

“Difficult Dialogues; and How To Be Judgy”

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Here we enter a classroom that is, to some degree, specifically designed for seminar discussions to take place. Here we enter knowing that we will begin to have a seminar discussion. And I will begin with this question: do we know just how difficult dialogues, or discussions, are to have when they are concerned with the truth of matters? And not necessarily to call attention to the following question for the purpose of this essay, but to call to your mind your personal experience for reference: how much does that phrase, or phrases similar to it, get thrown around college campuses today? Really, what makes a dialogue difficult, and how do we address it? I am referring to investigations of opinions and judgements of truth--things that are not, and cannot be, decided by merely appealing to "the facts."

I imagine that, as Aristotle had mentioned in his *Metaphysics*, there are some logicians in the room, as well as poets, and anything and everything in between: some people naturally take a liking to clear cut and logical conversation "and do not listen to a speaker unless he speaks mathematically", while others take a liking to descriptive and poetical conversation and "expect him to cite a poet as witness" (*Metaphysics* 995a5-10). Considering this statement by Aristotle, one would suppose that conversation will need to appeal to both naturalities; and the attempt to form a conversation that does so is where at least one difficulty in dialogue may arise. But perhaps most often, dialogues regarding the truth of matters seem difficult to have and their end, the truth, difficult to grasp, because the act of making sense of yourself and others, to yourself and others, in order to communicate, consists of a process where there are a number of errors or mistakes that could occur. Any number of things could keep people from having a real effective communicative dialogue, and very often do. Obstacles to the progressive movement of the investigation of truth seem to be the result of people coming to a "standstill" in conversation--a

“standstill” quite commonly caused by interlocutors’ inability to focus other than on one another’s judgement of the truth of matters on which they disagree.

Socrates, in Plato’s *Philebus*, seems to categorize some of those obstacles as excessive emotion and pride, which may disable one from seeing past something; other obstacles arise whenever possibilities of miscommunication are realized. Like Socrates, one has to be calm, cool, and collected, so to speak, to converse and partake in a difficult dialogue. Neither, however, can one “get on” by conceding points for no other reason than to avoid conflict, or in an attempt to avoid the work of substantiating one’s own claims by implicit *quid pro quo*. Like Socrates, one cannot let timidity keep one from fully participating in the conversation. What Socrates, with the help of a young, fellow Athenian, Protarchus, would seem to call the thing that overcomes all obstacles that might impede interlocutors from grasping the truth of matters, is dialectic.

In Plato’s *Philebus*, to the question of which “possession or state of the soul [is] one that can render life happy for all human beings” (*Philebus* 11d), Socrates and his main interlocutor, Protarchus, picked up the pieces from where the prior conversation between Socrates and Philebus left off. They began by repeating Philebus’ thesis that pleasure is the thing “that can render life happy for all human beings”; and they repeated Socrates’ thesis that wisdom was the thing that renders life happy for all humans. Socrates tried to invite Philebus to join them once more in conversation, but Philebus had “given up” on them (*Philebus* 11c). Stubbornly, Philebus believed his answer to be true, to the exclusion of Socrates’, and would swear to it in front of the gods, even though he made his claim without a sufficient argument for it. Socrates also called on the gods, particularly the goddess, Aphrodite, but in a way unlike Philebus’ way. Socrates

admitted to feeling dread “over what names to use for the gods” and avowed that he meant to use “whatever title pleases her” (*Philebus* 12c), for fear of whatever might be the consequence of calling Aphrodite by an incorrect name. Here, Socrates confessed to not knowing with certainty what names were appropriate to use for the gods, because he could have been wrong in the association of the name for Aphrodite to the goddess herself. Socrates implied that the reason for the uncertainty of what name was appropriate to use for the gods, or for anything else for that matter, was because of a certain principle the use of words falls under. That principle is: “If one just goes by the name it is one single thing, but in fact it comes in many forms that are in some way even quite unlike each other.” (*Philebus* 12c). In other words, though Socrates here used one word “Aphrodite” to signify the goddess herself, the name for the goddess herself used as signification for her is subject to the possibility of being expressed “in many different forms” as many different names. Further, inherent to the use of words for signification lies the possibility of using different words for the identification of a thing--the "oneness" of using a name to refer to an object conceals a "manyness". Here, therefore, Socrates seems to suggest that one should consider that their name for some (apparently) singular thing is susceptible to being partially or wholly incorrect. In this way, he foreshadows how those who are not wary may be led to be like Philebus, who refused to partake any further in a conversation that did not concede his naming of the thing that renders human life happy as the one and only way.

