

*J. Chidozie Chukwuokolo,  
Victor O. Jeko*

## **A HERMENEUTIC UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE AS A TOOL FOR GLOBAL PEACE**

### ***ABSTRACT***

The problem of threat to international politics and global peace has undermined the effectiveness of the power of dialogue. The world seems to be in the condition of will to power derivable from the mutually assured destructive (MAD) tendencies. Is it possible to extend global peace? How can this be achieved? In this paper, we posit that dialogue is a fundamental medium for conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence in a diverse world. We contend that monologue in international politics understood in terms of might is right undermines the effectiveness of dialogue and often leads to violent conflicts within and between countries. Our world today is at a crossroads. Dialogue, however, foregrounds the medium of conflict resolution and the social consciousness of human communication. We present a hermeneutic understanding of dialogue that follows from relevant works of Hans Georg Gadamer and Jürgen Habermas. This paper espouses the power of dialogue as a basis for the normative foundation of an emancipated social global order. The dialogical sequence has a cobweb of social interconnectedness and the ethics of global peace. We present a literal and philosophical understanding of dialogue and a contextual understanding of dialogue within the hermeneutic tradition.

**Keywords:** Hermeneutics, dialogue, global peace, communicative action, language.

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The world crises have brought to the fore the need for dialogue and communicative action in order to ensure that global peace. Dialogue thus becomes a medium of conflict resolution. Dialogue brings to the fore the dynamic interplay of interpersonal human relationships, the quality of interpersonal communicative reasoning and the nature of the underlying shared normative

background of meanings in which humans interact. Dialogue has been regarded as a basis of human social existence. Jürgen Habermas' conception of communicative action aims at conversation and dialogue. According to Giovanna Borradori (2008, x–xvi), “Habermas' approach to the political and ethical realms of communicative action is ruled by dialogue and rational argument. The emphasis on rational argumentation as the ultimate condition for justice is the central theme of Habermas' philosophical approach.” Habermas concludes that communicative exchange is aimed at the democracy of everyday speech. Communicative freedom aims at the formulation of rational argument. Accordingly, Borradori believes that “rationality provides the structure as well as the scope of communication. Communicative action is Habermas' name for the residue of rationality built into our everyday exchanges” (2008, 52). Communicative action is emancipatory and it is all about rational discourse. Accordingly, Borradori believes that “Habermas makes the term ‘discourse’ the cornerstone of his communicative approach to ethics and political philosophy” (2008, 53).

The virtue of dialogue includes optimal strategy and normative possibility, peace-making, conflict resolution, community building, inter-personal relation, global world order and personal development. Dialogue can bring about change in our international system. Authentic dialogue can bring about the normative background for the communication models of liberal democracy. Dialogue brings to the fore the possibility of communicative consociation (the ability to associate via the use of language), constitutive/transformational association or sociative mechanism, and seeing this as a first step in exploring the potential for enriching dialogic practice on the basis of communication theory. Dialogue has been a form of communication pattern with principled disinterest toward rational society. In rational society, dialogue brings about significant changes in the social worlds of political participants. The dialogic argument is the argument that events and objects are only patterns of communication. Dialogue is a normative assumption that everything is a matter of polarized opposites. The dialogic perspective constituted a pattern of reciprocated communicative action. Dialogue brings to the foreground open-mindedness and deep expansive collective thinking. Dialogic communication embodies expansive thinking and the simplification of complex issues. Dialogic relation represented or produced social structure, normative texture, and it represents cultural values, beliefs, goals, and the like are formulated and lived. Dialogue constitutes a basic normative structure and directs our attention to the ways of making of events and objects of our social world. The idea of dialogue brings about changes in our global society. Dialogue is seen as a means of social interaction and the social construction of global reality of human interpersonal relations.

Our society has undergone gross stratification and divided lines as a result of variations in culture. Borradori (2008, 61–62) concludes and aligns herself with the Habermasian standpoint that views the rigid stratification as the root of the collapse of intersubjective dialogue. The driving and mobilizing force in today's

conflicts apart from power and money is a cultural misunderstanding. Communicative dialogue is emphatically anchored on the force of better argument as a way of improving better understanding and *ipso facto* enthroning global peace. Borradori (2008, 60–61) concludes that “... the force of a better argument can thus only flourish in a democratically regulated context in which individuals feel empowered enough to discuss the validity of the rules by which they abide.” We must note that in global politics might determines what a better argument is and this is why democratization is being challenged in sundry ways in various countries as stronger countries impose their strands of democracy on others.

Although Habermas did not devote any full text to the issue of the global world order, his distinctive contributions toward envisaging this order have been clearly demonstrated in many of his sociological and philosophical works. It is worthy of note to state that the findings that emanates from this view have been that normative questions of democratic legitimacy and nationalism reflected on Habermas’ conception of terrorism. Dialogue requires contact and should be the fundamental instrument of the ethics of global peace. Violence is a disruption to the project of humanity. International communicative interaction requires synergies among nation-states across the globe. The radical transformation of the progress of humanity requires a more systematic approach to the global political order.

