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The Anthropological Foundation of Ethics and its Dualities

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ABSTRACT: Ethics, according to L. Polo, is dual, not just in respect to other philosophical disciplines, but intrinsically dual, both for its double noetic method (syn-deresis and practical reason), as well as for its real dual themes: external realities, real ends (ultimate end and means), and internal realities (virtues and acts of the will and sensitive tendencies).

KEYWORDS: Ethics, Anthropology, Leonardo Polo, External Dualities, Internal Dualities, Thematic Dualities and Methodical Dualities.

1. ETHICS IS A *DUAL* DISCIPLINE

First of all, in order to set up the *foundations of ethics*¹, it is necessary to take into account that ethics consists in *dualities*, that is to say, various real dimensions that are combined, forming pairs.

The aim of this paper is to explain the following brief and condensed passage of the Spanish philosopher Leonardo Polo: “Ethics is dual, for it deals with *norms* and *goods*. Moral norms themselves also offer a duality: the first moral principle (enclosed in synderesis, an innate habit... that is also dual) and directly prevailing laws, which are in their turn positive or negative. In turn, goods are internal (virtues) and intended, or external, according to the duality of means and ends”². In this text, the author holds that ethics –the supreme practical knowledge– deals with two main themes: norms and goods. And yet in other writings of different times he asserts that ethics has three bases: norms, goods and virtues. We must therefore clarify this apparent discrepancy³.

In order to do this, what we must first consider is that in ethics, as in any other discipline, we must distinguish between those *themes* or subjects that are known and the proper cognitive *methods* with which we know the former. Both methods and themes are *dual*. Ethics’ themes are indeed two: external goods and moral virtues (which are internal goods). The methods or levels of human knowledge to acquire the objects of ethics are also two: synderesis and the acts of

¹ Cfr. about this topic: SWEET, W. (ED), *The Basis of Ethics*, Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 2000; FLIPPEN, D., “On Two Meanings of Good and the Foundations of Ethics in Aristotle and St. Aquinas”, *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 58 (1984) 54-64; JOHNSON, D. H., “The Ground for a Scientific Ethics According to St. Thomas”, *The Modern Schoolman*, 40 (1963) 347-372.

² POLO, L., *Antropología*, I. *La persona humana*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 1999, 165. In the following pages, Polo’s writings will be quoted according to the standardized method set forth by the journal *Studia Poliana*.

³ See *Lecciones de ética*, Pamplona, Eunsa, Astrolabio, 2013. Even though this book was only recently published, it belongs to the academic year 1981-2. See also: “La ética y las virtudes del empresario”, an interview with Patricia Pintado Masca-reño, published in *Atlántida*, Madrid, 14 (1993) 80-92, and reproduced in *El Mercurio* de Santiago de Chile, 29-VIII-1993, 14-15; “Ética y empresa”, a speech given at the Universidad de Piura (Perú), in 1992. *Ética: hacia una versión moderna de temas clásicos*, was published in 1995; *Sobre la existencia cristiana*, from 1996; “Las virtudes morales”, a talk to professors in the Programa de Alta Dirección (PAD), Universidad de Piura, Lima, 14, septiembre del 1998.

practical reason. Both are called ‘norms’, even though they are distinct, for synderesis offers the first moral rules (‘first practical principles’, to employ the medieval terminology), while practical reason provides concrete action guidelines. Here, too, we have therefore an apparent paradox, for even since the Middle Ages we have distinguished three noetical dimensions in ethics, namely, synderesis, conscience, and the acts of practical reason. We must thus find out whether these are three really distinct dimensions or whether one of them is just nominally different from one of the others. If conscience, for example, were an act and not a habit, it could only be an act of practical reason.

If we manage to arrive at this conclusion, the preceding will show that both the *method* and the *theme* of ethics is dual, even more so, ‘doubly dual’, for its own noetic method has two dimensions, each of which is also dual: on one hand, the superior noetic level of ethics is an innate habit, that of *synderesis*, which has, according to Polo, two dimensions: the superior illuminates the will; the inferior illuminates the intellect. On the other hand, the inferior noetic level of ethics is made up of acquired habits and the acts of practical reason. And the subject of ethics is also ‘doubly dual’: the internal subjects are virtues, which are dual; the external subjects are goods, which are of a double order: particular and common. Every virtue has also two dimensions, just like the contrary vices to each virtue. Likewise, particular and common goods are dual: in particular goods we can distinguish means and ends; while within common goods we can distinguish the ‘common social good’, which is different and inferior to the ‘common ultimate end’, which coincides with God.

The Polian text we have referred to above speaks of the *intrinsic* dualities of ethics. But we must also take into account that this human knowledge is not and cannot be isolated from other human forms of knowledge, forming dualities with them. Indeed, it submits to two superior forms of knowledge and is connected with many more inferior forms of knowledge. On one hand, ethics dualizes with a superior form of knowledge that deals with the human person⁴, and that is the *transcendental anthropology* –which studies the personal *act of being*–, to such a degree that without it, it cannot be justified.

⁴ Cfr. about the relationship between Ethics and Person: GALLAGER, D. M., “Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas”, *Acta Philosophica*, 4 (1995) 51-71.

And it also dualizes with a superior form of knowledge that deals with the *principal* non-human reality: metaphysics, which deals with extra-mental, real acts of being (first principles).

All inferior forms of knowledge must also dualize with ethics: both those that deal with human affairs and those that not. Indeed, regarding humanistic forms of knowledge inferior to ethics, as this binds together family and education, the so-called *sciences of the family* and *sciences of education* must inevitably be grounded in ethics. Since it also sheds light on the psychic and the social, *psychology* and *sociology* must also be subordinated to ethics. And as such without ethics, we cannot legitimize law and intersubjective human communication; ethics also grounds *Law* and *communication sciences*. It is also ethics, the discipline that grounds entrepreneurial activity and the economy, as well as culture and the fine arts, so there cannot be *economic-business sciences* and a *theory of culture* without ethics. The same can be said of *history*. As for other forms of knowledge that do not have the human being as its subject but other physical realities, that is to say, *experimental sciences* in league with technology, they must also be dualized with ethics, for if they proceed without, or against it, their actions would lack human meaning.

The preceding words mean that ethics dualizes above with anthropology first, and with metaphysics in the second place; and below with the other human knowledges in the first place, and experimental sciences in the second. The themes that are superior to ethics are the *acts of being*, within which are in the first place the personal ones, and then the non-personal ones. The inferior themes are the *essences*, within which are firstly the human essences, and then essences of the physical universe. Acts of being belong to the *transcendental* order; essences are of the *categorical* order. Ethics is, therefore, the only link between the transcendental and the predicamental order. As their extrinsic dualities with other forms of knowledge are many, in this paper we must limit our focus only to its *intrinsic dualities*, which are, as we have indicated, *methodical* and *thematic*. Furthermore, as their detailed study would involve an excessively extended investigation, here we will confine ourselves to their ordered presentation and a succinct description, because the goal of this paper is to emphasize that the right approach to ethics is *dual*, both in its *themes* and in its *methods*. To that end we will intend to summarize here hundreds of Polian pages full of dense information.

As a consequence of this, it may be seen that the study of ethics is *systemic*. We can therefore hold that the usual *analytical* studies about each dimension of ethics responds to a reductive view. It will also be seen that the Polian discoveries in this field are in line with classic Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, and in opposition to modern and contemporary philosophical proposals, inasmuch as they left this path.

2. THE METHODICAL DUALITIES OF ETHICS

The Polian theory of knowledge understands ‘*method*’ as a determinate noetic level appropriate to the understanding of a specific subject or theme. Ethics has two noetic levels to study its objects: *synderesis* and *practical reason*. The first is supra-rational; the second, rational. Both are plural for, on one hand, synderesis is dual as it has two cognitive members: the superior, that illuminates the will and which Polo calls *willing-I*, and the inferior, which illuminates the intellect, called by him *seeing-I*. On the other hand, in practical reason we must distinguish two dimensions: the superior, made up of the *acquired habits* –conceptual practical habit, eubulia, synesis-gnome and prudence–, and the inferior, formed by the respective *acts* or *immanent operations* of those habits –the act of the practical concept, deliberation, practical judgment and *imperium*–. Habits allow for the knowledge of the acts, and these for the knowledge of real physical goods. But only the *willing-I* of the synderesis knows the virtues and acts of the will.

Apart from that, synderesis is not limited to shedding light over immaterial faculties, their habits and virtues, but also over organic faculties, for otherwise we would have no experience of their current state. Let us proceed, then, from the superior to the inferior, to expound these noetic levels. We must keep in mind that with synderesis we can know about human *essence*, and with practical reason we can know about the essence of physical reality, but only from a practical point of view (its theoretical knowledge provided by theoretical reason).

a) *Synderesis*⁵

It is the protagonist of this study, for, excluding the final end, it is the superior reality studied in this article. Still, it is a noetic reality, which means it is a *method*, not a *theme*. We must keep in mind that “in the (human) essence, the method is superior to the theme”⁶; on the other hand, regarding the *act of being*, the contrary is true. To sum up, in ethics, knowing is superior to that which is known, excluding the reality of the final end. Nevertheless, ethics does not know this final good as it is and that is why our adhesion to it cannot be complete in this life. According to Polo, synderesis is the ‘apex’ of the human *essence*⁷, the most superior part of it⁸ (the rest, the slopes,

⁵ Cfr. BOURKE, V. J., “The Synderesis Rule and Right Reason”, *The Monist*, 66 (1983) 71-82; GONZÁLEZ, A. M., “Precepts, Synderesis and Virtues in St. Thomas aquinas”, *The Thomist*, 63 (1999) 217-240; MOLINA, F., *La sindéresis*, Pamplona, Universidad de Navarra, 1999; SELLES, J. F., “La sindéresis o razón natural como la apertura cognoscitiva de la persona humana a su propia naturaleza”, *Revista Española de filosofía Medieval*, 10 (2003) 321-333.

