

UNDERSTANDING THE POLEMICS OF PHILOSOPHY OF DIALOGUE AND ITS IMPERATIVES ON CONTEMPORARY HUMAN RELATIONS

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Abstract

Dialogue is a complex process. The philosophy of dialogue examines these aspects through the lens of human relationships, which are facilitated by dialogue. The study argues the thesis that that no isolated "I" exists independently of its relationship to another. Dialogue elevates each figure into an ultimate and mysterious center of value, whose presence defies instrumental language. The external revelation of a unique presence draws the subject into an open-ended relationship; living pattern that challenges sense, logic, and proportion. The aim of this study is to explore the elements of human reality through the perspective of human relationships, which are mediated by dialogue. This methodology is philosophical analysis which enables us to examine the nature of dialogue, and its applications to human relations. The study is further built on the theory of dialogues which x-rays the importance of human relationships not just on humans but on other aspects of human transactions. Thus our findings show that through dialogue the individuated elements come to life in relationships, creating patterns that emerge, grow, disappear, and reappear as well as promote human inter-subjectivity. The study further explores ways of promoting dialogue after which evaluation and conclusion followed.

Keywords: Dialogue, philosophy of dialogue, human, presence, relationship

1. Introduction

Various branches of philosophy can be seen as distinct approaches to reflecting on reality. Philosophy seeks to question, describe, and understand the world and its processes. The philosophy of dialogue, a contemporary field, began to emerge in the early twentieth century. Dialogics offered a fresh and promising perspective not only for philosophy but for culture as a whole. European thinkers from various nationalities and worldviews contributed extensively to this field. Generally, they are associated with three major religious traditions: Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Prominent Jewish philosophers of dialogue include Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas. In the Catholic tradition, significant figures also contributed to this philosophical movement. Different branches of philosophy represent unique ways of contemplating reality. Philosophy aims to inquire, describe, and comprehend the world and its dynamics. Specifically, the philosophy of dialogue explores these elements through the perspective of human relationships, which are mediated by dialogue. Although it is said that everyone is entitled to an opinion, but there are limits to how far team members can take their opinions. All too often, they forget to encourage a healthy dialogue and turn the conversation into a debate of one idea versus another. Taken to the extreme, they can dominate the discussion, hoping to gain support from the majority. In his ground-breaking book, *The Fifth Discipline*, Peter Senge makes a powerful distinction between dialogue and discussion: In a discussion, opposing views are presented and defended and the team searches for the best view to help make a team decision. In discussion, people want their own views to be accepted by the group. The emphasis is on winning rather than on learning.

In dialogue, people freely and creatively explore issues, listen deeply to each other and suspend their own views in search of the truth. People in dialogue have access to a larger pool of knowledge than any person enjoys. The primary purpose is to enlarge ideas, not to diminish them. It's not about winning acceptance of a viewpoint, but exploring every option and agreeing to do what is right (Kristin Arnold, 2013). Dialogue is not a "discussion" either. Discussion is almost like a ping-pong game, where people are batting the ideas back and forth and the object of the game is to win or to get points for you. Possibly you will take up somebody else's ideas to back up your own; you may agree with some and disagree with others—but the basic point is to win the game.

Generally, the term 'dialogue' is important in conflict resolution because it is the management of conflict using peaceful, non-violent methods. In the philosophy of history, there is a preference for peaceful settlement of disputes along the times prescribed by the institutions and values of the community. This was well enunciated by Gaya Best. He asserts that, under the concept of dialogue

that, “violence is normally frowned at. In a few instances where it may be tolerated, the community rather than the individual has to be the sanctioning authority” (Best, 2006:93). Dialogue is an interaction in which people try to meet their needs or accomplish their goals by reaching an agreement with others who are trying to get their own needs met. The consequences of dialogue are many, it brings changes or transformation in conflict and often people feel intimidated by it. Whether we call it problem solving, bargaining cooperative decision making, or communicating, when two or more people try to reach a voluntary agreement about something they are into a dialogue of resolving their conflict. This dialogue may be friendly, hostile, positional, or open-minded; they may have good alternatives or no acceptable choices in the settlement of the conflict.

2. Understanding the Nature of Dialogue

The word derives from the Greek *dialogos*, which means through (dia) the word (logos), or through the meaning of the word. Literally, then, dialogue is any communication that uses words to convey meaning. However, in our terms, dialogue means a specific kind of participatory process which is particularly well suited to addressing the societal needs. Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn. Each makes a serious effort to take others’ concerns into her or his own picture, even when disagreement persists. No participant gives up her or his identity, but each recognizes enough of the other’s valid human claims that he or she will act differently toward the other. Dialogue is an open and inclusive process where communication is based on mutual respect and which main objectives are: to encourage listening, learning and problem solving.

