

Person

Encounters, paradigms,
commitment and
applications

Editors

Diana Prokofyeva

and

Colin Patterson

Philosophy of Personalism



VERNON PRESS

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To Thomas O. Buford

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Introduction

Randall Auxier

University of Southern Illinois

In August 2019, the International Conference on Persons held its fifteenth meeting. The gathering has been convened every two years since the early 1990s when Thomas O. Buford, to whom this volume is dedicated (and the topic of James McLachlan's essay in this volume) first organized the group. Health problems prevented Professor Buford from attending the conferences in 2015 in Boston and 2017 in southern Italy, but his influence remains pervasive in all of these gatherings. I first attended in 1999 and have had a part in organizing every subsequent meeting. Thus, I had the good fortune to work with Tom Buford on a number of meetings, and he passed on to me the journal he founded (*The Personalist Forum*, now called *The Pluralist*) in the hope that we could keep publication channels open for high quality intellectual work and scholarship on the problem of the person. The journal and the conferences were closely connected in that a selection of papers from the conferences regularly appeared in the journal, a practice which continued until 2010 (the journal was renamed *The Pluralist* in 2006).

The mission and vitality of the conferences have grown into something of an interdisciplinary movement over the decades. As a result, the outlets have multiplied for publishing the work of the diverse scholars who pursue issues of the person. In recent years we have been fortunate to present through Vernon Press a selection of the papers that best represent the movement. Such is the volume you see now, which includes works in philosophy, theology, religious studies, economics, biology, anthropology, history, and a number of studies that cross disciplinary boundaries.

This wide range was always Professor Buford's intention. He believed that the idea of "person" was far too important to be siloed in disciplines that do not interact. It is not as if the biological concept of person, in its varied forms, medical, physiological, etc., has nothing to do with the sociological or philosophical ideas about person. All of the disciplines have a stake in how we understand the person. When we gather across these boundaries, we learn from each other. Although Tom Buford was a philosopher by training and inclination, his universal curiosity and lifelong commitment to learning brought him into conversation with a great diversity of perspectives and disciplines. He was able to pick out personalist tendencies in people who did

not know those tendencies even had a name. The present writer is one such person. In 1993 I attended a six-week NEH seminar with Tom Buford on the philosophy of Giambattista Vico. After two weeks or so of our group discussion, Tom pulled me aside and began asking me questions. After two or three lengthy discussions he informed me I was a personalist. I had never heard of it. He gave me some things to read. He was right. I was (and am). Now I had a name for it, and that was a great help. Tom repeated this process of aiding in self-discovery in many ways with many people.

The truth about “Personalism” is that many researchers and thinkers and teachers and writers are personalists, but they do not know it. The label is not easily or quickly understood. The term “personalism” itself repels some people, sounding subjectivist or too psychological, or one might find a host of other weaknesses in the term. Even among those who do know the term, they often associate it with a particular *branch* of personalism, not realizing how many branches and schools of personalism there are. For example, since the personalism of Pope John Paul II has been so visible and prominent for some decades, many people simply identify his philosophy with the label, not realizing that there are some dozen other historical strands of personalism, some of which are not so similar to his philosophy. This is not the place to provide a full accounting of all the types of personalism except to say that many of the differing strands are present in this volume. Personalists are both traditional and progressive, conservative and liberal, scientific and humanistic, historical and analytical, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, and followers of many Eastern and South Asian disciplines. Many are not theists, and some are not religious in any way. That entire spread is found in this volume.

There are heroes of these various traditions, highly visible people who took the values and principles of personalism into action. There is St. Edith Stein, and Martin Luther King, Jr., along with Martin Buber, Lech Wałęsa, Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, John Paul II, Emanuel Mounier, and Muhammad Iqbal. Looking back, we find Leo Tolstoy, Pope Leo XIII, Henri Bergson, William James, F.W.J. Schelling, Mary Whiton Calkins, Max Scheler, Charles Renouvier, W.E.B. DuBois, and other important intellectual figures who defended personalism without always using the label. These very public “heroes” of personalism are themselves diverse enough to lay to rest the idea that one must be attached to some particular religion in order to be a “personalist.” But the list does seem to suggest that most personalists are religious, which has to be admitted.

