

Student

Class - WR120

9/20/19

Exploration of Difference

The word difference is commonly used in everyday conversation or text but can provide a lot of context and significance. The Oxford English Dictionary defines this word as “a particular way in which two or more things differ; a point of dissimilarity”. The word difference derives from the Latin word *differentia* which is used as a noun and translates to difference and diversity. From my findings, however, the difference has a much more complex definition delving deeper into what makes difference mean two or more things dissimilar. This definition of difference is dissimilarity in two or more things due to perception and interpretation of the information about the objects or ideas at hand.

To start off, saying that there is a difference for a subject makes the subject stand out and often brings importance or notice to the change that the difference creates. For example, to our perception, differences often can be concrete, like how a pencil has obvious physical differences from a guitar or just as abstract if the objects at hand are similar, like two pencils, which can be noticed through our senses. This explains what makes difference a common word to express, being casually used in speech or text to compare and contrast two or more objects or ideas which match the general Oxford English Dictionary definition. On the flip side, there are arguments that differences stand within all things even in objects or ideas, even in things we consider similar or no different from each other. Gregory Bateson in his excerpt “Form, Substance, and Difference” cites from Immanuel Kant and states, “I suggest that Kant's statement can be

modified to say that there is an infinite number of *differences* around and within the piece of chalk. There are differences between the chalk and the rest of the universe, between the chalk and the sun or the moon. And within the piece of chalk, there is for every molecule an infinite number of differences between its location and the locations in which it *might* have been. Of this infinitude, we select a very limited number, which becomes information. In fact, what we mean by information—the elementary unit of information—is a *difference which makes a difference*”. Towards the end of the quote, Bateson quotes that information is a “difference which makes a difference”. To expand on this, this could mean that information is simply dissimilarities in our world that have made an impact and have changed our ways of understanding and processing objects and ideas in our heads and the world in unique ways. This makes information a way to separate things such as thoughts and objects by unique factors such as shape in order to differentiate what is what in our world to gain a higher understanding of complex and even simple ideas and objects in our world.

This basically states that there is an unlimited amount of differences in all things, such as small molecular differences even in similar objects. Going along with the personalized definition, these levels of differences, varying from similar to different, can be dependent on interpretation and can be perceived differently between people due to the chosen or lack of information about the objects which Bateson states earlier. For example, there is an episode from a late fifties T.V. show called, “The Twilight Zone” which revolved around the difference in terms of appearance and how subjective this difference is. The main character in the episode was a woman who wanted to be “normal” in her world and desperately wanted to clear any differences between herself and the majority of the people in her world. However, the plot twist

towards the end of the episode was that the woman was actually beautiful and the majority of people in her world were unappealing surprising the audience, which showed the significance of differences and how they can affect people. Simply acknowledging that she was different than the majority of the population in her world made her undergo multiple medical treatments to try to turn herself into what was considered normal. This difference in understanding of beauty and ugliness is clearly subjective and counts on prior information of how her world's population looks making outside influence and knowledge play a role in how these differences can affect a person's life or how they are perceived initially, which can make it difficult to state or see differences to certain people or things. This is due to their lack of knowledge or influence of certain differences in subjective things such as beauty and going back to what Bateson talks about which are molecular differences. Even the word beauty is defined as "That quality of a person (esp. a woman) which is highly pleasing to the sight; perceived physical perfection" by the Oxford English Dictionary which is reliant on perception and is dependent on the person describing the object or person.

Overall, the word difference is applicable to many subjects but as said before, based on findings from Bateson and his analysis of Kant's work, it is dependent on perception and prior knowledge which makes a noticeable difference within the object, person, or idea to a person. This leads us to makes a solid definition of dissimilarity in two or more things due to perception and interpretation of the information about the people, objects, or ideas at hand. In reference to this, an extension to these findings could be investigating future tools and information that could change the meaning of difference that was concluded in this analysis.

Student,

Most of the problems that were present in your rough draft are still present here.

Although you met the minimum word requirement – barely – you haven’t taken care of any of the sentences I flagged as being repetitive or overwordy, and you didn’t reformat the block quote I tagged in your rough draft as a problem. The restructuring you did around your introduction is good, but this paper does not show the kind of editing that ought to be indicative of a final draft. It’s not clear how your Twilight Zone example connects to your larger point, and that’s half of the body of your paper.

If you want to set up a meeting to talk about this paper and what sort of thing we can do to make sure your next paper is stronger, I’d be happy to do so – you know my office hours, and you can send me an email if you’d like to meet at another time.

GRADE:

D+/C- (without peer editing)

C-/C (with peer editing boost)

Work Cited

Bateson, Gregory. “Form, Substance, and Difference.” *Steps to an Ecology of Mind*, Jason

Aronson Inc., 1972, pp. 454–471.

“Difference, N.1.” *Oxford English Dictionary*,

www.oed.com/view/Entry/52453?rskey=D75owW&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid.

