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# Clitophon and Socrates in the Platonic *Clitophon*

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The *Clitophon* shows us a man similar to Socrates in analytic skill, social ease, frankness, and avowed interest in justice. He praises Socrates for bringing people to *desire* to be just, but criticizes Socrates for not helping them *be* just, the object of their desire. H gives his experience as an example: having listened to Socrates he desires justice, but does not know how to be just. Readers have often accepted both the cogency of and warrant for Clitophon's criticism. But details of the dialogue undermine both. Its characterization of Socrates shows that desiring to be just, considered robustly—recognizing one's ignorance, listening to other views, and trying to learn about the good—is much the same as being just, and so Socrates cannot be faulted for *merely* inculcating the desire. And though Clitophon has heard Scorates speak and is interested in justice—especially in finding some apt formula—he has not listened closely to Socrates, and therefore has not allowed himself to be brought fully into desiring to be just. Therefore, he fails, both theoretically and personally, to understand Socrates' efforts, and so his criticism fails too.

The dialogue begins with Socrates reporting a rumor. He heard that Clitophon disparaged their time together but raved about his time with Thrasymachus. Clitophon calls this rumor mistaken. Far from disparaging their time together, Clitophon says, he lauded much about Socrates. He asks leave to speak frankly. He wants to give a fuller report about what he actually said to Lysias, the source of the rumor. Socrates accepts the request, saying it would be shameful not to hear what he said. Socrates adds that listening to this report will allow him to develop the traits Clitophon praises and abandon those he censures. Clitophon begins reciting what he claims to be Socrates' usual protreptic speech about justice. He praises that speech for its ability to make him eager about justice. He goes on to paraphrase more speeches. He then states his frustration. His eagerness about justice made him eager to hear speeches about the benefits justice provides and the process by which one becomes just. But he had theretofore heard no such speeches from Socrates. So he asked Socrates' associates to tell him about the benefits and the process. Unfortunately, those exchanges, conducted in a purportedly Socratic fashion, proved fruitless. He then turned to Socrates, he says, but this too proved fruitless. Socrates put him through too many protean exchanges, where what justice seemed to be—benefiting friends and harming enemies—soon came to seem something quite else—never harming anyone—and so he gave up. Socrates must not know about justice or he must want to withhold lessons from him. In either case, it is time to think seriously about associating

with Thrasymachus instead.

The dialogue ends before depicting Socrates' response to Clitophon's speech. It is worth stopping to consider an interpretative point. Most commentators take the dialogue's ending without Socrates' response to mean that the dialogue *depicts Socrates' silence*. These commentators tend to explain Socrates' silence by claiming either that he cannot respond or that he chooses not to. Those who think Socrates cannot respond take this to show Clitophon's challenge is valid and that Socrates knows it. They therefore interpret the dialogue as a critique of Socrates,[1] or of Plato's Socrates more specifically.[2] Those who think Socrates chooses not to respond deny that the challenge is good, and suppose instead that Socrates judges Clitophon to be beyond his help.[3] Socrates' silence here is to be understood in the context of the *Republic*.[4]

But this common inference from 'no depicted response' to 'depicted non-response' is invalid. It is true that Clitophon makes a profound criticism, that despite being able to make people eager to live well, Socrates cannot bring them to live well.[5] But the reader is left pointedly ignorant about what happens after the end of Clitophon's speech and how Socrates takes it. The question 'What might Socrates do next?' becomes one the reader must ask himself. An answer to that question depends on Socrates's goal in the conversation and how he would judge Clitophon's speech.

In this dialogue, Socrates acknowledges his ignorance about living well. He asks about Clitophon's criticism of him, says he will listen carefully, and weathers that criticism. Clitophon makes no such acknowledgments. He never doubts that he knows enough about justice to know that its desire and manifestation must differ. But this view would not sustain examination, and the views about and depictions of justice found in the dialogue would provide counterexamples. So Clitophon is ignorant. Because he is unwilling to recognize his own ignorance, he cannot begin to appreciate what he would need to do to rectify it. He is prevented from following Socrates on the path to becoming good. Socrates, the dialogue shows, is notable for examining and refuting others. He helps them acknowledge their inadequacies. Clitophon has not yet let Socrates help him in that way.

Clitophon's putative desire for justice must have come, not from realizing that

[1] E.g., Grote 1888, 420-425, Hutchinson 1997, Rowe 2000a, Plax 2006, Tomin unpublished a and b.

[2] Heidel 1896, Rowe 2000a, 2000b, 2005 (specifically, of the Socrates of the *Republic*), Bowe 2007 (of the 'early' Socrates).

[3] E.g., Roochnik 1984, Blits 1985, Rutherford 1995, Bruell 1999, Zuckert 1999, Kremer 2000, 2004, Leibowitz 2010, 107n85.

[4] As though Socrates heard Clitophon's argument of the *Clitophon* just after he refuted Thrasymachus in *Republic* i, by book 2 Socrates has stopped trying to refute his interlocutors and has adopted a new way to encourage them to think about the pursuit of justice. See, e.g., Grube 1931, Thesleff 1982, Orwin 1982, 2004, Davis 1998, Bruell 1999, Slings 1999, Kremer 2000, 2004, Rowe 2000a, 2000b, 2005, Saxonhouse 2005, Bowe 2007.

[5] This criticism orients both Vasiliou 2008 and Benson 2012.

he is ignorant about justice, but from a desire for political honor. The proliferation of speeches about and teachers of justice in fifth-century Athens suggest that seeking justice had external motivations, and having a formula for defining justice would have great currency. Instigating rumors about one's dogged pursuits of justice—as Clitophon did about Socrates—would be part of the project of honor-seeking.

My path is to go from an observation about Clitophon's similarity to Socrates to an explanation about how they differ. (1) The dialogue suggests that where these two similar-seeming men differ is not in analytic ability or concern for normative concepts but in the recognition of their respective ignorance about justice. (2) Indeed, Clitophon takes himself to be an expert in speeches about justice, and thus about justice itself. (3) Socrates, however, shows himself to be competent only in listening and asking questions, which are ways of recognizing one's ignorance. (4) It turns out that both justice and the desire for justice are recognitions of one's ignorance, and are thus, in a sense, practices of listening. But why, despite being around Socrates, did Clitophon fail to realize this? (5) He did not listen correctly to Socrates' speeches, and (6) did not think about what was happening when he was being refuted by Socrates. (7) This means his purported desire for justice came not from any Socratic effect but from a preexisting desire for honor keyed to a public pursuit of justice. (8) The abrupt ending of the dialogue compels the reader to reconstruct this distinction between actual and apparent desires for justice.