Yet, not all personalists are religious, many being more “post-religious,” such as the sociologist Marcel Mauss, and the humanistic psychologists such as Erich Fromm, Carl Rogers, and Viktor Frankl, who really must be called personalists, even if they did not use the term themselves. However, this may

be, the more academic spread of personalism has been such that the various strands are not always visible to the public as belonging to a more or less unified concern over the dignity and development of the person. Indeed, the various strands of personalism have not until recently been visible to one another.

There have been those working within the personalist philosophy proper, who have made the extra effort to connect the various strands and branches to one another. Many years ago, Fr. Bogumił Gacka realized that he needed to join the Polish and other Roman Catholic personalists with the Protestant personalists he had encountered in his work at Boston University. That tireless effort resulted in the formation, with Tom Buford, of the group that triangulated the British, North American and mainly Polish personalists (followers in the long tradition of which John Paul II was a part). Gradually that group spread to other European countries and the Near East. With each conference, the geography of this group grew and diversified. It currently reaches from St. Petersburg in Russia to Melbourne (as our present volume editors exemplify), and from California to Israel. I have no doubt that a future conference will be held in India.

There is a large organization of Spanish-speaking personalists who have been vital and productive for many decades. Recently, through the collaboration of Juan Manuel Burgos and James Beauregard, they have gradually come into conversation with the European and North American Personalists. In fact, this association has begun to bear fruit as some of the works of Burgos have now appeared in English and he has contributed to every meeting of the International Conference on Persons since 2013. The most recent meeting of the European-North American group was held in conjunction with the Ibero-American group in Mexico City in August 2022. There were over 120 papers from 23 different nations and six continents. A selection of the best of these presentations will appear from Vernon Press in the near future.

The origin of this cooperation came when Jan Olof Bengtsson, intellectual historian and a leader in the English-speaking group, became convinced that our European-North American group needed to be joined with the other personalists in the world and made this the theme and the main work of the 2013 meeting held at Lund University in Sweden. That is how Professor Burgos came to be aware of and in discussion with our group. At that meeting, a number of sessions devoted to South Asian forms of personalism were held, and these interactions have grown and flowered as well. More could be said along these lines, but readers will perhaps get a sense of the growth, organic, sustainable, deliberate but relentless.

These signs of a joining of worldwide personalist scholars across disciplines, show that with further work there can be a continuing growth and spread of

this intercultural and interdisciplinary work on the idea of “person.” The volume you have before you documents a chapter on that growth, which is a representative measure of where matters stood as of August 2019 when, for the first time, the gathering was neither in Europe nor in North America. The arrangements made by Fr. Gacka made for an extra-ordinary meeting in Israel. Fr. Gacka was able to persuade the city leaders of Lublin to support generously many of the expenses associated with the conference, including Polish translators that enabled many of our Polish colleagues to participate who would not otherwise have been able to do so. Fr. Gacka also secured generous support from various offices and agencies of the Roman Catholic Church, and these are represented in the letter below by Cardinal Ravasi. Especially important to the success of the meeting was the exemplary hospitality of the Domus Galilaeae.

More than just a report on the growth of the movement, however, this book takes a look at the progress of our world in recognizing and acting to uplift the person as the highest value in the field of values. These authors may disagree on many issues, but they agree on the moral and ontological importance of the person, however it may be understood and defined. Thus, we will not be offering some unified definition of “person” that all of us agree upon; that would be a bridge too far. With every episode in the growing history of this group, we find more common ground and ways to smooth over verbal differences. There remain intractable differences, especially regarding whether “person” is wholly relational, or whether there is a substantive core that is the “person” in some timeless sense. In spite of these differences, we believe that advancing our understanding of the idea helps us improve ourselves as a race of beings whose freedom places us in a position to do better in our relations with one another, with our world, and with whatever our origins and destinies may include. It is a privilege to present this volume to the readers of the future and knowing that so much effort went toward creating and presenting it, I want to thank you, on behalf of those people, for your attention and even more for whatever light may shine through you as a result of what you find in these pages.