As Socrates and Protarchus proceeded with the argument for either pleasure or wisdom being the answer to the question of what makes all men most happy, Socrates pointed out a flaw in Protarchus’ argument. After Protarchus admitted that pleasure can come from opposite things--that people with foolish opinions get pleasure at the same time wise men get pleasure

from their wisdom--he argued that the pleasures themselves are not opposite to one another by asking the question, “how could pleasure not be, of all things, most like pleasure?” (*Philebus* 12d-e), thus assuming that things that are alike in one sense have to be like each other in the other senses. Socrates then warned Protarchus not to “rely on this argument that makes a unity of all the things that are most opposed” (*Philebus* 13a), or, not to assume a “unity” of pleasures by calling them all good when in some sense, they may be opposed. Socrates then tried to help Protarchus out, so that he did not make a contradiction in speech, by asking him, “What is the common element in the good and bad pleasures that allows you to call them good?” (*Philebus* 13b). But Protarchus would not accept Socrates’ supposition that some pleasures were good and some were bad; he thought Socrates was suggesting something absurd. Socrates then began to imitate Protarchus’ reasoning so that Protarchus could understand, by means of this logical tactic, how his reasoning would not allow their conversation to progress any further. Socrates suggested that it would be possible to “reach a mutual accommodation” if each interlocutor treated each argument in their conversation with a “similar stance” (*Philebus* 13d). By way of treating each--viz: the life of pleasure and the life of knowledge--fairly, Socrates admitted that though he supposed knowledge to be the good, there were also branches of it that “will seem quite unlike others” (*Philebus* 14a). Were Socrates to assume a unity of the same good to come from the different branches of knowledge, he would make the same mistake Protarchus made in making a unity of pleasures by calling them all good.

When Socrates invited Protarchus to question and investigate what could have been a “common element in the good and bad pleasures that allows you to call them all good?” (*Philebus* 13b), Protarchus responded stubbornly and asked Socrates if he really thought

anybody would entertain at all the idea that there were good and bad pleasures. Socrates seemed to think Protarchus talked as if they were fighting one another, but with words, just because their claims of what possession or state of the soul it is that truly makes human beings happy seemed opposed. Metaphorically, Protarchus seems to think that, in conversations involving different claims or opinions, one must defend one's own argument as if it were a possession and counter-attack against opposed opinion as if defending one's possessions from destruction at the opposed opinions' hands. Socrates seemed to suggest, in regard to the character of the interlocutors in the conversation, that if they did not want to give up on their conversation and end it where it was at the moment, then they must not be as stubborn about their ideas as Philebus. In order not to "speak in just the same way as those who are the most incompetent and at the same time newcomers in such discussions" (*Philebus* 13c), the interlocutors must "brave the possibility that, when put to a closer scrutiny, it will come to light whether pleasure should be called the good, or wisdom, or yet a third thing" (*Philebus* 14b). In other words, the interlocutors must entertain the possibilities that one of their opinions was truly the answer to the question of what makes men most happy, or that neither of their opinions was truly the answer, or that a fusion of the two would be the true answer to their question. And since Philebus was made the example of someone who gave up a conversation from an unwillingness to concede the possible truth of others' points in argumentation, Protarchus began to accept Socrates' suggestion that there exists another way they can converse, past the point of mere display of opinions, for mere display of opinions was what the conversation with Philebus had been like until he refused to converse any longer.

