

**The Transcendental Distinction Between
Anthropology and Metaphysics:
A Discussion of Leonardo Polo's *Antropología trascendental****

Salvador Piá Tarazona

Abstract. In the first volume of his recently published *Antropología trascendental*, Leonardo Polo proposes a transcendental distinction between metaphysics (understood as the study of the cosmos) and anthropology (understood as the study of the human being). In his view, these two sciences study distinct types of acts of being; the former studies the act of being of the physical universe (that is, the act of *persistence*), while the latter studies the act of being of the human person (that is, the act of *co-existence*). On the assumption that reality is distinguished by its various acts of being, Polo argues that anthropology can be properly labeled *transcendental* even though the traditional transcendentals of metaphysics (*ens, unum, res, aliquid, verum, bonum, and pulchrum*) differ from those of anthropology. The transcendentals of the human person are personal *co-existence*, personal *freedom*, personal *intellection*, and personal *love*. Co-existence, freedom, intellection, and love are transcendentals that are convertible with the act of being of the human being, because this act is personal, but not with the act of being of the cosmos, which is not personal.

One of the few topics that have remained unclear throughout the long history of philosophy is the idea of human freedom. Even though countless attempts have been made by philosophers of every era to fully understand this particular dimension of humanity, it remains as problematic a subject today as ever. Indeed, the problems encountered by today's philosophers are rooted in the philosophical treatment of human freedom by thinkers of the past. A great number of ancient and medieval philosophers focused their efforts on trying to comprehend the idea of human freedom from within the structure of the *cosmos* (as I will explain later on). In doing so, they introduced a variety of notions and ideas into the study of human freedom that are not properly human, thus adding to the confusion surrounding the topic. This tendency can be observed, for instance, in the writings of Aristotle, Boethius, Avicenna, and Thomas Aquinas. Indeed, in its effort to study human freedom, much of modern thought, reacting against medieval philosophy by brushing aside the metaphysical thesis that being is the first

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principle, continues this tendency; for example, one need only look at the writings of Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, among others. In contemporary thought there are a number of philosophers who have tried to reconcile the ancient and medieval conceptions of man with the modern conception; among the better known of these writers are W. Norris Clarke, Emmanuel Levinas, Gabriel Marcel, Romano Guardini, and Karol Wojtyła. Unfortunately, I believe that none of these thinkers has managed to reconcile in an adequate manner the ancient and medieval conceptions of human freedom with the modern conception; all of them have failed therefore to sufficiently explain the concept of human freedom.

To my mind, the only philosopher to date who has been able to shed new light on the free human condition is Leonardo Polo. However, before it can be demonstrated how Polo was able to reconcile the ancient and medieval visions of man's freedom with the modern, and in the process truly depict human freedom, it will be necessary to establish the radical distinction that exists between *anthropology* (understood as the study of man) and *metaphysics* (understood as the study of the cosmos). That a full and complete distinction between these two philosophical disciplines exists is what I intend to prove in this essay, using as a starting point Polo's most recently published book *Antropología trascendental*.¹ In *Antropología trascendental*, Leonardo Polo deals with, among other things, the question of whether anthropology is a discipline which belongs to the larger field of metaphysics or rather, whether it is possible to properly distinguish the field of anthropology from that of metaphysics. To adequately address this issue—and in the process judge the merits of Polo's argument—the first topic that must be clarified is precisely that which he raises in the title of the book itself (*¿"Transcendental Anthropology"*): Can anthropology properly be labeled a transcendental science? Or, is it the case that only metaphysics should be considered transcendental?

That metaphysics is a transcendental science seems straightforward enough, if we understand by "transcendental science" the science that studies the being, the grounding or the first principles of reality. The consideration of metaphysics as a transphysical science is part of traditional philosophical doctrine and it is—with certain specifications—widely accepted as such by philosophers of all persuasions. It is also a part of traditional Aristotelian doctrine that the object of metaphysics is being insofar as it is being,² since *everything* that is, *is* insofar as it

¹Leonardo Polo, *Antropología trascendental*, vol. 1: *La persona humana* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1999), ISBN 84-313-1659-4, €18.03 (cited below as *Antropología*, I).

²In Aristotle's words: "[A]nd indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, viz. what being is, is just the question, what is

is *what* it is. Thus metaphysics is established as the universal and first science; the study of *all reality* pertains to it.

Thanks to the totality introduced into it by the concept of being ("being is all that is") metaphysics can be understood to be a universal science. It is the first science because the totality of all being "comes first" in reality as well as in knowledge (the concept of being is the first concept known and that in which the remaining conceptions are resolved).³ If all that is real is being, the study of a particular given being is equivalent to the study of a being that is part of reality (the totality of being). For this reason, in both Aristotelian and Thomist metaphysical formulations, the study of man as a special being among other beings is understood as a particular metaphysics, or as a secondary philosophy.

