship is between objects in the world and our words about them.[vii] Perhaps this is because Alcidamas does not see the primary purpose of λόγος as descriptive, or as knowledge seeking: rather, the aims of λόγοι are to affect the desires (ἐπιθυμίαι) of others (3); to avoid helplessness and inactivity (8-9; 21); to be honored (9); to help those who want to win lawsuits (25-26); to achieve a great reputation (29-34);

and, in general, to be capable of responding to one's surroundings. In other words, learning how to speak well gives one a degree of power and influence in a changing world and improves one's soul. Plato's Socrates, too, will emphasize the ill effects of writing on the soul, and the benefits of the spoken word for the human person who practices oral speech; however, he will add to this a concern with seeking knowledge as part of the improvement of the human soul.

Alcidiamas uses the image of a living thing as a model for good speech. As can be seen in the extended quote above (27-28), Alcidamas uses the image in order to emphasize particular characteristics of speech: its flexibility and responsiveness to changing circumstances in its environment; its temporal nature; and its being "alive" or "ensouled" (28). Like a living thing, oral speech can move and change in response to others. If an audience is too tired, excited, or passive, a written speech can adapt its content and style to affect its audience differently. Alcidamas' claim that oral speech is "ensouled" (ἐμψυχός) is especially intriguing. Speeches are, of course, ensouled insofar as the spoken word is directly connected to a living speaker who has a soul. A written speech, in contrast, may have been written by someone other than the speaker himself, or may reflect the ideas of many individuals who contributed to the work. However, Alcidamas does not just describe the speaker, but speech *itself* as ensouled. His choice of words to some extent detaches the speech from the speaker. To be ensouled here means to be active in the way living beings respond in the moment to their surroundings, i.e., to possess καιρός (28*)*. Spoken words are like living things insofar as they are temporal, in movement, have energy (ἐνεργεία) and respond to the changing dynamics of audience and circumstances.

A third significant feature of Alcidimas' essay is that he associates philosophy with the spoken word and sophistry with inferior speech. Alcidamas opens his essay by criticizing "some of those who are called sophists [σοφιστῶν]" for their inadequacy (1). His main point of attack is to assert that these so-called sophists regard their own ability to write speeches as the whole of rhetoric, when in fact they have only mastered a part of it, and a secondary part at that. Although the opening paragraph of Alcidamas' speech is brief, it is of particular interest to us here for its inclusion of the terms σοφιστης (sophist), ῥητορική (rhetoric), ποιητής (poet), and φιλοσοφία (philosophy) all in rapid succession. What each of these terms means and how they are related to one another is an issue of considerable dispute in the fourth century.[viii] Alcidamas uses these terms for his own purposes in order to defend his own activity against other practices and beliefs that he sees as inferior.

Alcidamas does not use the word "sophist" as a disparaging term in this opening paragraph. Rather, he criticizes those who are called sophists and implies that this name is too *high* a term of regard. His speech begins:

> Since some of those who are called sophists (τινες τῶν καλουμένων σοφιστῶν) have neglected an enquiring approach (ἱστορίας) and training (παιδείας) and have no more experience of being able to make speeches (δύνασθαι λέγειν) than ordinary people, but, having practiced the writing of speeches and demonstrating their cleverness (δεικνύντες) through texts (βιβλίων), give themselves airs (τήν αὐτὼν σοφίαν) and think much of themselves (μέγα φρονοῦσι) and, having acquired a very small part of an orator's ability (ῥητορικῆς), lay claim to the art as a whole (ὅλης τῆς τέχνης), this is the reason for my setting out to make a case against written speeches…." (1).

Alcidamas qualifies the term "sophist" in order to make his criticism: these speechwriters think of themselves as possessing σοφία, but in fact are only clever and familiar with

books. The term "sophist" becomes a way of emphasizing the pretensions to wisdom that these intellectuals have in contrast to the much more modest evaluation that they deserve.

Alcidamas suggests that there is a much larger sort of education and realm of learning that these intellectuals neglect in favoring the written word alone. In particular, he asserts that they lack ἱστορία, παιδεία, and the whole of the τέχνη that they claim to practice. Although not fleshed out by Alcidamas himself here, each of these terms is of interest for helping us to develop a clearer sense of Alcidamas' meaning. First, his use of the term ἱστορία suggests that these sophists are not sufficiently interested in inquiry. He implies that these writers are too narrow in the scope of their activity, turning inwards towards written speeches and their own pretentions of wisdom, rather than a turning towards the world outside of themselves. Alcidamas' claim that these intellectuals also lack παιδεία suggests a separation of them from the larger Greek world. Since παιδεία refers to a broader cultural education (rather than to formal, technical training), Alcidamas implies that these sophists are "uncultured," out of touch with the traditions and practices of Greek political life. His claim that these thinkers believe themselves to possess the whole of the art of rhetoric when in fact they only possess a part further emphasizes their lack of breadth. Alcidamas also contrasts the poet to the sophist. Again, the term "sophist" is used to point to a high standard of wisdom that these practitioners of writing have failed to attain. Alcidamas says that professional writers cannot justly be given the name of sophist, but ought instead to be called only poets (2). In light of his criticism of writing as a mere image of an original (27-28), his point seems to be that poets merely imitate the real, while speakers are more directly engaged with reality.

