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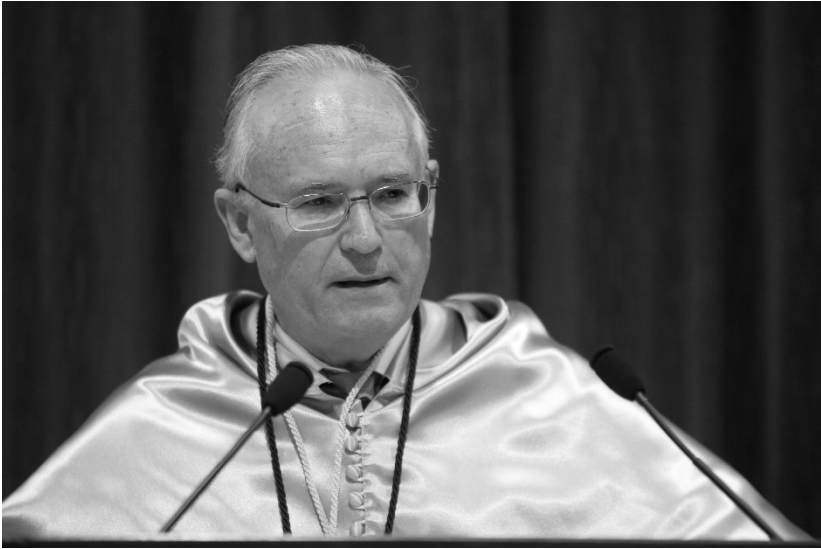
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Angel Luis González, Professor of Metaphysics at the University of Navarra, died suddenly but peacefully this last April 16, 2016. He was one of the principal promoters of the research and publications of Leonardo Polo's thought. Until his passing he was Editor-in-Chief on the Board of the *Complete Works* of Leonardo Polo and of *Studia Poliana*, the philosophical Journal on Polo's thought published yearly since 1999 by the University of Navarra. In a conference after receiving an Honorary Doctorate by the Panamerican University (Mexico), he said that Polo was the "university professor that I principally admired." He dedicated a good part of his life transmitting a passionate spirit for the truth in the university and fostered an unlimited search for truth. This issue is dedicated to his memory. May he rest in peace.

# Beyond Aim, Competency, and Habit: a Brief Critical Analysis of the Purposes of Education from the Perspective of Leonardo Polo's Anthropology

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**ABSTRACT:** This article begins by accepting that every pedagogical proposal presupposes an anthropological view, and this carries with it the consideration of what is best for man, that is, the purpose of education. From here, this study asks if it is sufficient to consider aims, competencies, and habits as the ultimate purposes of education. Each of these purposes of education has formed relevant educational trends today. It concludes, following an analysis from the anthropological proposal of Leonardo Polo, that these ends are necessary, as partial purposes, but they achieve only the growth of human nature, not that of the person.

**KEYWORDS:** Education, Person, Aims, Competencies, Habits.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society needs whole persons developed in their fullness: persons capable of facing the challenges posed in the difficult situations in which we find ourselves<sup>1</sup>. We frequently observe that education has not always been capable of answering to these needs. Indeed, one perceives a certain despair in educational work; education today seems to be in a state of crisis<sup>2</sup>. It seems that educational models are being questioned because they have not accomplished what was expected of them<sup>3</sup>. This may be due to a variety of reasons, among them, important societal changes. Women's entry into the working world, globalization, technological advances, a bid for equality, new pedagogical methods are among these changes. All of these have certainly had positive consequences, but at the same time, they have triggered a certain disorientation and a lack of formation to help face this new reality.

For this reason, it seems crucial to make a deep analysis of the educational aims that establish the action lines of education, as well as to clarify what objectives and/or aims are moving educations in times of crisis. Indeed, what is education and what is its reason for being should become the object of clarification. To this end, one must first define the anthropological methods on which educational action is founded. It is clear that education will take on one form or another depending on one's concept of human being, and that the aims which orient the action will differ as well.

To illustrate this point, this paper will take a brief tour of the ideas of human being which have existed throughout history- and which have repercussions on current education. It will discuss the conception of education and its ends- the teleological dimension- which has been proposed in each case. Thus it seeks to make a link between philosophical anthropology understood as the framework from which we depart- and theory of education.

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<sup>1</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre. Un espíritu en el tiempo*, Eunsa, Madrid, 2003, 19.

<sup>2</sup> Cfr. BONAL, X., "Crisis, educación y desigualdad: una cuestión de paradojas", *Investigar em Educação*, 3 (2015), 23-32.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. MARITAIN, J., *La educación en la encrucijada*, Palabra, Madrid, 2008; GURPEGUI, J. & MAINER, J., "La crisis de la escuela como problema. Modos de educación, crítica de la crítica y formas de resistencia", *Con-Ciencia social*, 17 (2013) 13-25.



Fundamental approaches to educational purposes in education today are collected and synthesized. These can be summarized in three: education based on objectives, commonly called *Pedagogy of Aims*; another whose main purpose refers to competencies, and finally education that seeks to develop habits.

This proposal intends to demonstrate whether these approaches cover all dimensions of human growth. Are these educational approaches adequate or sufficient in regards to the integral growth of a human being? Thus, the key point of this paper will be to analyze if there is a theory capable of covering all the educational dimensions. As a result of the analysis carried out in regards to the ends and the anthropological approaches, it seems necessary to go a step further and face the question of growth of the *personal being*, an aspect ignored in the three classical approaches here mentioned. To demonstrate this point, the paper departs from the contributions of Leonardo Polo in regards to the person, as they are discussed in his *Antropología Transcendental*.

This article will try to explain why *an education based solely on aims, skills, or habits is insufficient, because these do not cover the dimensions susceptible to the growth – and thus, to the education- of the human person.*

We are aware that society perceives education as being in crisis. Considering that the empirical research into the subject is abundant, as are proposals of educational intervention around aims and competencies especially, it seems pertinent to carry out a critical reconsideration of the presuppositions of these studies. It is necessary to rethink the teleological questions which underlie them. Thus, by demonstrating whether the presuppositions are sufficient- by searching for aims, competencies, or habits- this can shed light for a new way of facing the issues which can help improve educational actions and overcome this time of crisis.

## 2. ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRESUPPOSITIONS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTION

It is common to find in scientific literature research in regards to the practical dimension of education. Fewer studies, though, focus on its theoretical dimension. We can see in Spain, for example, that in the past few decades there has been a clear concern with education. Indeed, political agents seek solutions by proposing new educational

laws. However, the emphasis is being placed on academic outcomes and not so much on the true growth of the learners. Perhaps the focus needs to be amplified and grounded, since all educational practice demands theoretical underpinnings which give it sense and orientation. In the same way that theory without practice can become a utopia, an action without a motive or orientation loses its reason for being. This occurs because education does not mean carrying out many actions- though there are educational systems based on these proposals- but rather directing these actions toward a concrete and specific purpose, which we understand as the growth of the person. Without this underlying sense, all education falls short of what it intends to achieve.

Thus, it is important to clarify whether there is a clear foundation in educational actions and if it is adequate or sufficient for the person. To answer this question, in the first place, we look at the most significant anthropological paradigms- we propose six- which have had a certain influence on what today is understood as human being. A hierarchical, rather than chronological, order will be followed in the article. The *instinctive being* is the most basic or incomplete image of man, and the *openness to transcendence* is the most complete, in our view.

