

LIBRI RICEVUTI

A. DE SANTIS, *Dalla dialettica al kairós. L'ontologia dell'evidenza in Heinrich Rombach*, Centro Studi S. Anselmo, Roma 2002, pp. 408.

Fenomenologia della donazione a proposito di Dato che di Jean-Luc Marion, a cura di G. FERRETTI, Morlacchi Editore, Perugia 2002, pp. 156.

G. FERRETTI, *Filosofia e teologia cristiana. Saggi di epistemologia ermeneutica*, vol. I. *Questioni*; vol. II. *Figure*, Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, Napoli-Roma 2002, pp. 260 e 360.

F. FIORENTINO, *Il problema della verità nei filosofi antichi*, Editrice Domenicana Italiana, Napoli-Bari 2002, pp. 450.

ALEXIUS MEINONG, *Teoria dell'oggetto*, a cura di V. RASPA, Edizioni Parnaso, Trieste 2002 (Quaderni di Hesperides), pp. 360.

B. MINOZZI, *Illuminismo e Cristianesimo*, Longo Editore, Ravenna 2002, pp. 852.

R. PETTENUZZO, *Persona e Soggettività. La teologia di Pietro Parente e il problema filosofico dell'autocoscienza di Cristo*, Casa editrice Leonardo da Vinci, Roma 2003 (La filosofia cristiana nell'età moderna e contemporanea, 3), pp. 96.

G. SALATIELLO, *L'ultimo Orizzonte. Dall'antropologia alla filosofia della religione*, Editrice Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Roma 2003, pp. 120.

B 122 510
EXCLUIDO
DE PRESTAMO

S o m m a r i o

Indagini sul pensiero contemporaneo

- SALVADOR PIÁ TARAZONA, *Leonardo Polo on the act of being: precedents and a proposal for development* p. 169
- TATIANA ARRIGONI, *Istanze fondazionali e attenzione alla prassi nella filosofia della matematica contemporanea* p. 199

Problemi e prospettive

- STEFANO BIANCU, *L'ontologia poetica di Giacomo Leopardi* p. 233

Note e discussioni

- ROSSELLA SPINACI, *Il problema critico nel pensiero di Léon Veuthey* p. 259
- ANTONELLA CORRADINI, *Il ritorno della natura umana nella biologia evoluzionistica e nelle scienze cognitive: una nota critica* p. 273

Analisi d'opere

- R. BONITO OLIVA, *L'individuo moderno e la nuova comunità. Ricerche sul significato della libertà soggettiva in Hegel* (A. Babolin), p. 281 – C. BIANCHI, *La dipendenza contestuale. Per una teoria pragmatica del significato* (A. Frigerio), p. 282 – M.L. COLISH, *La cultura del Medioevo (400-1400)*, trad. it. di E. GALLO, ed. it. a c. di C. AZZARA (P. Muller), p. 288 – G. COMO, *Ignis amoris Dei. Lo Spirito Santo e la trasformazione dell'uomo nell'esperienza*

UNIVERSIDAD DE NAVARRA
SERVICIO DE BIBLIOTECAS

spirituale secondo Guglielmo di Saint-Thierry (G. Piacentini), p. 293 – M.T. PANSERA, *Antropologia filosofica. La peculiarità dell'umano in Scheler, Gehlen e Plessner* (E. Simonotti), p. 299 – R. RUSSO, *Ragione e ascolto. L'ermeneutica di John Locke* (A. Babolin), p. 301 – M. VIGNOLO, *Afferrare pensieri. Gli atteggiamenti proposizionali dopo Frege e Russell* (M. Corioni), p. 303 – C. CRISCIANI, *Il papa e l'alchimia. Felice V, Guglielmo Fabri e l'elixir* (R. Gado Wiener), p. 310 – W.G. LYCAN, *Filosofia del linguaggio. Un'introduzione contemporanea*, trad. a c. di A. COLIVA (M. Corioni), p. 312 – L. MESSINESE, *Un passo oltre la scienza. Filosofia e trascendenza in Karl Jaspers* (M. Mantovani), p. 318 – P. PREMOLI DE MARCHI, *Etica dell'assenso. Se accettare i principi morali sia un problema della volontà* (A. D'Agostino), p. 321 – *Storia della filosofia analitica*, a c. di F. D'AGOSTINI - N. VASSALLO (R. Corvi), p. 325

Libri ricevuti

p. 333

INDAGINI SUL PENSIERO CONTEMPORANEO

SALVADOR PIÁ TARAZONA

LEONARDO POLO ON THE ACT OF BEING: PRECEDENTS AND A PROPOSAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Leonardo Polo is considered by many philosophers as the most important Metaphysicist in Spain in the XX century. His more than twenty books about philosophy issues give a clear account of it. Born in Madrid in 1926, after graduating from college, he spent two years in Rome (1952-1954) thanks to a doctoral scholarship. This stay in Rome turned out to be crucial for his philosophy, because during this time he elaborated a first draft of his philosophy (in a still unpublished two volume book, entitled *Real Distinction between Being and Essence*), and outlined a program that would lead to the publications of five nuclear books, in which he would analyze all the big problems of philosophy while at the same time developing his own philosophical point of view. In fact, it has been earlier this year (2003) when Leonardo Polo finished the last of the books drafted in the Rome manuscripts. This book is the second volume of *Antropología trascendental* (Transcendental Anthropology). Whereas the first volume deal with the *act of being* of the human being (i.e. about the personal character of the human being), this second volume deals with the *essence* of the human being (the essence of the person). With these two books Leonardo Polo tries to extend the Thomistic metaphysical doctrine about the *esse* and *essence*, which has been underdeveloped in the study of human being.

In September of 1954, Polo joins the School of Philosophy at the University of Navarra (Pamplona - Spain), where he teaches until his

retirement in 1996, when at the age of 70 he is appointed professor emeritus of the Philosophy Department. During these decades of teaching in the University of Navarra, Polo teaches practically all courses of philosophy at the undergraduate and graduate levels and writes 24 books and more than one hundred papers. Among these books we should underline *El acceso al ser* (Access to Being) (1964), where he develops a genuine method for metaphysics and anthropology in the way opened by Heidegger in *Being and Time*, i.e. the abandonment of the consideration of *being* as presence. In 1965 Polo writes *El ser* (Being), where he dwells on the metaphysical topics reached with his method. We can also mention the five volumes of *Curso de teoría del conocimiento* (Course in the Theory of Knowledge) (1984-1996), where Polo elaborates a complete theory of knowledge and researches into the main related problems in the history of philosophy. *Hegel y el posthegelianismo* (Hegel and the Posthegelianism) (1985) and *Nominalismo, Idealismo y Realismo* (Nominalism, Idealism and Realism) (1997) are two books about history of philosophy. Finally, the two volumes of *Antropología trascendental* (Transcendental Anthropology) (1999-2003) bring his philosophical thronged full circle, by analyzing the being and the essence of the person. After this short introduction to the figure of Leonardo Polo, I intend to develop the central theme of his Metaphysics, i.e. the *esse* (also named, using a Thomistic terminology, the *act of being*).

I think that one of the greatest contributions of Leonardo Polo to philosophical endeavor has been the recognition of differences between the act of being of the cosmos, the act of being in humans, and the divine act of being, which he has couched in a transcendental terminology. In other words, he has been able to *characterize* the *existence* of physical creation, human creation and God in an altogether singular way. Polo is the first philosopher to have established *the distinct modes of the act of being* in the history of philosophy, namely: *persistence* – which is the universe's act of being –, *co-existence* – the act of the human being – and *Origin* – the divine act of being –. This Polian doctrine of *the modes of the act of being* has arisen out of a consideration of the big themes in metaphysics, and seeks to be, thus, a continuation of that legacy. In order to understand what Polo is proposing I will provide a very brief summary, by way of introduction, to how Polo has interpreted the history of metaphysics.

1. *Being in Parmenides*

Parmenides's influence in the history of metaphysics has been decisive, given that he was the first to lay down the parameters of the great debate

about being¹. The history of metaphysics is basically, albeit often implicitly, either a rejection or adoption of Parmenides's hypothesis that being is *absolutely uniform*². He believed the identity of being to be so radical that not only is the question of internal distinctions within being ruled out, there really cannot even be a distinction between being and thought. He is famous for such phrases as "for the same thing can be thought and can exist"³ or "it is the same to think and the thought that [that object of thought] exists"⁴. But if we don't make any sort of distinctions then metaphysics comes to a halt before it even gets started. The path that Parmenides opened up is impossible to walk down if we choose to stick with his initial thesis. If being is as homogenous as Parmenides says that it is – "it is always present in complete identity with itself"⁵ –, then any attempt to make progress in metaphysics will spell the rejection of this initial monism in being. The discovery of new metaphysical truths is only possible because these truths are somehow distinct from those truths that we already possessed. To cut a long story short, what this implies is that being is not the same thing as thought i.e. that there are such things as real and extramental distinctions⁶. Parmenides's thought, *in sensu strictu*, denies precisely that. Says Polo, for Parmenides "a being's unity is so tightly knit that any form of predication about being is impossible"⁷; or in Parmenides's own words: "nor is it [Being] divisible, since it is all alike"⁸.