⁶ *Antropología, II. La esencia de la persona humana*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2003, 73.

⁷ This Polian notion appears for the first time in *Antropología I*: “La sindéresis es un hábito innato que ha de considerarse en orden a la voluntad y a la inteligencia. Por tanto, la sindéresis es el *ápice* de la esencia del hombre. Designo ese ápice con la palabra *yo*. El yo no es idéntico con la persona humana, sino el ápice de la esencia del hombre en tanto que depende de la persona; por eso, la distinción real en antropología no se confunde con la distinción real del ser extramental y su esencia”. Ed. cit., 160. “El *ápice* de la esencia del hombre se cifra en la sindéresis, que es un hábito innato realmente distinto del carácter de *además*. Esa distinción se formula del siguiente modo. En primer lugar, por depender de la persona, la sindéresis es un hábito, asimismo, dual. Se ha dicho también que equivale al yo. La dualidad del yo es, por lo pronto, su respecto a las dos potencias inmateriales: yo significa ver (*ver-yo*) y querer (*querer-yo*). El ver deriva del *intellectus ut co-actus*, y el querer deriva del amor donal, es decir, de transcendentales personales. Ahora bien, ni *ver-yo* ni *querer-yo* son transcendentales”. *Ibid.*, 161.

We must nevertheless keep in mind that “en suma, el Tomo II de la *Antropología transcendental* estudia la esencia cuyo ápice es el hábito innato llamado sindéresis, y que depende de los transcendentales antropológicos”. *Antropología, II*, 11.

It continues to appear in later publications: “Hay que decir que el ápice de la *esencia humana* es un *hábito innato*, del que ya se ha tratado en la *Antropología transcendental II*, la *sindéresis*, así llamada desde el Medievo”. *Epistemología, creación y divinidad*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2014, 87. “La esencia es la *manifestación* de la persona. Esa manifestación tiene lugar de acuerdo con la dualidad que llamo *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*, que son las dos dimensiones de la *sindéresis*, que –como se ha indicado– es un hábito innato, que se corresponde con el ápice de la esencia humana”. *Ibid.*, 257.

⁸ “La sindéresis como disponer global se describe como el ápice de la esencia del hombre. Sin embargo, ese ápice se distingue de la perfección esencial, la cual radica en los hábitos adquiridos. Que el ápice de la esencia se distinga de su perfección es

are made up by the immaterial faculties). The human *essence* is really distinct, because it is inferior, to the human *act of being*⁹, whence it is born¹⁰; it is also equivalent to what modern philosophy calls an ‘I’¹¹, which is really distinct from the person. It is also equivalent to what classical philosophy called a ‘soul’, which must be seen as distinct from the human *spirit*¹². The ‘I’ or the *soul* is also equivalent to what we term today *personality*.

Human essence is a manifestation of the personal act of being¹³. Synderesis, therefore, manifests our personal being. As such, just as an act of being is composite, so is synderesis. It is effectively an innate

posible por la dualidad del yo, es decir, porque se trata de una globalidad dual”. *Antropología*, I, 162.

⁹ “En cuanto que ápice de la esencia del hombre, la sindéresis tiene carácter potencial (en otro caso, la distinción real no se puede sentar). Ese carácter potencial es más neto en el *ver-yo* que en el *querer-yo*, precisamente por eso... el *ver* suscita la potencia inmaterial, es decir, la visibilidad. Las operaciones, los actos detenidos o actuales, no son suscitados por el ver, sino ejercidos por la potencia”. *Antropología*, I, 161. “La sindéresis no equivale a la co-existencia, sino que es el ápice de la esencia del hombre, del que la persona se distingue realmente no co-existiendo con él, sino en términos de dependencia”. *Ibid.*, 196. “El ápice de la esencia del hombre, la sindéresis, se ha descrito como *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*. La manifestación esencial del yo es inseparable del ver y del querer. Pero ni *ver-yo* ni *querer-yo* significan *yo soy*”. *Ibid.*, 210. “La distinción real equivale al descenso de la pura transparencia hasta el *ver-yo* y el *querer-yo*”. *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁰ “La esencia (humana) nace de ella (de la persona); sencillamente se trata de que mirando hacia abajo la persona *alumbra* y *halla*... ese mirar se llama *querer-yo* y *ver-yo*”. *Antropología*, II, 81.

¹¹ “En cuanto que el *yo* es la consideración primordial –o en su ápice– de la esencia del hombre, su dependencia de la persona es la más estrecha”. *Antropología*, I, 184. “El ápice de esa dependencia se llama *yo*. Por tanto, el *yo* –que se malentiende como unitario, es decir, como *yo mismo*– es dual: *ver-yo* y *querer-yo* se distinguen”. *Ibid.* “La persona considerada hacia la esencia, es decir, en tanto que la esencia depende de ella, se designa como *yo*. El yo es una dualidad: por una parte, *ver-yo*, por otra parte, *querer-yo*. La distinción estriba en que en el primer caso el *yo* no es constituyente, y en el segundo sí”. *Ibid.*, 182. “En esta dimensión humana aparece lo que en la filosofía moderna entiende por *yo* o subjetividad”. *Epistemología*, 137.

¹² “El alma humana es la manifestación esencial cuyo ápice es la dualidad *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*. Por tanto, el alma humana consta de dos potencias: la inteligencia y la voluntad”. *Antropología*, II, 68.

¹³ “La manifestación de la persona humana es el proseguir del hábito innato llamado sindéresis; pues ese proseguir se realiza de acuerdo con lo que llamo *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*”. *Antropología*, II, 12. “La sindéresis es un hábito innato dual; de acuerdo con dicha dualidad se manifiesta la intimidad de la persona como luz iluminante”. *Ibid.*, II., 22. “La dualidad *ver-yo* y *querer-yo* es la manifestación de la intimidad de la persona, y la sindéresis es el ápice dual de la esencia humana”. *Ibid.*, II., 23.

habit with two dimensions¹⁴: the inferior, *seeing-I*, allows the activation of theoretical reason, and the superior or *willing-I* allows the knowledge of the will and, in a derivative way, the knowledge of practical reason. This does not mean there are two 'I's or two souls¹⁵, but rather two different views on the part of the human person to its superior faculties. We may remember here that one of the main themes of Western philosophy is the age-old polemics that has debated the supremacy of the intellect or the will. Polo brings a solution to this problem, as in other cases, by 'elevating' it. The point is that the duality between intellect and will does not mean a duality between seeing-I and willing-I, but rather the other way around. The former faculties are really distinct because their root, *synderesis*, is double. In the same fashion, seeing-I and willing-I are really distinct because of their roots –the personal radicals, personal knowledge and personal love, respectively¹⁶– that conform to a transcendental duality.

¹⁴ "El ápice de su esencia, la *sindéresis*, también es dual: significa *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*". *Antropología*, I, 161-2. "El ápice de la esencia del hombre es la *sindéresis*, es decir, la dualidad *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*. La investigación acerca de la esencia del hombre pertenece al segundo tomo de este libro". *Ibid.*, 171. "Según dicha distinción el *yo* no es un transcendental ("hacia" la esencia equivale al ápice de la esencia, y la esencia del hombre no es transcendental)". *Ibid.*, 183. "El ápice de la esencia del hombre es dual: *ver-yo*, *querer-yo*". *Ibid.*, 185. "En tanto que la *sindéresis* es el ápice de la manifestación esencial, llega a la potencia intelectual, que no es saturada por el límite mental, y a la voluntad". *Ibid.*, 192. "Los dos miembros de la dualidad de la *sindéresis* son el *ver-yo* y el *querer-yo*". *Ibid.*, 199. "El ápice de la esencia humana es un hábito dual, cuyo primer miembro es *ver-yo* y el segundo *querer-yo*". *Ibid.*, II, 93. "El alma humana se manifiesta con los actos de dos potencias, a saber, la inteligencia y la voluntad. De acuerdo con esa dualidad el ápice del alma es la *sindéresis*, es decir, *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*". *Ibid.*, II, 126. "La esencia humana no es un cíclope, sino que tiene dos ojos: aquel que he llamado *ver-yo* y otro al que llamo *querer-yo*". *Nietzsche como pensador de dualidades*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2005, 215. "La *sindéresis* tiene dos dimensiones, distintas jerárquicamente entre sí. A la inferior, que activa y perfecciona a la inteligencia, se la llamó *ver-yo*. La superior, la que conoce, activa, perfecciona la voluntad se la denominó *querer-yo*". *Epistemología*, 137. "La esencia es la *manifestación* de la persona. Esa manifestación tiene lugar de acuerdo con la dualidad que llamo *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*, que son las dos dimensiones de la *sindéresis*, que –como se ha indicado– es un hábito innato, que se corresponde con el ápice de la esencia humana". *Epistemología*, 257.

¹⁵ "La distinción entre *ver-yo* y *querer-yo* no obliga a admitir dos yoes, ni dos potencias cognoscitivas o volitivas espirituales. Con todo, es menester no reducir la voluntad a la inteligencia como hace Aristóteles al sostener que la voluntad está en la razón o, al revés, que la razón quiere –Schelling–". *Antropología*, II, 212. "La dualidad del ápice de la esencia no comporta dos almas, sino el proceder de la co-existencia". *Ibid.*, II, 213.

¹⁶ "El amor es el celo que consume a *querer-yo*". *Antropología*, II, 222.

