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The Personal Being in Leonardo Polo's Philosophy

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1. SIGNIFICANCE OF LEONARDO POLO'S ANTHROPOLOGY

We will focus on the following question: which is more important, the philosophical anthropology of Leonardo Polo, or his enquiry into the limit of human knowledge and, accordingly, his methodical proposal of abandoning a mental limit?

Here, we will emphasize his anthropology, because Polo's philosophy is essentially anthropology. There is no doubt that Polo has conducted research in others fields, such as metaphysics, causal physics, and many more. But one must respond that metaphysics is human knowledge and, like Polo, formulates such human knowledge; furthermore, Polo has written about the physical universe, pointing at its foundational character, in his *Course on Theory of Knowledge*.

The philosophy of Polo is essentially anthropology. And it is so, because his methodological proposal is a special freedom that a philosopher can take and exercise. There is a sort of solidarity in his methodological proposal, from which his philosophy is formulated, and therefore, his anthropology.

Returning, again, to the subject at hand: where does the importance of Polo's anthropology lie? To answer in general terms, the anthropology of Polo demonstrates its importance because it modifies the character of human knowledge: it amplifies it.

a) Human Knowledge

Human beings have lived for twenty-five centuries without philosophy. Not without knowing anything, however, but only with practical knowledge. This last statement has been formulated keeping in mind the world of myths and literary narrations carried on from generation to generation. Philosophy did not appear until the sixth century before Christ, and when it did, it was a theoretical form of knowledge.

Human beings have lived for another twenty-five centuries, concentrating on the value of theory. The first philosophy was a form of theoretical knowledge that was spread to second philosophies. These have generated our current sciences. In turn, these sciences have modified human techniques, transforming the world in which we presently inhabit.

Twenty-five centuries without theory. Another twenty-five taking advantage of its possibilities. We might be entering another twenty-five centuries equipped with knowledge, which go beyond the theoretical. Polo's methodical proposal for philosophy is meta-theoretic; its importance rests on this point.

If this were so, the very word "Philosophy" could change. Perhaps in doing so, we would lead a misunderstanding, rather than aiding. The modification that the approach of Polo involves for human knowledge is an amplification that could be designated as, *eleutero-sophy*: knowledge of freedom; or *heuristic-sophy*: knowledge for knowledge's sake.

This is what Aristotle said about philosophy, of first philosophy: it is science, intellectual knowledge for which one searches. But Aristotle associates such a pursuit with the natural wish of knowledge, with theory, and its gradual expansion and development. In doing so, he did not make the most of the notion of heuristic.

But, the wish of knowledge, (the desire of theory, the philosophy --or even the increase of our knowledge to which such a desire is directed), is not the same as the search for knowledge. Because wishing means tending towards, and tendencies are clearly different from knowing possessions; in this case, one does not possess, but wishes. With everything that one already has, one can enjoy. Nevertheless, the search for knowledge is not merely a desiderative dynamic but a cognitive one, too. It is extremely compatible with the possession of notions, because one needs knowledge, even to seek. Furthermore, searching is better than knowledge, because, if it is treated with Wisdom, there is no doubt that in this life one has nothing to do but search, which is more than desire.

One may distinguish between animals, incapable of knowledge; God, who knows everything; and a human being, who knows in a partial sense, and, for this reason, wants to know more. Philosophy, it is said, is not divine, but strictly speaking, human. Once again, knowledge is not only the object of desire, but of a theoretical possession. Although knowledge that has been reached would be limited, that does not stop a superior knowledge: *heuristic-sophy*.

Certainly, desire is directed towards the knowledge —towards theory— from its absence. The search set out of knowledge with the intention of knowing more, of going further in theory. Moreover,

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when knowledge is understood in a heuristic sense, one can comprise how human wisdom is opened without any objection to another superior wisdom: divine wisdom. Reason, therefore, is most certainly compatible with faith.

b) Metaphysics and Anthropology

We have the offer of a new form of knowledge, *heuristic-sophy*. Or, just a new method for philosophy: the abandonment of mental limit which leads to a meta-theoretical knowledge. We may now ask: What is the basis for this new form of wisdom?

Polo often says that it consists of amplifying classic metaphysics with a transcendental anthropology. Or, that to the classic set of the transcendental metaphysics, one must add another new set of transcendental notions: anthropological transcendentals, transcendentals of the person. To being, truth and good, for instance, one must add to coexist, to understand and to love. These are the subjective and personal sides of metaphysical transcendentals. Hence, Polo's transcendental anthropology is an expansion of classic philosophy, with the goal of discovering, within the human person, a different and original theme from that of metaphysics. For example, transcendental themes like those of metaphysics. This is the way in which his transcendental anthropology is proposed.