I.

The "symmetrization" of metaphysics and anthropology: the "cul-de-sac" argument. In part I of *Antropología trascendental*, Polo argues that the above-mentioned way of confronting the study of man, while not exactly incorrect, is insufficient. This insufficiency is due to the simple fact that the study of man as a particular being—secondary philosophy—would require a study of the equivalence or parallelism between man and that which is not human. In traditional philosophy, extramental being is first discovered as the grounding, or foundation, of the physical universe. As such, the study of man is undertaken through the notion of "grounding." Because of this, according to Polo, a *symmetrization* of anthropology and metaphysics takes place;⁴ that is to say, anthropology is still developed as a *transphysical* science, as a part of metaphysics, or as "secondary" philosophy.

Unfortunately, this symmetrization (which reduces anthropology to a part of metaphysics) drives anthropology into an intellectual cul-de-sac, if you will, an alley into which philosophers have been driven by ancient and medieval philosophies, and from which modern and post-modern philosophies have been

substance?" (*Metaphysics*, VII, 1, 1028 b 3-5; cited according to *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, trans. W. D. Ross, vol. VIII: *Metaphysica* [London: Oxford University Press, 1952].)

³See Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, tract. I, chap. 6.

⁴This "symmetrization" is characteristic of modern thinking (Descartes, Kant), since it creates an anthropology without giving up notions that belong to metaphysics (the human subject is still being considered *qua* ground). Note that it is precisely because the modern project is accomplished from the perspective of traditional metaphysical concepts that it does not satisfactorily distinguish between the study of man and that of non-human reality (see Polo, *Antropología*, I, 90).

unable to set us free. This cul-de-sac stems—in my opinion—from the incompatibility of the concepts *of ground and freedom*. Being, understood as ground, substance or first principle, cannot at the same time be understood as free being. To speak of a "free grounding" is a contradiction in terms, since necessity is implicit in the concept of "ground"; the ground, insofar as it is a first principle or substance, is necessary; therefore, it is impossible to exempt it from its necessary condition and consider it as free.

In grappling with this problem, philosophers in the past were only able to get out of this dead-end alley by erroneous means, that is, by inclining the scales either in favor of ground or in favor of freedom in their considerations. Faced with the impossibility of marrying ground and freedom, ancient and medieval philosophers—forgive my generalizations—traditionally favored the ground (first principle), understood as substance, and thus freedom was relegated in man to the category of the accidental.

Philosophically speaking, substance can be defined as that which is in itself (*in sé*), as opposed to the accidents, which are in another (*in alio*). Substance can also be understood as that which is in itself (*in se*) and by itself (*per se*) (as in the case of a supreme being) or as that which is in itself (*in se*) but by another (*ab alio*) (the case of composed beings). Hence, the notion of substance carries with it that of necessity, a necessity that is participated in the case of composed beings (notion of contingency) and absolute in the case of a supreme being. Thus, the study of man as "substantial freedom" cannot be accomplished without falling into incoherence, since every ground lays its foundation necessarily, but freedom cannot integrate necessity.

Due to the fact that the study of man in traditional thought was tackled from the perspective of the concept of *ens*, man is understood as a substantial being: "an individual substance of rational nature."⁵ And, taking into account the conflicts of substance-freedom and substance-accident, human freedom is relegated to being considered an accident of man, and as such is referred only to some acts of the will.⁶

However, modern philosophy does not accept the traditional formulation of freedom as merely an accident of man, attempting to overcome these crossroads by affirming freedom as the most radical dimension of man and, ultimately, of all reality. Man *is*, first and foremost, thus, it is not valid to confer a "pre-existing"

⁵Boethius, *De duabus naturis et una persona Christi*, chap. 3 (PL 64, 1345).

⁶In the best of cases, as for example in Thomas Aquinas, the root of freedom is reason: "all roots of freedom are constituted in reason" (Thomas Aquinas, *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 2, corp.).

nature on man, because such would determine him. In modern philosophy, then, man is no longer considered *qua* substance or nature, since these imply necessity. However, because the modern thinker cannot unite ground with freedom, the only way of understanding freedom without any trace of necessity is to resort to the notion of spontaneity⁷, a method which reaches its climax in the consecration of freedom—in Hegel's "absolute spirit"⁸—as the ground of all reality. Unfortunately, however, the modern conception of man is just as problematic as the traditional one. If the human being is nothing but spontaneity—human being as free spontaneity—man remains without substance (foundation). Moreover, with the modern conception of man, exactly what happens to the physical world—which is not free—remains unknown. The solution found by modern philosophy was to extrapolate the conclusions of anthropology to metaphysics, and thus the metaphysical notion of spontaneity is transformed, becoming one of evolution where being is either process (Hegel) or production, relationship, and time (Heidegger), since it no longer requires a ground (the necessity of the substance).