Synderesis also has knowledge of the organic faculties, senses and appetites, even though reason has no knowledge of them, for its abstractions proceed from the objects of the particular senses, and it is obvious that cognitive and appetitive faculties are not identical to their known objects. It may be seen that knowledge from synderesis is unifying, for it knows both the intelligence in relation with the senses and the will in relation with the appetites. It can thus be explained, for example, that abstraction, in which internal senses and reason are involved, depends upon it¹⁷. At any rate, if synderesis knows the complete human *nature*, and knows it inasmuch as it must grow in active correspondence with physical reality, this may indicate that synderesis depends both on the knowledge of the human natural law¹⁸ and natural physical law¹⁹. Knowledge of the former depends on synderesis in a direct way, while knowledge of the latter depends directly on reason. So the fact that the present day world has lost the value of human natural law and also infringes upon natural physical

¹⁷ “La primera operación intelectual es la abstracción. La dependencia de la potencia intelectual respecto de la sindéresis ha de entenderse según lo que, en la filosofía tradicional, se llama iluminación de los fantasmas, la cual es previa a la suscitación de las operaciones intelectuales”. *Antropología*, II, 22. And in a footnote he adds, “La iluminación de los fantasmas se atribuye al intelecto agente. Pero si el intelecto agente se asimila a la luz transparente, la cual es superior a las luces iluminantes, es más ajustado sostener que la iluminación de los fantasmas corresponde a la sindéresis, es decir, una luz iluminante a la que equivale el inspirarse en la vida añadida”.

¹⁸ “El conocimiento de la ley natural (humana) corre a cargo de la sindéresis a la que, en cierto modo, equivale. En cambio, no corresponde a la razón práctica”, *Antropología*, II, 185. In another place he writes, “Como preside cognoscitivamente la naturaleza humana, se puede decir que la sindéresis es la fuente del conocimiento de la *ley natural*. En este sentido se puede entender como vigilancia atenta a la realidad y como capacidad de juzgar”. *Epistemología*, 137. And in another footnote, “La interpretación exclusivamente práctica de la acción humana, al dejar de lado los temas realmente transcendentales, se presta al olvido de la ley natural”. *Ibid.*, nota 6. Cfr. over this topic: SELLÉS, J. F. “Natural Law, Essential law and Personal law”, in GARCÍA, A. N., TORRALBA, J. M. (eds), *Natural Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008, 349-360; J. M. GREENE, R. A., “Instinct of nature: natural law, Synderesis and the Moral Sense”, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58 (1997) 173-198; RHONHEIMER, M., “The cognitive Structure of the Natural law and the Truth of Subjectivity”, *The Thomist*, 67 (2003) 1-44.

¹⁹ “La noción de ley natural (física) -aunque haya evolucionado mucho- es la base de la ciencia física moderna”. *Quién es el hombre. Un espíritu en el mundo*, Madrid, Rialp, 1993, 188. Elsewhere he adds: “la *fisis* es ley natural, es ley de acuerdo con la naturaleza... Por tanto, si se acepta que hay ley natural, ésta se da en ellas, en el orden de los artefactos, y si no se la acepta, entonces éstos quedan desasistidos”. *Filosofía política*, pro manuscrito, 16.

laws, shows that the natural light of synderesis has dimmed. And as synderesis knows such realities from a practical point of view²⁰, it impels some (human realities) to act upon the others (physical realities)²¹.

The fact that synderesis is open to the knowledge of the entire human nature and that reason is open to the knowledge of the entire physical nature assumes two previous positions. First, that human nature is superior both to physical reality and to the natural human resources that must operate upon the said physical reality, and therefore that the person is called to ameliorate both, not to impoverish or debase them. Now then, the *act of being of the human person* is known by means of the *habit of wisdom*. Secondly, since the nature of physical extra-mental reality is not a human invention, it must be accepted and perfected on its own way of being according to its final addressee, which is not man but the divine being. Therefore, the knowledge of the essence of the physical world depends on the previous and superior knowledge of its foundation: the *act of being of the universe*, and its origin: the *divine act of being*. All these are topics of metaphysics, which may be known by means of the innate habit of *first principles*. Consequently, synderesis dualizes with, or is dependent on, its superior side, the habit of wisdom, which allows knowledge of the human personal act of being, which the human essence depends upon; on the inferior side, it dualizes with the habit of first principles, that notices the act of being of the universe²², upon which the essence of the universe depends (physical tetracausality).

²⁰ “En lo más hondo de la inteligencia existen principios directivos de alcance global o supernormativo. Para nombrarlos, el término tradicional es *sindéresis*. La *sindéresis* es el conocimiento de los primeros principios de la realidad en tanto que en ella se sitúa la acción práctica. El conocimiento de los primeros principios incluye el bien transcendental. También la voluntad se refiere al bien. Por tanto, los primeros principios intelectuales son susceptibles de ser tomados desde el punto de vista práctico”. *Ética*, 160.

²¹ “El primer principio cognoscitivo que rige la acción humana, que suele llamarse *sindéresis*”. *Ética*, 24.

²² The act of being of the universe and the human personal act of being are known to be open to the divine act of being. But the latter is known in a different way when knowing each of the former: the act of being of the universe, corresponding to the divine being, is adverted as ‘origin’ or necessary ‘fundament’, while in the second case, referred to human being, it is known as ‘pluri-personal free being’. It is evident that what is personal and free is superior to what is impersonal and necessary.

Now then, keeping all this in mind, “synderesis holds that acting is a matter of principle; it does not say what to do, only that something is to be done”²³. We must also take into account that such a principle impels us not only to ‘act’ upon the world, but rather to its being known by the intellect, being desired by the will and that the rest of the human potencies correspond to it according to their proper way of being, that is to say, to behave with it in a way that is appropriate to its being and its proper growth, and in a way that respects the way the world is and may be perfect²⁴. Synderesis allows us, therefore, to know our natural disposition in correspondence with physical and cultural realities, and impels our actions over them. Let us now attend to the two dimensions of synderesis²⁵.

a.1) The *willing-I*. This is the superior member of synderesis, born out of the person; it illuminates two human themes: directly, the will and by redundancy, practical reason. Regarding its activation by the will, Polo writes that “just as the will, its acts and moral virtues depend on synderesis, so the ‘I’ designates the ‘I’ as *willing*: ‘I’ means ‘willing-I’”²⁶. Without this knowledge, the will could not be known, traversed by meaning, sense, or truth, given that reason cannot have any knowledge of it, inasmuch as it knows through abstraction and the will cannot be abstracted, as it is not sensible²⁷. This dimension of

²³ *Ética*, 162.

²⁴ “El hombre tiene principios morales que en definitiva se reducen a esto: quiere, haz. Esto es conocido por *sindéresis*. El hombre es un ser en el mundo y la realidad tiene una estructura primordial a la que el hombre debe responder con su acción y con la contemplación: contempla y actúa, pon de tu parte; pero no seas pasivo, no omitas”. *Ética*, 162.

²⁵ “En el fondo, el hombre conoce que debe hacer. Es la *sindéresis*. Por los primeros principios el hombre conoce su puesto en la realidad y desde ahí se da cuenta ante todo de que debe tener iniciativa. A veces se dice que el principio que se conoce por la *sindéresis* es ‘haz el bien y evita el mal’. Prefiero formular ese principio simplemente así: ‘haz el bien, actúa’; actúa todo lo que puedas y mejora tu actuación”. *Ética*, 161.

²⁶ *Antropología*, I, 160. “Corre a cargo de la *sindéresis* el descubrimiento de la verdad de la voluntad... Por consiguiente, *querer-yo* puede describirse como el *verdadear* de la voluntad”. *Ibid.*, II, 23. “El estudio de *querer-yo* conduce a la exposición de la voluntad y sus actos”. *Ibid.*, II, 93. “En tanto que ilumina la voluntad, la *sindéresis* se denomina *querer-yo*. En este sentido sostengo que *querer-yo* constituye los actos voluntarios de acuerdo con el *verdadear* propio de la voluntad”. *Ibid.*, II, 128.

²⁷ The will, its acts and virtues cannot be known by reason because they are immaterial, and what is immaterial cannot be abstracted. But as we clearly know our will,

synderesis is superior to the other one (the one that knows and activates the reason), because the will is not ‘clear’ –as it is not a cognitive faculty–, and throwing light upon it requires more light than upon reason²⁸. This means that the *willing-I* and the will depend more upon the human person than the *seeing-I* and the reason²⁹. Even more, synderesis takes its name from its endorsement of the will, more than that of the reason³⁰.

Furthermore, while the inferior dimension of synderesis is reduced to illuminating, the superior constitutes the acts and virtues of the will³¹, which also indicates that the will itself is more closely connected to the person than reason. That is why the will does not will unless ‘I will to will’, that is to say, unless the *willing-I* supports the willing of the will. Ultimately, unless the person herself wills. This indicates that if the act of willing of the will is good, synderesis must endorse it; if it is not good, it must disrupt it³². In light of the subject’s implication, Polo holds that ‘I’ means ‘willing-I’³³. At the same time, as synderesis knows the will perfected with moral virtues, and that these are the key for human morality, we may call this knowledge

our acts of willing and our virtues, we must affirm that there is a distinct instance, superior to reason, that knows them: synderesis.

²⁸ “El *querer-yo* ilumina la voluntad. Dicha iluminación es requerida por la constitución de lo voluntario y, en vez de “desintensificarse”, se incrementa. Por consiguiente, el *querer-yo* es el miembro superior de la dualidad de la *sindéresis*”. *Antropología*, I, 198. “La voluntad, que es la potencia del alma iluminada por *querer-yo*”, *Ibid.*, II., 22. “*Ver-yo* y *querer-yo* son iluminaciones esenciales que se distinguen por su intensidad”. *Ibid.*, II., 213.

²⁹ “El despliegue de lo voluntario es esencial y señala que *querer-yo* depende de la persona más intensamente que *ver-yo*”. *Antropología*, II, 127. “*Querer-yo* constituye sin desprenderse del *yo* por ser el compromiso de la persona”. *Ibid.*, II, 231.

