

# The promotion of human coexistence: Personalised education from Leonardo Polo

## La promoción de la coexistencia humana. La educación personalizada desde Leonardo Polo

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### Abstract:

This article aims to expand the theoretical basis of personalised education with the help of Leonardo Polo's transcendental anthropology. Specifically, it addresses the difficulty of arranging learning and teaching so that they can be regarded as parts of a strict *duality*, that is to say, exercises that cannot be done without both elements. This particular mutual reference or intrinsic opening enables personalised educational growth, which is intrinsic or habitual perfecting, thus preventing learning and teaching from becoming disconnected as parallel processes that are only *coincidentally* related. Personalised education, inspired by Leonardo Polo, is understood as a perfecting *in common* of educators and learners that each of them achieves in *duality* with the other. In personalised education, teaching and learning are intersubjective or social manifestations that are peculiar to the essence of each human being, given that teaching and learning hap-

pen in living-with others, with the performance of individual tasks in a secondary position.

**Keywords:** transcendental anthropology, duality, essential improvement, habits, personalised education, Leonardo Polo.

### Resumen:

Este artículo pretende ampliar las bases teóricas de la educación personalizada con la ayuda de la antropología trascendental de Leonardo Polo. En concreto, en este estudio se aborda la dificultad que entraña articular la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de modo que puedan considerarse miembros de una *dualidad* estricta, es decir, ejercicios que no pueden darse el uno sin el otro. Precisamente, esa referencia o apertura intrínseca mutua hace posible el crecimiento educativo en sentido personalizado, que es el perfeccionamiento intrínseco o habitual,

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evitando de esta manera que se disocien como procesos paralelos que se encuentran relacionados de una forma meramente *coincidental*. La educación personalizada inspirada en Leonardo Polo se entiende como un perfeccionamiento *en común* de educadores y educandos que cada uno de ellos alcanza en *dualidad* con el otro. En la educación personalizada, enseñar y aprender son manifestacio-

nes intersubjetivas o sociales propias de la esencia de cada ser humano, en la medida en que se enseña y se aprende conviviendo con otros y, secundariamente, realizando tareas individuales.

**Descriptores:** antropología trascendental, dualidad, crecimiento esencial, educación personalizada, hábitos, Leonardo Polo.

## 1. Introduction

Personalised education is not an indiscriminate operation that guarantees results by following particular procedures; instead it is a dialogic task based on correspondence between teachers and students. It is precisely in this sort of *weakness* that its educational density lies.

According to this view, which was that of García Hoz who founded and promoted this pedagogical concept with Christian roots, personalised education is more than *personalised learning* done through planned experiences, such as those described by Coll, Esteban-Guitart, and Iglesias (2020), which are of undoubted methodical value. Neither is it a *marketing* strategy adapted to the new *consumer identity* (Hartley, 2007; Peters, 2009), nor is it merely individualised education. In fact, the expression “personalised education” started to be used to differentiate it from individualised education (García Hoz, 1993). Personalised education is an *effusive coming and going* typical of the personal encounter that can only come about or be fostered from its surroundings, as it is aimed at removing anonymity, something that involves a dignifying commitment: Personal-

isation has something of aggression about it and in some way commits and ennoble as by virtue of personalisation, someone goes from being just another person to being the point of convergence of allusions (García Hoz, 1970a).

In personalised education, the human person is “the explicit reference point of the subject of education” (García Hoz, 1997, p. 103). Personalised education is “education referring to the person” (García Hoz, 1993, p. 32), and so it is not a pedagogical method (Arancibia, 2018) but rather “a way of seeing education through the most profound reality of the individual, which is its condition as a person” (García, 1997, p. 105).

García Hoz did not devote much of his work to strictly philosophical topics (the treatise *Cuestiones de filosofía individual y social de la educación* [Questions on the individual and social philosophy of education], from 1962, stands out here), but his anthropology can be regarded as being “between the Aristotelian-scholastic tradition and contemporary Christian spiritualist thought” (Bernal Guerrero, 1999, p. 219). This anthropology from the scholastic tradition is set out by various authors who are renowned authorities in the

second volume of *Tratado de Educación Personalizada. El concepto de Persona* (Treatise on personalised education: the concept of the person) (García Hoz et al., 1989).