Alcidamas' essay is also at least incidentally a defense of a certain vision of φιλοσοφία. Alcidamas uses the language of philosophy in a positive, normative sense twice (2; 15). His first use of φιλοσοφία is in the opening of his speech, when he notes that those who write are deficient in "both oratorical skill and philosophy (ῥητορικῆς και φιλοσοφίας)." He does not explicitly elaborate on the meaning of " φιλοσοφία" but it is clear that rhetoric and philosophy are associated abilities in his presentation. While the sorts of criticisms leveled in Plato's *Gorgias* against ῥητορικῆ as unphilosophical because of its lack of knowledge seem far from Alcidamas' mind here (*Gorg*. 455a ff.), φιλοσοφία is still explicitly opposed to pretensions of wisdom (σοφία). Alcidamas suggests that those who spend their lives writing not only lack wisdom: they do not even love it, because they do not devote enough time to oral speech. Φ*ιλοσοφία* is the pursuit of the ability to speak well in a variety of circumstances. Alcidamas associates true wisdom with excellence in speech and φιλοσοφία with the pursuit of such excellence. Philosophy is not connected to the pursuit of knowing or leading others to know, but rather to the ability to speak with attention to the changing circumstances, i.e., to possess καιρός. The practice of philosophy requires devotion to a life of rhetorical excellence.

Alcidamas' second use of the term φιλοσοφία occurs in the midst of his explanation of the limitations of writing halfway through his speech. There he says:

> And it is a terrible thing if the man who lays claim to philosophy (φιλοσοφίας), promising to educate (παιδεύσειν) others, can demonstrate his wisdom (σοφίαν) if he has his writing table or his book, but, if he is separated from them, is in no better state than the uneducated, and can produce a speech when given time, but on the spur of the moment is more lost for words about something set before him than the man-on-the-street, and professes technical skill in oratory (λόγων μὲν τέχνας ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι) but clearly has in him not even a small capacity for making a speech (15).

This time the discussion is of the person who claims to be a philosopher, not a sophist: but this false philosopher is too dependent upon his writing to be an able speaker. While he believes that he possesses a τέχνη, in fact he lacks any special ability for speeches. Again, the true philosopher according to Alcidamas is the one who can speak well extemporaneously, i.e., who possesses καιρός and who is well educated.[ix] The essay concludes that it is good speakers who possess good judgment (εὖ φρονεῖν) (34). In sum, Alcidamas develops a picture of the philosopher as the rhetor who can respond to his world capably and powerfully, relying upon a good education and practical judgment to guide him in the moment. He is a philosopher, a lover of wisdom *because* he pursues the spoken and not the written λόγος. This ability to speak well engages him in the larger social-political world in which he has been educated.

III.

Isocrates' "Against the Sophists" also takes on the question of the value of speechmaking in relation to philosophy. Socrates mentions Isocrates in passing at the end of the *Phaedrus*. He remarks that Isocrates seems to be superior to Lysias, not only with respect to his speeches but also his character. Socrates states that there is "something philosophical in the man's mind" (279a9-b1). Since Isocrates is still quite young at the time Socrates is speaking,[x] it is implausible for Plato to have Isocrates play a major dramatic role. Still, his mention makes it likely that Plato intends for us as readers to consider where Isocrates' ideas about speech, writing, and philosophy fit into the conversation in the *Phaedrus*. It is therefore worthwhile to compare briefly Isocrates'

views on speechmaking, sophistry, and philosophy to those of Alcidamas and Plato's Socrates.

Isocrates' "Against the Sophists" is a natural counterpart to Alcidamas' "On those who write written speeches," with its basic similarity in structure and in theme (cf. Cole 1990).[xi] Like Alcidamas, Isocrates begins with an immediate attack on the pretensions of many who claim to be teachers:

> If all those who undertook to teach were willing to speak the truth (ἀληθῆ λέγειν) and not make greater promises than they plan to fulfill, they would not have such a bad reputation among the general public. But as it is now, those who dare to make boasts with too little caution have made it appear that those who choose to take it easy are better advised than those who apply themselves to philosophy (τῶν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διατριβόντων). Who would not hate and despise first and foremost those who spend their time in disputes (τῶν περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατριβόντων), pretending to seek the truth (την ἀλήθειαν ζητεῖν) but attempting from the beginning of their lessons to lie?" (1).[xii]

Isocrates' immediate criticisms of the sophists are twofold: first, their claims to teach are too grand, as they make great promises that cannot be kept; second, they do not seek the truth. In contrast, φιλοσοφία is a more difficult activity and more cautious in its claims. The sophists only pretend to seek the truth, while philosophers genuinely seek the truth, even if it is harder to find.[xiii] Isocrates' opposing clauses, " τῶν περὶ τὴν φιλοσοφίαν διατριβόντων″ and " τῶν περὶ τὰς ἔριδας διατριβόντων″ make the contrast even more striking: sophistical teachers are associated with a tendency to spend their time on eristics, while their betters spend one's time on things philosophical. Like Plato, Isocrates contrasts eristics to philosophy, associating the former with deceit and false promises of an easy life, and the latter with truth and a more difficult but rewarding life (cf. Plato, *Euthydemus* 272a7-b1).