The term “*communication*” is coined by Hymes (1966) to focus attention on the skills and knowledge involved in human communication. It reflects on the limitations in linguistics of concentration mainly on syntactic competence. According to David Jary and Julia Jary:

“The human capacity for communication, especially through language, is far more extensive than that of any other animal. The capacity to communicate across time and space has expanded enormously in modern times with the invention of writing, printing, electronic communications- telegraphy, telephone, radio,-and media of mass communications, as well as, the mechanization of transportation. A reduction of what geographers refer to as the friction of distance has been particularly evident in the 20th century in the capacity to send messages over long distances at great speed. This has many implications, not least the increased capacity for social control this makes possible for the modern state” (Jary, Jary, 2000, 59).

Dialogic or dialogical philosophy is a twofold issue and it exemplifies relational analysis or dialectical process. This method starts from the normative assumption that every utterance has an addressee. The central question is: To whom is the person speaking?

However, the address is rather a multiplicity of others, a complex web of invisible or cob-web of human interaction whose presence can be traced to the content, flow and expressive elements of the utterance. It means connection

between two persons or things. The word “*dialogic*” is ambiguous. The topic of mediated dialogue in a global age has been at the heart of a special issue on cultural identity and the sacredness of our humanity. Religion as the reposition of the sacred is the transcendence within. Transcendence means the movement of consciousness of being.

Barnett W. Pearce and Kimberly A. Pearce reflect on the fact that dialogue has become a global phenomenon and it has a variety of social contexts including conflict resolution, community building, interpersonal relation and personal development (2003, 39–40). They believe that dialogue has been predicated on theories of communication. They argue that communication characterizes models of deliberation and the development of the practices of participatory democracy. These scholars postulate that enriching the practice of dialogue is the basis of communication theory. Dialogic communication is a way of achieving a better argument. Pearce and Pearce reflect on the articulation of the theories of communication and that dialogue can be understood as better way of articulating various concepts and tradition of social practices. They explain that language helps us to create things in our experiential objective world (2003, 42–43).

Pearce and Pearce (2003) argue that the lives we live are contingent on the interaction of our choices and circumstances. They claim that the creative aspect of communication is so powerful and it brings to the fore transformative dialogue. Pearce and Pearce adumbrate that the plurality of ways of being human can be seen as a warrant for a life of dialogic communication (2003). Dialogic communication aims at the complex webs of responsibility and morality. The authors recognize the fundamentally social nature of communication (Pearce, Pearce, 2003). They observe that dialogic communicators are immersed in the linguistic webs of the world and that dialogic communication remains in the tension between standing our own ground and being profoundly open to other human persons. They describe dialogue as the avenue where people can interact and argue that the dialogic quality of speech acts is often achieved by verbal or non-verbal or meta-communication. The authors believe that dialogic communication brings to the foreground the dynamics and rational account of interpersonal relations. These scholars argue that emotions, passions, confrontation and challenges occur within the dialogic space. Communication is the observable practice of an interpersonal relationship whereby everything is seen as a matter of polarized opposites. They concluded that dialogue is characterized by a constituted pattern of reciprocated communicative action (Pearce, Pearce, 2003).

From the foregoing we have tried to highlight the essence of dialogue and communicative action in attaining global peace and a greater understanding between human persons. In this paper, we shall look at how dialogue enhances communication and what is the role of dialogue in defending global peace. We shall also consider dialogue as opening up to the system-life-world and we shall conclude by positing that there is no alternative to dialogue in securing global peace.

## 2. DIALOGUE, LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

Dialogue is crucial to every diplomatic strategy and it is a universal tool of human communication. According to Jürgen Habermas, linguistic communication aims at a reasonable consensus. When investigating communication Habermas shows a lot of gratitude to Ludwig Wittgenstein. However, they differ: Habermas' works have been more "transforming and liberating" as opposed to Wittgenstein's "quietist approach" (Wisnewski, 2007, 88–89). Wittgenstein wants his reader not to think too much but to look at the "language games" (any practices that involve language) that gave rise to philosophical (personal, existential, spiritual) problems. His approach to such problems is painstaking, thorough, open-eyed and receptive. Wittgenstein's emphasis on language and human behaviour, practices, etc. made him a prime candidate for antirealism in many people's eyes. He has been accused of linguistic idealism, i.e., the idea that language is the ultimate reality.