When Socrates suggested that of the multiplicity of opinions, they “ought to act together as allies in support of the truest one” (*Philebus* 14b), he seemed to have been talking about two different tasks: one, to answer the particular question of which state of the soul it is that makes men truly happy; two, to keep in mind that the way they should converse with one another should be non-contentious. Thus far it seems that in order to maintain the conversation, the interlocutors must not simply display their own opinions and acknowledge the other’s opinions as either the same as their own or different. The interlocutors must also grant that, at any point of the conversation, either one or both of them could be wrong regarding the truth of their claims, which may stem from a mistake in the signification of objects, or wrong to assert the truth of their claims, when people slip-up and let things like stubbornness fueled by pride drive their contribution to the conversation. Persistent awareness of the possibility of being wrong is one way the interlocutors could participate in dialectic, and therefore necessarily keep the conversation progressing toward its goal.

Afterward, Socrates put into question the worthiness of a discussion partner who would fear making like things look like opposites, so much as to deny (in the case of Socrates’ thesis) “that one kind of knowledge can be unlike the other” (*Philebus* 14a). Protarchus then understood that both theses were “on the same footing” and “agreed that there can be many and unlike kinds of pleasures, but also many and different kinds of knowledge” (*Philebus*\. 14a). After Protarchus conceded this point, Socrates suggested they should “brave the possibility” that if they consider the answer to their question more carefully, “it will come to light” whether pleasure, wisdom, or a third and different thing should be called the good. Socrates called this act of investigating which of those three things would sufficiently answer their initial question non-contentious

conversation, or, conversation that is not had “out of love of victory”--as if either Socrates’ or Protarchus’ opinion could “win” (*Philebus* 14b).

Described as one that “creates difficulties” and “has an amazing nature”, Socrates then identified the “principle” of language and speech itself, previously referred to in Socrates’ mention of the goddess, Aphrodite, as the cause for statements like “the many are one and the one are many” (*Philebus* 14c) to be said about the same thing. Given this principle, which is the capacity for a name of a thing to be expressed “in many forms that are in some way even quite unlike each other.” (*Philebus* 12c), Socrates asked whether or not such unities as ‘man is one’, ‘ox is one’, ‘the beautiful is one’, and ‘the good one’ could be affirmed among things that are at the same time many and one, and again “whether one ought to suppose that there are any such unities truly in existence”, and yet again, if such unities exist, how are they supposed to be (*Philebus* 15a-b).

Socrates and Protarchus then proceeded in their conversation with at least two rules in mind. For one, they would act as allies in their conversation so that if their opinions were different or seemed directly opposed, they would contend not battle-like, but more like sparring partners “in support of the truest” answer to their initial question, and not in support of only themselves. For the other, in order to justify their supposition that of the multitude of opinions, or things you could say about one thing, they can find a “truest one”, they set out to investigate whether “one ought to suppose that there are any such unities truly in existence” (*Philebus* 15b). To clarify, Socrates and Protarchus began a search to see if a unity between two apparently opposed opinions could truly exist at all. But if they desired to investigate whether they could see if that unity truly exists, they would need to see if truth exists as a unity and singularly, or, as an

object itself. If they could prove that truth exists as an object itself--that there exists one real truth of something, though there is a multitude of things that appear to be true about that thing-- they could certainly prove that a unification of their different opinions could exist. (But Socrates and Protarchus more thoroughly investigate this question of truth later on). At this point in their conversation, Socrates and Protarchus were willing to suppose that they could look from a higher ground, down onto their apparently opposed opinions of the matter, a ground “higher” in the sense of a different perspective that attempts to gain an “overlook” from which things form a whole, instead of only some parts. But Socrates suggests regarding opinions and “these problems of the one and many” that it is surely difficult to figure out the true answer to their questions “if they are not properly settled, but promise progress if they are.” (*Philebus* 15c).