#### a) *Educational models and anthropological models*

Anthropological approaches which have marked the history of education are, firstly, man as an instinctive being. This viewpoint was principally developed by Freud<sup>4</sup> and Jung<sup>5</sup>. This way of understanding man highlights the importance of instinct, and it does so in a deterministic way: instincts block all possibility of growth and seek a homeostatic situation<sup>6</sup>. They also consider that the human being, determined by the past, is incapable of overcoming it<sup>7</sup>. Everything surrounding man affects not only him, but also marks his future. This proposal definitely does not take into account human freedom; rather,

<sup>4</sup> Everyone knows the words about instincts in this author. Cfr. FREUD, S., *Cinco conferencias sobre Psicoanálisis* (Clark University), FV Editions, 2015 [1910].

<sup>5</sup> Cfr. JUNG, C. G., *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, Bollingen Foundation, New York, 1999.

<sup>6</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quien es el hombre*, 115-116.

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. MARTÍNEZ PRIEGO, C., "Freud-Polo, la superación poliana de la propuesta psicoanalítica", *Studia Poliana*, 7 (2005) 119-142.

it attributes to the human being characteristics and psychic structures which determine him, impeding his growth<sup>8</sup>.

Another group of important authors is that which includes Darwin<sup>9</sup>, Marx and the behaviorists (Skinner<sup>10</sup>, Watson<sup>11</sup>, among others). All of them are part of the broad paradigm marked by materialism. The way of understanding the human being from the materialistic perspective is grounded, basically, in the idea that man is limited and determined by the physical world. In the case of Marx, he considered that the human being should be formed to serve a certain society; that this is the end of education and of his action<sup>12</sup>. Thus, the human being is concerned with living for society, not living a full and free life. This could be called, "homeostatic collectivism"<sup>13</sup>.

Another way of understanding man is as a *defective being*. Gehlen<sup>14</sup> and Portmann<sup>15</sup> are the main authors of this paradigm. They emphasize the biological frailty of the human being, and the possibility of cultural development. They explain that *not being defined* makes it possible for man to be open to the world. They conceive of more dimensions in a human being than do the instinctive or material thinkers.

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<sup>8</sup> Cfr. FIZZOTTI, E., *De Freud a Frankl. Interrogantes sobre el vacío existencial*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 1981.

<sup>9</sup> Cfr. DARWIN, C., *El origen del hombre*, EDAF, Madrid, 2004.

<sup>10</sup> "We should pay attention directly to the relationship between the behavior and its environment, forgetting presupposed intermediate mental states ... We can say, consequently, that to arrive at a scientific analysis of the behavior we do not need to try to discover what they are and what are not personalities, mental states, feelings, peculiarities of character, plans, purposes, intentions, or any other prerequisites of a problematic autonomous man". SKINNER, B. F., *Más allá de la libertad y la dignidad*. Fontanela, Barcelona, 1980, 24.

<sup>11</sup> Cfr. WATSON, J. B., *Behaviorism*, Library of Congress, New York, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Cfr. MARX, K., & ENGELS, F., *Textos sobre educación y enseñanza*. Comunicación, Madrid, 1978; MARX, K., & ENGELS, F., *Manifiesto comunista*, Ediciones de intervención cultural, Barcelona, 2005.

<sup>13</sup> POLO, L., *Curso de psicología general*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2009, 334.

<sup>14</sup> "It can be said that man, exposed as the animal to wild nature, with his physical and instinctive congenital deficiency, would in all circumstances be unfit for life. But these deficiencies are offset by his ability to transform uncultivated nature and any natural environment, however constituted, so that it becomes useful for his life". GEHLEN, A., *Antropología Filosófica: Del encuentro y descubrimiento del hombre por sí mismo*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1993, 33.

<sup>15</sup> Cfr. PORTMANN, A., *Entlässt die Natur den Menschen? Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Biologie und Anthropologie*, R. Piper & Co, München, 1970.

However, they agree that openness in man is a consequence of a biological deficit, and not a characteristic of human being and doing. For them, the first is a biological indetermination which demands or results in openness and human freedom. In reality, the *Polian* proposal posits that the person- due to his characteristic of *additionally*<sup>16</sup>- is the former; his intimacy and liberty, and the manifestation of that reality is openness and biological indetermination<sup>17</sup>. Indeed, culture is *continuatio naturae*<sup>18</sup>, but it is possible in virtue of liberty; this is not a consequence of nature.

The fourth group is *pedagogic naturalism*, currently in use in contemporary classrooms, headed mainly by Rousseau and the authors of the New School (Pestalozzi<sup>19</sup> and Fröbel, among others) or the Pragmatism of John Dewey<sup>20</sup>. The fundamental idea which these authors all accept is that the human being is by nature good: education should be careful not to inhibit this intrinsic goodness of man<sup>21</sup>. Any orientation is rejected, and there is no place for helping the human being to grow. However, man is not born virtuous; his freedom allows for alternatives. The character of *additionally* needs to be oriented, because the human being does not grow in isolation, but with *the other*. Thus, Polo states that "Ethics is linked to perfection which man must reach, because it is not given to him entirely beforehand"<sup>22</sup>.

The fundamental idea behind the *cybernetic conception of man*- the fifth anthropological paradigm- is that the human being is capable of growing, and that everything he does affects his growth. Reitingger and Polo are just two of the authors who speak of cybernetic growth. These proposals are centered on human actions (Reitingger), or on the act of being (Polo). Polo's cybernetic perspective studies the growth of

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Presente y futuro del hombre*, Rialp, Madrid, 1993, 184 v ss.; POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2003, 206 y ss.

<sup>17</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer. Cuestiones filosóficas de la educación*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2006, 48-51.

<sup>18</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 170 y ss.

<sup>19</sup> Cfr. PESTALOZZI, J. H., *Mis investigaciones*, Antonio Machado, Madrid, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> Cfr. DEWEY, J., *Democracia y Educación*, Morata, Madrid, 1975.

<sup>21</sup> "Everything is perfect when coming out of the hands of the maker of all things, everything degenerates into the hands of man". Cfr. ROUSSEAU, J. J., Emilio, EDAF, Madrid, 1985, 35.

<sup>22</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 115.

man's superior powers; that is, what in the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition is the development of intellectual and moral habits. Acts revert onto their own essence, making it grow<sup>23</sup>. That is, when the human being develops habits, the faculties undergo a radical change: they stop being what they were to become more<sup>24</sup>. This occurs thanks to the habit of synderesis<sup>25</sup>.

As is known, Leonardo Polo explains that “virtue responds to a cybernetic model which could be called intrinsic cybernetics because virtue is a modification of the initial conditions themselves. (...) One can improve the *voluntas ut ratio* by learning, but there is a more radical model to perfect the will. This is, to get to the root, to perfect the initial conditions. Virtue rushes to the unleashing; it breaks spontaneity, because the *voluntas ut natura* can be improved intrinsically, improving the faculty *quae talis*. My thesis is that only human faculties (will, understanding) are capable of this perfection”<sup>26</sup>. This author, not only has a cybernetic proposal, but expands his anthropology –transcendental– in a way compatible with this approach –the cybernetic–.

Finally, we find one last way of conceiving mankind by considering his *transcendent character*. Scheler<sup>27</sup>, Polo<sup>28</sup>, all the narrativist authors (Ricoeur<sup>29</sup>, MacIntyre<sup>30</sup> and Taylor<sup>31</sup>, among others) and the main exponents of humanistic psychology (Frankl principally) are found in this group. They also conceive of man, not only from his works, but from his most important characteristic: his being. Indeed, they understand the human being as having faculties of a natural order, but they situate the most radical in relation to transcendence. Some of them, such as Polo or Frankl affirm the only by conceiving of man in his

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., “La cibernética como lógica de la vida”, *Studia Poliana*, Pamplona 4 (2002) 9-17.