In summary, the only possibility for reconciling grounding and freedom rests on inclining towards one of these two extremes to the detriment of the other. Is there a way out of the cul-de-sac in which we find ourselves? Are anthropology and metaphysics ultimately incompatible? If so, why are they incompatible? This essay attempts to answer these questions by using Leonardo Polo's *Voids Antropológicas trascendentales* as an inspirational starting point.

II.

Abandonment of the notions of "totality" and "unicity." "According to Polo the affirmation of the dichotomy between anthropology and metaphysics— between freedom and ground (substance)—is an inadequate formulation of the problem that has its roots in the human aspiration to achieve a "comprehension of reality as a totality."⁹ When philosophy endeavors to be a universal science, the study of all reality is undertaken from one central point of view. That is to say, philosophy

⁷Freedom as spontaneity is understood in terms of immanence and autonomy; therefore it cannot be affected from outside: it is independent. In this sense, freedom has its foundations in itself; it is the only in itself of reality (substance). Note the modern "sym-metrization" when dealing with freedom from the perspective of the notions of "ground" and "substance."

⁸In Hegel, the unification of man with the world, and with God, is total. In this sense Hegelian pantheism conducts its treatment of reality from the perspective of the concepts of totality and unicity to its last consequences: *Das Wahre ist das Ganze* (G. W. F. Hegel, *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 9: *Phänomenologie des Geistes* [Hamburg: Meiner, 1980], 19, line 12).

⁹Polo, *Antropología*, I, 129.

gains its unity from its formal object—*ens qua ens*. This position is clear in ancient and medieval philosophies that conceive first philosophy as the study of the *ens qua ens* (note that in the notion of *ens*, *all* reality is considered in a unified way). Therefore, there is room for only one first philosophy and its subsequent developments will only be secondary philosophies, as in the case of anthropology: the study of man as a particular *ens*.

The case is similar in modern philosophy since each modern thinker establishes one system, and only one *system*, with the purpose of building a universal science from which a complete knowledge of the entirety of reality can be achieved. What characterizes this systematic thinking is the fact that it tries to unify all of reality to the point of consecrating the unification of the subject with the object as the highest challenge of thought. A large part of this modern attempt at unification seeks to achieve an absolute and universal knowledge of the totality of what is real: "the system, as a form of modern philosophy, is a wholeness that is completed, crystallized, unable to be continued, consummated in objectivity's pure present."¹⁰ According to Polo, it is here that both traditional and modern philosophies are out of focus: in trying to achieve a unified, universal knowledge of the totality of what is real. In effect, traditional philosophy and modern philosophy coincide in first stating that everything is, without realizing that this leads the study of reality to be undertaken from the perspective of the concepts of unity and totality.¹¹

Polo believes these notions—unicity and totality—should be submitted to a critical study, a study that will thereafter lead us to abandon them. This he calls *the abandonment of the mental limit*¹² the discovery that unicity and totality belong exclusively to the mental realm and are therefore erroneously applied to extra-mental reality. Hence, the problem of philosophical knowledge rests on the fact that, from its very beginning, mental unicity is surreptitiously introduced into

¹⁰Polo, *Evidencia y realidad en Descartes*, 2nd ed. (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1996), 13.

¹¹ The notions of "totality" and "unicity" are convertible: totality requires unicity to be total, since everything *is* insofar as it is *one*. As Aristotle said: "being and unity are the same and are one thing in the sense that they are implied in one another as principle and causes are, not in the sense that they are explained by the same definition" (*Metaphysics*, IV, 2, 1003b 22-5; quoted from *The Complete Works of Aristotle*).

¹²With this term, Leonardo Polo designates the cognitive method through which one may access reality without the limitation imposed by objects thought. Polo wrote his book *El acceso al ser* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1964) in order to explain this method (cited below as *El acceso al ser*).

it (this is reflected in the pretension of obtaining a knowledge of the totality of reality).¹³

If knowledge of reality is posed from the perspective of unicity, it is impossible to find a way out of the ground-freedom conundrum, and this has led philosophers into a paralysis of thought. In order to avert such a paralysis we must adjust or re-order the notions formulated from the consideration of reality *qua* "totality," with the notion of *ens* and of absolute system being the most representative examples of that consideration. Therefore, as Polo points out: "transcendental anthropology must eliminate the *prestige of the one (unum)*."¹⁴