Isocrates elaborates upon this initial criticism: while the sophists' claims are great, they charge relatively little for their teaching (only three or four minae), a small fraction of their supposed worth (3-4). Their distrust of their students in how they handle their students' deposits of such money only adds further to the sophists' dishonesty: if they really did teach moral excellence (ἀρετή) and moderation (σωφροσύνη), then they would not need to worry about bad behavior on the part of their students. Isocrates says that he cannot blame those private citizens who see that the sophists earn little, quarrel about inconsistencies in words but not deeds and are incapable of action. These citizens see that those who follow opinions (δόξαι) rather than false claims to knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) fare better (7-8). While Alcidamas associates philosophy with oral speech and sophistry with writing, Isocrates does not think that the distinction can be made so easily. For Isocrates, oral speeches can be unphilosophical and full of impossible promises, and written works (such as Homer's poetry) can be appropriately humble. It is not the form of either oral speech or writing that characterizes good or bad λόγος, but instead a certain kind of humility about what sorts of truth are possible and impossible to attain.

Isocrates gives us further details as to what is problematic in sophistical teaching, as he turns to those who offer skill in political speeches. Again, Isocrates criticizes these teachers for their lack of concern for the truth. They are too concerned with earning money. Their speeches are bad, so bad that a private citizen might write one just as good (9). Furthermore, they claim that the ability to speak well is taught, without regard to native ability, and they lack any understanding of how it is that such teaching is possible (10). Isocrates is particularly critical of the sophists' model of teaching the alphabet as comparable to teaching how to speak well.[xiv] He notes that these teachers "fail to notice

that they are using an ordered art (τεταγμένην τέχνην) as a model for a creative activity (ποιήτικου πράματος)" (12). While the purpose of letters is unchanging, the function of words changes for different speakers and different circumstances (12-13). In fact, part of what makes a speech seem most artful (τεχνικώτατος) is when a speaker has novel things to say about a topic that has been discussed before (12). Καιρός is crucial to success.[xv]

Isocrates finally turns to a positive vision of education. First, he notes that there have been many successful philosophers in both the private and political realms that have not studied with sophists. Education (παίδευσις) can develop those who have an innate ability to speak so that they are more skilled (τεχνικοτέρους). However, natural ability is a prerequisite (15). Isocrates suggests that there are specific skills upon which one can work: learning the forms (εἴδη) of speeches, how to arrange and embellish them, and how to speak words rhythmically and musically. A good teacher can teach as much as can be taught of these things, and then be a model (παράδειγμα) for his students, so that they have the power to imitate (μιμήσασθαι) him (17-18). Still, he adds that he does not think that a sense of justice can be taught to those who lack it. Training can assist those who possess natural virtue (21).

Isocrates' assessment of λόγος is quite different than that of Alcidamas. As a writer of numerous speeches, he does not simply demarcate good from bad speech on the basis of whether it is spoken or written. Instead of comparing different sorts of *speeches*, Isocrates focuses upon different sorts of *speakers*. A "philosophical" teacher will not promise more than he can deliver; will be humble; will seek the truth; will not mainly be concerned with money; and will love wisdom more than winning disputes. However, Isocrates does not associate this love of wisdom with objective knowledge—this is too

pretentious a thing for anyone to claim. Instead, following opinion (δόξα) is a more reasonable path (8). A good teacher will not even pretend to be able to teach moral excellence to others, for this is impossible. Still, those who already possess virtue may become even better people through this sort of training and practice. For those who do want to undertake the study of speeches (oral or written), imitation of good models—always combined with whatever poetic originality the student can contribute—is the best training. A good λόγος is guided by originality of content, musicality of form, and, above all, the ability to respond adequately to the particular demands of the current situation (καιρός; 16-18). But good λόγος can only arise from the right kind of soul, which must possess a natural talent for speech, humility, and moral excellence that cannot be taught. The purpose of λόγος is therefore not only to be effective, but also to be just. Isocrates thus introduces moral qualities lacking in Alcidamas' account of good λόγος.

Isocrates does not compare good speech to a living animal, as do Alcidamas and Plato's Socrates. Like them, however, Isocrates is interested in separating out a flexible, accommodating kind of speech that can be responsive to different sorts of situations in contrast to the overly rigid models of other teachers. Isocrates uses the term "form" or *idea* to accomplish this task (16-18). Isocrates does not elaborate upon what he means by "forms" of speeches, but he does indicate that he has in mind certain types of speeches that are the foundation for all other speeches that can be made (16; cf. Sullivan 2001).[xvi] These forms are the basis for other speeches, as Isocrates says that one must choose from the forms of each subject, mix them, and order them appropriately. Isocrates uses the same term, *ἰδεαι*, in his "Encomium of Helen," when he states that, in contrast to trivial speeches that praise misfortune and the like:

> But speeches of general import and credibility and the like are devised and spoken through many forms (*ἰδεῶν*) and circumstances (*καιρῶν*) that are difficult to learn. Matching them is more difficult—just as being solemn is more difficult than making jokes, and being serious is more demanding than play ("Encomium," 11).