³⁰ “*Ver* –es decir, el *yo*– puede considerarse también como un hábito innato al que en atención al *querer-yo* se llama *sindéresis*. Por tanto, el *querer-yo* también es un *ver*. *ver*, iluminar a la voluntad, equivale a constituir lo voluntario (ante todo, lo que Tomás de Aquino denomina *simplex velle*)”. *Antropología*, I, 182.

³¹ “El *querer-yo* es superior al *ver-yo* porque es constituyente de actos”. *Antropología*, I, 184. “El *querer-yo* es el miembro superior de la dualidad de la *sindéresis*”. *Ibid.*, 189. “Los actos voluntarios son *constituidos*: todos ellos son modalidades dispositivas de *querer-yo*”. *Ibid.*, II, 23. “Los actos voluntarios tienen que ser constituidos –aportados– por la *sindéresis*. Tal constitución se designa como *querer-yo*”. *Ibid.*, II, 126. “*Querer-yo* constituye lo voluntario”. *Ibid.*, II, 133.

³² “Si el acto es malo. En ese caso, *querer-yo* está obligado a rechazarlo”. *Antropología*, II, 200.

³³ *Antropología*, I, 160.

‘moral experience’³⁴. To sum up, “the will is spiritual, not sensible, and the knowledge of it corresponds to a habit –synderesis– which is not an acquired rational habit”³⁵. Even so, the will is not always known by synderesis, but rather “the will is known as long as it constitutes itself as ‘the voluntary’, in which case we do not speak of *seeing-I* but of *willing-I*”³⁶.

a.2) *The seeing-I*. This is the inferior member of synderesis, which is born out of the person³⁷ and illuminates the intellect: “inasmuch as the intellectual faculty (reason), as well as its operations and acquired habits, depend upon synderesis, I shall describe the ‘I’ as *vision* or *seeing*. ‘I’ means *seeing-I*”³⁸. According to this, Polo holds that “I describes the intellect as an immaterial potency *aroused by seeing*, because it is a potency, I shall denominate it *visivity*. In turn, *see* means *seeing-I*. *See-I* is a dimension of synderesis, that is to say, of an innate habit that depends upon the *intellectus ut co-actus* (the personal knowledge, at the level of *act of being*). The person is the act of being as co-act”³⁹. On the upper side, seeing-I dualizes with two cognitive levels, the inferior is the habit of first principles⁴⁰, and the superior, personal knowledge (what the Aristotelian tradition calls the ‘agent intellect’)⁴¹. According to Polo, unlike the willing-I, the seeing-

³⁴ “La experiencia moral pertenece al otro miembro de la sindéresis, al que llamo *querer-yo*”. *Nietzsche*, 277.

³⁵ *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*, IV, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2004, 634.

³⁶ *Antropología*, I., 183. This thesis, however, opens up numerous other fronts. First: how can synderesis be always active, being an innate habit, and yet not always activate the intellect or the will? Second: Polo holds that “el conocimiento de los principios morales es integrante de la ciencia ética” (*Curso de teoría*, IV, 634), because ethics depends on synderesis; does this mean that the first practical principles are nothing different than the impulse synderesis gives to the faculties of the human composite so that they may act according to them and honor their hierarchical order?

³⁷ “*Ver-yo procede* de la persona, de la que nace”. *Antropología*, II, 72. “*Ver-yo* es método esencial, no acto de co-ser”. *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Antropología*, I, 160.

³⁹ *Antropología*, I, 160.

⁴⁰ “La luz iluminante esencial, el *ver-yo*, es dual con la concentración de la atención, esto es, con la advertencia de los primeros principios” (es decir, con el hábito de los primeros principios). *Antropología*, I, 185. “Aunque el *ver-yo* no sea constituyente, expresa la dependencia del *ver* respecto del *intellectus ut co-actus*. Por eso, el *ver-yo* posee valor de luz iluminante”. *Ibid.*, 186.

⁴¹ “Del *intellectus ut co-actus* depende el *ver-yo*”. *Antropología*, I, 185.

I encompasses reason, its acts and habits⁴². This does not mean it is equal to the sum of these, for it is separated from them⁴³. It is a light that pours out over the inferior and weakens as the entity of that which is illuminated is reduced⁴⁴. This level has no self-knowledge, but rather is like a torch that throws light over inferior noetic dimensions: “the seeing-I is not seen, but is rather that which is all encompassing, full of human dualities”⁴⁵, which are of the order of the human essence, which indicates that such a ‘seeing’ cannot stay in itself, but is entirely transmitting. This means it is only a *method* of knowing, and not a known *theme*⁴⁶. That is why there is no pride in it: “we must exclude intellectual pride; the seeing-I plays in favor of the *seeing-intellected*”⁴⁷, that is to say, of what is known by the intellect.

Polo formulates four theses, as synthetic as they are complicated, about the *seeing-I*: “1) The method *seeing* means, directly or without reflection, an *intellected* theme. 2) Therefore, seeing –in itself– does not mean seeing-intellected. 3) The method *seeing-I* arouses –directly or without reflection– *seeing-intellected*, which is its theme. 4) Therefore, neither ‘seeing’ nor ‘I’ –in itself– mean *seeing-I*”⁴⁸. Thesis 1) indicates that what is understood is either an object corresponding to an act of reason or an act of the reason by means of an acquired habit. Theses 2) and 4) indicate that the consideration of seeing ‘in itself’ is erroneous, that is to say, that *seeing-I* is a *method*, not a

⁴² “Por su carácter de ápice descendente, el *ver-yo* engloba la potencia intelectual, el límite mental y los hábitos adquiridos”. *Antropología*, I, 192.

⁴³ “La sindéresis se separa más de las operaciones que éstas de sus objetos”. *Antropología*, II, 19. “*Ver-yo* ilumina iluminaciones menos separadas que dependen de él”. *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴⁴ “El *ver-yo* se entiende como una iluminación gradualmente descendente, pues tanto los hábitos adquiridos como las operaciones intelectuales son también iluminantes. Además, el *ver-yo* ilumina los objetos de la fantasía. Con otras palabras, el *ver-yo* es una iluminación que se va ‘desintensificando’”. *Antropología*, I, 198.

⁴⁵ *Antropología*, I, 199.

⁴⁶ “El estudio de *ver-yo* se ha de atener a su carácter metódico”. *Antropología*, II, 63.

⁴⁷ *Antropología*, II, 70. “*Ver-yo* no significa *mío*”. *Ibid.*, II, 214. “*Ver-yo*, que es el ápice del método esencial procedente de la persona, y que he descrito como olvido de sí”. *Ibid.*, II, 73. “*Ver-yo* significa activación libre de ver que se olvida de sí al suscitar”. *Ibid.*, II, 236. “*Ver-yo* es olvido de sí sin sobresaltos”. *Ibid.*, II, 236. “*Ver-yo* no significa *yo veo*”. *Antropología*, I, 210. “Estimo imposible que en la línea del *ver-yo* el yo aparezca como tema”. *Nietzsche*, 215. “El yo no implica egoísmo, pues la sindéresis es el principio de la actividad de la esencia del hombre, que no se queda en sí misma, a menos que se incurra en pecado”. *Epistemología*, 328.

⁴⁸ *Antropología*, II, 69.

theme. Thesis 3) indicates that *seeing-I* activates the knowledge of reason, which is the theme of *seeing-I*; therefore, it indicates that *seeing-I* is not reflexive (no cognitive level is). Actually, the four theses indicate that the noetic reflexivity of an act of knowledge is impossible. This, which is so evident at the sensible level (i.e. the act of seeing does not see itself), has been put into doubt at the rational level by many recent authors that try to sustain their hypothesis in the Thomistic *corpus*⁴⁹. Polo nevertheless wholly rejects reflection at any noetic level, which can easily be seen in the *seeing-I*⁵⁰, i.e. in the apex of the human *essence*, and in personal knowledge, i.e. in the personal *act of being*⁵¹.

If *seeing-I* is an *innate* habit that illuminates reason, its illumination cannot be intermittent, but constant, which means that through this habit we *always* know we have intelligence, i.e. that reason is a faculty we possess, which also implies knowing that a person is not its intellect, and also, that the intellect is not a person. Even so, we must still explain how is it possible that the *seeing-I* always illuminates the reason and yet the reason is not always *in actu*, for it is clear that natively the reason is pure potency.

⁴⁹ See J. F. SELLÉS; "Revisión de la teoría reflexiva del conocer humano", *Sapientia*, LXIX/233 (2013) 67-95.

⁵⁰ "La sindéresis consagra la imposibilidad de conocer reflexivamente. Si el conocimiento fuera reflexivo, el abandono del límite mental no sería posible". *Antropología*, I, 155, nota 11. Indeed, to 'abandon the mental limit' means to know the operative act of knowledge by means of a superior knowing act, namely, a habit. That is why holding that acts of knowledge are reflexive implies a lack of understanding of the noetic mission of cognitive habits, and makes it impossible to explain the hierarchy of human knowledge and its unification. Furthermore, it would imply defending an act of knowledge not being an act, for the 'reflexivity' hypothesis entails 'potentiality', that is to say, that the act has two phases: a first phase in which the act is not known and a second phase in which it is. Furthermore, as the operative act is limited in its knowledge, abiding by it implies not adverting that human knowledge is susceptible of unrestricted growth. These four theses: 1) knowledge is an act; 2) the distinction of acts is hierarchical; 3) superior acts unify inferior acts; and 4) cognitive operativity is unrestricted, are the four central tenants that are present in the Thomistic-Aristotelian system, and are translated into axioms by Polo, upon which other lateral axioms depend. And if human knowledge is susceptible to a formulation of axioms, in which all axioms are interlaced, holding to a 'reflexive theory' would mean violating the entire way of being of human knowledge, a wild issue.

