

Overcoming Individualism on a Personalist Level: A Muslim and Christian Proposal

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Abstract: This paper discusses the personalist responses of the Muslim Moroccan philosopher Mohamed Lahbabi (1922–93) and the Catholic Polish philosopher John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005) from their twentieth century religious contexts. The nature of these contexts not only includes each thinker’s religious tradition but also the social, economic, and political circumstances of the latter half of the twentieth century. These personalist responses are grounded in the religious traditions to which each thinker belongs but are aimed at facing the socio-political issues of the day. Through a discussion of Lahbabi’s process of personalization and Wojtyła’s concept of participation, this paper will portray a common concern between the two authors for the development of the person in connection with rather than in opposition to other persons. In both cases, the connection between the person and “others” is then given a universal scope to apply to the relationship between each person and humanity as a whole.

Keywords: Mohamed Lahbabi; John Paul II; Karol Wojtyła; personalism; personalization; participation; solidarity; Muslim-Christian theology

“We created man. We know the promptings of his soul, and are closer to him than the vein of his neck.”

—*Qur’an, Surah 50* (tTrans. N. J. Dawood)

“And Jesus said, ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

—*Gospel of Matthew 19:18-19* (NRSVCE)

The first of the above two quotes is cited by Mohamed Lahbabi to begin a discussion on broken and restored relationships between the person and society. Beginning from the Qur’anic teaching of the relationship between the Creator God and the created person, Lahbabi discusses the nature of each human person as one of relationship and communication.¹ Lahbabi follows this with the example of a criminal with a guilty conscience. He argues that committing a crime goes against the nature of a person, so that the guilt of the act weighs on her conscience and isolates her from the surrounding society. It is only when the criminal confesses that she can reestablish her link with society and thus be restored to her proper nature of relationship rather than isolation.² In this example, Lahbabi casts the moral law as a good for an individual person. It is not only the threat of imprisonment that one should consider before committing a crime but also the negative consequences to one’s conscience and one’s relationship to others. Even after committing a crime, the good for the conscience accomplished by the confession outweighs the probable punishment and limitation to one’s physical freedom.

¹ Mohamed Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne: Essai de Personalisme Réaliste* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1954), 222–23.

² Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 223.

Meanwhile, John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła) explains the second quote listed above in his encyclical *The Splendor of Truth*.³ He uses this dialogue between Jesus and a rich young man in order to connect love of one’s neighbor to the “fundamental rights, inherent in the nature of the human person.”⁴ Following these precepts, John Paul II argues, allows for the beginnings of a person’s freedom and is a necessity for communion with persons. John Paul II is careful to note that this beginning enters into a process of greater fulfillment and does not replace the other commandments that describe the love of God.⁵ A moral teaching of the Christian tradition is here discussed in its relationship to the positive nature of the person’s relationship with other persons.

With this brief introduction to our two authors, we see a shared intuition to interpret sacred scripture and moral law according to personal freedom and communion. In this manner, both authors reflect their affinity to personalism: that is, as Thomas D. Williams writes, “any school of thought or intellectual movement that focuses on the reality of the person . . . and on his unique dignity, insisting upon his radical distinction between persons and all other beings (nonpersons).”⁶ Personalism’s distinctive characteristics include this insistence on the “difference between persons and nonpersons, an affirmation of the dignity of persons, a concern for the person’s subjectivity, attention to the person as object of human action to be treated as an end and never as a mere means, and particular regard for the social (relational) nature of the person.”⁷ Although Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła write and think from different religious perspectives, they are both interested in understanding the reality of persons in dialogue with their respective traditions.

Lahbabi and John Paul II address times of drastic political change in their writings: the former, the process of decolonization in North Africa, and the latter, the fall of the Soviet Union.⁸ Both thinkers are also concerned with the economic questions of the developing world.⁹ Yet their proposal, in the face of social, political, and economic problems of their days, is to insist on looking ever deeper into the phenomenon of personal fulfillment within community.¹⁰ According to both Lahbabi and John Paul II, in arriving at a better understanding of our own personhood and the personhood of those around ourselves, we are better able to face societal problems. Whatever our greatest concerns for our contemporary society may be, one of the accompanying questions is how

³ John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth: Encyclical Letter of His Holiness John Paul II Regarding Certain Fundamental Questions of the Church’s Moral Teaching*, 6 August 1993 (Sherbrooke, QC: Éditions Paulines, 1993), 12–45 (s. 6–27).

⁴ John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, 22–23 (s. 13).

⁵ John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, 23–24 (s. 13).

⁶ Thomas D. Williams, “A Personalism Primer,” in *Who is my Neighbour? Personalism and the Foundations of Human Rights* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 108.

⁷ Williams, “A Personalism Primer,” 118.

⁸ Cf. Mohamed Lahbabi, *Le Monde de Demain: Le Tiers-Monde Accuse* [*The World of Tomorrow: The Third World’s Turn to Accuse*] (Casablanca: Éditions Naaman, 1980), and John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus: The Social Teaching of the Church: Encyclical Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to his Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, the Priests and Deacons, Families of Men and Women Religious, All the Christian Faithful, and to All Men and Women of Good Will on the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, 1 May 1991 (Sherbrooke, QC: Éditions Paulines, 1991), esp. 41–47 (s. 22–25).

⁹ Cf. Lahbabi, *Le Monde de Demain*, esp. 40–41; and John Paul II, *Concern for the Social Order: Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II to the Bishops, Priests, Religious Families, Sons and Daughters of the Church and All People of Good Will for the Twentieth Anniversary of Populorum Progressio*, 30 December 1987 (Sherbrooke, QC: Éditions Paulines, 1988), esp. 89–92 (s. 41).