As far as metaphysics is concerned, when it is added to such anthropology, metaphysics limits its scope and specifies its objects. Metaphysics it is not the knowledge of entity in all its universality, but it is the knowledge of basis, of fundamental being. To such a foundation the knowledge of free being, of freedom, has now been added: such is the theme of transcendental anthropology.

We dare to say it in another way: it focuses on adding the methodological dimension of knowledge to said theme. For this reason it is also *eleutero-sophy*, because human knowledge can liberate itself from being attached to the theme (to the theme of metaphysics, the foundation). Then, the knowledge can achieve being in charge of itself, of its proper methodical dimension. The dimension that constitutes itself is at the end of personal freedom, which is exactly what distinguishes anthropology from metaphysics. The object of anthropology is at the same time its subject. The theme of anthropology is

the human being. But man also formulates it: the theme is added to the method.

Moreover, it is not true that modern philosophy inquires and pursues method? *Discourse of method* is the title of the most famous work of Descartes, the work that opens the door of modernity. Kant devotes his philosophy to the critique of reason, of our cognitive instrument: that is, to the method. Hegel will arbitrate the dialect like the method that can generate the content of absolute knowledge, the one that monopolizes reality in its entirety.

Polo's philosophy recognizes that the goal of modern thinking is transcendental anthropology. Modern philosophy of subjectivity fails because it is made in parallel with metaphysics. It understands freedom in a causal way. Such symmetry is, according to Polo, the error of modern subjectivism. The anthropology of Polo is, from this point of view, a thorough rectification of such subjectivism. He distinguishes between ground and freedom.

In fact, it is the direct and specific benefit of the modification or increase in human knowledge that Polo has proposed: to sufficiently distinguish ground and freedom. This happens when philosophy is elevated to its meta-theoretical level, that is, when classic philosophy is enlarged, or modern philosophy is rectified. Or if, when its methodical dimension is added to the subject of knowledge, then the last double reference of human knowledge is established: metaphysics and anthropology.

Human wisdom —practical, theoretical and meta-theoretical— has always dealt with two grand subjects, which are basis and destiny, the basis of the universe and human destiny.

Polo's anthropology clearly distinguishes both subjects, because it declares that human destiny does not derive from a foundation. It is not explained by metaphysics. Human destiny leads us to freedom; so, human destiny is separated from the universe and points to transcendence in the same order of the person, of his intimacy. For this reason, anthropology is transcendental.

c) Subject of Anthropology

To what does the transcendental anthropology of Polo contribute? To what does such a modification of the way of knowledge lead?

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Our answer is that the subject of transcendental anthropology is the person.

Polo, of course, did not conceive the notion of person, originally. It comes etymologically from the masks that were used in ancient Greek theatre to amplify the sound of human voice and to play different roles in a performance. In philosophy, it is a concept of Christian origin. It was created in order to formulate both a notion of the divine trinity, and that of Christ. There is only one God, only one divine nature. But, nevertheless, there are three different persons. Although there is only one person in Jesus Christ, He has two different natures: divine and human. In both cases, person distinguishes itself from the notion of nature. And nature was the first theme of philosophy.

The notion of person does not belong exclusively to Polo. But, particular to him is his focus on the human person, because it has frequently occurred, throughout the history of philosophy, to focus on the anthropology on human nature. There are a lot of books which examine the evolution of living organisms, focusing on the *homo sapiens*. They continue by studying the faculties of such a rational animal: its sensibility, its capacity of knowing, its tendencies and appetites –both of which have their origin in sensibility and in free will, and so on. Furthermore, they examine some of the production that the human being achieves in activating its capabilities: work, culture, economy, family, society, etc. Additionally, they separately examine other dimensions of human reality, such as its aesthetic sense, its religiosity, its historicity, etc. Of course, there is the subject of the person, but why just one? Following Polo, one must focus anthropology on the person; one must discuss any other anthropological theme from the person, and depending on person.

