

Conclusion

In this work I have presented a definition of philosophical dialogue. We began with the question of its unity — is dialogue one thing or many — by looking at the two important candidates, oral and written dialogue. I concluded that the relationship between the organizer of oral dialogue and his audience is the same as that between the writer of dialogue and the reader. Oral and written dialogue are one genre of relationship between the persuader and his audience. I then looked at some Renaissance definitions of dialogue, finally proposing a working definition that allowed me to identify the parts and types of dialogue. I concluded that both oral and written dialogue are a unity of diverse voices, showing that we could categorize dialogues best by the time and place that are the ground for the unity of those voices. This definition, while it says something about dialogue in general, does not by itself help us understand the place of dialogue in the larger field of philosophical persuasion. In this conclusion I will place this work in the flow of discussion around "philosophical style" and philosophical writing, discussing the differences between dialogue and other forms of philosophical writing. This will allow me to conclude with some observations on the question of the relationship between philosophical expression and doctrine and in particular the philosophical constraints and possibilities of the genre dialogue.

Philosophical Style

The issue of philosophical style has for a long time been confused with the question of clarity, a question often used to dismiss authors, especially those from the "Continental Tradition," as being too obscure to be worth reading. Writers like Brand Blanshard, *On Philosophical Style* are concerned with what it is that makes philosophical writing as clear as possible, for example, the appropriate use of examples. Such manuals on expository writing, while sometimes useful, obviously are too limited in their scope to help us with the

place of dialogue in philosophical expression. Recently, however, the issue has been redirected from such petty concerns by philosophers like Berel Lang and Mark D. Jordan. Philosophical style has become the generic name for questions of philosophical writing, philosophical genre, or more generally the poetics of philosophy. Berel Lang has been working on this issue for some time publishing two basic works in the field: *Philosophical Style: An Anthology about the Writing and Reading of Philosophy*, and *The Anatomy of Philosophical Style; Literary Philosophy and the Philosophy of Literature*. We will return to Lang later and begin with an introductory article by Mark D. Jordan that nicely surveys the field.

Philosophical Genre

Jordan begins "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres" by distinguishing his project from other projects that are frequently confused with the study of philosophical genres. He mentions the long history of philosophy's strained relationship with rhetoric and the relation of philosophy and language. Language in this history is something that is "treated" as an object for study and not the body of philosophy itself. A second history he traces from Aquinas to Blanshard is the topic of writing philosophy which he points out often deteriorates into "helpful remarks about writing expository prose."¹ A third approach, which comes close to the study of genres, is found in the work of philosophers like Louis H. Mackey who look at individual works by moving from their content to the embodiment of that content.² For Jordan the study of genres is the opposite movement: "The study of

¹ Jordan, Mark D., "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 201. Along with Lang's anthology *Philosophical Style*, the first pages of this article provide a good overview of the way writing has been discussed in philosophy.

² Mackey, Louis, "On Philosophical Form: A Tear for Adonais", *Thought*. Mackey deals with Plato's *Euthyphro*, Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae*, and part of Hume's *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*.

genres would move, instead, from the structure to the possibilities for doctrine."³ Jordan calls Mackey's connection of doctrine to structures a *material* correlation, while the question of genres is a *formal* correlation.

Along the same lines, and of greater interest to us, Jordan discusses an essay by Albert William Levi on the dialogue which was the first of a series of articles published by *Philosophy and Rhetoric* on "philosophy as literature" entitled, "Philosophy as Literature: The Dialogue."⁴ Levi poses the question thus: "What I am interested in is the fact that Malebranche should have chosen the dialogue form for his philosophizing, and the way in which he utilizes its possibilities..."⁵ As Jordan points out, Levi starts with the biographical question of why particular authors like Malebranche chose the dialogue form for their content. While the biographical reasons behind the choice of the dialogue are interesting, this question does not really address the possibilities of the genre. It assumes that authors have a doctrine in their head and they choose among the genres at their disposal — an assumption which may be true of some authors, but does not throw light on the possibilities for a genre in general. The choice of a particular author does not exhaust the possibilities

To be fair to Mackey he argues for a symmetrical relationship between literary (formal) analysis and logical (content) analysis — that each should inform the other. Where I think Mackey and Jordan are different is that Mackey looks at individual works moving back and forth from form to content, while Jordan is proposing a study of a genre as a whole.

³ Jordan, Mark D., "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 203.

⁴ It is not clear whether Jordan's article, which also appeared in *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, was considered by the editors to be part of the same series begun five years before. Another series of articles of note on this subject is the issue of the *Monist*, Vol. 63, No. 4, dedicated to "Philosophy as Style and Literature as Philosophy" of which I discuss Berel Lang's contribution "Towards a Poetics of Philosophical Discourse" later in this chapter.