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Lecciones de ética*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2013, 151 y ss.

<sup>25</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II*, 216.

<sup>26</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *La esencia del hombre*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2011, 156.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. SCHELER, M., *Ética*, Caparrós, Madrid, 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. FRANKL, V., *El hombre en busca de sentido*, Herder, Barcelona, 1994.

<sup>29</sup> Cfr. RICOEUR, P., *Lo voluntario y lo involuntario*, Docencia, Buenos Aires, 1986;

RICOEUR, P., *Sí mismo como otro*. Ed. Siglo XXI, Madrid, 2006.

<sup>30</sup> Cfr. MACINTYRE, A., *Tras la virtud*, Editorial Crítica, Barcelona, 1987.

<sup>31</sup> Cfr. TAYLOR, C., *Fuentes del yo: la construcción de la identidad moderna*, Paidós Ibérica, Barcelona, 2006.

transcendent characteristic can the person reach existential fullness<sup>32</sup>. “Indeed, it seems that the ultimate sense exceeds the life that man still lives, since it has not yet reached him. Rather man walks toward it, and therefore, in a certain way, he does not yet know it completely. Thus, it is impossible that this ultimate sense is given by man himself. If nobody can give himself the ultimate sense, it must be admitted that this is not a human invention, rather, it must be given to the human person by a reality which transcends him”<sup>33</sup>.

As has been seen, the different anthropological conceptions have a clear repercussion on education, because anthropology presents purposes for education, and these purposes must be ordered. If anthropology and education are linked, it is, precisely, in virtue of the finality which educational action always possesses. The anthropological model not only gives pedagogical orientation to a particular action, but also to the sense of the action, in its whole<sup>34</sup>.

#### *b) Education and finality*

We have said that any anthropological conception necessarily bears a specific educational finality. As Tedesco states, the current educational crisis “does not come from the deficient way in which education fulfills the social objectives assigned to it, but rather, worse still, we do not know what ends it must fulfill and where to effectively orient its actions”<sup>35</sup>. In any case, what is obvious is the existence of a reflection on the ends education should have, or on whether education actually requires them, or if it has lost them, etc.<sup>36</sup> Thus, addressing the teleological question is a key aspect of educational tasks. As in any other task of a practical nature, the premise is true that “any agent works toward an end” as Monarca has stated: “Any educational action is teleologically framed, either implicitly or explicitly. But it is necessary for

<sup>32</sup> Cfr. VARGAS, A. I., *Tesis doctoral: La crisis antropológica de occidente y el crecimiento personal según Leonardo Polo*, Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., *¿Es trascendental la antropología de Víctor Frankl?* Ápeiron Ediciones, Madrid, 2015, 226.

<sup>34</sup> Alongside this, it explicates the “resources” available to the person for his growth.

<sup>35</sup> Cfr. TEDESCO, J. C., *El nuevo pacto educativo*. Anaya, Madrid, 1995, 53.

<sup>36</sup> Cfr. MARITAIN, J., *La educación en la encrucijada*.

said framework to assume critically and reflexively all the explicit aspects presupposed in an educational project which has been publicly contrasted and accepted<sup>37</sup>.

When it comes time to address the issue, we find a certain confusion surrounding the meaning of the purpose of education. Indeed, it has frequently been compared with approximate terms whose meaning is different (laws, functions of education). Thus, it is necessary to point out that the *functions*, together with the *laws* of education, are charged with establishing the direction of education<sup>38</sup> establishing a certain framework of action. Nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that laws and functions must be at the service of the human being, in his fullest sense. Law/function and purpose have a subordinate relationship, because the former must be subordinate to the latter (the purpose). However, not unfrequently, educational aims, by being unclear, are subjugated to the law, proposing as the ultimate end the fulfillment of these, instead of the growth of the learner.

On the other hand, more similar to the concept of purpose, are the terms *educational intentionality* and *sense of education*. Both concepts tend to be used to refer to the intention, motive, or reason underlying educational actions, offering a pedagogical framework; that is, the subjective point of view of the educator.

Directly addressing the topic of the purposes of education, as such, through experience, we find a first difficulty. There exists a multiplicity of purposes which must be developed through educational action<sup>39</sup>. Indeed, in any educational task, we see that what is intended to be achieved is seconded through concrete and specific actions. However, there can be no amalgam nor infinite chain of purposes. This leads us to think of the classic distinction between partial end and final end,

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<sup>37</sup> Cfr. MONARCA, H., *Los fines de la educación. Sobre la necesidad de recuperar y revisar el debate teleológico*, Narcea, Madrid, 2009, 13.

<sup>38</sup> Cfr. NASSIF, R., *Teoría de la Educación: Problemática pedagógica contemporánea*, Cincel, Madrid, 1985, 229.

<sup>39</sup> Cfr. "The human being is a unit, though with a plurality of operative instances, and thus in him there are diverse movements which respond to different ends". POLO, L., *Antropología Trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*, 80.

frequently used in education<sup>40</sup> –Polo speaks of means and ends<sup>41</sup>–. Actions which are oriented toward something which gives them meaning receive the name *partial ends*: they all have a partial or medial character in the fulfillment of the end. This latter receives the name *final end*, and it appears at the beginning of the action, during the process (giving meaning to it) and at the end<sup>42</sup>.

To realize this final end, small objectives are essential, necessary and important in themselves: these are the partial ends. However, it would be a mistake to think that these are the only ends of education, as sometimes occurs. Thus, it would be necessary to see in education which are the means to realize and which is the final end to which they are oriented, the principle and the sense of the process. Definitely, *it is necessary to establish an adequate hierarchy of means and ends*: the notion of finality demands, in the sphere of real actions, its hierarchical consideration.

Thus, departing from what we understand as human being and his capacity for growth, we conceive the role of education, and the ends toward which it must be oriented. From the distinction act of being-essence which Polo takes from Thomas Aquinas, as well as from the Polian idea of what education is- helping to grow- as the point of view, we will analyze some of the principal pedagogical proposals of the contemporary age. These are *Pedagogy of Aims*, *Education for Competencies*, and *Education through Habits*.

### 3. CONTEMPORARY PROPOSALS AROUND EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES

As has been mentioned, there are three main pedagogical proposals derived from anthropological viewpoints; these are considered in the purposes of education. It is evident that each of these proposals - all of them of the twentieth century - find in the models previously presented their roots. It does not seem necessary to point out the precise correspondence. The three shall be briefly described.

<sup>40</sup> Cfr. ALTAREJOS, F. & NAVAL, C., *Filosofía de la Educación*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2004; ALTAREJOS, F., “Finalidad y libertad en educación”, *Anuario Filosófico*, Pamplona, 29 (1996) 333-345.

<sup>41</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*. 158 y ss.

<sup>42</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ética: Hacia una versión moderna de los temas clásicos*, Unión Editorial, Madrid, 1997, 129 y ss.



a) *Education by aims*

*Pedagogy of Aims* meant a certain break with previous approaches, and changed the way of conceiving education --in which there was not so much didactic concretion-. Before the development of this educational paradigm, and perhaps in its early days, the theory of educational purposes appeared diffuse, lacking in precision and in scientificity. Teachers frequently found themselves not knowing which path to follow, or how to address concretely an objective or an end of a certain dimension. Indeed, “traditionally, the objectives of education tend to be located in the far future, particularly in regards to teachers of basic or elementary education. While these teachers recognize their role in the total process of educating good citizens who are morally responsible, cultivated, intelligent and well-informed, these ideas, nevertheless, lack significant impact on daily school work”<sup>43</sup>. Derived from these difficulties and from the social changes of the time, development of industry and of the sciences, we see the need to develop controllable and evaluable aims.

