

# Dialogue between agnosticism and the universe of faiths: the case of empathy

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## Abstract

The article discusses the possibility of dialogue between two worldviews considered as antithetical and mutually exclusive, but that can be seen as separate and complementary: Agnosticism and religion. Therefore, it introduces the concept of *empathy*, a condition considered necessary for dialogue between subjectivities that want to relate and understood as intellectual and emotional competence to understand *others* and their experience, regardless the fact that I really cannot relive an experience experienced by another person. The empathic dialogue, whose meaning and history we try to draw from the conceptual analysis and its contextualization within the Humanities, also seems to be the condition of possibility for the construction of a complex meta-perspective, able to overcome arguably an alleged antithesis between religion and agnosticism, which must be dialectically overcome for the sake of survival of the actors dialogue.

**Keyword:** Secularism. Empathy. Religion.

## Resumo

### Diálogo entre o agnosticismo e o universo das religiões: o caso da *empatia*

O artigo problematiza a possibilidade de diálogo entre duas cosmovisões consideradas antitéticas e excluídas, mas que podem ser vistas como separadas e complementares: o agnosticismo e a religião. Para tanto, introduz o conceito de *empatia*, condição considerada necessária para o diálogo entre subjetividades que queiram se relacionar e que é entendida como competência intelectual e emocional para compreender outrem e sua vivência, independentemente do fato do *eu* não poder reviver realmente a experiência vivenciada pelo *outro*. O diálogo empático, cujo sentido e história tentamos delinear a partir da análise conceitual e de sua contextualização no âmbito das ciências humanas, parece ser também a condição de possibilidade para a construção de um meta-ponto de vista complexo, capaz de ultrapassar, de modo argumentativo, uma suposta antítese entre agnosticismo e religião, em prol da própria sobrevivência dos atores do diálogo.

**Palavras-chave:** Secularismo. Empatia. Religião.

## Resumen

### El diálogo entre el agnosticismo y el universo de las religiones: el caso de la *empatía*

El artículo discute la posibilidad de diálogo entre dos visiones del mundo que se consideran antitéticas y excluyentes, pero que pueden ser vistas como independientes y complementarias: el agnosticismo y la religión. Para tanto introduce el concepto de *empatía*, que se considera condición necesaria para el diálogo entre las subjetividades que quieren relacionarse y entendida como capacidad intelectual y emocional para comprender a los otros y su experiencia, sin importar el hecho de que el *Yo* no puede vivir realmente la experiencia que pasado el *otro*. El diálogo empático, cuyo sentido y la historia se intenta dibujar a partir del análisis conceptual y su contextualización en el ámbito de las Humanidades, también parece ser la condición de posibilidad para la construcción de una meta-perspectiva compleja, capaz de superar argumentativamente un supuesto antítesis entre la religión y el agnosticismo, que debe ser superada dialécticamente por el bien de la supervivencia de los actores del diálogo.

**Palabras-clave:** Secularismo. Empatía. Religión.

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Declara não haver conflito de interesse.

*How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others. The most hardened violator of the laws of society, is not altogether without it.* Adam Smith <sup>1</sup>

The discursive phenomenon, known as "dialogue", may be seen as having at least two aspects: one theoretical and one practical, which should be considered as distinct and interconnected, or as we would say today, as constituents of a complex relationship. According to philology, "dialogue" originates from the Greek διάλογος, or "share the *logos*", and is herein referred to a possible empathetic relationship between "agnosticism" (from the Greek α - prefix private + γνώσις, "knowledge" in the meanings of "unknown" or "not knowable") and "religion" (from the Latin *religio*, from [a] *religare*, which has the meanings of "bond" and "obligation" towards certain practices or between humans and between them and the gods, and [b] *relegere*, with the sense of "re-read" and "carefully review" or "collect" and "gather") <sup>2</sup>.

