

Dialogue: Greek foundations and the thought of Fethullah Gülen and Jürgen Habermas

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Fethullah Gülen, the contemporary Turkish thinker, has consistently articulated a message in which he conjoins the notions of tolerance and dialogue. In this paper, I compare his notion of dialogue with that in ancient Greek thought, particularly, as articulated by Plato. I find that Gülen's concept of dialogue fits well within the Greek philosophical tradition. I then examine his notion of dialogue in light of recent work in speech act theory and Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative rationality. Once again, I find many elements in common, particularly, in the conditions that both Gülen and Habermas lay down in order for dialogue truly to take place. Finally, I argue that Gülen has linked tolerance and dialogue in a new way that provides an important message within a global context that offers an alternative to conflict.

I. Διάλογος

The Turkish word *diyalog* and the English word 'dialogue' as well as its orthographical variant 'dialog' are derived from the ancient Greek noun διάλογος. The word came into English in a typically indirect manner. The Middle English *dialoge* or *dialogue* came from the Old French which in turn came from the Latin *dialogus* that comes directly from the Greek. The standard translations of διάλογος are 'conversation', 'discussion', or 'dialogue' (LSJ 1940, *s.v.* διαλογία). The word is used in this sense in Plato's dialogue *Protagoras* wherein Callias says, οὐχ ὁμοίως ἡμῖν ἔσονται οἱ διάλογοι, "...the discussions will not be the same for us" (335d).¹

In turn, διάλογος is based on the Greek verb διαλέγεσθαι, the present middle infinitive of the verb διαλέγειν. Διαλέγεσθαι, as well as its more familiar first person singular present indicative middle/passive form διαλέγομαι, is a deponent verb, that is, it has a middle or passive form, but it is used in an active sense (Smith 1984, §356c) to mean 'to hold converse with' (LSJ 1940, *s.v.* διαλέγω). An example of this use may be found in Plato's *Theaetetus*. In the dialogue, Socrates says, ἐγρηγόραμέν τε καὶ

ὔπαρ ἀλλήλοισ διαλεγόμεθα, "...both we are awake and we are actually conversing with one another" (158b-c).

Διαλέγεσθαι is a compound word. The verb is compounded out of the preposition διά which is used adverbially and then prefixed to the verb λέγεσθαι.

Originally Greek prepositions were free adverbs that functioned to limit the meaning of a verb (Smith 1984, §1638a). This particular use is in accord with one of the three major uses of the preposition in Greek, that is, prepositions unite

¹ All references to Plato's works are according to the standard Stephanus pagination. All translations from the Greek are mine unless noted otherwise.

with verbs to form compounds (Smith 1984, §1646). The noun διάλογος may appear to violate this rule, however prepositions compound with nouns as well as other prepositions. Λέγεσθαι is a reciprocal middle voice verb. Reciprocal middles are often compounded with διά (Smith 1984, §1726). Such middles are called reciprocal because the action of the verb involves the interaction of two agents not just the action of a single agent. Thus, the notion of ‘conversing’ that is the essence of the verb διαλέγεσθαι involves the notions of ‘questioning’ and ‘replying’ as well. These are the actions of two agents interacting. Implied in this reciprocal relationship is the equal participation of the involved agents. They are mutually questioning and replying to one another. One agent is not necessarily dominating the other and “hogging” the conversation so to speak. Furthermore, the preposition διά in composition means among others ‘through’ (Smith 1984, §1685.3). Thus, when compounded with λέγεσθαι, διαλέγεσθαι may be interpreted to mean ‘to talk through’, for example, an issue or subject. So, διάλογος may be semantically interpreted as ‘a talking through’.

I now propose to examine one instance in which we may see how the greatest ancient master of this genre constructs a dialogue. Before proceeding, however, it remains for me to clear away one obstacle to our understanding of διάλογος. Διάλογος is related to other words derived from the root λεγ-, for example, the adjective διαλεκτικός and the noun διάλεκτος. Although this particular form of the root ends in the voiced palatal mute gamma (γ), the related unvoiced palatal mute kappa (κ) may occur as well (Smith 1984, §22). A similar flexibility is to be found in the vowels, for example, λόγος is the verbal noun of λέγω where omicron (ο) occurs in place of epsilon (ε) (LSJ 1940, s.v. λόγος). The noun διάλεκτος like διάλογος means ‘discourse’ or ‘conversation’, but it also means ‘debate’ or ‘argument’ (LSJ 1940, s.v. διαλεκτέον). We see the noun διάλεκτος used in the sense of ‘conversation’ in Plato’s *Symposium*, ...ἡ διάλεκτος θεοῖς πρὸς ἀνθρώπους..or “...the conversation suitable to men with the gods...” (203a). However, Plato’s *Theaetetus* shows a different usage. Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ αἰθήης τῆς τοιαύτης διαλέτου...or “for I am unaccustomed to such debate...” (146b). In this passage, διάλεκτος should not be confused with διάλογος. They are not the same. Διάλογος does not logically entail debate. In other words, two people may engage in a conversation without debating.

