

"*The Common Good* captures personalism's core insight, interpersonal relations as the key to understanding God, Persons, and the world. This presentation of personalism is the first, as far as I know, to present personalism to a general audience. From that perspective, *The Common Good*, accomplishes an important goal: Personalism is central to daily grappling with our common lives together. Pulled to something greater than ourselves, we must embrace personalism with unrelenting passion."

THOMAS O. BUFORD, professor, Furman University, North Carolina, USA

"I very much enjoyed reading *The Common Good*. The book does an excellent job of conveying what personalism is about that certainly will be understandable to a general reader, as well as of interest to personalist academics."

JAMES BEAUREGARD, Rivier University, Nashua, New Hampshire, USA

"Jonas Norgaard has done a great job by exposing the personalist thought brilliantly adapted to the mentality and interests of the 21st century. Combining his skills as a communicator with precision in presenting the authors, he has been able to present the main anthropological and social keys of personalism in a format close to all readers."

JUAN MANUEL BURGOS, professor, San Pablo University, Spain

"I found it a very enjoyable and interesting read – a grand piece of work that does the job of presenting what is, in many ways, quite a straightforward and pragmatic philosophy to a wider audience which definitely deserves to know much more about the subject.

By bringing this vital and exciting tradition to public attention, this book presents a crucial challenge to the philosophical, political, and cultural status quo. It does so, moreover, in a remarkably engaging and readable way. It may also prove to be a great contribution to the development of a popular public philosophical discourse."

SIMON SMITH, Independent Scholar, Haslemere, Surrey, UK

”In his book Norgaard Mortensen gives a convincing introduction to this current of thought, and takes a step forward in revealing it’s importance in the public sector.

Prof. Mortensen’s current work is an accurate and non-technical account of the main characteristics present in the life and work of many important authors that have put the human person in the forefront of their intellectual reflection and praxis.”

JORGE OLAECHEA CATTER, director, Vida Y Espiritualidad, Lima, Peru

”Jonas Norgaard Mortensen’s work will undoubtedly satisfy the expectations of a number of readers who were left disappointed by specialist theses, available to a narrow range of experts. The publication is attractive because it can serve as a reference book, enabling people to acquaint themselves with the basic assumptions of the personalistic philosophy and its application in the creation of common good.”

KRZYSZTOF GUZOWSKI, professor, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (KUL), Lublin, Poland

”This is a very good book and Jonas have done us all a great service in writing it.”

RANDALL AUXIER, professor, Southern Illinois University, editor of the journal *The Personalist Forum* (renamed *The Pluralist* in 2005), USA

”I am both shocked and moved to find that personalism, the existence of which I was unaware of until now, seems to be the common thread that runs through all of my passionate commitments, present and past, as far back as I can remember. The book hits the exact spot where my heart beats, my tears flow, and my courage to work for change is rekindled.“

KAREN LUMHOLT, journalist, author and director of think tank Cura, Denmark

”An extremely well-written introduction to personalism, a virtually unknown philosophical and political current that holds great inspiration for our way of building and leading communities. A break with an often stereotypical polarization of individual over against community, by looking at relationships as what connects each of us with others. In the family, the workplace, and in the world. Do we build up or do we tear down? We face this choice every day in our communication, behavior, and management.”

THOMAS JOHANSEN, director, partner and head consultant
in the consultancy MacMann Berg

”How desperately we need the view of humans that permeates personalism and the book *The Common Good*. It is a holistic view of humans, it is about respect for values and social relations, and it is about the belief that we, in a community, can change the world and our own existence. Personalism is fundamentally about becoming responsible: our ability to take responsibility—and to share it.

The book dusts off an old theory and demonstrates its vast relevance in our current age and world. It does so by involving brand new knowledge about social relationships from surveys and theories in the human and social sciences. The book will therefore be of value to anyone working in the social sector.”

PER SCHULTZ-JØRGENSEN, Professor of Psychology,
Danish School of Education

”The notion that all humans are dignified, relational, and engaged is a subcurrent of my entire work with young people in boarding schools. In conversations, dialogue, and behavior, this view of humans comes to the surface and gives content and body to the claim that “All young people wish to succeed”. The book *The Common Good* should be read by anybody working with children and young people.”