Historically, it is customary to distinguish, from the "Metaphysics" of Aristotle, the theoretical knowledge referred to things deemed necessary, and the practical knowledge related to contingencies, being that, together, the two types of knowledge would guide the political and ethical actions; that is, it is two different types of knowledge, which can be understood as the opposite, but not as separated, by referring to a sort of reason that excludes such a separation, named *practical reason*.

The distinction between theory and practice (or between theoretical and practical reason) will be retaken and reformulated by Kant, who distinguished the *theoretical rationality* (which would answer the question *What can I know?*) and *practical rationality*, (referred to *What should I do?*) and therefore, both aspects related to the common denominator "reason" (*logos, ratio*). And considering that (a) *the theoretical use of reason [is concerned] with objects of the simple faculty of knowing, but that easily loses itself, above its limits, between unreachable objects or between mutually conflicting concepts* and, in case of its "practical use", (b) *the reason occupies itself with determining fundamentals of the will [and,] to the extent that it is only the will, has always an objective reality* <sup>3</sup>. In its third criticism - criticism of judgment - Kant reiterates the distinction between these two perspectives of reason, but affirms that there would be a passage between them, represented by the *judgment faculty*, that *regarding our*

*faculties of knowledge constitutes a medium term or an intermediate link* between understanding and reason, that is, the judgment faculty would be the ability to adjust the faculty of imagination to the understanding <sup>4</sup>.

We will discuss in the present work this complex relationship between theory and practice, but only from the theoretical aspect of the question of a possible dialogue between religion and agnosticism, leaving the practical aspect for further reflection and focusing primarily on the approach known as "conceptual analysis" understood as a *process* [of] *explaining a concept, a belief, a theory [...], drawing attention to its constituents, its assumptions, its implications [and that] can serve as a basis for critical evaluation* <sup>5</sup>. In this sense, although being the focus, the theoretical aspect, when contextualized, finds its practical reason, when it is dealing with the fact, widely observable in the field of practical ethics, communication difficulties in cases of specific conflicts between social agents, which are due, in turn, to the different use of concepts in the argumentation seeking to justify the practices of a moral agent when faced with a conflict of values and interests underlying a particular dispute to be resolved.

In the specific case under consideration in this work, the theoretical side of the question about "dialogue" refers to the conditions of possibility of its existence between two types of excluding *prima facie* beliefs: (a) the one which believes that the reason must "suspend its sense" or "to bracket" the metaphysical and religious problems - indicated by the term *agnosticism*; and (b) the one which deals with the relationship that man establishes with the sacred and the divinity (ies) - indicated by the term *religion*. In short, the question is whether it is possible a dialogue between positions logically antagonistic at first, represented by the agnosticism (s) and the religion (s).

Apparently, the answer to this question can only be negative, because the dialogue between an agnostic and a religious person seems to be impossible due to the lack of a common denominator "shareable" between their antagonistic "world views". The lack of clear intersection between the agnostic (for whom it is impossible to know *whether* God exists and can be represented in the statement *we can not even know what questions to ask in relation to certain matters* <sup>6</sup>) and the religious, whose *scrupulous attention paid to signs [...], external manifestations to the individual or, on the contrary, changes in psychological level [and that] does not exclusively apply to the realm of the gods* <sup>7</sup>, refers to the same rela-

tionship that, *a fortiori*, is established between the atheist (which simply denies the existence of any divine being, considering it therefore a non-pertinent question) and the fundamentalist religious person (which denies any different belief and refuses any version of a secularized world and society).

The justification often used to try to support with real facts such negative response is that it would be enough to simply look at the conflicts, both the past and present ones, between religious fundamentalism and secular democracy to realize that we are far from a situation where we can say, with property, that humanity is effectively "sharing the logos" for that "believers" and "unbelievers" comprehend themselves and live together without getting hurt, accepting and sharing their mutual differences to "compensate" the existential and experiential incompleteness that characterizes us as finite (and deadly) beings. The thesis advocates, therefore, that dialogue would not exist if we consider the current conflicts and characteristics, as with fundamentalism, which explicitly confuses politics and religion and, purposely, Church and State, which makes impossible a dialogic relation, since there is no common denominator between the conflicting parties, neither they express intention of leaving it.