Matters become even more complicated when we turn to the adjective διαλεκτικός. This is because Plato uses this adjective in a technical sense. The phrase ἡ διαλεκτικὴ τέχνη means “the dialectical art” or simply ἡ διαλεκτικὴ which means ‘dialectic’. Aristotle attributes the invention of dialectic to Zeno the Eleatic (D.L. 1925, IX, 25). However, Plato refined dialectic into a high philosophical method. His views on this method changed over time. Apparently, Zeno’s view of dialectic was as a species of verbal polemic that Plato denominated ἡ ἐριστικὴ τέχνη or ‘the eristic art’ or, simply, ‘eristic’, that is ‘disputation’. For example, in the *Sophist*, Plato has Socrates describe the sophist as τῆς γὰρ ἀγωνιστικῆς περὶ λόγους ἦν τις αθλητής, τὴν ἐριστικὴν τεχνὴν ἀφορισμένος or “for he was a certain sort of athlete fit for contesting about words, who had marked off for himself the disputatious art” (231e). There is no question that dialectic developed from dialogue for Plato asks this question in the *Cratylus*, Τὸν δὲ ἐρωτᾶν καὶ ἀποκρίνεσθαι ἐπιστάμενον ἄλλο τι σὺ καλεῖς ἢ διαλεκτικόν; or “And do you call he who knows how to ask and answer any other than a dialectician?” (390c). However, he moved beyond this conception in his later works.

In the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*, Plato suggests that the dialectical method is the means by which the highest level of vision that one may achieve of reality (*Republic* 511c). All other levels of cognition are subsumed under it. However,

in the *Phaedrus* 265c-266b, Plato introduces dialectic as a method that consists of two procedures. These procedures are συναγωγή or ‘collecting’ and διαίρεσις or ‘dividing’. Collecting seems to be the process by which a variety of things are brought together under a single genus. Dividing is the process by which those things which have been gathered together are then formally divided into species and sub-species. So at *Phaedrus* 266b, Plato has Socrates say, Τούτων δὴ ἔγωγε αὐτός τε ἐραστής, ὦ Φαῖδρε, τῶν διαίρέσεων καὶ συναγωγῶν..., “Indeed, Phaedrus, I myself am a lover of these things, of divisions and of collections”. However Plato may have conceived dialectic during his philosophical career and, broadly conceived, it involved a number of different techniques or methods, as we shall see. It would be a mistake to confuse his technical use of the term ‘dialectic’ with its more common meaning of ‘conversation’, ‘discussion’, or ‘dialogue’.

Let me illustrate this by using a portion of one his dialogues. In this dialogue, as in the others, Plato uses the genre of dialogue as a means by which to exercise his dialectical method. In this case, I turn to his dialogue *Gorgias*. This dialogue actually consists of three dialogues with three different individuals—Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. I am particularly interested in his dialogue with Gorgias because of the way in which he treats Gorgias.² Gorgias is a well-known contemporary of Socrates. He was a famous rhetor or orator and teacher of rhetoric. He was also greatly respected in the Greek world. Gorgias was a native of the Greek colony Leontini in Sicily, and he was a member of an embassy sent to Athens in 427 B.C.E. At the time this purported dialogue took place, Gorgias would have been about fifty-eight years of age and Socrates about forty-two. Very early in the dialogue, Socrates invites Gorgias to engage in dialogue with him. The clear implication of the invitation is to use the dialectical method during the course of the conversation. Socrates says, “Well now, Gorgias, would you be willing to complete the discussion in the way we’re having it right now, that of alternately asking questions and answering them, and to put aside for another time this long style of speechmaking...” (Plato 1987, 449b). Gorgias then accepts Socrates invitation and the conditions under which the conversation is to be conducted.