If, like Parmenides, we were to stick to a "to be or not to be" philosophy, then I suppose that *uniformity* of being would be the only way to go. And as the *only* way to go it would be an *absolute* way, reducing all meta-

¹ Leonardo Polo maintains this interpretation of Parmenides in the following texts: *Antropología trascendental*. Tomo I: *La persona humana* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1999), pp. 33-34, 53, 147-148; *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*. Tomo II (Eunsa, Pamplona 1998³), pp. 90, 96-97, 124, 190, 213-214, 221, 241, 242-249; Tomo III (Eunsa, Pamplona 1999²), pp. 13-14, 16-18, 38, 57-60, 64, 67, 79-82, 85, 87, 91, 178-180; *Introducción a la filosofía* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1999²), pp. 38-44, 48-63, 193.

² Cfr. Parménides, Fr. 8, vv. 1-31; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 1-31.

³ Parménides, Fr. 3, v. 1; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 3; cited by *Parmenides. A text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays* by Leonardo Tarán (Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey 1965), p. 41.

⁴ Parménides, Fr. 8, v. 34; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 34; cited by *Parmenides*, p. 86.

⁵ Á. GONZÁLEZ ÁLVAREZ, *Tratado de metafísica*. Volumen I: *Ontología* (Gredos, Madrid 1987²), p. 66.

⁶ For which reason Polo says that, "monism culminates in an ontological formulation of Parmenides that does not meet with an adequate continuation in speech, for the simple reason that speech implies plurality". *Curso de teoría*, II, p. 244.

⁷ POLO, *Curso de teoría*, II, p. 244.

⁸ Parménides, Fr. 8, v. 22; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 22; cited by *Parmenides*, p. 85.

physical investigation to the *monolithic identity* of being – where there is no longer any sort of metaphysical prolongation –. In short, Parmenides himself says that “there is only one word still left to say of a way: “existence”⁹. Behold the simultaneous birth and death of metaphysics¹⁰.

In Parmenides metaphysics stops, paralyzed by its erection of the difference between being and non-being as the *greatest metaphysical distinction* around. But this distinction has no bearing on reality – it’s not internal to being –, and so Parmenides can’t expand on what he’s said without falling into some form of internal contradiction. In order to preserve the complete homogeneity of a being he cannot allow it to have any sort of internal distinction because then one part would be distinct from another and that would force him into the contradiction of saying that one of the parts of the being is non-being¹¹.

As we have seen, the mere distinction between being and non-being is not going to take us very far because it does not allow us to deepen in our knowledge of extramental reality. Even so, it’s the first distinction that metaphysics should establish in order to set itself up as a science about being¹², without of course this first distinction being the last one or we would have strangled metaphysics at birth.

Progress along the path of being calls for the ditching of Parmenides’s metaphysical *uniformity* and *homogeneity*¹³. Metaphysics can only make progress in the measure that we should discover *internal distinctions in being* – distinctions that run deeper than the opposition between being and non-being –. In this sense, and 25 centuries of thought later, we can say that the history of metaphysics has progressed according to distinctions having been made in being. Some authors have tried to re-establish the absolute homogeneity of being, Hegel being the most obvious one in modern times since the Hegelian Absolute lies precisely in the surpassing of all real distinctions¹⁴.

⁹ Parménides, Fr. 8, v. 1; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 1; cited by *Parmenides*, p. 85.

¹⁰ Polo criticizes Parmenides’s metaphysics for its completely *monistic* character. By saying that being is ‘unique’, no further metaphysical broadening is permitted, and certainly not the kind of extension to there being different modes of being which Polo is proposing. See *Antropología*, I, pp. 33-34.

¹¹ Cfr. Parménides, Fr. 8, v. 42-49; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 42-49.

¹² Cfr. POLO, *Introducción*, p. 87.

¹³ Says Polo: “Parmenidean being is a somewhat lonely being, it can be as beautiful as you might care for, but it is quite solitary. For as much as the ‘one’ might be a transcendental notion, it cannot be so in this way because it’s quite clear that plurality can also be thought of and spoken about”. *Introducción*, p. 86.

¹⁴ Cfr. G.W.F. HEGEL, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Gesammelte Werke*. Band 9 (Rhein.-Westfäl. Akademie der Wissenschaften, Düsseldorf 1980), pp. 18-19.

The *way of distinction* is the key to making progress in metaphysics; or what amounts of the same thing: the *distinction in being* is the last word in establishing a hierarchy between different metaphysical approaches. As a result, that metaphysics which has discovered the greatest number of distinctions in reality will be the most advanced at any given moment. The path to progress lies in making *distinctions*, whilst *unification* should be seen as taking a retrograde step. According to what I have said, there would be three great developments of Parmenides’s metaphysical doctrine. Other metaphysical doctrines can be interpreted using the notions uncovered within these three great developments.

2. The Metaphysical Achievement of Aristotle

The metaphysical monism of Parmenides was abandoned by Aristotle in his famous enunciation of the *different meanings of being*: being no longer has a *unique* meaning because it can be spoken of in different ways – *tó ón légetai pollachôs*¹⁵ –. With each one of the meanings of being Aristotle introduces real distinctions within reality itself¹⁶. We should not speak thus about there being an *ens generalissimum* in Aristotle, i.e. a being conceived of as something universal and homogenous. Aristotle’s metaphysics is *multi-dimensional* – a break thus from the metaphysical uniformity introduced by Parmenides –. Says Aristotle: “In general, if we search for the elements of existing things without distinguishing the many senses in which things are said to exist, we cannot succeed [...] to seek the elements of all existing things or to think one has them is incorrect”¹⁷.

The distinction between *ens per se* and *ens per accidens*¹⁸ gives rise to the non-necessary being in reality; and hence we have opinion, contingency, things that Parmenides had absolutely forbidden in his version of reality¹⁹. With the introduction of the *ens per accidens* the lion’s share of what goes on in the universe can now be accounted for – that which only

¹⁵ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, V, 7, 1017 a 7 - 1017 b 7, and in many other parallel texts.

¹⁶ Enrico Berti has this to say about the matter: “the notion of being, when taken as simple (Aristotle would say when taken ‘simply’, *haplôs*, or ‘per se’, *kath’ autô*), without further qualifications, does not have just one meaning, but rather many, and these cannot be boiled down the one into the other”. *Introduzione alla metafisica* (Utet, Milano 1993), p. 55.

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, I, 9, 992 b 18-24; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*. Translated into English under the Editorship of W.D. Ross. Volume VIII (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1966).

¹⁸ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, V, 7, 1017 a 7.

¹⁹ Cfr. Parménides, Fr. 6, v. 4-13 and Fr. 7, v. 2-6; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 6, 4-13 and 7, 2-6.

occurs most of the time or by 'accident' – for as it is *free* it is not necessary and does not form part of the *ens per se* –.

In order to make sense of opinion, we need to draw a distinction between what is *true* and what is *real*²⁰. In this way Aristotle snips away at the very roots of Parmenides's hypothesis about the unification of thought with being²¹, which is the sort of hypothesis that cannot explain how there could possibly be such a thing as a false thought i.e. a false non-being. For Aristotle, neither thought nor reality is to be taken in a unique sense. *Totality* cannot be the criterion for reality and thought, for both allow for internal distinctions, and still less can we identify thought with reality à la Parmenides.

In order to explain the reality of movement – a problem without solution within Parmenides's philosophy²² – Aristotle had to introduce a further two meanings with regard to a being: the distinction between *substance* and *accidents*²³ – which help us distinguish between two types of *change*: those in which the subject of change is an accident and those in which the subject of change is the substance itself²⁴ –, and the distinction between *act* and *potency* – which explains *movement* insofar as it is being realized by a subject²⁵. With these two real distinctions Aristotle could then explain all of the different types of movement. In his own words, "there are as many types of motion or change as there are meanings of the word 'is'. We have now before us the distinctions in the various classes of being between what is fully real and what is potential. Definition: *The fulfillment of what exists*

²⁰ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, V, 7, 1017 a 31-34.

²¹ Cfr. Parménides, Fr. 3, v. 1; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 3.

²² As is well known, Parmenides explicitly affirmed that being is immobile (cfr. Fr. 8, v. 1-4; Diels-Kranz, 28 B 8, 1-4); but according to Aristotle: "Nature has been defined as a 'principle of motion and change', and it is the subject of our inquiry. We must therefore see that we understand the meaning of 'motion'; for if it were unknown, the meaning of 'nature' too would be unknown". *Physica*, III, 1, 200 b 12-15; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*. Volume VII.

²³ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, V, 7, 1017 a 22-31.

²⁴ It would be wise to note that the difference between *substantial* and *accidental* change is just the sort of thing that allows Aristotle to refer to a *subject of change* according to whom movement can then be explained: "there is no such thing as motion *over and above* the things. It is always with respect to substance or to quantity or to quality or to place that what changes. But it is impossible, as we assert, to find anything *common* to these which is neither 'this' nor *quantum* nor *quale* nor any of the other predicates". *Physica*, III, 1, 200 b 33-36; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*.

²⁵ Cfr. Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, V, 7, 1017 a 35 - 1017 b 7. "Whilst the being of Parmenides is confronted with movement, the Aristotelian act overcomes it. Movement is incompatible with the existence of only one substance". L. POLO, *El ser*. Tomo I: *La existencia extramental* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1997²), p. 113.

potentially, in so far as it exists potentially, is motion"²⁶. This is his famous definition of movement as the *act of a being in potency insofar as it is in potency*²⁷.