## I. Clitophon's Socratic and unsocratic traits

Clitophon shares many but not all of Socrates' qualities. Like Socrates, Clitophon has analytic and dialectical ability, interest in spending time with others, forthrightness, and an interest in virtue and peace.[6] He has skill in examination (408d1-409a4, 409a7-c1, d6-e7), refutation (409c4-d2, e10), and disjunction (410b6).[7] He seeks out and gives explanations (410d3, 408d2-e3; διεξέλθοιμι 406a9). He can self-consciously experience *aporia* (410c8; cf. Bowe 2007, 263), expresses some self-awareness (408c1-2), speaks openly (406a9, a13-14, 410b3-e8), and seems to understand that studying takes both time and company (410b4; 408c4, d7, 410a7-b4, c7). He displays considerable social sensitivity (408e8, 409a4, d4). He says he wants to learn about justice and excellence (408e1), self-cultivation (408b7-c1), and the right use of his soul (408a4-5); and not only does he want these benefits for himself, he also wants peace and friendship in the city (407d1).

In his smaller role in the *Republic*, Clitophon shows himself to be interested in

[6] That these are Socratic traits is evident from this dialogue itself: Socrates uses refutative questions (408d1 with 408d1-410a6), desires to learn what he needs to know to improve himself (407a1-4), talks often about justice (407b5-408a5, 410a8-b3), attracts associates (408c6-8), and attends to norms of shame, friendship, and conversation (407a1) but at the same time is forthright (406a1-4) and initiates conversations (406a1).

[7] Text and lineation is from Slings 1999; translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

and committed to conversation with intellectuals (328b8), attentive to legal and argumentative moves (340a3), and thoughtful about preserving the consistency of arguments (340a7-9, b6-9). He adds to the conversation only once Polemarchus has interrupted (340a1-2), and recognizes the propriety of Socrates' return to conversational control (340c1-3).

The historical record supports the philosophical literature's image. It suggests that Clitophon thought about how to make the city better and took risks to bring his conclusions about; he is the one to have moved to investigate (προσαναζητῆσαι) the ancestral constitution, and updated his political affiliations in 405.[8] These activities, and Aristophanes' naming of him, suggest that he spent time with a range of intellectuals.[9]

Clitophon is a foil for Socrates. They are well-matched in many ways. But this should not blind the reader to their key differences. Socrates' uniqueness is not to be found in his argumentative acuity, his eloquent concern for justice, or his time spent with others in articulate theoretical conversation. The difference between Clitophon and Socrates the dialogue displays most explicitly is Socrates' interest in discovering his bad qualities and striving to abandon them (407a1-4), an interest connected with his desire for justice. He both asks to hear Clitophon's complaints, and asserts that he will take advantage of the chance to listen to them. He wants to learn the contours of his ignorance. By contrast, Clitophon never admits to any bad qualities, even when citing his zeal to learn about justice. Clitophon professes ignorance only about what to do after getting excited by Socrates' speeches (408c4, 408d1-409a3, 410c8). He expresses no doubt that he is going about things in the right way, that all his assumptions are true, or that he might be better off listening to Socrates more carefully than he has. Clitophon's claim that he does not know about justice obscures his more general ignorance about himself. The ability the *Clitophon* draws most attention to is Clitophon's supposed expertise about speeches about justice. He overestimates his ability to assess speeches about justice. This means he overestimates his knowledge about justice, and thereby hinders himself from fully desiring it.

## II. Supposed (and parrhesiastic) expertise in protreptic speeches about justice

By saying he likes listening to exhortations to justice, Clitophon seems to reveal his lack of pretension and his amenability to improvement. By expressing interest in speeches that aim to get him to care about justice, he seems to imply that he realizes he knows little about justice and thus will do anything to develop such knowledge.[10] But the details of his attitude toward such exhortative speeches belies his self-assuredness as a competent judge of them. In particular,

[8] Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution* 29.3, 34.3. On Clitophon's rider, see Fuks 1953, 1-25, and on his activities, Munn 2000, 137, 209-210.

[9] Aristophanes, *Frogs* 967. See Souilhé 1930, 165-169; Slings 1999, 56-58; Nails 2002, 102-103; Bailly 2003, 115-116.

[10] Slings 1999, 16, 42, accepts Clitophon at his word, and so thinks Socrates does not *need* to refute him.

he believes himself able to judge how well they exhort people to care about justice, and their capacity to teach people the way to becoming just. This confidence that he knows about justice-concerning speeches entails a confidence that he knows about justice itself (cf. *Meno* 71a-b, 100b; *Prot.* 329b-d). If Clitophon thinks he knows when justice is or is not being taught, he must think he knows what sort of thing justice is.

The dialogue repeatedly shows Clitophon seeing himself as an expert in protreptic speeches about justice. He claims familiarity with many speeches (407a8, 410b5), and has heard Socrates' repeatedly (408b4, b6, 410b4-5). He claims familiarity with the intellectual associations formed around and because of such speech-givers (406a3, 407a6-7, 408c6-7, 410c6). He publicizes or feels able to publicize his judgments about relevant speeches and associations (406a6, 410e4-8, 407e4, 408c2). He engages in judgment of those he admits to be his intellectual betters (407a9-b1, e4, 408b6-c4, 410c5, e6), judgment about the degree to which they know justice (δικαιοσύνης ἐπιστήμονι 410c5). He holds himself to be particularly capable of appraising speaking ability and pedagogical skill with respect to justice:

> These speeches and others like them, spoken in such great quantity and with such great quality, discussing how virtue is teachable and how one must care more for oneself than anything else, I have till now said basically nothing against; nor do I think I will ever speak against them in the future; I think they are the most protreptical and beneficial, and quite simply able to wake us up, as it were, from a slumber. (408b5-c4)

Clitophon here is not reporting neutrally on his earlier behavior, but is claiming to know which speeches are like which (καὶ ἑτέροις τοιούτοις), which are excellently given (πανκαλῶς), which best turn a person toward the encouraged value (προτρεπτικωτάτους), which cause the most good (ὠφελιμωτάτους), what virtue-related perspective counts as 'being awake' (ἐπεγείρειν), and how 'we' (ἡμᾶς)—people besides himself—are affected.

Clitophon identifies the sources of his confidence in judging talk about justice in his experience, reflection, and mimetic ability. He is around many speeches about justice and he associates with many people who talk about justice (410c7). He can refute even the best of Socrates' associates in discussions about justice (410a2, 409d2, a7). He thinks about (ἡγοῦμαι, he says) all that he hears (410c4). He even says that he could perform Socrates' speeches about justice, and would do as well as Socrates (408e1-3).

A request at the start of the dialogue confirms Clitophon's self-appraisal as expert in speeches about justice. Clitophon asks Socrates to be allowed 'frankness' (εἰ δέ μοι δίδως παρρησίαν 406a12). In asking leave to criticize a person who figures centrally in the city, Clitophon invokes the tradition of *parrhêsia*, frank speech. The *parrhêsiastês*, the frank speaker, takes himself to have a cer-

tain civic or moral insight the leader lacks.[11] When he activates his role, he transmits knowledge from himself, a member of the insightful but weak citizenry, to a power-blinded community leader, and to the extent the knowledge is well-substantiated, does so without risk of reprisal.[12]

Socrates responds that it would be shameful not to abide by Clitophon's evaluation (αἰσχρὸν…μὴ ὑπομένειν, 407a2) and that he will use what he hears to improve himself. This response shows that Socrates registers Clitophon's claim of the parrhesiastic right. The exchange is substantively similar to the one Socrates has with Callicles in the *Gorgias*. There, Socrates calls Callicles an exemplar of παρρησίας after Callicles criticized what he took to be Socratic philosophizing (*Grg*. 487a3, b1; cf. 461d8-e4). Socrates is praising Callicles for helping him improve himself. He legitimates Callicles' claim to exercise *parrhêsia* by observing that Callicles has already deliberated about training in wisdom (487c5).