Socrates begins by asking Gorgias whether oratory is a kind of knowledge (449d). This technique of definition was one of the modes of Plato’s broadly dialectical method (Robinson 1953, 49-60). Gorgias responds briefly by answering that oratory is knowledge περὶ λόγους, “about speeches” (449d). Socrates then responds by asking about the sort of speeches of which oratory is knowledge (449e). As an example, he proposes speeches about the means of helping the ill get well. Gorgias, of course, responds that it is not this kind of knowledge. The point of the discussion is that Socrates is attempting to point out to Gorgias that his initial definition is too broad or inclusive, and for this reason it fails as a definition of the kind of knowledge that oratory may be. So, within the dialogue genre, Plato has Socrates use yet another method of dialectic called elenchus or refutation. This method is also called exetasis or scrutiny and basanismus or assay (Robinson 1953, 7). Again, I want to emphasize that these broadly dialectical techniques are not essential to the dialogue as a form of human verbal interaction.

There are, however, other things going on in this dialogue. At one point in the dialogue, Socrates says, “You should know that I’m convinced I’m one of those people who in a discussion with someone else really wants to have knowledge of the subject the discussion’s about. And I consider you one of them, too” (Plato 1987, 453b). Although, it is very likely that there is some irony here in Socrates’ words, the intent is to place Gorgias on an equal footing with

² I am fully aware that Plato does not always have Socrates treat his other interlocutors in other dialogues as well as Socrates treats Gorgias in the *Gorgias*.

Socrates in the discussion. Shortly afterwards, Socrates announces, “It’s not you I’m after, it’s our discussion, to have it proceed in such a way as to make the thing we’re talking about most clear to us. Consider, then whether you think I’m being fair in resuming my questions to you” (Plato 1987, 453c). In this passage, Socrates is demonstrating consideration for his interlocutor. First, he makes it clear that it is the subject matter of the discussion that is important and not the persons involved in the discussion. Second, Socrates makes it explicit that the aim of the discussion is to get clear about that subject matter. Third, Socrates, in effect, invites Gorgias to continue the discussion. And, finally, fourth, Socrates announces that the discussion will proceed by his continuing to ask questions. Note also the emphasis that Socrates places on the fairness of the method of discussion. This discussion is not one in which the interlocutors take advantage of each other, but they are to proceed in a fair manner. A bit further on in the dialogue, Socrates asks, “Or don’t you think it’s right to repeat that question” (Plato 1987, 454a)? Again, Plato has Socrates show consideration for Gorgias. Gorgias is afforded the opportunity to object if he should think that a question is inappropriate.

Shortly thereafter, Socrates once again alludes to his manner of conducting the discussion:

But so you won’t be surprised if in a moment I ask you again another question like this, about what seems to be clear, and yet I go on with my questioning—as I say, I’m asking questions so that we can conduct an orderly discussion. It’s not you I’m after; it’s to prevent our getting in the habit of second-guessing and snatching each other’s statements away ahead of time. It’s to allow you to work out your assumption in any way you want to (Plato 1987, 454b-c).

Although he continues to press Gorgias in this passage, Socrates phrases it in a courteous manner. Socrates also explicitly states that he wants Gorgias to work out the implications of his assumption (ὑπόθεσις) in his own way. This is a type of forbearance or tolerance (ἀνοχή).

Later in the dialogue, Socrates goes into even more detail about the nature of discussions or dialogues (457c-458b). Socrates notes that both he and Gorgias have observed many discussions (πολλοὶ λόγοι). He observes that it is difficult for a discussion to end satisfactorily with both participants satisfied with the results. Often discussions end with the parties becoming angry with each other because of a variety of problems such as lack of clarity or simply a desire to win the discussion. Socrates does not want this discussion the end in such a manner. Socrates asserts,

So, I’m afraid to pursue my examination of you, for fear that you should take me to be speaking with eagerness to win against you, rather than to have our subject become clear. For my part, I’d be pleased to continue questioning you if you’re the same kind of man I am, otherwise I would drop it. And what kind of man am I? One of those who would be pleased to be refuted if I say anything untrue, and who would be pleased to refute anyone who says anything untrue; one who, however, wouldn’t be any less pleased to be refuted than to refute. For I count being refuted a greater good, insofar as it is a greater good for oneself to be delivered from the worst thing there is than to deliver someone else from it. ...So if you say you’re this kind of man, too, let’s continue the discussion; but if you think we should drop it, let’s be done with it and break it off (Plato 1987, 457e-458b).