According to Polo, the arrival of the Aristotelian categories – and especially of the pairing of *substance* with *accident* –, has been decisive for the rest of philosophy's history given that, if the Thomistic distinction between the act of being and essence is left to one side, then metaphysics will not have been able to abandon the framework of the categories²⁸. For that very reason, not a few philosophers have maintained that the substance and accidents "are the fundamental modes of being to which all created reality may be reduced"²⁹; or what is the same thing: what is not substance in reality can only be an accident.

If we were to accept the conclusion of that thesis, we would close the door on their being any further real distinctions to make at a deeper level. That is, it *a priori* rejects the possibility of there being anything real that is not either a substance nor an accident. The "totalizing" way in which this thesis is formed can be seen in the alignment of opposites 'What is not a substance is an accident, what is not an accident is a substance' and the *totality* of the two thereby comprehends and unites together all reality. The *opposition* between substance and accident is what *unifies* our consideration of reality into a totality. This is the *unification* of reality which blocks off any further advances in metaphysics.

The enunciation that Aristotle realizes in the *different meanings of being* can only be formulated if one also implicitly maintains the following metaphysical proposition: *distinction* is proper to and characteristic of reality as such. But if distinction is the first thing that we can say about reality, then it would should not think about reality as a lump sum. Talk about "reality" presupposes a unifying consideration that is expressed in terms of *all* that is real.

I really don't think that *totality* pertains to reality – because the different meanings of being cannot be reduced to each other –, so much as to thought,

²⁶ Aristotle, *Physica*, III, 1, 201 a 8-12; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*.

²⁷ Also: "we can define motion as *the fulfillment of the movable qua movable*". Aristotle, *Physica*, III, 1, 202 a 7-8; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*. Says Leonardo Polo: "If we don't take notice of the sticky fixes which the big notions have gotten us out of, then we haven't really understood those notions. This is the case with potency and act. The first person to clearly make this distinction was Aristotle, but if you don't take into account the problem that this distinction solved [that of explaining movement] then the distinction is not well understood". *Quién es el hombre* (Rialp, Madrid 2001⁴), pp. 40-41. See also, POLO, *Introducción*, p. 88.

²⁸ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, pp. 91-102.

²⁹ T. ALVIRA, L. CLAVELL, T. MELENDO, *Metafísica* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1997⁶), p. 53.

which tends to unify the mind's contents; and so, as Polo affirms, it is "simply confusing to sustain that being means a lump sum, or that the notion of an all has a real value, or that totality exists"³⁰. If *totality* were taken as having an ontological status in reality – if the all were a characteristic proper to reality –, we would not be far from affirming what Hegel had said about 'all that is real is rational' and that 'all that is rational is real'³¹. If reality formed a *totality* and our thought also formed another such *totality*, in order that both 'totalities' be *real* and *truly* 'total' we would need to make them identical, because in the contrary case – if there were something real that was not rational or vice-versa – we would only have 'partial totalities', i.e. not complete 'sums'. Both Parmenides's and Hegel's philosophies are conditioned by their not having sufficiently distinguished thought from being, or rather, by their having allowed the *unification* or *totalization* proper to thought to have set itself up as the criterion for reality. The primacy of reason in the Parmenidean and Hegelian interpretation of extramental reality inevitably becomes a pantheist metaphysics: the rationalization of reality as a *unique totality* winds up in pantheism³².

Aristotle, however, did not hold *totality* to be the criterion for reality given that he distinguished being from thinking; in fact, if we dig deeper into the Aristotelian distinction between *real* being and *veritative* being, one is forced into accepting that the status proper to thought must in some way be different to the status proper to reality. The following thesis may then be deduced: whilst thought is about *unification*, reality is about *distinction*³³. Hence metaphysics is really a *science of distinction*, that is to say, a science that seeks to discover real distinctions – the deeper the distinction, the more metaphysics is being employed –.

3. St. Thomas Aquinas's Contribution to Metaphysics

Metaphysics did not end with Aristotle. He found the way, rather, in which progress can be made in this science. The proof of the truth in Aristotle's metaphysical pudding lies in the fruitfulness with which his discoveries can

³⁰ POLO, *Curso de teoría* III, p. 47.

³¹ Cfr. G.W.F. HEGEL, Preface to the *Filosofía del Derecho*, UNAM, México 1975, 14. Also: "What is true is all". *Fenomenología del espíritu* (Fondo de Cultura Económica, México 1966, 16).

³² Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 129.

³³ This position has been set out in greater detail in my book: *El hombre como ser dual. Estudio de las dualidades radicales según la «Antropología trascendental» de Leonardo Polo* (Eunsa, Pamplona 2001), especially pp. 47-67.

be deepened in. Were some metaphysical theory intrinsically complete, rather than being a perfection it would be a *thought-stopper*, which is actually a sign of imperfection³⁴. In other words, no metaphysics can suppose that the study of reality have come to an end – the way that Parmenides and Hegel did –, reality always has something more in store for us, we can always know better, and the reason lies precisely in the lack of perfect identity between thought and being – this distinction is the reason why there is always something more about reality which we have yet to know about³⁵.

Given all of the above perhaps we should stop now to consider what there was in reality that Aristotle had yet to discover? What *real distinction* did he not establish? The distinction between God's act of being and that of creatures'. According to Leonardo Polo, creationism led to the introduction of a metaphysical distinction that was greater than that which was given between being and nothing, namely: the distinction between *created being* which is proper to the finite being and *uncreated being* which is proper to the divine being; hence Polo argues that "the *creature-Creator* distinction is greater than the distinction between *being* and *nothing*"³⁶.

Polo's thought on creation can be summed up in the following paragraph of his *Transcendental Anthropology*: "God is radically transcendent, which means that the expression 'God and the creature' is meaningless because there is no such thing as a totality in which God and the creature are different subsets. The copulative character of the 'and' between God and the creature is not a real one; the creature does not add anything to God, nor does *nothingness* add anything to God either: 'God and nothing-

³⁴ Cfr. L. POLO, *Evidencia y realidad en Descartes* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1996²), p. 13.

³⁵ Leonardo Polo says that intentional knowledge is *aspectual*, with our thought we only know certain aspects of reality, but not reality as such: "human knowledge does not exhaust the whole of reality: intentionality is aspectual. An act of knowledge that illumines all that is real, or better still, the entirety of reality (all is an equivocal expression) is not an act that is commensurate with the object. St. Anselm spoke about the greatest thing that can be thought of: *id quod maius cogitari nequit*. But there is no such thing: it's always possible to know more". *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*. Tomo I (Eunsa, Pamplona 1987²), p. 155.

³⁶ POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 133. Cfr. by the same author: *Presente y futuro del hombre* (Rialp, Madrid 1993), pp. 138-142. The abundant literature on this topic often thinks of the distinction between being and nothingness as more important than the distinction between being created and being uncreated – given that in some way both *are*. This interpretation is founded in a *unification* of the notion of being, where *uncreated* and *created* being are considered as merely concrete cases within being itself. For more about this distinction between being and nothingness and creationism see J.A. AERTSEN, *Nature and creature: Thomas Aquinas's Way of Thought* (Brill, Leiden 1988), and the lengthy bibliography given there.

ness' is pure nonsense. The expression 'God *and* nothingness' – the same as 'God *and* the creature' – should be meaningless does not mean that the creature is nothing at all, what it means is that the creature is *extra nihilum*; and in this we see the dependence of the creature with respect to God³⁷. Armed only with the meanings of being discovered by Aristotle, we cannot distinguish that characteristic that marks God out from his creation because the enunciation of a *creation ex nihilo* cannot be reached using the categories³⁸.

So far as I can make out, this *creation ex nihilo* is the chief metaphysical problem with which St. Thomas Aquinas chose to wrestle with – something which Aristotle was ignorant of –; in order to explain the radical distinction between God's being and that of creatures, Thomas needed to establish a real distinction – a meaning of being – that is not to be found in the Aristotelian list, and which Leonardo Polo considers to be the main contribution that Thomistic metaphysics has made³⁹, i.e. the real distinction between the act of being (*actus essendi*) and the essence (*essentia*)⁴⁰.

Thomas Aquinas's metaphysical approach does not begin with the real distinction between *being* and the *essence*, rather said distinction is the *solution* to the metaphysical problems which he poses; what St. Thomas Aquinas has to explain in his metaphysics is a datum of Christian Revelation: that God has created creatures *out of nothing*. Given that Aristotle never looked for an explication of *creation ex nihilo* – and so as a consequence, distinguish God from creatures in the most radical way – we

³⁷ POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 135.

³⁸ Aristotle ignores creation because, as Leonardo Polo puts it, "creation means two things: 1^a) The most important distinction is not that between what moves and what is unmoved, between what is passing and what remains, because the distinction between being and nothingness surpasses this [...]. What creationism means [...] is that being is *really* what is most distinct from nothingness [...]. 2^a) But it also means that if being is different to nothingness in a real sense, there is still an even greater distinction: that which exists between what can be distinguished from nothingness and God. These two notes define the notion of creation". *Presente y futuro*, pp. 138-139.