In the *Gorgias*, Socrates goes on to test Callicles' attitudes about wisdom and virtue, to see whether he should follow Callicles' advice. Throughout the Socratic literature, Socrates examines people's purported expertise and undermines their conceits to knowledge if he judges them dangerously ill-founded. Clitophon appointing himself *parrhêsiastês* means that he thinks himself knowledgeable about justice. This is a dangerous self-conception. Clitophon's eager (προθυμουμένου 407a2) pursuit of justice suggests an energy that could be misdirected. His political leadership (as presented by Aristotle and implied in Aristophanes and Plato) suggests that Clitophon's beliefs about justice and education could have a large scope.[13] Mistaking the nature of justice and the way a populace would acquire it could damage democratic openness, legal flexibility, norms of humility and curiosity, and patterns of self-discovery and concerns for integrity. One could imagine Clitophon's self-assuredness a cause for Socrates' alarm.

## III. Socratic listening

Whereas Clitophon, despite taking himself to have listened eagerly to Socrates' speeches, talks almost without interruption in this dialogue, Socrates demonstrates good listening. It is characteristic of Socrates in the Platonic dialogues to listen. This is especially obvious in the *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*, where prompting discussion and then listening constitute most of

[11] Davis 1998, 275 nicely charges Clitophon with thinking that he can see through Socrates very well, perhaps even better than Socrates can see himself.

[12] Cf. Monoson 2000, 51-62, 154-180—*parrhesia* 'implied…a claim on the part of the speaker to be capable of assessing a situation and pronouncing judgment upon it', and included in its scope 'candid speech among friends'; Markovits 2008, 48-80; Sluiter and Rosen 2004; Saxonhouse 2006, 86-99; Foucault 2001 and 2011.

[13] Nails 2002, 103 claims that 'in retrospect, [Clitophon's] action [to investigate the *patrios politeia*] can be seen as one of the decisive moves toward what was to be the oligarchy of the Four Hundred'.

Socrates' actions. Here, Socrates has prompted this potentially uncomfortable speech, and so he is committed to hearing it out. We know he remains through the entirety of the speech; Clitophon addresses him in the vocative in the final sentence (410e6). Socrates observes that not listening would be shameful. He says what *he* intends to do after the speech, namely, work harder and purify himself in accordance with what Clitophon tells him.

The structure of the dialogue focuses the reader's attention on Socrates' listening to Clitophon. Had the dialogue's author wanted merely to enunciate a criticism of Socrates, or had he wanted to reveal Clitophon's character, he could have depicted a conversation between Clitophon and Lysias. Had the point been to show Socrates being confronted with criticism per se, the conversation could have been between the informant and Socrates. To show that Socrates chose not to or could not respond, the dialogue would have either to have been narrated with the story-teller saying what Socrates next did, or to have included some remarks by Clitophon to the effect that he sees that Socrates is not responding.

By listening to Clitophon, Socrates would be doing many things. He would be acting the role of the parrhesiastic audience. He would be trying sincerely to discover how other people perceive him, specifically those similar to him in analytic ability and interest in justice. He would be causing Clitophon to reflect more carefully on his accusations. Until now Clitophon has shared his worries only with others, presumably men he thought would be sympathetic with his charge (410e4-5). Socrates would be modeling for Clitophon a correct kind of behavior, giving a lesson to a man who prides himself on his listening (πολλάκις…ἀκούων 407a7, ἀκούω 407e3, προσεῖχον δὴ τὸν νοῦν…ὡς ἀκουσόμενος 408c4). Finally, he would be thinking about Clitophon's reports and judgments. Are they accurate? Clitophon's first remarks of the dialogue accuse someone of misreporting his words (οὐκ ορθῶς ἀπεμνημόνευε 406a5); this could encourage Socrates to check whether his own words have been misreported (cf. Saxonhouse 2005, 134). Socrates' notoriety for refutative conversation—a fame Clitophon recognizes in this dialogue—suggests that he would want always to determine the soundness of any position. All these functions of listening—noting criticisms, learning about his public effect, helping others think about their views, assessing arguments about justice—acknowledge one's ignorance and desire to do better.

## IV. Desiring justice and becoming just

Socrates does not claim to know about justice. But he openly displays his desire to become just and to avoid acting unjustly. From this dialogue alone we see that Socrates surrounds himself with friends committed to talking about virtue and justice; he engages with potential critics; he does not enforce dogmatic views; he listens to what people say; he has a sensitivity to what is shameful and what is acceptable; he wants to improve himself; he does not interrupt when being criticized; he knows how to listen; and he goes over the same material repeatedly. Given the Socrates we know from other literature, from his purported

speeches encouraging others to become just, and from his querying of Clitophon, we have good reason to suppose that these activities and sensibilities derive from Socrates' desire to become just.

Clitophon's putative desire to become just sends him in another direction. He seeks a description of the distinct practice by which he might become just, and does so on an analogy with several other practices and their goals. He thinks of his pursuit of justice in terms first of medicine and gymnastics, by which one might become healthy, and second of piloting a ship, by which one might sail safely (410b8). He believes that the practice of becoming healthy involves something beyond some realization about health (410d1-4). Only by actually following prescribed regimens of diet, exercise, drugs, and dwelling will one become healthy. The same goes for attitudes about sailing and the practice of sailing itself.

Clitophon thinks that the eagerness for an ability always differs from the ability itself—one is a feeling, one is knowledge of, say, a formula—and so he has understood justice on this pattern. But his pattern is drawn from an impoverished induction. He has thought only of pursuits that yield a product distinct from the eagerness itself. Health and safe-sailing—and likewise money and honor—are products plainly distinct from the eagerness for them; they do not come merely from desiring them. But a desire is not simply a wish, impulse, or judgment of worth. It is a set of activities, dispositions, and attitudes. Saying merely 'I desire to win the prize', without some serious efforts to figure out what it will take you to win, undercuts your claim. Since a set of activities, dispositions, and attitudes—a complex state of soul—can itself be the object of desire, the object of desire may be attained upon fully developing that desire. The *Clitophon* shows that robustly desiring justice is part of being just itself.[14]

Desiring something—in this case, a state of soul—involves recognizing that one lacks some competence; in terms of justice, the competence to act well. A fully developed desire for justice involves diffidence before hazardous situations, and forbearance, when uncertain, if asked what to do. It involves seeking out reliable methods of acquisition of virtue, and these could come from people with their own experience searching for justice. It requires being willing to be challenged and corrected, being informed about one's—till now undiscovered—ignorance. Because lacking competence in justice could be influenced by lacking knowledge about related topics—the well-ordered city, friendship, the nature of investigation, knowledge itself—desiring justice would involve desiring to know about these elements of the good as well. In general, then, desiring justice will involve avoiding evils, giving everyone their (epistemic) due, acknowledging one's inadequacies and being open to improvement, and developing good rela-

[14] The overlap between desiring virtue and being virtuous is pointed to by Gonzalez 2002 and Orwin 1982, 753. Vasiliou 2008 takes Clitophon to make a sound conceptual distinction between directing oneself toward virtue and determining which actions exactly are virtuous, and accepts that Socrates can help one do only the first; but Vasiliou accepts that aiming toward virtue is a key part of being virtuous: most notably, it is the way in which Socrates is virtuous.

tions with people.