¹⁰ Cf. Mohamed Lahbabi, *Du Clos à l’Ouvert: Vingt Propos sur les Cultures Nationales et la Civilisation Humaine* [*From Closed to Opened Up: Twenty Conversations about the Cultures of Nations and Human Civilization*] (Algiers: SNED, 1971), esp. 74–84 and 186; and John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, esp. 147–52 (s. 98–101).

to work towards positive social change—more specifically, how to work in community for the good of all persons amidst polarized political climates. How does one arrive at finding the other person who may differ from oneself religiously, ethnically, or politically as a good for oneself? As Pope Francis reminded the U.S. Congress in 2015,

There is another temptation which we must especially guard against: the simplistic reductionism which sees only good or evil; or, if you will, the righteous and sinners. The contemporary world, with its open wounds which affect so many of our brothers and sisters, demands that we confront every form of polarization which would divide it into these two camps. We know that in the attempt to be freed of the enemy without, we can be tempted to feed the enemy within. To imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their place. That is something which you, as a people, reject.¹¹

With the polarized political climate in both the U.S. and Canada and its accompanying difficulty in accomplishing meaningful societal reform, this paper hopes to be a small reminder and a continuation of the personalist project. Our first priority and our ultimate aim in any societal problem should be to encourage the flourishing of the person amidst the community.

This shared philosophical personalism position in the face of political and social issues seems like an interesting opportunity for an inter-religious comparison. How does Mohamed Lahbabi understand the person and her fulfilment from his twentieth-century Moroccan Muslim context? How does John Paul II/Karol Wojtyła understand the person and her fulfilment from his twentieth-century Polish Catholic perspective? In other words, how does the person act out her created nature and become truly oneself according to the personalist philosophies and religious beliefs of Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła? By reading these authors together, I have found that both Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła criticize individualism and provide alternatives that shed light on persons' processes of becoming human within communion and solidarity with others.

The current comparison may seem largely philosophical in nature. This perspective is the most straightforward entry point for a comparison between Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła. Lahbabi often cites the Quran or Hadith in his writing and discusses the person in Islam in his short work *Le Personnalisme Musulman* [Muslim Personalism]. While this work will be cited in what follows, Lahbabi's more extensive treatments of the nature of personhood are found in his philosophical works. Many of Wojtyła's writings, as priest and bishop, and papal writings (as John Paul II) discuss the dignity of the created person as image of God, the redemption of the person enacted by Christ, and the sanctification of the person through the grace of the Holy Spirit.¹²

¹¹ Francis, "Visit to the Joint Session of the United States Congress, Address of the Holy Father, Thursday, 24 September 2015," http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/september/documents/papa-francesco_20150924_usa-us-congress.html.

¹² For example, cf. John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Redemptor Hominis, Addressed by the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, To His Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate, the Priests, the Religious Families, the Sons and Daughters of the Church, and to All Men and Women of Good Will at the Beginning of His Papal Ministry*, March 4, 1979, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html; and John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Dominum et Vivificantem of the Supreme Pontiff John Paul II, On the Holy Spirit in the Life of the Church and the World*, May 18, 1986, http://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html.

However, in the current article I have chosen works with more similar aims and vocabulary to those found in Lahbabi’s works. I believe that this can still fall within the realm of comparative theology. In his work *A Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology*, David Burrell notes the interaction between medieval thinkers Ibn Sina, Maimonides, and Aquinas on the philosophical challenges from Plotinus: believers in a free Creator God had to interact with Plotinus’s contrasting yet influential explanation for the origin of the world.¹³ From their context in the twentieth century, Lahbabi and Wojtyla interact with current influential philosophical trends (e.g. phenomenology, existentialism) and propose a view of personhood and community that can speak the language of modern philosophy and yet reflect the values of their respective traditions. They both portray a positive sense of the person belonging to a community, citing beliefs from their traditions and yet explaining philosophically the reasonableness of this positive sense of belonging.

Inadequate Understandings of Personhood

Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyla explicitly name the ideas of personhood with which they disagree and provide explanations for their disagreement. While our authors are not reacting to the same thinkers, they do agree on certain points as to what is an inadequate understanding of personhood. One clear example of this overlap is their critiques of individualism and its relation to individualistic understandings of freedom. Within these critiques, individualism is found problematic not necessarily as a system (political or economic) but rather as an attitude or ethic taken towards others.

In Lahbabi’s *Liberté et Liberation : à partir des libertés bergsoniennes* [Liberty and Liberation: Departing from Bergsonian Liberty], he criticizes the early twentieth century French philosopher Henri Bergson’s ideal of “purely subjective liberty.”¹⁴ Lahbabi argues that Bergson’s concept of *liberty* as the individual feeling of being free is insufficient; a realistic understanding of liberty or freedom should be “a total symbiosis of all the pieces of liberties which are articulated around the concept of the human, in his totality, engaged in the fight for the mastery of his destiny and of nature. Only this synchronous work of liberties is capable of harmonizing the action of *me* with those of *us* and orienting them towards liberation.”¹⁵ Lahbabi here acknowledges various freedoms but underlines that they are all located within history and society. Liberty cannot exist solely subjectively and should not be understood as simply a feeling. Rather, it should be placed within a larger sense of the human person and interaction between the single person and with those around her.

The stress on communication over individualism is illustrated by Lahbabi in his discussion of aesthetics and the artist. While Bergson understands art as a “spontaneous manifestation of natural gifts,”¹⁶ Lahbabi insists upon the artist’s communication to surrounding society. The artist does not only express herself but is able to communicate something from one’s society to those around oneself.¹⁷ According to Lahbabi’s description, works of art are inspired by the most

¹³ David Burrell, “Free Creation as a Shared Task for Jews, Christians, Muslims,” in *Towards a Jewish-Christian-Muslim Theology* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 9–24.

¹⁴ Mohamed Lahbabi, *Liberté et Liberation : à partir des libertés bergsoniennes* [Liberty and Liberation: Departing from Bergsonian Liberty] (Algiers : SNED, 1956), 9 [this translation, and all others in this paper from French texts, is mine].

¹⁵ Lahbabi, *Liberté et Liberation*, 201–2; italics in the original.