Gorgias agrees to continue the discussion. Again, there are several points to note in this speech of Socrates. Socrates rejects the notion that the purpose of a discussion or dialogue is for one of the participants to win. Socrates explicitly states that purpose of a dialogue is ζητοῦντας τὸ προκείμενον ἐν τῷ λόγῳ, “investigating the subject in the discussion” (457d). Socrates also sees that the discussion is one between equals insofar as the discussants both aim in this case at the truth. Furthermore, Socrates indicates that Gorgias or anyone else is welcome to bring forward objections to anything that he might assert if the objector can give reasons for the objection. Although truth is Socrates’ specific aim, there is no reason that the aim could be different, for example, mutual understanding. As a matter of fact, Socrates and Gorgias never finish their dialogue because their discussion is impetuously interrupted by Polus.

So, we may sum up at this point the findings of our investigation of διάλογος. A dialogue is reciprocal discourse in which two or more individuals ask questions and reply to those questions about a topic or subject. The participants do not aim at winning the discussion or argument, but rather they aim to get clear on the subject matter of the discussion. Furthermore, the participants are roughly equal participants in the discussion and treat each other courteously. In addition, any participant is welcome to dispute any claim made by one of the other participants. It is not the aim of any of the participants to dominate the other. Also, the participants practice forbearance or tolerance of each other. While many of the early dialogues result in ἀπορία or ‘difficulties’, it is clear that Plato’s expectation is that the dialectical method properly utilized in a dialogue will result in the attainment of truth and the truth will produce a consensus among the participants. It also seems clear that such a consensus is not a necessary result of dialogue.

II. Language, Use, Speech Act Theory, and Communicative Rationality

Ludwig Wittgenstein pointed out that “for a *large* class of cases—though not for all—in which we employ the word “meaning” it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language” (1958, §43). This applies not only to words but also to larger swatches of discourse. Thus, Wittgenstein came up with the notion of “language games” (1958, §7). He also observes that we use language in games and writes, “I shall also call the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven, the ‘language-game’” (Wittgenstein 1958, §7). He also asks,

...[H]ow many kinds of sentence are there? Say assertion, question, and command?—There are *countless* kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call “symbols”, “words”, “sentences”. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten (Wittgenstein 1958, §23).

He continues, “Here the term ‘language-game’ is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life” (Wittgenstein 1958, §23). Wittgenstein gives as examples of languages games the following:

giving orders, and obeying them, describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements, constructing an object from a description (a drawing), reporting an event,

speculating about an event, forming and testing a hypothesis, presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams, making up a story; and reading it, play acting, singing catches, guessing riddles, making a joke; telling it, solving a problem in practical arithmetic, translating from one language into another, asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, [and] praying (1958, §23).

Given this multifarious list of language usages, it appears that we would be justified in adding engaging in dialogue to the list. However, Wittgenstein, to my knowledge, never lists dialogue as an example of a language game.

Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* was published posthumously in 1953. J. L. Austin's *How to do Things with Words* was also published posthumously, however, in 1962. Austin's book is based on the William James Lectures that he delivered at Harvard University in 1955. Austin tells us that he first formulated his views on this subject in 1939 (1975, v-vi). In this justly famous work, Austin formulated his speech act theory. This theory was further elaborated by his student John R. Searle. Although Wittgenstein tied language and action together, his views seem to have had little influence on Austin's work (Grayling 1988, 114). This is somewhat surprising because speech act theory is a theory of language use and falls within the scope of the discipline of pragmatics. Given that Wittgenstein ties meaning to use, he appears to be connecting semantics, or theory of meaning, to pragmatics, the theory of language use. For the moment, let me give a brief sketch of Austin's theory.

Austin assumes a distinction between linguistic meaning (semantics) and speaker meaning (pragmatics). That is to say that words and their colligations, despite the fact that their meanings are the result of convention, have meanings independent of any particular speaker. However, a speaker may use those words in a variety of ways. Speech act theory studies the nature of communicative intentions "and how they are expressed and recognized" (Audi 1995, 758). Thus, "speech acts are a species of intentional action" (Audi 1995, 758). When someone expresses a statement such as "The cat is out" one, in fact, is performing three acts. First, there is the phonetic act of making sounds or phones. Second, there is the "phatic" act of making a grammatical sentence or "pheme". Third and finally, the "rhetic" act of making a meaningful expression or "rheme" (Austin 1975, 92-93). These three taken together constitute a "locutionary" act. The locutionary act is simply the act of expressing a statement. In performing a locutionary act, the speaker also typically performs an "illocutionary" act. The difference between a locutionary act and an illocutionary act is the difference between the "performance of an act *in* saying something as opposed to performance of an act *of* saying something" (Austin 1975, 99-100). The locutionary act is the act of saying something. The illocutionary act is the act in saying something. For example, in a logic class, I may make the statement "The cat is out", a locutionary act, in order to illustrate what I mean by a simple statement in sentential calculus—an illocutionary act. I may say the same statement to express my belief that the cat is indeed out. The locutionary act is the same, but the two illocutionary acts are quite different. Austin claims, "To perform a locutionary act is in general, we may say, also and *eo ipso* [by that itself] to perform an illocutionary act..." (1975, 98). He gives the following as examples of illocutionary acts: "asking or answering a question, giving some information or an assurance or a warning, announcing a verdict or an intention, pronouncing sentence, making an appointment or an appeal or a criticism, making an identification or giving a description, and numerous like" (Austin 1975, 98-99). Austin also identifies a third type of speech act. He observes that "saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them..." (Austin 1975, 101). To produce such effects is to perform a "perlocutionary" act. So, for example, when I say "The cat is out" in a certain tone in a particular set of circumstances to another person, then I