However, this apparent practical impossibility can be circumvented by adopting, for example - according to the proposal of *unconditional hospitality* and Derrida's *forgiveness - a logic of hyperbolic ethics*, which would *grant forgiveness where it is neither requested nor deserved, and even to the worst of radical evil, since forgiveness only acquires its meaning [and] only finds its possibility of forgiveness where is required to make the impossible and to forgive the unforgivable*<sup>8</sup>.

This practical "unconditional" solution proposed by Derrida is, however, only indirectly addressed here, because we will not go into the intricacies of the possibilities/impossibilities of thinking about the metaphysical question of *the relationship with the other in general*, "relationship" understood as *this fiduciary "bondig" [that] would precede all given community, all positive religion, all onto-anthropo-theological horizon and that would relink pure singularities before any social or political determination, before all intersubjectivity, and even before the opposition between the sacred (and the holy) and the profane, which can be interpreted as a desertification which makes it possible, open, digs or infinitizes the other, including in making possible even if that it seems to threaten*<sup>9</sup>. In other words, in here we will try to go another way, more modest:

looking for what could, at least conceptually, relate the two seemingly antithetical fields, reformulating the question and trying to see if there are characteristics of the dialogue which would put in touch systems and *worldviews* at least logically opposite.

Here we leave the hypothesis that one of the conditions of possibility is that the dialogue between such *Weltanschauungen* be seen as a relationship between differences, that is, as *empathic* dialogue, understanding by *empathy* (from the Greek *εμπάθεια*) an open discursive form or *logos sharing* with another; as a *non-directive attitude of understanding the other able to understand the experience of another* without, however, *truly experiencing* it concretely<sup>10</sup>.

We will defend, in particular, the idea that the intersubjective relationship said "empathic" is considered a necessary condition (though perhaps not the only one) in order to speak with property, in a *dialogue*, once the words (and concepts) "dialogue" and "empathy" imply in one another, whereas empathy is to try to *put yourself in the place of the other*, but knowing that this project requires accepting, ultimately, the absolute transcendence of the other, which would make the relationship I-other no of identity, but of differences (represented here by the cases of agnosticism and religion).

Next, we will try to show this idea from the conceptual analysis of the terms "dialogue", "empathy", "agnosticism" and "religion", involved in the issue of dialogue between parties.

## Conceptual analysis

### Dialogue

According to the science of language, *dialogue* can be defined as the discursive form (also called dialogue) that (a) *puts the accent on who listens*, that is, focus the recipient of a linguistic act; wherein (b) *refers thoroughly to the situation*; and (c) *acting in various situations of reference simultaneously*<sup>11</sup>. In this regard, when related to *several situations of reference*, a dialogue would only happen in the presence of a "difference" between the actors involved, their arguments and their references. Such difference is what keeps that dialogue be confused with monologue, that is, speaks without dialogue itself, which excludes the difference.

In other terms, a condition of possibility for the existence of discursive form named dialogue is that certain assumptions are met, starting, as example, for *tolerance*, understood as the attitude to refrain

from acting against what reproach, against what is politically contrary or against what is different from us, being considered in religious matters one of the bastions of the modern democratic state, although remains a problematic concept because it implies comprehending how a tolerance principle may coexist with the genuine moral and religious conviction<sup>12</sup>.

Moreover, tolerance is a condition that we call minimum so that there is dialogue, being its maximum condition - which might also be called full - the unconditional acceptance of the absolutely other, which is, in our point of view, the specific characteristic of the type of dialogue differences between, we call empathic.