JAN DUFKE, Headmaster, Skovbo Boarding School

“In these times when the crisis of culture and management seems to have become permanent, it is wonderful to see a book that grapples with a challenging and inspirational new perspective. The book is a welcome and vitalizing unpacking of ideas that will resonate with the growing number of people who are all fighting for a new and better future. Read the book; it is an important and benevolent appeal for society to rise up and re-conquer our social institutions as human domains.”

STIG SKOV MORTENSEN

Head of SOPHIA – think tank for pedagogics and social formation

”As I read the second edition of *The Common Good*, I was shocked to discover the pertinence and centrality of some of the book’s points in light of recent developments in national and international society. We are witnessing a social shift in which community and dialogue become ever more trapped between political correctness and populist darkness. In this post-factual haze, *The Common Good* can help us navigate towards deeply founded values, frames, and relational points of orientation that provide air for our development and well-being to grow in.”

KARSTEN AUERBACH, painter

”A growing number of people are becoming involved in volunteer efforts centered around relationships, because the way we interact defines the life we live and the society that we are part of. *The Common Good* articulates the importance of this fact and provides insight as well as new inspiration for a future with humans at the center.”

JAKOB I. MYSCHEZKY, Development Manager, Danish Refugee Council /
Frivillignet (Volunteer Department)

”Personalism has always helped me in my work in organization development, namely as an essential contribution to the balancing of the classical dilemmas always present in such work—for instance in finding the right balance between bureaucracy and emergent aspects, between control and freedom, and between uniformity and diversity.”

HENRIK SCHELDE ANDERSEN, chief consultant, COK

“We live in an age when representative democracy is incapable of accommodating the true and good values of community in the struggle against dark forces.

The book *The Common Good* sets the direction for a new political culture that ascribes to each one of us social as well as political responsibility in order for us to contribute to the renewal of society. The language and magic of art may here be a crucial source of inspiration.”

PREBEN MELANDER, professor, Centre for Business Development and Management, Copenhagen Business School

“The *Common Good* sets the direction for a new political culture that ascribes to each one of us social as well as political responsibility in order for us to contribute to the renewal of society.”

PREBEN MELANDER, professor, Centre for Business Development and Management, Copenhagen Business School

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen

The Common Good

An Introduction to Personalism

Vernon Series in Philosophy



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Foreword

In *The Common Good* Jonas Norgaard Mortensen shows that personalism is contemporary, up-to-date, a living philosophy for people. It is not an esoteric, narrow activity practiced by a few intellectuals protected by the walls of academia. To make his point, Mortensen calls our attention to a current crisis that penetrates to the core of Western societies and shows that personalism offers a penetrating analysis, and a compelling vision for our societies, a direction we should walk to find meaning in our lives.

Consider the meaning of "crisis." It is a situation in which we cannot go back to what we have been doing; yet we do not know in what direction we should proceed. For example, the American Congress is stymied by unbending ideologies that lead economically to a situation in which the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. To what can we appeal to lead us beyond this malaise? Examine the crisis from the viewpoint of personalism.

Jonas lays bare personalism, its anthropology, and three core principles: humans are relational, they engage, and they have inherent dignity. Persons live best in close interpersonal relations with dignified humans. When examined through the lenses of personalism, we find the crisis has a structure, learn how those structures permeate our lives and the societies in which we live, and discover a way of overcoming the crisis.

In the Western World we live in a period of economic and political crisis, a crisis that affects every dimension of our society. How deep and pervasive is it? Since the economies of most of the Western World are capitalistic or influenced by capitalism, it is plausible that capitalism influences (possibly overlaying and controlling) all other institutions, from education, religion, politics, family, and communication, to law. This pervasive influence, however, raises questions not only about our institutions and their relationships but also about economic well-being itself.