This is how diverse projects are proposed within the theoretical framework called *Pedagogy of Aims*. Basically, the way to proceed in education is through “concrete” objectives which allow for *evaluation*, *nesting*, and *planning of teaching*<sup>44</sup>. This educational proposal can be summarized in that its priority is observable outcomes and the final *product* of a complete process<sup>45</sup>. The purpose of education is the *achievement of a measurable outcome*<sup>46</sup>. This way of addressing the concept of *aim* introduces a key element: the purpose of education is the *outcome*, not so much the *process*, and much less, the *growth*. Aims describe outcomes; they are not the means to reach them. In this

<sup>43</sup> Cfr. ASHTON, P., KNEEN, P., & DAVIES, F., *Los objetivos en la práctica educativa*, Anaya, Madrid, 1980, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Cfr. GAGNÉ, R. M., *La planificación de la enseñanza: sus principios*, Trillas, México, 1976; BLOOM, B. S., *Taxonomía de los objetivos de la educación. Tomos I y II*, Marfil, Valencia, 1979.

<sup>45</sup> “First, you decide where you want to go, then you formulate and administer the means to get there, and finally, you worry about verifying if you have arrived”. MAGER, R. F., *Formulación operativa de objetivos didácticos*, Marova, Madrid, 1982, 112.

<sup>46</sup> “The description of the execution (the fulfillment of an activity) which the learners should be in condition to carry out before they can be considered competent. This objective describes the foreseen *outcome* of teaching, more than the *process* of teaching”. *Ibíd.*, 5.

sense, it can be said that the fundamental principle is intended to prioritize the *outcome principle*, characteristic of modernity<sup>47</sup>. As Polo has stated: “technology, politics, art, the very progress of the human being, of each one, is also seen in terms of outcomes. Modern ethics is, in large part, consequentialist; the consequences determine the ethical value of actions. It is evident that this, too, is to fixate on outcomes”<sup>48</sup>. If educational action were reduced to the achievement of certain actions, education would not be centered on helping to grow, but rather on achieving expected aims. It is clear that educational action is “action” and that it is resolved in certain goals. In this sense, aims help specify what is to be done. The danger is that education ends up focusing exclusively on small outcomes and losing its reason for being: helping man to grow.

On the other hand, we cannot but recognize that for the day-to-day educational task, this system has turned out to be a very effective instrument, because it contributes clear ways to carry out educational tasks, which were perhaps not previously concrete. Aims adapt well to areas covered in the classroom: by being very specific, they allow different subjects to be addressed in all their plurality of nuances. Likewise, if aims are compared across the curriculum, it is possible to reduce overlap in different areas<sup>49</sup>. This evidently contributes to the establishment of a certain hierarchy- in the sense of “before” and “after”- of these<sup>50</sup>. On the other hand, this system facilitates the development of objective assessment tools, as well as *feedback* which allows us to see achievements and improvements for both learners and teachers. In this sense, Gagné’s theory is extremely interesting, concretely his cybernetic conception of learning as a *process*<sup>51</sup>. It is also a system which has proved useful in other disciplines, such as those of technological nature, for example, in the development of computing programs or educational applications<sup>52</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Presente y futuro del hombre*, 97 y ss.

<sup>48</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Lo radical y la libertad*, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2005, 11.

<sup>49</sup> Cfr. ASHTON, P.; KNEEN & DAVIES, F., *Los objetivos en la práctica educativa*.

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. RODRÍGUEZ, J., & GONZÁLEZ, F., *Los objetivos educativos I*, Alhambra Longman, Madrid, 1991.

<sup>51</sup> Cfr. GAGNÉ, R. M., *La planificación de la enseñanza: sus principios*.

<sup>52</sup> Cfr. HERNÁN-LOSADA, I.; LÁZARO-CARRASCOSA, C. A. & VELÁZQUEZ-ITURBIDE, J. A., “Una Aplicación Educativa Basada en la Jerarquía de Bloom para el

Definitely, Pedagogy of Aims is an effective instrument to orient concrete actions, as well as in the development of the different skills learners develop through their formation process. However, this strength has a double edge, which has been one of the principal criticisms to the system: the disintegration of the contents and loss of unity in the curriculum project. Indeed, in the beginning, Bloom himself saw the danger. There was a fear that the taxonomy “could lead to the fragmentation and atomization of educational purposes where the various parts which constitute the final standings were essentially different from the much more complex goal that had been the starting point”<sup>53</sup>.

This means that aims may offer a broad informative repertory, but they do not guarantee the growth of a learner’s faculties nor do they allow a comprehensive growth at the essential level<sup>54</sup>. For example, memory can undergo enormous development, but the same may not be true for intelligence. This may give evidence of an educational proposal whose principal end is reduced to the transmission of knowledge. In this way, a sort of “encyclopedic formation is obtained: it is summative, without organization, such that one can hardly give the name of intellectual formation to this mere acquisition of knowledge”<sup>55</sup>. This also supposes a serious difficulty in the integration of these, since there is a certain “enslavement” of information. Furthermore, this system, used as the ultimate end of education, becomes a solitary task of the learner, a sort of self-teaching, rejecting any outside help and detracting from the essence of education: helping the learner to grow<sup>56</sup>.

But perhaps the gravest of all is that the achievement of educational aims has become, in most cases, a real obsession with efficiency, detracting from the true sense of education: helping the learner to grow in all of his dimensions<sup>57</sup>. The strongest critique toward this system is without a doubt the restriction of formation to mere instruction; the

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Aprendizaje de la Herencia de POO”. *VII Simposio Internacional de Informática Educativa – SIIIE05*, (noviembre de 2005), Leiria, Portugal.

<sup>53</sup> Cfr. BLOOM, B. S., *Taxonomía de los objetivos de la educación*, 19.

<sup>54</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *La esencia del hombre*, 127-129.

<sup>55</sup> Cfr. GARCÍA HOZ, V., “Génesis del Sistema de Objetivos Fundamentales de la Educación”, *Aula Abierta*, 39 (1983) 21.

<sup>56</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 41.

<sup>57</sup> Cfr. GIMENO, J., *La pedagogía por objetivos: Obsesión por la eficiencia*, Morata, Madrid, 1982.

reduction of intelligence to the human beings capacity for memorization<sup>58</sup>. Instruction is a fundamental dimension of the formative process, but it is only one part of it. If it should be considered identical to “education”, it would mean confusing the distinction between the partial ends and the final ends of education.

Ultimately, aims are extrinsic to the person; they are a measurable product. It is easy to prove that this paradigm is incapable of addressing the complete reality of human growth. Ormell points out: “The most important general criticism to the behaviorist approach is that it unconsciously distorts education through the wish to test and evaluate. It accepts implicitly that that which cannot be measured by standard tests is not education”<sup>59</sup>.

#### b) *Education by competencies*

Much has been written about competencies; it is not our intention to carry out a detailed study on them, as this has already been done. Rather, we will make a brief analysis taking as a reference the ends of education as stated in Polian anthropology. It is known that the paradigm of competencies arises in the business context and has been addressed in various different spheres. Concretely in education, competencies are spoken of in professional formation, compulsory basic education, and higher education. Importance is immediately given not so much to academic preparation, but to *skills, abilities, competency in carrying out specific tasks*<sup>60</sup>.