The word *dialogue* is often contrasted with *monologue*, as if it was a two-way, rather than a one-way, process. But this is misleading. Dialogue is a contraction from the Greek words for *through* and *words*. It suggests an activity aimed at eliciting meaning. The Greeks may not have invented dialogue, but they introduced the idea that individuals are not intelligent on their own, that it is only by reasoning together that they are able to uncover the truth for themselves. The Greeks understood that if two or more people are unsure about a question, they can accomplish something together they can't do on their own. By questioning and probing each other, carefully dissecting and analysing ideas, finding the inconsistencies, never attacking or insulting but always searching for what they can accept between them, they can gradually attain deeper understanding and insight. That's what dialogue is: a form of discussion aimed at fostering mutual insight and common purpose. The process involves listening with empathy, searching for common ground, exploring new ideas and perspectives, and bringing unexamined assumptions into the open.

Dialogue is about a diverse group of people finding a common sense or understanding about things. This leads to moving forward together in a common direction, each understanding their part in what is being done, and contributing to what may be needed in a willing and intelligent way. Dialogue refers to the mutual exchange of experience, ideas and opinions between two or more parties; i.e., a conversation. Dialogue is two-way or multi-way communication. It presumes the opportunity to reply on several occasions in order to enhance a line of reasoning. The dialogue concept contains a dimension of simultaneity and direct contact, either physical or via technical aids. In order to achieve genuine civic participation, there must be some form of dialogue between citizens and those in positions of power.

In the course of dialogue processes, people come together to build mutual understanding and trust across their differences, and to create positive outcomes through conversation. Continuous evaluation of the progress achieved together deepens peoples’ relationships and builds up their capacity to make mid-course corrections and to tackle new problems or opportunities as they arise. The critical quality of dialogue lies in that participants come together in a “safe space” to understand each other’s viewpoint in order to develop new options in addressing commonly identified problems. Dialogue provides a space in which participants learn. They learn more about themselves, about others, and about their relationships. They learn that their interests cannot be pursued successfully without the collaboration of others—even their enemies. They learn that cooperation can generate power. They learn to work together in the common or public interest while preserving their own identities.

While dialogue is often confused with other forms of discourse, it belongs in a distinctive category of its own. Unlike debate, it doesn't involve arguing for a point of view, defending a set of assumptions, or critiquing the positions of others. Unlike negotiation or consensus-building, it's not a method of reaching agreement or arriving at decisions. And unlike discussion, it can only emerge when participants trust and respect each other, suspend their judgments, and listen deeply to all points of view. Dialogue and Discussion is not actually the same thing even though they are related. Dialogue can be defined as, a written or spoken conversational exchange between two or more people, and a literary and theatrical form that depicts such an exchange (Wikipedia). According to David Bohm (2019), dialogue comes from the Greek word *dialogos*, *Logos* means 'the word', or in our case we would think of 'the meaning of the word'. And *dia* means through' – it does not mean 'two'. The picture or image that this derivation suggests is of a *stream of meaning* flowing among and through and between us. This will make possible a flow of meaning in the whole group, out of which may emerge some new understanding. It's something creative. And this shared meaning is the 'glue' or 'cement' that holds people and societies together.

Contrast this with the word "discussion," which has the same root as "percussion" and "concussion." Discussions can be an excellent strategy for enhancing student motivation, fostering intellectual agility, and encouraging democratic habits. They create opportunities for students to practice and sharpen a number of skills, including the ability to articulate and defend positions, consider different points of view, and enlist and evaluate evidence. While discussions provide avenues for exploration and discovery, leading a discussion can be anxiety-producing: discussions are, by their nature, unpredictable, and require us as instructors to surrender a certain degree of control over the flow of information. Fortunately, careful planning can help us ensure that discussions are lively without being chaotic and exploratory without losing focus. When planning a discussion, it is helpful to consider not only cognitive, but also social/emotional, and physical factors that can either foster or inhibit the productive exchange of ideas (Davis, 1993; Brookfield & Preskill, 1999).