The *Clitophon* does not set out a final definition of justice, but the three it seems to take most seriously—whatever produces the beneficial and good (409c2-3); the creation of friendship in cities (409d5-6); and not harming anybody (410b1-3)—all fit this justice-as-the-desire-for-justice view. These activities, dispositions, and attitudes are also those exhibited by Socrates. Socrates' last lines of this dialogue are that he wishes to 'exercise' (ἀσκήσω) and 'pursue' (διώξομαι) his good points, and 'flee' (φεύξομαι 407a4) the bad, and he wants to do this with strength (κατὰ κράτος 407a5). He strives hard for the good and away from shame. In being patient before Clitophon, Socrates must want to hear whether Clitophon might benefit him, and also whether he might benefit Clitophon. For Socrates, desiring justice appropriately requires coming to terms with one's failures and abilities and thinking on one's own and with others about how best to address those failures.

Clitophon has not manifested his desire for justice in the complete way Socrates has, and thereby undermines his claim to desire it. He does not discuss the reasons he desires justice, the gaps he is filling, what he tries to forbear from saying or doing, his theories about alternative methods of investigation, the results of testing the ideas of Thrasymachus and his ilk, the catalogue of views of justice he has heard, or what else he desires to know. Clitophon's dismissive attitude toward the relationship between Socrates' associates and Socrates (408c6-7) and toward the plausible (but refuted) analysis of justice as producing either benefit, goodness, etc., or producing friendship in the city (409d5) suggests that Clitophon does not much care about the relationship of justice to other goods or about the significance of friendship.

Why would Clitophon have this immature or stunted view about justice and its pursuit if he had in fact spent so much time with Socrates? Why would he fail to realize his ignorance about justice and the teaching of it, apparently the expected goal of the Socratic treatment? The dialogue repeatedly reveals that Socrates works his effects through *ad hominem* refutation and discussion. It also reveals that Clitophon has not yet understood that process. In a certain way, he has not yet *heard* it. Clitophon has failed to see how it diagnoses his ignorance. This would be no fault of Socrates or his method, only of Clitophon's inadequate awareness and self-awareness, and of his desires that do not aim for justice.

## V. Clitophon incorrectly characterizes Socrates' production of speeches

The best way to see that Clitophon has not correctly heard Socrates is to see that he has failed to describe all the relevant features of Socrates' talking that he claims to have heard. While Clitophon may sincerely feel that Socrates has not helped him learn about justice, what he misses in his descriptions of Socrates' verbal activity shows that he has inferred wrongly that Socrates' activity in general has no promise for him. There are two modes of talking Clitophon appears to have misunderstood. The first one, to which he gives the most time, is Socrates' talking to others, a kind of discussion Clitophon has overheard. From such con-

versations he has extracted or assembled a protreptic speech. By not realizing that these speeches are *ad hominem*—addressed to a specific person's situation—he fails to appreciate they have their ignorance-diagnosing effects only when one is the right kind of participant in that speech.

Despite speaking as though he directly recounts and then paraphrases either one or several of Socrates' speeches,[15] much of what Clitophon says undermines his implication that Socrates gives protreptic addresses to crowds rather than engaging in conversation. That the opening of Clitophon's report mirrors popular and dramatic perceptions of Socrates suggests that the whole report may have been covered with a veneer of popular expectation or assumption.[16] It starts by comparing Socrates to a god inside a stage machine (ὥσπερ ἐπὶ μηχανῆς τραγικῆς θεός 407b1),[17] deriding Socrates' speeches as disparaging (ἐπιτιμῶν) and perhaps superficial (connoted by the word ὑμνοῖς),[18] and setting him with seemingly tragic diction (ποῖ φέρεσθε, ὦνθρωποι 407b2).[19] Then the reported speech is artificially short. Whether three-fifths of a Stephanus page (the directly quoted part) or an entire page (with the paraphrase included) long, it would take only about two-and-a-half or four minutes to give. Prodicus' protreptic story of Heracles at the Crossroads is the equivalent of three Stephanus pages (*Mem*. ii 1.21-34); Protagoras' 'Great Speech,' probably protreptic in nature, is eight pages long (*Prot*. 320c-328d). In the *Republic*, Glaucon's encomium on injustice, and Adeimantus' speech on justice, are both three-and-a-half pages (358e6-362c10, 362e8-366d6). The artificiality and brevity of Socrates' supposed speech are the first two clues that Clitophon may have wrenched Socrates' actual words from their context. One possibility is that he has extracted something from the

[15] Slings 1999 ad 407e5-8 and 407e5 and at pp. 98-100 argues that Clitophon means to recount just one speech. If Clitophon is making a pastiche, however, it does not matter whether he makes it seem that he is speaking about just one speech or about several.

[16] Cf. Aristophanes *Clouds* 222, with Dover 1970 ad 223ff. and Sommerstein 1982 ad 223ff.; *Apol*. 19c3-4; Slings 1999 ad 407a8.

[17] It is worth noting that gods in tragedies did not speak only generally. Heracles in the *Philoctetes* addresses Philoctetes and Neoptolomus directly: 'Heracles does not know anything that the others do not already know. He does not do anything that others have not already done… He is persuasive because Philoctetes trusts him as an old friend, and this trust arises from an earlier connection between them' (Woodruff 2009, 245). Kremer 2000, 480 takes this reference to a *deus ex machina* as a hint both that Clitophon wished to find 'in Socrates a possessor of an art that would rescue man from tragic conflict…and even strife altogether'. He goes on here and in Kremer 2004 to diagnose Clitophon's character as entranced by the ideal of a peace-making technical skill in the *Clitophon* and legal positivism in the *Republic*.

[18] Slings 1999 translates ὑμνοῖς λέγων as 'lengthy sermons'; see ad 407a8. At *Prot*. 317c6, the word denotes how the masses merely repeat what their leaders say without knowing what is going on. At *Euthyd*. 297d3-4, Dionysodorus, by this point quite sick of Socrates, uses the word to describe his thought that Socrates has been buying time by giving a funny and involved speech about Hercules and the hydra (b9-d2). Accordingly, this term can imply either a sense of repetition (as signified by πολλάκις 407a6); length (as in Slings' translation), which would emphasize the generic status as protreptic speech (but not confirm it); or superficiality, concerned more for praising than for transmitting information.