In the educational context, there have been different variables signaling two ways of assuming the model: the ones supported by pedagogies focused on results, which have only changed the terminology<sup>61</sup> and others which have truly accepted the profound change proposed

<sup>58</sup> “Needing the student to learn many things, instead of using his reflective capacity to understand the reason behind what he is learning, he takes refuge in a weak memorization of what a future exam will demand of him”. GARCÍA-HOZ, V., “Génesis del Sistema de Objetivos Fundamentales de la Educación”, 21.

<sup>59</sup> Cfr. ORMELL, C., *La manipulación de los objetivos en la educación*. Adara, Madrid, 1978, 39.

<sup>60</sup> Cfr. McCLELLAND, D. C., “Testing for competence rather than for «intelligence»”, *American Psychologist*, 28 (1973) 1.

<sup>61</sup> Cfr. JONNAERT, P.; BARRETTE, J.; MASCIOTRA, D. & YAYA, M., “La competencia como organizadora de los programas de formación: hacia un desempeño competente”, *Revista de currículum y formación del profesorado*, 12 (2008) 3.

by the original model. From a pedagogical perspective, of special interest is the original proposal which conceives competency as the *development of skills* in a *procedural* manner. In this case, the competency *makes* the learner *capable*. This pedagogy was a great novelty, since it brought to the previous system a framework which was, in some way, comprehensive. It placed emphasis on the development of the learner's skills<sup>62</sup>; broadening the concept of education and overcoming rote memorization<sup>63</sup>.

However, totally suppressing all memorization has proven to be negative. Memorization is a fundamental operation which underpins others of an intellectual character. Nevertheless, what is positive is formative evaluation and the conception of the learner as the motor of his own learning, and not as a mere receiver of information and doer of tasks<sup>64</sup>. In this sense, perhaps the most remarkable is that it attends to the fact that its acquisition is always procedural. What is intended by evaluation is to value the improvement of a competency. To this end, the competency must be broken down into concrete variables which can be observed and evaluated. In this regard, especially valuable are studies carried out in the past few years, both in elementary and in higher education, into self-regulation of learning. Concretely, of interest is the influence or the development of the will in the students' learning, and how to address it in education<sup>65</sup>. However, in practice, the evaluation of these learnings, reduces skills or competencies to simple observable and measurable results.

These pedagogies which focus only on results (as frequently occurs), end up reproducing the same problems as the systems of aims: they tend to be rigid and they hinder *transferability* of learning to other dimensions or spheres of the learner's life. However, the greatest cri-

<sup>62</sup> Cfr. ZABALA, A. & ARNAU, L., *Cómo aprender y enseñar competencias*, Graó, Barcelona, 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Cfr. TOBÓN, S.; GARCÍA-FRAILE, J.A. et al., *Competencias, calidad y educación superior*. Magisterio, Bogotá, 2006.

<sup>64</sup> "It supposes the transition from a model focused on teaching to a model centered on student learning". DE MIGUEL, M., *Modalidades de enseñanza centradas en el desarrollo de competencias. Orientaciones para promover el cambio metodológico en el Espacio Europeo de Educación Superior*, Ediciones Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo, 2005, 11.

<sup>65</sup> Cfr. ZIMMERMAN, B.J. & Schunk, D.H., *Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Achievement*, Routledge, New York, 2001

tique to this system conceived as a purpose of education, is that learning frequently obeys social demands. The point of view is not the development of the learner, but rather his capacity to satisfy certain demands which are considered important according to the socio-economic context. This supposes a great danger, likewise pointed out in the pedagogy of aims, that the formative ends of the learner are at the mercy of what is opportune, not what is best for him as human being, independently of what is proposed by different social agents. This implies a certain inversion: analogous to how parents are there for their children, and not vice-versa, it could be said that society is for persons<sup>66</sup>.

Definitely, though competencies are a good educational instrument, they are insufficient as the ultimate end of education. They themselves do not address all the human dimensions susceptible to being educated, since the purpose of education has to do with growth, and competencies are a means of this growth<sup>67</sup>. On one hand, meaning is given to objectives, because the latter are the practical concretion of the former. On the other hand, they serve as the means to reach a higher end: human growth in each and every one of its dimensions. This growth has to do with habit and virtue. We will see how this is.

### c) *Education and habits*

Man can and must grow in each and every one of these dimensions in order to achieve his humanization. Through freedom, the human being is the only being who does not have a closed nature. "The person adds to nature an effusive, contributing dimension. Because man is a person, he is not subject to the laws of nature; rather, he rises above them and enjoys a radical freedom"<sup>68</sup>. This particularity allows him to increase his own nature. One- the first- of a person's tasks is to make this nature grows in an optimal way. There, education has much to do, since it is a help, a necessary companion in this undertaking. The principal objective of education is to help the person to carry out the task of increasing his nature<sup>69</sup>. "Human nature is not only the beginning of

<sup>66</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 107.

<sup>67</sup> Cfr. BARRIO, J. M., *Formar personas, la innovación educativa pendiente*, Erasmus, Barcelona, 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ética: Hacia una versión moderna de los temas clásicos*, 92.

<sup>69</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *La esencia del hombre*, 127 y ss.

his acts, but also the end. And this end receives the names of habit and virtue. Habits and virtue teleologize nature<sup>70</sup>.

We have seen that aims as well as competencies are means which help man grow his nature. However, though it is sometimes believed that they measure growth, in reality what they are measuring are the fruits of that growth. It does not seem to us that they attend to the faculty, but rather to the process of acquisition of competencies-oriented to productive action- or the products of action, the aims. Habit does not observe the aims nor the competencies; it is strictly the increase- or decrease- of the intelligence and the will. When the human being acquires them, he experiences a profound change in his own faculty.

In this sense, it is important to explain that the growth of the sensitive faculties of a human being is limited by the organic support they are subjected to. Indeed, the growth of the external and internal senses cannot be infinite because they are all restricted by an organ. The same cannot be said of the intelligence or the will, which have no organic limitation. Indeed, both faculties are of a spiritual nature and their growth is therefore, unrestricted. Indeed, “man is a being capable of an unrestricted growth, a being which never stops growing. Certain types of growth are given up to a certain point –organic growth ends, the formation of neuron circuits does, as well. These growths are not unrestricted-, but man as such is capable of growth without reserve<sup>71</sup>. This particular growth receives the name of habit (in the case of the intelligence) or virtue (in the case of the will)<sup>72</sup>. When the faculty does not grow –when it shrinks- we speak of a vice.

The meaning of “habit” used here is not that which is commonly used in education. In the first place, it is necessary to distinguish *habit* from other terms, such as custom<sup>73</sup>, way of doing<sup>74</sup>, operational ease

<sup>70</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., “Hábitos, virtudes, costumbres y manías”, *Educación y Educadores*, 1 (1997) 17-25; SELLÉS, J. F., *Los hábitos adquiridos*, Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 2000, 8.

<sup>71</sup> POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 110-111.

<sup>72</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*, 181.

<sup>73</sup> Cfr. COVEY, S. R., *Los 7 hábitos de la gente altamente efectiva*, Paidós, Barcelona, 1989;

COVEY, S. R., *El 8º hábito*, Paidós, Barcelona, 2005.

<sup>74</sup> Cfr. ISAACS, D., *La educación de las virtudes humanas*, Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona, 1976; ALCÁZAR, J. A. & COROMINAS, F., *Virtudes humanas*.

etc. These are some of the manifestations of human operability, the fruit of habit acquisition. But the habit cannot be reduced to these; it is something much deeper: it is the growth of the faculty<sup>75</sup>. Numerous authors address the issue of habits<sup>76</sup>, including those with clear educational repercussions<sup>77</sup>. However, here we will deal briefly with Leonardo Polo's proposal, which may have an impact on educational action. We consider as our starting point that man may grow beyond the acquisition of customs or ways of doing things.