Neither the absolute system nor *ens* are originary, precisely because they are formulated according to the unitary nature of thought. The unification of reality in terms of totality—all is *ens*, the system is all—is due to thought which introduces unicity into the ideas that are thought; for this reason, Thomas Aquinas says that only the one can be known.¹⁵

Nevertheless, reality is radically plural and diverse within itself; that is to say, in reality what comes first in terms of *esse* is distinction, not unity.¹⁶ This is the reason why Polo proposes to banish all "unicity-centered" or "totality" thinking in the study of reality, since unicity is a particular characteristic of ideas, but not of reality. Unicity is a limitation introduced by the mind's ideas when it stops recognizing reality's plurality.¹⁷

If this last thesis is accepted, it is possible to establish a radical distinction in the study of reality; that is, reality is internally and transcendently different in terms of *esse*. Therefore, the study of *esse qua* maximally universal must be left aside. If reality (*esse*) is internally distinct *a priori*, there is no room for an unification *a posteriori*, but only for a study of reality which recognizes and

¹³If the mental limit is abandoned, the notions of unicity and totality are excluded from reality, that is, expressions such as "the totality of what is real," "the whole of reality," and "everything is" do not have metaphysical scope: reality is not total.

¹⁴Polo, *Antropología*, I, 34.

¹⁵As Thomas Aquinas said: "qui enim non intelligit unum nihil intelligit" (*De veritate*, q. 21, a. 3).

¹⁶See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 138fE

¹⁷In this sense I maintain that the critique of Parmenides, who claims that "the same thing can be thought and can exist" (*Fragment 3,1*; quoted from Leonardo Taran, *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary and Critical Essays* [Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965], 41), is best accomplished by Leonardo Polo, who establishes that "sameness [unicity] is pure difference with being" (see Leonardo Polo, *El acceso al ser*, 191). The character of unicity neither has metaphysical or anthropological scope, but rather an exclusively mental scope (see *ibid.*, 72).

maintains the internal distinction, or plurality, of *esse*. This radical or transcendental distinction of *esse* can be established only if a distinction in terms of being is found. If reality's most radical character rests on being act, "various distinctions must be settled in the first transcendental, that is, in the act of being (*esse*)."¹⁸ This is why Polo—following Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas—comes to the conclusion that there are distinct acts of being. I agree that it is right to maintain that Aristotle's greatest contribution to metaphysics lies in the plurality of the ways to speak of the *ens*,¹⁹ while Thomas Aquinas discovers the *actus essendi*.²⁰ Therefore, the transcendental distinction between the acts of being—the plurality of the acts of being—proposed by Polo is in line with Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, although he goes further than the fundamental parameters of the metaphysics of these authors. That proposal could be stated as follows: "there are different modes of acts of being." In other words, there are distinct acts of being. According to Polo, the three different modes of act of being (*esse*) *dito*.: *persistence* (cosmos), *co-existence* (man), and *Original Identity* (God).

Not every being is *esse* in the same sense, because sameness is a characteristic of our ideas and is thought, but is not an extra-mental characteristic.²¹ We encounter—from the beginning—two distinct acts of being: the act of being is said according to persistence²² or according to co-existence.²³ The act of persisting is studied by metaphysics while the act of co-existing is studied by anthropology.²⁴

III.

The transcendental distinction of metaphysics and anthropology. Polo maintains that anthropology is *transcendentally* different from metaphysics.²⁵ This means that anthropology has a transcendently different method and topic of study from metaphysics. If such a distinction is satisfactorily established, it can be concluded that Polo has offered a way out of the stagnation caused by classical and modern thought. With his new method (the abandonment of the mental

¹⁸ Polo, *Antropología*, I, 69.

¹⁹ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V, chap. 7.

²⁰ See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3.

²¹ Note that because God creates different acts of being, the notion of "all creation" is excluded (see Polo, *Antropología*, I, 69).

²² See Polo, *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*, vol. IV/2 (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1996).

²³ "Co-existence" designates the act of being of each human person.

²⁴ From metaphysics and anthropology it is possible to accede to the original act of being, which is not created.

²⁵ See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 130.

limit),²⁶ the dichotomy between the notions of ground (substance) and freedom can be shown to be an unsuccessful consideration of the issue because the opposition of these two notions is established in the mental realm, not in the extra-mental realm.