[19] For evidence that this is tragic diction not otherwise found in Plato, see Slings 1999 ad 407b1.

back-and-forth conversation in which it was embedded.

Clitophon may have thought Socrates preached from the fact that Socrates would on occasion turn momentarily from his interlocutor to make a general point. But the speech Clitophon claims to repeat looks to be something Socrates would never really have presented. It looks instead like something patched together from phrases, passages, and pieces. When talking about the quoted speech, Clitophon refers only to its plural contents (ταυτ᾽ 407e3), and when he mentions the paraphrase, he refers to multiple speeches (τοῖς λόγοις 408b5). Indeed, there is very little difference between the supposed direct quotation (407b2-e2) and the paraphrase (407e5-408b5), leading one to think that what is purported to be quoted really is also a paraphrase put into direct speech. Both the direct quotation and the paraphrase move extremely rapidly within and between arguments. In the direct quotation, twenty-six lines long, the speech manages to make at least a dozen discrete remarks or rhetorical questions, ending with a highly compressed discussion of the thesis that nobody acts unjustly voluntarily. The purported paraphrase, nineteen lines long, continues in this highly schematic argumentative mode, moving among neglect of soul and body; ruling and knowing how to use one's instruments; technical abilities and the use of others' instruments; autonomy and slavery; sailing and politics. These are all plausibly Socratic concerns, but their highly abbreviated character seems unlikely material to earn praise as 'extremely fine' and 'most influential', if they could even be understood by anybody but those already immersed in Socratic conversation.

Besides the intrinsic implausibility that a speaker would speak with such hectic speed, the dialogue provides other reasons to think that Socrates does not talk as Clitophon presents him. Clitophon reveals that Socrates actually speaks conversationally with great regularity, despite not presenting this in his report of Socrates' speech. He must have witnessed Socrates' epagogic and refutative styles of conversational argument frequently, since he says he spoke to Socrates' associates 'after your fashion' (κατὰ σέ), with leading questions (ὑποτείνων 408d1), and he goes on to quote his imitation of Socratic one-on-one examination (408d2-410a7).[20]

Further evidence that Socrates mostly or exclusively talks conversationally is Clitophon's acknowledgment of Socrates' intellectual companions, and the fact that he does not know what to call them. He introduces them, exasperatedly, as 'your contemporaries and fellow-enthusiasts or comrades, or whatever one should call the kind of relation you and they have' (τῶν ἡλικιωτῶν τε καὶ συνεπιθυμητῶν ἢ ἑταίρων σῶν, ἢ ὅπως δεῖ πρὸς σὲ περὶ αὐτῶν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὀνομάζειν 408c6-7). That they are Socrates' age-mates suggests an unusually egalitarian relationship, or at any rate not just the old teaching the young.[21] That

[20] Others appear to have learned to refute by overhearing Socrates' discussions with others (*Apol*. 23c4; *Grg*. 447e7-c3; Xenophon *Mem*. i 2.40-47).

[21] Rowe 2005, 219-220 takes 'contemporaries' to make sense only when talking historically, and thus 'reflects…someone's recognition that the dialogues represent a *bygone* world'. But its more neutral meaning as 'age-mate' is generally attested (*Apol*. 33d, *Symp*. 183c, and LSJ sv A).

they are 'sharers in eagerness' emphasizes communality and common purpose.[22] The term for 'comrades' is ambiguous between pupils and teachers in pedagogical contexts, but since the term is not originally or necessarily pedagogical it may also mark egalitarian interactions (cf. Ford 2008, 36; Robb 1994, chs. 6-8). The confusion about the appropriate name indicates that Socrates' style of interacting with people differs markedly from that of others. It differs especially from the way many people talk who take on acolytes and profess views. Preaching does not seem the force attracting or influencing his companions, with whom he has individual relationships (408c9).

It would have been simple for Clitophon to have created a pastiche from remarks he heard Socrates make in conversation (cf. Bailly 2003, 117; Kremer 2000, 483n5). He could have interpreted Socrates' questions as assertions, ignored the situation in which the conversation took part, excised the answers to Socrates' questions, or excerpted the merely motivational or recapitulative remarks from the conversation. Socrates elsewhere has to remind his interlocutors that they are in conversation and that he is not teaching them (cf. *Prot.* 330e9-331a1, *Alc. I* 112d8-113b6, 114e4). In the *Menexenus*, Socrates says that Aspasia put together a speech that was 'partly impromptu, and partly using stuff she had prepared in the past, …pasting together discarded fragments' (236b, Griffith trans.; cf. 246d1-248d8).

Besides being able to create a pastiche, Clitophon may have been unconsciously disposed to do so. He could have assimilated Socrates' way of speaking to the rhetorical form he most commonly heard. He says he has heard plenty of speeches, and has spent time with men, including Thrasymachus, likely to have produced monologues.[23] He constantly refers to Socrates' speeches in terms of monologue-production (e.g., καταμελετῆσαι τὸν ἔπαινον 410b8, ἐγκωμιάζεις 410c4, τῶν λόγων τῶν προτρεπτικῶν 410cd1).[24]

There is good reason, then, to think that Clitophon has failed to understand the particular dynamics of Socratic conversation, explanation, and encouragement. Even if Socrates sometimes spoke to a broad audience, he would not have spoken to an audience in the way Clitophon describes, and the men closest and most influenced by Socrates were not those who merely listened to Socrates' addresses

[22] Slings 1999 ad loc. translates, perhaps too formally, 'fellow-aspirants'.

[23] Socrates reports that Thrasymachus, pressed on his claim that injustice is strong, responded: 'I can give a speech about it. Though if I do, I know you'll say that I'm being rhetorical. Well, either let me speak as much as I wish, or if you wish to ask questions, do so, and I'll say to you, "Well, well," and nod and shake my head as I would to old women telling their tales' (*Rep.* 350d-e, Allen trans.). When Socrates denies being persuaded by his speech, Thrasymachus is at a loss for any better forms of speech: 'And how am I to persuade you? he said. If you are not convinced by what I just now said, what more can I do for you?' (345b5-6). Thrasymachus' protreptic speech was nearly a page-and-a-half long (343b1-344c10) and he did not want to stay for questions (344d4-e2). In the *Phaedrus*, 'the Chalcedonian' (sc. Thrasymachus) is said to address many people at a time (αὖ πολλούς 267c9). See Nails 2002, 288-290, and Betti 2011.

[24] Ausland 2005, 411: likely 'Clitophon has been attending Thrasymachus' lectures for some time, since his entire speech is in its basic outlines a carefully constructed piece of forensic rhetoric'.

to a broad audience. An adequate critique of the Socratic project would have to appreciate this, and Clitophon does not.