¹⁶ Lahbabi, *Liberté et Liberation*, 87.

¹⁷ Lahbabi, *Liberté et Liberation*, 99.

profound aspects of the person's existence in the world and are recognized as works of art insofar as they respond to the needs of these most profound aspects of persons existing in the world. In this manner, one who is considered a genius is not considered to be one due to her eccentricity or strangeness but rather because what she expresses or creates corresponds in an especially meaningful way to her society. When the artist and her work is understood in such a way, the liberty found in artistic expression approaches Lahbabi's understanding of liberation, as it is not only the feeling or thrill of the one who creates but the concrete production and enhancement of liberation for society. Lahbabi's *Liberty and Liberation* includes a critique of an overly individualistic or subjective understanding of liberty. His alternative understanding of liberation can only understand the liberty of the person as intertwined with other persons.

In John Paul II's pre-papal writings—that is, Wojtyła's philosophy—he rejects the systems or philosophies that limit the person's relationship with others, which he calls individualism and objective totalism. In the former, the person only focuses on herself and her own good, which is understood as “opposed or in contradiction to other individuals and their good.”¹⁸ In this system, acting together with others has no positive meaning, as it is understood as against the person. However, the solution is not a system that simply values the society over individual persons. Wojtyła also finds fault with the system of totalism, which understands the individual as “the chief enemy of society and of the common good.”¹⁹ While the latter values the society rather than the individual as the highest good, it also understands the individual and society as against one another. Wojtyła's personalism rejects both of the above systems. He insists, rather, on a connection between the person and others.

Such a connection relates, just as with Lahbabi, to an understanding of freedom. John Paul II/Wojtyła's works demonstrate a shared concern regarding both overly individualistic understandings and how they lack clarity with regard to the person's relation to humanity as a whole. In *The Splendor of Truth*, John Paul II takes up the subject of the relationship between freedom and law. He is concerned about a trend in moral theology that “adopt[s] a radically subjectivistic conception of moral judgment.”²⁰ John Paul II also defines this subjectivistic conception by relating it to individualism:

There is a tendency to grant to the individual conscience the prerogative of independently determining the criteria of good and evil and then acting accordingly. Such an outlook is quite congenial to an individualistic ethic, wherein each individual is faced with his own truth, different from the truth of others. Taken to its extreme consequence, this individualism leads to a denial of the very idea of human nature.²¹

Here, John Paul II is critical of an individualism separate from moral law. The opening discussion of Jesus and the rich young man cited in my introduction, on the other hand, argues for a moral law of love of neighbor with particular commandments that are always obligatory. Following these commandments is not viewed as against the individual person but rather for the person's freedom

¹⁸ Karol Wojtyła, “Intersubjectivity by Participation” (1969), in *The Acting Person*, trans. Andrzej Potocki (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 274.

¹⁹ Wojtyła, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 274.

²⁰ John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, 53 (s. 32).

²¹ John Paul II, *The Splendor of Truth*, 53 (s. 32).

and her conscience. In my discussion of Wojtyła’s concept of participation, there will be further explanation of the person’s freedom and fulfilment in following the moral law of love of neighbor. However, in the above criticism of individualistic understandings of freedom, it is evident that John Paul II exhibits an interest in the ethical and personal attitude in his critique of individualism.

Although they may have different emphases within their discussions, both Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła are critical of individualism and subjectivist understandings of liberty. The emphasis on communication in Lahbabi’s critique and the emphasis on relationships in John Paul II’s/Wojtyła’s critique provide a personalist perspective on the issue. Individualism is viewed as problematic in the sense that it views individual persons in isolation from other persons. The above personalist critiques point rather to the concrete reality of persons existing and working together with other persons. This reality is a true challenge within any circumstance, to affirm that my own ideas are not the only ones that matter. Rather, my good and the good of others can be discovered in communicating and working together. This now leaves questions as to how the person’s nature can be understood to be open to society and community. The rest of this paper will discuss our thinkers’ proposals to integrate the individual person with other persons.

Lahbabi’s Personalization

In order to represent Lahbabi’s personalization faithfully, a couple of comments from his work *De L’Être à la Personne: essai de personalisme réaliste* [From Being to Person: Essay on Realist Personalism] should be mentioned. Lahbabi identifies his project of Realist Personalism as part of a dialogue with other religions and philosophies,²² but he believes that personalism should “put God in parentheses, that is, not to make of him an accusation or an obstacle.”²³ As such, he notes that “the task of realist personalism will be to opt for a dialectic.”²⁴ Lahbabi’s position on this issue does not mean that he does not integrate his Islamic context into his discussion; however, when he cites his tradition, he does so in conversation, or dialectic, with Christian beliefs and modern philosophies.

This conversation of multiple perspectives may remain consistent with Lahbabi’s option for a dialectic, but it can also make it difficult to present a unified interpretation of his concept of personalization in such a short discussion. The current section, then, will not emphasize an overriding concept but the interaction of a few key characteristics in the dialectic of personalization: namely, the value of universalism as an alternative to tribalism; the unity of being and personhood; and the role of love and values. In order to make some of these characteristics clearer, threaded throughout the discussion will be an example of how the self interacts with oneself and others.

Universal Value

²² While Lahbabi only mentions inter-religious dialogue in the Epilogue of *De L’Être à la Personne*, Markus Kneer discusses how many personalists and Lahbabi in particular were regularly involved in Islamic-Christian dialogue (“Le double dialogue de Lahbabi: entre musulmans et chrétiens, entre philosophie et théologie,” *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 141, no. 1 [2019]: 90–92).

²³ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 347. This position received some criticism in André Voelke’s review of the book, who was worried if such an attitude “does not risk as such emasculating each of the envisaged cultures” (review of *De L’Être à la Personne: essai de personalisme réaliste* by Mohamed Lahbabi, *Revue du Théologie et de Philosophie* 5, no. 4 [1955]: 310).