3. Theories of Dialogue

'Dialogue theory' is a particular thesis that describes the relationship between the legislative and judicial branches of government. Put most simply, it is the idea that "Canadian legislators are engaging in a self-conscious dialogue with the judiciary" (Hogg & Bushell, 1997). This is an on-going process that, over time, can result in a variety of responses. Charter dialogue originated in Canada from the introduction of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982. According to this theory, interaction "resembles a tennis match between branches about the compatibility of the policies at stake with the bill of rights (Macfarlane, 2012). The judiciary's role is to give meaning to constitutional text by determining a given law's consistency with the *Constitution* and *Charter* (1982). The government is then able to engage with court judgments and respond accordingly. Parliament may choose to re-work or abandon legislation altogether. Thus, legislative and judicial institutions participate in a dynamic exchange. Intergroup dialogue can be one tool through which educators can teach about social justice issues, and support individual and collective transformation. We can explore how intergroup dialogue can support social justice education and action by examining some of the key principles, objectives, and demonstrated outcomes of intergroup dialogue.

Positive intergroup contact: Allport's contact hypothesis (1954) is one of the most proven ideas in intergroup relations (Brewer and Brown, 1998). Contact hypothesis proposes that one of the most successful ways to reduce intergroup conflict, prejudice and enmity is through positive intergroup contact. Positive intergroup contact requires equal status, acquaintance potential and interdependency between the groups. The hope is that through positive contact experiences in intergroup dialogue, participants engage in ways that shift the relationship of enmity and injustice.

Relationships as the basis for transformation: Both the content and process of intergroup dialogue focus on relationships between participants, as the focal point for transformation among the conflicted groups (Lederach, 1997; Saunders, 1999; Schoem and others, 2001). As it is an intentional process that seeks to create deep understanding and transformative experiences for participants, intergroup

dialogue provides a structure in which participants explore how their thoughts, emotions, consciousness, beliefs and narratives diverge, and how they can come together to create shared meanings.

Listening and inquiry: Intergroup dialogue is different from the more adversarial forms of communication, such as discussion or debate. Both *discussion* and *debate* imply a passing back and forth of ideas in argumentative form, in pursuit of truth by one party. Dialogue, according to Saunders, a major proponent of its use in conflicted societies, is “a process of genuine *interaction* through which human beings listen deeply enough to be changed by what they learn” (1999, p. 82). Many practitioners and researchers (such as Chasin and others, 1996; Ellinor and Gerard, 1998; Cissna and Anderson, 2002) have also written about the importance of such qualities as listening, curiosity, reflection, vulnerability, transparency and authenticity in dialogue processes, in order to support individual and social transformation. When people suspend their assumptions and judgments, share their opinions without hostility, and create shared meaning rather than search for facts, they are better able to engage in “collective thought” that moves them more creatively in new directions to address social issues (Bohm, 1996).

Participatory and inclusive decision-making: Many cultural and discourse traditions have long valued dialogue as a communication practice to support inquiry and explore shared concerns, and have led to its development as a peacebuilding tool. One of the main philosophical roots of intergroup dialogue is the ideology of participatory and inclusive decision-making. Particularly when used in educational settings, intergroup dialogue also often draws from philosophical, cultural and pedagogical traditions that led to the democratic, experiential, and intergroup education movements in North America and the United Kingdom during the twentieth century (McGee Banks, 2005; Stephan and Stephan, 2001; Zúñiga, Nagda and Sevig, 2002). Intergroup dialogue creates a democratic process that acknowledges and respects all parties, a context that reinforces the notion that change is possible, and transforms relationships toward positive social change. Through such changes, intergroup dialogue attempts to influence public decision-making, and produce new, previously unexplored results (Schoem, 2003).

Practitioners use intergroup dialogue in different contexts, often sharing such key principles but with variations in delivery. These can include variations in participant numbers, process duration, meeting frequency, facilitator roles, content or process focus and post-dialogue follow-up. Specific group goals may also vary across different intergroup dialogue processes. However, intergroup dialogue processes usually include certain general stages: setting the environment, developing a common foundation, exploring questions and issues, and moving from dialogue to social action. These stages support the pursuit of key overarching objectives of intergroup dialogue. These objectives may be termed differently but generally include the following.