⁵ Levi, "Philosophy as Literature: The Dialogue", p. 2.

for a genre; after all, authors can choose a genre for the wrong reasons, or choose a genre that is at odds with their doctrine, a juxtaposition that Levi himself draws our attention to. Jordan's formal question precedes the biographical. Only if we have some idea what dialogue can do can we comment on how the choice of genre runs counter to the doctrines held by it.

Levi moves from the biographical approach to sociological conclusions about the effect of professionalization on the choice of genre of philosophers: "For I think one can safely say that *philosophy's literary involvement is almost directly inverse to the degree of its professionalization*. The dialogue form is clearly unsuited to a parade of scholarship or the symbolic demonstration of one's mastery of the conventions of logical rigor."⁶ Jordan feels Levi is missing the point; all philosophical forms are literary, though some, like expository writing, have as a generic feature the pretense that they are not literary genres, but clear expositions.⁷ Nonetheless Levi's point still stands, if modified; philosophy's involvement today in certain literary genres, like the dialogue (that have as a generic feature an explicit literary aspect) is almost directly inverse to the degree of its professionalization. The professionalization of philosophy creates a climate where philosophers are trained in and expected to produce certain types of writings like the essay and the commentary. The structure of the profession encourages certain forms and not others. Jordan is objecting to the distinction of certain genres as literary and others as not, while Levi is making a sociological point about the culture of professional philosophy today.⁸ Levi is making a

⁶ Levi, "Philosophy as Literature: The Dialogue", p. 19.

⁷ Jordan, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 207.

⁸ If there is any truth to Lucian's complaints about the number of philosophers and the use of the dialogue by them it could be that professional philosophy after Plato encouraged the dialogue genre in the same way that we today tend to expository writing in our professional capacity. The same might be said to be true of

natural leap from the question of genres of writing to the genres of professional philosophy.

In this he is joined by Berel Lang who believes that the analysis of philosophical style "bears directly on the practice or 'doing' of philosophy itself."⁹ If it is true that genres like the dialogue correlate with certain doctrines then would it not be even more true that the organization of the discipline would also tend to encourage certain doctrines over others? This is, of course, one of the possibilities for dialogue as a genre: that it can discuss the relationship of culture to doctrine. Dialogue as a genre of philosophical writing is suited to the critique of the culture of the discipline.

After distinguishing his project from others Jordan turns to the question he thinks is interesting: "The question is not, Why should a dialogue be chosen? It is, What thought thinks itself as dialogue?"¹⁰ Jordan wants the issue to be what possibilities and constraints for thought exist for a genre like dialogue, not how to write a clear essay. Jordan is opening the space for the exploration of the formal correlation between genres and thought. Jordan connects this topic to the larger question of the genres of persuasion. "The ultimate ground for the plurality of genres in philosophic discourse may be the plurality of modes in persuasion."¹¹ Thus the genres he is looking at are not simply literary genres but modes of

the brief period in the Italian Renaissance before the Inquisition when dialogues were one of the most popular forms. It would follow that dialogue is just as capable of professionalization as any other genre.

To the best of my knowledge the larger question of the effect of the organization of the discipline on the produce of the discipline has not been dealt with adequately in the English sources. There is a pathetic book by D. W. Hamlyn, *Being a Philosopher: The History of a Practice*, that is full of generalizations about how French philosophy is different from serious English philosophy because the French don't have the tutorial system. A far more serious discussion of these issues is found in recent French philosophy.

⁹ Berel Lang, "Space, Time, and Philosophical Style", p. 146.

¹⁰ Jordan, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 205.

¹¹ Jordan, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 205.

persuasion that might cross from the oral to the written, which is what I have shown in the case of dialogue. If what is important is the way of persuasion, not the oral or written character, the key is the relationship between author/teacher and their audience. This is the issue of the *Phaedrus*; and also what distinguishes genres: the art of the dialectician is to know, among other things, the types of persuasion and the characters they are suited to.

This is the extent of Jordan's preface to the study of philosophical genres: setting up a question and suggesting that it will be what Northrop Frye calls "the radical of presentation" that will allow us to unwrap the correlation between genre and thought. The rest of his paper reflects on the dangers of such an approach: that it can lead to a discussion of "genre as such", or to a "Table of Generic Categories."¹² He ends with the challenge of the ineffable to philosophical expression:

The claim of antiquity that there is something of vital importance to philosophic discourse which cannot be enunciated by it touches the study of genres in many ways. It might suggest a ranking of genres according to how closely they approach what they cannot reach. ... Yet, finally, the question of the ineffable serves to keep the analysis of genres in check by reminding one that there is something beyond. ... The study of genres might show why that *other* thinking of discourse is needed still.¹³

Generic Relationships

Berel Lang, who Jordan tells us commented on an earlier version of his paper, picks up where Jordan leaves off, trying to map out the basic genres of philosophical discourse by looking at the relationship between author and reader.¹⁴ In "Towards a Poetics of

¹² Jordan, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 207-9.