While it is important to have a job that provides money to care for our families and ourselves, we wonder if economic power, jobs, and money provide the meaning we deeply seek. Our politicians work to create jobs and tell us to work hard. In doing so they point in one of two directions: individualism and individual responsibility or the group, collectivism, socialism, caring for the poor, the helpless, the sick. Both alternatives are economic solutions to our problems; they are also deeply ideological. Politicians claim that moving in the direction they propose will give us the way of life we all want. But does it? Is the life good to live found there or somewhere else?

In light of personalism's core principles, individualism and socialism are recognized as abstractions uprooted from their life giving soil. Instead of "us" and "we" together, inter-related, we treat ourselves as individuals or members of a group. Overemphasizing the importance of the individual, we objectify other people and find ourselves alienated from them and ourselves. Focusing on groups, we attempt to understand them through structures such as ideologies, systems, and institutions. Ignoring our interpersonal lives and looking to individualism or socialism, we find only depersonalization, narcissism, loneliness, alienation, systemic objectification, and mistrust.

In *The Common Good*, Mortensen focuses on the lives of persons-in-relation that enhance rather than depersonalize, that in twenty-first century points the way beyond the present crisis brought on by indivi-

dualism and socialism to relations of mutual trust and understanding and to lives good to live.

Personalism has a long, honored history with roots in Athens, Rome, Jerusalem, and India. In placing before you the core principles of personalism, Jonas honors that history and cites important modern and contemporary personalists, from Martin Luther King, Jr., Mounier, Berdyaev, to Karol Wojtyła. They call us to a philosophy that focuses on our relationships with each other, where meaningful life is found.

The Common Good opens the windows of personalism to help us see a way of thinking that expands our imaginations to set us on the way to the good common to us all. In these pages, personalism comes alive.

THOMAS O. BUFORD

Louis G. Forgione Professor of Philosophy, Emeritus
Furman University
Greenville, South Carolina

Introduction

We live in what we in the Western World call a time of crisis. A period of economic progress has given way to pessimism and bewilderment. It seems to be broadly agreed that the economic crisis has taken hold and may last several years, and yet there are no clear guidelines as to how we might move on. Simultaneously, the consequences of global climate change have begun to show, especially in the Third World. As far as we can tell, this set of problems seems likely to remain the great challenge for world leaders throughout the present century.

Crises are not something purely negative, though they may be grave enough for those suffering the consequences. One good thing about crises is that they provide an opportunity for us to reconsider our priorities as to what is most important in life. To ponder what we might call the big questions: What is the purpose of our lives and how does one attain a good life? Upon which values should our societies be built, and in what direction are we as a community moving? In a word: What's the point of it all?

The interesting – and depressing – thing is that, with very few exceptions, these big questions are neither asked nor answered by politicians. In the political world, attention has been directed almost exclusively towards the economy, and for several years *growth* has been the mantra of nearly every political party. It is symptomatic that not even those most critical of capitalism have abandoned the concept of growth, speaking instead of “green growth” or the like.

This puts us in a grotesque situation where politicians greet us in near unison with the message that “citizens must work more hours” because this is what “the economic system” demands, a necessity for our “welfare.” But at the same time, many of us have found by experience that more work – and more material wealth – does not make us more happy. Quite the contrary. High on the list of things that people regret on their deathbed is having spent too much time working.¹

It does not take a very extensive or thorough analysis to establish that wealth does not guarantee happiness in life, not by a long shot. To be sure, this insight is by no means new. Wealth does not by necessity equal welfare. Regardless, we have managed to create societies defined to a great extent by economic thought, and it seems that human values have been forced into the background.

In a quiet moment, we might ask ourselves: Are there really no alternatives to working our way out of the crisis? Or to buying more flat screen TV sets? Is this ultimately what will bring about a better life for us? Or might we imagine an approach different from the one offered by the political left and right alike, with slight variation?

Individual or society

The European nation states can, to a varying degree, be seen as a number of attempts to combine the best of what is traditionally called the political “left” and “right” – care for the weak on the one hand and personal freedom on the other. The same may reasonably be said of the more liberal trends in American politics. The terms “left” and “right” usually stand for some variety of the ideological and historical heritage of *socialism* and *liberalism*, respectively.