²⁴ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 347.

In both Lahbabi's works *Le Personnalisme Musulman* and *De L'Être à la Personne*, he discusses the development in the understanding of the person brought about by Muhammad and the foundation of Islam. He notes that in pre-Islamic Arabia the individual's identity was tied to the family and the tribe.²⁵ Outside of belonging to a particular tribe, the person has no innate dignity. In an interaction between a tribe and an individual outside the tribe, then, the tribe does not grant a personal value to the individual: she is just an outsider. When ideas of the person's identity and value have such a small horizon, Lahbabi argues that sectarian conflict is common, for the value to which all else is subordinate is "the defense of the tribe and the honor of the family."²⁶

With Muhammad's introduction of the *umma* or community of believers, however, a sense of belonging much larger than one's family and tribe is created.²⁷ Lahbabi cites a hadith where Muhammad comments, "there is no nationalism in Islam."²⁸ This step beyond the family, tribe, or nation moves towards the universal value of the person and is thus a step towards personalization. According to Lahbabi, the ultimate value of the person surpasses all distinctions between groups of peoples: "there is *a value* that make us feel superior to situations of class and community, to ideologies that link us to a group and oppose us to others, to differences of race, language or nationality. This value is the only one to make our unity."²⁹ Lahbabi interprets the *umma* as an affirmation of the universal dignity of each person, and thus he understands it to provide a more comprehensive of the person than a tribalist position would allow. We understand then that an aspect of personalization is awareness of the value of all persons despite differences.

The universal value of the human person, however, is not meant to represent a static reality. The unity that links individuals across boundaries is that all individuals tend toward a greater flourishing of our humanity.³⁰ This is where we begin to see the necessity of the use of the term personalization. The unifying factor of personhood is universal but contains a direction and activity. For instance, the value of the person standing in front of me at the airport who dresses differently or talks differently from me lies in this person's innate desire for a fuller life: one is pushed toward a fuller life through one's desire. Within this movement of personalization, we still need to uncover, however, one's beginning point in searching for a fuller life and what this fuller life could entail.

Person and Being

Lahbabi's understanding of the two aspects of each human person helps us to understand the beginning point in this search, that is, the process of personalization. He understands each human person to be a unity of person and being which propels the human person into the world: "I am deliberation, decision, will, memory, society . . . by my person, and availability, biological activity, execution [of acts] . . . by my being."³¹ In this list, we see that Lahbabi locates many

²⁵ Mohamed Lahbabi, *Le Personnalisme Musulman* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), 3, and *De L'Être à la Personne*, 259–60.

²⁶ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 259.

²⁷ Lahbabi, *Le Personnalisme Musulman*, 3.

²⁸ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 257.

²⁹ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 63; italics in the original.

³⁰ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 63.

³¹ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 56.

intellectual and social capacities within the personal aspect of the human and many bodily capacities with the being of the person. However, he emphasizes throughout *De L'Être à la Personne* that these two aspects should be understood through how they work together. The degree to which this working together is effective reflects the degree of personalization.

There are a few movements within the working together of person and being that allow for a greater understanding of how Lahbabi defines personalization. The first is the working together of person and being within the dynamic of intentions and acts:

The human is the being in which personalization has attained a development such that, when she acts, it is according to intentions that aim beyond the individual, and by acting she poses an equation between her acts and intentions. The adequacy of the result of the intended action supposes on the part of the subject an understanding of the situation and the means to dispose one's acts in view of a precise end. The link between the parts and the whole is the work of a binding and dynamic conscience, which arrives in the world at the same time as the being, and flourishes and develops with the person in her march towards humanity.³²

The human person can use her being—in the case of acts, her body—to fulfill the intentions of her person, reflecting the intellectual understanding of the person. For instance, my intention is to reach the departure gate of my flight and so my understanding of where I am and where the gate is located informs my body how to move. In this case, my being and person are working together to achieve an intended result.

The example of the desire to go to the departure gate and the execution of that desire by moving myself to the departure gate, however, does not explicitly include Lahbabi's “intentions that aim beyond the individual.” I am concerned with moving myself. The interaction of intentions and acts should also consider Lahbabi's two trajectories of personalization: towards the “materiality of the real” and the “solidarity of the self with the we.”³³ The person and being interact with the material things or the objects of this world in a relationship of resistance. I cannot simply walk to the boarding gate, because there is a wall and a door blocking the way. The wall and door force me to consider them and find out how to still achieve my intended goal. In addition, there are not only material things in this world but also other persons like myself.³⁴ The security guard and the persons standing in line to go through customs also force me to consider them in my understanding of how to reach the boarding gate. The human person, a unity of person and being, is pushed to consider the world around itself in carrying out its intentions and acts.

Values and Love

The process of interacting with the outside world and other persons is not, however, contrary to the process of personalization. The security gate, guard, and the other persons in line are not simply obstacles to my goal of arriving at the boarding gate. It is at this point that the question of value re-enters our discussion. Lahbabi understands societies as representing a

³² Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 55–56.

³³ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 72.

³⁴ Lahbabi, *De L'Être à la Personne*, 72.

complex, dynamic hierarchy of values. A “sclerosis of personalization” occurs if there is a fixed set of values that does not allow for interaction among the different values; instead, society is alive when values interact and conflict with one another.³⁵ There is not only the value of my own punctuality as I approach the line at customs, but there is also the value of respect for others and for their own desires to be on time to their own boarding gates. This value for others interacts with my goal of reaching my own boarding gate and may change my behavior: rather than trying at all costs to manipulate my way to the front of the line, I remain in line and wait my turn to go through customs.