Consciousness Raising: One of the core objectives in intergroup dialogue is what Zúñiga and others (2007) call “consciousness raising”. Consciousness raising draws from the work of the educator Freire (1970), who conceptualized this as an educational process through which members of oppressed groups come to understand the history and circumstances of their oppression. Intergroup dialogue expands this process to raise the consciousness of all participants in the dialogue, who are members of both target and non-target groups of institutional oppressions. Intergroup dialogue attempts to raise the consciousness of participants through parallel and interrelated processes of developing their knowledge of social systems, and their awareness of their personal and social identity within these larger societal structures. Interpersonal, institutional, and societal privilege and power dynamics as well as the groups’ histories and present environment shapes and affects intergroup relationships and the respective statuses of the groups in the larger society. The integration of both cognitive and affective explorations helps intergroup dialogue participants understand how and why certain patterns of intergroup dominance and subordination exist, and how these patterns affect them personally. Participants build an understanding of and empathy for the narratives of others in the dialogue group – not only the positions or opinions expressed, but also the underlying assumptions, values, needs and

fears – and in the process, build a clearer understanding of their own assumptions, values, needs and fears, as well as their personal relationship to the issues being explored.

Relationship building: Members of conflicted parties often take positions or “sides” on contentious issues, but may not have nor take the opportunities to interact directly with each other to address their differences. When unaddressed in situations of injustice, differences can lead to enemy images and dehumanization of the “other” (Volkan, 1997; Moses, 1990). Once formed, enemy images tend to become deeply embedded and resistant to change, perpetuating and intensifying the conflict, and posing obstacles to conflict reduction and resolution (Gross Stein, 1996). As such, intergroup dialogue addresses relationships as a focus for transformation among conflicted parties. A key feature of relationship building is the explicit recognition that relationships between participants in the dialogue group are likely to be impacted by the asymmetrical relationships and history of conflict or potential conflicts between the social identity groups involved (Maoz, 2001). Consequently, intergroup dialogue focuses on how relationships occur among people in full recognition of their social group identities. Unlike “feel-good” types of encounters that attempt to promote understanding by avoiding, masking, or overcoming social injustices, intergroup dialogue recognizes that communicating about and, if possible, working through conflict and social injustice are both positive and necessary parts of the intergroup encounter. Such conflicts can become valuable opportunities for participants to engage in heart-to-heart conversations and to discover new ways of thinking and relating across difference, building bridges between and among individuals across group boundaries (Zúñiga, 2003).

Capacity building: Because intergroup dialogue is a process by which peacebuilding occurs slowly through relational change rather than structural change, small groups of individuals in an intergroup dialogue process can find it challenging to address larger structural issues that they may be unlikely to impact in immediate or significant ways. This can become frustrating, especially for participants who are invested in societal shifts. For deep, sustainable peacebuilding to occur, intergroup dialogue must be linked to action and change, at the personal, interpersonal, intra- and intergroup levels, that address the injustices and institutional oppressions that have perpetuated the conflicts. The earlier objectives of intergroup dialogue (consciousness raising and relationship building) support the participants in developing their capacities to enact change (Zúñiga and others, 2007). By supporting new ways of thinking about oneself and others and the social structure in which both exist (consciousness raising), intergroup dialogue promotes thinking about and acting for social change. The process of building bridges across and within differences in social identity groups (relationship building) can provide participants with a sense of shared responsibility for challenging institutional oppressions and creating more socially just communities. In envisioning and then taking action, participants create opportunities to continue to learn and to carry the skills and commitments they have developed in intergroup dialogue to settings outside and beyond the dialogue.

Dialogue and Mediation: Dialogue and mediation are important tools to address conflicts in a constructive manner. These approaches are employed both to prevent and to resolve conflict, and can be put into effect before, during or following violent conflict. As an instrument, dialogue is used to build relationships among a wide group of actors. It can be a tool to build consensus among a group or to discuss divisive issues. It is also used to extend the reach and impact of a formal process through wider participation. Dialogue can be public, but often takes place in private and confidentially. The format can range from one conversation to initiatives that are conducted over a longer period of time. They can involve individuals, or groups of communities, for example in locally-led Peace Courts where issues are resolved through dialogue. Mediation is another tool used to help resolve conflict and stop violence from escalating – involving bringing opposing individuals or groups together to find a solution. Mediation, often conducted by a third party, can play a crucial role in de-escalating conflict and in healing wounds after division. In mediation, a mediator’s primary role is to act as a neutral third party who facilitates discussions between the individuals or groups in dispute elements of mediation (<https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/themes/mediation-dialogue/>).

4. On the Nature of Philosophy of Dialogue

Hegel under the trajectories of conflict advocates the importance of dialectic of synthesis as dement of dialogue in the settlement of conflict. He sees dialogue as an organ of compromise for peace. "Hegel agreed with Heraclitus that everything is changing from one concrete state to another: therefore, becoming is the fundamental feature of all existence" (Sahakian, 1968: 190). In the problem of conflict, Hegel believes that life activity occurs as part of this stream or process of change-of Becoming-and mind is a higher form of Becoming. Nothing is at a standstill, for everything develops by means of the dialectical process. Whatever is absolutely still is non-existent; thus it is that a completely abstracted. Being and Nothing are identical.