Isocrates has in mind a multiplicity of different kinds of speech that need to be adapted to different circumstances. He goes out of his way, however, to insist that he does not have in mind the sort of model speeches to be found in handbooks such as the *Arts (Technai)* or the sophists' "alphabet" model, which are insufficiently poetic (cf. Cahn 1989).[xvii] A student must understand the different types of speeches that can be made, learn which elements are helpful in particular contexts, and then use these forms of speech as an artist mixes paints rather than as a builder uses building blocks. Isocrates objects to the inflexibility of any model of teaching that too closely mimics previous speeches. The creativity of each individual speaker is crucial. He emphasizes the importance of good living role models, that is, other speakers and writers whom a student can imitate. Isocrates is interested in the living nature of speech but locates it in living speakers who act as models for others, and in the unique poetic talents of each speaker, who always has new circumstances and problems to which to adapt his ideas.

As to how Isocrates understands "φιλοσοφία " here, it is clear that he associates it with the practice of speechmaking (although philosophical speeches can be spoken or written). Like Alcidamas, he uses the term philosophy to describe an activity that is at once more difficult and less boastful than other inferior pursuits (1). Isocrates admits that philosophy is weaker than the sophists claim: while he would prefer that philosophy have as much power as they say, it does not (11). He also separates philosophy from both political art and public life in general, insisting that some philosophers have remained

private citizens, even while others have become successful politicians and speakers (14). Still, even if philosophy is distinct from political power *per se*, Isocrates still identifies it with a certain kind of speechmaking that is necessarily political in a broad sense:

> But to choose from these the necessary forms for each subject, to mix them with each other and arrange them suitably, and then, not to mistake the circumstances (τῶν καιρῶν) but to embellish the entire speech properly with considerations and to speak the words rhythmically and musically, these things require much study and are the work of a brave and imaginative soul. In addition to having the requisite natural ability, the student must learn the forms of speeches and practice their uses. The teacher must go through these aspects as thoroughly as possible, so that nothing teachable is left out, but as for the rest, he must offer himself as a model, so that those who are molded by him and can imitate him will immediately appear more florid and graceful than others. When all these conditions occur together, then those who practice philosophy will achieve success (16-18).

Philosophy, then, is the ability to bring together all of these disparate elements of excellence in speech. Philosophical excellence requires not only the possession of moral virtue, but also knowledge of the forms of speech, imitation of good models, and a natural aptitude, in particular an imaginative mind and a just soul.

While Isocrates as much as Alcidamas associates philosophy with making speeches, there are three major differences between them. First, as we have seen, Isocrates thinks that written speeches can be philosophical if the soul of the writer is philosophical, which includes being both humble and courageous, as well as possessing the right sorts of talent in speechmaking. Second, the Isocratean philosopher properly understands his speechmaking as a ποιήτικον πράγμα rather than a τεταγμένη τέχνη (12). Whereas Alcidamas uses poetry as a term of disparagement, Isocrates raises up the idea of ποίησις as an important component of philosophy. The artifice of written speech is not an indication of its inflexibility, if the writer imaginatively and creatively endows the

speech with whatever novel elements the current situation demands. While Isocrates notes the limitations of written handbooks of rhetoric, he does not criticize all writing. Last, Isocrates gives a moral priority to justice that is absent in Alcidamas' work. While Alcidamas seems to treat speeches as means to the personal glorification of the individual who speaks, Isocrates makes the possession of justice necessary to being a great speaker. This component cannot be taught directly, but at most can be encouraged by the study of past political speeches (21).[xviii] For Isocrates, φιλοσοφία is the ability to speak well, but speaking well includes speaking with justice—although justice is understood to be found in reasonable δόξα rather than in certain knowledge.

IV.

The ideas of Alcidamas and Isocrates provide a useful context for reading and understanding the final sections of Plato's *Phaedrus*. First, it is clear from both Alcidamas' and Isocrates' discussions that the distinction between the terms philosopher and sophist is a matter of controversy at the time that these authors write (cf. Nightingale 1990; McCoy 2008).[xix] A key part of various thinkers' efforts to make the distinction involves the examination of the proper roles of speech and writing in living well. Second, the question of whether and how writing can contribute to excellence is closely connected to the discussion of what it means to be a philosopher in all three thinkers. In other words, the question as to what constitutes good philosophy is intricately connected to the question of what constitutes good rhetoric. We cannot artificially separate Plato's understanding of philosophy from the larger intellectual discussion ongoing in Athens about the proper way to relate philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry. Third, Plato is not

alone in comparing rhetoric to a living animal or in connecting good rhetoric to "forms." However, his use of these images turns out to be quite different than either that of Alcidamas or Isocrates. The final section of Plato's *Phaedrus* is not simply a response to figures such as Lysias and Phaedrus (who, after all, are characters living in Socrates' time, not Plato's); the *Phaedrus* is also part of a living conversation between Plato and other intellectuals arguing over the value of speechmaking and its relationship to φιλοσοφία more generally.

Let us return to the nature of λόγος as described in the last section of the *Phaedrus*. Like Alcidamas, Socrates argues for the deficiency of writing when compared to its spoken counterpart. Socrates' account of Theuth and Thamus includes some of the same criticisms of writing found in Alcidamas. Socrates says that writing will produce forgetfulness in the soul of those who write, since they will practice using their memories less (*Phaedrus* 275a), just as Alcidamas had criticized writing for its effects of contributing to a "slow mental process" and forgetfulness ("Speeches," 16-21). Moreover, a written work is incapable of responding to those who ask questions of it. Just as Alcidamas compares written speeches to statues, monuments, and imitations of animals, Socrates compares written speeches to paintings:

> The offspring of painting stand there as if alive, but if you ask them something, they preserve a quite solemn silence. Similarly with written words: you might think that they spoke as if they had some thought in their heads, but if you ever ask them about any of the things they say out of a desire to learn, they point to just one thing, the same each time (275d5-9).[xx]

Socrates elaborates that the written word is the same for all audiences, while different souls need different kinds of word; like an "orphan," the written word cannot defend itself against those who attack it. For both Alcidamas and Socrates, there are two major

deficiencies in writing: the written word is incapable of responding to changing circumstances (e.g., different audiences) and the habit of writing leads to a deficiency in the souls of writers.