Wittgenstein's realism equates objectivity with intersubjectivity (universal agreement). Wittgenstein was neither a realist nor an antirealist, at least with regard to ethics and metaphysics. Wittgenstein's aim seems to have been to show up as nonsense the things that philosophers (including himself) attempt to say. Philosophical theories, he suggests, are attempts to answer questions that are not really questions at all (they are nonsenses), or to solve problems that are not really problems. Most of the philosophers' propositions and questions arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language. Philosophers then have the task of presenting clearly the logic of our language. Wittgenstein takes this philosophical puzzlement very seriously. His philosophy of language presupposes a critique of social practice. The critique of social practice is a connotation of social liberation. In this process, the parties involved define, interpret, and attach meanings to the existential encounter of human linguistic processes. Wittgenstein's conception of language corresponds with Habermas' conception of existential–political philosophy. This correspondence reflects on the linguistic analysis of the social world because language is a necessary means in human social interactions. The conceptual clarification of language is anchored on society which, in turn, is characterized by vast human relationships and the cosmic network of human association. According to Joan Ferrante, "[s]ociety is a large complex of human relationships; a system of interaction" (2003, 512). Wittgenstein's conception of language justifies the "empirical variability" of normative reasons of the physical world. According to Jeremy Wisnewski, "normative reasons are required to justify normative conclusions: to claim that ordinary use ought to count as a criteria of meaning is to move beyond ordinary usage; to claim that empirical statements are the only ones that ought to count as meaningful as to move beyond empirical statements" (Wisnewski, 2007, 93–94).

The problem here is not merely that one cannot justify the above approaches but that a commitment to the above approaches predicts the possibility of nor-

mative justification. This possibility is what Habermas calls “criticizable validity claims.” Wittgenstein’s conception of language permits the critique of social practice. According to Wisniewski, in his book *Wittgenstein and Ethical Inquiry: A Defense of Ethics as Clarification*, “once we demonstrate that Wittgenstein’s approach to philosophical issues not only permits critique but demands it, it will be possible to defend a robust, and critical, clarificatory ethics” (Wisniewski, 2007, 94). Wittgenstein’s conceptual clarification of language is akin to Habermas’ theory of communication; both they see philosophy as an emancipatory project, transformation, and enrichment of our socio-political position. According to Wisniewski, both they claim that “philosophy thus aims at emancipation and at the enrichment of our socio-political position” (2007, 90–91).

Wittgenstein’s influence on Habermas is present in his conception of language: Language reflects on the evaluation and the transformation of social life. According to Wisniewski, “transformation is not to occur willy-nilly; rather, the aim of the theorist is to identify areas of social life that are replete with ideology that are repressive of true human interests and then to attempt to change this area of social life through positive intervention” (2007, 88). Wisniewski claims that language from its philosophical perspective has a transformational value. In his view “... philosophy not only aimed at action and the transformation of political reality is ultimately idle—and hence not worth doing” (Wisniewski, 2007, 88). Accordingly, he opines that “considerations of ultimate should focus on social institutions, as social institutions explain individual actions” (ibid.). Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language reflects on critical social theory. According to Wisniewski, “one might respond by claiming that the rigour and tension brought to bear on questions of linguistic significance provide the point of departure required for any critical theory” (2007, 92–93). Language’s use clarifies the need for human practices and the bearing in our socio-political existence. According to Wisniewski “... philosophy robs itself of any bearing on our socio-political existence” (2007, 93). Philosophy is not about all “what is” but also about what can be. “The aim of philosophy, then, is not merely to document what is, but also to highlight what can be” (Wisniewski 2007, 94). Language is a medium of communication and the process of the transference of knowledge. Communication showcases the use of verbal and extra verbal means. Accordingly, Godfrey O. Ozumba believes that “language is the means of communication of knowledge,” including ideas and thoughts (2004, 14). Emotions can also be communicated through language.

Wittgenstein’s conception of language connotes how human beings can use language to reinforce their culture, undergo formation of their personality, appropriate patterns of social relations (society). George Ritzer and Jeffrey Stepnisky state that “engaging in communication and achieving understanding in terms of each of these themes lead to the reproduction of the life world through the reinforcement of culture, the integration of society, and the formation of

personality” (Ritzer, Stepnisky, 2014, 530). Communicative action presupposes knowing. Wittgenstein’s conception of philosophy of language is to guarantee clarity, and it served as a prophylactic against linguistic abuses. “[T]he end of philosophy of language is to ensure clarity, distinctions and cogency in our picture of reality through language” (Ozumba, 2004, 14).

The use of language game clarifies social criticisms, practice and the social order of society. Edmund Igboanusi considers that “one of the major contentions regarding language is that it is the most direct sense making mechanism of human society, which is recognized to harbour political ideology, and is critically endangered in Africa” (Igboanusi, 2012, 1). According to Igboanusi, “one of Wittgenstein achievements is that he insisted that the meaning of human language is its use that is to say, communication” (Igboanusi, 2012, 1). Language is characterized by the Meadian symbolic interactionism’s theory of communication of intention, meaning and socio-political existence or experience. Language is a carrier of culture. Wittgenstein’s conception of language game showcases a simpler form of language than the highly complicated everyday language. Language is a form of which a child begins to make use of words. Accordingly, Richard Velkly postulates that:

“The study of language games is the study of primitive forms of language or primitive languages. If we want to study the problems of truth and falsehood, of the agreement and disagreement of propositions with reality, of the nature of assertion, assumption and question, we shall with great advantage look at primitive forms of language in which these forms of thinking appear without the confusing background of highly complicated processes of thought” (2000, 394).