The problem of articulating anthropology and metaphysics, therefore, is solved in a new study of the transcendentals and specifically, of the first transcendental,²⁷ a study which leads us to the discovery of properly human transcendentals that were not previously considered in the classical array. While for the philosophical tradition "transcendental" means most universal or transcategorical, for Polo "transcendental" is equivalent to "act of being"; accordingly, "the primacy of the act of being must safeguard compatibility with the other transcendentals."²⁸

If reality is plural in terms of acts of being (*esse*), anthropology and metaphysics will study different types, or modes, of being *qua* act. The human act of being is not studied in the same way as that of the cosmos, since the conclusions of metaphysics cannot be extrapolated in a strict sense to anthropology, nor can the results of anthropology be strictly applied to metaphysics. Therefore, anthropology must undertake its study in a different way than metaphysics: it must have a different method.

To amplify the array of the transcendentals is to include other, previously not considered acts of being that were not taken into account before. That is, the array of transcendentals can be legitimately added to according to the findings of the study of the human act of being; if the study of man is accomplished exclusively by anthropology, new specifically human transcendentals can be discovered.

Therefore, the following key statements can be pointed out: (a) the act of being of the physical universe is different from the human act of being (that is, they are two distinct modes, or acts, of *esse*); (b) extra-mental essence (that is, the physical universe) is different from the human essence (that is, they are two different modes of *essentia*)-, and (c) the real distinction between the extra-mental

²⁶On the abandonment of the mental limit, see Salvador PiáTarazona, "Sobre el límite mental," *Studia Poliana: Revista sobre el pensamiento de Leonardo Polo* 3 (2001): 177-85.

²⁷For Polo, it is better to speak of the "act of being" rather than of "ens," since the former is properly transcendental; if the real distinction of *esse* and *essentia* is taken into account, essence cannot be transcendental, since it is transcendently different from the act of being. Essence is different from being because it really depends on it, since the former is the potency of the latter (see Polo, *Antropología*, I, 60).

²⁸Polo, *Antropología*, I, 83.

act of being (*esse*) and the extra-mental essence (*essentia*) is not equivalent to the real distinction between the human act of being and the human essence.²⁹

Thus, Polo maintains that Thomas Aquinas's affirmation, according to which being is divided into two—namely, uncreated and created being³⁰— can be enlarged from the point of view of the creature.³¹ Created being is divided into at least two: the cosmic creature (physical universe) and the human creature. The cosmic creature and man are distinguished *qua* creatures, and this is not only due to the fact that they are created in a different manner but rather—and above all—because they are creatures in a different manner: the human creature is personal but the cosmic creature is not.

The human *esse* and the *esse* of the cosmos are actively different *qua* acts of being. The distinction between the metaphysical and the anthropological is founded on a distinction between the dependencies of each on uncreated being. It can thus be sustained that created beings are measured by their transcendental distinction with respect to God.³² In this way, "transcendental distinction"—the distinction between the creature and the Creator—is equivalent to "transcendental dependence": the created act of being (*esse*) depends on the Original Act of Being.³³

In order to distinguish between acts of being, Polo describes the act of being of the universe as neither a ceasing nor as a continuous beginning:³⁴ the being of the universe is something *persistent*. Thus, rather than speaking of the "act of being" in general terms, it is preferable, in this case, to speak of the "act of persisting" or of "persistent activity." In this way, the openness of the creature to the creator can be recognized, for only in strict dependence on God is it possible to understand an act of being as beginning without either ceasing or being continuous.³⁵ Knowledge of the aforementioned act of being does not cease or

²⁹Following these thematic distinctions, philosophy is divided into metaphysics, philosophical physics, transcendental anthropology, and essential anthropology.

³⁰See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 44, a. 1, corp.

³¹See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 93.

³²"Transcendental distinction" must be understood in a positive or real manner (as the openness of the created acts of being with regard to the act of being on which they depend) and not as the difference or separation of two terms (understood as isolated beings).

³³In *El ser*, vol. 1: *La existencia extramental* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1965; 2nd ed., 1997) (cited below as *El ser*), Polo repeatedly names God *Original Being*. By doing so, he is attempting to describe the existential character of the divine activity: God is Original or Identical Act.

³⁴See Polo, *Nominalismo, idealismo y realismo* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1997), 245 (cited below as *Nominalismo*).

³⁵On persistence (the act of being of the cosmos), see Salvador Piá Tarazona, *Los*

end in that act, but opens to God: the knowledge of the cosmic creature culminates in the knowledge of God.³⁶ For this reason, the dependence of the act of being of the physical universe on the Creator is equivalent to its causal reference to the Original Being. In Polo's words: "causality is dependence. Dependence is reference. Reference is connection [of the material creature with God]."³⁷

Nevertheless, as I will indicate below, it cannot be said that the dependency of the human person on God is a causal one; the human person depends on God in a way different from that of the cosmic creature because they—the human person and the cosmic creature—are two transcendently different created acts of being. To maintain the contrary would be to fall into a symmetrization, that is, to apply the results of metaphysics to anthropology.

IV.