Socrates then proposed “that it is through *discourse* that the same thing flits around, becoming one and many” (*Philebus* 15d), or that discourse itself is the form in which one subject of the conversation can be spoken of in many different ways. But another translation, to perhaps get a clearer view of what is meant by “discourse”, may be helpful here. Otherwise translated, Socrates says “We say that one and many are identified by reason,” (Loeb 15d). ὑπὸ λόγων is in the genitive and plural form of the noun λόγος. It’s sense in context could perhaps be more accurately translated: ‘Under the influence of wordings [readings or discoursings], the same thing that is one and many comes around’. This translation seems to express more clearly the meaning of λόγος, and also stands as an example of the very principle Socrates has mentioned. Socrates noted that it was this characteristic of discourse, that it allows one thing to be spoken of in many ways, that young people found as valuable and as pleasing to have as treasure.

Socrates then made a remark that young men, not Protarchus particularly, seemed to get confused by the multifacetedness of discourse and enjoyed learning how to confuse others once they became aware of the principle of language. Then, calling to mind his and Socrates' conversation regarding the agreement that the purpose of their inquiry was not to find out who "wins" it, Protarchus jokingly made it seem as if he was offended by some part of what Socrates said. Protarchus pointed out to Socrates how many more young people there were with the same opinion as himself than there were those who shared the opinion of Socrates. He asked Socrates whether he was "not afraid that we will gang up against you with Philebus if you insult us?" only to say right after "Still, we know what you want to say" (*Philebus* 16a). Protarchus' last comment was ironical because Protarchus pointed out in a joking manner what in other conversations and circumstances could have had serious implications. Protarchus pretended to be insulted, as other young men actually could have been. To the two different ways he could have received Socrates' comments (as offensive or not offensive), Protarchus must have been aware of two different corresponding reactions. He could have reacted by speaking contentiously, returning a personal attack (a return in the sense that whether Socrates meant to attack Protarchus personally or not, Protarchus received it that way), or he could have received the statement with a less combative attitude and worked, by questioning Socrates, to understand more fully what Socrates meant. When Protarchus said he understood what Socrates wanted to say, he implied that the exact words Socrates said mattered, to a certain extent, for understanding at least what he thought Socrates *meant* to say. It seemed that the less contentious Protarchus became, the more able he was to understand Socrates.

With Protarchus left wanting a “peaceful way... to show us a better solution to the problem”(Philebus 16b) (if there existed such a way) of not knowing what to make of discourses’ ability to make one subject of conversation appear in many different ways, Socrates proposed one he had always admired. He suggested that the “way” was a gift from the gods, and that people who lived long before them “in closer proximity to the gods” had established “that whatever is said to be consists of one and many, having in its nature limit and unlimitedness.” (Philebus 16d). Socrates then said that if this description of things is taken as granted “we have to assume that there is in each case always one form for every one of them, and we must search for it,” (Philebus 16d). Here, Socrates introduced the way that would allow him and Protarchus to make sense of “whatever is said to be” that somehow has the qualities of one and many, or limit and unlimitedness. In other words, Socrates suggested that there was a singular form of a thing to be understood, but that one must search extensively to find it.

To further identify this “way”, it is a way of speech in which “we must not grant the form of the unlimited to the plurality before we know the exact number of every plurality that lies between the unlimited and the one”. In other words, Socrates suggests (1) that to identify plurality is to identify the number of categories objects could fit into, and (2) that to identify the unlimited is to identify the many individual things, according to one model. He then claims that this is the legacy by which we know “how to inquire and learn and teach one another” (Philebus 16d-e). Finally, (3) considering the “intermediates” between the one and the unlimited is what makes “all the difference as to whether we are engaged with each other in dialectical or only eristic discourse.”(Philebus 17a).