¹³ Jordan, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 209.

¹⁴ In a footnote Jordan mentions how they cover much of the same ground, but warns that, "Lang gives too much weight, I think, to the categories of his stylistic and generic analysis. He may also be assuming

Philosophical Discourse" he proposes to use a model of literary action to identify the major genres.¹⁵ In this model a text is a transaction between an author and an reader. The implied or explicit author has a point-of-view from which he or she communicates to the implied or explicit reader. The differences in point-of-view allow Lang to build a simple schema of philosophical writing. The following chart shows the point-of-view of the author and reader of three of the genres Lang proposes in this schema.¹⁶

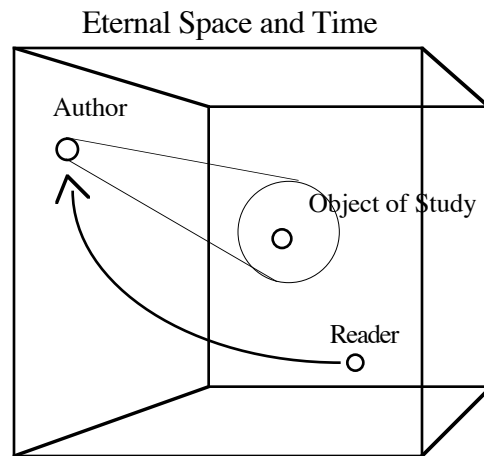
Genre	Author	Reader
Dialogue Reflexive Writing	Absent or problematic author whose point of view is dispersed through many characters.	Reader is also absent and, like the author, is eavesdropping. Reader has to create an authorial point-of-view from those of the characters.
Confession Performative Writing	Author's point of view is a subject of the text.	Reader invited to follow author's narrative, and to duplicate the experience of the author regarding the object of discussion.
Treatise Expository Writing	Detached author whose point of view is presented as an objective view accessible to all.	Reader invited to share objective point of view from which all can contemplate a fixed object of study.

that he has found a fixed, Newtonian point from which he can describe quite objectively the varieties of philosophic speech." (footnote 32, "A Preface to the Study of Philosophic Genres", p. 211.) I believe the only way to avoid that danger is to be rooted in particular works, moving from individual works to generic observations (and then back.) Jordan, given the limitation of the article form, does not have the time for this, but it also runs counter to his preface, that focuses on the movement from generic structure.

¹⁵ "The model of literary "action"... has, in this respect, at least the advantage of simplicity; it presupposes a model of communication as a transaction only among speaker (implied or explicit), audience (again implied or explicit), and the referent of what is said." (p. 450)

¹⁶ In "Towards a Poetics of Philosophical Discourse" Lang actually proposes a fourfold schema with the Commentary as the fourth genre. I have stuck to the threefold schema he proposes in "Space, Time, and Philosophical Style". The Commentary is similar to the Treatise having a detached author, the difference is that there is a referent to which the author defers, the primary text and its implied author. See page 452.

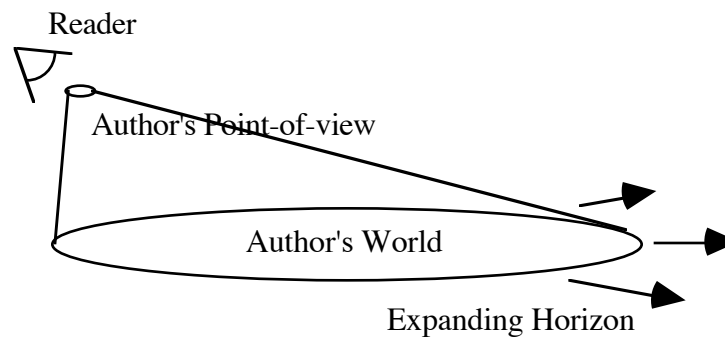
In another essay, "Space, Time, and Philosophical Style", Lang connects the point-of-view with the space and time created by a work. While he doesn't mention Bakhtin in the essay he comes to a similar conclusion about the importance of the chronotope to the identification of genres. Extending the visual metaphor of "point-of-view", every genre for Lang presents a space and time within which the author and reader are points with views. The type of space determines the possible relationship between the different points within, and the possibilities for direction of view and movement of these points. Thus we can, by looking at the space and time created by works, identify the major genres and their philosophical capacity.¹⁷



Expository writing presents us with a fixed objective space and time where the author, reader and, object of study are all points. This eternal space and time is presented as if it were a given shared space that we all have access to, not a space created by the author. (This intellectual space is often the world of presuppositions shared by the profession.) The author presents himself as one who exposes the given object of study by, in effect, shining a

¹⁷ In the following discussion I have departed slowly from the points made in Lang's article, especially in my discussion of Reflexive writing. While I do not think my discussion is incompatible with Lang's, I just don't want to burden this conclusion with the work of commenting on how Lang could be adapted to make sense of the dialogue, which is my focus.