Randall Auxier
Southern Illinois University Carbondale
August 2022

Message from Gianfranco Cardinal Ravasi for the 2019 International Conference on Persons

Message of His Eminence Gianfranco Cardinal Ravasi, President of the Pontifical Council for Culture to the Organisers and Participants of the International Congress of Personalism Domus Galilaeae on the Mount of Beatitudes, Israel Aug. 12th – 16th, 2019

With great pleasure, I would like to extend cordial greetings to the Organisers, especially to Professors Gacka, Auxier and Burgos and to the Participants of the *XV International Conference on Persons* organized by the Personalism Association based in Lublin, that every two years gather important researchers from over the world to explore different currents of philosophical, theological and humanist thought on *Person*. I am very pleased that for this edition of your Conference, you have chosen a special place, the Holy Land, to which as a biblical scholar I am personally attached, and thus to this *Congress of Personalism*.

Although the notion of person was already known both by the Greeks through philosophical discourse and by the Romans through their legislative codification, under the influence of Christianity, it changed in a more radical way. Through the reflection of Fathers of the Church such as Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235 AD), and Tertullian (160 ca - † 220/225 ca), and of the Fathers of Cappadocia and of Alexandria, the meaning of the Greek word (*prosopon*) and of the Latin one (*persona*) received a completely original imprint and significance. The use of this word, following the theological reflection, first linked to the Latin translation of the Bible (with the use of the term *subsistentia*, Gr. *hypostasis*, Hbr 1, 3), then to discussions concerning the understanding of the mysteries of the faith, especially the Trinity and the Incarnation, has led to epochal changes.

In fact, thanks to the influence of Christian thought, the notion of person went far beyond its understanding as a *dramatis personae*, as the Greeks meant it, and beyond limits the Romans assigned to it as the character and role of man in public life. Christian thinkers defined a person as a being of rational nature (*naturae rationalis individua substantia*), as Boethius (480 - † 524) and then Saint Thomas Aquinas (ca 1225 - † 1274) affirmed. The latter further developed reflection on the concept of person, knowing how to draw also from the intuitions of other cultures: Jewish and Muslim, and their representatives such as Moses Maimonides, Avicenna and Averroes.

Changes introduced by Christianity to the perception and definition of the person, allowed it to extend widely this notion so as to apply to oppressed categories such as slaves, for centuries not considered persons, but *res mancipi*, and treated as *sub specie iuris*, from which status it was rarely possible to fully (re)become human beings. It seems evident, therefore, that the scrupulous reflection of Christian thinkers has allowed us to give the concept of the person a more “human face”. With time the notion of person became a fundamental point of reference not only for theology and philosophy but also for many other disciplines such as sociology, law, psychology, pedagogy, economy, politics, and so on.

Today, we are living through a period of profound social and cultural change. Recent decades allowed us to improve our self-understanding of the human person on both humanistic and scientific levels. The latter seems to be particularly important today, when research in the fields of genetics, the neurosciences and artificial intelligence develop powerful technologies to transform radically many aspects of human life and they oblige us to think again about how we understand the human being and its uniqueness; about our comprehension of human responsibility and free will; and about the emergence of machines capable of using types of intelligence, language capacities and reasoning-like processes that we would have previously considered as exclusive to human beings. These developments call not only for moral evaluation, but more radically, they require us to re-examine anthropological categories traditionally considered unchangeable. Some researchers claim that we are reaching the edge point from which humanity will start a new era in its evolution, with genetically modified humans, mainly enhanced to their 2.0 status.

Those claims show us that while the human person still remains a mysterious being, his or her understanding is changing, raising new challenges also from a theoretical perspective. In this context, personalism as a tool for reflection can play a crucial role in shaping the future of humanity. To do this it is necessary to conduct interdisciplinary research that will eventually allow us to build a true school of thought capable of influencing all spheres of our life just as the early Church Fathers did in their time and lead to the creation of the coherent and overall system.