Personal human transcendentals. Setting aside the study of the extra-mental act of being (to which Polo dedicated his book *Being*), I will focus on the distinctive character of the human act of being.

According to Polo, "being a human person is also radical, but this radicality must not be associated with the notion of principle [substance]".³⁸ Here, "human person" means *each one*³⁹ that is, "each human person considered as a *novum* in the strictest sense of the word."⁴⁰ Thus, the addition to the transcendentals is not proposed as a purely methodical designation; rather, it refers to the topic. The anthropological amplification of the transcendentals corresponds to *human co-*

primeros principios en Leonardo Polo (Pamplona; Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 1997), 35-62.

³⁶Strictly speaking, if knowledge of the being of the physical universe does not culminate in God, it is not correctly known, since such an act of being cannot exist (*persist*) as isolated or of itself.

³⁷*El ser*, 1st ed., 241; 2nd ed., 219. Note that the principle of causality is that which guides or governs the relationship between the principle of non-contradiction (cosmic creature) and the principle of identity (Original Act of being). In this way, the first principles are prevented from being confused: "[I]n order to be first they must be different, and in the distinction lies the primacy of each one according to which the relationship is established amongst themselves" (Polo, *Nominalismo*, 240).

³⁸Polo, *Antropología*, I, 88-9.

³⁹ See Polo, *La persona humana y su crecimiento* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1996), 157 (cited below as *La persona*).

⁴⁰Polo, "El hombre como hijo," *Metafísica de la familia*, ed. Juan Cruz Cruz (Pamplona: Eunsa, 1995), 317-25, at 323.

existence. In other words, the amplification of the transcendental is internal to the human being, who is, above all, *intimacy*. Referring the amplification of being (*esse*) to this being is *human co-existing (co-esse)*, co-being, to be-accompanied.⁴¹

The act of being of the human person is equivalent to co-being or co-existing: co-existing is worthier than persisting. The human being is superior to the being of the physical universe and, therefore, the personal transcendental are superior to the metaphysical ones. According to Polo, the human being does not exist, but rather co-exists in the strictest sense: "co-existence designates man's being as being which is not reduced to existing."⁴² Man co-exists because he exists with other acts of being, that is, he is existentially open to others acts of being: here lies the dual character of the human being.⁴³ The radicality of personal being consists in its doubly open character. The human person is outward openness (outwardly open) or being-with (to be *ad extra*), since he co-exists with other acts of being: with the being of the physical universe, with other human persons, and with God.⁴⁴ Moreover, the human person is also intimate openness (intimately open), or co-being (to be *ad intra*), in that "to co-exist is *to be amplified internally*. intimacy."⁴⁵ The human person is intimately co-existential: to co-exist is being in company, "to be, being accompanied."⁴⁶ Hence the human person can be properly denominated *co-being-with* (where *co-* refers to "intimate" co-existence and *with* refers to co-existence with "other acts of being").⁴⁷ In Polo's words: "[M]an does not limit himself to being, but he *co-is*. *Co-being designates the person*, that is, the reality which is outwardly open (to other acts of being) and at the same time inwardly open (to itself); thus *co-being* alludes to *being-with*."⁴⁸ To summarize: the dual character of human coexistence is equivalent to its doubly open character (outward and inward). However, "intimate co-existence" does not imply the internal existence of "another" person; the persons intimacy is not "another" person. On the contrary, intimate co-existence is equivalent to what Polo calls the "lack of personal replication" of the interior of the created person:

⁴¹Polo, "El descubrimiento de Dios desde el hombre," *Studia Poliana* 1 (1999): 11- 24, at 19.

⁴²PoIo, *Presente y futuro del hombre* (Madrid: Rialp, 1993), 158 (cited below as *Presente y futuro del hombre*).

⁴³See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 142.

⁴⁴Even though the human person co-exists with God, such co-existence does not happen outwardly but intimately, as I will explain later on.

⁴⁵Polo, *Antropología*, I, 92.

⁴⁶See Ricardo Yepes, "Persona: intimidad, don y libertad nativa. Hacia una antropología de los transcendentales personales," *Anuario filosófico* 29/2 (1996): 1077-104, at 1086.

⁴⁷In this sense, says W. Norris Clarke, "to be a person is to *be with*" (*Person and Being* [Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1993], 112).

⁴⁸Polo, *Antropología*, I, 32.

within the personal created act of being, there are never two (or more) persons.⁴⁹ This lack of personal replication of the interior of the created *esse* means that co-existence is something that is always still to be achieved, it must be attained; however, this "achievement" is never completely attained. Hence, personal co-existence is what Polo calls "being ever more," which means: being *always more*. The solidarity between the method of anthropology (the habit of wisdom) and its topic (human co-existence) lies here: both method and topic are "ever more," that is, both are "always more."⁵⁰ In other words, the lack of personal replication (of another person) of the interior of the human person is the way in which the created person lacks identity. In this sense, it can be said that the human person is a mystery even unto himself.