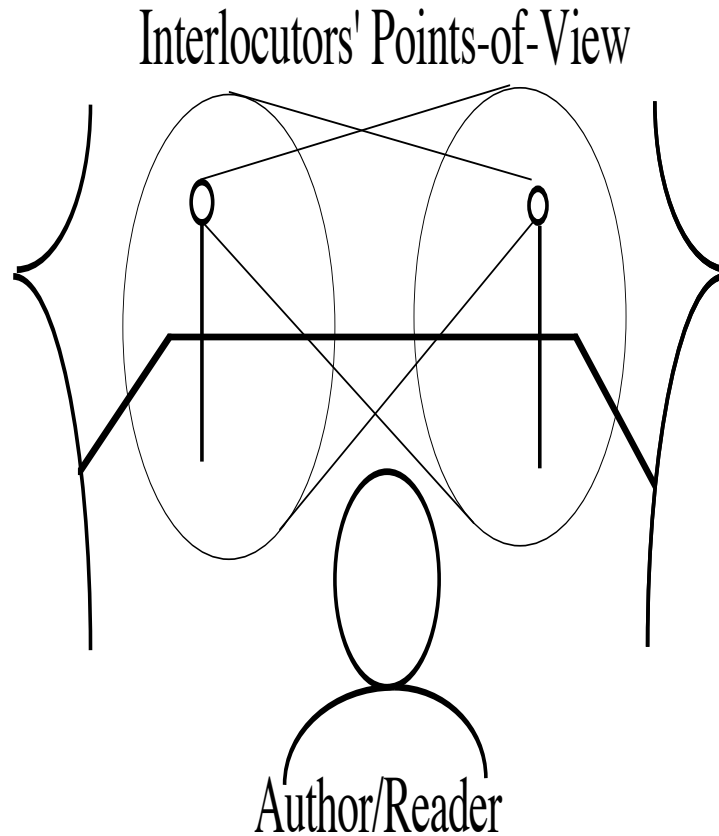
light on it, within a space he did not create. The point-of-view from which the author exposes the object is accessible to the reader; the author invites readers to look at the object from that view. Lang points out that in such works the author's "act is one of discovery rather than of invention..."¹⁸ It isn't the case that the object and authorial perspective are created by the author so much as an eternally given object is illuminated from a certain eternally available angle. Nor is there much movement through this space except in so far as the reader is encouraged to move to the author's illuminating point-of-view.



By contrast, Performative writing presents us with a subjective time and space where everything is measured from the view of the author. The space and time of works like Descartes' *Meditations* is the view of the author and to some extent defines the author. The author is not a point that moves within universal space to find the best perspective, but the centre of a particular space (like a study) from which the world unfolds. The author's point of view is a personal history, not an eternal perspective. It is a time of life (the author's) that we might also experience. The reader gets to see the world through the eye of the author and thereby experience the unfolding of that view so that they can recreate the experience. There is movement, not within the space, so much as **of** the space as it spreads out to include the subject of study. Rather than there being an object of study which one moves to view within an all-embracing space, the world that the space expands to uncover is the subject of study.

¹⁸ Lang, "Space, Time, and Philosophical Style", p. 150.

The moving horizon (or limit) of this expanding view is where our attention is at any one point of the story.



In Reflexive writing the space is a particular space, just as it was in Performative writing, for example, a particular garden or courtyard, but it is not a space defined by the experience of the author (or reader.) It is a communal space chosen by the author for the setting.

Likewise the time of Reflexive writing is also a particular time in history, but not a personal time unfolding from the author. It is also a communal time when people are likely to meet.

Reflexive writing differs from Expository in that the chronotope is a particular place and time within the space and history of the community. It differs from Performative in that there is not a single authorial point-of-view from which everything unfolds. In dialogues there are multiple points-of-view, one for each character. The author and reader are absent as a point-of-view (they are just listening in) and thus are forced to build a point-of-view from

those within the work. As Bakhtin puts it the author is refracted through the characters. If readers want an authorial point-of-view they have to reassemble it from the characters.