Velkly observes that these simple forms of language gave us the impetus to see activities, reactions, which are clear, cut and transparent. Richard Velkby rightly observes that our craving for generality is closely connected with philosophical confusions. Language helps us to describe things just as philosophy reflects on the descriptive mode of things in the world. According to Velkly, “[p]hilosophy really is purely descriptive.”

Wittgenstein’s view of what philosophy is, or should be, changed over his life. For Wittgenstein [p]hilosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.” Philosophy is not descriptive but elucidatory. Its aim is to clear up muddle and linguistic confusion. Philosopher’s proper concern is what is possible or rather with what is conceivable. This depends on our concepts and the ways they fit together as seen in language. What is conceivable and what is not, what makes sense and what does not, depended on the rules of language, and the rules of grammar. Ways of life and uses of language change overtime, so meanings change, but not utterly and instantaneously; we lose all grip on meaning. But we cannot escape language or the confusions to which it gives, except by dying.

Meanings are sometimes interpreted as doing. The meaning of any word is a matter of what we do with our language, not something hidden inside anyone's mind or brain. What is essential to a concept depends on us, on how we use it. To Wittgenstein, what matters to you depends on how you live (and vice versa), and this shapes your existential experience. Understanding another person involves empathy which requires the kind of similarity that we just do not have with dogs and with many human beings.

Without sharing certain attitudes towards the things around us, without sharing a sense of relevance and responding in similar ways, communication would be impossible. Moreover, language involves rules establishing certain linguistic practices. Certain things one might want to say about language are ultimately incoherent. So whether two plus two equals four depends not on some abstract, extra-human rule of addition, and depends on our past experience. Truth conditions are replaced by the conditions of validity claims.

According to Wittgenstein, "to solve an ethical problem, one must clarify a misunderstanding one has concerning some specific ethical concepts" (Wisnewski, 2007, 88). Wisnewski, alluding to Kelly's submission, believes that "we must view ethics, in Wittgenstein, as an ultimately personal endeavor" (Wisnewski, 2007, 95). Wittgenstein's philosophy is a global vision that gives rise to linguistic transparency. According to Wisnewski, "Wittgenstein's early and late writing always seemed to have thought of ethics, not as an assortment of disconnected goods, rights, and obligations, but as a global vision which gives meaning to life" (Wisnewski, 2007, 95). Language showcases facts and values; it reflects on the holistic principle. Language should not be seen from a disoriented perspective. Language showcases strong philosophical commitment, normative structure, transparency and complete global re-orientation. It expresses underlying semantic structures of thoughts and ideas. It is an integral part of human existence and makes us humans. The most important function of language is that of communicating. Wittgenstein and Habermas dwell on nature, functions and power of language as it affects the contemporary global order. The primary function of language is intersubjective communication which involves the dissemination of information and exchange of ideas among people. Language provides us aspects of our social identity or some kind of social experiences. That way language serves as the basis for social order.

Language functions as the basis of social or cultural learning processes and is aimed at learning about the world. It has a social structure. Comfort I. Eberinga rightly observes that "the linguistic structure of any society may influence or determine its social structures" (Eberinga, 2013, 504). This means that the linguistic structure of any society aims at the unification of the world. Eberinga asserts that "we can then say that linguistic uniformity is a very vital aspect of the social order of a given society" (2013, 513). For language reflects on the continuous learning process and the survival of every society. Eberinga concludes that "language plays very vital roles in the survival of every given

society” (2013, 513, 510). For her “any society or community that overlooks the power of language in general is bound to crumble because it is not something that can easily be swept under the carpet” (2013, 510). Language is crucial in the philosophical enterprise of the world. It also expresses the deeper concerns of human association (Eberinga, 2013, 510). According to William Lawhead, “... philosophy is an attempt to speak accurately and coherently about our deeper concerns” (Lawhead, 2002, 390). The free analysis of experience reflects on our common form of linguistic usage. Wittgenstein and Habermas attempt to remedy the situation by developing broader notions of both language and experience.

Wittgenstein, Habermas, Edmund Husserl and others depict the role language plays in our intercourse with the world. Lawhead claims that for them “language is just one way in which we break the world up into intelligible units and fashion it after our own image” (Lawhead, 2002, 390).

What we have espoused so far is the values of language, dialogue and communication in effecting moral consciousness. Our contention is that proper understanding of the role of dialogue and communication via language will improve world peace and understanding amongst cultures.