Assuming the unconditional necessity of the other so that the I exists in the structure formed by the sharing of logos, represented by dialogue, we could understand why empathic dialogue a speech based on communicative rationality, considered to be at the same time analytical, critical and normative, according to the proposal of communicative action Habermas<sup>13</sup>, which implies a discursive ethics founded on the necessary recognition of the other, without which there would be no proper dialogue.

However, this recognition can be thought of in two different ways: (a) as a reciprocal recognition between self and other, that allows people to be conversational and supportive agents of a society<sup>14</sup> in which people, adopting the fundamental ethical principle of dialogue, become morally competent agents, capable of expressing the moral will to understand others and to make himself understandable to others, but given that there is no rule to think, but only rules for other aspects of our behavior<sup>15</sup> or ; (b) as radical recognition of the other, which, according to Levinas, implies in accepting that the intersubjective space is not symmetrical because the other is not, in any way, other me-myself even though participates in a common existence. Therefore, the relationship with others should not be seen as an idyllic and harmonious relationship of communion, nor as a sympathy through which, putting ourselves in their place, we recognize it as similar, being even said that the relationship with the other is the relationship with a Mystery<sup>16</sup> and that the intersubjective relationship would only take place as a relation from one to another and in the transcendence of 'for-the-other' espousing the 'ethical subject', espousing the between-us<sup>17</sup>.

Of the two proposals, the more demanding evidently is the proposition of Levinas, which seems to require the concept of empathy proposed here,

while the proposal of Habermas seems to be based on the traditional concept of sympathy, which implies some form of prior reciprocity between me and the other so that there is in fact dialogue as well, so the attitude of mere tolerance towards otherness. Then follow the proposition Levinas, which seems more appropriate to address the issue of empathy and demanding dialogue type that it presupposes.

In this sense, the "conditions of possibility" for the existence of dialogue may arise from observations of Levinas on "otherness" and transcendence of the other, considering that:

- a) the other is a being and counts as such, that is, *the other* is basically inassimilable to I;
- b) the understanding that I can have about the other as a possible threat may involve a *partial denial, which is violence*, [because] *denies the independence of the being* [and the fact that] *he depends on me*;
- c) *despite* [of] *my domination over him* [...] *I do not own him*;
- d) *he does not enter entirely* [in] *the field of my freedom, and one should understand it from his history, his environment, his habits*;
- e) and this may also indicate that *someone else is the only entity whose denial can not advertise himself as such*, [once] *the other is the only being who can* [include] *want to kill*<sup>18</sup>.

In short, according to Levinas, the rejection of another's otherness may require, ultimately, its disposal, which is just the opposite of the expected outcome of the dialogue; that is, may entail the abolition of any condition of possibility of empathic dialogue between I and other.

### The relationship between dialogue and dialectic

The word "dialogue" has in fact semantic proximity with the word "dialectic" (διαλεκτέον), or art of dialogue, which can be explained by several interpretative lines that are not isolated from each other and among which exchanges are established, interlacements, contaminations, which make the overall picture quite moved and variegated<sup>19</sup>.

In short, the dialectic was historically understood in the following ways: as a method to refute opinions (Zeno of Elea); as a dialogic model in which questions and answers are discussed (Socrates); as a method for rational knowledge (Plato); as a form of argument to address opinions (Aristotle); as critical discussion of antinominal positions (Kant); as a synthesis of opposites, in which the dialectic incorpo-

rates in its logical contradiction (Hegel); as a method to understand the existing reality and to criticize it and deny it (Marx); as an expression of the experience of the interrelationships between subjects *in the ordinary course of life* and open to relationships and contrasts of freedoms in history (Merleau-Ponty); as a *living logic of action* in process (Sartre); as *dialectic negative* form, wherein the category of totality should be replaced by that of contradiction (Adorno); or as *dialectical theology* in which God is considered as *totally other* against which man should be considered a *nothing* (Barth) etc.<sup>19</sup>

Just as "logos", the concept of dialectics has a dense and complex semantic field, where *concurrent senses* passes through the Greek to different European languages, acquiring its contradictory identity and a complexity of use<sup>20</sup>, being that characterization in regard to *dialogue*. In short, dialogue can be seen as *the original place of language mode*, as a relationship that occurs between at least two human beings that are others, *in a strict sense, to one another and having a fully opened future in that, by the realization of the man in his being in the world, may become real something new, impossible to predict*<sup>21</sup>.