The particular space and time of a dialogue is what holds the points-of-view of the characters together. It is the stage within which the voices play and, as such, is the most visible presence of the author. The chronotope of dialogue, however, must also be a communal space and time, as it has to be believable that the characters gathered at that place and time. As for the object of study in Reflexive writing, having multiple points of view allows individual points of view to fall under the gaze of others. Points-of-view, or if you wish, characters and their interaction, are one of the subjects of Reflexive writing, which is precisely why it is reflexive; it is writing capable of holding itself up for discussion. This was one of Bakhtin's points: that the novel is, by virtue of the multiplicity of voices within, the only genre capable of discussing itself (and the process of genre making.) As the individual points-of-view held within a dialogue can be voices of different persuasive genres, Reflexive writing can have as its subject other genres. The *Phaedrus* is an example of this, in that it holds other genres of persuasion within it in a way that allows them to become objects of discussion. This is different from the way expository writing deals with other genres. This book, while it is about dialogue, does not have dialogue within it as one voice. This work depends on your having read dialogues in a way that a dialogue on dialogue would not.

We can summarize the differences in chronotope of Lang's three major genres of philosophical discourse with a chart.

Genre	Space	Time
Dialogue Reflexive Writing	Meeting space - the stage of discussion where people could meet. It is a specific space in the world of participants.	A time in the history of the community of discourse. It is usually a leisure time when people can meet and discuss.
Confession Performative Writing	Private space where the author retreats to recreate himself and the world.	Biographical time - the subjective time of the author. A time within a life that the reader can experience.
Treatise Expository Writing	Universal space, fixed and accessible to everyone from which all can be seen.	Eternal time, accessible to all for all time. Nothing changes in this time, it is the time of eternal truths.

The Capacity of Dialogue

Keeping in mind the dangers that Jordan and Heidegger warn of when grasping something like dialogue and squeezing it for content, I will conclude by commenting on the philosophical capacity of dialogue. By philosophical capacity I mean the possibilities and constraints the genre puts on the doctrine(s) enclosed within. I should begin by pointing out that I am not a generic determinist. I do not believe there is a hard connection between genre and doctrine, i.e. that the choice of genre of expression does such violence to the content that one cannot say anything but what the genre determines. In fact I believe one can swim against the current of a genre, contradicting its tendencies if one wishes. At the same time I do not believe that there is no connection between genre and doctrine; i.e.. that ideas can be casually translated from one form of writing to another without suffering any change. The truth is more complex: a genre puts constraints and opens possibilities for what is said. So, to present a system of thought in a genre like dialogue would result in something hardly a dialogue at all, or it would result in a situation where the very system of thought is undermined by the different voices that make the dialogue. It is not impossible to use a

genre for that which it is not suited. The history of the dialogue is filled with awkward and basically bad dialogues, but, where one goes against the capacity of the genre, one either risks writing something that is not recognizable as a good example of that genre, or one risks having one's writing undermined by the ideological tendency of the genre. I would even go so far as to say that in certain cases the repurposing of a genre against the grain of its possibilities can result in a work of art, exceptional precisely because of its ability to stretch the constraints of the genre. Such works are the exceptions that rule the genre.¹⁹ The recent turn to the ineffable dialogue, like the opening of dialogue to comedy by Lucian, may be such an exceptional moment of change for dialogue.

In addition to putting constraints and opening possibilities, genres also carry specific ideological baggage. By ideological baggage I mean specific, and often minor, points of doctrine that are implied by the genre. These ideological points are tied to the constraints and possibilities, but they are less of a force acting on everything that is said, than a supplement to what is said. These points can be overcome by the text, but they nonetheless accompany it as baggage. These remarks are best understood in the context of a specific genre, so I will turn to my conclusions about the capacity of dialogue.

The Culture of Dialogue

As I have commented above, the dialogue cannot avoid being about the culture of dialogue. Whatever the object of discussion is, the dialogue presents us with an image of how people talk about such issues, and thus the way people talk about an issue becomes a

¹⁹ If one believes that the use of the dialogue form undermines the critique of poetry in Plato's *Republic*, it might be an example of such an exceptional work. It is worth noting that its exceptional character depends on our expectations of the genre while stretching them. Lucian's repurposing of a form associated with philosophy to mock philosophy would be another example of such exceptional dialogue.

supplementary issue. Only the driest of dialogues gives us nothing to reflect on in this fashion. This feature of dialogue is also a possibility that can be exploited by the author of dialogue who wishes to imagine an alternative culture of philosophy or contrast ways of participating in the culture of discussion. Unlike the anthropological treatise that makes culture and how people interact an object of study, the dialogue can illustrate the possibilities, thereby both commenting on the present culture and changing the culture by showing what could be the case as if it were the case.