Being and Nothing are thesis and antithesis, respectively. As such, each is a momentum, and both are contending but reciprocally dependent forces whose mutual contradiction forms an equation. This considerably according to Hegel is a dynamic logic in which we find truths through a series of triads: thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Thus, it is on this light that evenly fact will be understood only when related to its opposites, to those things which the theses are not. If we relate or unite the idea to its opposite, we discover a different truth about which transcends their previous separate meaning. In setting forth this law of the dialectic, of consciousness, Hegel was agreeing with the principles of conflict transformation. Conflict transform is a form of dialogue; it is to change the parties, their relationships through a process of change in perceptions and attitudes of parties. Jeong (2000:94) sees it as coming into being of new situation involving conflict issues, perceptions, relationships and communication patterns. So, it is on a related not that Hegel sees dialogue as a priority in conflict. It stems from the recognition of the dialectical element of conflict about the inevitability of change. More so, it recognizes the neutrality of conflict in such a manner that conflict can be either negative or positive, but parties can transform it into positive to maximize opportunities. Hegel much believed in dynamic of evolution that there is the continuity element, that the synthesis is not static, but can in turn become another anti-thesis, meaning that parties and interveners continue to work on problem areas to achieve continuous change. Considerably, it is on this ground that we explicate the real meaning of dialogue. Dialogue is a dialectical process where participants relates together, reflect, question with the idea of reaching an agreement as a shared understanding.

Philosophy of dialogue is a type of philosophy based on the work of the Austrian-born Jewish philosopher Martin Buber best known through its classic presentation in his 1923 book *I and Thou* (Rosenbaum, 1975). For Buber, the fundamental fact of human existence, too readily overlooked by scientific rationalism and abstract philosophical thought, is "man with man", a dialogue which takes place in the "sphere of between" (Friedman, 1955).

4.1 Philosophy of Dialogue: *I and Thou*

Whereas before World War I Buber had promoted an aesthetic of unity and unification, his later writings embrace a rougher and more elemental dualism. Buber always opposed philosophical monism, which he identified with Bergson, and objected to "doctrines of immersion," which he identified with Buddhism. Complicating the undifferentiated shape of mystical experience (as sought by the medievals, including Eckhart, as an annihilation of self), the profoundly dualistic world-view proffered in *I and Thou* references Cusa's *coincidentia oppositorum* as an expression of human limits. Buber's text reduces the relation between persons, animate objects, and deity to three expressive signifiers: "I", "You", and "It". They are the elemental variables whose combination and re-combination structure all experience as relational. The individuated elements realize themselves in relations, forming patterns that burst into life, grow, vanish, and revive. Human inter-subjectivity affirms the polymorphous *I-Thou* encounter. Resting upon the claim that no isolated "I" exists apart from relationship to another, dialogue or "encounter" transforms each figure into an ultimate and mysterious centre of value whose presence eludes the concepts of instrumental language. The heteronomous revelation of a singular presence calls the subject into an open-ended relationship, a living pattern, that defies sense, logic, and proportion; whereas the *I-It* relationship, in its most degenerate stage, assumes the fixed form of objects that one can measure and manipulate. At the core of this model of existence is the notion of encounter as "revelation." As understood by Buber, revelation is the revelation of "presence" (*Gegenwart*). In contrast to "object" (*Gegenstand*), the presence revealed by revelation as encounter occupies the space "in between" the subject and another

(a tree, a person, a work of art, God). This “in between” space is defined as “mutual” (*gegenseitig*). Contrasting with the Kantian concept of experience (*Erfahrung*), *Erlebnis* (encounter), or revelation of sheer presence, is an ineffable, pure form that carries not an iota of determinate or object-like conceptual or linguistic content. Buber always insisted that the dialogic principle, i.e., the duality of primal words (*Urworte*) that he called the *I-Thou* and the *I-It*, was not an abstract conception but an ontological reality that he pointed to but that could not be properly represented in discursive prose (Buber, M. translated by Ronald Gregor Smith, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark., 1958).