However, the meaning of the criticisms of writing in light of Socrates' and Alcidamas' larger arguments is quite different. Alcidamas sees forgetfulness as leading to the inability to speak well on one's feet, i.e., he thinks that a writer will literally forget what he is saying when he eventually must speak extemporaneously.[xxi] Socrates' account of King Thamus's comments on forgetfulness is reminiscent of Alcidamas' claims. Thamus says, "through reliance on writing they are reminded from outside by alien marks, not from inside, themselves by themselves" (275a3-6). Writing leads only to the appearance of wisdom rather than true wisdom (275b). Socrates implies that true wisdom is found through being reminded from within, that is, through recollection. While here Socrates does not elaborate further upon memory, his Palinode claims that the most important things a soul needs to remember—and is always attempting to remember, whether it knows this explicitly or not— are the forms. It is those divine things that the soul is always trying to recollect, not the words of a particular speech that one has tried to memorize. For Socrates, memory is central for the lover's coming to know both the forms and himself: philosophical lovers still possess a memory of Beauty and can see in their beloved, who imitates and reflects beauty, a glimpse of this higher form of Beauty (250d-e; 253a; 254b). Socrates' account of the human soul is that it is always trying to recollect the forms in its encounter with the present world. Other individuals are reflections of Beauty itself (250d-e) and also of the lover himself, whom Socrates says sees himself as in a mirror when he gazes at his beloved although he is unaware that this is happening

(255d).[xxii] The ἔρος between the lovers feeds into the ἔρος that the soul has for the forms. Conversation between the lovers elevates their souls closer to the forms, as their "wings" grow. While Thamus claims that written speech only “reminds” us of what we already know “inside,” for Socrates spoken conversations, too, can be reminders of our previous sighting of the forms. If this is so, then philosophical speeches, whether written or spoken, might be understood as those that awaken a desire for the forms.

Moreover, while Socrates is concerned that the written word does not easily adapt itself to various audiences, his reason is different from that of Alcidamas: Socrates says that different sorts of souls need different kinds of persuasion and require different causes of conviction (271b). But the goal of any speech, whether written or spoken, is to lead the soul to say what is gratifying to the gods, and to act in such as way as well (273e). The purpose of λόγος is not simply to persuade, but instead to lead a soul to what is good, i.e., the forms. Alcidamas' practical concern about the effective adaptability of the spoken word stands in contrast to Socrates' moral and epistemological concerns.

Alcidamas is willing to give a limited value to the written word, if it helps one to achieve a certain kind of immortality and allows one to see progress in one's speeches over the years. Socrates also gives the written word a positive role. However, Socrates claims that the written word is at its best written for the sake of amusement and as a reminder: in the philosopher's "garden of letters, it seems, he will sow and write for amusement, when he does write, laying up a store of reminders both for himself, when he 'reaches a forgetful old age', and for anyone who is following the same track… (276d1-5)." While Alcidamas sees writing as a reminder of a past speech or of the talent of a particular speaker, for Socrates good writing is a reminder for those "who know"

(*εἰδότων*) what is fine, good, and just (278a1). Socrates again turns our attention away from the speaker to what the speaker knows, that is, to the forms. For Socrates, then, writing can serve as a reminder of what we love (the forms) and who we are (lovers of them). While Alcidamas sees the written word as a mere imitation of the spoken word, for Socrates the written word is a reminder of the spoken word, which is *itself* is only a reminder of the beautiful that we love but are always in danger of forgetting. All λόγοι are only reminders of what the human soul loves and tries to recall; all words are secondary.

Alcidamas' use of the term "mimesis" to describe the priority of oral speech over written speech might also remind us of Socrates' mention of mimesis in the Palinode. However, there Socrates speaks of mimesis of a different sort: the imitation of a man after the pattern of the god whom he follows: "Just so each man lives after the pattern of the god in whose chorus he was, honouring him by imitating (μιμούμενος) him so far as he can, so long as he is uncorrupted and living out the first of the lives which he enters here; and he behaves in this way in his associations both with those he loves and with everyone else" (252d). Socrates later uses the concept of mimesis when he says that the lover also tries to get his beloved to imitate the god whom the lover follows (253d). Socrates admits that his own aim with Phaedrus is to get Phaedrus to turn to philosophy so that he single mindedly devotes himself to "love accompanied by talk (λόγων) of a philosophical kind" (257b). Socrates' words throughout the *Phaedrus* might be understood as an example of this sort of lover's talk, i.e., as an attempt to turn Phaedrus back to what the youth really loves. In other words, good speech is mimetic insofar as it encourages the *soul's* imitation of the pattern of the forms. Again, Socrates' focus is on

the human soul—not on whether written words adequately imitate spoken words, but rather on whether the human soul itself imitates the best pattern possible, and whether the philosopher's words best reveal himself as such a lover.