It is in this context that we can speculate about the fascination with dialogue since the Second World War. Dialogue as a genre of interaction is suited to the discussion of culture. One of its possibilities is the ability to present a unity of different voices representing different cultures. At the same time it is constrained in that it is difficult to represent in dialogue the assimilation of these voices. Dialogue is thus suited to those who wish to create a culture that maintains the differences among subcultures and their voices. It is, if you will, better suited to the Canadian model of a multicultural salad-bowl, than the American melting-pot.

We can see this on a small scale at work in the University. When Cicero decided to encourage the growth of a Latin philosophy, he chose to gather the dominant philosophical schools of his time into dialogues.²⁰ In the same fashion the North American University has gathered philosophies from the cultures it recognizes into departments and conferences. With the proliferation of imported ideologies and the growth in academic output, comes the need for a paradigm or ritual for tolerant coexistence. The desire to encompass the other leads to the desire for dialogue. To hold all the schools of thought in an academic equivalent

²⁰ The prefaces of Cicero's dialogues contain explicit discussions of why one would choose dialogue. For a commentary on Cicero's prefaces and approach to dialogue see, Michel Ruch, *Le Préambule dans les oeuvres philosophiques de Cicéron*.

of a garden salad we need a wide and theoretically neutral receptacle. Dialectic doesn't work once the variety grows past a certain point, so we turn to a more neutral play-ground like dialogue, which we hope is open enough. As it was for Cicero, dialogue is an activity we hope is capable of gathering the different voices into a new tolerant whole that fits our self-image as open to the other and supposedly does not oppress those gathered. If this is the case we should now ask if dialogue has hidden ideological constraints such that it actually excludes or misrepresents certain positions, especially those that are themselves intolerant. Is the call for dialogue truly neutral? Does it not reflect a desire to consume or enter the other? Should we be ashamed of this desire or should we simply be aware of it?

The Vocalization of Dialogue

Because the dialogue represents a culture of discussion and not action, it is constrained in its imagination to the oral interaction among people. The dialogue shows people talking, not fighting or lecturing. Part of the baggage of dialogue is a subtle legitimization of discussion as an activity. The meditation inevitably glorifies meditation as a philosophical way; likewise the dialogue generally sets up conversation as an important part of what it is to do philosophy, even when the characters say nothing explicitly about the importance of talk (as they do in many dialogues anyway). The point is that if something important is shown happening in dialogue, one cannot help but think the author is also hinting that that is the way important work is done in dialogue. To connect this with the previous point about the culture of philosophy, this is one feature of the culture of philosophy which dialogue inevitably presents as valuable. It is conceivable that one could write a dialogue that showed the uselessness of talk: Valla in his dialogue on free will seems to be attempting something close to this, but you always run the risk of people feeling the conversation, despite its end, was worth it just so that one could get to that end. Perhaps a novel could introduce dialogue between a torturer and his victim such that the reader left the work nauseated by talk, but

such a novel would depend on the action that accompanies the dialogue to achieve its effect.

My point is that most dialogues set up as exemplary the talking philosopher, not the meditating, reading, or writing philosopher. This is one of the items of philosophical baggage that accompanies the dialogue as a genre.

Not only does dialogue value the voice but it values the voice as it chooses to express itself in oral dialogue. By this I mean two things: first, that dialogue encourages the inclusion of voices as they choose to express themselves, and second that it tends to favor those voices that are themselves dialogical. There is a tension between the dialogue's encouragement of diversity and the dialogue's encouragement of voices that work well in conversation. On the one hand dialogue represents voices as they would speak themselves, rather than translating them into a common language for comparison; on the other hand, those voices that are themselves predisposed to dialogue tend to stand out.

To look closely at the first point, dialogue by being a unity of voices tends to preserve the character and language of voices. It therefore suggests that there is something philosophically valuable about the character and language of different voices. Dialogue is, as a genre, a subtle critique of the tendency of other genres to eliminate differences in favor of solutions. The dialogue suggests that the way people talk about their ideas is an important part of the ideas and should be preserved (as it is in dialogue.) Even when voices are embarrassed or contradict themselves the net effect of most dialogues is that it is nonetheless worth preserving those voices in their contradiction. The dialogue becomes for the discipline of philosophy an archive of voices.