But with his proposal for a *transcendental expansion* in anthropology, it is Polo “who best captures and expands the findings on *intersubjectivity* from the philosophical anthropologies of the 20th century” (Sellés, 2007, pp. 199-200), continuing in turn with traditional transcendental metaphysics (Polo, 2016a), without falling into what he calls the *symmetries* that characterise modern approaches. Polo elaborates on the real distinction between act of being and essence that Thomas Aquinas was unable to adapt to anthropology (Corazón, 2019). Consequently, anthropology is subordinated to metaphysics and freedom does not achieve the transcendental status that modern philosophy gives it, at the service of which we find personalised education (García Hoz, 1970a, 1993). For this reason, authors like Altarejos, who provided the prologue to *Ayudar a crecer* (Helping to grow – the only essay Polo devoted wholly to education) (2019), Izaguirre and Moros (2007), and Bernardo (2019), have attempted to incorporate his advances into personalised education.

*Filosofía de la Educación* (Philosophy of education) by Altarejos and Naval can be regarded as the first attempt to develop “what Polo sketched in his essay *Ayudar a crecer*” at an educational level” (Orón Semper, 2018, p. 1250). On the same lines, the present article can be linked to this effort to take the personalised concept of education García Hoz promoted and open it to the anthropology of Leonardo Polo, as done by Orón Semper (2018), Dasoy

(2018), Ahedo (2018), Martínez Priego (2019), and Pérez Guerrero (2020).

This study specifically proposes that teaching and learning in personalised education can be seen as exercises that have a strict correspondence between each other or that mutually refer to one another insofar as teaching is *teaching-someone* and learning is *learning-from-someone*.

Naturally some notions can be acquired without anyone teaching them, in the same way that it is possible to *try* to teach without anyone actually learning anything. Nonetheless, “learners who do not accept the person who is educating might pick up some notions, but strictly speaking, they will not learn *personally*, that is to say, they will not come to know themselves progressively as people” (Sellés, 2007, p. 354)<sup>1</sup>. The key Polo provides for understanding intersubjective relationships, which are crucial for getting to know oneself as a person and, therefore, for personalised education, is *loving correspondence*. Education is radically personalised when teaching is regarded as a contribution by the teacher that pupils must accept and correspond through their learning.

Personally, *teaching* is giving something, doing a favour, and *learning* is accepting it. If we eliminate this intersubjective status of education, which ultimately depends on the *donal* structure of the person, teaching and learning do not accompany one another but instead split into parallel activities. As we will see, through synderesis, people put into operation or activate their specifically human capacities, but this subjective process is dependent on the intersubjective or social framework, in other

words, on the *being and doing with the other* on which both personalised education and Polo's anthropology are based.

To clarify this, we will very briefly explain what Polo understands by *coexistence*, “which is not the plurality of people, but rather the transcendental expansion” (2017, p. 139). Coexistence considered in this way is not *between* people but is *demande*d or possessed by each one of them (2017). Coexisting is more worthy than existing (2016a), and converts itself through a series of personal transcendentals “which are superior to metaphysical ones” (*idem*). Coexistence implies duality. Therefore, we will now set out the transcendental scope of the notion of *duality* in the thinking of Polo.

The person grows educationally like a complex system of interdependent dualities, and must discern between that growth or intrinsic perfection and the personal being, from which it *insurmountably* distinguishes itself and with which it forms a duality of transcendental scope. This will enable us to review personalised education understood as an extension of the *notes* or *personal radicals* in the life of students, since the status of these notes should be as transcendental as the human person or coexistent. From here we can regard personalised education as a perfecting *in common* or *with the other*, in other words, a *social manifestation of the human essence*, so that teaching and learning are connected in a duality of initiatives in mutual response.

cal metaphysics were unsuitable for reaching the personal being: “the being of man is not the being with which metaphysics concerns itself” (2016b, p. 338). But it also has a thematic sense, as transcendental expansion is the person itself: “while admitting that being and existing are equivalent expressions in metaphysics, transcendental anthropology is the doctrine of human co-being or of coexistence. Man does not limit himself to being but rather co-is” (2016a, p. 42). Coexistence is “accompanied being” (2016b, p. 356): “intimacy, being as scope” (2016b, p. 355).