Socrates allows for the possibility of writing that might address different souls differently, suggesting that if a writer knew each of the forms of soul, he might offer complex speeches to a complex soul, and simple speeches to a simple soul (278c). Commentators have found the Platonic dialogues to be exemplars of such a form of writing.[xxiii] Socrates acknowledges that writing is problematic because it can fail to address its particular audience's needs and because it can give the illusion of knowledge on the speaker's part when none is present (276a; 275b). But like Isocrates, Plato's Socrates holds out the possibility that good writing can overcome these limitations. However, while Isocrates' concerns remain squarely in the political realm, Socrates is most concerned with whether speeches reflect knowledge of the forms and of one's self.

Socrates' language in the *Phaedrus* is also striking for its parallel uses of Alcidamas' image of a living organism and Isocrates' language of "form." These two images, found separately in Alcidamas and Isocrates, are in the *Phaedrus* merged into one single description at 264c-266b. (Thus, while my interpretation does not rest on chronological assumptions, the fact that Plato combines these two images into one suggests that Plato's composition came later.) Socrates, like Alcidamas, uses the image of the good speech as akin to a living organism. After criticizing Lysias' speech for being a "random heap" (264b), Socrates describes a good speech as more carefully ordered: "this much I think you would say: that every speech should be put together like a living creature, as it were with a body of its own, so as not to lack either a head or feet, but to

have both a middle part and extremities, so written as to fit both each other and the whole" (264c1-5). Socrates suggests that their own earlier discussion that followed such an order, as when Socrates first gave a speech on behalf of the non-lover and then the lover, or when they divided μανία into divine and human madness, and then subdivided divine madness into four kinds (265a-b).

Alcidamas' use of the image of the "living organism" focuses primarily upon the "power" (ἐνεργέια) of an oral speech, that is, how oral speech is "ensouled" (ἐμψυχός) and therefore capable of moving and responding to the world (27-28). Socrates shares this concern, but his use of the image of a living organism focuses more on the arrangement of the organism's or speech's parts in relation to one another: a good speech has an organic symmetry to it and can be divided up into natural joints. That is, Socrates says that a good speech contains opposites within it, but these opposites work together to form a coherent whole. For example, Socrates mentions the division of μανία into the human and divine kinds and the two speeches of the lover and non-lover as instances of such organic opposition (265a). Plato's *Phaedrus* itself contains just this sort of "antilogical" opposition between Phaedrus/Lysias and Socrates, which together produce a greater account of love than if Socrates alone had spoken.

Again, we find a striking similarity between Isocrates and Plato's Socrates, in their concerns that the parts of a speech correspond to the right forms, or ideas. Isocrates claims that a good speech must take up the different forms of speeches and remix them, not artificially as the sophists imply with their images of building blocks and the alphabet, but as a painter mixes different forms together. Socrates also uses the language of the forms, saying that praiseworthy speeches must both collect and divide things

according to forms. Socrates begins with collection: "First, there is perceiving together and bringing into one form (*ἰδέαν*) items that are scattered in many places, in order that one can define each thing and make clear whatever it is that one wishes to instruct one's audience about on any occasion" (265d). A good speaker must then follow a second principle:

> Being able to cut it up again, form by form (*κατ' εἴδη*), according to its natural joints (*ἄρθρα*), and not try to break any part into pieces, like an inexpert butcher; as just now the two speeches took the unreasoning aspect of mind as one form (*κοινῇ εἴδος*) together, and just as a single body naturally has its parts in pairs, with both members of each pair having the same name, and labeled respectively left and right, so too the two speeches regarded derangement as naturally a single form (*εἴδος*) in us, and the one cut off the part on the left-hand side, then cutting it again, and not giving up until it had found among the parts a love which is, as we say, 'left-handed,' and abused it with full justice, while the other speech led us to the parts of madness on the right-hand side, and discovering and exhibiting a love which shares the same name as the other, but is divine, it praised it as cause of our greatest goods (265e-266b).

While Socrates and Isocrates use similar language, it is clear that here Socrates has in mind a natural form, that is, a form found in the reality of the *object* of speech, and not a form *of* speech. A good speech both forms a meaningful whole out of parts, according to the reality of the thing in question. It is possible for a bad speaker to "cut up" the thing being examined inexpertly, against the natural divisions to which it lends itself. A good speaker, in contrast, considers oppositions within the thing and how these opposites relate to one another as a unity. That is, while the forms of speech for Isocrates are models to be used poetically by the orator, Socrates speaks of forms as the basis of reality itself. In this sense, the Socratic speaker (or writer) is an imitator of reality itself, rather than an imitator of the forms of previous speakers or authors. Dialectic is the division and collection of things in speech according to their realities in nature; the term "form"

applies both to those realities *and* to words properly used to collect and to divide reality. In this way, Socrates' adaptation of both the images of living creature and of form reorient his audience away from the links between a speech and audience and towards the soul's relationship with the forms.