## VI. The insufficient effect of refutation on Clitophon

Just as Clitophon has underdescribed—from having misunderstood—Socrates' discussions with others, he underdescribes, and misunderstands, Socrates' discussions with him. Clitophon has correctly understood that Socrates characteristically examines his interlocutors' views and refutes them. But Clitophon does not reflect on a consequence: that Socrates would get his interlocutors to care for justice most characteristically by examining and refuting their views about justice. If Clitophon really has had a conversation with Socrates, as he says he has, either he did not have the characteristic kind of conversation, or if he did, he did not think much about it. He certainly does not admit to discovering any inconsistency or inadequacy in his views. His desire for justice, not having come from a sense of ignorance, would be inadequate to *be*, at the same time, justice itself.

Clitophon's immunity to self-doubt of course precedes the exchanges with Socrates he summarizes. He speaks vaguely about the effect of the protreptic speeches he has heard Socrates give. He says that they stunned him (ἐξεπληττόμην 407a7), filled him with wonder (θαυμαστῶς 407e4), had the power to wake him up (ἐπεγείρειν 408c3), and earned his appreciation (407a8, e3, 408b6-c3). He says that they lauded caring for virtue and the soul on the basis of an analogy with speeches lauding care for one's body (408d3, 409a3; 408e3-409a2). But he does not admit to having realized what he *did not* know, what he *should* know, what he made a *mistake* about, where he was going *wrong*, or anything else that would impugn his intellectual virtues or virtues of character. He does not treat not knowing the nature of justice to be bad, or a fault, but only intellectually disappointing.

His interactions with Socrates' associates show the same self-confidence. He approached those associates having realized that Socrates was not going to tell him 'what comes next' (408d3-4, e1-2, cf. c4-5). (He never says why he did not go directly to Socrates; cf. 408c5). The associates did not give him what he wanted. One of them said that Socrates spoke about 'justice' (409a6). Clitophon took this information to be inadequate on the grounds that skills should not merely be named but also analyzed in terms of their particular product (ἔργον 409c1). When he asked for that, he got four different answers—the helpful, appropriate, beneficial, and profitable—from the four associates he asked (409c2-3). But these answers did not name the unique product of justice; according to Clitophon, every other skill has the same products. With such a quick dismissal of the associates of Socrates—the man whose advice he badly wants—he already assumes himself to have superior knowledge about justice. After all, Clitophon does not wonder whether each skill has as its products helpfulness, appropriateness, benefit, and profit exactly because of the addition of justice. He does not think about what could make those answers even seem plausible. Clitophon makes the same errors of overconfidence in his follow-up conversation. Someone

suggested that justice produces 'friendship in cities' (409d5). Clitophon put this suggestion through the test. The particular defense of that suggestion failed, as all the associates recognized (409e10-410a6). But he took the refutation as a negation of the proposed definition rather than as an inadequate defense of it. At no point did Clitophon press his own assumptions about justice or the way to talk about justice.

It is strange that Clitophon did not speak directly to Socrates during these early efforts. But finally (τελευτῶν 410a7), he says, he did.

> I went about asking even you yourself (σὲ αὐτὸν ἠρώτων), and you said to me (εἶπές μοι) that justice is harming enemies and doing well to friends. Later, though, it appeared (ὕστερον δὲ ἐφάνη) that the just person harms nobody ever. (410a7-b2)

Clitophon put up (ὑπομείνας 410b5) with this sequence of questioning and reversal at least twice more before he could take it no longer, and then he gave up on Socrates (410b3-4).

It is remarkable that Clitophon expresses no confusion, self-doubt, or ignorance as consequences of these interactions, but this is consistent with his character as so far depicted. It is even more remarkable that his report—of Socrates' most important way of interacting—is so brief.[25] Obviously Clitophon has left very much out. What is it, and what does he fail to understand?

Clitophon presents his interaction with Socrates as one in which he asks Socrates a question, he gets an answer, and then at some point in a conversation an alternative view comes up. This cannot be the whole story. It is unlikely that Socrates would give as a definition of justice 'harm to enemies, benefit to friends'. It is said more bluntly and assertively than the way in which Clitophon implies Socrates generally talks, which is either at length, with sequences of analogies, or with questions. None of Socrates' associates to whom Clitophon spoke gave something like this answer. It would be odd that Socrates would finally reveal his views only to this late-comer to his circle. The answer is made more suspicious by the fact that it is a commonplace (cf. *Rep*. 332d3, *Meno* 71e; cf. Blondell 1989, 26-59, and Dover 1974, 180-184) that, if really promulgated, would need to be further glossed, and Clitophon mentions no such gloss. Nor does Clitophon acknowledge that the 'harm enemies' answer sounds inconsistent with the very protreptic addresses Clitophon attributes to Socrates. There, Socrates apparently chastised cities that acted immoderately, inharmoniously, and hostilely toward other cities (407c9-d1), presumably for acting unjustly. Thus harming enemies would seem to be unjust (cf. *Cr*. 49b-e). Finally, the 'harming enemies' thesis, even if consistent with Socrates' earlier remarks, was not foreshadowed by them. This would itself be worthy of explanation. Clitophon is being decidedly elliptical when reporting on Socrates' supposed first

[25] The brevity cannot be explained by the fact that Socrates could simply have remembered the interaction. Clitophon rehearsed much of what he took Socrates to have said to a general audience; one ought repeat a past interaction if its details form the basis of one's criticisms of it; and Clitophon is supposed to be reporting what he told to Lysias.

definition of justice.

Clitophon's remark about the second definition of justice—that it merely 'appeared'—is equally indirect. He does not say that Socrates changed his mind, or looked at the issue from another perspective or in a different context, or was trying to fool Clitophon. Clitophon does not say by what means, or from whom, or how much later, or following what discussion, this new view appeared. He does not establish whether anyone even thought these views to be inconsistent, or whether it had been found that nobody is an enemy, or that harming enemies actually benefits them, or harms friends. He obviously does not accept this answer as Socrates' final view about justice, but he does not say what disqualifies it as a sufficient answer. Clitophon appears to have heard or cared about nothing whatsoever in his repeated conversations with Socrates except what could plausibly be taken as a stable, uncontradicted definition of justice.

Clitophon's exchanges with Socrates, toggling repeatedly between two distinct-sounding definitions, are not baffling to anyone familiar with the Socratic practice depicted by Plato and Xenophon. Socrates hardly makes any assertions; and the ones he makes he tends to take back. More likely he said, after some initial conversation: 'So, now you claim that "Justice is harm to enemies, benefit to friends." You are right, it is hard to see what else it could be. Let's investigate its consequences.' After a while, Socrates again: 'It turns out we must accept that "The just person never harms anybody."' Clitophon may have accepted Socrates' hypothetical agreement, and then been confused about the force of the intervening agreements, and so had to explain the change in thesis by the passive construction (ἐφάνη, 'it appeared'). So eager was he to know Socrates' views about justice, Clitophon simply accepted whatever he heard come from Socrates' mouth, until it seemed incompatible with what he next heard from his mouth.

What this dialogue informs us about Socrates—that he asks leading questions and refutes definitions—makes clear that Clitophon has undergone an examination but has not realized its consequences for himself. He has not realized what the Socratic overturning of a definition amounts to, and so he has not realized that it entails his ignorance. He is like most interlocutors after only a few contradictions, before they reach a genuine *aporia*. But if Socrates' effect comes about only through recognizing one's ignorance, then Clitophon has not yet reaped the benefits of Socrates' effect. And so he is not yet in a position to judge that effect.