I hope that through initiatives like yours, our self-consciousness can be raised and developed, making humanity more aware of the importance of interdisciplinary reflection on the human being. For this reason, I am very pleased to offer the Patronage of this Pontifical Council for Culture to this International Congress

and through the presence of my representative, Msgr. Tomasz Trafny, I personally join all your efforts in exploring such a complex topic.

I wish all of you a successful reflection and a wonderful time in the Holy Land!

Gianfranco Card. Ravasi

President

Vatican City, August 12th, 2019

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Author biographies

Randall Auxier is Professor of Philosophy and Communication Studies at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He is author and co-author of several books and editor of many more. He is co-founder of two journals, *The Pluralist* and *Eidos: A Journal of the Philosophy of Culture*, and co-founder and co-director of the American Institute of Philosophical and Cultural Thought. He has co-organized several meetings of the International Conference on Persons. He is a frequent visiting professor at several universities in Poland.

Juan Manuel Burgos is a personalist philosopher who has developed the theory of Integral Personalism following the insights of Karol Wojtyła. He is the founder and president of the Spanish Association of Personalism, the Ibero-American Association of Personalism and the Journal “Quién.” He also serves as the Director of an Online Master’s Degree in Philosophical Anthropology at UDIMA University (Spain)/Universidad Anahuac (México), Director of the Master’s course on Karol Wojtyła (AEP) and Professor at Universidad Villanueva (Spain). He has published numerous articles and books, including *An Introduction to Personalism* (2018), *Personalist Anthropology: a Philosophical Guide to Life* (2022), *Personalism and Metaphysics* (in press), *Repensar la Naturaleza Humana* (2017), *Para Comprender a Karol Wojtyła, La Experiencia Integral* (2015). His writings have been translated into English, German, Polish and Portuguese. He has been honored with the Medal of the Anahuac University in Humanities (2015) and the Humanities Research Award “Ángel Herrera” (2015), and is a member of the editorial committee of several journals.

Robert Devall Jr is an independent scholar who earned his M.A. degree in philosophy from West Chester University in Pennsylvania. His research interests focus on European intellectual history, the philosophy of history, and British idealism. Works include “Collingwood, Bradley, and Critical History” in the *Journal of the Philosophy of History* as well as a chapter contribution to *In the Sphere of the Personal: New Perspectives on the Philosophy of Persons* (Vernon Press) on Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison. Recently he began research for a book-length project on an intellectual biography of Pringle-Pattison.

Bogumił Gacka MIC holds the Chair of Christian Personalism (2001)—the first such in the world—at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. He is the President of the Personalism Association founded in 2005 and he was the main organizer of the 15th Congress of Personalism held in Israel in 2019. His doctoral work was on the Personalistic Ecclesiology of John Henry Newman (published as *Personalistyczna eklezjologia Johna H. Newmana*, 1989) under

Czesław Bartnik while he completed his post-doctoral habilitation, dealing with American Personalism (*Personalizm amerykański*, 1996), at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. He studied personalism at the Catholic University of America (1990), Harvard University (1992-1993), and Boston University, where he received a Master of Sacred Theology (1995). He is the founding editor of the biannual *Personalism Science – Philosophy – Theology*. Among his other published works are *Bibliography of American Personalism* (1994), *American Personalism* (1995), *Bibliography of The Personalist* (1999), and *Znaczenie osoby w teologii Josepha Ratzingera – Benedykta XVI* (2010). In 2014 he wrote his bilingual book *Personalizm europejski / European Personalism* (Warszawa 2014). He is also the author of many articles and editor of a book series.

Sławomir Gacka graduated with honors from the Faculty of Horticulture at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences in 1980. From 1983 to 1984, he was a scholarship holder of Prof. Szczepan Pieniążek, in the USA. Currently, he serves as CEO of *ProBiotics Polska* – a family company that has been implementing and disseminating probiotechnology for 18 years – a technology based on live probiotics and other beneficial microorganisms. Since 2005, he has been involved in the development and promotion of natural technologies and products for the revitalization of the environment and human health. He is a co-founder of ProBiotics Polska Group, Ecosystem-Heritage of Nature Association, Polish Chamber of Technology and Natural Products and the CEO of the Valentinus Association. In his work to improve the climate, food quality and human health, he has cooperated with research institutes and universities, predominantly with the Institute of Microbiological Technologies in Turek, Poland; he has received several awards for this work. He has also published articles both for industry and popular audiences.