### **3. HERMENEUTIC UNDERSTANDING OF DIALOGUE IN ATTAINING WORLD PEACE**

The concept of horizon suggests the perspective of knowing and the limits of knowing that allow one to be open to what is new. The hermeneutical horizon, as Gadamer fore-grounds, “bespeaks the productively mediated relation between what is distant and near; it enables us to discern both what is close up and what is far away without excluding of these positions.” (Cf. Gadamer, 2004, 10). The concept of horizon meaningfully integrates the subject’s immediate environment and the more distant world at large. Gadamer stresses the open and dynamic nature of horizon. The “fusion of horizon” signified understanding. Misunderstanding can exacerbate the otherness of the other. Gadamer conceives of difference as a means or the basis for transformation which Gadamer terms “fusion of horizon.” The tendency to see difference as impossibility reflects a superficial response and affirms a rigid notion of horizon. From the Gadamerian standpoint, true understanding is anchored on the politics of difference. This is the perspective this paper works on how best to be managed; this means the actual appreciation of the politics of difference. This work in its contribution insists that if the human community understands and applies dialogue and communication in the management of the politics of differences, there will be hope for the attainment of world peace. The challenge in the expansion of our horizon is to be in full control of its ramifications. Fusion refers to active and the on-going process or nature of understanding that is not static but dynamic.

Understanding is a continuous process that is not static or never ending. To defend a mono-culture is akin to positing a single and definite horizon that denies the role of difference. Gadamer's account of horizon emphatically maintains that only where one is open to new horizons emerging- and hence difference- can one claim to understand; difference is only an occasion and not an impediment to understanding.

Furthermore, the conceptual analysis of the fusion of horizon can be deduced from what Iain Mackenzie calls "the canvas of liberal democratic theory." The concept of "fusion of horizon" is concerned with the relation between culture and identity. According to the Mackenzian standpoint, the judgment of worth in multicultural and global politics depends on a "fusion of horizon." Accordingly, Mackenzie believes that "the core to treating this fusion of horizon; is to presume, in the first instance, that every culture is of equal worth" (2009, 112–113). Mackenzie argues from the perspective of Charles Taylor that "we should always begin by assuming that every culture, at least every culture that has stood the test of time, must be thought to contain elements that express fundamental human needs and that world, therefore, enrich our own" (2009, 112–118). According to the Mackenzian standpoint, "to recognize this and to engage with others on the basis of fusing our cultural horizons with theirs is to promote, according to Taylor, a truly liberal dialogue with others that responds to the demands of contemporary identity politics" (ibid.). Mackenzie posits that "the fusion of cultural horizons is just that, a hope, rather than a worked-out political solution to a problem at the heart of liberal democracies" (2009, 112). He concludes that "perhaps Habermas' more thorough-going account of exactly what is at stake in dialogue may suggest an alternative approach, or a complementary one that nonetheless secures Taylor's hope more firmly" (2009, 114–115). The hermeneutic dialogue of Gadamer's fusion of horizon presupposes an ethical and political approach. The challenge that may be facing us is to juxtaposition of morality and politics. Since the times of Machiavelli, there is a divesting of politics from morality but we contend here that human actions cannot be divested of morality. This is because man is a rational being; and as a rational being, he is essentially a moral being. Morality is a function of rationality and *ipso facto* there ought not to be any human activity devoid of moral engagements and consideration.

#### 4. DIALOGUE AS OPENING UP TO THE SYSTEM-LIFE-WORLD

Understanding is a mode in which the common social world opens up to social beings as rational agents. The understanding of the social beings is an unprecedented concern for the other. The philosophy of otherness marks the crux of dialogical philosophy. Understanding our socio-political world is all about the task of rational dialogue and social transformation. To understand our exist-

tential situation in social reality does not mean to define it but to find oneself in an affective attunement, to understand how social beings coexist with others. Broadly speaking, what we call affective attunement is more reasonable, i.e., more perceptive because it is more open to social beings. Society opens up to social beings or political beings. Humanity exists because “being” in general is inseparable from its opening-up, because there are truth claims, or because there is communicative modality and ethical insight into social beings. All non-understanding is only a deficient mode of understanding our socio-political world. The social analysis of our existential condition is thus the normative framework of universal truth of reason, the existential condition of transformative dialogue as the opening up to the system-life world and the indispensability of dialogue to our global world order presupposes normative criteria of our social life world. The disclosed or unconcealed truth reveals the fusion of horizons of universal truth of “Being” in the socio-political world. Man is a holistic being in the world. Man is invariably conscious of the inevitable law of political order, normative assumption, moral order and rational reciprocity. Man is always conscious of the existence of others but fails to obey the laws of this relationship and this is the crux of this issue.

The Habermasian picture of transformative dialogue is basically on human ethical discourse, existential/political position and epistemological significance, that is, on the indispensable aspects of human existence. What makes man what he is is his social consciousness as a political animal, his correlations with others and his being surrounded with other men and objects. Dialogical philosophy reveals man’s existential position since in his correlations with others his cultural identity, personal identity and communicative freedom is realized and guaranteed.