The human person coexists with the being of metaphysics precisely as its expansion (2016a). Metaphysics, as Aristotle says, is *first philosophy* because it concerns itself with principles. But “being the principle does not mean being free” (2016a, p. 35; 2016b, p. 338). Where “freedom is discovered, or where freedom appears, is, specifically, in anthropology” (2016b, p. 339). Man is free insofar as he is a second being, in other words, it is by adding oneself to the *principal* reality or to the being as principle or as first (2016b).

Being-with also refers to beings that, in turn, coexist with one another, that is to say, to the plurality of people or coexistents (2017). In contrast, the human person lacks an intimate partner because no one knows the intimacy of the other from within (at least no one *human*). This means that the human person lacks an intimate response, which it cannot procure but also cannot stop seeking (2016a).

## 2. Transcendental expansion

The transcendental expansion that Polo developed is methodical in the sense that, in his view, the transcendentals studied by classi-

García Hoz identifies this *coexistential* human character insofar as it emphasises the *vocation of reality* that is characteristic of the person and its character which is *open* to dif-

ferent dimensions of reality (1993). But Polo's transcendental expansion allows us to examine this line methodically and in greater depth, understanding that this openness is an intrinsic reference of each person, and not merely a relationship between them (Polo, 2017).

Polo reduces his concept of transcendental expansion in anthropology to three fundamental theses (2011, 2016a, 2016b, 2017).

Firstly, metaphysics with classical roots does not adequately consider the free being because it does not distinguish it sufficiently from the being that metaphysics considers. Furthermore, it reduces anthropology to a secondary philosophy and freedom to a "merely categorical matter" (2016, p. 35), but "a founded freedom is contradictory" (idem). Furthermore, modern and contemporary philosophy attempt to establish this distinction by emphasising the transcendental character of the free subject, without specifying the transcendentals that would be characteristic of the free being, instead changing the order between the metaphysical transcendentals and breaking with traditional realism. In this sense, it is a poorly focussed undertaking (2016b), but a legitimate one, as by analogy one very weakly comes from the physical to the spiritual (2016a).

Secondly, both focuses are symmetrical in the sense that they understand that the central notion is that of foundation, but, while classical focusses position it beyond man, modern ones situate it within him. Nonetheless, if the being of metaphysics is transcendental foundation, the being of man is not transcendental in this way. The being of man is more

than the *principal* being of metaphysics: it is being-with and this is equivalent to being free. The extramental being is the principle, cause, foundation, while the personal being is an addition, it is *second being* (García González, 2008). The person "is in addition to the foundation" (Polo, 2015a, p. 218). Anthropological transcendentals are the *ratification* or *affirmation* of metaphysical transcendentals.

For this reason, the definition provided by Boethius who regards the person as an individual substance with an intellectual nature, is highly problematic, because substances are separate in themselves, "but the irreducibility of the person is not isolating; it is not separation" (2016b, p. 356). The perfection or superiority of the classical substance lies in its separation, but the superiority of the personal being is found in its irreducibility (nobody can be the person of another), which is inseparable from its coexistent or open being: its *being-with* (2016b, 2017).

For its part, freedom is not simply a property of voluntary acts either (2016b): "it is not incorrect to understand freedom as command of acts, but personal freedom goes beyond the order of means" (2015a, p. 220). Apart from a practical and moral character, which belongs to the order of the essence, liberty has a transcendental character that is in the order of the human *esse* or *actus essendi* (2016b, 2017).

Polo describes personal or transcendental liberty as *the capacity not to defuturise the future* (2016a, 2017), in other words, to be free is to maintain a future that does not exhaust itself because freedom *adjusts its pace* to it. Freedom means being in step with regards to



the passage of time, so that the person is able to be-accompanying itself, to be intimately: “co-existence, the expansion of the order of the transcendentals, is the person, the irreducible intimacy insofar as it is attained: this attainment is inseparable from its being” (2016a, p. 136).

Finally, a new method is required for formulating the anthropological transcendentals, which are different from metaphysical ones and do not involve mere symmetries or changes of order. The human being-with is transcendental, not as foundation, but as free, because it performs operations through which it achieves actuality (knowing or wanting in act) and, *furthermore*, it goes beyond it, it *lets go* of it (2016a).