Peter Thomas Goliszek, Associate Professor, Department of Specific Catechetics and the Contemporary Forms of the Transmission of Faith, Institute of Theology, Faculty of Theology The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin. He received his doctorate from the Catholic University of Lublin PL, and he studied at the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Gaming-Austria (1997-1999), Loyola University Chicago (1999-2000). Fr. Goliszek published: *Kerygma for a New Europe* (Lublin 2004), *Catechesis and the Person. Selected Issues in the Personalistic Methodology in Catechesis* (Lublin 2010), *Personalistic Aspect of Catechesis* (2016), *Christ and man* (Lublin 2018), *Selected issues in personalized medicine* (Lublin 2019).

Daryl L. Hale now retired after 29 years of teaching, was Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at Western Carolina University, North Carolina. Regular courses taught include Kant and Early Modern Philosophy, Classical and Late Antiquity, Medieval and Reformed Thought, History of Early

Christianity, Global Justice, and Religion and Science. His published work covers such areas as stoicism and epicureanism, the economic liberalism of Adam Smith, Kant as a personalist philosopher, and Jimi Hendrix and philosophy. He continues to research and write in particular on the life and thought of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In retirement, he works as a master carpenter.

Jacquelyn Kegley is CSU Outstanding Professor at California State University, Bakersfield and Wang Family awardee for outstanding teaching, research, and service. A recipient of the Herbert Schnieder Award for outstanding contributions to American Philosophy, she was President of the Josiah Royce Society and of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy. She is the author of *Josiah Royce in Focus* and *Genuine Individuals and Genuine Communities* and *Introduction to Logic* (1978, 1982). She was editor and contributor to *Persuasion and Compulsion in Democracy* (2013), *Informed Consent in an International Perspective: Case Studies* (2003), and *Genetic Knowledge, Human Values, and Responsibility* (1999). She has published over 90 articles on a wide range of subjects, the most recent being “Developing a New Philosophical Narrative via the Shared Insights of Pragmatism and Feminism,” in *Pragmatist Feminism and the Works of Charlene Haddock Siegfried* (2022).

Stanisław Kolbusz has worked as a public servant and activist. For many years he served as President of Ecosystem – Nature’s Heritage Association (SE-DN), an NGO focused on promoting nature-based approach to agriculture and human health while reducing excess reliance on artificial inputs. Founded in 2005, SE-DN now runs a state-of-the-art R&D facility – Microbial Technology Institute in Turek (ITM) and facilitates widespread implementations of natural, biology-based products and technologies. Also, he holds the position of President of Mikrobiotech – a leader in organic waste-to-fertilizer technologies, now servicing more than 50 major waste producers. Currently, he is a member of the Management Board of Polskie Radio, Deputy Director of the Central Agricultural Library in Warsaw, Director in the Ministry of Agriculture, and is involved in EU-Poland Accession Treaty development.

Eugene Korn is the former Academic Director of the Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding in Israel. He earned a doctoral degree in moral philosophy from Columbia University and is an ordained Orthodox rabbi. Dr. Korn has taught general and Jewish philosophy at Columbia, Yeshiva, and Seton Hall Universities in the United States. He is the author of *Israel and the Nations: The Bible, The Rabbis, and Jewish-Gentile Relations* (2023), *To Be Holy People: Jewish Tradition and Ethical Values* (2021), “Christianity in the Eyes of Judaism” (2015) and “The Jewish Connection to Israel” (2008). He is the editor and contributor to seven other books including *Jewish Theology and World Religions*, *Plowshares into Swords: Reflections on Religious Violence* and *Covenant*

and Hope. His English writings have been translated into German, Italian, Hebrew, and Spanish. He and his wife, Lila Magnus Korn, live in Jerusalem, Israel.