This is not to say that the political left in general is associated with the totalitarian horrors of the 20th century state communism. The point is, rather, that socialism as an intellectual current may take, and indeed has taken, many other, more moderate forms. These forms of moderate socialism have mainly influenced the political left. Conversely, the intellectual heritage from Adam Smith and his economic liberalism is manifested mainly in the political right.

One internationally well-known variety of such left-right synthesis is the so-called “Scandinavian model” which attempts to mold a society in which all citizens share a part, and where “few people have too much, and still fewer have too little,” as priest and popular educator N. F. S. Grundtvig put it.²

For many years the struggle between right and left – between individualism and collectivism – has been the natural point of orientation in any political debate. These have been the models that were ready at hand, and our political solutions have been informed by this opposition – in the sense that one is either in favor of more freedom or of more community. Take, for instance, the sentiment of Democrat liberals in the U.S. that the government should have enough power to actively care for its citizens subject to it, as opposed to the extreme focus on individual autonomy found in the Tea Party movement.

The question is whether this dichotomy is not close to becoming obsolete. In Europe at least, one is bound to wonder sometimes: Have we turned things upside down, and are we moving towards societies that have taken the *worst* from the left: centralism and bureaucracy – coupled with the *worst* of the right: selfishness and greed?

It is important that we be aware of the values and the anthropology (philosophy of what a human being is) upon which we wish to build our societies. To be sure, over time *ideology* as a concept has picked up some very negative connotations – perhaps because many know from experience how rigid systems may prevent flexibility and compromise.

But values and anthropology may also make a positive contribution, providing us with a sense of direction; an inner compass for the individual and a compass to guide society in setting priorities and engaging in the struggles of our time. Such a compass is significant not least when crisis comes knocking and politicians must make choices with a high human cost.

If we as citizens fail to actively choose the values we want influencing our lives and societies, then they will be pushed on us from outside. They may be values such as higher efficiency, more competition, willingness to adapt, all of which stem from an underlying ideology of increased productivity. It may be a growing tendency to account for everything, including human life, in terms of dollars or euros. It may be the management culture of public sectors, where everything is monitored, tested, and evaluated in order to secure the rights of citizens.

There is an alternative

What if there were a school of thought that *does not* attempt to take the best from different ideologies, but which is *in itself* a coherent philosophical whole? An anthropology which acknowledges the individual's search for the good life and which simultaneously holds that it is in relation to other people that this search bears fruit? An anthropology which always puts humans at the center, so that ideology, economics, and systems are all secondary? An anthropology in which life is not measured by productivity or by what is of use to society? An anthropology that has driven and still drives social change all over the world?

The first item of good news is that such an anthropology exists. To be sure, it dates back quite a few years and could use a bit of dusting off – at least in some parts of the world, where it has been neglected for many years. But it is still relevant – perhaps now more than ever – and it holds potential for guiding us through the challenges we face

concerning matters both national (such as the renewal of public social security) and international (such as peace, reconciliation, and accountable cooperation).

This is why the anthropology in question is called *personalism*. It was developed during a time when the young nation states had to decide how to treat their citizens. Unlike many other ideologies, personalism does not claim to have an answer ready at hand to all the challenges and problems that we as societies and individuals face. There is no answer book, but rather a collection of principles and guidelines that we may follow when attempting to say how we should treat one another and which role the state and other institutions should play in our societies.

This is why personalism is well suited as a compass in these times, marked as they are by great change in our societies and in the world at large. Globalization, financial crisis, climate change, scarce resources, and new technologies and forms of communication all demand that we make decisions with far-reaching consequences.

Personalism offers some points of departure from which to make these decisions, points that are ambitious, but have also shown their applicability in practice.

The next piece of good news is that this anthropology is not so strange to us. Most of us would recognize practical examples of personalism, only perhaps not being aware of the underlying thoughts and values. For instance, personalism forms the backdrop of some of the greatest events of social change the world has seen over the past fifty years. Martin Luther King in the U.S. and the influential archbishop Desmond Tutu in South Africa were both influenced by a personalist anthropology, as were those who formulated the Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War.