⁵¹ If personal knowledge knew itself completely, not only would God be unnecessary, because a human being would not need any illumination from a superior being, but also a contradiction would follow, since it would entail accepting that a human being does not initially know itself, but eventually does after the reflexive circle, which would mean educating knowledge from ignorance.

b) Practical reason

The *willing-I* illuminates, as it has been said, the will, but also practical reason⁵², and yet not directly, but rather as a result of *seeing-I*⁵³. If synderesis illuminates the will and practical reason, it discovers these faculties are configured for action, since they are constituted as passive potencies. From this illumination, obligation is derived⁵⁴.

⁵² “Se ha de distinguir la intelección de la voluntad en cuanto que tal, de la razón práctica, que es la presentación de los bienes a la voluntad. A dicha presentación sigue el ejercicio de actos voluntarios ordenados a bienes que son medios o fines”. *Ética*, 162.

⁵³ “Si se admite la dualidad de la sindéresis, es posible entender la distinción entre la razón teórica y la razón práctica. La explicación de la razón teórica es *ver-yo*, por su parte, la razón práctica es una redundancia de *querer-yo* en *ver-yo*. Si... la voluntad racional es una continuación de la voluntad nativa, y no una potencia distinta de ella, la razón práctica también ha de entenderse como derivada del segundo miembro de la sindéresis. Si esto no se tiene en cuenta, es difícil admitir que existe un conocimiento racional de los bienes”. *Antropología*, II, 159. “La distinción entre el conocimiento teórico y el conocimiento práctico sólo es posible si la sindéresis es un hábito dual; esto es, si se distinguen *ver-yo* y *querer-yo*”. *Ibid.*, 158. “Redundar es añadir actos -por ejemplo, los de la razón práctica-”. *Ibid.*, 230.

If the overflow of the human dimension, the willing-I, is superior to that over which it overflows, the seeing-I, and the latter activates the intellect, when the seeing-I relies on the overflow of the willing-I and illuminates reason, conforming to what is now called *practical reason*, does it mean that this operative line of the intellect is superior to theoretical reason? We should remember that both Greek and Medieval philosophy would answer negatively to that question, for they thought that practical reason is always true, while the ‘truth’ of practical reason consists of its correctness. Even so, they would admit that theoretical reason is not only about what is universal, necessary and the end, but also about the present, while they also held that practical reason does not only deal with what is particular, contingent and medial, but also with the future, and evidently knowing the future requires more cognitive light than knowing the past and the present.

⁵⁴ “Los primeros principios morales no se concretan *per modum conclusionis*, sino *per modum determinationis*. son determinables y no rígidamente concluyentes”. *Ética*, 119. “Las normas positivas no son normas concretas, sino principios universales primeros: ‘haz el bien’ admite una pluralidad”. *Ibid.* “A veces se dice que el principio que se conoce por la sindéresis es “haz el bien y evita el mal”. Prefiero formular ese principio simplemente así: “haz el bien, actúa”; actúa todo lo que puedas y mejora tu actuación *Ibid.*, 161. “El hombre tiene principios morales que en definitiva se reducen a esto: quiere, haz. Esto es conocido por sindéresis”. *Ibid.*, 162. “Como imperativo, ¡haz! se reduce a un precedente intelectual interno que la filosofía clásica llama sindéresis, sin el cual los actos voluntarios concretos no se explican. La sindéresis es propia de cada ser humano”. *Antropología de la acción directiva*, Madrid, Aedos, 1996, 125, nota 2. “A veces se dice que la sindéresis dirige a la voluntad el imperativo: «haz el bien y evita el mal». Estimo que no es exactamente así, sino que *querer-yo*, por lo pronto, anima a la voluntad a querer. La verdad se establece en la

Even so, illuminating a concrete action is not a competence of synderesis, but of practical reason⁵⁵. Without the *willing-I* of synderesis, the acts of the *voluntas ut natura*, which deal with ends, cannot be activated, and “without practical reason the acts of the *voluntas ut ratio* are not executed”⁵⁶, those that deal with means. The latter must also be accepted by *willing-I*, for “if *willing-I* does not accept the means, their corresponding voluntary acts remain suspended”⁵⁷. Given that we are faced with three different human dimensions – *willing-I*, practical reason and the will –, we can say that there may be disharmony between them, for “the will can move against practical reason, but that is a kind of vice and it affects the constitution of voluntary acts themselves”⁵⁸. At the same time, as the *willing-I* always endorses the willing acts of the will, the willing-I can also oppose practical reason, and therefore to that extent can also be vicious. So, even if

voluntad en orden al bien, con el que ella se corresponde como relación transcendental”. *Antropología*, II, 143. “La sindéresis anima a la voluntad de acuerdo con su verdad. No se trata siquiera de un deber moral impuesto, sino del principio mismo de la moralidad: «quiere, haz el bien, porque querer es tu verdad»”. *Ibid.* “Si el mal no pertenece, en principio, a la esencia humana, después del pecado es un deber moral apartarse de él y proponerse desterrarlo. Por eso, el primer imperativo de la sindéresis se amplía: *haz el bien y evita el mal*”. *Ibid.*, 197. “El precepto de la sindéresis es *haz el bien*, y secundariamente *evitar el mal*, aunque esto último le compete porque el mal ha sido incorporado a la historia del hombre”. *Ibid.*, 207. “El gran principio ético que es compatible con las normas y las virtudes es: haz el bien lo mejor que puedas”. *Filosofía y economía*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2012, 454. “El verdadero estatuto de la normatividad es principal: haz bien el bien, haz lo que tengas que hacer, y hazlo bien”. *Ibid.*, 455. “De acuerdo con la formulación clásica, tal como es iluminado a partir de la sindéresis, el primer principio moral sería éste: «haz el bien y evita el mal». Pero, en rigor, la sindéresis es la comprensión intelectual del carácter enriquecedor del dinamismo en la esencia de la persona humana. Con lo que el primer principio moral juega a favor del actuar y del enriquecimiento del poder de actuar; por así decir, mira más a lo positivo que a lo negativo. Por eso el mandato de la sindéresis se centra en hacer el bien: ‘no te conformes con ser inútil’”. *Epistemología*, 149.

⁵⁵ “La sindéresis dice: te puedes cansar, pero tu deber es seguir... La sindéresis señala que no se puede uno parar. Luego, en cada caso, uno tiene que ver qué hace situado en la realidad concreta, atendiendo al entorno; y entonces viene el juicio: hago o no hago tal cosa. Así pues, no es lo mismo el juicio moral que los principios morales, es decir, el conocimiento moral tiene dos niveles: el conocimiento de los principios y el conocimiento de lo concreto desde el punto de vista de lo que hay que hacer decidiendo. Por eso, la libertad en la sindéresis impulsa y en la conciencia dilucida y elige: hago esto o lo otro”. *Ética*, 163.

⁵⁶ *Antropología*, II, 132.

⁵⁷ *Antropología*, II, 133.

⁵⁸ *Antropología*, II, 143.

“synderesis constitutes the truth of the will”⁵⁹, it may also constitute its falsity, for it is synderesis, and not practical reason, that knows and acknowledges the acts of the will⁶⁰. “According to this, it is possible to solve... the issue of how goods conceived by practical reason may be communicated to the will. As the will is not a cognitive faculty, this communication must be undertaken by the *willing-I*. That is why it may be said that the synderesis harmonizes practical reason with the acts of the *voluntas ut ratio*”⁶¹. We will now describe the two noetic dimensions of practical reason, whose superior level is formed by its *acquired habits*, while the inferior dimension is made up of its respective *acts* or *immanent operations*. We must keep in mind that each habit dualizes with the acts that underlie it. Similarly, each habit dualizes with the preceding one, and it is the same for each one of the acts.

b.1) *The habits*. They are noetic perfections intrinsic to practical reason⁶² that illuminate or manifest their respective acts or immanent operations⁶³. They are the result of the redounding of the *willing-I* over the *see-I*, and resulting from that redounding the activation of *see-I* over the reason. Polo calls the illumination of the acquired habits of reason by means of the synderesis ‘intellectual experience’⁶⁴. Unlike the habits of theoretical reason, the habits of practical reason are never completely acquired; they can decrease and even be lost. Due to their growth we can exercise more acts, even more cognitive

⁵⁹ *Antropología*, II, 145.

⁶⁰ “Que la razón práctica conciba bienes, y después juzgue y argumente sobre ellos, no equivale a que conozca los actos voluntarios”. *Antropología*, II, 160. “La iluminación de los medios pertenece por redundancia a la razón práctica y es una objetivación extrapolada en la acción, pero la iluminación de los actos voluntarios corre a cargo de *querer-yo*, esto es, de su constitución”. *Ibid.*, 213.

⁶¹ “Que la razón práctica conciba bienes, y después juzgue y argumente sobre ellos, no equivale a que conozca los actos voluntarios”. *Antropología*, II, 160.

⁶² “Los hábitos adquiridos son el perfeccionamiento de la potencia intelectual”. *Antropología*, II, 67. “En su sentido más propio, el hábito es la perfección adquirida por las potencias superiores del alma a través del ejercicio de sus actos. Por tanto, existen hábitos de la inteligencia y hábitos de la voluntad”. *Ibid.*, 174.

⁶³ “Los hábitos adquiridos manifiestan las operaciones”. *Antropología*, I, 224. “Por encima de cualquier operación, existe el acto de conocer la operación, el cual no es una operación. Eso es lo que, ante todo y hablando de manera global, es un hábito intelectual adquirido”. *Nominalismo, idealismo y realismo*, Pamplona, Eunsá, 4ª ed., 2001, 236, nota 24.

⁶⁴ “Llamo *experiencia intelectual* al conocimiento de los hábitos adquiridos, manifiestos por la *synderesis*”. *Nietzsche*, 225.

ones⁶⁵. This kind of habit is not as hard to acquire as the virtues of the will, but they are more difficult to acquire than the ones of theoretical reason⁶⁶. They are also more similar to the virtues in that they are more inter-dependent⁶⁷, unlike the habits of theoretical and formal reason, which are more isolated from each other. Given that these habits are known by their respective acts, they should stand out more due to their acts than because of their own virtues⁶⁸. Even so, unlike the will, “operations and acquired habits do not saturate the intellect”⁶⁹, and yet they dispose the intelligence to know even more every time, which shows the irruption of freedom within it⁷⁰.

