

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen. Edited by Steffen Boeskov, Leif E. Kristensen

The Common Good

An Introduction to Personalism

SERIES IN PHILOSOPHY

“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

Summary

Our traditional ways of thinking about politics and society are becoming obsolete. We need some new points of reference in order to re-imagine the possible character, growth, and functioning of our private and common life. Such re-imagination would imply doing away with every-man-for-himself individualism as well as consumption-makes-me-happy materialism and the state-will-take-care-of-it passivity.

There is an alternative: Personalism is a forgotten, yet golden perspective on humanity that seeks to describe what a human being is and to then draw the social consequences. Personalism builds upon the thinking of Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, among others, and has been a source of inspiration for Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, and other important personalities in recent history.

According to personalism, humans are relational and engaged and possess dignity. The person and the relationship amongst persons are the universal point of departure: Human beings have inherent dignity, and good relationships amongst humans are crucial for the good, engaged life and for a good society. Personalism has been greatly neglected in Western political thought. In

this book, Jonas Norgaard Mortensen attempts to introduce personalism while simultaneously demonstrating its historical origins, acquainting the reader with its thinkers and those who have practiced it, and showing that personalism has a highly relevant contribution to make in the debate about today's social and political developments.



About the author

Jonas Norgaard Mortensen is committed to the philosophical and value debate on the welfare state. In 2012 Jonas Norgaard Mortensen published the Danish book “Det fælles bedste” (in English “The Common Good”), which has since been published in three editions. In 2015 Jonas Norgaard Mortensen published the anthologies “The personal community. Personalism in practice” and “The relational human. Personalism in perspective”, where a number of leading experts give their views as to which practices and perspectives personalism provides for relational being. 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 relational being.

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