If the metaphysical transcendental is reached by overcoming the physical until its principles are observed, the anthropological transcendental is achieved by transcending the operation of knowing (2016a, 2016b). There is no principle beyond this operation because knowing is not causing (the thought-object is not real), except for the *trans-immanent*, that is to say, the free or spiritual (2016a). The operation imposes a limit: knowledge is only possible in action or in presence, in other words, what is *operatively* known is always that which is actual, that which is present. When noting this limitation, it abandons itself *ipso facto*: it starts from what is present but is transcended by incessantly adapting to the future “without defuturising it or anticipating it in the already of presence” (Ferrer, 2012, p. 38).

This is why the method by which transcendental expansion is done is called “abandoning the mental limit” (in one of its aspects), in

other words, abandoning cognitive actuality (Polo, 2016a). The mental limit is detected and abandoned through habitual intellectual knowledge, which is superior to the operative kind (2016a). Personal reality fully escapes objective or operative knowledge because the being-with, the character that is intimate and radically open to the other is not reduced to the actuality and unity that typify the object.

Intimate coexistence and freedom are ultimately anthropological transcendentals that are not revealed by traditional philosophy, which reduces anthropology to a second or regional philosophy. These transcendentals, along with personal love and pure intellection (which is not equivalent to the operation of intelligence nor to its habits), are converted with the human personal being.

### 3. Two ways of confronting reductionisms

According to García Hoz, the idea of personalised education developed from immediate precedents proposed by seemingly irreconcilable rival educational concepts, such as the theoretical and experimental (1993):

Personalised education integrates North American pragmatism with European speculative thinking, the inner life (humanism) with the external life (realism), philosophy with positive science, technical training with ethical training ... What is perhaps its truest grandeur is found in this integration. (Bernardo, Javaloyes, & Calderero, 2011, p. 55)

In *Principios de Pedagogía Sistemática* (Principles of systematic pedagogy) García Hoz uses an analytic method to deconstruct and study the major common elements and

laws that govern the pedagogical universe, and a synthetic method to integrate these common elements in various stages and measurements into the particular subject of the varied phenomenon of education: the *pedagogical unit* (Bernal Guerrero, 1994). He bases his *differential pedagogy* (García Hoz, 1970b) on this integration, which is a preliminary step towards his conception of personalised education. But he also applies this method to his study of the human, family, and social aspects related to education:

Modernity is characterised, from the epistemological perspective, by erroneously converting relationships of distinction and complementarity — like those that must exist between an organism and its surroundings, between man and woman, between reason and intuition, between mind and body, between us and others — into relationships of opposition among which only alternatives were possible. (Ballesteros cit. in García Hoz, 1993, p. 24)

This turns it into a source of reductionisms that lead to a biased vision of education and its recipient, something García Hoz tries to avoid with the *principle of difference and complementarity*, and which he uses in what has already been called personalised education.

The criterion Polo uses to overcome these opposing reductionisms and confront the human *systemic complexity* is that of *duality* (Polo, 2016a). While in García Hoz's *complementarity* of the principle, the *with* is external to its members, in the duality, these include it in their own nature (2017). Complementary things have a mutual need for one another, as García Hoz (1993) notes, but as parts that are distributed in a com-

plete whole and require the other owing to their own partiality or limitation, which determines them. However, where there is complete or integral totality, any growth is prevented (Vargas, 2019).

Polo understands that, in duality, one member achieves greater perfection thanks to the other; precisely because *being-with-the-other* determines its own nature. This clearly involves a new concept of potency (*obediential potency*, ultimately) (Polo, 2016a) that does not imply imperfection but rather the capacity to grow or *give of oneself* thanks to the *superior* member of the duality that “does not exhaust itself in its respect for that other, but that opens itself to a new duality” (2016a, p. 192). We speak of the *superior* member since the teacher has learnt previously, has studied the great masters, or is simply from an earlier generation. In this sense, teachers open themselves to a duality that induces students to grow. Thanks to the other, to the *superior* member that does not exhaust itself with respect to its students, they are capable of new dispositions, of achieving ends they would not achieve alone.

Polo turns to several classic examples of Aristotelian inspiration to illustrate this (2019), such as the use of hand tools — which is a perfection (a technical habit) we would be incapable of without intelligence: “That which is usually called manual skill is the projection of the intellect to the hands” (2016b, p. 61) — or the use of speech which would not be within the reach of the human phonic system (lungs, throat, mouth, tongue, etc.), without the habit of language. Neither writing nor speaking English are natural ends. Instead, they require habits acquired with practice, increments that

are possible precisely thanks to the combined activity, in duality, of various factors.