Furthermore, dialogical philosophy perceives communicative freedom as an existentially established social fact by which the nature of man is seen. The indispensability of dialogue presupposes social facts and action as the mastering situation. Consciousness and intention have inextricable nexus in man’s existence and intentions are the essence of man’s existence. Man takes full responsibilities for every facet of his moral consciousness and his rational conducts and emotive communication with others. According to Alexander Mosley, “consciousness generally means being aware of ones surroundings” (2008, 36). Emotions are forms of arrested actions. Man’s idea about his existence as a social being in the socio-political world involves the idea that there may be other free rational agents and conscious beings that can obscure his self-consciousness which defines his existence, freedom and human reality. Habermas’ philosophy is invariably an existential-ethical discourse and legal-political system of human beings. Human consciousness and the idea of the mind are like a machine governed by natural forces, and at the same time admitting their motives and intentions behind man’s conscious behaviour.

Consequently, people in society have learned how to see themselves, like mirrors, as they appear to their neighbours. By implication, the other sees me or

looks at me like a mirror. Our existence becomes meaningless or rudderless without the existence of others. Our existence is threatened by the existence of others. Similarly, our look places him under the same threat to his liberty and the idea of normative structure of the common social world subject us into moral obligation. Habermas' theory of communicative action is a normative core of our practical everyday existence. According to Borradori, "Habermas' normative core of a communicative ethics is the experiential relation of the Self to others" (2008, 60–61). Habermas' linguistic communication is an experiential or intersubjective relation. The Habermasian analysis is a self-reflective understanding of moral reasoning. His communicative ethics anchors on his social theory of intersubjective recognition. Freedom presupposes individualization which "emerges through the realization of Self within a community of Others" (Mackendrick, 2003, 148–149).

Furthermore, individualization is locked within the conventional framework of ego identity. Human rational and cognitive capacity of differentiated behavioural expectations is normative. Accordingly, Mackendrick opines that "the individual is locked into a conventional ego identity" (2003, 149–150). The dialogical encounter is not a call to share our existence, but is rather a direct social system, normative framework linked to an objective experience. We always share our existence on a fundamental, normative background and dialogical, epistemological, existential level by virtue of being there together in a system life world. Although, enfolded into individuality, within the clearing of being's universal truth, the dialogical encounter does not necessarily lead to anything in particular, to specific dialogical commitment in ensuring each other adhere to the act of collective conscience. Dialogue is conscience-oriented and people-oriented. In particular, for the most part it leads to any ethical immediacy or constancy in the sharing of individual existence the possibility of on-going moral responsibility for each other. The dialogical encounter is not merely ethical immediacy but barely lived experience of dynamics interplay of individual communicative freedom and the normative criteria of the social life world. Individual communicative freedom is directly confronted with life relations and rational relations because we as individuals live in the system-life world together. Habermas' philosophy is a cultural homogeneous humanism. It has to do with science, law, politics, arts, technology, philosophy, culture, and aesthetics. For Habermas, we deal with other human beings only in human relations and rational relations. The dialogical encounter is ethical-political and existential; it establishes an intersubjective relationship with others, and in doing so it lays the normative background for human community and its rules. Ethics arises from the interpersonal communicative existential encounter.

Nevertheless, such interpersonal humanity will not be satisfied simply with the observation of moral principles and the recognizability of normative structures of communicative power. The interpersonal human relationship calls for rational persons to take seriously moral responsibility or Darwinian "fundamen-

tal answerability” or “mutual accountability” for other persons and to ensure a concrete world order. Habermas’ notion of moral consciousness has a legitimating force and showcases a normative foundation of communicative rationality and deliberative democracy. Habermas calls on each person to fulfill his duties and thus puts him in an existential position of wide-ranging moral indebtedness to communicative interaction. Indeed, according to Habermas, we as rational human beings must engage in communicative dialogue, and we are in fact responsible for all other persons, each one of us for himself with respect to each other person in the system-life world. There lies the nucleus for the idea of a normative foundation or universal core of global ethics. We must learn to live with one another. The task incumbent on each of us is not only the notion of collectivity, or collective consciousness but the political task of social transformation that calls for international interactions, global interdependence and global intercultural cooperation. What counts is to prevent global war, global terrorism, political violence and human cruelty, in order to open up a normative perspective for global peace, global interpersonal humanity. Habermas’ cultural humanism is a global ethics and the normative foundation for dialogical process. Dialogical philosophy is best encapsulated by the Habermasian picture of cultural humanism, moral rationalism, deliberative democracy, contemporary integrated sociological paradigm, a multi-level analysis of agency-structure relation and rational relation of interpersonal communicative encounter.

Habermas’ political philosophy offers a global vision or has global implications. Political ethics is indeed the ethics of political communication and the philosophy of social relations. In each dialogical encounter, the theory of communicative action showcases purposive rational activity or an emancipatory project. The theory of communicative action in every classification and every political ordering embraces social totality and human sociality. The radicalization of Habermas’ political ethics is evident in his social theory as well as in the very conceptualization of moral consciousness and the deliberative model of human democracy.