It must be remembered that for Polo, identity *qua* existence occurs only in the case of God, who is Original Being:⁵¹ "If the identity is not original, it is not Identity."⁵² Furthermore, in the case of creatures, essence is different from the act of being: "the creature is characterized precisely by not being original, that is, by lacking identity."⁵³ It is due to this fact that Polo calls the act of being of the physical universe "persistence" or "non-contradictory existence,"⁵⁴ and the human act of being "co-existence" or "being ever more" (being always more).

Human co-being cannot be identified with an "object"; it is not actual act,⁵⁵ but being-act-ever-more—neither ceasing nor culminating. For man, being means to be "always more," so that he is inasmuch as he is-ever-more. "Being always more" or "being-ever-more" are equivalent to "the act of being of the human person," because this act of being is being *ad intra*. Thus, being-ever-more is equivalent to co-being: "*ever-more* is a designation of the act of being."⁵⁶ The purpose of the term "being-ever-more" is to name or designate what is different in the human being both with respect to persisting being and to the Original Being.

⁴⁹See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 179.

⁵⁰See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 128.

⁵¹God is Origin because he is the one who has always been; in contrast, all creatures have come to be: "Identity is Origin because the Identity does not begin; it is the uncreated act of being. This is the radical distinction between the act of being of God and the act of being of the creature: God does not begin to be, but the creature does" (Salvador Piá Tarazona, "De la criatura a Dios. La demostración de la existencia de Dios en la primera dimensión del abandono del límite mental," *Anuario filosófico* 29/2 (1996): 929-48, at 939).

⁵²Polo, *Nominalismo*, 247.

⁵³Polo, *Antropología*, I, 68.

⁵⁴See Polo, *El ser*, 190.

⁵⁵The notion of the extra-mental actual act corresponds to the notion of *entelekheia*: already constituted and, as such, completed act.

⁵⁶Polo, *Presente y futuro del hombre*, 199.

Its *ever-more* character—that is, its co-existence—shows that the personal human being is created.

Therefore, the dependence of the human being, *qua* creature, on the Original Being cannot be measured in terms of causality. The personal human being excludes all kinds of necessities: the person is transcendently free. Herein lies his dependence on God. In other words, in order to be free, it is necessary to be more dependent on the Creator than the being studied by metaphysics. The being of the cosmos also depends on God, but in a lesser way (because it is not personal), and that is why it is less being. The being of the cosmos is, so to speak, more independent or isolated from God than is the personal creature; the activity, or *esse*, of the cosmos is more autonomous than that of the personal creature.⁵⁷ Conversely, the human being is more perfect than the being of the physical universe because he depends on God in terms of personal freedom. Through freedom, the dependency of a created person on the Uncreated person is established. To be free is equivalent to being completely dependent on God—this is the singular dependency of a personal creature. The dependency between two persons implies freedom, and this dependency shows that it is impossible for the human being to exist as isolated.⁵⁸ The existence of one unique person is an anthropological absurdity.⁵⁹ Moreover, such an existence would be a total tragedy.⁶⁰ This is why for Polo "person does not mean substance. Substances are given separately, but what is separated does not co-exist; each of the substances occur individually: they are, in themselves, isolated."⁶¹ Man is therefore not a substance in the usual sense.

Man depends on God because he *is* free (his being is freedom); human freedom manifests the existence of God even while it reveals that human dependence on God is greater and more strict than the causal reference of "persistence." So, human freedom is also a way of discovering God and manifesting his existence.⁶² Man makes manifest the existence of God because he

⁵⁷Obviously, the cosmic (impersonal) creature cannot exist if isolated from God in an absolute way; for this reason, it is properly described by Polo as "*beginning*, neither ceasing nor continuous" (*Nominalismo*, 245).

⁵⁸Polo's complete disagreement with the modern concept of the human person is remarkable, particularly with regard to Kant and Nietzsche, for whom "person" means "subject": an autonomous and self-sufficient reality, that is, completely isolated and confined within itself.

⁵⁹See Polo, *Presente y futuro del hombre*, 169.

⁶⁰In my opinion, the positing of just such a tragedy is what happens with the Nietzschean concept of the overman.

⁶¹Polo, "El descubrimiento de Dios desde el hombre," *Studia Poliana* 1 (1999): 11-24, at 19.