may be performing the illocutionary act of requesting of that person that she let the cat in. By making the statement, I may get the person to accede to my request. This is the perlocutionary act.

Austin was particularly interested in illocutionary acts. Initially, he divided utterances into those that are “constative” and those that are “performative”. A constative utterance is one that is usually called true or false. The way in which logicians use the term ‘statement’ is roughly equivalent to Austin’s constative. However, there are other utterances that have the form of a declarative sentence, much like constatives, but of which it does not make much sense to say that they are true or false. Thus, if person A says, “I promise to meet you at three this afternoon”, person A has not said something that is either true or false. In saying what he said, person A is, in fact, making a promise. Person A has performed a speech act, and a speech act such as this Austin denominated a performative. Here, it is important to distinguish between sentence

1. Person A said, “I promise to meet you at three this afternoon”

and sentence

2. I promise to meet you at three this afternoon.

Sentence 1 is a constative. Either it is true that person A uttered that sentence or it is false that person A uttered that sentence. In the uttering of sentence 2, person A made a promise. Either she keeps her promise or she fails to keep her promise. However, it seemed to Austin that constatives collapse into performatives. For example, the sentence “The cat is out” may be an observational sentence in which case it is either true or false. But more often than not the same sentence may be a request to let the cat in, or a warning about possible dangers to the cat in its being out, or something else of a similar sort. This led Austin to develop a new tentative classification of the illocutionary “forces” of utterances.

Let me briefly outline this classification. The five classes are: (1) “verdictives”, (2) “exercitives”, (3) “commissives”, (4) “behabitives”, and (5) “expositives”. Verdictive utterances are those which give “a finding as to something—fact, or value—which is for different reasons hard to be certain about” (Austin 1975, 151). Examples of verdictive utterances are those that have the force of acquitting, convicting, reckoning, grading, measuring, etc. (Austin, 153). Exercitives are those utterances that have the force of “exercising powers, rights, or influence” (Austin, 151). “Examples are appointing, voting, ordering, urging, advising, warning, &c.” (Austin, 151). Commissives are those utterances which commit the speaker to doing something, for example, promising, contracting, guaranteeing, vowing, agreeing, etc. (Austin, 157-58). Behabitives “are a very miscellaneous group, and have to do with attitudes and *social behavior*. Examples are apologizing, congratulating, commending, condoling, cursing, and challenging” (Austin, 152). Expositives “...make plain how our utterances fit into the course of an argument or conversation....” (Austin, 152). Austin further expands his characterization of expositives by asserting that they “are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references” (Austin, 161). Examples of expositives are affirming, denying, stating, describing, informing, answering, reporting, agreeing, objecting, correcting, defining, and many others (Austin, 162-63).

Now I have not done justice to Austin's rich exposition of his classification, but even he states, "...But I am far from equally happy about all of them [the classes of illocutionary force]" (Austin 1975, 151). Later investigators have reworked his classification in various ways. For example, Austin's student John Searle gives a different classification of illocutionary acts (1969, 66-67). Virtually all subsequent speech act theorists and users of speech act theory have retained the constative-performative distinction despite Austin's own criticism of it. Furthermore, these same groups have dropped Austin's rebarbative neologisms as names of his classes of illocutionary forces. One of the more interesting utilizations of speech act theory has been made by Jürgen Habermas. Habermas is one of the few contemporary continental philosophers who have crossed the legendary divide between continental philosophy and analytic philosophy. What I find particularly relevant here is his theory of communicative rationality.