Consequently, the monetization of society and the bureaucratization of power are indeed the ideological frameworks or distortion that impede the normative ideal and the rationalization of complex modern society. Modernity has become an endless project. Habermas’ conception of moral consciousness and communicative action presupposes the social fact that human beings are rational animals with superior faculty or cognitive capacity or a normative structure through which they deal with the common social world. This conception seems to sufficiently encompass a matrix of dialogical/reciprocal relationships, an analysis of the ethical, moral and behavioural normative assumptions of the rational agent in our global world order. Habermas’ political ethics reveals the need for rational-problem-solving mechanism, pragmatic, linguistic, hermeneutics, and phenomenological approach that get rid of the specter of pure self-seeking and the normative foundation of society in order to promote peoples’

utility and cultural humanism. It presupposed the complexity of modern society. It is *ipso facto* a radical ethics or cultural rationalism and moral rationalism and social psychology. It is defined within the normative context of dialogic communication, ethical objectivity and practical rationality.

In addition, Habermas' ethics refers to the moral consciousness as a radical response to universal human freedom based on peace, social justice and dialogic communication. As we have mentioned before, Habermas' ethical-existential perspective is the great expression of human solidarity, a network of global cultural interdependence. His ethical philosophy also has an existential-political dimension. The Habermasian picture is a deep thinking of global world order. Habermas regards communicative ethics as likely that the social life world consists of a network of social arrangements, meanings and significance of a social order or social change or social system through which we discover the existential wonders of our socio-political world. Therefore, we appeal to the right to disconnect ourselves from the values of instrumental ethics of the market structure that tries to impose on us instrumental reason. For Habermas, this is not communicative ethics, but it is the monetization of society, bureaucratization of power, interest based ideology or economic and administrative rationalization of society. We also appeal to the organic solidarity of emancipated global society that envisions universal human flourishing, transformative dialogue and communicative freedom. It is a dialogical implication of a planetary ethical interpersonal human relationship around critical social movement based on the phenomenological principle or interpretation, cultural representation and communicative, political action on a global scale. Furthermore, this dialogical reflection, which encompasses the global world order, aims at free and open communication—a field of rational reconstruction, radical openness, deconstruction, ethical-existential encounter and democratic deliberation on the contribution of global ethics to forming the political public sphere. Authentic dialogue is a dialectical sequence of historical progress in an international community of reasonable people. It is a spiritual unity of dialectical sequence and cobweb of network of social connectedness of international relation and international order or global system. The discursive practice of rational relations is the hallmarks of human fraternity or universal brotherhood and it is a philosophical foundation, democratic ideals, rationalization of a global system and humanistic dimension of rethinking of global humanity and human flourishing.

Furthermore, hermeneutics inquires the meaning and significance of understanding of human existence. Gadamer elucidates the historical and linguistic situatedness of human cognition. The practical trajectories of Gadamer's hermeneutics are anchored on his interest in Plato and Aristotle. Gadamer discerns the centrality of dialogue as that which is deeply rooted in human understanding. Dialogue is deeply rooted and committed to the furthering of our common bond with one another. It is all about our radical openness to dialogue with the other that Gadamer saw as the basis for a deeper human solidarity. Gadamer's

hermeneutics elucidates how being made human existence meaningful. Gadamer contends with the limits of human knowing. The radical return to Plato made Gadamer all the more receptive to and excited by Martin Heidegger's thinking. Gadamer follows Plato in insisting on the ontological nature of the Good. The idea of the Good serves as an assumption that made possible all understanding. Cognition is for the sake of acting and for the sake of living the good life. Knowledge stems from and must return to praxis. Gadamer, like Heidegger, insists that hermeneutics is a practical philosophy, deeply rooted in human existence which is not solipsistic but communal. For Gadamer, existence means existing with others, which requires dialogue born out of humility and radical openness. Gadamer affirms that understanding is inseparable from dialogue (2004, 12).

The dialogical openness aims at solidarity and presupposes the fact that each part possesses good will to understand, that is, an openness to hear something anew. Good dialogic encounter requires a willingness to offer reasons and justification for one's views. Dialogue requires humble playfulness in which we get caught up and lose ourselves in the connection with others. Gadamer's *Truth and Method* offers us the foundation of hermeneutics. Gadamer fully realizes the universalizing tendency in the history of hermeneutics and the myriad ways we interact with and seek to connect with others. Gadamer is profoundly critical in his eagerness to conceive of the dialogical impetus of hermeneutics as a possible resource for resolving certain contemporary social and political crises in the human world. He stresses the possibility of how we can interact rationally and dialogically in order to listen to the other and to advance human understanding that values the whole that is (the community) over the part (the individual). The hermeneutic task of integrating is predicated on the communicative consciousness which includes the task of exercising practical social and political reasonableness. The ethics of this hermeneutics is an ethics of respect and trust that calls for universal solidarity. Gadamer concludes that human thinking always requires an acknowledgement of what cannot be fully understood or captured in language and yet language can be understood to function to create our human world and finds meaning to the world. Just like Heidegger, Gadamer believes that language is part of being. Language, as that part of being that can be understood, functions to create our human world so to speak.

## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Dialogue can bring about a change in the idea of global politics. Habermas' conceptual explication of deliberative democracy reflects how global democracy should be understood. Global democracy constitutes the tendency whereby different countries in the world are interdependently connected with one another in their political, educational, social, cultural and economic interests. Global

democracy is a cross border movement of the contemporary ideal political world order. It shows how countries can benefit from one another through social cooperation. The contemporary global politics should focus on the continuous protection of basic human rights, results of climate change, the perpetuation of international peace and international cooperation at the social, economic, cultural and political spheres. The world should be a global village where rational or authentic dialogue prevails by doing away with all forms of prevailing prejudices or ideological biases or pre-conceived ideas facing various nations of the world. Global democracy ought to accept international dialogue and social change. Social change is a significant aspect of the human transformation in contemporary society.

The idea of social change correlates with the notion of globalization and global politics; this is known as Giddian dialogic democracy; although globalization has tactically fueled communicative violence. Accordingly, Borradori believes that “globalization seems to inject fuel into spiraling movement of communicative violence” (2008, 12). Communicative action aims at emancipation. This is what Borradori calls the “delegitimizing the authority of the state” (2008, 12–13).

Our intention in this paper is to enthrone dialogue to a point where it can help in enhancing global peace. This is akin to what Borradori means when she proposes that humans should be called members of a universal and cosmopolitan community. No matter what the limitations of dialogue are, there can never be an alternative to dialogue in improving the relationship between humans in order to attain world peace.

## REFERENCES

- Borradorri, G. 2008. *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogue between Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*. Chicago–London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Eberinga, I. C. 2013. “The Power of Dialogue: Communication and Social Order.” In: *The Kpim of Social Order: A Season of Inquiry, Meaning and Significance in the Modern World*. Obi, D, I. Nwankwor (Eds.). World, USA: Xlibris Corporation, 504.
- Eyisi, J. 2006. *Language: A Foundation for Political Socialization*. In: *Philosophy, Democracy and Globalization*. Odimegwu I et al. (Eds.). Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, 120.
- Ferrante J. 2003. *Sociology: A Global Perspective*, Fifth Edition, USA: Wadsworth and Thomson Learning, 512.
- Gadamer, H. G. 2004. *Truth and Method*. Second Edition. Weinsheimer, Joel, Donald G. Marshall (Trans.). New York: Crossroad, 10–22.
- Habermas, J. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. McCarthy, Thomas (Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press, 122–132.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1970. *Towards a Rational Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, Boston Beacon Press, 80–84.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1975. *Legitimation Crisis*. McCarthy, T. (Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press, 120–134.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1984a. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1: *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*. McCarthy, Thomas (Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press, 5.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1987b. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 2: *Lifeworld and System: A Functionalist Critique of Reason*. McCarthy, Thomas (Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.
- Jary, D., J. Jary (Eds.). 2000. *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers, 59–60.

- Lawhead, W. 2002. *Voyage of Discovery: A Historical Introduction to Philosophy*. Second edition, USA: Wadsworth Group Limited, 390.
- MacKendrick, K. 2003. "Discourse, Desire and Fantasy." In: *Habermas, Critical Theory*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 146–156.
- Mackenzie, I. 2009. *Politics: Key Concepts in Philosophy*, London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 112–152.
- Mosley, A. 2008. *A to Z of Philosophy*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 36–56.
- Ozumba G., 2004. *The Great Philosophers*, vol. 1, Calabar: University of Calabar Press, 14.
- Pearce, W. Barnett, Kimberly A. Pearce. 2003. "Taking a Communication Perspective on Dialogue." In: *Dialogue: Theorizing Difference in Communication Studies*. Anderson, R, L. A. Baxter, K. N. Cissna (Eds.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 39–56.
- Ritzer, G., J. Stepnisky (Eds.). 2014. *Sociological Theory*. Ninth edition. Singapore: McGraw-Hill Higher Education Limited, 473–514.
- Velkly, Richard. 2000. "Ludwig Wittgenstein on the Blue and Brown Books." In: *Philosophy 101, Selections from the Western World's Greatest Thinkers*. Rosen, S. (Ed.). New York Gramercy Books Limited, 394.
- Wisniewski, J. J. 2007. *Wittgenstein and Ethical Inquiry: A Defense of Ethics as Clarification*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 88–94.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

J. Chidozie Chukwuokolo PhD — Department of Philosophy and Religion, Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State.  
E-mail: jerrychidozie@yahoo.com

Victor O. Jeko — PhD, Department of Philosophy University of Benin, Edo State.