Likewise, many of the solutions that we intuitively consider sensible are often in tune with a personalist anthropology. One powerful

example is found in the legal sphere, where good results have been achieved through so-called victim-offender conferences, which arrange for the perpetrator and the victim of a crime to meet face to face. This is a distinctly personalist way of thinking. Another example, but a negative one, is the nursing sectors of certain countries, where it is broadly agreed that surveillance and documentation have excessively become the order of the day – at the cost of actual care, contact, and conversation.

As we can see, personalism is not merely a philosophy or an ideology that looks interesting on paper. It has proved its worth both as inspiration and as a model for solving problems. In these times when politicians as well as regular citizens lack proper reference points, personalism may serve as a compass to show us the direction in which to move – as societies and individuals alike.

The fundamental values of personalism

Personalism holds a number of fundamental values that are here gathered together into three basic statements.

- *Humans are relational* and in need of a close and engaged interplay with other humans in larger or smaller communities, in order to thrive and develop our potential.
- *Humans are beings that engage*, i.e. beings that freely take responsibility for our own lives, but also for our fellow humans and for the community at large.
- *Humans have inherent dignity* that can never be relativized or diminished, and which our fellow humans and society have no right to suppress or violate.

Personalism thus stands in opposition to both individualism and collectivism (and thus also to the political ideologies of socialism *and* liberalism alike). Personalism emphasizes the individual person's freedom and responsibility for his or her own life, while simultane-



Individualism



Personalism



Collectivism

PLACING PERSONALISM

According to personalism humans are relational, dignified, and engaged beings. The dignified and engaged human person comes into existence through relationship with others.

Personalism is thus on the one hand opposed to *individualism*, which sees persons as independent from fellow humans – and on the other hand to *collectivism* which sees persons as subjected to society or community. Personalism emphasizes the individual's freedom and responsibility for his or her own life while simultaneously stressing how humans can practice this responsibility only in relation to others. Conversely, community may never take precedence over the individual.

Personalism is also opposed to a materialist anthropology, which claims that humans are reducible to something biological. Personalism holds that humans are *spirit* as well – not necessarily spirit in a religious sense, but as that which elevates humanity above nature (in the same sense that there used to be in some European languages a distinction between the natural sciences and the sciences of “spirit,” which were concerned with “higher things” or with “high culture,” conveying the notion that there is a *something more* to human existence, something accessible to the human intellect.)

ously stressing that humans can realize this responsibility *only* in relation to our fellow humans. Some personalists go as far as to say that humans exist only in relationship with others. Personalism can thus never end up in liberalism, since the relationship to other humans and their needs will always have a say in how I am to live my own life.

PAGES MISSING
FROM THIS FREE SAMPLE

Notes

- 1) Australian Nurse Bronnie Ware has written a book about what dying people regret the most. Number two on the list is the regret of having worked too hard. Bronnie Ware: *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying* (Hay House, 2012).
- 2) N. F. S. Grundtvig's song "Langt højere bjerge så vide på jord" from 1820.
- 3) In philosophical and academic terms, the matter may be put as follows: Personalism is an anthropology that poses the *person* as ethical, ontological, and epistemological primate, as the point of departure for existence and the privileged aspect of being as well as the foundation for all knowledge. That is to say, what is good (ethics), what is (ontology), and how to understand it all (epistemology) must start from the person as first principle.
- 4) Anthony Giddens sought a third way that would escape the dichotomy of socialism vs. capitalism. His endeavor took the form of a so-called Social-Democratic philosophy in which Giddens claimed that the global political situation had outgrown the socialist demand for the abolition of capitalism and that the ethical demands of socialism might be met within a capitalist market-based system, namely through efforts of the state to provide equal *opportunities* within the capitalist system.
In an attempt to renew itself under the leadership of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the British Labour Party drew upon Giddens' philosophy, distancing itself from the trade unions, vocally endorsing free market economics, and shifting its ethical focus from social equality to "social justice."
- 5) Martin Buber unfolds these thoughts in his most famous book: *I and Thou* (Scribner, 2000).