Here the term “intermediates” could be understood in two senses. One pertains to the steps necessary to understand how objects go from being associated with singularity to plurality, and from limitedness to unlimitedness. The other sense pertains to what more exactly it takes to inquire, learn and teach. For Protarchus to learn how his initial argument about pleasure was not logically substantiated, it took Socrates to imitate him. And not only that, but both Socrates and Protarchus had to humble themselves into being non-combative, or non-defensive about their opinions; they had to let their judgements stand alone to see if the judgements could support themselves, or, to see which judgement was the truest.

Socrates proposes the system of letters as an example of something in which one needs to identify the plurality and the unlimitedness of the things. He points out that all who use language make sound that is individual or subjective to the maker, and that all the sounds one could make are “unlimited in number” (*Philebus* 17b). But knowing those “two facts alone” does not make one knowledgeable about the unlimitedness or unity of sound. Similar to the unlimitedness of vocal sounds, for music “sound is also the unit in this art”. One could sort sounds, or pitches, as high, low, or equal pitches. But Socrates points out that knowing the pitches, and similarly for vocal utterances, knowing the letters, does not yet make you knowledgeable in music or in spoken language. Therefore, the task at hand would be to identify “how many kinds of vocal sounds there are and what their nature is”, which would then make one literate (*Philebus* 17b). Similarly, once one knows all the kinds of combinations formed by the individual intervals of pitch in music, one knows the “modes of harmony” of musical sound. Socrates then claims that the forbearers who had discovered and named the modes of harmony make them, Socrates and Protarchus, “realize that every investigation should search for the one and many”. According to

Socrates, once you come to know the forms of the one and the many of a thing, you gain expertise in that subject area, “and when you have grasped the unity of any of the other things there are, you have become wise about that” . Acknowledging only the boundless multitude of things leaves you in “boundless ignorance” and makes one’s knowledge “amount to nothing” because it “count[s] for nothing” (*Philebus* 17d-e).

When Philebus agrees that everything Socrates had said thus far has been well explained, he asks what the purpose is for all Socrates’ aforementioned talk. Socrates then points out that Philebus is making the same mistake they talked about; going straight to the opposite stance of the conversation without taking the intermediate steps, he jumps to a conclusion concerning Socrates’ statements and does not see the point of it all. Socrates reminds both Philebus and Protarchus that starting from the unlimited aspect of something, one “should not head straight for the one, but should in each case grasp some number that determines every plurality” (*Philebus* 18a-b).

In attempt to answer Philebus’ question, Socrates then introduces some traditional Egyptian story of how the god Theuth “discovered that vocal sound is unlimited”. He says the god Theuth first discovered “vowels in that unlimited variety”, then the sounds that “are not voiced, but make some kind of noise” and all of its kind, then “the ones we now call mute” and all of its kind (*Philebus* 18b-c). After he subdivided those sorts “down to every single unit”, finding out the number for each of the categories, “he gave all of them together the name “letter””. Socrates says the god Theuth claimed that no one “could gain any knowledge” of a single one of those letters “taken by itself without understanding them all”. Theuth “considered

that the one link that somehow unifies them all” was what he called “the art of literacy” (Philebus 18c-d). In other words, the “science” of grammar (Loeb 18d).

Philebus then expresses that he still does not understand what “the relevance” of everything that Socrates just said is, though Protarchus believes he understood everything Socrates was explaining; and Socrates suggests that what both Protarchus and Philebus are looking for, is actually right under their noses, with the example of how the god Theuth discovered the unlimited variety of vocal sounds that he was able to categorize and therefore identify as different letters. Socrates at this point seems to figure that Philebus would make a connection from the Theuth example to the subject of their initial conversation. He seems to have figured that Philebus would understand that to show how each pleasure and knowledge, in the investigation of “which of the two is preferable”, is at the same time one and many, one should not settle with the unlimitedness of either pleasure or knowledge, but acquire “some definite number before it becomes unlimited” (*Philebus* 19a). On the other hand, Protarchus seems to understand that Socrates is ultimately suggesting at the moment that there are kinds of goods that will render man happy--one comes from pure pleasure, and the other comes from things like reasoning and knowledge--but even within those two, there are different kinds. Socrates suggests that they should explore equally the “kinds” of each pleasure and knowledge, “how many there are, and of what sort they are” (*Philebus* 19a-b). For if they admit that there are different kinds of knowledge (which Protarchus did admit earlier on), then they should admit that there are different kinds of pleasure, and they would both need to be considered as equals in order for Socrates and Protarchus to find out which truly is the one that renders life most happy for all human beings.