These habitual growths are the true educational topics. They are not simple competences aimed at specific tasks, but habits without which the human system cannot integrate itself because “it is destined to grow” (Polo, 2019, p. 156). In this way, the integrating ambition of the different human dimensions (corporeality, affectivity, will, and intelligence) typical of personalised education is reinforced (Bernardo, 2011).

Duality has a transcendental value in Polo (Piá Tarazona, 2001) and, as such, “it is a gain: it is superior to the *monon*” (Polo, 2016a, XV, p. 45). Being one is what characterises the thought-object, as Aristotle said, given that the act of thinking is narrowly reduced to that which is thought (García González, 2019), while the personal being is not one, but rather is *in addition to the oneness and actuality* that mark or limit the thought-object.

The superior duality internal to the human being is that which is formed by the personal being and its essence, which is its growth or intrinsic perfection, truly distinct from it. This distinction should be respected to avoid the error of considering the person as the result of the process of family or social educational perfecting. It is advisable to avoid equivocal expressions that can be misinterpreted, such as stating that “the family is the natural realm and environment where the human being becomes a person” (García Hoz, 1993, p. 222). The process of educational personalisation “has its starting point in the student as personal being” (Vélez, 2003, p. 1).

Starting from Polo’s anthropology, it cannot be held that “the person is made as a person, but is not completed” (Bernardo, 2019, p. 54), because the person exceeds the causal notion of the end. The personal being, the *who*, does not grow as a mere organism does, creating, in a manner of speaking, *more organism*. As has been said, intimacy transcends the notion of immanence. In anthropology and in education it is expedient to go beyond the Aristotelian *tetracausal* approach with the transcendental *personal being-growth* duality or the intrinsic perfection of the person, which is equivalent to its essence.

With regards to the essential or predicamental order, the fundamental duality is the one formed by the person’s manifesting availing-of, which is the intrinsic perfection that comprises its essence (Polo, 2016a, 2017), and by what is available, that is to say, those means that are not part of it, but must be availed of *in accordance* with it. From this duality, moral deviation can be understood as the attempt to avail of one’s own availing-of, in other words, to treat it as something available (2016a). For example, speech, which is part of the human availing-of, can be used duplicitously to lie or deceive.

#### 4. Deployment of personal notes or manifestation of anthropological transcendentals

Personalised education sets out to strengthen students’ personal notes and make them flourish (García Hoz, 1962), mediate their effective use so that “each person is capable, with the appropriate help, of formulating and carrying out ... a personal, singular form of existence” (Bernal Guerrero, 1994, p. 254).



García Hoz offers a first list of these notes, namely singularity, openness, and autonomy (1970a), and, in a later expansion that it is more a “statement of the essential content of these characteristics” (1993, p. 172), he adds conscience and freedom as foundations of human dignity, as well as the principle being of intentional creative and unifying activity (García Hoz, 1993; García Hoz et al., 1997). These notes are regarded as spiritual qualities “that ensure that one is who one is and not another, those notes by virtue of which a human being is a person” (García Hoz, 1962, p. 81). Subsequently, this group of notes has been reorganised by authors following García Hoz who have explicitly characterised them as *foundational principles* of the person (Bernardo, 2011), or as *constituent notes* of the person (Bernardo, Javaloyes, & Calderero, 2011; Alcázar & Javaloyes, 2015).

But the person, as we have seen, cannot be founded or constituted, and is distinct from other people in strict correspondence with their coexistence. It is a person precisely because it is a *distinct person*, and not because it possesses a series of common notes. These constituting principles would be more radical than the person itself, who, in some way, would derive from them. Meanwhile, nothing created is more radical than the person if, as Polo says, it is a relationship in the order of the Origin, or “is equivalent to being born from God” (Polo, 2012, p. 21). It is only this relationship with God as its Origin that can be thought of (without abandoning the ambit of mystery) as constituent of the human person (2012, p. 23). Moreover, many of these notes do not attain the transcendental status that characterises the person.

Bernardo affirms that “the principles of the human person are, then, what gives it reason, its cause, those that make it a person” (Bernardo, 2019, p. 55).