The acquired habits of practical reason are the following: a) The *habit of the practical concept*, through which we know all acts of ours that conceive of different realities as goods. b) The *eubulia*, which is the habit through which we know and compare between different acts of knowledge that deliberate about the greater or lower weight of real goods⁷¹ (its contrary vice is precipitation). c) *synesis* is “the virtue that perfects reason according to practical judgment”⁷², that is to say,

⁶⁵ “La prosecución operativa es imposible sin hábitos adquiridos”. *Antropología*, II, 66. “Los hábitos intelectuales adquiridos son los actos que perfeccionan la inteligencia, ante todo, porque sin ellos la prosecución operativa se detendría -las operaciones son actos detenidos o conmensurados con objetos-”. *Ibid.*, 78.

⁶⁶ “Las virtudes morales son trabajosas de adquirir; en cambio, no es ningún trabajo adquirir los hábitos intelectuales. Desde el primer acto intelectual, la inteligencia está en acto según un hábito. ¿Cuál? El correspondiente a esa operación. Así reforzada puede seguir, y con el nuevo acto adquiere otro hábito. Eso quiere decir que la pluralidad de hábitos se corresponde con la pluralidad de operaciones”. *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*, II, Pamplona, Eunsa, 1985, 233.

⁶⁷ “Los hábitos de la voluntad -las virtudes- son interdependientes. En esto se distinguen de los hábitos intelectuales adquiridos”. *Antropología*, II, 23. “La conexión entre las virtudes morales es más estrecha que la que existe entre los hábitos intelectuales adquiridos”. *Ibid.*, 176.

⁶⁸ “Las virtudes se destacan de los actos voluntarios menos que los hábitos intelectuales adquiridos de las operaciones de la inteligencia”. *Antropología*, II, 176.

⁶⁹ *Antropología*, II, 126.

⁷⁰ “Los hábitos abren la potencia a la libertad”. *Antropología*, II, 131. “Antes de los hábitos no hay libertad en las potencias espirituales”. *Ibid.*, 134. “Al adquirir hábitos la libertad entra en escena y las modulaciones de la acción humana son enormes”. *Ética*, 159.

⁷¹ “La *eubulia* sería la discreta distinción de la pluralidad de bienes mediales”. *Antropología*, II, 163. “Cuando la razón se perfecciona adquiriendo el saber aconsejar de modo recto y estable, se habla de un hábito que desde Aristóteles se denomina *eubulia*”. *Ibid.*, 178.

⁷² *Antropología*, II, 179.

“a good sense in the comparison of goods”⁷³ (its contrary vice is being inconsiderate⁷⁴). *Gnome* looks to obtain a judgment that is as upright as possible. It is the capacity to judge well⁷⁵ in exceptional cases (its contrary vice would be rigidity, i.e. to have judgment too fixated on a practical standard). d) *Prudence* is the highest habit of practical reason, the one that allows us to know our imperative acts or norms: “we must distinguish between the concrete moral norm and the awareness of this norm, between the act of *imperium* and the habit of prudence. Its contrary vice is negligence⁷⁶. We can also say that prudence has two dimensions according to the person it is directed to, regarding oneself or others.

Furthermore “Prudence is *genetrix virtutum*, for without it no other cardinal virtue can be acquired”⁷⁷. This does not mean that prudence is the end of all virtues and, therefore, superior to all of them, for, according to the medieval simile, we can say that just as maternity is ordered to filiation, so is prudence ordered to the acquisition of moral virtues; but, inasmuch as these differ hierarchically according to the greater or lower intention of the other prudence is superior to the virtues that regard oneself and inferior to those that regard others. Polo understands this service of prudence to the virtues as ‘conversion’⁷⁸. According to this, not only are the habits of

⁷³ See *Antropología*, II, 179.

⁷⁴ See *Antropología*, II, 179.

⁷⁵ See *Antropología*, II, 179. “La *gnome*, que también versa sobre el juicio práctico, pero en aquellos casos no previstos por la ley”. *Ibid.* “La *gnome* entendería que el plexo posee cierta flexibilidad, es decir, que excepcionalmente un medio admite una pluralidad de usos, sin que ello comporte astucia, sino ingenio”. *Ibid.*, 163.

⁷⁶ “La negligencia, o inhibición del imperio”. *Antropología*, II, 180. A este defecto los pensadores clásicos lo llaman *inconstancia*.

⁷⁷ *Antropología*, II, 133. “Sin embargo, la prudencia no es la única condición de la virtud moral; previamente se requiere el conocimiento del fin, que es superior al conocimiento de los medios dirigidos por la prudencia. El conocimiento del fin corre a cargo de la *sindéresis*”. *Ibid.*, 178.

⁷⁸ “Una virtud se ‘convierte’ en otra atendiendo a la intensificación de la intención de otro de los actos voluntarios con los que se adquiere. Según este criterio, la prudencia se ‘convierte’ en justicia, y la justicia en amistad... La justicia es prudente, y la amistad es prudente y justa, pero no al revés; por ejemplo, antes de su elevación, la prudencia no es justa. *Antropología*, II, 180. “La virtud de la justicia es superior a la virtud de la prudencia, a la que eleva a su propio nivel en tanto que los intercambios y las distribuciones implican medios”. *Ibid.*, 185. Por eso, “corregir al amigo es una muestra de la elevación de la prudencia y de la justicia como virtudes que acompañan a la amistad”. *Ibid.*, 192. Y también por eso, “para ser justo hace falta algo más

practical reason dualized, but also temperance and fortitude dualize with prudence⁷⁹, and the latter dualizes with justice and friendship⁸⁰. As prudence leads to acts of *imperium* over our practical conduct, prudence dualizes with (this) practical conduct⁸¹, which indicates that “acts of *imperium* must be continued by human activity in order to ameliorate natural and cultural realities. To this we owe the classic description of prudence as *recta ratio agibilium*, for ultimately, finding the golden mean”⁸². This does not mean that transitive human actions and real means are superior to prudence, but rather being inferior to (it) prudence, they make superior virtues possible when referring to others⁸³.

b.2) *The acts*. The immanent operations of practical reason present a thought object, which is intentional regarding external beings. Just as the acts of theoretical reason possess an object thought, so do the acts of practical reason possess an object thought. They are simple, for they do not present themselves but rather present what is known as such, i.e. they are not reflexive⁸⁴. In other words as any habit and cognitive act, whether acquired or innate, they are not self-intentional, simply because no act of knowledge is, as they all derive from the knowledge which is at the level of act of being, personal knowledge, which is likewise not reflexive⁸⁵. Known objects are intentional and not the acts of knowing. Precisely because there is a perfect commensuration, congruence or coincidence between the act of

que razón práctica (la prudencia) sino que se debe conocer la ley natural: *sindéresis*”. “Las virtudes morales”, pro manuscrito, 4.

⁷⁹ “La fortaleza y la templanza. Esas virtudes son privadas. Están al servicio de las virtudes de la prudencia y la justicia”. “La articulación público-privado”, pro manuscrito, 4.

⁸⁰ “Según este criterio, la prudencia se ‘convierte’ en justicia, y la justicia en amistad”. *Antropología*, II, 184. Prudence only deals with means and must be accompanied by other virtues that deal with the ends, like justice and friendship.

⁸¹ “La prudencia es una virtud dianoética; es decir, una virtud intelectual que marca el enlace de la inteligencia con la conducta práctica, en tanto que la conducta práctica puede y debe ser dirigida”. *Ética*, 49.

⁸² *Antropología*, II, 178.

⁸³ “Si las acciones no se detienen en la obra, se adquiere la virtud de la justicia”. *Antropología*, II, 169.

⁸⁴ “Los actos intelectuales no son reflexivos”. *Antropología*, II, 64. “La improcedencia de la reflexión es el sentido, por lo común insospechado, de la coincidencia método-tema”. *Ibid.*, 73.

⁸⁵ “Si esa condición de reflexivo no la tiene el cognoscente, menos la tendrán los niveles de conocimiento que desde él descienden”. *El conocimiento del universo físico*, Pamplona, Eunsá, 2008, 386.

knowing and the known object, the act can only go as far as presenting the thought object, without 'leaving' any residue to know itself or any other realities⁸⁶. As there is a plurality of distinct acts, we must establish that "if the intellectual acts are acts because they are simple –sincere, non-identical but coincident with their themes–, the faculty will be based on non-simplicity, i.e. in complexity"⁸⁷. The plurality of acts in a potency refrains from understanding them as potential, for what one does not know, a superior one knows, both being without potency⁸⁸. What is potential is the faculty; that is why, to explain the apparition of acts within it, a superior activating act is necessary. Besides, the mediation of the potency allows us not to confuse the act with its subject. On the other hand, unlike the acts of the will, "cognitive acts do not need to be constituted, precisely because they are possessive"⁸⁹.

The acts of practical reason are four: "besides simple apprehension, the acts of practical reason are *counsel*, *judgment* and *imperium*"⁹⁰. a) The *act of practical concept* knows diverse objects as goods. b) *Deliberation*. Counsel is also called deliberation and it consists in weighing between different real goods. This is followed by the *consent* of the will. In turn, *eubulia* is the habit of practical reason that deals with the acts of deliberation. c) The act of *practical judgment* consists in highlighting one concrete good over others⁹¹. This act is followed by the voluntary act of *election* or *decision*. In turn, *synesis* and *gnome* are the habits of practical reason that deal with practical judgment. d) *Imperium*, *precept* or *command* is the act through which we prescribe to other faculties to put into practice the feasible good highlighted by practical judgment. This is followed by the *active*

⁸⁶ "Coincidir equivale a que el acto intelectual humano no se conoce a sí mismo". *Antropología*, II, 64. "Un acto detenido se conmensura con un objeto intencional, es decir, con la iluminación aspectual de la cosa". *Ibid.*, 68.