## VII. The source of Clitophon's desire for justice

Because Clitophon does not admit to wanting to become just out of an *aporia*-induced recognition that he is ignorant about justice, whence his motivation to learn about justice?

The usual route to desiring something good is through a recognition of a certain kind of impasse.[26] Throughout the Socratic dialogues Socrates aims to bring

[26] Jordan 1986, 320 recognizes that in the *Euthydemus* at least, 'the protreptic does not seek so much to arouse a desire as to connect an admitted desire with its object. Thus, second, the aim of the

his interlocutors to accept that their current commitments or enthusiasms—perhaps an assumed expertise, a fascination, or a relationship—cannot be maintained or achieved as they are, or their state of ignorance is shameful to them. They learn that further conversation about that good is the best way forward.

In describing his experiences before, during, or after listening to Socrates' supposedly impersonal protreptic speeches, Clitophon expresses no discovery or feelings of ignorance, much less any personal, shameful, life-impeding ignorance.[27] He says that he wished to know what would come next, but he says this in the same way that the crowd listening to a rhapsode or poet would want to know what came next (cf. Rutherford 1995, 100 and Bailly 2003, 116).

What then are the possible sources of desire? Even had Clitophon not undergone refutation himself, he surely watched others undergo it. Might he have suffered *aporia* sympathetically, from identifying with the positions of Socrates' interlocutors, taking Socrates' questions as though they were pressuring him, and then answering as honestly as possible? This is, after all, what some people think readers of Platonic dialogues experience (cf. Gonzalez 2002, 168 and Slings 1999, 147, 155-164). And many of Socrates' hangers-on seem to have been devoted to auditing Socratic exchanges. But it is doubtful that this occurred for Clitophon, as he never acknowledges any dawning ignorance, irrespective of its source.

Perhaps Clitophon's highly-visible interest in justice is largely defensive. Clitophon may not be worried that he fails to care for justice, but realizes that he must appear to care for justice. But if Socrates can give him no easy formulae to share, only contradiction and confusion, he fails to provide Clitophon any safe cover. Clitophon's gossiping with Lysias might show off his insight about justice and his willingness to admit that Socrates, whom he had once praised over others (407e4, 408c-12), has become passé (406a2, 410e4-5).

But to make the best sense of Clitophon's interest in speeches about justice, let us consider the context. *Republic* ii makes clear that the Athenian marketplace is filled with people giving descriptive and exhortative speeches about justice itself.[28] Glaucon says, 'My ears have almost been talked deaf by listening to

protreptic is to produce a choice, an action—the passionate pursuit of a wisdom now thought to be obtainable. Because its hinge is desire, the argument relies, third, on showing that access to the desired objects is provided only by a master-good, by wisdom'.

[27] Hutchinson 1997, 965 is imprecise when he says that 'it was Socrates himself…who stimulated this desire in Clitophon and caused him to enter the Socratic milieu in search of the knowledge that he needed next: a philosophical understanding of virtue itself, especially justice'. Clitophon never says that he was not already desirous of justice, only that Socrates gave these speeches in the best way, and could wake people up. He does not even say what concretely was so relatively or absolutely effective about Socrates' speeches. Clitophon also never says that he wants a 'philosophical' understanding, just that he wanted to know how to become just. 'Philosophical understanding' could be exactly what Clitophon *does not* want, if by 'philosophy' Hutchinson means what Socrates in the *Apology* means by it: principally, examination of views and discovery of one's ignorance.

[28] Glaucon desires a demonstration of the nature of justice and injustice 'in themselves' (*auto kath' hauto*, cf. Ferrari 2003, 15); this desire mirrors Socrates' desire expressed at 354b, and what philosophers are supposedly interested in, and, by implication and direct remark, what the (many)

Thrasymachus and countless others, but I have never yet heard the case for justice as better than injustice stated by anyone as I wish' (cf. 360d9, 367a7). Indeed, the speech belittling justice Glaucon gives will not, so he says, reflect his own beliefs. This suggests that he has heard similar ideas elsewhere (358b1-d10), and the fact that he has this speech prepared suggests either that he has heard exactly this before, or has thought it might someday be his turn to contribute something like this, and he wanted to be ready. Socrates' acceptance, in the form of a non-controversial rhetorical question—'For of what would a sensible man more enjoy speaking and hearing?' (358e1-2)—implies that speeches about justice would not seem overly abstruse. Adeimantus refers to every sort of speech concerning justice: 'encomia on justice' (363d5), speeches against injustice (363e1), and speeches in favor of justice (364a1). Adeimantus says that nobody has adequately explained 'that injustice is the greatest evil the soul can contain within itself' (367a1-2); presumably some speakers have tried.

All this rhetoric about justice itself suggests that people did not listen to it solely to be convinced about the value of justice. Adeimantus says he would accept the other kind of praise of justice from others (at 367a), but not from Socrates. That Adeimantus 'accepts' something means he thinks it worth listening to apart from its persuasiveness or truth. Xenophon gives the most striking explanation for the phenomena, when he says that Critias and Alcibiades studied with Socrates not 'because they desired the life of Socrates and the moderation that he had, [but instead] because they held that if they associated with him they would become most competent in speech and action' (i 2.15, cf. i 2.39). Studying justice in groups to which they had been enticed by protreptic addresses could have seemed the way to political advancement.[29] We can assume that the language of justice had become important in the democratic vocabulary, and that one had to be able to speak it, be seen to want to speak it, and be identified with the best speakers of it. The speakers on justice were essentially marketing their wares, which may have been simply 'association with people who talk well about justice'. Socrates, as the discipleship of Alcibiades and Critias makes clear, was a highly valued speaker about justice.

## VIII. The end of the dialogue

Clitophon closes his speech with neither questions nor requests to which Socrates could respond at the moment. He does not indicate what precisely he expects himself or Socrates to do next. Clitophon wants a large-scale change in Socrates' behavior, and implies, without stating it outright, that he wishes Socrates would start telling him what kind of thing his soul is and what kind of

other speeches are nearly but not quite about.