- 6) J. B. L. Knox: *Gabriel Marcel : håbets filosof, fortvivlelsens dramatiker* (Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2003).
- 7) Gabriel Marcel: *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 60; J. B. L. Knox: *Gabriel Marcel. Håbets filosof, fortvivlelsens dramatiker* (Syddansk Universitetsforlag, 2003), p. 119.
- 8) Gabriel Marcel: *Homo Viator: Introduction to a Metaphysic of Hope* (Harper Torchbooks, 1962); *The Mystery of Being* (The Harvill Press, 1951).
- 9) Emmanuel Mounier: *Personalism* (The Grove Press, 1952), p. 20.
- 10) Karol Wojtyła unfolds these ideas in *The Acting Person* (D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979) and *Person and Community. Selected Essays* (Peter Lang, 1993). The quote is from Pope John Paul II's *Letter to Families*, 1994, see www.vatican.va.
- 11) Karol Wojtyła: *Veritatis Splendor* – Papal encyclical letter (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993 – www.vatican.va), paragraph 49, with reference to the constitutional or confessional document *Gaudium et Spes* (Joy and hope) from the Second Vatican Council of 1962-1965.
- 12) See Juan Manuel Burgos: *El Personalismo* (Ediciones Palabra, 2000); *Introducción al Personalismo* (Ediciones Palabra, 2012); *Antropología* (Palabra, 2003).
- 13) Karol Wojtyła: *Uczestnictwo czy alienacja*. (Participation or Alienation). Paper at the Fourth International Phenomenology Conference on January 24-28, 1975 in Fribourg, Switzerland. English translation published as "Participation or Alienation" in *Person and Community. Selected Essays* (Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 197-207.
- 14) Bronnie Ware: *The Top Five Regrets of the Dying* (Hay House, 2012).
- 15) Peter Rollins: *Insurrection* (Howard Books, 2011), p. 2-3.
- 16) Quoted from debate on Danish public radio.
- 17) John T. Cacioppo interviewed in Danish newspaper *Information*: "Ensomhed har konsekvenser for alle," on November 15, 2011. The study showing that loneliness is as dangerous as smoking fifteen cigarettes per day was carried out at Brigham Young University in the U.S. and published as "Social Relationships and Mortality Risk" in the journal *PLoS Medicine* in 2010.

- 18) www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org.
- 19) *The Telegraph* on September 14, 2009. Read more about Joseph E. Stiglitz's work at www.stiglitzsenfitoussi.fr.
- 20) *Journal of Gerontology: Social Sciences*: "From Social Structural Factors to Perceptions of Relationship Quality and Loneliness," 2008, Vol. 63B, No. 6, pp. 375–384.
- 21) Quoted from Danish public radio. For further reference see www.kringelbach.dk.
- 22) Christopher Lasch: *The Culture of Narcissism* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1979).
- 23) Danish Newspaper *Weekendavisen* on September 21, 2012.
- 24) Sherry Turkle: *Alone together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other* (Basic Books, 2011).
- 25) Sheldon, Abad and Hinsch: "A twoprocess view of Facebook use and relatedness needsatisfaction: Disconnection drives use, and connection rewards it" in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, January 2011.
- 26) Sources: Health and Safety Executive, Labour Force Survey, Safe Work Australia, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, The Work Foundation, Health Advocate, World Health Organization.
- 27) Ove K. Pedersen: *Konkurrencestaten* (Hans Reitzel, 2011), from chapter 6: "Skolen og den opportunistiske person," pp. 169-203.
- 28) Ove K. Pedersen: *Konkurrencestaten* (Hans Reitzel, 2011), from chapter 6: "Skolen og den opportunistiske person," pp. 169-203.
- 29) Ove K. Pedersen: *Konkurrencestaten* (Hans Reitzel, 2011), from chapter 6: "Skolen og den opportunistiske person," pp. 169-203.
- 30) Quoted from Danish public radio.
- 31) Victim-offender conference coordinator Charlotte Wegener in Danish newspaper *Politiken* on January 9, 2011.
- 32) See for instance www.restorativejustice.org.