Habermas developed his theory of communicative rationality largely in response to Max Weber's concept of rationalization. In Weberian rationalization, rationality is reduced to a tool utilized to achieve ends which are not chosen on rational grounds (Weber 2002, 26-28). The ends or goals of human activity are grounded in material needs, desires, religion, or other non-rational sub-strata. Thus, reason is solely instrumental. Curiously, no one in the continental tradition seems to have noticed that David Hume had already reduced reason to pure instrumentality long before Weber. Hume famously writes, "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them" (Hume 2000, 266). He then proceeds to back up his claim with a powerful set of arguments. Whatever the case, Habermas' predecessors at the Institute for Social Research, also known as the Frankfurt School, exploited Weber's conception of reason in their essay "Critique of Enlightenment". Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno eventually concluded that all reason or rationality is instrumental (2001, 3-5). They each found an escape from the dominion of instrumental reason in religion for Horkheimer and in art for Adorno (Gorner 2000, 160-61). Habermas found neither escape route appealing, and he was not willing to give up on reason or the Enlightenment. He thought that there was a rational way out of the dilemma concerning reason. However, this escape route required a different approach to philosophizing. Since Kant, continental philosophy had been dominated by the philosophy of consciousness. Habermas believed that the new approach was to be found in the philosophy of language, particularly in speech act theory (Habermas 1987, 296-97). Here arose Habermas' notion of communicative rationality. Let me now give a brief sketch of that theory.

Of course, it is impossible to go into detail concerning Habermas' complete theory. Habermas began with a systematic critique of Weberian rationalization and the notion of reason as solely instrumental (1984). He then moved on to an exposition of his own position. All I can do here is to point to aspects of his theory that I believe to be relevant to this topic. Habermas articulates his notion of communicative reason against the background of the *Lebenswelt* or lifeworld. The notion of the lifeworld comes from Edmond Husserl through Hans-Georg Gadamer. However, Habermas modifies it somewhat. He characterizes the lifeworld as a "culturally transmitted and linguistically organized stock of interpretive patterns" (Habermas 1987a, 124). Habermas continues, "The life world is so to speak the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims that their utterances fit the world (objective, social, or subjective) and where they can criticize and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements, and arrive at agreements" (1987a, 126). Observe that the lifeworld consists of three worlds: (1) the objective, (2) the social, and (3) the subjective. Here Habermas is using "transcendental" in the Kantian sense of the lifeworld being the condition of the possibility of making speech acts. This point is emphasized in his later work where he claims, "...The lifeworld reproduces itself to the extent that these three functions, which transcend the perspectives of the actors, are fulfilled: the propagation of cultural traditions, the integration of groups by norms and values, and the

socialization of succeeding generations. But what comes into view in this manner are the properties of communicatively structured lifeworlds in general” (Habermas 1987b, 299). He claims,

In performing or understanding a speech act participants are very much moving within their language, so that they cannot bring a present utterance *before themselves* as ‘something intersubjective’, in the way they experience an event as something objective, encounter a pattern of behavior as something normative, experience or ascribe a desire or feeling as something subjective (Habermas 1987b, 125).

Against the background of the lifeworld that is the very possibility for speech acts to occur, “The clarification, in terms of speech-act theory, of the complex linguistic functions of representation, the establishment of interpersonal relationships, and the expression of one’s own subjective experiences has far-reaching consequences for (a) the theory of meaning, (b) the ontological presuppositions of the theory of communication, and (c) the concept of rationality itself” (Habermas 1987b 312). I am particularly interested in rationality here. Habermas claims, “‘Rationality’ refers in the first instance to the disposition of speaking and acting subjects to acquire and use fallible knowledge” (1987b, 314). He continues,

...As soon as we conceive of knowledge as communicatively mediated, rationality is assessed in terms of the capacity of responsible participants in interaction to orient themselves in relation to validity claims geared to intersubjective recognition. Communicative reason finds its criteria in the argumentative procedures for directly or indirectly redeeming claims to propositional truth, normative rightness, subjective truthfulness, and aesthetic harmony (Habermas 1987b, 314).

Habermas notes, “This communicative rationality recalls older ideas of logos, inasmuch as it brings along with it connotations of a noncoercively unifying, consensus-building force of a discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively biased views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement. Communicative reason is expressed in a decentered understanding of the world” (1987b, 315). What Habermas has done is build a new conception of reason by applying speech act theory to human discourse. Speech act theory brings to the foreground the multitude of functions expressible in linguistic utterances, particularly as humans interact. Communicative rationality emerges in the process of human discourse and it is measured against the background of an “ideal speech situation” (Gorner 2000, 184). In the ideal speech situation three conditions must be met. First, every claim made by a participant in the discussion would be open to dispute. Second, each participant in the discussion would have the same rights to bring forward reasons in support of a claim or reasons which would undermine a claim. Third, the discussion would be free from domination or distortion from whatever source (Gorner 2000, 184). Habermas’ view of the ideal speech situation and communicative rationality bears a marked resemblance to Plato’s conception of dialogue, a fact that Habermas himself notes. Let us now turn to our main topic.