Polo's perspective has, as its starting point, Aristotelian studies and those of Thomas Aquinas. Concretely, he conceives of habit as the growth of higher powers. In Polo's words, habit and virtue are a *hypercybernetic* model because they modify the initial conditions<sup>78</sup>. This means that habits radically transform the original faculty; they update it. This supposes a net growth in the human psychic structure. Indeed, faculties not only improve, there is a change in man's "factory settings". Thus, the human being may achieve radical growth. This is only possible in faculties not limited by any organ –as we have mentioned-. Indeed, habit and virtue are the perfection of the powers. These powers –intelligence and will- stop being as they were, they update and they allow the growth of their possibilities.

Following the classical distinction –Thomas Aquinas-, habit refers to *intelligence*, and virtue to *will*. Within habits which affect intelligence, it is possible to distinguish innate habits from those acquired. Innate intellectual habits are "a natural gift which every man receives and the root of the rest of the habits man can acquire"<sup>79</sup>.

There are two innate habits of special relevance to the subject we are studying: the habit of the first principles and the habit of synderesis. With respect to the acquired habits of intelligence, these are all those

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Palabra, Madrid, 1999; LÓPEZ DE LLERGO, A. T., *Valores, valoraciones y virtudes*, CECSA, México, 2001.

<sup>75</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., "Hábitos, virtudes, costumbres y manías".

<sup>76</sup> Cfr. MILLÁN-PUELLES, A., *La formación de la personalidad humana*, Rialp, Madrid, 1981; RICOEUR, P., *Lo voluntario y lo involuntario*, Docencia, Buenos Aires, 1986; MACINTYRE, A., *Tras la virtud*; PIEPER, J., *Las virtudes fundamentales*, Rialp, Madrid, 2007.

<sup>77</sup> Cfr. GARCÍA HOZ, V., *Tratado de Educación Personalizada: del Fin a los Objetivos de la Educación Personalizada*, Rialp, Madrid, 1995.

<sup>78</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., "La cibernética como lógica de la vida".

<sup>79</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., "Hábito", en A. L. GONZÁLEZ, *Diccionario de Filosofía*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 2010, 506.



intellectual habits acquired over time. The theoretical can be distinguished from the practical<sup>80</sup>. Virtues are “the progressive perfecting of this power (will) to want better and better, an acquired updating which is gradual, not susceptible to ending in its desire to tend toward happiness”<sup>81</sup>.

As to the differences existing between *intellectual habits* and *moral virtues*, what stands out on one hand, is that virtues are acquired through the repetition of acts. In intelligences, only one act is needed to develop the habit<sup>82</sup>. Indeed, the end of the exercise of the will is always external to it: happiness. The will never reaches a complete happiness which satisfies it; it always wants more<sup>83</sup>. Thus, the will is more power than the intelligence, and for the same reason, it requires the repetition of acts to reach it. The will has a potential dimension because it is always in a state of desire.

On the other hand, the connection between moral virtues is narrower than that existing between intellectual habits. Indeed, within intelligence there are several rational habits depending on the topic being studied (habits of wisdom, habits of science, etc.) and in each one, different, plural habits are formed. In the will, on the other hand, we can only speak with rigor of *one* virtue: wisdom, which consists of being capable of orienting one’s life toward true happiness. All other virtues are systemic; they are like “communicating vessels”. If one of them is developed, the others grow<sup>84</sup>. A similar thing occurs when one acquires a vice; it extends to the rest.

Habits are a change in the power, but not only in terms of improvement of capacity around an operation<sup>85</sup>. Polo highlights this idea and distinguishes an operation carried out by a faculty from the growth of the same faculty. This is crucial for education as, ultimately, what is

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<sup>80</sup> “A progressive updating of the faculty of intelligence, or if one prefers, a progressive remission of the power it has, in order to know more. It has to do with the intrinsic acquired perfections which unrestrictedly improve the capacity for knowing. ”. SELLES, J. F., *Los hábitos adquiridos*, 14.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II: La esencia de la persona humana*, 181.

<sup>83</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ética: Hacia una versión moderna de los temas clásicos*, 137-138.

<sup>84</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II: La esencia de la persona humana*, 182.

<sup>85</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., “Planteamiento de la antropología trascendental”, en I. FALGUERAS & J. GARCÍA, *Antropología y trascendencia*, Servicio de publicaciones Universidad de Málaga, Málaga, 2008, 25 y ss.

important is the growth of faculties and not their operability. For Polo, though both are acts, the *habit* is superior to the *operation*, because it activates the faculty. The end of the habit is not the carrying out of operations, but the growth of the power. This is of great importance, because it clearly delimits the distinction from competencies –since these must be considered equal to habits. Indeed, the aim of the development of competencies is the carrying out of operations, not the perfection of the power, nor the essentialization or growth of the essence of man.

Finally, this growth of the natural dimension of the human being is fulfilled in the development of the superior capacities through habits. The more virtuous a person is, the freer he is, and his nature grows, becoming essentialized. “Virtues increase the capacity for the exercise of freedom”<sup>86</sup>. Thus, the role of education is key in this undertaking: fostering in students the development of habits and virtues which perfect their intelligence and their will in such a way that they are free to make decisions and govern their lives.

Having seen this, we encounter a crucial question for education: Can the human being only be contemplated in his natural dimension? Indeed, if we conceive man from his purely natural dimension, the habit will be the most complete mode of his growth, since it allows the growth of his superior faculties. However, we understand that the human being *is more than his nature and his essence*; the highest is his personal being. “No matter how much man grows, no matter how much he perfects himself throughout life in the form of habits; in spite of everything, in man there will always be a distinction between *essentia* and *esse*; man will never achieve an identity. That is, no matter how great his essential growth, his being will always be above him”<sup>87</sup>. Now, this “being above”, because it is not something static or closed, must also be considered<sup>88</sup>. If the highest is virtue, ethics is the highest science. However, “virtue is close to the end, but it cannot be taken as the final end”<sup>89</sup>. Definitely: Can education somehow affect the personal being?

<sup>86</sup> Cfr. *Ibíd.*, 114.

<sup>87</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *La esencia del hombre*, conference, Universidad de Málaga, Málaga, 25 de Noviembre de 1994, 18.

<sup>88</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., *Antropología para inconformes*, Rialp, Madrid, 386.

<sup>89</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*, 157.

#### 4. NEW PATHS TO LINK ANTHROPOLOGY AND EDUCATION. TRANSCENDENTAL ANTHROPOLOGY

The thesis on which this study is based is that each anthropological conception corresponds to a determined idea of the purpose of education. Thus, it must be considered that if the proposal of transcendental anthropology is different enough to the ones which precede it -Leonardo Polo himself looks for historical background<sup>90</sup>-, they do not seem to reach all the aspects which the method, the abandonment of the mental limit, offers; the educational proposal in which what stands out the most is the purpose for education, should also be different or at least different enough. Thus, what we intend to develop is a brief systematic explanation of the areas of growth which open to education from the Polian proposal, in which the real distinction “essence-act of being” plays a fundamental role.

The transcendental expansion proposed by Leonardo Polo bears the sentence that man is a personal “being”, considering that “being” is considered transcendently -in the sense of non-predicamental-. Along with the Thomist discovery of real distinction, present also in the human being, we must talk about the personal being in every man and about the essence of man. And this in the context of other relevant differences such as the being of the cosmos and the being of the person; which are different. Likewise, in the cosmos we can speak of essence and act as being distinct. These distinctions, as is known, are achieved thanks to the abandonment of the mental limit: *the essence of the human person* who has four dimensions<sup>91</sup>:

These four dimensions or modes of abandonment of the mental limit are constituted depending on the subject area<sup>92</sup>. The first level of abandonment of the mental limit is carried out through the habit of first principles. Indeed, through the habit of first principles the main being (the act of being created is distinguished from the uncreated) can be observed. This first level allows us to “realize” that the cosmos *is*. The second level of abandonment of the mental limit achieves knowledge of the essence of the cosmos “It explicates the physical

<sup>90</sup> Por ejemplo, cfr. *Ibíd*, 29-49.