But just when it seems Protarchus grasps what Socrates had said of the relationship of words, he claims that Socrates should quit “turning against [them] in the discussion here”(Philebus 19e). Protarchus does not seem to like or appreciate Socrates putting him “into difficulties and repeating questions to which we have at present no proper answer to give”. But at the same time, Protarchus presumes “universal confusion” is not Socrates’ goal. He says, therefore, that Socrates must solve the problem and that he should stop putting him, Protarchus, on the spot. What Protarchus perhaps failed to remember, though it has been brought up multiple times, is that should Socrates alone have talked and led the investigation by himself, without asking his interlocutors questions, it would not have been much of a real investigation or conversation at all: the investigation would have been missing the intermediate steps necessary to bring both Protarchus and Socrates to the same understanding. Protarchus proceeds to claim that Socrates promised to solve the problem, so that if they cannot figure out the answer to their initial question together, Socrates has to do it--whether he splits up the kinds of pleasures and the kinds of knowledge, or does something else.

Almost immediately after Protarchus expressed what seemed to be some kind of offense taken from Socrates, Socrates called to mind something he thought the gods had sent him. It was a doctrine he heard, whether in a dream or while he was awake, that stated that neither pleasure nor knowledge is the good, but that the good was some third thing “superior to both of them” (Philebus 20b-c). Socrates and Protarchus then established that the good must be perfect and sufficient for and by itself--for “this is how it is superior to everything else there is”. They then jointly established that anything and everything that has even the slightest impression of or notion of the good, also “hunts for it and desires to get a hold of it and secure it for its very own,

caring nothing for anything else except for what is connected with the acquisition of some good”. From here, they set out to put the life of pleasure and the life of knowledge on trial (*Philebus* 20d-e).

Socrates and Protarchus, at the beginning and near the end of the dialogue, identify dialectic as the form of conversation necessary to discover the truth of judgements, and spend much of the dialogue laying out what exactly dialectic is and what it does. They claim that one could not find the truth of a judgement without going through the process of having a dialectical conversation. Near the end of the dialogue Socrates and Protarchus go so far as to say that using dialectic in the way they describe will lead to pure truth, the highest form of truth, and therefore the truth about any and all other judgements. Now, importantly, Protarchus asks the question:

But Socrates, look: how is there any fixed and real truth to anything at all? How could you possibly find it? By what means? The search for it certainly does not seem as simple as looking for it and finding it under the living room rug. So how on earth do you suppose we find it?

He asks the question of how it is at all possible to find the truth of things. Socrates’ answer to that question, which has been his answer the whole time, from beginning to end, and had been explicated in different ways at different times, is that the truth of something could be found “by means of the art of literacy”; and to use the art of “literacy”, is to travel back and forth on the track established by the connection vocal sounds have to words, words to communicative statements, statements to rhetoric, and rhetoric to dialectic.

Anything that occurs in language has a trace. Therefore anything that occurs in language that is unknown, is discoverable at least to the extent that one could know what another is speaking of. Socrates simply seems to say that judgements claimed to be true need to be tracked down and traced to their conclusion (which is present in its rhetorical stage). I propose that the

way the meaning of words and rhetorical statements, as well as the truth of those claims is discovered, is by tracing it through all its connections in speech, starting with vocal utterances and ending with the most eloquent rhetorical locution. This is also to say that what is certainly required of dialectic, is to understand what one's interlocutor is saying. To understand that requires one to be on the same "track", so to speak, as one's interlocutor. Metaphorically, both interlocutors have to ride the roller coaster together, on the same cart.