III. Fethullah Gülen: Tolerance and Dialogue

Fethullah Gülen sums up some of his central ideas when he writes, “Throughout the four corners of the world, people of truth and love...are carrying messages of love, tolerance and dialogue with everyone”(2004, 174). These three concepts, love, tolerance, and dialogue, show up again and again throughout Gülen’s writings, speeches, sermons, and interviews. What I would like to do is to examine particularly the concepts of tolerance and dialogue within the context of Gülen’s thought. I will concentrate particularly on the concepts of tolerance and dialogue because it is these ideas that personally attracted me to his thought. Although it is obvious I will relate these concepts to the Western tradition, you must understand that Gülen grounds these notions firmly within his own deep commitment to and knowledge of his faith tradition of Islam. However, let me begin in reverse order starting with dialogue.

Gülen writes, “Dialogue means two or more people coming together to talk and meet on certain subjects and, by means of this, to draw closer together to one another” (2004, 171). He amplifies this by stating, “The ways to explain things to people without making them hostile and frightened should be sought. For this reason, at whatever cost, the road to dialogue with people must be kept open” (Gülen, 2004, 140). Gülen also recognizes that dialogue and tolerance are interrelated concepts. Dialogue is only possible if one is willing to be tolerant about what may be said. This does not mean that the parties to the dialogue need agree. Gülen states, “Tolerance does not mean being influenced by others and joining them; it means accepting others as they are and knowing how to get along with them” (2004, 157). He reemphasizes this point when he writes, “Being tolerant does not mean foregoing our traditions coming from our religion, our nation or our history, because tolerance is something that has existed since olden times” (Gülen, 2004, 158). The alternative to dialogue and tolerance is unpleasant. Each person, community, and nation is faced with a genuine moral dilemma between dialogue and tolerance and their alternatives. Gülen states this dilemma clearly when he writes, “People with different ideas and thoughts are either going to seek ways of getting along by means of reconciliation or they will constantly fight with one another” (Gülen, 2004, 157).

The responsibility for being tolerant and engaging in dialogue is not just the personal responsibility of the individual. Gülen notes, “At a time when the world has become like a big village and at a point when our society is on the verge of great change and transformation, if we are talking about dialogue with other nations...[then] tolerance is a matter that needs to be rewarded and for this reason it must permeate all society” (2004, 157). Thus, “universities should breathe it, politicians should frequently talk about it, people in the music world should write lyrics about it and the media should give support to positive developments on this subject” (Gülen, 2004, 157). Gülen also observes, “In countries programmed for corruption, intolerance, and mercilessness, such things as freedom of thought, polite criticism and exchange of ideas according to norms of equity and fair-minded debate, it would be meaningless to speak of products of logic and inspiration” (2004, 37). It is obvious here that Gülen is upholding the values of tolerance and dialogue. Furthermore, he maintains that dialogue itself is a logical process because it is only meaningful to speak of the products of logic out of this process.

As I noted before, Gülen bases his notions on Scripture. He writes, “The Qur’an is the source of leniency and tolerance, and because these concepts have flowed to us like an exuberant stream from the Conveyor of the Qur’an, upon him be peace and blessings, we cannot think any differently on this matter” (Gülen 2004, 155). He continues, “From this perspective, because tolerance derives from the Qur’an and the Sunnah, it is a Muslim’s natural virtue and, because of the sources it derives from, it is permanent” (Gülen 2004,155). Now as I reflect on the religious foundation

of Gülen's ideas and the fact they solidified in his mind in reaction to the stresses that he observed in his own society, I cannot help but be reminded of the fact that John Locke's first *Letter Concerning Toleration* arose in not too dissimilar a situation. Locke was all too familiar with the terrible conflicts that had beset the Christian West after the Reformation. He also found that toleration was an alternative to those conflicts. He too grounds his notion in his own religion. Locke states, "...I esteem that toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true church" (Locke 1955, 13). The fact that two men so far apart in space, time, and religion could arrive at roughly similar conclusions gives me great hope for the future of their ideas.