In the Palinode, Socrates develops an elaborate description of the soul of the philosopher himself. The philosopher is distinguished from the non-philosopher not by his method of speaking, but by his soul: the philosopher loves, even to the point of madness, truth and beauty (248d; 253c). Good speeches are reflective of this sort of love, rather than the lesser loves of body, power, wealth and the goods that non-philosophical souls love (248d-e). Socrates characterizes ῥητορική, in its best sense, as a leading of the soul towards the goods of truth and beauty (261a-b). Like Alcidamas and Isocrates, Plato's Socrates does not separate philosophy from rhetoric, but ultimately brings them together into one. Philosophical rhetoric is a way of speaking that leads the soul back to the forms that it naturally loves and desires.

Spoken words are better suited to this task of leading the soul because the speaker must look at the nature of the particular soul to whom he is speaking and decide how best to lead it to the object of its love. Philosophical rhetoric is ideally written with knowledge in the soul of the learner and capable of knowing how to speak and how to keep silent in relation to whom it should (276a). Throughout, Socrates' emphasis is on how philosophical speech leads the soul—but leading the soul properly also requires knowledge of what different kinds of souls there are, as well as knowledge of what souls love. While Socrates denies possessing the knowledge needed for a science of speech (262d), he does claim to know Phaedrus. Socrates says, "Phaedrus—if I don't know

Phaedrus, I've even forgotten who I am. But I do, and I haven't." (228a).[xxiv] He also claims to be an expert about love itself (257a). Philosophical rhetoric, then, is not characterized by a single *method* or mode of speech as Socrates actually practices it. Nor is it confined to public speeches, as Socrates attempts to lead Phaedrus towards philosophy in a one-on-one conversation. Instead, philosophical rhetoric requires a number of disparate elements that need to be brought together by the speaker: knowledge of the soul(s) to whom one is speaking; self-knowledge; possessing for oneself a love of beauty and truth; knowing how to lead this particular soul to whom one is talking back to beauty and truth; and in general, knowing when to speak and when not to (i.e., possessing καιρός).

Like Alcidamas and Isocrates, Plato takes on the challenge of identifying philosophy and rhetoric in the midst of competing claims about the nature of good speech. All three of these thinkers have concerns about the power and effect of rhetoric on the soul, and whether speaking or writing of different sorts ultimately corrupt or enhance the excellence of the soul. All three thinkers advocate the importance of καιρός and the adaptability of speech to different audiences and circumstances. However, while the emphasis of Alcidamas and Isocrates is on a method of speech, or how one ought best be educated to speak, Plato identifies philosophical rhetoric not with a mode of speech or a technique used to teach good speaking or writing. Instead, philosophical rhetoric is dependent upon the speaker's love of truth and beauty, his understanding of himself as a lover, and his ability to lead others to these goods. Plato takes up the mostly practical issues of speechmaking with which Alcidamas and Isocrates are concerned and elevates them in demonstrating their deep connections to moral and intellectual goods. Philosophy

and philosophical rhetoric are connected with a love of the forms. In doing so, Plato revolutionizes the very concept of what is meant by philosophy as love of wisdom.[xxv]

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[i] Several authors have examined the importance of Isocrates' own competitive concern for the claim to be a philosopher, however. See, e.g., Nehamas 1990; Nightingale 1990, especially chapter one; and Timmerman 1998. Brown and Coulter 1971 examine the middle speech of the *Phaedrus* and identify it with an Isocratean approach to rhetoric, implicitly criticized by Plato. Howland 1937 takes a harder line than the rest, arguing that the *Phaedrus* as a whole ought to be read primarily as an attack on Isocrates, particularly the latter's lack of concern with teaching *episteme*.

[ii] Here I in disagree with Edward Schiappa, who in his article "Did Plato Coin *Rhetorike*?" argues that Plato is the originator of the term *rhetorike*. However, I agree with Schiappa that the relative novelty of the term suggests that Plato is in the process of developing the meaning of the term in a normative and not just descriptive sense.

[iii] Again, my argument need not depend on Plato's *Phaedrus* being later; my working hypothesis is that these images and ideas are part of the debate in Athens about speechmaking, only part of which survives for our perusal.

[iv] Muir makes such a suggestion, but admits its purely speculative nature. See his introduction to *Alcidamas: The Works and Fragments* (London: Bristol Classic Press, 2001), xv. See Mirhady and Too 2000 p. 61. Too 1995, 152-156,q gives an account of the relevant issues in dating it, cautioning against presupposing a very early date. Because Isocrates' "Antidosis" was written almost 35 years later, I refrain from reference to it here, as my focus is on the initial conversation between Alcidamas, Isocrates, and Plato.

[v] For discussions of the dating of Plato's *Phaedrus* see Nails 1994; de Vries (1969, pp. 7-11); Nussbaum (1986, pp. 465 n. 7, 470-1 n. 5); and Rowe (1986b, pp. 13-4). See also S. Panagiotou, "Lysias and the Date of Plato's *Phaedrus*." *Mnemosyne* 28 (1975): 388-398.

[vi] To address the apparent contradiction in writing a speech that defends the spoken word, Alcidamas concludes his essay with the explanation that he is demonstrating how easy it is for an orator to work in the medium of writing and that he “with only a little effort, will be able to blot out and destroy their arguments” (30). He also concedes that writing allows those who do not know a speaker firsthand to learn something of the speaker’s talent, and serves as a memorial after death (31-32).

[vii] Neither does he address the relationship between thought and speech, as Plato does in the Theatetus (206c-e) or as Aristotle does in *On Interpretation*. The reason, I think, is that Alcidamas is not ultimately concerned with a defense of speech as grounded in knowledge, but rather with the effectiveness of speech for political and cultural purposes.