As Lahbabi believes the antithesis of personalization to be a fixed set of values, he does not want to emphasize absolutes within a hierarchy of values.³⁶ With the interaction between the value of my own punctuality and the value of respect for others, it is not that one of them should always stand above the other without the two interacting with each other. At the same time, Lahbabi does make the claim that any value is to be understood first from the standpoint of love: “love of the good, the true, the just . . . and also the love of self and of the other as a person.”³⁷ All values that are acted out from intentions through the unity of the being and person are at least some version of one of these loves (even if a “perverted” form.)³⁸ This underpinning love gives rise to the universal value of the person discussed at the beginning of this section. Lahbabi explains that “The value of the human person only has sense if it begins by being constituted as intimacy—that is, as intuition of the proper dignity of my person as being loved . . . by myself and loved by another.”³⁹ The values of punctuality and respect, for instance, should be understood first from the standpoint of the love of self and others that animates these values. As both these values are understood in themselves from the standpoint of love, they can also be related through the love that constitutes each of them. Since I love both myself and others (or at least have a sense that others have the same dignity and worthiness of being loved as I do), I come earlier to the airport since I both want to be on time for my flight *and* want to respect others around me in the many lines at the airport.

While love is the first point, Lahbabi does not end with this as a point of understanding the value of the person. Rather than remaining at the level of love of self or love for a particular person, Lahbabi points towards the union among persons: “[T]rue value is not love proper but more in the mutual intuition of the neighbor as it evokes a union of solidarity in the we. As such the person is value, value due to love, and love made to go out of egoism.”⁴⁰ Love and value interact again here to bring an individual person’s horizons outside of the self to a larger recognition of all persons and a sense of unity with all persons. In Lahbabi’s comment here, we see a reflection of his concern to avoid the individualism and different senses of belonging that produce conflict. It is in the section directly following his comments that he discusses the universal value of the person in Islam explained above. Even in discussing love, Lahbabi is careful to qualify the concept so that it serves a large sense of belonging, noted by his use of the term solidarity. Here is yet another recognition of the possibilities of conflicts between persons of different families, nationalities, ethnicities, and political positions. Even at the level of understanding the nature of love, Lahbabi emphasizes the moving out of “egoism” and the general sense of understanding the other as “neighbor.” It can be

³⁵ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 253.

³⁶ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 253

³⁷ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 255.

³⁸ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 255.

³⁹ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 256

⁴⁰ Lahbabi, *De L’Être à la Personne*, 256

a helpful reminder that love as we experience it more strongly with those who are closer to us is not the only manner in which we can experience love and value. However, Lahbabi does not provide much explanation as to how the experience of love of self and for others interacts with solidarity, or how to understand the nature of solidarity. We will discuss this more in our upcoming section in the explanation of John Paul II’s concept of participation.

With the characteristics of universalism over individualism, the unity of being and person, and the interaction between values and love, Lahbabi continually emphasizes the movement of personalization. Personalization is both a value and a process. Muhammad’s prophecy brought about a revolution in personalization, as it recognized the universal value of human persons. Personalization is also a process of coming to understand the universal value of human persons. This process unfolds as the being and person become more unified in intention and action and, in turn, as intention and action are increasingly animated by a love for others in a sense of solidarity.

John Paul II/Wojtyla on Participation

Karol Wojtyla’s personalism is known in particular for linking insights on the person from “modern phenomenological (especially Schelerian) philosophy to discoveries of the Aristotelian-Thomistic and Augustinian tradition of philosophy.”⁴¹ Through this diversity of influences, Wojtyla tries to overcome a one-sided approach dominant in modern philosophy that understands the “person primarily through knowledge and cognition.”⁴² As the current paper is interested in comparing Wojtyla’s personalism to that of Lahbabi’s and the two proposals for the positive relationship between the individual person and society in general, this section will chiefly limit itself to Wojtyla’s concept of “participation,” or his interpretation of the social nature of the human person, and, through this concept, his concept of community.

An Introduction to Wojtyla’s Concept of Person

While this section will be largely focused on the person’s relation to others in forming a community, the discussion cannot begin without at least a preliminary definition of the person in Wojtyla’s philosophy. Due to the importance of the person in Wojtyla’s thought, it is impossible to begin to understand participation and community as constructed within his work without such a definition. I will, however, limit myself to a somewhat brief explanation of Wojtyla’s two major influences and of his terms self-possession, self-determination, and self-fulfillment as they relate to his concept of person.⁴³

As mentioned above, Wojtyla’s philosophy is heavily influenced by traditional Christian sources and modern phenomenological thought. This is true for his definition of the person as well. In his essay “Thomistic Personalism,” Wojtyla provides the definition of the person according to Boethius and Thomas Aquinas: “The person . . . is always a rational and free concrete being,

⁴¹ Josef Seifert, “Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher and the Cracow/Lublin School of Philosophy,” *Aletheia* 2 (1981): 132.

⁴² Seifert, “Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher,” 132.

⁴³ Describing Wojtyla’s seminal work on the topic, *The Acting Person*, Seifert states, “The thesis clearly seems to be that in acting as it involves free self-possession, self-determination, and self-governance, the person qua person realizes and shows himself most profoundly, especially in morally good action” (“Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher,” 132).

capable of all those activities that reason and freedom alone make possible.”⁴⁴ Wojtyła is informed by, and agrees with, this traditional definition. Nonetheless, Wojtyła argues that this traditional definition does not express the “uniqueness of the subjectivity essential to the human being . . . [which can be built upon] the basis of experience.”⁴⁵ In the emphasis on subjectivity of the person and on discovering it through experience, Wojtyła reveals his connections with the phenomenological tradition. Wojtyła himself praises phenomenological analysis for its valuable contribution towards “understanding and explaining the subjectivity of the person.”⁴⁶

Having established the basic grounding for Wojtyła’s thinking, we can now turn to his actual configuration of the person. In his essay “The Person: Subject and Community,” Wojtyła begins from the point of subjective experience to define the person: “In experience man is given to us as he who exists and acts. All men, and ‘I’ among them, participate in the experience of existing and acting.”⁴⁷ According to Wojtyła, the person is to be understood from the perspective of both being and action, rather than one or the other. This dual emphasis continues throughout Wojtyła’s discussion of the main dimensions of the person’s subjectivity.