Gülen writes, "The Qur'an urges peace, order, and accord. It aims at universal peace and order, and opposes conflicts and dissensions. It is interesting that the Qur'an calls actions acceptable to God 'sound actions to bring peace and order'" (2004, 214). This raises the question about the relation between peace and the key notions of tolerance and dialogue. Well, all too often in human history, dialogue has only begun after people have exhausted themselves in war and conflict. Gülen calls for us to begin with tolerance and dialogue because in such an atmosphere peace follows of its own accord. In fact, Gülen envisions a world and a new civilization growing towards global tolerance. He writes that, "Instead of a world kneaded with malice and hatred, a surprising world shaped in a climate of love, tolerance and forbearance will appear before us" (Gülen 2004, 194).

As can be seen from Gülen's characterization of dialogue, his conception of dialogue differs in only one important respect from those of Plato's and Habermas'. While both Plato and Habermas hold that consensus is the ideal product of dialogue, Gülen explicitly denies this. The only consensus Gülen implicitly calls for is mutual tolerance, that is, that we agree to be tolerant of each other's views and values. In that tolerance, we need neither agree to the views of others nor accept the values of others. What he does call for is for each of us to understand the other as he or she is as a result of dialogue.

IV. Conclusion: A Problem and a Solution

Fethullah Gülen is one of the few thinkers to link explicitly toleration and dialogue. Toleration has long been a topic of exploration for Western religious, philosophical, and political thinkers. We need but think of Richard Hooker, Benedict Spinoza, John Locke, François-Marie Voltaire, John Stuart Mill, and many others who have addressed the issue of toleration. But none of them tie the two notions of tolerance and dialogue together as closely as does Gülen. As we have seen, even Plato only implies that something like toleration should be a condition of dialogue; he never makes it explicit. Toleration calls for people with fundamentally different beliefs and values to coexist peacefully with each other. The main philosophical issue attached to the idea of toleration is how that principle can be reconciled with genuine moral and religious convictions that are significantly different. Of course, history teaches us that those different convictions need not be very significant, at least, from a longer perspective. But even if one is tolerant why should that person engage in dialogue with those of whom she is tolerant. In other words, what is the link between toleration and dialogue?

This problem is compounded once we realize a further dimension to the issue. The nouns 'toleration' and 'dialogue' have corresponding verb forms, 'to tolerate' and 'to dialogue'. Furthermore, both verbs have illocutionary force. If we

classify them according to Austin's system, we get the following results. 'To tolerate' has commissive force. Austin writes, "The whole point of a commissive is to commit the speaker to a certain course of action" (1975, 157). To tolerate others is, quite bluntly, to commit oneself to put up with others who differ from us in such matters as beliefs and values. 'To dialogue' has expositive force. Austin asserts, "Expositives are used in acts of exposition involving the expounding of views, the conducting of arguments, and the clarifying of usages and of references" (1975, 161). These are all illocutionary acts among a group of such acts that may occur during a dialogue. The two verbs thus reflect different illocutionary acts that are not necessarily linked to one another.

However, Gülen does provide us a link between the two notions. Out of his own experience of tolerance and dialogue, Gülen observes,

...I have had the opportunity to speak with and get to know many people from different segments of society. The most important observation I have personally made from these dialogues is how closed we are to our own society. Many times when I encountered someone who did not think as I did, I thought unpleasant things would ensue. But it is interesting that in hardly any group did I see a sour face. We were able to draw close to one another quite comfortably, and everyone who thought they were very different from each other actually warmed easily to one another. In fact, when embracing one another, everyone's eyes were full of tears. There was no feigned flattery here (2004, 81).

This passage indicates that Gülen finds the link between tolerance and dialogue in our shared humanity. He writes, "Remaining respectful to others' thoughts and feelings because 'they are human', we must accept all people in their own special circumstances and with their thoughts" (Gülen 2004, 83). Furthermore, Gülen grounds this shared humanity in Islam. He notes, "God created humanity as noble, and everyone shares in this nobility to a certain degree. His messenger once stood up out of respect for humanity as the funeral procession of a Jew passed by. When reminded that the deceased was a Jew, the Prophet replied: 'But he's a human being', thereby showing the value Islam gives to human beings" (Gülen 2004, 65).

Gülen's message of tolerance and dialogue originally started as a response to certain specific tensions within Turkish society. The notions that he developed of both tolerance and dialogue fit well within the traditions of ancient Greek thought as well as more recent developments in the application of speech act theory and the conception of communicative rationality. By linking these notions as he does, Gülen supplies a unity of the two notions that has application on a global level.

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