- 33) Desmond Tutu: *No Future Without forgiveness* (Doubleday 1999), p. 31.
- 34) Desmond Tutu: *No Future Without forgiveness* (Doubleday 1999), p. 35. For further reference see Michael Battle: *Ubuntu I in You, and You in Me* (Seabury Books, 2009) with a preface by Desmond Tutu, and Desmond Tutu: *God Is Not a Christian* (HarperOne 2011), pp. 21-24.
- 35) Desmond Tutu: *God Is Not a Christian* (HarperOne 2011), p. 22.
- 36) JeanPaul Sartre: *No Exit* (Vintage International, 1989). The famous dictum is found in Sartre's stage play *No Exit* from 1944.
- 37) Emmanuel Mounier: *Personalism* (The Grove Press, 1952), p. 18.
- 38) Emmanuel Mounier: *Personalism* (The Grove Press, 1952), p. 18.
- 39) Emmanuel Mounier: *Personalism* (The Grove Press, 1952), p. 58.
- 40) Emmanuel Mounier: *Personalism* (The Grove Press, 1952), p. 64.
- 41) Emmanuel Mounier: *Manifeste au Service du Personalisme* (available online at classiques.uqac.ca), part 4, ch. 2.
- 42) See John Paul II's encyclical letter *Centesimus Annus* (Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1991 – www.vatican.va).
- 43) See Tobias J. Lanz (ed.): *Beyond Capitalism & Socialism* (Light in the Darkness Publications, 2008).
- 44) N. F. S. Grundtvig in the journal *Danskeren* 1949, p. 540.
- 45) Hal Koch: "D.U.s fremtid," *Lederbladet* no. 6, 1945.
- 46) Hal Koch: "D.U.s fremtid," *Lederbladet* no. 6, 1945.
- 47) Howard Kurtz: *Spin Cycle: Inside the Clinton Propaganda Machine* (Pan Books, 1998).
- 48) Hal Koch: *Hvad er demokrati?* (Gyldendal, 1995), p. 16.
- 49) Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (The Floating Press, 2009) p. 234.
- 50) Richard Stengel "A Time to Serve" in *Time* on July 30, 2007.

- 51) Robert D. Putnam: *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993); "The Prosperous Community. Social Capital and Public Life" (*The American Prospect*, 1993, no. 13, pp. 35-42); "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital" (*Journal of Democracy*, 1995, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 65-78).
- 52) Thomas O Buford, *Trust, Our Second Nature: Crisis, Reconciliation and the Personal* (Lexington Books, 2009) p. 3.
- 53) Hal Koch: *Hvad er demokrati?* (Gyldendal, 1995), p. 13.
- 54) Sources: Corporation for National and Community Service, World Volunteer Web.
- 55) European Parliament: *The role of volunteering in contributing to economic and social cohesion* (Case number 2007/2149(INI), passed on April 22, 2008).
- 56) United Nations and Johns Hopkins University: *Measuring Civil Society and Volunteering: Initial Findings from Implementation of the UN Handbook on Nonprofit Institutions*, 2007 and *Handbook on Non-Profit Institutions in the System of National Accounts*, 2003. See www.jhu.edu/ccss.
- 57) Robert Putnam has carried out extensive research concerning social capital. See for instance *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton University Press, 1993) and "The Prosperous Community. Social Capital and Public Life," in *The American Prospect*, 1993, no 13, pp. 35-42.
- 58) Sartre was strongly inspired by German existential philosopher Martin Heidegger, not least concerning the notion of "thrownness into the world." See Martin Heidegger: *Being and Time* (Harper & Row, 2008).
- 59) Strictly speaking, we are dealing here with what Sartre termed "atheistic existentialism." Theistic and Christian existentialism arguably have more in common with personalism.
- 60) Karol Wojtyła: *Uczestnictwo czy alienacja* (Participation or Alienation). Paper at the Fourth International Phenomenology Conference on January 24-28, 1975 in Fribourg, Switzerland. English translation published as "Participation or Alienation" in *Person and Community. Selected Essays* (Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 197-207.