In doing so, we find the person's value. It is usual, perhaps, in traditional anthropology, to focus on human nature without paying much attention to person. For instance, ethics distinguished between acts of man (all those which man does), and acts that are human, those which are deliberated: those that have been done with awareness, intention and free will. But, strictly speaking, only the latter are personal acts. Though it may sound strange or partial to separate the acts that are impersonal, the dignity of the person commands it. Man, then, would notice that what is referred to as natural, although not entirely personal is capable of being assumed by a person. Thus, man

would recognize that only in that respect is it of interest to transcendental anthropology. Instead of distinguishing between human acts and acts of man, Polo's anthropology makes a distinction between received life and life contributed by person. Keeping in mind personal being is a better way of understanding that matter.

Transcendental anthropology discovers a singular existence, proper of person in the human person. Moreover, it points out that being has at least two senses: a personal one which differs from the physical. Being is different for persons and for all other being of the universe. Furthermore, the transcendental anthropology understands that person seeks freedom. This involves a new meaning of existence. Therefore, human person is not a reality which participates in existence together with the rest of beings that are the subject matter of metaphysics. The human person is a reality which exercises a peculiar and proper activity of being. A unique and exclusive act of being corresponds to the human person corresponds.

Polo accepts traditional anthropology, the metaphysical sort, which provides a coherent notion of man according to the analogy of being. However, Polo proposes his transcendental anthropology like an innovation that attempts to improve our understanding of personal being over analogy.

d) Transcendental Anthropology

What, then, does Polo's transcendental anthropology say about personal being, about the human person? Briefly and plainly explained: the dualities and the transcendental. These are the subjects of the second and third parts of the first volume of *Transcendental Anthropology*.

Such a subject implies that personal being corresponds to the appropriate transcendentals. There are four transcendentals, specifically: existence, or rather, the co-existence of person; freedom; personal intellect; and the gift-love of person. Such a doctrine is, in part, already known. We will emphasize, among these four transcendentals of the person, that of transcendental freedom. Polo understands that freedom is the quintessential transcendental of the human person. Freedom is not only a property of his behaviour, but of his free will. It is a characteristic of his being, of his existence.

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2. FREEDOM AS BEING

First, the human person is a dual being, or a pair of itself. This is not well-known but is extremely important because the same transcendentals of the person are considered according to dualities: existence and freedom form a duality that constitutes the intimacy of person. The intellect and the gift-love constitute the interior of the human person – searching for and deepening its intimacy, recognition and acceptance. The duality is an indicative characteristic of the freedom of the personal being. Polo describes it as *to be additionally* (*ser además*).

What *is* the human person as *additionally?* To understand, revisit the traditional thesis in which Aristotle focused on the actuality of intelligible notions rather than the activity of the intellectual. If we apply the potency-act to intelligible notions, we shall notice that the intelligible is related to an intellectual act. In order to understand the different intelligibility of the material and of the mental, distinguish the intelligible that is heterogeneous with the mental activity from the intelligible that is similar with such an activity. Such a distinction will allow us to add the transcendental anthropology to metaphysics. According to such addition, we point out the sequence from idea, through understanding, to person. And not only as an epistemological question, but in it existential scope. The freedom of intellectual activity expresses a peculiar way of being.

At this issue, Plato seems to be a heir of Parmenides. To be means to be always the same. To keep itself in being, to restrain the erosion of time in order to still being that what such a being is. According to this, what changes, what appears again, or what is born and dies is not being. Strictly speaking, real is only the ideal, because it always keeps itself being what it is. What it is moving is only a copy or an imitation of the true reality, that which is always the same to itself.

After Plato, Aristotle improves such an understanding of reality. According to him, in order to be always the same, one must to exercise any type of activity. To be is to be in act. To exercise activities according to them something achieves to restrain time, to keep itself and to be. Particularly, ideas are always the same, they keep themselves, because they have been thought. And understanding is a singular activity. Its present is simultaneous with its perfect: one thinks,

and already has thought. Mental activity is not a temporal one. It is an immanent activity. And according to such activity, the idea is always the same that it is.

There is mental activity and there is physical activity too, which remain in being. In circulars movements in heaven, the beginning and the end coincide. Stars rotate always the same to themselves, without stoppage or variation. The meteorological transformations under the Moon, imitating the circle, keep the elements in being. From earth arises water. From water, air; from air, fire; and from the last one comes up earth. At the end of the cycle, there are the four elements again. In other words, we have always the same. The same have achieved to restrain time, to keep itself by means of its mutual transformations.

Medieval philosophy followed that tradition, and consequently it distinguishes, for creatures, between act of being and essentials activities. In one hand, the activities in order to keeping, to persist in being, in the other hand, the sets of activities that have to do with achieve that, or the activities that must be exercise while the thing lasts.