³⁹ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, pp. 12-13, 28.

⁴⁰ The following text from Thomas Aquinas is telling: "esse dicitur dupliciter. Uno modo dicitur esse ipsa quidditas vel natura rei, sicut dicitur quod definitio est oratio significans quid est esse; definitio enim quidditatem rei significat. Alio modo dicitur esse ipse actus essentiae; sicut vivere, quod est esse viventibus, est animae actus; non actus secundus, qui est operatio, sed actus primus". *In I Sent.*, d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1. St. Thomas received his core doctrine on the *actus essendi* from his teacher Albertus Magnus (as made evident by E. ALARCÓN, *S. Alberto Magno y la 'Epistola Alexandri de Principio Universi Esse' Los orígenes históricos de la reducción al ser y el aristotelismo panteísta*, «Tópicos. Revista de filosofía», II/3 (1992), pp. 77-95.

need to go beyond the Aristotelian meanings of being because none of them can explain creation as being *ex nihilo*⁴¹.

According to the real distinction of being with the essence a radical distinction between God and creatures can be established: in God his being (*esse*) and his essence (*essentia*) are really identical, whereas in all creatures their being is really distinguishable from their respective essences⁴². God is Pure Act (*Ipsum Esse*) and so *Simple Act*, whilst creatures are always a *composition* of act and potency (of *actus essendi* and *potentia essendi*). As a result, the radical distinction between God and creatures corresponds to St. Thomas Aquinas's distinction between simple being and the composed being⁴³.

In keeping with this distinction, in order to explicate *creation ex nihilo* St. Thomas elaborated his theory of participation⁴⁴, which, at heart, is a metaphysical doctrine that looks to explain how the composed being – any being whose act of being is really distinct from its essence – *depends* entirely upon the only simple being i.e. on God⁴⁵ – since there can only be one simple being⁴⁶ –. The composed being is caused as much in its being (*esse*) as in its essence – and so this type of transcendental causality is known as *creation ex nihilo* –, while the simple being is uncaused – its being identifies with its essence –⁴⁷. With the doctrine of participation we

⁴¹ With the meanings of Aristotelian being generation cannot be taken in an absolute sense because, as Aristotle says himself, "for *qualified* coming-to-be is a process out of *qualified* non-being". *De Generatione et Corruptione*, I, 3, 317 b 4; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*, but "nothing can be said without qualification to come from what is not". *Physica*, I, 8, 191 b 12-13; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*.

⁴² "Solus Deus est suum esse, in omnibus autem aliis differt essentia rei et esse eius." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 61, a. 1, co.

⁴³ "Hoc quod est esse, in nullius creaturae ratione includitur; cuiuslibet enim creaturae esse est aliud ab eius quidditate: unde non potest dici de aliqua creatura quod eam esse sit per se notum etiam secundum se. Sed in Deo esse ipsius includitur in suae quidditatis ratione, quia in eo est idem quod est et esse, ut Boetius dicit, et idem an est et quid est, ut dicit Avicenna". Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q. 10, a. 12 c.

⁴⁴ On the Thomist doctrine of being and participation see: Á.L. GONZÁLEZ, *Ser y participación. Estudio sobre la cuarta vía de Thomas Aquinas* (Eunsa, Pamplona 2001³).

⁴⁵ Cfr. C. FABRO, *The Intensive Hermeneutics of Thomistic Philosophy: The Notion of Participation*, «Review of Metaphysics», 27 (1974), pp. 449-491.

⁴⁶ On the Thomist arguments that show the impossibility of there being more than one *Ipsum Esse* see: J.F. WIPPEL, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas. From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Catholic University of America Press, Washington 2000), pp. 150-157.

⁴⁷ "Quod est per essentiam tale, est propria causa eius quod est per participationem tale: sicut ignis est causa omnium ignitorum. Deus autem solus est ens per essentiam suam, omnia autem alia sunt entia per participationem: nam in solo Deo esse est sua essentia.

see that every composed being is caused: *omne compositum, causam habet*. And from there we deduce that every composed being always depends or participates on the simple being⁴⁸; or what amounts to the same thing, we demonstrate the existence of God by way of his transcendental causality: God is the being that is the cause of the being (and essence) of all beings.

The *composition* that is found in creatures is a definitive proof of its character as a *creation*⁴⁹. The *real distinction* between the act of being and the essence in the creature leads to the dependence of the creature on God being taken up in transcendental terms – transcendental causality or *creation ex nihilo* –, overcoming, thus, the merely categorial dependence that had been established by Aristotle with respect to the Prime Mover – as an efficient cause in his *Physics* and as a final cause in his *Metaphysics*⁵⁰ –.

By presenting creation as a *processio ex nihilo*⁵¹, St. Thomas goes beyond the Aristotelian model of change, which had always assumed that there was a permanent substrate of matter (creation is only truly a creation if it is *ex nihilo*: there cannot be anything in the creature that does not depend upon God – else there would be something not creaturely in the creature and hence it would not be a creature as such –). God's creation cannot depend upon there being any other previous act or potency – and so matter cannot be eternal⁵² –. The creative act of God has as its end the

Esse igitur cuiuslibet existentis est proprius effectus eius, ita quod omne quod producit aliquid in esse, hoc facit in quantum agit in virtute Dei". Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. 3 cap. 66 n. 7.

⁴⁸ "Quod per essentiam dicitur, est causa omnium quae per participationem dicuntur". Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, lib. 2 cap. 15 n. 5.

⁴⁹ Thus says Thomas Aquinas: "Solus Deus est ens per suam essentiam, omnia vero alia sunt entia per participationem; omne autem quod est per participationem causatur ab eo quod est per essentiam". *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 61, a. 1, co.; "secundum rei veritatem causa prima est supra ens in quantum est ipsum esse infinitum, ens autem dicitur id quod finite participat esse, et hoc est proportionatum intellectui nostro cuius obiectum est 'quod quid est' (ut dicitur in III *De Anima*), unde illud solum est capabile ab intellectu nostro quod habet quidditatem participantem esse; sed Dei quidditas est ipsum esse, unde est supra intellectum". *In Librum de Causis*, lect. 6, n. 175.

⁵⁰ Aristotle does not go any further in his consideration of God as the final cause of movement; it is in this sense that he holds that "all are ordered together to one end". *Metaphysica*, XII, 10, 1075 a 18-19; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*.

⁵¹ "[...] emanationem totius entis a causa universali, quae est Deus, et hanc quidem emanationem designamus nomine creationis [...]. Unde, si consideretur emanatio totius entis universalis a primo principio, impossibile est quod aliquod ens praesupponatur huic emanationi. Idem autem est nihil quod nullum ens. [...] creatio, quae est emanatio totius esse, est ex non ente quod est nihil". Thomas Aquinas, *Summae Theologiae*, I, q. 45, a. 1 co.

⁵² Turning the argument around we could say that if we don't discover the nature of creation as *ex nihilo*, time and movement would need to be eternal in order for the cosmos to

being of the creature (*actus essendi*)⁵³, in virtue of which the being *is* and participates in the *Ipsum Esse*, and with its being, God co-creates the corresponding essence of the creature⁵⁴. This means that there is no Aristotelian meaning of being that would be prior to the creation *ex nihilo*, because God completely transcends the categorial order of things: the consideration of God as *Ipsum Esse* cannot be reduced to any of Aristotle's meanings of being.

This new real distinction which was introduced by Thomas Aquinas – between being and the essence – is of course fully compatible with the Aristotelian meanings of being. The discovery of the act of being (*esse ut actus*) only serves to widen the scope of Aristotle's framework: the Aristotelian meanings of being do not exhaust our understanding of reality because the principle of every being is the act of being. In this way the Aristotelian meanings of being fall on the side of the essence, which behaves as potency (*potentia essendi*) with respect to the act of being (*actus essentiae*)⁵⁵. Here is clear proof, in this internal development of the Aristotelian position by St. Thomas, of the fundamental truth of that position.

4. *The Absence of Metaphysical Development in Modern Philosophy*

If metaphysics is the *science of distinction*, its progress lies with discovery of ever deeper real distinctions. With the notable exception of Leonardo Polo, I don't think that we will find any other philosopher who has come

be adequately explained. And so Aristotle needed to affirm that "if there is always time, motion must also be eternal". *Physica*, VIII, 1, 251 b 13-14; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*; given that "it is impossible that movement should either have come into being or cease to be (for it must always have existed), or that time should. For there could not be a before and an after if time did not exist. Movement also is continuous, then, in the sense in which time is" *Metaphysica*, XII, 6, 1071 b 7-9; cited by *The Works of Aristotle*.

⁵³ "[...] creatio proprie respicit esse rei: unde dicitur in Lib. de causis (prop. 8), quod esse est per creationem, alia vero per informationem". Thomas Aquinas, *In III Sent.*, d. 11, q. 1, a. 2 co.

⁵⁴ The metaphysical explication given by Thomas Aquinas is better than Aristotle's because it also explains the created character of purely spiritual beings – something believed in by Thomas Aquinas due to his Christian Faith –, there can be no composition of matter and form in an angel but there most certainly can be a real distinction between its being and its essence.