Dialectic is a form of speech designed to achieve something more than what naming, simple communication and rhetoric are designed to achieve. Rhetoric is a necessary part of dialectic, but it is not identical with dialectic--one can speak rhetorically without speaking dialectically. Rhetoric is used when more than a statement of a fact, desire or need is intended to be expressed, like an opinion or a culmination of concepts ordered into a judgement.

Communication is a necessary part of rhetoric, but is not identical with rhetoric itself as a whole.

Communication is the function of at least two speakers stating things to each other which are comprehensible to each--unless they are communicating, they cannot use rhetorical speech in conversation. Accordingly, the relation of the act of communication to the act of rhetoric, and the subsequent relationships, cannot be well-characterized merely as part-to-whole: instead, communication is a function of rhetoric. Communication is a functional moment of rhetoric, as flexing the knee is a functional moment of walking, and not as what a wheel is to a car.

What I mean by "communication" is illustrated when a child cries for a thing, e.g. milk or to be held, and receives it after crying for it: communication need not take the form of complex statements; to communicate is to convey meaning like seeing. Communication in this sense is non-inferential: it does not take time or processing of beginning, middle and end terms to grasp

the meaning of what was said. Other than illustrating that the child expressed a desire and received what the child had wanted, the parent or caregiver implicitly came to share--to know--that the child desired milk or to be held. The child had succeeded, in some way, to put into the mind of the other, what was already in the child's own mind; in other words, the child communicated.

Further, naming is necessary to communication, but is not identical with it. By naming I mean, for example, when a child identifies an object, e.g. a toy giraffe, by a particular word, e.g. "jaff" (proper naming is not referred to here; naming in this sense refers simply to the association of a word, any word, to an object). Lastly, utterance is necessary to naming, but is not identical with naming. By "utterance" I mean, for example, the very first vocal sounds a baby makes apart from crying or yawning, or any event that makes noise. The principal difference between the acts of mere utterance, naming and communication seems to lie in whether intentions behind the actions differ. A baby could utter some vowel or consonant sound, but if it does not identify that sound or even a culmination of sounds with a particular object or objects, then the sounds do not have a higher function, or, a further aspect of intention other than perhaps experimenting with what sounds it could make with its mouth. A child could learn to name things as a result of a parent presenting an object and repeating the name associated with the object, and this seems to have an intention (if the child continues to use that name or even any name), because the child wishes to identify an object by a name for it. At this point it would seem that the child is naming but not necessarily communicating. For, the process of naming, as the child probably discovers, is a function that makes the identification of objects by symbols quicker and easier and more systematic in the child's own thoughts. If, for example, a child learns to use the word "mama" to

identify mother, and cries “mama” with the expectation that mother will come tend to it, it would seem that the child is crying “mama” as a command. If the baby spoke a word or words for the sake of indicating a need or a want to others, it would seem that the child is not only naming, but is communicating.

When a child learns from a parent what names to associate with objects, the child and parent use the same name for an object and share that--the usage of the particular name to signify a particular object. When either one of them communicates to the other, the one understands what response the other is trying to elicit. Because both child and parent call the same object by the same name, they share an understanding to some extent, of the object being referred to. When the child and parent share an understanding of names, that means they share an understanding of vocal sounds/utterances--an understanding of vocal sounds is required. For example, if a child intends to say “cat”, but pronounces the name for what is meant to signify “cat” as “mat”, there is a misunderstanding. But in addition, if the child and the parent are communicating by the word “cat”, they are assigning a definition, or sense, in tandem with the object sharing the name. So, in addition to sharing the referent (a sharing that might be marked by the interlocutors' ability to point to the thing and utter its name jointly), the interlocutors will share a definition/sense--which seems to be the condition for their jointly predicating--speaking of, not just referring to--the object they now share.