⁶²See Leonardo Polo, *Quién es el hombre. Un espíritu en el tiempo* (Madrid: Rialp, 1991), 224-5 (cited below as *Quién es el hombre*).

is a being who is radically—or freely—open to Him.⁶³ The designation of the human person as being-ever-more shows man's strict dependence on God which, unlike the being of the physical universe, does not consist in the principle of transcendental causality, but in transcendental freedom.

On the contrary, if human openness were not to encounter a personal being, if it did not find its correspondence in a personal God, it would be frustrated: if God is not "a" person, human freedom would be an absurdity or nonsensical. Thus, it must be maintained that human freedom co-exists with respect to God: "there exists a personal God without whom human freedom would end in a void. There would be complete perplexity with regard to man's existence, a lack of destiny."⁶⁴ Consequently, if God were put to one side in the study of man, the fact that man is someone (*aliquis*, but not *aliquid*) would be ignored.⁶⁵

The transcendental character of man's freedom has now been demonstrated: transcendental freedom means the intimate openness of being; thus the term *human freedom* is convertible with that of *human co-existence*. However, according to Polo, in addition to co-existence and freedom—the human act of being—the transcendental character of the personal intellect and personal love must also be discovered by investigating the openness of human co-existence. Due to the fact that it is free, intimate co-existence is cognitive and loving. In this way, the personal transcendentals are convertible.

On the other hand, if truth and goodness are denominated as transcendentals (as is the case in medieval metaphysics),⁶⁶ it is reasonable to conclude that, in anthropology, personal knowing and personal loving shall be transcendental, since truth and goodness—metaphysical transcendentals—depend on the personal intellect and on personal love. If extra-mental reality is transcendental in being an act of being, it makes sense that the act of being on which its truth depends will be transcendental; that is, the openness of the co-act of the human being qua intellect is also transcendental. Only if it is admitted that the human intellect is transcendental can the transcendental character of the truth be saved. Based on this reasoning,

⁶³It must be taken into account that this thesis must not be understood in an abstract way: that man manifests the existence of God means that each person manifests that God exists. In other words, each *personal human being* is equivalent to a demonstration of God's existence.

⁶⁴Polo, *Quién es el hombre*, 225.

⁶⁵See Polo, *La persona humana*, 157.

⁶⁶See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 3, corp. In the words of Jan A. Aertsen: "[T]he *anima* is the being that can accord with every being. Man is marked, we might say, by a transcendental openness" (*Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals: The Case of Thomas Aquinas* [Leiden: Brill, 1996], 105).

Polo establishes the personal intellect as one of the transcendentals that are convertible with the human act of being.⁶⁷

In the same way, if goodness is admitted in metaphysics as a transcendental, it can be stated in anthropology that the openness of the human act of being *qua* loving is transcendental; thus, in line with the radical consideration of the will, there is another personal transcendental which Polo calls "personal love."⁶⁸

In effect, if the transcendental character of knowing and of loving is not admitted by anthropology, truth and goodness cannot be established as transcendental by metaphysics, because not all acts of being are personal, and therefore not all beings know and love. Personal knowing and loving are convertible with the human co-act of being, but not with the extra-mental act of being, since the being of the physical universe does not have intimacy. Conversely, the human person is a being who is "openness," "freedom," "intellection," and "love." Hence, "person" means intimacy: the personal intellect and personal loving are anthropological transcendentals because they are convertible with the human co-act of being. Put another way, the activity of the "personal human co-being" is a loving and cognitively free activity.⁶⁹ In the human person, personal co-existence, personal freedom, personal intellect and personal love can be discovered as personal transcendentals.⁷⁰ It must be stressed that these four transcendentals are convertible and that only in their conversion is their personal character attained.⁷¹ Moreover, I consider that the distinction between anthropology and metaphysics has been satisfactorily demonstrated, since each of these disciplines studies different acts of being (the act of persistence, the act of co-existence, and the act of Origin). If reality is different in terms of its acts of being, anthropology can be properly labeled transcendental. For this reason, Polo rightly gives his study the title *Transcendental Anthropology*.

⁶⁷See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 211-6.

⁶⁸See Polo, *Antropología*, I, 217-28.

⁶⁹The conversion of co-existential freedom with the intellect is expressed in the formula *intellectus ut co-actus* (see Polo *Antropología*, I, 119), while personal loving is dual in *giving* and *accepting* (see *ibid.*, 218).

⁷⁰The distinction between the personal transcendentals and their convertibility are studied in the second part of my book, *El hombre como ser dual. Estudio de las dualidades radicales según la «Antropología trascendental» de Leonardo Polo* (Pamplona: Eunsa, 2001), 181-435-

⁷¹If the anthropological transcendentals are not attained in terms of conversion, it is due to the fact that they have been established separately, that is, they have been stripped of their intimacy.