In this he follows the position of García Hoz, who, as we have seen, sometimes regards the person as a pure perfection that can be realised more or less perfectly. On other occasions he states that each individual is in the “sad position” (García Hoz, 1970, p. 247) of being “an imperfect realisation of the person” (idem) “through the imperfect use of freedom” (García Hoz, 1970a, p. 27). Polo does not share this position, which raises doubts about the irreducibility and radicality of the person.

As we have said, in a principle, the list of these distinctive notes is reduced to singularity, autonomy, and openness. With regards to singularity, it should be said, from the approach of Polo, that it is a characteristic of the personality or of the manifesting display of the person and, therefore, is an essential property. Polo does not regard the human essence as shared (as García Hoz does, 1970a), that is to say, as being equivalent to human nature, but as the part of this nature that each person manages to make *their own*: the yield they obtain from it: “the essence of man is simply the capacity he has for self-perfection” (Polo, 2015b, p. 135).

Nonetheless, the relationship García Hoz establishes between this singularity and aspects such as originality, inner life, simplicity, solitude, or silence (Bernal Guerrero, 1994) bring this notion close to personal intimacy. Personal intimacy, which is equivalent to coexistence, manifests itself in its essence, but it is not capable of replicating itself, of *saying itself*,

and, in this sense, it is silent and, at the same time, manifestative, because it assists or supports its essential manifestation as *appeal*, and so this manifestation is not merely an aspect or external appearance (2016a). People call upon us, enjoin us with their mere presence.

García Hoz, following the traditional approach, understands freedom as autonomy or self-mastery (1970a) and positions it as an essential attribute of the will (1993). Nonetheless, for Polo, “the essence of man is freely effusive, and this means that we can refuse to be effusion, we can deny. This is where the ‘yes-no’ distinction appears, which is derived” (2017, p. 74). In this way, autonomy, the capacity to direct oneself thanks to that indeterminacy or alternative, derives from transcendental freedom through the habits that integrate the essence of each man and allow him a free disposition that is neither arbitrary nor unconsciously instigated. In this sense, it is true that educating people with a critical and well oriented autonomy that avoids generalisation, might be the key task of education in our time (García Hoz, 1970b): “teaching to choose or teaching to choose well is a specific objective of personalised education” (1970a, p. 28). But precisely because it depends on what is feasible and situational it is an extension or manifestation of the intimate personal freedom that should not be confused with it. Thanks to the habits acquired when acting, one is freer in the moral sense, more *complete*, and authentic autonomy is that of one who does not subordinate the ethical to other instances (Ruiz Corbella, 2012).

And, with regards to openness, which according to García Hoz claims develops at three levels — towards the world, towards

others, and towards transcendence (Bernal Guerrero, 1994) — Polo offers a structure in which human people find themselves *dialogically* in the world through the essential manifestations they include in corporeal and verbal expressiveness (Polo, 2016a). At this level, this openness is not transcendental and is socially typified, with each person occupying a place that can be recognised by others in a structured *human world* that coordinates its different roles. Educating is a social perfecting in this sense, given that it perfects coexistence by initiating young people in the different channels of collaboration and free manifestation, which possess their own grammar (Pérez Guerrero, 2021) and their own limits that must be respected (Reyero & Gil Cantero, 2019).

According to Polo, openness towards the physical universe ultimately depends on an innate habit, the habit of the first principles. But openness to the *human world* is operative, it is at the predicamental level, and it is culturally and corporeally mediated. Consequently, it is possible to speak of *impaired* people, in other words, people whose physiological or psychological deficiencies are just those of *a person* who is not able to manifest itself or does so in a very limited way.

Furthermore, the person who is open or turned *outwards* is properly the I, which Polo considers as another dual innate habit (*seeing-I and willing-I*), which becomes the pinnacle of the human essence (2016a): the apex encompassing all of its acquired acts and habits and on which they depend. He sometimes calls this habit *synderesis*, especially when referring to its second member, the *willing-I* (2016a).

Finally, according to Polo, the person also opens itself internally as intimacy. Going deeper in this intimacy it opens itself, or rather, *orientates itself*, towards transcendence of the divine intellecting (2016a), that transcends it completely.