<sup>91</sup> Cfr. Polo, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*, cit., pp. 107-117.

<sup>92</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Presente y futuro del hombre*, 182 y ss.

causes as concomitant causes (...). Causes are found or sought because they are real<sup>93</sup>. That is to say, thanks to this second level, we cannot only “realize” that the cosmos *is*, but what it is in a certain way, concretely, tetracausal.

Polo’s theory of knowledge takes on special relevance due to the following: the third dimension of abandonment of the mental limit allows us to know human coexistence, the co-being. Indeed, in third place, man can know this character of *additionally* that is each person. “Achieving co-being with another, co-existing, is equal to *additionally*, and it can be described as a future without defuturization<sup>94</sup>. Polo refers to the future as that which is to be reached. When he speaks of non-defuturization, he is designating that which has no ending, which lacks one because the person is also additionally, permanently open to growth<sup>95</sup>. “According to this, the person is open intimacy: intellectual light, transcendental freedom, gift-love<sup>96</sup>.”

Finally, the fourth and last dimension allows the person to access the essence of man. This is possible because that essence shows itself through the habits: indeed, through the habits, man can know and access his own essence. “From mental presence, one passes to habits; and human nature, in virtue of habits, comes to be the essence of man<sup>97</sup>. Human nature is not like that of the cosmos because it is growing, it becomes essentialized through habits. This crescent being comes about because the human essence is to dispose. Through habit, essence becomes increasingly freer because it is ever growing<sup>98</sup>. Thus, through habits, man becomes the master of his nature.

This extension to transcendental level is, therefore, the first and main contribution of education given by Polo. Education derives from anthropology- now understood as a first philosophy- not from metaphysics and, on the other hand, the merely predicamental consideration- essential- is not enough to comprehend what education can cover if one ignores what it means to be a “personal being<sup>99</sup>.”

<sup>93</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*, 116.

<sup>94</sup> Cfr. *Ibíd.*, 118.

<sup>95</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *La libertad trascendental*, 136-137.

<sup>96</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*, 118.

<sup>97</sup> Cfr. *Ibíd.*, 120.

<sup>98</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia humana*, 181.

<sup>99</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., “Planteamiento de la Antropología Trascendental”, 9-10.

Also notable is the priority of the person with respect to the species: the fact that the human being is not finalized by the species<sup>100</sup> nor is it exhausted –“man is a personal being who does not exhaust his species”<sup>101</sup>–. If the person is not finalized by the species, the end of education, properly stated, cannot be limited to the good of the species. Rather, it must be a good for each person. Education can be called personalized education only if it attends to the person, understanding that this differs from the essences of man. To speak of personalized education, therefore, demands a weighted understanding of what the human person is. Only in the case where the *essence of man* and the *personal being* are sufficiently distinguished, and education reaches both, does the notion of personalized education acquire meaning. Personalized does not mean individualized. Indeed, person cannot mean “lone person” since this would be absurd, nor is solipsism an adequate response to the specificity of the human existence –which is co-existence–<sup>102</sup>.

Now, the greater part of Polian developments in regards to education and growth in general, appertains to human essence<sup>103</sup> and only some statements allow us to believe that the person, by being personal, can also reach educational action. Stated as a first approximation: in virtue of the character of *additionally*, we can state that the person is not something static, but dynamic, and not mere spontaneity – as freedom itself is not. This situation opens the door to the possibility of an education which cannot only surpass the ends of efficiency-based mentality, such as those of aims, or even competencies, but also the growth of faculties in the form of habits.

#### a) *Essential growth*

Polo writes that, on thinking of Philosophy of Education, “the first thing to expose is the human meaning of education; that is, the reasons why man is susceptible to education, why there is no education, but rather formation; that is, help for the human being”<sup>104</sup>. Evidently the proposal seeks a clear means of surpassing mere instruction, indicating

<sup>100</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ética. Hacia una versión moderna de los temas clásicos*, 57.

<sup>101</sup> Cfr. *Ibid.* 75.

<sup>102</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología Trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*, 28-33.

<sup>103</sup> “Para no suponer la vida se precisa no suponer al viviente, no la vida respecto de su aspirar a más vida, a crecer”. POLO, L., *Antropología Trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*, 17.

<sup>104</sup> POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 41.

that the horizon of educational action is in the growth of the human being. In this way, we find the entry way to what should be dealt with: the conditions of possibility of education and that which is to be educated: the “formation” of the “being”.

The treatment of the conditions of possibility of education alludes to, on the character of the human being, on the one hand, filial and on the other, growing. That is, being a “child” demonstrates that no one owes everything to himself—one is originated- and Polo concludes that “if man owed everything to himself, education would lack meaning”<sup>105</sup>. On the other hand, the invalidity and prematurity with which man begins life<sup>106</sup>, obliges one to consider that nutrition alone is not enough for human growth. It requires as well help of another type- that of education- for the properly human growth to occur. Indeed, organic growth does not capture all that is growth in man, and much less, that which is the greatest growth.

As a continuation of procreation and nurture, education is a primary responsibility of the parents. They educate, also primarily “the affective normality of the child”. That is, the growth of the irascible and concupiscible appetites as the origin of emotional life. This growth is related to the development of two virtues: fortitude and temperance<sup>107</sup>. Affective normality is the necessary psychological base for the other virtues and habits. The help of school and teachers appears as an element of the second order –necessary, but not original-. Here, teaching is oriented toward the growth of the internal senses –especially imagination- and intelligence- beginning with analytical thought as a means of arousing “interest” –<sup>108</sup>. As the first learning, Polo mentions as key, the learning of language and of technique<sup>109</sup>, this oriented toward the development of virtues linked to industriousness, work, and discipline. In this way, we can say that “education essentially does not consist of offering rational content, nor in indoctrinating ways of behaving, but in arousing intellectual habits and virtues in the will”<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibíd.*, 46.

<sup>106</sup> Esta afirmación, puesta de relieve por Portmann, fue acertadamente recogida en España por Juan Rof Carballo y forma parte de la argumentación poliana. Cfr. ROF CARBALLO, J., *Violencia y Ternura*, Madrid, Prensa Española. Espasa-Calpe, 1977.

<sup>107</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 87 y ss.

<sup>108</sup> Cfr. *Ibíd.*, cap. 4-6.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibíd.*

<sup>110</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., “Hábitos, virtudes, costumbres y manías”, 10.

We have heretofore described what is specifically essential in human growth. However, in the same book, *Ayudar a crecer* [*Helping to grow*], the author takes a step which allows us to consider there is something more to education than the mere development of habits and virtues, all of them linked by freedom. Indeed, Polo establishes *filiation* as the most radical affirmation which can be said of a person – at least within the sphere of education-. Therefore, to educate, to form a human being, also implies the knowledge and acceptance of one's own reality: the filial character, with the structure of “responsibility” or personal mission<sup>111</sup>. What is remarkable is that Polo contrasts global orientation, which proceeds from this knowledge and acceptance of a vital responsibility, in such a way that freedom extends to the entire existence –origin and destiny- with “global affectivity” which can be seen, for instance, in authors such as Heidegger or Sartre. When the living lacks any sense of filiation, his existence has neither a “why” nor a “what for”. That is, he cannot freely face his entire reality; at the beginning and at the end there would be need. A person can only have, in this reality, an affective state, but not an orientation nor a sense.