What one seems to intend by dialectical speech is different than what one intends by naming-speech, communicative speech (which seems to be limited to the expression of facts, desires or needs), or rhetorical speech. But both dialectical speech and rhetorical speech seem to share at least one thing in common--that is, the fact that either could be used with the intention of

assisting a participant of conversation reach a shared, univocal understanding of something not initially shared between them. For both dialectical and rhetorical speech, every prior step or “level” of the process of a developing conversation is included in them.

As previously mentioned, the use of sounds is needed for naming objects, the use of names (which are associated with corresponding objects) is needed for communication, communicability (which includes assigning the name to the definition or description of a thing that limits its application) is needed for rhetoric, and rhetoric is needed for dialectic. Their difference seems to be defined by the following: A speaker who uses rhetorical speech in a conversation, intends to put some thought or concept into the mind of the interlocutor one that is not only not already present in them, but one that is also somewhat abstract and constituted by more parts than a singular expression of a fact, desire or need. Rhetorical speech requires communicability, but is intended to accomplish more than that. This could be illustrated by the example of the difference between saying “it is sunny outside” compared to “it is beautiful outside”. In this example, calling the outside sunny was more a statement of a fact, while calling the outside beautiful required more unpacking of what was meant by the speaker’s use of the word “beautiful”.

A speaker who uses dialectical speech, talks in a way that intends to grasp an understanding of some thought or concept shared, but new to both interlocutors. To use the previous example, if Person A were to say “it is beautiful outside” and Person B were to say “what is beautiful, or, what is beauty?”, Person B would begin to speak dialectically, because regardless of what notions both persons may have of the referent of beauty, Person B has put the true meaning of the word into question. If Person B put the true meaning of the word into

question, they would need a new common ground of understanding in which both Person A and Person B can share. I propose that dialectic is the search for a new and shared understanding that necessarily includes the use of any and all kinds of rhetoric (should there be kinds of rhetoric), taken together as a whole, but not in an arbitrary way--rhetoric is what allows the conversation to be focused on the object of the conversation while using a variety of ways to refer to it.

[paragraph break] The search for a new and shared understanding transpires when interlocutors communicate reciprocally unshared understandings. Because these understandings are distinct (unshared), their communication from one interlocutor to the other is a rhetorical undertaking; but the *reciprocal* communication from each to the other promotes the interlocutors' individual rhetorical undertakings into a joint dialectical undertaking, when the conversation is taken together as a whole. What is meant by "taken together as a whole" is the the consideration of all the parts together--of all the rhetoric used to convey to each other each others' meaning of a statement. Similarly as the act of naming is a higher function of utterance because it includes it but accomplishes more than it, and communication is a higher function of naming because it includes is but accomplishes more than it, and rhetoric a higher function than communication for the same reason, so is dialectic a higher function of rhetoric because it includes it, but accomplishes something more than it. Just as, in those part to whole relationships, *utterance* is necessary but not identical to *naming*, and *naming* is necessary but not identical to *communicating*, so *rhetoric* is necessary but not identical to *dialectic*.

Assuming that the interlocutors have the pure intention of searching for some new shared understanding, they could use any means of speech they deem necessary, so long as they do not intend to speak falsely, with intent to confuse or purposefully lie. But as soon as a conversation

is designed to achieve more than communication and includes persuasion (the use of rhetoric) and investigation (the use of dialectic), misunderstandings rise to the surface of the conversation. Anytime there is a disagreement between opinions expressed in a conversation on a particular part of the subject of their inquiry, the two interlocutors' may not go any further until they reconcile their different opinions of the same thing. But also, anytime there is a disagreement between opinions on a particular topic, the disagreement is most often, if not always, the result of a lack of common usage on one or more of the "levels" of the conversation: either a lack of understanding the other's rhetoric, the other's statement, or the other's signification of a word. This lack of common usage, and consequent lack of shared understanding, seems to happen most often in the dizzying, fast moving, absurd, and sometimes even hostile chaos of words, opinions, and speech within conversations concerning the truth of things.

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