Therefore, in Polo's thinking, personalised education can be described as the help given *to the manifestation of personal transcendentals*. Personal love, which is transcendental, is manifested in voluntary willing and in raising good to the category of a gift, an offering, as the ultimate end of love is not the good itself, but another love (García González, 2017) or the *loving game or recreation* (Polo, 2017). Without love, good would be reduced to the final cause or order (Polo, 2011): there would be no gifts or favours. Personal love also manifests itself in the growth of ethical virtues, which are resources that increase this specific capacity to give and to achieve the moral good par excellence, which is good will, as well as friendship, which is the maximum manifestation of the *coexistent* and *donal* character of the human being.

And thanks to personal intellecting, which, like the active intellect of Aristotle, with which Polo compares it (2016a, 2017), is *unmixed*, in other words, it does not accommodate anything intelligible but rather it is pure transparency, objects are illuminated intellectually. It is this transparency of personal intellecting that manifests itself in operations of knowledge that do not mix with their objects but are hidden precisely to highlight them, and, so to speak, always *work in favour* of what is known without imposing themselves, as well as in the intellectual habits that follow them.

The extension of the personal freedom that personalised education seeks to make practical as a capacity to direct one's own life resides in this growth or habitual strengthening of specifically human potencies (García Hoz, 1953):

The essence of man is not a fact, but rather a task of freedom that lasts for the whole life, namely: the growing conquest of dependence of the human on the personal being. This dependence is strictly the essence of the human, but it is not static. Instead, it must be conquered because the essence of the human is only such insofar as it grows (if it did not grow, it would not depend on the person, and if this growth were not free, it would not go beyond being that of a corporeal organism). (Polo, 2018, p. 200)

The person *makes human nature its own*, in principle, common, developing habits that are the outcome of its actions. It endows itself with its own essence (2015b). Habitual growth involves constantly improving the starting point of the action, in other words, overcoming the notion of immanent progress and growth. Personal freedom extends to nature through habits, and manifests itself in it as pragmatic and moral freedom (García González, 2011).

The unrestricted educational growth that is characteristic of the human being, is not only due to the peculiar *plasticity* of human nature, even though it is a necessary condition for it (Altarejos & Naval, 2011), "because the person adds the effusive, contributing dimension to nature" (Polo, 2018, p. 212). Education can be regarded as a necessary *continuatio naturae*, but, even more radically, as an essential mediation for the manifestation of the

spirit, with both of these perspectives present in the thinking of García Hoz.

## 5. Education as a form of perfection in community or *with-the other*

This human plasticity is especially due to the fact that its specific potencies, intelligence and will, are *passive* potencies (2016a), that is to say, that they are not spontaneously activated under particular conditions. This passivity is precisely what makes them liable to become habits, to act from ever better starting points, because another higher instance that illuminates them activates them: what Polo calls synderesis. Synderesis supports and observes the joint functioning of the potencies so that it is harmonious, and can be corrected: synderesis illuminates the human faculties because “*seeing-I* and *willing-I* are the two eyes that proceed from the intimacy of coexistence” (2016a, p. 356). From synderesis, personal transcendentals strengthen or have an impact on the essence of each human being, manifesting its personal, intimate, and free character; none of which would be possible without education.

For this harmony between faculties to occur, the child requires an *affective normality*, which is the first educational objective, corresponding to the parents (2019). Moreover, young people’s synderesis must take an interest in or throw itself into the crucial matters of life. This requires the help of another synderesis: that of the educator, because, firstly, the situation of the human being is weakness and need, and, in this state, interests are very limited and do not enable the *personal life project* that García Hoz names as the objective of personalised education to

be carried forward (1993). For this reason, for Polo interest is a *principle of education* (2019), and its *structural increase* in the student is one way to understand its principal purpose. To educate is to share the most valuable human interests with young people; helping them at the level of synderesis by helping them adopt a *global orientation* towards what is humanly valuable (Izaguire & Moros, 2007).

Understood in this way, education is a perfection *in common* that goes beyond educator and learner since neither of them can provide themselves with it without the other, or on their own account. And yet, it is also a perfection that each of them *demand*s and possesses. Educators perfect themselves by helping students acquire these habits or intrinsic perfections, and students perfect themselves by acquiring them with the help of the educator. We must leave behind the view that educator and learner are subjects between which there are superimposed relationships and understand that the “intersubjective is in each subject” (Polo, 2017, p. 140). And so the educator-learner duality, insofar as they are people, “is not a sum, but instead each one is *with-whom*” (2016a, p. 139).