⁵⁵ "Thomas discovers an act with respect to which the natures that determine each of predicaments or categories are only potency. This act is known as *actus essendi* (act of being) or simply as *esse* (being)". T. MELENDO, *Metafísica de lo concreto. Sobre las relaciones entre filosofía y vida* (Ediciones Internacionales Universitarias, Barcelona 1997), p. 150.

after St. Thomas Aquinas who has been able to go one further, so to speak, on this real distinction between the act of being and the essence. If anything the contrary has occurred, with the loss of that distinction and a return to something like the Aristotelian "framework" (a very non-Aristotelian word) of the categories⁵⁶. In this return, the Aristotelian understanding of the categories has been rethought and restructured in a different way. Let's take a closer look at just how that has come about.

Since Descartes and on through to Heidegger, the general topic of philosophy has been the *human subject*, at least in contrast to the relatively scarcer attention paid to that issue by ancient and medieval philosophy. For a modern or contemporary thinker the human subject doesn't "fit" into the Aristotelian framework, and so its inner structure gets tweaked in an effort to try and adjust the "system" to the subject. This 'turn' did not broaden Aristotelian metaphysics to any great degree because it did not lead to the discovery of new real distinctions. Although these modern philosophies took radically different points of view to Aristotle, they never really succeeded in making their way out of the framework that preceded them. Their *opposition* to Aristotle is clear proof that the more modern approaches have positioned themselves at the same level of discourse with the *Stagirite*, without there consequently being any metaphysical broadening. There only arises what we might call *symmetrical approaches*. I think that intellectual symmetry is a symptom of philosophical weariness. It does not lead to notions that are novel, all it does is reshuffle what was already around⁵⁷.

One clear example of intellectual symmetry can be found in the Kopernican turn worked by Kant's transcendental philosophy. At first sight, Kant's approach could appear quite novel, but upon taking a more detailed look we find that there is nothing radically new in his metaphysics. It shifts the center of attention from the object into the human subject but that is not to do more than reposition notions of object and subject that already existed in ancient and medieval philosophy. Kant got trapped by

⁵⁶ Arguments about the real distinction between being and the essence have been present in one way or another after the death of Thomas Aquinas – in such authors as Cajetan, John of Saint Thomas, Suárez or Domingo Bañez, among others –, but up until the 20th century the integrity of St. Thomas's doctrine had not been recovered. Among those authors who have helped salvage this distinction should be mentioned Cornelio Fabro, Étienne Gilson, Joseph de Finance, Leo Elders, John F. Wippel, etc.

⁵⁷ According to Polo, "modern philosophy focuses on the deficient attention paid to the human subject in traditional philosophy, but in its investigations it does not make use of sufficiently distinct notions, getting caught rather in the mire of 'ground', and so falls into a symmetric interpretation of the same or simply shuffles said notion from one place to another". *Antropología*, I, p. 102.

the subject-object relationship because all he did was change the importance of the elements in this pairing. He does not eliminate the notion of subject, nor of object, nor does he introduce any elements of more radical metaphysical standing⁵⁸.

The symmetrical way of doing philosophy was already present in Descartes, who even if he did usher modernity in, did not dig any deeper than Aristotle and Aquinas. The Cartesian *cogito* cannot even be formulated without the Aristotelian notion of *substance*: the parallelism between the notions of *substance* and *subject* is obvious. In fact, the Cartesian notion of the thinking substance (*res cogitans*) arose out of the inversion in order between the Aristotelian notions of substance and accidents; that is, by raising the accident of *thought* to the order of substance. I'll explain. In the Aristotelian approach the being of a human is defined by the *substance* (οὐσία); which is the substrate (or subject) in whom the accidents reside – and so the substance is defined as the *subsistent* –. *Thought* can only ever be an accidental dimension to a human being because thought resides, as it were, along with the other human accidents. It's not even a subsistent dimension to a human being. But Descartes defined "man" as a *res cogitans*, meaning that thought is what makes a human being subsistent. The human being is now defined by his or her action – in this case, thought –; and thus Descartes would affirm: "*je ne suis pas donc qu'une chose qui pense*"⁵⁹. This appears to be a very different way of looking at things in comparison to Aristotle but it's really nothing more than a turning upside down of the Aristotelian categories. What was accidental for Aristotle is now substantial for Descartes. With this reshuffling of notions we haven't gone outside the "framework" of substance and accidents, all we have done is raise an accident to the order of substance.

In my judgement, this symmetrisation of concepts explains the greater part of our modern day philosophies. Following on Descartes's failure to actually elevate the accident of thought to the order of substance, modernity has followed along that same path by trying to raise up the other acci-

⁵⁸ Leonardo Polo explains: "modern philosophy is symmetrical with respect to Greek philosophy. It provides us with a symmetrical notion of foundation. The ground in presence is the reality of the cosmos in Greek philosophy; the *a priori* in presence (which is the starting point for the transcendental deduction) is Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, in symmetry with Aristotle's *Physica*. The cosmos with a founding consciousness; *a priori* consciousness of what physics deduces. Modern philosophy is symmetrical insofar as the presence of the foundation is attributed to the human subject; subject or cosmos". *Curso de teoría*, II, p. 215.

⁵⁹ Cfr. R. DESCARTES, *Oeuvres et lettres. Textes présentés par André Bridoux. Seconde Méditation* (Gallimard, Paris 1952), p. 278.

dents to the level of substance. This turn in the Aristotelian scheme of things implies that the human being can no longer be defined to the exclusion of her *activity* – be it cognitive, voluntary, free, sentimental, etc. –. Hence human action can no longer be relegated to the accidental plane – at least as ancient and medieval philosophy used to –. The substantiality of the subject is made to coincide with its activity. This *active* interpretation of the human substance is the hermeneutical key to such notions as that of the *cogito* in Descartes, the transcendental self in Kant, the self-positing ego in Fichte, the self-conscious subject as a self-manifestation of the Absolute in Schelling, the dialectical process in the self-constituting Absolute in Hegel, angst in Kierkegaard, the will to power in Nietzsche, self-pretension in Marx, the *Da-sein* in Heidegger, the being-for-itself in Sartre, etc. In all of these characterizations, the human subject is defined according to the *action* that he carries out. Human action becomes thus the ontological foundation of the human being. The metaphysical principle of the human being is no longer the Aristotelian substance but rather the activity that a man or woman does. Goethe even went so far as to say that: *the beginning is action*⁶⁰!

To sum up, even if modernity encompasses philosophies of very different flavors, none of them has been able to radically outstrip the Aristotelian – let alone the Thomist – approach, because none of them have discovered real distinctions of greater profundity. They all lie within the scope of the distinction between substance and accidents – and, as it happens, inside the real distinction between the act of being with the essence –. What Leonardo Polo proposes goes well beyond the Aristotelian-Thomistic position.

5. The Metaphysical “Extension” of Leonardo Polo

If we want to fully appreciate Leonardo Polo’s extension of metaphysics, then I think it worthwhile at this point to take another look at what Thomas Aquinas had proposed. St. Thomas had effectively established a distinction between God and his creatures when he showed how creatures are *composed* beings whereas God is absolutely simple i.e. each creature’s act of being is really different to its essence but God’s is not. What this means in effect, is that, in order for us to be able to distinguish between two different acts of being, we must take into account their respective essences. Thus it follows that in order to be able to distinguish between the divine act of

⁶⁰ “Im Anfang war die Tat!” J.W. VON GOETHE, *Faust*, cited in *Goethes Werke*. Band 3 (Christian Wegner Verlag, Hamburg 1962), p. 44, line 1237.

being (*esse*) and the created act of being (*esse*), we should examine their corresponding essences in order to see whether they really identify with their own acts of being or not. And this only occurs with God. If, however, we are more worried about making some sort of hierarchical distinction between the created acts of being themselves – for example, distinguishing the *esse* of a human being from the *esse* of a swan – then we should focus on their respective essences. Why? Because for St. Thomas, the essence is what limits the act of being, given that *esse* of its own accord is perfect⁶¹. We can mark out different perfections (different acts of being) by looking at the limitations imposed by those being’s imperfections (essences). These varying imperfections can be sorted in a *hierarchical* way between themselves because the essence determines the *grade* of being of the *esse*. Of course, if we didn’t take the essence of a human being and the essence of a swan into account – that which limits their respective acts of being – then we wouldn’t be able to draw any real distinctions between the human act of being and that of other created acts of being such as that of a swan. In short, in order to establish a hierarchy between the different *esse*, we need to have recourse to the hierarchy that exists between the different essences; and this goes for created acts of being just as it does for created acts of being and the divine act of being.

For St. Thomas the *esse* is considered almost exclusively as an act of the essence (*actus essentiae*)⁶², and so without the essence we would not be able to introduce distinctions between the different acts of being. The grade of being that pertains to beings that participate in being – created beings – is established according to the limitation that their corresponding essences impose. Thus, the divine stands out among creation because its essence is *infinite* – and so it doesn’t limit the divine *esse* in any way –, while creatures have *finite* essences i.e. their *esse* participates in the divine *Esse* as various *esse* that are limited by their essence⁶³.

⁶¹ “Ipsum esse est perfectissimum omnium. Comparatur enim ad omnia ut actus; nihil enim habet actualitatem nisi in quantum est”. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 1 ad 3.