The confusion (and/or con-fusion) between philosophy and religion is especially marked in *I and Thou*. While Buber seems to lack a fully worked-out epistemology and occasionally revels in paradoxes that border on mystical theology, it has been argued that Buber did indeed solve the inherent “difficulty of dialogics that it reflects on, and speaks of, a human reality about which, in his own words, one cannot think and speak in an appropriate manner” (Bloch [1983] p. 62). Debates about the strength and weakness of *I and Thou* as the foundation of a system hinge, in part, on the assumption that the five-volume project, to which this book was to serve as a prolegomenon (a project Buber abandoned), was indeed a philosophical one. Buber’s lectures at the *Freiesjüdisches Lehrhaus* and his courses at University of Frankfurt, as well as letters to Rosenzweig show that, at the time of its writing, he was preoccupied with a new approach to the phenomenology of religion (cf. Schottroff, Zank). In Buber’s cyclical conception of the history of religions, the revelation of presence mixes into and animates the living and lived forms of historical religion (institutions, texts, rituals, images, and ideas), becoming over time ossified and rigid and object-like, but structurally open to the force of renewal based on new forms of encounter as revelation. The history of religion as described by Buber in the closing words of *I and Thou* is a contracting, intensifying spiral figure that has redemption as its telos. It would be artificial, however, to separate Buber’s interest in religious phenomena from his interest in a general philosophical anthropology. Rather, Buber seems to have tried to find one in the other, or—put differently—to make religious belief and practice perspicacious in light of a general philosophical anthropology (Buber, M. translated by Ronald Gregor Smith, Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark., 1958).

5. Dialogue as a Philosophical Tool in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

As a professional tool, dialogue is most commonly used in peacebuilding work as a structured, intergroup process between members of conflicted societies (Tint, 2008). In the multidisciplinary field of peace studies, *peacebuilding* refers to the efforts in pursuit of social justice at all levels of society. Peacebuilding is distinct from *peace-making*, which is the attempt to prevent or mitigate direct episodes of violence through non-violent means (Christie, Wagner & Winter, 2001). For example, an educator delivering a curriculum to unpack racial oppressions is undertaking peacebuilding work, whereas an educator trying to stop a schoolyard fight that began with a racial slur is engaged in peace-making. After an extensive review of intergroup dialogue work in various community-based and academic settings, Dessel, Rogge & Garlington (2006) provide a definition of *intergroup dialogue* as a peace building tool: a process designed to involve individuals and groups in an exploration of societal issues about which views differ, often to the extent that polarization and conflict occur... Intergroup dialogue in the public arena is a facilitated community experience designed to provide a safe yet communal space to express anger and indignation about injustice. Participants are engaged in witness, and are affected by a facilitated community experience (p. 304). More specifically, Schoem and colleagues (2001) define intergroup dialogue as “a form of democratic practice, engagement, problem solving, and education involving face-to-face, focused, facilitated, and confidential discussions occurring over time between two or more groups of people defined by their different social identities” (p. 6). Ethnicity, race, religion, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, mental ability, physical ability, age, socio-economic class, and/or other social characteristics can broadly define these social identity groups. In *Last Chance for Eden*, for example, Lee Mun Wah and his co-facilitator, Linda Compton, facilitated an intergroup dialogue that focused primarily on institutional oppressions based on racial, gender and sexual identities.

In dialogue, however, nobody is trying to win. Below we look at the differences between Dialogue and Discussion. Discussion deals with present ideas, Seek answers and solutions, Persuade others,

Enlist others, Share information, Solve our own and others' problems, Give answers, Achieve pre-set goals, Acknowledge feelings, then discount them as inappropriate, Listen for places of disagreement, Avoid feelings, Avoid areas of strong conflict and difference, Retain relationships, and Avoid silence (Tanya Kachwaha, 2002 & Huang-Nissan, 1999). Generally, dialogue broaden our own perspective, look for shared meaning, find places of agreement, express paradox and ambiguity, bring out areas of ambivalence, allow for and invite differences of opinion and experience, ask questions and Invite Inquiry, discover collective meaning, Challenge ourselves and other's preconceived notions, explore thoughts and feelings, Listen without judgment and with a view to understand (Tanya Kachwaha, 2002; Huang-Nissan. 1999 and Consultant/Trainers Southwest 1992).

The theory of dialogue types can be traced back to Aristotle's Topics and Sophistical Refutations. In the second chapter of the latter work (165a38-b8), Aristotle classified four types of arguments, didactic, dialectical, examination arguments and contentious arguments. In the Topics, Walton notices (Walton 1990, pp. 416-417), Aristotle wrote about four contexts of reasoning, or dialogue frameworks (1998, p. 11): demonstration, dialectic, contentious reasoning, and misreasoning. Demonstration can be interpreted both as a scientific inquiry, and in terms of a pedagogical dialogue. In particular, dialectical reasoning was developed in a set of question-answer moves in the VIII book of the Topics. The Aristotelian ideas were partly developed in the Middle Ages in the theory of Obligations, but later abandoned. For a long time, the old dialectic was thought to be merely an antiquated art that had no place in the science of logic.