Therefore, we can speak of intrinsic perfections that are essential but at the same time, *in common* or *in duality*: perfections that each one has thanks to the other. Nobody participates in personalised education on his own account because each intervention opens itself to a correspondence, it must *give way* to the next one, without which it is not possible or is frustrated, and so both teaching and learning are exercised in an intersubjective space recreated *in common* by the educator and the learner;

and are not a sum of isolated processes that are *coincidentally* related.

Living-with as perfection *in common* demanded by each of the people who live-with is the area that connects learning and teaching, each of which has its own tasks or assignments, in personalised education. The intrinsic perfection of a radically coexisting being, as is the human person according to Polo, is a growth in living-with and in capacity for living-with: coexisting more and better with the others.

It is specifically by promoting the coexistence of learners from younger generations that educators perfect themselves. Teaching is oriented towards learning, but learning is also oriented towards teaching young people. Nobody should keep what they have learnt to themselves because virtues are not inherited; instead, each generation must start anew (Martínez Priego, 2019). Educator and learner integrate themselves and cooperate with an ongoing task (Polo, 2015c).

As Orón Semper (2018) notes, the teacher is not a sort of trainer who finishes work, generally fairly tired but without having gained in perfection, as the learner does. According to this author, rather than centring the educational act on the student, it is necessary to centre it “in all of the group of interpersonal relations that a school enables” (2018, p. 241) in the interest of, ultimately, learning to live together.

Personalised education is an intrinsic growth, a growth in virtue, as “the virtuous life is a sort of dialogue or conversation between friends” (Schwartz, 2007, p. 4).

To educate is not just to converse, as Jover (1991) notes, since it is a task that pursues its own objectives, but it is done through dialogue, is channelled through it, and is directed towards it, given that people are educated for dialogue. Educating is a back and forth, a coming and going that only occurs in interdependence and cannot be reduced to a linear process (López Quintás, 1997).

Personalised education is a learning-with the teacher and a teaching-with the learner, that is to say, personalised education sees learning and teaching not as individual acts, but at the strictly intersubjective or social level of the essence of each coexistent:

The personal openness of each individual is equivalent to the being that the human person is, from which social manifestations emerge, which are from the field of the human essence. At this level of manifestation, people are not individuals either, but instead social. The social in people is, then, more than the individual. When the person manifests itself at the level of its essence, it does not therefore do so individually but instead socially. (Sellés, 2007, p. 391)

The social precedes other human manifestations: without it there are no channels for manifestation (Polo, 2015c). In consistency with the coexistential character of the human person, its essential manifestation is *inevitably* social (2016a). The social is the very status of the manifest (2015c). Another way of putting this is that human self-manifestation is not self-sufficient (2015a) or singular (2015b), and yet it continues to be that of each individual.



## 6. Conclusions

As Altarejos states: “among intersubjective relationships, few lend themselves to existential knowledge as well as those of the educational relationship” (1999, p. 9). In García Hoz’s personalised education, the teacher and learner must not be dialectically opposed, but instead must accompany one another (Altarejos, 1999), and from Polo, this accompaniment is understood as *perfecting in common* of essences of radically *co-existent* beings who are in a common world that is not merely physical, but culturally mediated (Rodríguez Sedano & Aguilera, 2011). And the accompaniment or encounter is real in each one, not a *tertium quid*. As *co-existents*, educator and learner continue one another and achieve a certain plenitude with the other, promoting the alterity, the *otherness* of the other (Romero Iribas, 2018) or, in the words of Polo, promoting the existence of *more other* in the world with whom to coexist (2016a), so that education is above all the perfecting of living-with.

Polo’s pedagogy is not a pedagogy of successive isolated actions and superimposed relationships, but of culturally mediated dialogic intersubjective areas, and it considers curriculum content as a means, a *platform* for the growth of coexistence (Orón Semper, 2018) and as relatively indeterminable *a priori* (Polo, 2015c). In this sense, more than a process that is distinguished from a result, personalised education must, after Leonardo Polo, be considered as a path that gradually coincides with its

destination (Orón Semper, 2018), with educated living-with between teachers and students being an end in itself, as well as a necessary initiation into society and its types as channels of personal manifestation.

## Note

<sup>1</sup> In all of the quotations, the italics are from the originals.

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