⁶² The following affirmations of Thomas Aquinas brings this to light: “nihil enim habet actualitatem, nisi in quantum est, unde ipsum esse est actualitas omnium rerum, et etiam ipsarum formarum”. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 1, ad 3; “hoc quod habet esse, efficitur actu existens. Unde patet quod hoc quod dico esse est actualitas omnium actuum, et propter hoc est perfectio omnium perfectionum”. *De Potentia*, q. 7, a. 2, ad 9.

⁶³ “[...] aliquid dicitur determinatum dupliciter: primo ratione limitationis, alio modo ratione distinctionis. Essentia autem divina non est quid determinatum primo modo, sed secundo modo, quia forma non limitatur nisi ex hoc quod in alio recipitur, cui materia commensuratur. In essentia autem divina non est aliquid in alio receptum, eo quod esse eius est

Does this mean that Thomas Aquinas has uttered the last word on the matter? Leonardo Polo says that if we were to distinguish God from creatures by only looking at their identity or *composition* in their act of being and essence, then we wouldn't really be able to establish transcendental distinctions between creatures themselves – between the different *modes* in the created act of being –, for all we would have said is that being really distinguishes itself from the essence in *all* creatures⁶⁴. A sole focus on the being-essence composition leads to *unification* in the ambit of creation due to the language of *sums* and *totals* that we would be employing: *all* created being is composed i.e. participates in. *Composition* would be the reason, therefore, for the created nature of the being; *every* composed being is created. It's clear that in Thomistic metaphysics *composition* means *created* and vice-versa: they act as synonyms for each other⁶⁵.

Polo is not altogether satisfied with this position because it doesn't make the human *esse* stand out from the rest of creation. By identifying the *created* character of creatures with their composition as being and essence, we really don't see what's so special about the human *esse* when faced with the rest of the physical cosmos. Within the Thomist system the only way of distinguishing between two participated acts of being is by turning to their essences. Whilst fair enough in itself, it doesn't go far enough for Polo's likings because Polo wants to distinguish between the human creature and the cosmos according to their corresponding acts of being⁶⁶.

The metaphysical problem that Polo is confronting does not have to do with movement – as was the case with Aristotle –, nor with creation *ex nihilo* – the issue that St. Thomas was worried about –, but rather concerns the *way of being* human – as a person – from the *way of being* in the physical universe – which is not at all personal –, that is, distinguishing between the human creatures and the created cosmos in terms of the act of being. Polo's position is quite clear: persons are not things. This affirmation, which is

ipsa divina natura subsistens; quod in nulla re alia contingit: nam quaelibet res alia habet esse receptum, et sic limitatum; et inde est quod essentia divina ab omnibus distinguitur per hoc quod est in alio non recipi". Thomas Aquinas, *Quodlibet VII*, q.1, a. 1, ad 1.

⁶⁴ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 121.

⁶⁵ In this sense J.F. Wippel says that: "he [Thomas Aquinas] reasons from the fact that God's act of being is uncaused to the conclusion that in him essence and act of being are identical, and from this to the contrast with all other things. In all of them essence and act of being differ and are therefore composed. Presumably this is because, unlike God, they receive their *esse* from something else and therefore enter into composition with it". *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, p. 588.

⁶⁶ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 69.

commonly accepted⁶⁷, has a metaphysical depth in Leonardo Polo that cannot be found anywhere else in the history of philosophy because it is a *transcendental* (not in the Kantian sense of the term but rather as proper to the act of being) distinction which he makes between people and things. The real distinction in the human creature cannot be compared with the real distinction that exists in material creation. The human creature's *way of being* is different from material creation's *way of being* (at the level of their respective acts of being). In fact, not even the human essence is potential in the *way* that the physical universe's essence is. What this implies, in short, is a real distinction that goes much further than any that Thomas Aquinas had developed, namely: the distinction between *two modes* in the created act of being and between *two modes* of created essence.

If Thomas Aquinas had argued that being can be divided in two: as Uncreated and as created⁶⁸, Leonardo Polo expands this distinction on the creature's side⁶⁹: the created act of being can be divided still further (at least into two): as *persistence* – the cosmos's act of being – and as *co-existence* – which is the human act of being –; these are *two modes* in the created act of being⁷⁰. Why a distinction at the level of being? Because in them *being* and *creation* coincide⁷¹; creatures are different according to their different ways of being created, "to be created doesn't always mean the same thing"⁷².

If the *act of persistence* is the same as the cosmic *esse* and the *act of co-existence* is the personal *esse* of a human, then we will have to say more than that God's *Esse* identifies with his essence, because it simply doesn't

⁶⁷ R. SPAEMANN dedicates his book *Personen. Versuche über den Unterschied zwischen 'etwas' und 'jemand'* (Klett-Cotta, Stuttgart 1996), to this distinction.

⁶⁸ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 44, a. 1, co. Suffice that we invoke composition in order to distinguish between created being and Uncreated Being. Hence: "it would be enough for him [for Thomas Aquinas] to show that in one being at most can there be identity of essence and act of being and, therefore, that in everything else the two are distinct and composed with one another"; "if something is not God himself, it is not identical with its act of being, which is an almost perfect illustration of God-to-creatures argumentation for nonidentity of essence and act of being in such entities [...] only in God are act of being and quiddity identical". WIPPEL, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, pp. 585 and 586).

⁶⁹ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 93.

⁷⁰ As specialists know, Leonardo Polo dedicates *El ser. Tomo I: La existencia extramental* (Eunsa, Pamplona 1965) to the explication of the act of being of the cosmos or of *persistence*, whereas the human act of being or *co-existence* is studied in his *Antropología transcendental. Tomo I: La persona humana*.

⁷¹ Cfr. POLO, *El ser*, p. 23.

⁷² POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 93.

identify the unique existential character of divine activity. There must be a *mode of being* that sets God apart from creatures: we can't just say that a creature's being is different to God's⁷³, because even though it rules out pantheism, it doesn't succeed in stating that God's uncreated *way of being* is any different to the created *ways of being*.

For Leonardo Polo, the divine act of being is different to any created act of being because it is *Original*: the divine act of being (*esse*) signifies an *original* activity. God is the original Origin. This means that God is the *Real Identity* in absolute terms, because an act of being can only be identical with itself in an absolute way if it is the Original act of being – that which has always been –. The existential activity – or act of being – of each creature is to be distinguished from the divine one precisely because it has *not* always been but rather has *begun to be*. A created *esse* is not identical with itself in absolute terms – since always – because it has a beginning. As I have said elsewhere, “The Identity is the Origin, it doesn't begin because it is an uncreated act of being. This is the radical distinction between God's act of being and the creature's act of being: God doesn't begin, but the creature does”⁷⁴.

Origin and *beginning* are two different ways of being: the first is uncreated and the second one is created. In this way we need not invoke the principle of composition or identity between being and the essence in order to distinguish creatures from God. The distinction that we have established between the *modes of the act of being* is actually the justifying ground for the *composition* of an act of being with its essence and why in God there should be a *real identity*. If the divine *Esse* is Original, ever identical with itself, then the divine essence will also need to be Original, forever identical with the divine act of being – it would not make a lot of sense to say that an Original act of being should have an essence that at some stage began –. There cannot be a composition of being and essence in God because his being and his essence are Original; the obverse is that being and the essence can only be Original if they really are identical. The creature, however, *begins to be* – it is completely *ex nihilo* –; neither its act of being nor its essence are original – they have not always existed –; and so the created act of being does not originally identify with the created essence, which entails that the act of being is *really* distinguishable from the created essence. Non-original existential activity (*esse*) is really

⁷³ Cfr. Thomas Aquinas, *De Potentia Dei*, 3, a. 16, ad 24.

⁷⁴ S. PIÁ TARAZONA, *De la criatura a Dios. La demostración de la existencia de Dios en la primera dimensión del abandono del límite mental*, «Anuario Filosófico», 29/2 (1996), p. 939.

different from its essence, “the distinction between the act of being with its essence demands that the act of being not be identical with itself nor original”⁷⁵. The reason for this distinction lies in whether the act of being (*esse*) is original or not. If it is original, its essence will be identical with its being. If not – because it begins to be –, the essence will not identify with its act of being.

I insist: the real distinction between being and its essence can be explicated by its character as a non-original act of being: “the created act distinguishes itself from the uncreated one precisely in that it is created: and hence the created act should be distinguished from the essence, and not the other way around”⁷⁶. The *original* character of the divine act of being, is explicated by the fact that in God *being* and *essence* identify with each other in an *original* way. Says Leonardo Polo: “the act of being of the creature is different to the act of being of God not because its essence should happen to be really distinct from its act of being, but rather because its act of being has been created. If this is not adverted to, then one falls into the trap of dealing with being as though it were something entirely uniform and uni-dimensional. Thus I argue that the distinction between God and the creature should be established along the lines of the act of being, which carries with it the distinction between creaturely being and creaturely essence”⁷⁷. I think that we have now seen enough to satisfy ourselves that with this metaphysical distinction drawn between the different *modes of the act of being*, that Leonardo Polo has thereby broadened the scope of Thomas Aquinas's metaphysics.