⁸⁷ *Antropología*, II, 76. "Si la esencia no fuera potencial no sería posible redundar, es decir, multiplicar actos". *Ibid.*, 230.

⁸⁸ "Los actos esenciales no son imperfectos como el movimiento extramental". *Antropología*, II, 231.

⁸⁹ *Antropología*, I, 186.

⁹⁰ *Antropología*, II, 178.

⁹¹ "La *sindéresis* señala que no se puede uno parar. Luego, en cada caso, uno tiene que ver qué hace situado en la realidad concreta, atendiendo al entorno; y entonces viene el juicio: hago o no hago tal cosa. Así pues, no es lo mismo el juicio moral que los principios morales, es decir, el conocimiento moral tiene dos niveles: el conocimiento de los principios y el conocimiento de lo concreto desde el punto de vista de lo que hay que hacer decidiendo". *Ética*, 163.

use of the will. On its part, “prudence in the strict sense deals with the so-called act of *imperium* or precept, which follows election and connects with action”⁹².

3. THE THEMATIC DUALITIES OF ETHICS

A classic topic of ethics is the *good*, which is of two orders: *interior* and *external*.

a) *Internal goods*.

They are all immaterial and they are of two kinds.

a.1) The *virtues* and the *acts of the will* are superior internal goods. Virtues are more perfect than acts.

a.1.1) *The virtues of the will* are intrinsic perfections in this faculty acquired through the repetition of acts endorsed by will-I and with the help of practical reason that acknowledges some realities as goods. These virtues are plural and are integrated. They are all natural and they are distinguished from the supernatural virtues, which can be of two kinds: a) *theological* (faith, hope and charity), that have God as theme and that elevate the diverse dimensions of the personal act of being (personal knowledge, personal freedom and personal love, respectively); and b) *infused cardinal virtues* (besides the infused virtue of prudence, that is proper to practical reason, justice, fortitude and infused temperance). We should add that the natural virtues of the will must be distinguished from other natural virtues that seem rather to belong to the human personal act of being (humility, responsibility, generosity, etc.). In the virtues of the will we may see that temperance dualizes with fortitude⁹³, fortitude with justice⁹⁴ and justice with friendship⁹⁵. In turn, the two inferior virtues dualize with prudence, and prudence with the superior virtues of the

⁹² *Antropología*, II, 179.

⁹³ “Las virtudes constituyen un orden, todas se requieren. La templanza es condición de la fortaleza; quien no sabe aguantar sus pasiones no puede ser fuerte, no puede afrontar un bien mayor futuro”. *Lecciones de ética*, 143.

⁹⁴ “El resplandor de lo fortaleza es la justicia”. *Filosofía y economía*, 433. “Aparece la virtud de la fortaleza, que tiene que ver con la justicia: el fuerte es el que sabe subordinar lo propio a lo bueno”. *Lecciones de ética*, 115.

⁹⁵ See “Las virtudes morales”, pro manuscrito, 2, 4.

will. Prudence is actually superior to fortitude and temperance, but inferior to justice and friendship⁹⁶. Similarly, each virtue has two aspects. Thus the inferior dimension of temperance moderates the inclination towards food and drink, and the superior moderates the sexual tendency; the superior dimension of fortitude is resisting, and the inferior attacking; the superior dimension of justice is distributive, and the inferior commutative; the inferior domain of friendship regards created persons, and the superior, uncreated persons. We must keep also in mind that there are two possible defects against all virtues: by excess and by defect. So, for temperance, we have, by excess, intemperance; by defect, insensibility; against fortitude, by excess, temerity, by defect, timidity, pusillanimity or cowardice; against justice, by excess, coercion, by defect, arbitrariness (discrimination of people); against friendship, by excess false familiarity, and by defect, enmity.

The central virtues of the will are thus four: two deal with real themes inferior to them and two deal with real themes that are superior. The central inferior virtues of the will are: a) *Temperance*, the virtue that brings order to the concupiscible appetite: “the tendency to immediately enjoy a good thing, that can be virtuously habituated by temperance”⁹⁷. This virtue “differs from the others insofar as it has not so much the intention of the other, but rather looks to avoid disharmony, to establish an order before the willing of other radical biological appetites. This virtue does not trespass, so to speak, the subject’s constitution. It does not project him outwardly. Basically, it is directed towards interior harmony”⁹⁸. It is the most basic virtue⁹⁹, for without it no other virtue can exist. It frees the will from inferior tendencies so that it may occupy itself with that which is superior¹⁰⁰. b) *Fortitude* is the virtue that controls the irascible appetite¹⁰¹: “the tendency to overcome obstacles that the arduous goal may be achieved, to run away from a threatening evil, can be virtuously ha-

⁹⁶ “La justicia conlleva la prudencia”. *Filosofía y economía*, 433.

⁹⁷ *El método de la psicología*, pro manuscrito, 69.

⁹⁸ *Lecciones de ética*, 179.

⁹⁹ “La virtud de la templanza con no ser la más importante, es sin embargo, la virtud básica”. *Filosofía política*, pro manuscrito, 50.

¹⁰⁰ “Si la templanza domina las pasiones, la voluntad queda más libre para obedecer a la inteligencia”. *Las virtudes morales*, pro manuscrito, 3.

¹⁰¹ “El apetito irascible se controla con la fortaleza, y el concupiscible con la templanza”. *Antropología*, II, 110.

bituated by fortitude”¹⁰². The central superior virtues of the will are also two: first, *justice*, which inclines a person towards the good of others over one’s own self¹⁰³. In this virtue we can see that the natural tendency of the will is exceeded, for this consists in the search of goods for itself, not for others. Therefore, if it exceeds its inclination, it cannot be explained from it¹⁰⁴. That is why it must be explained from synderesis, which reinforces the will’s intention of the other. This indicates that it is synderesis, and not the will directly, that makes society possible. And as the bond of social cohesion is ethics, we should base ethics on synderesis rather than on virtue. That is why, for Polo, “the term *social justice* is, in a sense, a pleonasm”¹⁰⁵ or an excessive reduplication of words. For Polo, this virtue is embraced by an inferior one that looks to the past (*piety*), and a superior that looks to the future (*honor*)¹⁰⁶. Similarly, Polo holds, like classic philosophers, that “above justice is *epiqueia* or the exception of rules (it is the flexibility of justice)”¹⁰⁷. d) *Friendship* is “above justice and equity”¹⁰⁸; it is the superior natural virtue of the human *essence*, not only regarding other virtues of the will, but also habits of reason, which is why we can understand that friends can disagree over theoretical outlooks without their friendship diminishing”¹⁰⁹. Following Aristotle, Polo sustains that we can be friends with other persons, but unlike Aristotle he claims we can also be friends with God¹¹⁰.

a.1.2) *The acts of the will* are immanent operations, which can be of two kinds. a.1.1) Some deal with *ends*. Thomas Aquinas distin-

¹⁰² *El método de la psicología*, pro manuscrito, 69.

¹⁰³ “La justicia es un hábito imprescindible porque la voluntad humana tiende naturalmente al bien, pero no tiende naturalmente al bien de los demás. Ese bien excede la capacidad natural, ya que cada uno apetece su propio bien. Dicho de otra manera, la justicia y la inclinación a la felicidad son divergentes, de manera que, sin una virtud sobreañadida la voluntad no podría llevar a cabo actos justos”. *Antropología*, II, 182. “La justicia es la capacidad de interesarme por la felicidad ajena, de asentir a ella sin subordinarla a conveniencias meramente individuales”. *Filosofía y economía*, 193.

¹⁰⁴ “Aunque la justicia sea una virtud de la voluntad, no se puede explicar desde ella, ya que excede su inclinación natural”. *Antropología*, II, 183.

¹⁰⁵ *Filosofía y economía*, 193.

¹⁰⁶ See *Quién es el hombre*, 127-134.

¹⁰⁷ “Las virtudes morales”, pro manuscrito, 4.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Antropología*, II, 213.

¹¹⁰ See “La amistad en Aristóteles”, en RUS, S. (coord.), *Aristóteles. El pensamiento político y jurídico*, Universidades de León y Sevilla, León 1999, 11-16.

guishes: a) simple willing (*simplex velle*), b) tending (*intendere*), c) enjoying (*fruition*). a.1.2) Those that deal with *means*. Aquinas distinguished: a) consenting (*consensus*), b) election or decision (*election*) and c) use (*usus*)¹¹¹. Polo explains the former kind of acts saying, “the first voluntary act is simple willing, in which the intention of other is not present or absent; and yet, as the intention of the other cannot go amiss in an absolute sense, goodness is experienced in a vague way”¹¹². In turn, in *intendere* “the end is absent inasmuch as it is not yet possessed by the act of tending”¹¹³. Regarding *fruition*: “only when the illumination of the will is complete can we say that its act is complete or final. This is what should be said by what tradition calls *fruition*”¹¹⁴. Similarly, Polo describes the acts of the will regarding means in the following fashion: regarding *consent* he holds that “above all, we assent to the plurality of conceived goods”¹¹⁵, i.e. this act of the will precedes the deliberation of practical reason, for without attending to a variety of goods that make up a plexus we cannot deliberate about them. About *election* he says “there is a certain limitation in the elective act, for election restricts itself to the available

¹¹¹ Los actos de la voluntad sobre bienes mediales –el consentir, el elegir o decidir y el uso activo– siguen a cada uno de los actos de la razón práctica: deliberación, juicio práctico e imperio. See mi trabajo: *La prudencia según Tomás de Aquino*, Pamplona, Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, nº 90, 1999.