[viii] Plato makes the search for knowledge, through argument and perhaps also contemplation central to philosophical practice. Some intellectuals admire the interpretation of poetry as central to wisdom while others disparage it (see, for example, the contrast between Protagoras and Socrates on this very point in Plato's *Protagoras* at 348a). Schiappa 1990 has suggested that Plato is central in the development of the term *rhetorike*, even while others claimed to be rhetoricians. Contemporary commentators cannot themselves agree on whether Plato was a hostile reactionary against the rhetorical practice of sophists such as Gorgias (see, e.g., Wardy 1996, 15-17, or McComiskey 2002) or the very founder of the art of rhetoric, along with Aristotle (see, e.g., Cole 1991). What is clear is that a number of ancient figures in the late fifth and early fourth century rely upon a certain degree of ambiguity in terms such as sophist, rhetoric, and philosophy in order to extol or to criticize particular activities.

[ix] While this line raises the issue as to whether or not the good rhetor possesses a *techne*, Alcidamas' conclusion is unclear on this point. All he says here is that the sophists falsely think that they have a *techne*. Earlier Alcidamas notes that the ability to speak well is not a universal natural gift, nor something taught through any kind of training (3). Nowhere does he claim to be able to teach this ability to others, although he does suggest that endless practice of extemporaneous speech in as many circumstances as possible is the best way to learn it (34). So other indications in the essay suggest that rhetoric, and so also philosophy, is not technical for Alcidamas.

[x] There is no clear dramatic date of the *Phaedrus*. As C.J. Rowe points out, Lysias had not yet returned to Athens while Polemarchus was still alive (as he is assumed to be here), and Phaedrus was not yet in exile. See Rowe 11-12. However, Socrates remarks that Isocrates is quite young at *Phaedrus* 278e10.

[xi] Cole 1990, 125-126, also briefly mentions the interplay between Alcidamas, Isocrates, and Plato in his account of the transformation of the concept of rhetoric in ancient Greece.

[xii] Translations are from Mirhady and Too unless otherwise noted. I use the Loeb edition for the Greek.

[xiii] As Goggin and Long 1993 argue, both Isocrates and Plato are concerned with the moral implications of the human inability to know with certainty and view their two views of rhetoric as "complementary." I agree that both have genuinely moral concerns in their approaches to reforming rhetoric. However, I argue here that there are important distinctions in how Plato's Socrates and Isocrates respond to the problem, most notably in Socrates' affirmation of the forms and our love of them as central to good philosophy and good rhetoric.

[xiv] See also Plato, *Protagoras* 326d where Protagoras makes an analogy between practicing letters and learning excellence.

[xv] As Haskins 2004, chapter three, has argued, this emphasis on *καιρός* is not necessarily opposed to the idea of a speech genres (*epea*). For Isocrates, good teaching is not reducible to the imitation of model speeches, but still relies on speech genres as the best available resources from which an orator can draw. As Haskins puts it, for Isocrates imitation "is not a mere repetition but a timely reaccentuation of already uttered speech" (p. 78).

[xvi] Sullivan 2001 summarizes the various uses of *idea/eidos* in Isocrates' writing. There, he argues that its use in "Against the Sophists" seems to mean something like "types of speeches"; either figures or structures of speech might be intended here. Regardless, Isocrates' point is that the construction of a good speech cannot be mechanistic, and that whatever fundamentals with which one begins must be creatively reworked in order to make a speech that is appropriate to the current situation.

[xvii] To this end, Cahn 1989 argues that the main point of *Against the Sophists* is to persuade his audience that there can be no "theory" of rhetoric at all, i.e., that any written or verbal account cannot fully capture the nature of rhetoric as a practice. Still, as I argue above, Isocrates does give some recommendations for what sorts of practices are helpful for teaching rhetoric, even if talent, imagination, and other unteachable factors are required for a student to be receptive to that teaching.

[xviii] Cicero and Quintillian would later elaborate even further on the necessity of the orator as a good man. For example, see Cicero *De Oratore*, Book I and Quintillian, *Institiutes of Oratory*, Preface. 9-20.

[xix] See Nightingale 1990, 14-16 for a summary of the historical usage of the term *philosophia* prior to Plato.

[xx] I use C.J. Rowe's translation throughout, unless otherwise noted.

[xxi] Later Quintillian, too, will emphasize the importance of speaking extemporaneously; see e.g., Quintillian, Institutes, Book Ten, Chapter seven.

[xxii] Note the similarity of this image of mirror to that in Alcidamas. See Griswold 1986 who argues that most writing is deficient in Socrates' eyes because it does not lead to self-questioning; philosophical dialogue can, however, induce this sort of self-questioning. For Socrates, good rhetoric and dialectic cannot be separated. Brogan 1997 also aptly discusses the centrality of λόγος to self-knowledge in Platonic rhetoric.

[xxiii] See cf. Burger 1981; Cole 1991; Ferrari 1987; and Griswold 1986.

[xxiv] See Griswold 1986, especially chapter five, for an extensive account of the relationship between self-knowledge and philosophical rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*.

[xxv] Thanks to Ronald Polansky, Anna Besch, Charles Griswold, and an anonymous referee for helpful comments on this essay.