[29] The cases of Alcibiades and Critias that Xenophon twice cites would be particularly relevant to the case of Clitophon if Plutarch, *Mor*. 328a-c, has independent reason to group all three as men who turned from Socrates. See Bowe 2007, 256-257 on some interesting further similarities between Clitophon and Alcibiades, especially with respect to their talk of praise and jealousy (at, e.g., *Symp*. 214-215).

therapy it needs (410d3-4). He does not, however, articulate any steps Socrates might take by which he might teach him this information. This is in sharp contrast to Glaucon and Adeimantus' direct request for a defense of justice after they felt unconvinced by Socrates' exchange with Thrasymachus. The brothers ask for such a defense, tell Socrates in what manner they wish him to talk, provide models of the kind of tale they want to hear, and then recapitulate their instruction to him to investigate justice (*Rep*. 357a1-368c8). A serious desire for justice would seem to require thinking clearly about the way one might get such lessons. Either Clitophon has not considered what exactly he would want to hear; or he treats his previous unsatisfactory efforts as evidence of the impotence of any future efforts; or he sees himself as simply setting the record straight about what he said to Lysias. Whichever it is, one thing is clear. He wants to be heard. He does not want to establish a relationship of back-and-forth discussion, of challenge and counter-challenge, of admission and concession and explanation. Though he warns that he will join another teacher, Clitophon does not seem a man concerned to build rapport. His lack of interest is marked; in Socrates' opening remark of the dialogue, there are three words for social interchange and engagement (διαλεγόμενος 406a2, διατριβάς, συνουσίαν 406a3). For Socrates, talking among a group of others, where everyone shares an interest in prolonging the conversation, is somehow critical to the just life.[30]

Perhaps it is because Clitophon does not actively invite response that readers assume that Socrates has no answer for him. But of course the author pointedly does not depict Socrates standing aloof or dumbfounded after the end of Clitophon's speech. He leaves it to the reader to wonder why he ends there, and what could be imagined to follow.[31]

The second question—what could be imagined to follow—is simpler to address. Socrates has several options available to him by way of response. He could warn Clitophon off from studying with Thrasymachus, if indeed Socrates had any reason to do so.[32] He could ask what he means to learn from Thrasymachus.[33] He could interrogate Clitophon about his experience in associations. He could inquire whether Clitophon ever fears whether he might be acting or advising others incorrectly. He could question the veracity of Clitophon's report. He could explain that knowing the words to a definition of justice will have little regulative effect; that providing a description of the nature of the soul exceeds his

[30] Clitophon picks up on this usage at the beginning of his report with a synonym (συγγιγνόμενος, 407a6), but does not return directly to that theme.

[31] Many commentators wonder instead why Socrates does not respond—Bruell 1999, 199-201; Kremer 2000, 494; Saxonhouse 2005, 129; Plax 2006, 10—or cannot respond: Roochnik 1984, 1990, 106-107; Blits 1985; Slings 1999, 16-18. See Ausland 2005, 410-411 against their assumption of Socratic silence.

[32] Slings 1999, 55 is not warranted in believing that Thrasymachus must be a corrupting influence, only that he would not provide a Socratic influence.

[33] The claim by Annas 1989, 17 that '[Clitophon] complains to Socrates that…at least [Thrasymachus] has definite and helpful views about what justice actually is', is wrong: Clitophon never gives any specific reasons for studying with Thrasymachus.

abilities (cf. *Phdr*. 246a3-5); or that assigning a treatment would involve nothing beyond telling him to keep sticking by him and having faith that something good may yet turn out. Or rather than talk, or in addition to talking, he could keep silent at least for a while. He could simply leave, with or without comment. He could stand and think, as he is depicted doing at the beginning of the *Hippias Minor*, and do so until and after Clitophon departs. He could make a skeptical face until Clitophon spoke again with something more concrete, and then be more verbally responsive. He could mimic or exaggerate the silence he saw Clitophon preserve when Clitophon listened to *his* speeches. He could suggest a future meeting.

Whatever Socrates might be expected to do, the author does not depict any of them. While this does not mean silence ensues, the dialogue's ending with the end of Clitophon's speech recommends wondering how to understand any potential Socratic silence. Silence would emphasize Socrates' ability to listen all the way through a speech without interrupting. It would throw into starker relief Socrates' presumed liberality of conversation. It would suggest that the speech will echo in the speaker's ears, or encourage him to guess (as the reader does) at what Socrates could possibly be thinking. It would remove Clitophon from his culture of competitive argument, where each speech gets its counter-speech, often at the cost of due reflection. It would focus the attention of those who have read Socratic dialogues on the phenomenon of Socrates' taciturnity.

The *Clitophon* leaves too few clues for the reader to determine why Socrates says as little about the way to become virtuous as he does. Clitophon is already annoyed at the fact that the Socrates he knows has said so little.[34] As readers, we can do nothing but think about justice on its own, or about other Socratic writings, or about our own experiences with philosophy. Clitophon, however, has the man right before him. According to what we know about his interactions with Socrates, he seems to be squandering his opportunity. His self-confidence—his failure to admit what he does not know—will prevent him from learning more about justice. Perhaps this dialogue was written as an encouragement to come to know the ways in which one does not know, and to wondering whether this concerted pursuit of self-knowledge, as ongoing conversations about justice among the citizens, is what justice in the city is.

## Conclusion

Cooper ed. 1997 states, 'It is not generally agreed by scholars whether Plato is the author of this work [i.e., the *Clitophon*]' (cf. Thesleff 1982, 205-208). I have therefore tried to avoid assuming Platonic authorship of the *Clitophon*. I have treated Plato's *Republic* simply as a repository of information about late fifth-century Athens rather than as information about what a single author of both dia-

[34] Neumann 1967, 52-54 thinks that Clitophon finds Socrates' ideals too abstracted from the real world, too inadequately specified for him, too absolute. This frustration would be a species of the frustration that Socrates does not say enough *for* Clitophon.

logues would believe about justice or about his character Socrates.[35] Since, however, the dialogue is no longer treated as a fragment (Hutchinson 1997), I have read it as though it were complete.[36]

The *Clitophon* may focus a reader's attention on the way exhortations to virtue work, and on which ones are good, which ones are bad. This focus may show what most importantly distinguishes Socrates from Clitophon: their respective degrees of awareness about their ignorance about justice. The dialogue's structure and depiction of Socrates and his action in this conversation encourages reflecting on the role the desire for justice plays in coming to be just.

As part of my argument I gave reason to think that Clitophon did not report completely his experiences with Socrates. Even if Clitophon were correct in saying that Socrates gave impersonal speeches, and that 'talking in the Socratic style' simply means using analogies, rather than leading questions or other forms of back-and-forth discussion, the claim that Clitophon does not represent himself as understanding whatever refutation he underwent is untouched.

It is hard to see that one would want to study the *Clitophon* as the first of the dialogues making up the Platonic Corpus, as Diogenes Laertius iii 62 said sometimes happened. But a student with experience with the Socratic project could reach a deep sympathy for it and understand Plato's dialogues as models of the desire for justice.[37]

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[35] Saxonhouse 2005, 128 starts her remarks by asserting that the *Clitophon* is 'clearly a companion piece to the *Republic*' (as does Davis 1998, 271), but if this means that the dialogue could be understood by a contemporary of Plato's only after having studied the *Republic*, the assertion is false; if it means that the dialogue would be written to be best appreciated by someone who had thought about the *Republic*, this seems true enough, but does not direct our interpretation of the dialogue.

[36] See Plutarch *Solon* 32.3, Grube 1931, 303, Slings 1999, 12-14, and Ausland 2005, 412, 415 for completeness; Grote 1888, 420-425 for the 'fragment' view. Verdenius 1982, 143n1 simply impugns the intelligence of the author.

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