The first of these dimensions is self-determination. Wojtyła asserts that experience reveals action particular to the person. The action of the person can be conscious, whereby the self is the “author of the act and of its transitive and intransitive effects.”⁴⁸ This authorship implicates the person’s will, which Wojtyła defines as “an act of a faculty of the subject directed toward a value that is willed as an end and that is also, therefore, an object of endeavor.”⁴⁹ Directed outwards in both efficacy of action and recognition of value of an object, Wojtyła’s self-determination includes a turn inwards as well, whereby the person herself becomes good or bad according to respective good or bad actions.⁵⁰

Wojtyła argues that a definition of the person based on self-determination—that is, the person’s free choice in his actions that can be directed towards a certain end—reinforces Aquinas’s definition of a person as *persona est sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis*. Wojtyła links the person who reveals herself as self-determining to the person’s characteristic self-governing and self-possessing.⁵¹ The free and conscious acts where the person determines herself are not possible if the person does not simultaneously govern and possess herself.

In following his reference to Aquinas’s definition of the person with a discussion of self-governance and self-possession, Wojtyła seems to translate *alteri incommunicabilis* as “self-possessing” rather than with the literal translation “incommunicable.” From the brief discussion in his essay “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” the reason for this is not immediately evident,

⁴⁴ Karol Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 167.

⁴⁵ Karol Wojtyła, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in *Person and Community*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 212.

⁴⁶ Karol Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” *The Review of Metaphysics*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (1979): 274, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20127345>.

⁴⁷ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 273.

⁴⁸ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 281.

⁴⁹ Karol Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” in *Person and Community*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 191.

⁵⁰ Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” 192.

⁵¹ Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” 192–93.

but one can see the link between *incommunicabilis* and self-possession through the definitions in *Love and Responsibility*. In his first mention of incommunicability in *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyla associates *incommunicabilis* with the will:

The incommunicable, the *inalienable*, in a person is intrinsic to that person’s inner self, to the power of self determination, free will. *No one else can want for me*. No one can substitute his act of will for mine. It does sometimes happen that someone very much wants me to want what he wants. This is the moment when the impassable frontier between him and me, which is drawn by free will, becomes most obvious. I may not want that which he wants me to want – and in this precisely I am *incommunicabilis*.⁵²

Wojtyla’s connection between *incommunicabilis* and the will in the above passage would seem to conflate it with *sui iuris* or self-governing.

Later in *Love and Responsibility*, however, he extends the definition of *incommunicabilis* and reveals its relationship to *sui iuris*: “The person is always, of its very nature, untransferable, *alteri incommunicabilis*. This means not only that it is its own master (*sui iuris*) but that it cannot give itself away, cannot surrender itself.”⁵³ *Sui iuris*, the ability to freely choose one’s actions, is thus a part of the *incommunicabilis* of the person. However, *alteri incommunicabilis* also includes the person’s ownership of oneself, or self-possession.

In “The Person: Subject and Community,” Wojtyla describes self-determination according to subjective experience of oneself, which may seem more reflective of a phenomenological approach. Nonetheless, in “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination” and *Love and Responsibility*, he explains the connection between self-determination and Aquinas’s traditional definition of the person as self-governing and self-possessing/incommunicable. In this manner, Wojtyla reveals not only that his two main influences are Thomism and phenomenology, but also how he sees them as consistent with one another.

In “The Person: Subject and Community,” Wojtyla turns from self-determination towards the related dimension of self-fulfillment. He states that “In these acts, through the moment of self-determination, the human self is revealed to itself, not only as self-possession and self-domination, but also as a tendency to self-fulfillment.”⁵⁴ In a parallel manner to the outward and inward aspects of self-determination, Wojtyla relates the decision to perform morally good actions that take the person outside of herself, or to interact with her surroundings, to the fulfillment of the person’s self.⁵⁵

The person according to Wojtyla is thus a subject who exists and acts, whose acts are particular as they are freely chosen, and whose self-fulfillment is achieved through choosing morally good acts. The dynamic between the person’s fulfillment and good acts is most complete, as Wojtyla asserts in “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” in the gift of self:

⁵² Karol Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H.T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 24; italics in the original.

⁵³ Wojtyla, *Love and Responsibility*, 96.

⁵⁴ Wojtyla, “The Person,” 284.

⁵⁵ Wojtyla, “The Person,” 287.

Only if one possesses oneself can one give oneself and do this in a disinterested way. And only if one governs oneself can one make a gift of oneself, and this again a disinterested gift . . . [I]t is precisely when one becomes a gift for others that one most fully becomes oneself.⁵⁶

In this example, the person does not lose her self-determination nor her self-possession even though she freely gives herself. With the person transcending herself in morally good actions, and in this particular instance in the gift of self, the link between the person's fulfillment and her relationship with "the other" is opened.

Participation: The Person with Others

The person who is revealed through experience as one who exists and acts is also one who exists and acts together with others. In order to keep the person at the center when discussing the person's relationships with others, Wojtyla explores the social nature of the person, which he refers to as "participation." This sub-section will discuss his "Intersubjectivity by Participation," in addition to "Participation or Alienation?" and "The Person: Subject and Community," in developing the various dimensions of this social nature according to Wojtyla.

As it is the last chapter of *The Acting Person*, "Intersubjectivity by Participation" continues the focus of the rest of the book. That is, participation is chiefly understood through human actions. In this case, however, Wojtyla recognizes that many of a person's actions are performed with other persons.⁵⁷ In regards to these communal actions, Wojtyla seeks to demonstrate how the person fulfills herself when acting together with others:

First, the idea of 'participation' is used here in order to reach to the very foundation of *acting together* with other persons, to those roots of such acting which stem from and are specific to the person himself. Second, everything that constitutes the personalistic value of the action—namely, the performance itself of an action and the realization of the transcendence and the integration of the person contained in it—is realized because of acting together with others.⁵⁸

With this dimension of participation, we see that actions continue to be chosen by the person rather than by the group, and in this manner, the person can work with others at the same time as working towards her fulfillment. Through this understanding of the person in relation to the community, Wojtyla establishes that each community has an obligation to "allow the person remaining within its orbit to realize himself through participation."⁵⁹

In this manner, "Intersubjectivity by Participation" focuses on "the community of acting." Wojtyla explicitly admits this concentration, stating that "at present we are mainly interested in the 'community of acting' because of its closer relation to the dynamic action-person correlation

⁵⁶ Wojtyla, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 194.