A philosophy of creation, certainly, must distinguish between originating being from any other being, those that have a beginning and become to being. These, the creatures, exert its activity in order to exist, to achieve being, not merely in order to keep always their sameness.

Polo's inquiry on mental activity asks if it is possible to exist only as subsisting. Subsistence is proper to physic universe, whose act of being is the persistence. But it is possible to exist adding something to the mere still keeping in time. Such an activity is insisting. Polo said that to human person is not enough to persist, but "to be additionally". Being is persisting, but for a person being means to be additionally or to insist.

The intellectual operation it is not only without time; it is not only present. Intellectual operations can be intensified, making themselves stronger, in the way of expressing the operation, not only the notion or the intellectual object. The intellectual exercise pairs up: subject and method. To the subject it is possible to add the method. Such an intensification of mental activity, according to it, the mental activity pairs up itself, points out and shows the personal way of keeping, of existing in the way of adding, of being additionally.

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Such an insistence of mental activity can be prosecuted. Intellectual habits follow intellectual operations expressing them. Habits make possible new intellectual operations too. But all of this culminates in a personal habit, a habit of the human entity. Such habit of the human entity means to have the operations and the habits at the person's disposal. Such a habit is the self who knows its proper intellectual activity, but only the essential one. The self of each person can be denominated self, or the entity habit of "sinderesis." Sinderesis is an extension of knowing that has its origin at the intellect. The intellect, moreover, can be reached in its proper transparency: to know about itself. Furthermore, the personal intellect, even deprived of human wisdom, can search its proper subject. That is a subject that overflows and transcends the scope of any method. We have operations, and furthermore habits; acquired habits, and furthermore personal habits; habitual wisdom, and furthermore personal intellect; and, as if all of these weren't enough, we have the immense and boundless subject of personal intellect. As I have said, it is always additionally.

In such a prosecution, from operation to the reaching of human act of being, the intellectual activity intensifies itself. It pairs up and it reiterates its duality. In doing so, it is additionally and it contributes to itself. Then, it is an insistent activity – activity that doubles itself and redoubles itself because it concerns with a being that it is always furthermore. For this reason, it refers to an exact way of being, of keeping in being, of insisting in its act of being.

Moreover, it expresses properly the free existence, the free way of being. In adding itself, by insisting, the activity liberates itself of the previous, and contributes itself as novelty. It can liberate again from such novelty in the way of reiterating it adding. So it is pairing up: it contributes itself, it intensifies itself, and it continues itself by innovating itself. That means to be free, with the freedom of a knowing act of being. For this reason, the duality shows very well the free act of being of human person, of that act of being that keeps itself by adding to itself, of that act of being that Polo called the additionally act of being of human person.

As Polo suggests, the additionally character of human person can be achieved by giving up the mental limitation. Intellectual operation is the limit to what has been known by intellectual objects. And intellectual operations are the starting points, because knowing must lib-

erate itself from operation in order to add itself. But that can be done in one sense, by means of expressing the intellectual operation, after that, by maintaining it and seeing its expression. That can be done by means of achieving the personal intellect proper transparency, and by means of directing the persona intellect in the search of the boundless theme.

The very well-known sentence of St. Alphonsus Liguori: "Some will say, It is enough for me to be saved. 'No,' says St. Augustine, 'it is not enough; if you say that it is enough, you will be lost,'" is not only psychological advice, but it is descriptive of personal act of being, of an act of being that it is always *additionally*. It is an insisting, a re-doubling, a contribution, an innovation.

I am going to repeat it, because it is certainly something deep. The intellectual activity frees itself from its attachment to the object, re-doubles its exercise, it intensifies it, and makes an object the same method. At the same time, the method is made into an object. Ojbect and method pair up, pull one of each other. In doing so, the activity is contributed and it is kept by adding itself. That is the way in which we reach the *additionally* being of the human person.

The innovation of knowledge that L. Polo proposes is born in the knowing existence of human person. Such knowing existence adds the method to the object according to a dual intensification of intellectual activity. The human person is always *additionally*. For this reason, human knowledge it is open to a future beyond what has been known in present, and so the personal intellect searches for its boundless and immense object: the supreme wisdom, the divine truth that is.

3. THE PERSONAL BEING

We arrive to the aim of this paper: to classify the higher dualities of human person.

I understand that these dualities are four: I. the duality between human person and God; ii. the inner duality of each person; III. the duality between human person and the universe, and in general terms with the whole reality out of mind; and IV. The duality of the person with its proper human nature.

We are going to consider these dualities separately.