In this context, one can say that the conditions of possibility for the existence of dialogue between agnosticism and religions can be given by adopting the open agnostic attitude to the other, represented by religious, and not necessarily requiring, in turn, the same type of attitude on the part of the other, once he is considered - according to the suggestions of Levinas - object of my *absolute responsibility*, which refers to the category of *empathy*, adopted here just to indicate the possibility of dialogue between agnostics and religious.

### Empathy

According to its etymology, the term *empathy* (from the Greek εμπάθεια) indicates, in general, *the union or emotional fusion with other beings or objects (considered animated)*<sup>22</sup> or, more specifically, the ability to understand the feelings of another, regardless of sharing their experience and beliefs. The term should therefore be distinguished from the term *sympathy* (from the Greek συμπάθεια), which denotes the ability to (supposedly) experience the *same* emotions of the other, possibility excluded by the term "empathy."

In fact, we can only experience empathy with someone other than us, not assimilable to us; with someone who is transcendent to us, but with whom

we want to establish some form of dialogue, something seemingly impossible outside of a dialectical logic, able to integrate the contradiction to try to overcome it. Empathy would be therefore based on the inability to take the place of another and would derive from the ability to so only we can experience our own experience with other subjectivities, with other communities and society as a whole.

According to the history of ideas, the term appears specifically in German culture, particularly in the field of aesthetics, which appears at the end of the eighteenth century, the term "Einfühlung", based on the knowledge of other minds. Will be translated into English in the twentieth century, for "empathy", which becomes common, especially in psychology to designate altruistic behavior and, in the emerging field of neuroscience, a *new paradigm* to describe a *neural correlation* that would be the *biological basis of sociality*, and therefore a term widely discussed due to the charge of positivist reductionism, especially made by philosophers and social scientists<sup>23</sup>.

In particular, "Einfühlung" was adopted by the phenomenologist Husserl who, concerned with the establishment of objective knowledge and of practical life settings, used it to indicate the fact that we can not know the thoughts and feelings of others, which remain opaque, once *I have in me [...] the experience of the 'world' and 'other' [...] not as a work of my synthetic activity of some privately, but as a strange world to me*<sup>24</sup>. Husserl - which will be rediscussed by Levinas - maintains *strong the distinction between the empathizing subject and his intentional reference, that is, the psychic experience of others*<sup>25</sup>.

Currently, we can say that the term refers to a constellation of experiments, often quite different between each other and that can hardly be *all referable to a common ground*<sup>26</sup>, although it is possible to say - according to the concerns of the practical reason (and, therefore, ethics and politics) - that empathy presupposes human vulnerability, which implies recognition of the fragility of human existence and the appeal for the consequent liability to the other. In other words, it is understood the universal human characteristic of vulnerability as *the bridge* linking those who H. Tristram Engelhardt Jr. named *foreigners in moral plane in a pluralistic society*<sup>27</sup>.

In short, *empathy* seems to be an *umbrella word*, once it refers to a *ductile concept*, situated in a *protean constellation* and a *network of categorical kinships that involve terms only partly overlapping, such as projection, transfer, association, expression, animation [and] merger*, which implies different attitudes as

being *self-absorbed, revive, compassionate, consenting, imitate inwardly, sympathize*, and it would show on the one hand *the great ductility of this notion*, but also, on the other, the risk of misunderstanding demanded by the *indistinctions of its contours*<sup>28</sup>. Therefore, the term has been the subject of severe criticism by challenging their *relevance and usefulness for understanding our experience of the other and things*, and even *denying that the word correspond, ultimately, to something verifiable and limitative*<sup>28</sup>.