⁵⁷ Wojtyla, "Intersubjectivity by Participation," 262.

⁵⁸ Wojtyla, "Intersubjectivity by Participation," 269; italics in the original.

⁵⁹ Wojtyla, "Intersubjectivity by Participation," 271.

as a basis and a source of cognition.”⁶⁰ At this point, he opens up to a discussion of the common good in order to discuss the relationship between the person within a community of acting and the possibility of fulfilling herself in her actions within that community.⁶¹ When considering the common good alongside the person’s fulfillment and her relationship to the community, Wojtyla defines the common good as “the good of the community inasmuch as it creates in the axiological sense the conditions for the common existence, which is then followed by acting.”⁶² As such, the common good is integrally related to being with others; while acting towards a particular goal with others remains important, it cannot be wholly understood without reference to the existence of various bonds.

From this point, Wojtyla sets up two authentic attitudes for persons within a community. The first, solidarity, he describes as an attitude where the person has the “benefit of the whole in view” and is “ready to ‘complement’ by her action what is done by other members of the community.”⁶³ Wojtyla’s discussion of solidarity emphasizes the person’s looking to the common good of the community and the person’s own share in working towards that common good alongside other persons. The second of Wojtyla’s authentic attitudes is that of opposition. As understood by Wojtyla, opposition need not consist in a rejection of the common good, but rather aims “at more adequate understanding and, to an even greater degree, the means employed to achieve the common good, especially from the point of view of the possibility of participation.”⁶⁴

Wojtyla ends his discussion of authentic attitudes with an insistence on dialogue as a necessary condition for communities:

The principle of dialogue allows us to select and bring to light what in controversial situations is right and true, and helps to eliminate any partial, preconceived or subjective views and trends. Such views and inclinations may become the seed of strife and conflict between men, while what is right and true always favors the development of the person and enriches the community.⁶⁵

The above discussion integrates the person and her fulfillment in action with the community. Wojtyla argues for a view of the person wherein the person works towards her own authentic good as she works towards the common good of her community. The person is not necessarily at odds with the community; complementarity can be achieved when an atmosphere of dialogue is established, allowing and encouraging authentic attitudes of solidarity and opposition.

Wojtyla ends “Intersubjectivity by Participation” by opening his discussion of membership in a community to the community of humankind as a whole. Here, he introduces a more fundamental meaning of participation: “the ability to share in the *humanness itself of every man*.”⁶⁶ He explains that the juxtaposition between the neighbor and the self in the evangelical commandment “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” reflects this understanding of participation. That “I”

⁶⁰ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 279.

⁶¹ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 279–80.

⁶² Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 282.

⁶³ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 285.

⁶⁴ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 286.

⁶⁵ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 287.

⁶⁶ Wojtyla, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 295; italics in the original.

should love the other as “myself” reflects a shared human nature.⁶⁷ In order to understand Wojtyła’s perspective on the specifics of the ability to love or share in a common humanity and Wojtyła’s more fundamental meaning of participation, however, we must turn to discuss his articles “Participation or Alienation?” and “The Person: Subject and Community.”

*Participating in Another’s Humanity: “Profiles of Participation”*⁶⁸

While the definition provided above does protect against systems of thought that place the good of the individual in opposition to the good of the community, its emphasis on the action of the person does not allow for a complete understanding of participation. In “Participation or Alienation?” Wojtyła himself takes up again the fundamental meaning of participation as participating in the other’s humanity:

‘The other’ does not just signify that the being existing next to me or even acting in common with me in some system of activities is the same kind of being as I am . . . [But] ‘the other’ also signifies my . . . participation in that being’s humanity, a participation arising from my awareness that this being, is another *I*.⁶⁹

At this point, participation cannot solely be understood as a trait belonging to each person. It becomes more concrete as that which binds persons together, bringing them to experience one another. Wojtyła explains that, “Participation arises from consciously becoming close to another, a process that starts from the lived experience of one’s own *I*.”⁷⁰ From this point, the community that arises from participation can be understood not “as the plurality of subjects, but always the specific unity of that plurality.”⁷¹ Wojtyła constructs the unity of subjects from two points: the interpersonal, “I-you” relationships and the social, “we” dimension.

Wojtyła uses the first profile of “I-you” to denote the essential dimension within the many types of interpersonal relationships within communities, such as friendships, married couples, mothers and their children, or even two individuals “quite unknown to each other who unexpectedly find themselves within this pattern.”⁷² Although the various types of interpersonal relationships differ in many respects, as in “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” Wojtyła asserts that the elementary form of interpersonal relationships consists in “treating and actually experiencing ‘the other one’ as one’s self.”⁷³ In order for this to be truly the case, the “I” and the “you” experience one another in their

deepest structure of self-possession and self-domination. Especially, it should reveal [each person’s] tendency to self-fulfillment which, culminating in the acts of

⁶⁷ Wojtyła, “Intersubjectivity by Participation,” 295–96.

⁶⁸ This phrasing is borrowed from Kevin P. Doran’s discussion of participation (“Solidarity in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła,” in *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* [New York: Peter Lang, 1996], 143).

⁶⁹ Karol Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation?” (1975), in *Person and Community*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 200.

⁷⁰ Wojtyła, “Participation or Alienation?,” 201.

⁷¹ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 289.

⁷² Wojtyła, “The Person,” 295.