Let us go on to a brief incursion into what is needed in essential education, the education of the personal being.

### b) *Growth of the personal being*

We have said that education must impact all growth dimensions of the human being: his nature and his personal being, because the person is more than his nature and his essence. Now, once we have seen that Polo himself opens the door to the radical difference between “global orientation” and “global affectivity”, something beyond virtue is at play. Evidently, this is closely linked to personal freedom; this-freedom- is another indication of the possible ground for educational action. Thus, “to the extent that human life faces issues of little value, in this same measure, freedom is shortened, it loses *radicality and horizon*. I have called the first, native freedom; the second is the destination of freedom”<sup>112</sup>. Native freedom and destination of freedom are something more than virtue; virtue refers to the living, not just to his life<sup>113</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 44; *Quién es el hombre*, 244-245.

<sup>112</sup> POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 244.

<sup>113</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo II. La esencia de la persona humana*, 15.

In other words, “the ethics of virtues expands in native freedom”<sup>114</sup>. Together with personal freedom, each one of the personal transcendentals can be the object of attention of educational action: personal intimacy, personal freedom, personal knowledge and personal gift-love<sup>115</sup>. Education must reflect on the proper way to offer the learner frameworks of reference on all of this, key to his own life.

Thus, human life takes on meaning insofar as it is fulfilled with others and definitely, with God. In virtue of freedom and its true extension, man can neither deny his origin nor his destination- that would be to deny co-existence-, and that would mean that life is frustrated<sup>116</sup>. That is, “man is not alone, precisely when he takes charge; he then encounters adversaries, but, especially when his charge is in favor of something outside of himself, and implies that someone has charged him with it”<sup>117</sup>. In the beginning, there is co-existence (somebody charges), and in the end, there is co-existence (somebody receives).

Stated in other terms, to be a person is “to be a child” –originated and originally loved, fruit of love and not fruit of chance–<sup>118</sup>. Indeed, each person is a child in the first place. This occurs in a biological manner: each person has parents. However, it is not enough to know it; one has to accept this reality. Finally, in order for this life to acquire meaning, one has to accept that one is a child, and that one’s existence is linked to both his progenitors and to God<sup>119</sup>. That is, one does not owe everything to oneself. Evidently, the task of recognizing and accepting this radical truth of each person occurs thanks to the help received; that is, to education. In fact, the great problem of modernity is the Kantian concept of “emancipation” which carries with it man’s renunciation to his filial condition. Indeed, “the idea that man owes everything to himself is contrary to the notion of filiation, one who proceeds from does not owe everything to himself but to him from whom he proceeds”<sup>120</sup>.

<sup>114</sup> POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 221.

<sup>115</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Antropología trascendental. Tomo I. La persona humana*.

<sup>116</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 224.

<sup>117</sup> Cfr. *Ibíd.*, 246.

<sup>118</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 219-223.

<sup>119</sup> Cfr. ASSIRIO, J., *La dualidad filiación-paternidad: Estudio según la antropología trascendental de Leonardo Polo*, suficiencia Investigadora, Universidad Austral, Buenos Aires, 2013.

<sup>120</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Ayudar a crecer*, 44.



Certainly, we owe to our parents what we have received naturally, but the most radical dimension of the person refers us to God. From our biological parents we receive the natural dimension (which potentially contains the essence); from God we receive the act of personal being. “Strictly speaking, parents do not beget the person of the child. With regards to it, they are not natural parents, but rather foster parents”<sup>121</sup>. It is obvious that the human person, the parents, cannot be the origin of the radical novelty which is each person. We can state, therefore, that the human being has, as his *charge*, the development of his nature. However, this is not the most radical part of said charge, that which is reckoned in his destination: the fulfillment of his *mission*. Within the personal dimension of education fits, without a doubt, the arousing of the *freedom of destination* –the fruit of an encounter with the truth<sup>122</sup>-. In education it is necessary to help the learner reflect on the meaning of his life, the personal meaning which is, thus, unique – in the sense that each one possesses his own–. Education cannot be reduced to having students who are intellectually capable, or orderly, or who respond to the demands of a certain society. Having covered all the aims of education does not imply fulfillment, nor does being competent in such or other professional sphere. In a certain way, we can agree with Peters that ““To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different point of view”<sup>123</sup>.

It remains, however, to clarify how that personal growth is different from the growth of habits and virtues. Now, as Sellés has stated, “The person as such can also grow, though not by himself. It is not a question of a self-reward, because nothing is in his hands. Indeed, no one has self-invented as the person he is. However, nothing hinders the possibility of growing as a person, through Him who is capable of enriching life, since it depends on Him”<sup>124</sup>.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS. IN CONCLUSION.

For decades, educational programs and resources have been proposed to face the great educational problem faced by the West. Indeed,

<sup>121</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F., “La filiación personal humana. Estudio acerca de si lo más radical de la antropología es ser hijo”, *Cauriensa*, 1 (2006) 206.

<sup>122</sup> Cfr. POLO, L., *Quién es el hombre*, 249 y ss.

<sup>123</sup> Cfr. PETERS, R. S., *Education as Initiation*. London: The University of London Institute of Education, cit. por ALTAREJOS, F. & NAVAL, C., *Filosofía de la Educación*, Eunsa, Pamplona, 26.

<sup>124</sup> Cfr. SELLÉS, J. F. “Hábitos, virtudes, costumbres y manías”, 10.

education requires renewed ways of working. However, the key to educational renovation must be sought in the roots. Thus, this paper has analyzed the relationship established between the anthropological proposal and the proposal with educational aims; these are determining in daily work.

Thus, if this thesis is well grounded, we can state that an anthropological proposal such as that of Leonardo Polo –transcendental anthropology–, by being distinct and by extending the preceding proposals, must, therefore, have an impact on the end, or more precisely, on the educational purpose which it proposes. Indeed, transcendental extension, the consideration of a human being as a personal being, distinguished in his essence, possessing a crescent nature, etc., can give light to the idea of an educational purpose.

It was convenient, previously, to clarify the educational ends which have been proposed, especially in the past few decades, and whether these achieve the education of the human being, concretely, whether they address the growth of the essence and of the human person. Thus, we have seen that education by aims is resolved in the valuation of partial ends, and more concretely, in the confusion between growth and “products of an activity”. Education by competencies, somewhat more complete in the consideration of the educational purpose, is also resolved in productive activity or in training in regards to productivity, not in regards to growth. A significant advance is education which seeks as its end the development of habits and virtues. In this case, we can state that what is being sought is the growth of man’s superior faculties; that is, the growth of the human essence. We have seen, in any case, that the ends are not compatible; what is relevant is to establish among them an order or a subordination, in such a way that some of them are oriented toward the development of others.

However, it was still necessary to face the question of the growth of the personal being, and with it, the possibility of proposing an education whose end went beyond habit. We have seen that Polo’s philosophy offers enough hints to state that this is both possible and necessary: from the distinction between global orientation and global affectivity to the extension of freedom and the possibility of personal frustration. It is clear that “what is to be educated” goes hand in hand with personal freedom, and with it, the other personal transcendentals. It also seems clear that knowledge of these realities is important, but, without a doubt, it is recognition and acceptance, existence woven with “charge”, that which can give meaning to one’s own existence. Definitely, it is

knowing oneself and living as a child. Transcendental anthropology is offered as an opportunity and opens up a horizon of hope.