However, in recent decades, the use of the term was back again strongly used in the expressions "empathic civilization", "global empathy" and "Homo empathicus" (replacing the Hobbesian "homo homini lupus"), which, according to the economist and environmentalist Jeremy Rifkin, would aim *a new interpretation of the history of civilization, from a radical new view of human nature, based on an empathic evolution of the human race, who can decide our fate as species*<sup>29</sup>.

Also for the primatologist Frans de Waal, empathy would belong to the very human evolutionary history, and currently *it is a trend [and] is major issue of our time*, in the case of behavioral characteristic shared with other primates and other mammals, which possess - according to studies by anthropologists, psychologists, biologists and neuroscientists - an emotional convergence and that would show that we are *highly cooperative and sensitive to injustice. Our species has a social side and a selfish side, and our bodies and our minds are made for social life, and we desperately become depressed in its absence*<sup>30</sup>.

Against those who deny the relevance and the legitimacy of the use of the term, the author counter-argues that: *whoever wants to use the atrocities of war as an argument against human empathy must think twice, because the war and the feeling of empathy are not mutually exclusive, and we must consider the difficulties that most men feel to pull the trigger. To reinforce it, ends with a question: Why this difficulty [to "pull the trigger"] would exist if it were not for empathy between human beings and their fellows?*<sup>31</sup>. Indeed, for the author, *empathy promotes links between individuals and gives each of them a 'participation' in the well-being of others, shortening the distance between the direct benefits [and] the collective benefits*<sup>32</sup>, once the *feeling of not being indifferent to each other if we want to build a community worthy of this name is the other force that sustains our interactions*<sup>33</sup>.

In other words, empathy would be a form of *emotional contagion, and the bond is essential to our species, since we do not feel anything that hap-*

*pens outside of us, but as we unconsciously merge with each other, his experiences resonate with our inner*<sup>34</sup>.

In short, there would be a *multifaceted constellation of empathic phenomena*, which would lead us to try to *re-hear an echo of the ancient Greek term εμπάθεια, that was to mean a condition of the body, the flesh*<sup>35</sup>.

With these conceptual considerations on *dialogue and empathy*, we can approach more directly to the issue of the type of dialogue between agnosticism and religion also from the conceptual analysis of the two terms, which will be addressed together, that is, making them talking to each other empathetically.

## Agnosticism and Religion

The term "agnosticism" essentially refers to the issue of not knowing, that is, ignorance and, at least since Socrates, to be aware of it and admitting not knowing. "Religion" can refer either to the cult practices as the beliefs that legitimize it, at least since the rise of Christianity, whose *original contribution consists of [giving] a doctrinal content to the term*<sup>36</sup>.

From the doctrinal point of view, agnosticism can be seen as the idea that the existence of God is impossible to be known and proven; unlike atheism, which supports the idea of non-existence of God, idea that can not be demonstrated, proved or disproved empirically for an agnostic. Thus, the dialogue between religion and agnosticism seems only possible as a polemic about assigning different meanings to words, as:

- Agnosticism can be seen as a school of thought (or belief) which maintains that what can not be scientifically verified is unknowable, implying therefore the *suspension (έποχή) of judgment* against religious problems, that is, the belief that said the inability of the human mind to go "beyond" the realm of reality consisted of phenomena and to solve the metaphysical and religious problems;

- The universe of religions is concerned precisely of what agnosticism considers suspension of judgment object, at least if we understand religion as a device that presupposes a *relation of dependency of man [of] one or more superior beings, of which man knows to depend on and to whom provides a particular cult*, that is, if we understand it as a phenomenon that involves two elements: *a goal, that is, the complex relationships between divinity and man*,

and the other subjective, which is the consciousness of dependence and the resulting disposition in man to return to the deity worship belonging to it<sup>37</sup>.