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a) The first one is the duality between human person and God. Human being, like all other beings except divine being, is a created being. The being is no genus, but it can be divided among two: created and non-created. Human being, as creature, is absolutely dependent on God – not only in terms of dependence, but it has an openness to its creator. This constitutes a personal being's deepest desire. The human person co-exists intimately with its creator because we have a destiny in God. Moreover, God is the object that the personal intellect searches for. The human person gives way to Him, pursuing the divine acceptance of its personal reality.

b) The inner duality of each human person constitutes their personal intimacy. The person reaches out to know about itself. Persons are beings that know about themselves. They are not beings that exist and after that have certain knowledge about them. They are beings that have an intellectual existence. They exist knowing about themselves.

Such a knowing about itself is insufficient. It is not its truth. Its wisdom is a habit, a possession, an existential disposal. But there is no other person, another person with whom the person coexists. Human being lacks of inner replica because it is a creature; only God's Word (its Verb) is a wisdom that, at the same time, is a person. The Son is identical with the Father.

But such a lack of replica for the human person, such a solitude for the personal intimacy, it is not a whole emptiness. It is, in no way, negative. It is not to diminish the finite character of second creature. The lack of replica allows, on the other hand, the direction of the intellectual search.

c) The third anthropological duality is the one that links human person with the creation of universe, with the creature other than human person. Without such a creature, the same human person would not be possible. The human person is a generous being that forgets of itself and accepts the creation of the universe; because it opens itself outside, without asking the same about itself, in order to inhabit the world, carrying out and raising it.

I want to suggest a symbol of the generosity of human person: the face. Human face is not only an image of person, but of its open-ness. Without open-ness, it could not act.

d) The fourth and last radical duality of human person is the one that links human person with its nature. The human nature is a corporal one. It has spiritual potencies too, like mind, free will, and affectivity. Human person has at its disposal its nature, especially by means of the habits. Habits allow a certain control about its nature. Habits are the growth of some operative principles. Of course, growth is the essential expression of being *additionally*, of a being that adds, insists and goes on.

The person, by means of habits, improves its nature because it raises its nature to the essence of a personal being. The person turns its nature in its expression by means of it personalization.

The essence of man certainly is an expression of the person that coexists. But it is also an expression of the other transcendentals. The transcendental freedom has at its own disposal a nature. It is an illumination of the out of-mind being by the intellect and a contribution by the personal giving.

The last is especially relevant. Human person is donation. It aspires and tries to make a gift. But without acting by means of its nature, the human person would not have a gift to contribute. Then, its gift would come to nothing. The duality between the person and its nature has a special significance in order to fulfil the structure of the human person as a created being.

This summary of the four higher dualities of human being is logically very concise. It encourages the research of Polo's anthropology.

Thomistic philosophy found in the "distinctio realis" of essence and being the expression of the created character of creatures. The anthropology of Polo follows such a discovery, insisting especially in the personal creature. In personal beings the "distinctio realis" have especial impact, because such distinction is the frame of acts.

Just because the being of human person distinguishes from its essence, it is possible to research something more of the personal being. In doing so, one find those other dualities that we have pointed out: God and human person, human being with itself, and the human being with the universe. Only at the end, at the fourth and last duality it is possible to understand the real distinction between being and essence. Human person distinguishes in a real way from its operative nature, which can be strengthened by habits.

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The fourth duality would not be possible without the other three dualities. The anthropology of Polo amplifies the classical metaphysics with a transcendental anthropology. It adds to traditional anthropology an exact research (not only an analogy) on personal being, just in its distinction from its essence.

At the same time, Polo's anthropology has thoroughly rectified modern philosophy. The image of human being that such period has passed on us, after some centuries of feeling its inspiration, draws us the human being as a autonomous self, who tries his fulfilment through his behaviour. That is the enlightenment ideal, which rationalizes the whole human world. Or perhaps, that is Nietzsche's metaphysics of artist, who fulfils himself completely in his work. Such conceptions express the modern relevance of subjectivism.

Leonardo Polo's rectification of modern philosophy point out to another image of human being. That of the human being like a filial being, of a being that it is open to its creator from its intimacy, that of a being that search to please its creator by means of its behaviour.

Modern ideal of self-fulfilment involves a dynamic aspiration of human being on itself. Such an aspiration is incompatible with its character of creature. However, the modern overestimating of action is ordered to discover that the sense of human action is to fulfil with gifts the structure of personal love. The crucial hope of human being is that its gift would be accepted.