6. Application of Dialogue in Human Society

There are ways to dialogue in other to Inspire Respectful, Mutual Dialogue in the human transactions. Though we often think about dialogue as a simple conversation between two or more people, it is better defined as the medium through which people with different viewpoints may voice and share possibilities. It requires a number of skills beyond talking: setting aside ego, listening without judgment, creativity, and problem-solving. The idea is that people with alternative perspectives work together so that everyone may attain a deeper collective understanding of the issues. It's a pretty tough ask. Research on dialogue at work, however, suggests that the concept has become trivialized and its accomplishment made to seem routine. Many organizations boast of having an "open" environment where members are encouraged to participate in dialogue, but we rarely see businesses using dialogue transformationally — to dissolve long-standing stereotypes, unite people in a common purpose, inspire fresh thinking and amplify creativity. It is a missing skill (Thompson, 2017).

Why is genuine dialogue so rare? The hard truth is, dialogue is interpersonally tough and unfamiliar — only a handful of people do it well. Some personalities will find opening up to other viewpoints challenging, and may struggle with making observations, not demands. Some will find the act of synthesizing conflicting opinions psychologically disconcerting. And others will resist giving critical feedback. Against this backdrop, it is easy to see how organizations might pay lip service to dialogue without really creating the conditions for it to work effectively. How then, do you foster respectful, mutual dialogue in the workplace? Here are four tips. *Break down barriers:* Building bridges between workers of different personalities, generations and backgrounds is essential if they are to talk and learn from each other, find ways to communicate, and understand why it is not always easy to find common ground. A good way to bring people closer as a team is to assign a non-work related topic such as a book or a movie, and gather people to talk about it in a structured setting. People feel safe when expressing their opinions about a fiction book since the dialogue is unrelated to work goals, achievement or performance. Encouraging people to explore the subject from all angles gives participants the chance to learn far more about one another than they might have otherwise and builds a foundation for honest and meaningful interactions (Thompson, 2017). The idea behind this exercise is that it makes debate second nature. Employees who previously might have felt uncomfortable engaging with a co-worker may be more willing to strike up dialogue, because they have had a meaningful conversation with that person before.

Establish the rules: Rules are an important part of dialogue. They create a safe space for people with diverse views and impose a rigorous discipline on the participants. Indeed, honouring a set of rules that foster civility, openness and respect is what makes dialogue so different from traditional back-and-forth discussion or adversarial debate. Suggestions include: Seek to understand, not to persuade, Listen carefully and without judgment, When others are speaking do not interrupt, Do not pressurize anyone into speaking, Treat others with the respect you expect yourself, Everyone's views have equal value. You may draw up a set of ground rules and ask participants for their comments, additions and approval, or you may task team members to come up with their own set of ground rules. Either way, it is important that everyone has a say in establishing the rules that will make them feel safe and productive.

Create spaces for spontaneous dialogue: The physical design of the workplace can support dialogue and collective reflection between team members. Sofas, break-out rooms, and leisure areas encourage staff to meet informally and stimulate dialogue as part of daily work routines — some managers discourage workers from eating lunch at their desks, for example, so they meet with co-workers and discuss things. Technology can be used with great effect to open new communication channels that actively encourage dialogue. Instant messaging, group chat systems, intranets, virtual communities and wikis can help staff who find talking through technology less intimidating than holding a face-to-face conversation. These tools give workers multiple in-points to each other and serve as a basis for knowledge-sharing, problem solving and debate.

Practice what you preach: If you want to promote better dialogue, you need to make sure that senior managers are following through on the initiative. In practical terms, this means breaking down the corporate hierarchy and insisting that managers engage with employees on equal terms. This can be challenging for managers who were brought up never to question a leader's authority. Training may make a difference, especially if participants are given the opportunity to practice workplace dialogue and gain experience of consulting with each other on real-life issues. Developing a training program will depend on the specific needs of the organization; some early topic ideas include: how to capture dialogue across the entire workforce, engaging in reflective listening, how to encourage dissenting opinions, and showing employees that their ideas are heard and respected. Consultative leadership may never come naturally to some, but the process should move leaders away from individualism and develop dialogue to the stage where collaboration becomes an integral part of the organizational culture.