To look at the second point, it is no coincidence that the heroes of philosophical dialogues tend to be voices that themselves are capable of deploying different voices as the occasion warrants and are those voices capable of interacting effectively with other voices. Both Plato's Socrates and Hume's Philo are characters who can impersonate other voices

and are skilled conversationalists. Dogmatic voices that expect to be treated as authorities do not fare well in dialogues, because their character is at odds with the character of the genre. Socrates and Philo share the ideological baggage of the genre in which they appear. They are interested in the culture of philosophy and are willing to operate in an environment where authority is not given but earned. They can imitate other voices when necessary and love conversation.

We can look at the issue of vocalization in dialogue from a different perspective — that of the participant in dialogue and ask what makes for a successful participant. This perspective can be derived from the definition proposed. Doing so helps us understand the types of voice favored by the genre. To enter in dialogue you have to be willing to:

1. Discuss the dialogue itself. This means you have to be willing to negotiate the conditions of the dialogue rather than dictate them, and then reflect on the progress of the dialogue. That is to say, the conduct of the dialogue is one of the legitimate themes of the dialogue. In this context one should discuss the occasion, the space and pace (chronotope), and the themes that are the subject of the dialogue.
2. Respect the other interlocutors in their diversity. This means one must be willing to give them a chance to speak, and listen to them when they speak. It follows from this that one should:
 - 2.1. Respect the other interlocutor as other. This means one must accept that other interlocutors could be profoundly different, and not simply confused versions of what one knows. You have to begin with an openness to the possibility of difference that might never be overcome. You have to beware believing you understand what the other really is and means; you have to avoid interpreting the others' experience for them.

- 2.2. Respect the other as they choose to represent themselves. Part of respecting the other is respecting their choice of voice. Respecting them involves letting them speak in the character and language they choose.
- 2.3. Respect the other's opinions. This means that one not only respects their voice but what they say. This does not mean that one has to agree with the position of the other, but that one has to be willing to listen to it seriously in order for the dialogue to proceed. This ultimately means that one has to be open to the possibility that they are right (otherwise they would not be open to the possibility that you are right.)
3. Present your opinions honestly and in your own voice. If the other is to learn about your position just as you do about theirs, then it is your responsibility to honestly present the truth as you see it in the voice that best characterizes you.²¹

There is a tension in points 2 and 3. If one seeks to enter into dialogue with someone who does not respect your position or your manner of expression, it becomes difficult to respect that aspect of their position. Dialogue doesn't happen between intolerant positions; they can be expected never to get to the point of entering into dialogue unless they are willing to alter their position to the point of conceding that there is something worthy of respect in the other. This puts limits on all the participants in a dialogue, namely that they must, to some degree, present themselves as respectful of the process of dialogue and the

²¹ For an interesting discussion of how "people should reason together" see D. L. Hitchcock, *Some Principles of Rational Mutual Inquiry*. This short essay presents principles for friendly dialogue as an alternative to adversarial disputation. Adversarial disputation would seem to be the prevalent model for resolving differences of opinion in North America; witness the use of courts, elections, and referendums to deal with differences. The disadvantage of the adversarial model is that it encourages participants to play to win, not to compromise. Gadamer's *Truth and Method* is also interesting on openness to dialogue.

others involved. We can see here the way in which dialogue is not ideologically neutral. To enter into dialogue inevitably involves an openness and respect. Ideologies that are unwilling to respect others cannot be brought seriously into dialogue, one can only mock them with dialogues for others to hear or read. While a dialogue can be an effective way of portraying intolerance in a way that encourages the reader to reject it, it is difficult to enter into meaningful dialogue with that intolerance in a way that leads to reconciliation.

The Authority of Dialogue

With the disappearance of the author goes the authority typical of a monological work. As Hume points out, it is difficult to use a dialogue to forcefully expound a single system of thought. This is because a dialogue contains different voices that in their difference undermine the authority of any one voice. This does not mean that in dialogues there are not dominant voices; it means that no voice can dominate to the point of being the sole authority. Where there is a sole authority there is no dialogue, just exposition. We can see this at the level of characters and how they succeed in dialogue. Characters that present themselves as authorities and expect respect for what they have to say due to some status that is not displayed in the dialogue, tend to appear ridiculous in a dialogue. This is one of the comic possibilities of dialogue, amply discussed by Bakhtin and used by Lucian: the satirical presentation of tired authoritarian ideologues so that they appear pompous windbags. Within the dialogue the characters are all on a level playing field; their ability to convince those listening depends on what they say within the dialogue. They have to earn their authority. This does not mean that the author cannot manipulate things so that certain characters acquire in the dialogue greater authority. There are all sorts of devices whereby the author can set up the scene so that one character becomes an authority during the dialogue in ways that if the reader were aware of them they might not seem so convincing.