⁷³ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 295.

conscience, witnesses to the transcendence proper to man as a person. In this truth of his personal reality, not only should man be revealed in the interpersonal relation ‘I-you,’ but he should be accepted and confirmed. Such an acceptance and confirmation is the moral or ethical expression of the sense of the interpersonal community.⁷⁴

The main dimensions of Wojtyła’s concept of person remain integral to human relationships. As “I” and “you” experience each other, they do so if they experience and respect the principal dimensions which define “the other” as a person. That is, each one experiences and respects the other’s free will, self-possession, and self-fulfillment (understood as transcending oneself in morally good action). These are the types of relationships that Wojtyła describes as the basis of authentic interpersonal communities: “In the relation ‘I-you’ there is formed an authentic interpersonal community in some shape or variety only if ‘I’ and ‘you’ remain in the mutual confirmation of the transcendent value of the person—also understood as ‘dignity’—and confirm this by their acts.”⁷⁵

The second profile of participation is that of “we.” Wojtyła uses this term for the social dimension of the community or group; the “we” signifies a set of many “I’s” and “you’s.”⁷⁶ This plurality is still meant to include persons’ subjectivities and thus the use of the first-person pronoun rather than the third. “‘We’ signifies many people, many subjects, who in some fashion exist and act together.”⁷⁷ As opposed to the “I-you” profile where “I” faces “you,” as Kevin P. Doran comments, “[w]hen persons are revealed as *wel*, I stand with them.”⁷⁸ Specifically, “I” stand with “them” and “we” face and work towards the common good, which Wojtyła defines here as the following: “‘In common’ means that action, and together with it the existence of those many ‘I’s’ as well, is in relation to some value.”⁷⁹

It is this common action, directed towards a common value, that unites the social dimension of the community. Persons are brought together in their shared effort towards a common good. Wojtyła explains that this is complementary to the “I-you” relation; while the “we” dimension imposes further demands and responsibilities onto the “I-you” relation, it also enriches and further unites “I” and “you.”⁸⁰ He provides the example of a married couple,

[with whom] the clearly outlined relation ‘I-you’ as an interpersonal relation receives a social dimension. This occurs when the husband and wife accept that complex of values which may be defined as the common good of marriage and, potentially at least, the common good of the family. In relation to this good their community is revealed in action and existence in a new profile (‘we’) and in a new social dimension.⁸¹

⁷⁴ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 296.

⁷⁵ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 297.

⁷⁶ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 297.

⁷⁷ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 298.

⁷⁸ Doran, “Solidarity in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła,” 144; italics in the original.

⁷⁹ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 298.

⁸⁰ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 298–99.

⁸¹ Wojtyła, “The Person,” 298.

With this particular example and Wojtyła's explanation of the "we" dimension, our discussion of his concept of participation arrives at its last aspect. In "acting together with others," the person participates in the humanity of the others through sharing the goal of the common good that each discerns according to her conscience. That is, as each person is understood through her fulfillment in a true and honest good, participating in other persons' humanity involves this relation to the good.⁸²

Concluding Points of Comparison

In reading Lahbabi's and John Paul II/Wojtyła's alternative proposals to individualism next to one another, we discover many shared intuitions and places of convergence. At the beginning of each of the two preceding sections, I began with how each thinker defines the person in relation to his own tradition. Lahbabi finds inspiration in Muhammad's founding of the *umma* in order to reflect upon the universal value of persons, notwithstanding differences of race or nationality. Wojtyła works within different aspects of the definition of the person according to Boethius and Aquinas. While Wojtyła has the added concern to integrate these aspects to modern philosophical concepts, he and Lahbabi arrive at a similar assertion regarding the universal value of persons. Whereas Lahbabi's "personalization" emphasizes that this value is a given beyond differences of particular groups or sects, Wojtyła's "participation" places the discovery of participating in one community as more fundamentally a participation in all humankind.

Within their definitions of the human person, Lahbabi and Wojtyła also discuss the dynamic of being and act in connection to valuing others besides oneself. Lahbabi notes that personalization occurs through the unity of intentions and acts, but particularly through intentions that go beyond oneself. Wojtyła discusses how the person's will is one's own through his explanation of *sui juris*. With this added consideration, intentions that inspire acts going beyond oneself need to truly be one's own intentions. Wojtyła points here towards an aspect of the dignity of each person which should not be taken over by the intentions of a group.

Both Lahbabi's personalization and Wojtyła's participation aim towards a sense of solidarity with the "we." This solidarity arises from the person going out of the self, which is understood as a good. Lahbabi describes the necessity for the sense of belonging to a "we" through a comparison to more sectarian tendencies. While Wojtyła disagrees with individualist tendencies, he does not address the difficulty of sectarianism. However, there may be some space within his profiles of participation to work with Lahbabi's concern. For I-you relationships to reach their full potential, they should be within the community of "we." In this manner, particular relationships are not viewed as more sectarian and individualist than general relationships, but are seen as an equal part of the process of integrating the person into community with others.

I posited at the beginning of this comparison that treating the personalist philosophies of Lahbabi and John Paul II/Wojtyła could still enter into the realm of comparative theology. We saw how each intermingles his own religious tradition with his concern for understanding the reality of persons in relation to communities and society. Discussing the community-oriented and social understanding of personhood from a specific Muslim and Christian provides us with a grasp of the positive implications and details of each tradition's universalism. Personalization and

⁸² Wojtyła, "The Person," 300.

participation are both understood within the call of these two traditions to the innate value of all human persons. Each person, in turn, becomes more fully human in respecting and serving this universal value of all persons.

Explained at the personalist level, individualism is not treated as a political system to be destroyed. Rather, the manner in which Lahbabi and Wojtyła treat the individual person’s nature as open to others allows for a call to solidarity in any circumstance. Polarization, then, must be looked at in day-to-day experiences and fought against through looking at others as fellow persons instead of “the enemy” or “the opposition.”

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