Conflicted communities worldwide employ intergroup dialogue at various phases of social tensions to build understanding between parties and create possibilities for movement and transformation. Intergroup dialogue is used in a variety of settings ranging from non-profit community-based organizations, government to educational institutions. Some examples include: Fostering understanding among community members, as in Palestine and Israel (Reich & Halabi, 2004), Rebuilding and reconciliation in post-conflict societies, as in South Africa or Rwanda (Villa-Vicencio & Savage, 2001), Healing emotional scars long after a conflict has ended, as between descendants of Holocaust survivors and Nazi perpetrators (Bar-On, 1999; 2006), Promoting education and action to address institutional oppressions, as in university campuses in the United States (Zúñiga, et al, 2007), Engaging citizens in addressing public issues, such as the *Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future* (Saxena, 2003)

7. Recommendation and Evaluation

From the above, the concept of dialogue as a basic life skill that we use every day in many ways especially for conflict prevention and peace building: We use it in making business arrangements, family decisions, plans with friends, and commercial transactions, labelling our interchange activities is part of dialogue, because it gives me the incentives of a synergy of co-operation between two groups or individuals in the society. In this way, it connotes the cognitive elements of inclusiveness, collectivity, reciprocity and collaboration in a political community. People(s) under the dimensions of a dialogue think of an interaction as a negotiation that it is somehow more intense, challenging, or tricky. This, it is in this light that, people start thinking that there are going to be winners and losers,

that game is being played, and that people are out to take advantage of one another. People believe they will have to compromise on issues that are important to them, and they suddenly become concerned about it, on the needs and alternatives. It is relatively under this panoply, that we consider some of the more common assumptions that people make about ‘dialogue’.

Dialogue is a game: The metaphors we use in discussing dialogue often come from sports, poker, on some other game. We talk about “putting our cards on the table,” “raising the ante”, calling a bluff,” “scoring a knockout,” reaching a stalemate,” “playing handball,” and the like. Thinking of dialogue as a game has its useful side. It makes some of the dynamics clear, on the one hand games tend to involve a known process, standards conduct, and a relatively clear goal. On the other hand games are normally about winners and losers, about fixed-sum outcomes, about being more competent or clever than the other players (who are viewed as opponents).

Dialogue is about Compromise: Many people resist ‘dialogue’ because they think it implies having to compromise on important issues or values. Although dialogue may involve compromise, that is not its necessary result. In some dialogues people may have norms that promote compromising and considering the point of view of an adversary. But these norms about compromise may make people resistant to negotiating when they are very angry at another party or adamant about their position. Dialogue is about giving up power parents are often resistant to the idea of dialoguing or negotiating with their children, managers with their employees, police with suspects because this implies giving away power inappropriately. Ironically, these kinds of ‘dialogues’ occur all the time but without the label. Dialogue often involves applying power, recognizing someone else’s power, or discussing arrangements that may realign power, but it does not necessarily imply giving away power. Sometime, it is way of exercising power more effectively.

Dialogue is about being Nice: Do people have to be friendly or deny their anger towards others when they are into dialogue or negotiating? Do they have to treat others as if they approve of them in some way? They do have the willing to communicate with the other parties. But they do not have to pretend that their feelings are anything other than what they are. *Dialogue is about being Nasty:* Sometimes people assume that to go into dialogue you have to be belligerent, hard-nosed, and tough. This in other words is the opposite of being friendly. Many people do not go into dialogue simply because they do not want to behave in the nasty way, by believing that the alternative may be nasty. Then do not feel they can master it and therefore feel very vulnerable. Although, it has its complexities, its essence is fairly straightforward.

8. Conclusion

Dialogue assumes a conversation and a necessity to listen to the other. The study explores the concept of dialogue among civilizations. Dialogue should not be misused to justify contradictory strategies and policies, including confrontational agendas disguised as peaceful visions. The politics of dialogue at the global level have eroded the real meaning of the concept, necessitating a revisit to its original philosophical context. Thus the principles of dialogue must be followed during negotiations. The conclusion emphasizes the need for genuine dialogue based on mutual recognition and respect, rejecting civilizational supremacy or hegemony. Establishing rules are an important part of dialogue. They create a safe space for people with diverse views and impose a rigorous discipline on the participants. Indeed, honouring a set of rules that foster civility, openness and respect is what makes dialogue so different from traditional back-and-forth discussion or adversarial debate. The study underscores the importance of a prosaic and philosophically sober dialogue among cultures and civilizations to ensure long-term stability and peace.

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