The undermining of authority is part of the ideological baggage of dialogue. Not only are authorities questioned, set up so that they seem out of place, and undermined by dialogue, it is also the case that dialogue carries the hint that authority is problematic unless renewed through conversation. Another way of putting this is to say that dialogue tends to favor a mild form of skepticism that is suspicious of dogmatic positions and their authority. It is no coincidence that many dialogue writers, from Cicero to Hume, are perceived as being skeptical. The dialogue leaves us with the impression that the author does not think there is a single correct position on the issue, and that the truth is best represented as a unity of positions around an issue (and in continuing dialogue to renew themselves). I would even go so far as to say that dialogue is the genre best suited to skepticism as it shows the skepticism in addition to showing the skeptic. Hume's *Dialogues* reinforce the position of Philo within. The hero of the dialogue has the same capacity for dialogue that the author has. Even Philo's recantation in the last part is an example of the ability of the skeptic to carry many voices within, just as Hume the author does when he writes.

If there is an authority that is transmitted through dialogue it is the authority of ageless wisdom - the authority of the tradition of which the voices are part. This is not an authority that is "authored" or owned by an individual. Therefore it cannot be incarnated in a voice in dialogue or referenced in an exposition. It is the wisdom that collects in dialogue and remains after the reading. It is what comes through dialogue. This is the wisdom which is dangerous to name or define. It is what Jordan calls the ineffable and what Heidegger and he remind us is important. Jordan suggests one could rank genres by their ability to approach the ineffable without reaching it, their ability to hint at it without grasping it. One might define dialogue, as Heidegger want to, as that ineffable that comes through logos, in which case dialogue would have a special status. But that is not the sense of dialogue that I have been defining, nor is that the sense of dialogue as a genre of persuasion among others. I believe all genres have their ways of approaching the ineffable; they all have a way of

allowing the ineffable to come through. The dialogue has no special place among genres in this regard. The undermining of authority that accompanies dialogue is a feature of dialogue that can be exploited to enhance the coming through of the ineffable. Other genres have other such features. That does not mean it is always exploited or that there are not other features that can be exploited this way. It is simply a hint as to how one can approach the ineffable through dialogue.

The Mode of Dialogue

Dialogue, as Jordan and this work discuss it, is a pattern of interaction (and persuasion) that works at different levels. In this book I have looked at dialogue at two levels: as an oral event, and as a genre of writing. While I have not done so here, I believe it is possible to extend the discussion of dialogue to include two other levels: thought and communal interaction. By this I mean that, just as we talk about dialogue as an oral activity, we can discuss it as a genre of thought and, at the other end of the scale, as a genre of relationship between communities. This position is different from saying that we can talk about what happens in thought (or among communities) *as if* it were a dialogue - using dialogue as a model or metaphor for thought and communal interaction. I am suggesting that dialogue is more importantly a mode of interaction, that manifests itself at many levels, not just between people. This mode can be found in the thoughts of an individual, among individuals, written down, or among communities. In this context one could look at the soliloquy as a related genre of writing that teaches us about the dialogue of thought, or one could look at the utopian dialogue for more about communal dialogue.

It is not, however, the case that dialogue at any one level is unconnected to dialogue at the others. Our understanding of dialogue at each level informs our understanding of dialogue at the others. The written dialogue presents us paradigms for oral dialogue. The written dialogue also combines voices that represent ideologies, i.e. voices representing

groups of people or communities when they talk. We could go on to map the ways that each register of dialogue influences the other, but that is another project. The point is that the mode of dialogue is not separable from the levels at which it manifests itself as if it were an abstract idea. Dialogue, to be understood, has to be understood as a mode that manifests itself in a particular way, at particular levels of human interaction. It is interesting at which levels it is meaningful to talk about dialogue and it is important how dialogue at any one level echoes though others while registering echoes from them. The understanding of dialogue at one level cannot be cleanly separated from that of other levels as they all resonate with voices from other levels. This is one of the features of dialogue that makes it such an attractive paradigm. Expectations for dialogue at one level can be inherited from another. For example, in the call for political dialogue between communities, there can be echoes of the intimacy of a garden dialogue between friends, or echoes of the rigor of a written Socratic dialogue. It is tempting when defining dialogue to sever the connection between levels of dialogue so that one can grasp one type of dialogue at a time. Doing so grasps dialogue in a way that damages it. It may be a necessary first step, but eventually one has to return to a view of the whole of dialogue resonating through its different levels. The danger of an exposition such as this work is that it has focused on two levels, grasping the oral and written dialogue. I hope the reader can release this grasp and hear that which echoes through the other dialogues.

The End

Death is a Dialogue between,
The Spirit and the Dust.²²

²² Emily Dickinson (1830-86), *The Complete Poems*, no. 976 (1955). Taken from the *Microsoft Bookshelf*, 1994.