The metaphysical enlargement of Polo not only carries with it a greater depth in the way that the Being (*Esse*) of God is to be distinguished from the being (*esse*) of creatures, it also leads to the introduction of there being distinctions drawn between the different modes in the created act of being. And thus, *creature* – or non-original act of being – does not always mean exactly the same thing. In fact, within Polo's approach, we cannot study the created act of being in general – there is no *ens commune* or *ens universale* –, for one must specify the *esse* (and the *essentia*) that is under investigation. Although the act of being of every creature is a dependent act of being—a non-original act of being –⁷⁸, not every creature depends upon its Creator in the same way. And so if *being* for the creature means

⁷⁵ POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 138.

⁷⁶ L. POLO, *Curso de teoría del conocimiento*. Tomo IV. Primera Parte (Eunsa, Pamplona 1994), p. 48.

⁷⁷ POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 121.

⁷⁸ Cfr. POLO, *Curso de teoría*, III, p. 288.

*dependence*⁷⁹, with different creatures we will have different types of dependency.

The created act of being is distinguished from the uncreated act of being because it has a beginning. Its dependency lies in its being an *esse* as *beginning* and so it cannot be first or primary in an absolute sense – *ex nihilo nihil fit* –, it cannot be original. In order to distinguish between the modes of the created act of being it would pay to look at how a creature begins to be. Different beginnings spells a difference in the creature, something that clearly applies to human beginnings as opposed to non-personal creation. The cosmos begins to be as *persistence*, but the human person begins to be as a *co-existence*. The human person is a mode of *esse* distinct from the *esse* of a physical creature because the human dependence on God is that of a personal act of being. The dependence of a created person with respect to an uncreated person cannot be compared to the dependence of a non-personal being – the physical universe – with respect to its Creator. The first kind of dependence is *interpersonal* (between two persons), but the second is not⁸⁰.

Esse as a *created person* means having an existence that is open to others (*co-existence*): the human person is *open* to the physical universe and to other persons, God included. This is what *co-existence* means: *to exist turned towards* others. Thus to *co-exist* also means to *exist-with*, to *be-with*⁸¹. The human person's mode of *esse* is *co-existence* because the human being *exists-with* other acts of being, namely: with those that *persist*, with other *co-existences*, and with the *Origin*. On the other hand, the physical universe's act of being is not an open act of being, for the simple reason that it is not personal: it does not co-exist with other acts of

⁷⁹ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 136.

⁸⁰ A detailed study of *persistence* – the act of being of the cosmos – and of its quite singular mode of dependence on the Originating Act of being – the transcendental causality – can be found in my book: *Los primeros principios en Leonardo Polo. Un estudio introductorio de sus caracteres existenciales y su vigencia* (Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Navarra, Pamplona 1997, Cuadernos de Anuario Filosófico. Serie de Filosofía Española, n° 2), 108 pages.

⁸¹ Leonardo Polo found his inspiration for this point in Martin Heidegger, who used this expression in regard to man; in fact chapter IV of *Sein und Zeit* is entitled: *Das In-der-Welt-sein als Mit- und Selbstsein. Das «Man»*; see especially paragraph 26: *Das Mitdasein der Anderen und das alltägliche Mitsein*. As Heidegger maintains in this paragraph: “‘Mit’ und ‘Auch’ sind *existenzial* und nicht *kategorial* zu verstehen. Auf dem Grunde dieses *mithaft* In-der-Welt-seins ist die Welt je schon immer die, die ich mit den Anderen teile. Die Welt des Daseins ist *Mitwelt*. Das In-Sein ist *Mitsein* mit Anderen. Das innerweltliche Ansichsein dieser ist *Mitdasein*”. *Sein und Zeit*, cited in *Gesamtausgabe*. Band 2 (Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt 1977), p. 118.

being⁸². Openness is personal *intimacy*, something “inside” the human being and only secondarily turned towards what is “outside” because the human person can only open to others if she is *open to herself*⁸³. This means that “the human being does not limit himself to being, but rather he is-with. *Being-with* specifies the person who is that reality which is open to intimacy and also, by allusion, turned towards the outside”⁸⁴. The openness of the human being is not something accidental to him, i.e. it does not pertain to him at the level of the accidental categories. Rather it must be dealt with at a *transcendental* level, because this openness represents the singular character of the human *esse*: “intimacy [*esse* that is inwardly open] is the strict definition of a person”⁸⁵.

Co-existence signals intimacy as an act of being. Polo refers to this *transcendental openness* of the human *esse* as being *transcendental freedom*⁸⁶. Personal freedom is a *transcendental* dimension to the human being, as something proper to personal *esse*; and hence it is a *personal transcendental*. Freedom, in its transcendental sense, means the same as *openness* as an act of being, given that the human *esse* is *co-esse*. The act of being of the physical universe is not free, it is a *closed* act of being – not co-existent –.

Freedom and *co-existence* are two *transcendental* modes that designate the personal or human *esse*; they are, thus, *anthropological transcendentals*. They are only “convertible” within the human *esse*, exclusive to the human being and not convertible with the non-personal *esse*. The human person is freedom as *esse*, or if you will, *co-esse*, a being open to others – open to what merely *persist*s, towards other *co-existences* and open to the *Origin* –.

⁸² Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 32.

⁸³ This *intimate* openness to which Polo refers is to be distinguished from the human being's openness *to the outside* as is remarked on by Jan A. Aertsen: “the *anima* is the being that can accord with every being. Man is marked, we might say, by a transcendental openness”. *Medieval Philosophy and the Transcendentals. The Case of Thomas Aquinas* (Brill, Leiden 1996), p. 105. Thomas Aquinas makes an allusion – when citing Aristotle – to the openness of the soul towards all things – from the cognitive and volitive point of view – when he says: “sicut bonum habet rationem appetibilis, ita verum habet ordinem ad cognitionem. Unumquodque autem in quantum habet de esse, intantum est cognoscibile. Et propter hoc dicitur in III *De Anima* quod ‘anima est quodammodo omnia secundum sensum et intellectum’. Et ideo sicut bonum convertitur cum ente, ita et verum. Sed tamen, sicut bonum addit rationem appetibilis supra ens, ita et verum comparationem ad intellectum”. *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 3, co.

⁸⁴ POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 32.

⁸⁵ L. POLO, *La coexistencia del hombre*, in *El hombre: immanencia y trascendencia* (Pamplona 1991: Actas de las XXV Reuniones Filosóficas, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Navarra, n° 1), p. 45.

⁸⁶ Cfr. POLO, *Antropología*, I, pp. 94, 229-245.

This transcendental openness of the human *esse* is also a *cognitive* and *loving* openness, because intellection and love are modes which are proper to personal openness. The openness between personal *acts of being* – *inter-personal* openness – is always a cognitive and loving openness. Intelligence and will are not just dimensions to the human essence (as spiritual potencies) but rather are cognitive and loving openness should be situated in the order of the act of being. And so, according to Leonardo Polo, the *personal intellect* and *personal love* are also anthropological transcendentals⁸⁷.

No doubt these Polian comparisons and conversions within the human *esse* (co-existence) of personal freedom, the personal intellect and personal love will sound novel and surprising. But let's see what this has to do with St. Thomas's metaphysics. You will recall that Thomas's doctrine on the act of being (*esse*) states that the *esse* (or *actus essendi*) is the source of all the perfections of the essence (or *potentia essendi*), for as St. Thomas says: *omnium perfectiones pertinent ad perfectionem essendi*⁸⁸. As a consequence, the elevation of freedom, intellection and love to the personal or transcendental level of the act of being can be grounded in the Thomistic doctrine on the *perfection of being*⁸⁹. If you accept the Thomistic version of the human *esse*, then Polo's enlargement on this theme according to the anthropological transcendentals discovered by Polo is no longer as strange as it first sounds. Leonardo Polo studies⁹⁰ personal freedom, personal intelligence and personal love as purely human perfections contained within the personal *esse*⁹¹.

⁸⁷ Polo studies these two personal transcendentals in great detail in *Antropología*, I, especially pp. 212-228.

⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 4, a. 2 co. Ángel Luis González: says that *esse* should be considered "as the source and principle of all other perfections, which do not amount to being anything more than manifestations of the act of being. All the ontological richness of a being is due to *esse*". *Ser y participation*, p. 112; and Carlos Cardona affirms that: "every perfection remits to the pure perfection which *esse* is". *Metafísica de la opción intelectual* (Rialp, Madrid 1973²), p. 61.

⁸⁹ The perfection of being "contains in itself all the other perfections, being the first and the principle of all the others, as, for instance, understanding, life, etc. [...] *Esse* is the perfection of all perfections, precisely because it is the act of all acts and act, taken by itself, is perfection". GONZÁLEZ, *Ser y participation*, p. 107 and p. 112. What's more, "only due to the act of being can we say that man is alive, wise, humble, etc.". ID., *Teología natural* (Eunsa, Pamplona 2000⁴), p. 118.

⁹⁰ The third part of Tome I of the *Antropología transcendental*, pp. 203-245.

⁹¹ Cfr. *Antropología*, I, 114, note 115. A similar argument is made by W. Norris Clarke: "if all the perfection of being a person comes to it from its act of existence, proportioned of course to its nature, then we can transfer all the attributes characteristic of existence itself over into the person as such, where they will be found at enhanced degrees of intensity". *Person and Being* (Marquette University Press, Milwaukee 1993), pp. 29-30.