Historically, the term agnosticism has recent origin: the English zoologist Thomas Henry Huxley (1825-1895) introduced the adjectived English term "agnostic" in 1869 to indicate the attitude of one who considers "unsolved" the metaphysical and religious problems because exceed the world phenomenal and therefore could not be objects of valid knowledge, which could only be obtained through the scientific method. In this sense, for Huxley agnosticism would not be *a belief, but a rigorous rational method*, consistent in the application of the principle of *not pretending conclusions to be certain without being demonstrated or demonstrable*<sup>38</sup>.

Then, the term appears in several philosophical systems, beginning with positivism, one of the conditions of possibility of their use in the thought of Kant, for whom the human understanding (and its product represented by the knowledge and theory) is made of representations rather than intuitions: *the knowledge of God is mere intuition*, product of the will, and not *theoretical knowledge* or theory of *supersensible beings*, because *we are not fully capable of founding a speculative knowledge, but only to limit its use to the practice of moral law*. That is, *if we abstract from all anthropomorphism from it* [word agnosticism], *the simple word is left, unable to bind to it the minimum concept by which it was allowed to expect an extension of theoretical knowledge*; in short, the concept of God belongs neither to the physic nor metaphysics, but moral, once even *by the metaphysics* and through reliable inferences *is impossible to reach, from the knowledge of this world, to the concept of God and the proof of its existence*<sup>39</sup>.

### Final considerations

According to the impact between agnostics and religious, that was now outlined, the dialogue seems to be close to impossible. However, our task was to investigate the conditions of possibility for the existence, at least in theory, of this dialogue, what we try to show introducing the category of *empathy*, motivated by the desire to communicate and to relate to *others*, in particular with his otherness unassimilable to the *self*.

But, as seen, the very word "dialogue" has semantic proximity (a "family resemblance," as Wittgenstein would say<sup>40</sup>), with the word "dialectic",

which, in turn, has several interpretative lines that are not isolated among each other, and between which are *established exchanges, interlacements, contaminations, which make the overall picture quite moved and variegated*<sup>19</sup>. One must not forget that, since Hegel, the dialectical logic includes the contradiction, the conflict.

In this approach of the empathic dialogue, it was highlighted the ethical position of Levinas, who opposes as *ethical ego-centered conception* (which he refuses) and an altero-centered conception (which he accepts) based on the *irreducible transcendence* of the Other, due to its unknowable. This concept implies on the one hand, an unconditional responsibility of the Self with respect to the Other and, on the other, the *transcendent solution* [which] *consists in introducing the Other, before any practice that is, as a referent of subjectivity and in relation to which the actor of practice should be defined and located*, perspective in which, after all, are *the initiatives of the Other that modify the horizon of possibilities* [of Me], and that, for example, *thanks to forgiveness, open the possibilities of hope*<sup>41</sup>.

However, we must remember that Levinas is *not the first to make the Other key ethical subjectivity*, because besides Husserl (quickly remembered here), *is already in Kant a very explicit definition* [of] *subjective person when* [the "Fundamentals the metaphysics of morals", states that] *a person is the subject whose actions are likely to imputation*<sup>41</sup>.

Finally, you may want to also remember the philosopher Bertrand Russell, who, in a text on the relationship between ethics and politics, considered to be the type of relationship established with the otherness that would depend on the very survival of the human species and that we should therefore *expect* [that] *humanity, at least the edge of the cliff, stops and reflects, and perhaps realizes that even the well-being of those who we hate would not have a too high a price to pay in exchange for our survival*<sup>42</sup>.

In summary, the empathic dialogue, that in here we tried to outline, seems to be the condition of possibility for the construction of a sort of a complex *meta-point of view*, able to overcome, at least argumentatively, the differences seen as antithetical. But to do so, one must be able to distinguish without separating and to relate differences without confusing their specific traits, as we believe this to be a possible dialectical path to the *dynamic management of the disorder more than the stable production and artificial order*<sup>43</sup>.

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