- 61) Emmanuel Mounier: *The spoil of the violent* (Cross Currents, 1955). Translated from *L'affrontement Chretien*.
- 62) Emmanuel Levinas: *Totality and Infinity* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1991).
- 63) Emmanuel Levinas: *Difficult Freedom* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), p. 291.
- 64) Immanuel Kant: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 42.
- 65) Christian Smith: *What is a person? Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and Moral Good from the Person Up* (The University of Chicago Press, 2010).
- 66) Nikolai Berdyaev: *End of Our Time* (Sheed and Ward, 1933); *Slavery and Freedom* (C. Scribner's Sons, 1944); *The Destiny of Man* (The Centenary Press, 1945); *Dream and Reality* (Geoffrey Bles, 1950).
- 67) The Bible: *The Gospel According to Luke* chapter 6, verse 31. Immanuel Kant: *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett, 1993), p. 30
- 68) Recent years have seen the use of the concept *personism* to refer the notion that a human does not really acquire value or dignity until having become a rational and conscious person. This new use of the concept of personhood is fundamentally opposed to classical personalism, which would attack any idea of reducing human worth to rationality and consciousness. The new use of the concept of personhood may be attributed in particular to Australian moral philosopher Peter Singer (1946-), who precisely ties dignity and ethical obligation towards others to personality and rationality. It would be lamentable for the new concept of “personism” to be confused with personalism since it not only goes against the classical personalist tradition, but also creates conceptual confusion and diminishes the value of both concepts. In the anthology *Ethical Personalism*, Josef Seifert deals with this problematic, calling Peter Singer distinctly anti-personalist. See Josef Seifert: “Personalism and Personalisms” in Cheikh Gueye: *Ethical Personalism* (Ontos Verlag, 2011).
- 69) See Thomas D. Williams: *Who Is My Neighbor: Personalism and the*

Foundations of Human Rights. (The Catholic University of America Press, 2005).

70) K. E. Løgstrup: *Den etiske fordring* (Gyldendal 1956), pp. 25-26.

71) Claudio Magris in Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, quoted in Danish Newspaper *Information* on June 6, 2011.

72) Karl Ove Knausgård "Mit fædreland" published in Danish weekly paper *Weekendavisen* on August 19, 2011; Danish paper *Information* on August 18, 2011. German-Jewish philosopher Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) calls this "the banality of evil" and warns us that both totalitarian systems and modern mass culture pose a threat to freedom and human dignity. According to Arendt, freedom is coterminous with action, and community is the necessary condition for such freedom. However, due to the dissolution of civil society in modern societies, humans have become atomized, anonymous individuals within great and powerful systems. See Hannah Arendt: *The Human Condition* (University of Chicago Press, 1958) and *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (Schocken Books, 1951).

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About the Author

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen has been a key figure in an effort to interpret and communicate personalism in a Danish and Nordic culture. He has published *Det fælles bedste. Introduktion til personalismen* (2012), *The Common Good. An Introduction to Personalism* (2014) and the two anthologies *Det personlige samfund. Personalisme i praksis* (in English: *The Personal Society. Personalism in practice*) (2015) and *Det relationelle menneske. Personalisme i perspektiv* (in English: *The Relational Human. Personalism in Perspective*) (2015) in which 48 prominent leaders in the Danish society unfolds personalism within their different fields of knowledge and work.



In 2017 Jonas Norgaard Mortensen has published *Personalismens idéhistorie. En akademisk undersøgelse* (in English: *Personalism's history of ideas. An academic study*) and has been the editor of the book *Tanke og Handling skal være eet. Personalismen i Frankrig* (in English: *Thought and action should be one. Personalism in France*) by the danish theologian and philosopher K.E. Løgstrup.

Photographer: *Søren Kjeldgaard*

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen is today an active lecturer, working both nationally and internationally with personalism and is director of the Institute for Relational Psychology, working with relations key role in education, welfare, leadership and society. The Institute will in 2017 publish a book that examines and reflects on how personalism may constitute an anthropological and value orientation foundation of psychology.

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen was born in 1976; he holds degrees in political science, literature, and leadership; he is married to Hanne Skovgaard and father to Johan, Selma and Oline.