To see how Polo's approach is actually an extension of Thomas Aquinas's work, we need to look at how *intimacy* is a quite singular mode within the pure perfections of freedom, intelligence and of love, which are already contained within the personal act of being i.e. within the *co-existence*, as anthropological transcendentals, and not just as dimensions to the human essence. *Intimacy* is the co-act of being personal, of *being as openness*; and so: "the anthropological transcendentals are reached in intimacy. The study of the personal transcendentals and their conversion is the same thing as a study of intimacy. These transcendentals are intimate and so secondary to intimacy"⁹².

We can now distinguish the human *esse* from the divine *esse* and from the *esse* proper to the physical universe without laying hold of the composition of the created act of being with its essence, and so without needing to consider the corresponding limitation of each essence. The human *esse* is now distinguished from the divine *esse* because it is not the *Original Esse*, but rather *esse* as a *beginning*; on the other hand, the human *esse* is different to the *esse* of the cosmos because *co-existence*, *freedom*, *intelligence* and *love* are convertible transcendentals with the human person's act of being, but not with the act of being of the cosmos, which is not personal. In other words, *co-existence* is a mode of *created esse* distinct to *persistence*.

In conclusion, the metaphysical extension achieved by Leonardo Polo has shown that there are different modes of the act of being – between *persistence*, *co-existence* and the *Origin* – which are superior to the metaphysical distinction expounded by Thomas Aquinas between the act of being and the essence; and this precisely because the above mentioned distinction refers exclusively to the transcendental order, without needing to draw upon the categories. If Thomas concluded that the difference between the creature and God is greater than the creature and nothingness, Polo has shown that the difference between *the modes of the act of being* is greater than the distinction between *esse* and the *essentia*. Even so, we can still ask: 'Is this distinction between the modes of the act of being the greatest metaphysical distinction that can be established'?, or rather; 'Can we go one step further than Polo'?

6. My Proposal for Bettering Polo

I argue that the distinctions between the different modes of the act of being – between *persistence*, *co-existence* and the *Origin* – are not the greatest metaphysical distinctions which are to be found in reality. Further, and

⁹² POLO, *Antropología*, I, p. 203.

indeed more profound, distinctions can be made from *within* the personal act of being. These are distinctions that are *intimate to the personal esse*. The *transcendental distinctions* – those which are established within the different modes of the act of being – are actually inferior to the *intra-transcendental distinctions* – those which occur within the personal transcendentals –.

When Leonardo Polo studied the human *esse*, he made especial reference to the *conversion* of co-existence, freedom, intellection and personal love: four personal transcendentals that are integrated within the human *esse*⁹³. If we accept that position, the metaphysical problem that is now put to us is the following: are the anthropological transcendentals really distinguishable from each other? On the supposition that the answer were affirmative, we would then ask ‘and according to what criteria would we distinguish these personal transcendentals? Polo does not provide us an explicit answer to these questions within his writings. He was more concerned with underlining the continuation of his philosophy with Thomas Aquinas. But metaphysics cannot stop with Leonardo Polo. Polo’s work deserves to be carried on.

I think that it would be in the line of Polo’s thought that there are *real and internal distinctions within the personal esse*. The anthropological transcendentals are not really the same dimension i.e. only logically distinguishable for the following reasons:

1) If the four personal transcendentals amounted to being *the same dimension* to human *esse* – if *esse* and freedom were the *same thing*, and freedom the *same thing* as intelligence and intelligence, love –, then there would be no point in saying more than just *esse*⁹⁴. Were that the case, there really wouldn’t be any point in distinguishing the human *esse* from that of the cosmos: with the consequent loss of the distinction between *persistence* and *personal co-existence* established by Leonardo Polo. In other words the distinction between the modes of the *created esse* implies that the personal *esse* – co-existence – is a *multi-dimensional esse* – each of the personal transcendentals is a distinct dimension to the personal *esse* – and so it calls for a multi-faceted investigation. On the other hand, the *esse* of

⁹³ Polo studies the conversion of the personal transcendentals with the human *esse* in the Third Part of Tome I of his *Antropología transcendental*.

⁹⁴ If having criticized Parménides, we say that thought and being is not *the same thing*, then we should not introduce *sameness* into the study of the anthropological transcendentals, because said inclusion would end up leading us to *monism*. When dealing with anthropology, *sameness* loses the real the different personal transcendentals. On this note you might look to my postscript: «la imposibilidad de alcanzar la co-existencia desde la mis-midad», in my book *El hombre como ser dual*, pp. 129-135.

the cosmos – persistence –, as it is not personal being, means that it is a *mono-dimensional esse*; and so a further metaphysical study of the being of the cosmos need only be *one-sided*. Co-existence is a *complex esse* – it houses a plurality of transcendental dimensions that go into the make-up of *personal intimacy* –, whereas persistence is *just plain being* – without intimacy –. As a consequence, to try and reduce these four personal transcendentals to the first one – to *esse* –, is the same thing as trying to reduce personal *esse* to what is not personal. In short, if we don’t maintain the intra-transcendental distinctions of the personal *esse*, we end up losing the transcendental distinction between the different modes of the created act of being.

2) In keeping with the Polian approach, neither can we sustain that the four personal transcendentals really identify with each other. As I have already set out, Identity only properly applies to the *Origin*: which is the quite singular mode of the divine *esse*. God is the Originating Origin – and has been always, since the beginning, originally –; for that reason God is the only *esse* to whom we may attribute a *real identity* as a unique mode of existence. Given that the human *esse* has not always been, but rather that it began to be, there cannot be a real identity within it. Were the intimate transcendentals of the human *esse* actually identical to each other, we would be talking about a real identity which is quite contrary to what Polo affirms. The human *esse* does not possess a real identity because it is not completely *simple*: a property that pertains exclusively to divine act of being. Simplicity involves a real identity in these personal dimensions within the act of being as opposed to the being of the cosmos that is just plain being and so thoroughly lacking in interior dimensions at the level of the person. The divine *esse* is *simple*, the human *esse* is *complex* and the *esse* of the cosmos is *just plain being*. This is another way of distinguishing between the modes in the act of being.

In order to maintain complexity within the human act of being, it would pay to explicitly distinguish between the personal transcendentals. Having come this far we now need to ask ourselves according to what criteria this is to be done. My suggestion is that it be done according to a *hierarchy* (something that is very easy for a Thomist or Polian to digest)⁹⁵.

⁹⁵ Says Leonardo Polo: “hierarchy pertains to the immaterial”. *Curso de teoría*, I, p. 187; Also: “In the case of knowledge or in other dimensions of immaterial creation, the best distinction is that of grade, hierarchy, and not a simple numerical distinction. We are dealing here with distinctions between the superior and inferior”. *Antropología*, I, p. 23. The transcendentals of the human person are *dimensions of immaterial creation*; and so the most correct or proper of the distinctions to be made will be that of *hierarchy*.

The distinctions between the personal transcendentals are to be found within the intimacy of the human *esse*, within, that is, the intimacy of the human *spirit* or *personhood*. It is precisely because the human *esse* admits of *internal distinctions* that it is a personal *esse*; an *esse* that is not susceptible to internal distinctions – as is the case of persistence – cannot have any intimacy and so it cannot be personal.

This means that the antropological transcendentals are not to be distinguished from each other in the way that the different modes in the act of being are to be distinguished; whilst persistence, co-existence and the Origin are different acts of being – and this sense enjoy a certain independence from each other –, the antropological transcendentals are only different from each other within the human *esse*. It would not make sense, thus, to affirm that personal freedom is a different person to personal intelligence. They are, rather, different dimensions within the same human person, and they can only be distinguished from each other within the intimacy of the person. For the same motives, personal freedom cannot be distinguished from persistence and the Origin without an explicit consideration of the other personal transcendentals alongside that freedom. What is to be distinguished from persistence and the Origin is co-existence. Personal freedom can only be distinguished from persistence and the Origin in so far as it is an integral dimension to the human *esse*. To sum up: the different personal transcendentals are not to be distinguished from among themselves in the same way that we distinguish the acts of being amongst themselves. This is a task that can only be carried out within the intimacy of personal *esse*. It is a deeper and more intimate distinction. These intra-transcendental distinctions are intimate to *esse*, and not merely transcendental distinctions⁹⁶.

Let me now make a brief sketch of what we have seen in this present work. Following on Parmenides's monism, which was unable to explicate the phenomenon of movement and the distinction between being and thought, Aristotle resolved these enigmas by distinguishing different meanings within being. Centuries later, in order to explain creation *ex nihilo*, St. Thomas Aquinas introduced a real distinction between the act of being in a creature and its essence. In the 20th century, Leonardo Polo proposed a metaphysical broadening within the Thomist approach by characterizing the different modes in the act of being, namely: persistence, co-existence and the Origin. I argue that the Polian approach can be

⁹⁶ A detailed study of the distinction between the personal transcendentals and their internal hierarchy can be found in the Second Part of my book: *El hombre como ser dual*, pp. 181-435.

improved upon, showing forth its true reach in the process, through a study of the transcendentals that lie within the intimacy of the human person. These intra-transcendental distinctions are even greater than the different modes in the act of being in the sense that they are deeper, more *intimate*, to the personal *esse*.