James McLachlan is professor emeritus of philosophy and religion at Western Carolina University. He is past co-chair of the Mormon Studies Group at the American Academy of Religion, and organizer of the Personalist Seminar. He has assisted as co-chair of the Levinas Philosophy Summer Seminars held in Vilnius, Buffalo, Berkeley, and Rome and is co-director of the NEH Summer Seminar on Levinas at the University at Buffalo summer of 2017 and 2022. His recent publications have dealt with concepts of Hell in existentialism, Satan and demonic evil in Boehme, Schelling, and Dostoevsky, and the problem of Evil in Mormonism.

Antoni Magdoń is Professor at the University of Rzeszów, Poland, where he works in the Department of Financial Markets and Public Finance. Since 1997 he has also been associated with Bank PeKaO S.A., where he has held managerial positions. In the years 1994-1997 he was an advisor to the Minister of Finance in Poland. His research interests are in the areas of financial and banking issues, management and cooperatives, and relations between economics and philosophical and theological thought. In 1993 he published a bank dictionary *Leksykon bankowy* (1993) for banking studies and in 2009 he wrote *Systematic and Structural Transformations of Cooperative Banking in Poland*. His research into the philosophical/theological dimensions of economics has resulted in the book *Ekonomia wobec osoby ludzkiej* (2021) on economics and the human person. He has also co-edited the book *Splendor personae*.

Colin Patterson served on the faculty of the John Paul II Institute for Marriage and Family at its Melbourne campus from 2011 to 2019. Now retired, he continues to be actively engaged in scholarly research and writing. He is the author of *Chalcedonian Personalism: Rethinking the Human* (2016) and *Light on the Human Heart: Where Christian Theology and Psychology Meet* (2022) and co-editor of *God and Eros: The Ethos of the Nuptial Mystery* (2015). He has published journal articles and book chapters in several areas of theology.

Diana Prokofyeva is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI" in St. Petersburg, Russia. She is a member of the American Institute of Philosophical and Cultural Thought and was a visiting scholar at the Phenomenology Research Center at SIUC (2018-2019). She is the author of more than thirty articles and two book chapters ("The Search for Stability in Chaotic Times: Niccolo Machiavelli", 2019; "Education for Peace and Conflict Resolution," 2020). Her research interests are in the areas of personalism, existentialism, social philosophy, estrangement and engagement in modern society, and the philosophy of education.

Rocco Sacconaghi teaches at DePaul University, Chicago. He is a philosopher with a focus on philosophical anthropology and the philosophical implications of the Catholic faith. After his studies in Italy, Germany, and USA, he taught at Boston College and the Studium Theologicum Jerosolymitanum in Jerusalem (Israel). In 2017, he joined the Department of Catholic Studies at DePaul University. The leading questions of his research revolve around the problem of the relationships between different forms of knowledge and the question of the nature of the human being.

Ewa Smółka was, for many years, Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy of Education at the Catholic University of Lublin. Currently, she is Assistant Professor in the Department of Pedagogy at the University College of Applied Sciences in Chełm, Poland. She is the author of articles dealing with the philosophic grounds of education such as “Philosophy of Shaping the Character: Fryderyk Wilhelm Foerster’s Theory of Upbringing in the Light of the Principles of Christian Personalism.” She is also a member of several Polish learning societies.

Ithamar Theodor is Associate Professor of Hindu studies at Zefat Academic College, Safed, Israel, a graduate of the Theology Faculty, University of Oxford, and a life member of Clare Hall, University of Cambridge. His publications include *Exploring the Bhagavad gita: Philosophy, Structure and Meaning* (2010), *Brahman and Dao: Comparative Studies in Indian and Chinese Philosophy and Religion* (2014), *The Fifth Veda in Hinduism: Philosophy, Poetry and Devotion in the Bhagavata Purana* (2016), *Dharma and Halacha: Comparative Studies in Hindu and Jewish Philosophy and Religion* (2018) and *The Bhagavad-gita: A Critical Introduction* (2021).

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