¹¹² *Antropología*, I, 189. “El simple querer es el acuerdo de la voluntad consigo, y es constituido por la *sindéresis*”. *Ibid.*, II, 142. “La verdad constitutiva del *simplex velle* es el libre despertar al querer. La voluntad no puede oponerse a ese despertar porque es su propia verdad. Por tanto, que la voluntad actúe desde el punto de vista de la intención de otro equivale al acuerdo consigo. Dicho acuerdo es iluminado por la *sindéresis* constituyéndolo como simple querer”. *Ibid.*, 143. “El simple querer es la declaración de la índole de la voluntad. Y así, aunque la voluntad sea una potencia pasiva pura, se puede decir que está de acuerdo consigo en tanto que su verdad es iluminada. La doctrina de Tomás de Aquino es acertada, pero conviene acentuar más la intervención de la *sindéresis*. *Ibid.*, 147. “A la relación transcendental con el bien, la *sindéresis* aporta la iluminación de su verdad, y al constituir el simple querer no ilumina el bien ni como presente ni como ausente, pues ello implicaría jactancia: pretender ser un querer sin bien o poseerlo en presente sin desearlo antes”. *Ibid.*, 208. “El primer acto voluntario constituido por la *sindéresis* no es orético... El primer acto voluntario es la iluminación de la voluntad como relación transcendental. Así entiendo el acto voluntario que Tomás de Aquino llama *simplex velle*. El *simple querer-yo* es la pura potencia pasiva elevada a la condición de acto esencial”. *Persona y libertad*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2007, 18, nota 19.

¹¹³ *Antropología*, II, 125-6.

¹¹⁴ *Epistemología*, 137.

¹¹⁵ *Antropología*, II, 162.

resources at the moment”¹¹⁶. That is why, while this act has traditionally been considered as the paradigm of human freedom, it is not¹¹⁷. Regarding *active use*, Polo holds that this act unites human action with the intention of the end¹¹⁸.

a.2) *Inferior internal goods are the sensible organic tendencies*, which are of two kinds: a.2.1) those of the concupiscible appetite, which are dealt with by *temperance*; a.2.2) those of the irascible appetite, dealt with by *fortitude*. Regarding the former, Polo reminds us, “knowing how to employ concupiscible temperance with the control introduced by the habit is called temperance. Temperance, properly speaking, is a moral virtue, a moral habit, but only to a certain point, because it comes from the will and is improperly incorporated to the appetite”¹¹⁹. And with respect to the irascible appetite, Polo claims that it is more durable¹²⁰, that “it seems to correspond with superior sensitivity and with the development of the cogitative”¹²¹ and that “it is controlled with fortitude”¹²².

b) *External goods*

They are of two kinds.

b.1) *Goods that are also means*, are plural and sensible. They can be natural or cultural. We can produce both of them. For example, man produces more natural foods than nature, and he produces all sorts of cultural products by transforming nature. We know practical reason is the one that illuminates such goods¹²³. Consequently, with its diverse acts, the will wills these goods, chooses one of them and

¹¹⁶ *Antropología*, II, 137.

¹¹⁷ “Si la intención de otro es singular, la libertad se reduce a la elección. Pero la libertad de elección no es la cota más alta de la libertad”. *Antropología*, II, 137.

¹¹⁸ “Al estudiar el llamado uso activo se trató de aunar la acción y la intención del fin, y se sentó la tesis según la cual las obras son penetradas de sentido: la acción no se detiene en la obra, sino que la atraviesa, prolongando su intención de otro en el modo de la *intentio finis*”. *Antropología*, II, 185.

¹¹⁹ *El método de la psicología*, pro manuscrito, 69.

¹²⁰ See *Antropología*, II, 107.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* The text goes on: “Para construir algún proyecto, para postergar el fin en el nivel sensible, hace falta algo más que la sensibilidad externa. De manera que el apetito irascible tiene que ver con la sensibilidad interna”. *Ibid.*

¹²² *Antropología*, II, 110.

¹²³ See *Antropología*, II, 116.

realizes it or puts it into practice. The will naturally inclines towards the final felicitous end, but without choosing the adequate means to reach it, it cannot acquire it. Therefore, election is normative to it¹²⁴. Even so, it is evident that “the end is attained insofar as there are good means to it, but not in an inconsiderate way, for if we accept this, conscience, which is the immediate judgment over the fairness of the mean, switches off”¹²⁵. The Machiavellian proverb “the end justifies the means” is unjustifiable, for it promotes guile¹²⁶, i.e. it falsifies the habit of prudence and thus makes the virtues of the will impossible.

b.2) *The ultimate goal* is unique and immaterial. The noetic consideration of the end and the voluntary tendency towards it are necessary, for “if the end is not kept in mind, the coordination between means disappears. In this sense we may speak of the common good, and distinguish the human common good, which is the goal of society, from God, the common good *par excellence*”¹²⁷. But we can also deem as the ultimate end something that is not. In this circumstance, the will acquires the vice classically named the “prudence of the flesh”¹²⁸. Unlike the goods that are means, “the final end is not feasible (man cannot make God)”¹²⁹. This is precisely why some ethical theories (Nietzsche’s, for example) hold that there can be no final end, but Polo argues that, “if there were no final end, man could have no virtues and norms would have no meaning”¹³⁰. Indeed, on the one hand, virtues grow only insofar as the will increases its willing in order to attain the felicitous final end. We have to keep in mind, for example, with regard to the virtue of honor, in order to obtain the complete recognition due to our acts, it can only be rewarded by God; for neither oneself nor any other person can honor us *in vita* in a complete fashion. It is evident that we forget many of our actions and at the same time other people cannot bring many of our acts into

¹²⁴ “La tendencia al fin es tendencia al bien, y es norma para la voluntad elegir el medio adecuado al fin”. *Lecciones de ética*, 86.

¹²⁵ *Lecciones de ética*, 140.

¹²⁶ “Cuando los medios son simulados, se fragua otro vicio que se llama astucia”. *Antropología*, II, 180.

¹²⁷ *Antropología*, II, 156.

¹²⁸ “Cuando el fin al que se refieren los medios no es verdaderamente bueno, se habla de prudencia de la carne, que está estrechamente vinculada al deleite sensible”. *Antropología*, II, 180.

¹²⁹ *Ética*, 180.

¹³⁰ *Lecciones de ética*, 162.

consideration. On the other hand, norms only increase the perfection of the habit of prudence insofar as they promote better actions ordered to attain happiness.

We must also keep in mind that in this life, “in terms of operativity, man does not reach his ultimate end. Not even virtue is its ultimate end”¹³¹, but rather a means ordered to that end. Given that even if without virtues reaching the end is difficult, we can get stuck on the means, and virtues are not the final goal. But if virtue is the most perfect thing in the superior faculty, the will, and therefore what most perfects us in the present life, this only indicates that this life is not definitive, but rather a means ordered to the attainment of another. Besides, if virtue is taken as an end, we deny the will, which is intention of the other¹³². Indeed, the will looks for that which it lacks. If attaining virtue is kept as its goal, virtue remains in the will itself, and should stop being inclined to some otherness that it lacks, and therefore it would stop growing, i.e. it could not grow according to virtue. This is the proper attitude of old Stoicism, in which its distance from happiness is manifest. On the other hand, the final goal of the will is the common good¹³³, not God as a *personal being*, because the will is not a person, but *of* the person. For this reason also, ethics, when it refers to operations, is inferior to the anthropology of personal being. Anthropology is transcendental; ethics is not.

CONCLUSIONS

Ethics, according to Leonardo Polo, is practical human knowledge that dualizes, from above, with transcendental anthropology and from below with the other human forms of knowledge inferior to it (sociology, psychology, business theory, culture theory, etc.). It is also an intrinsically dual knowledge, both *methodically* and *thematically*.

¹³¹ *El hombre en la Historia*, Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico, Serie Universitaria, nº 207, Pamplona, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, 2008, 26.

¹³² “Una ética sólo de virtudes suplantaría el último fin a la facultad misma. Pero esto es una contorsión que destruye la misma virtud, porque ésta no está sin el último fin, porque está para perfeccionar la capacidad de fin. Esto quiere decir que a lo largo de la vida la potencia se debilita sin las virtudes, no porque ella misma entre en pérdida, sino porque se llena de cosas que entorpecen, y ella es impurificada”. *Leciones de ética*, 167.

¹³³ “El fin último de la voluntad no es particular, sino común (noción de bien común)”. *Lecciones de psicología clásica*, Pamplona, Eunsa, 2009, 319.

The *method* of ethics is dual. Its two levels of knowledge are: a) The superior, *synderesis*, conformed by two dimensions, with *will-ing-/* being the superior and *see-/* the inferior. b) The inferior, conformed by *practical reason*, which itself has two dimensions, the superior being the *acquired habits* (habit of practical concept, habit of *eubulia* or knowledge about deliberation, habit of *synesis-gnome* or knowledge of practical judgment, and habit of prudence), and the inferior, the *acts* or *immanent operations* corresponding to these habits: the act of practical concept, deliberation, practical judgment and *imperium* or command.

The *theme* of ethics is dual. Its two thematic spheres are: a) The *external*, conformed by *goods* (which are the superior good, or the *common good*, and the inferior goods or *means*). b) The *internal*, conformed doubly by the superior goods or *virtues* and *acts* of the will, and the inferior or *appetitive* human sensible *tendencies*.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The *Journal of Polian Studies* aims to encourage scientific cooperation and communication between researchers and academics concerning important themes of anthropology, metaphysics, and theory of knowledge. The *Journal of Polian Studies* focuses on and is inspired by Leonardo Polo's profound, wide-ranging and original philosophical proposals. Our principal aim is to publish articles that are models of interdisciplinary work and scientific accuracy, thus allowing readers to keep abreast of the central issues and problems of contemporary philosophy.



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