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Introduction: the dividual self

> Suddenly there is a young woman, in her mid-twenties, who arrives at the dhuni. She has a large, scarlet rhododendron flower in her mouth. She begins to circle the fire. People milling around move away to give her room, forming a circle of on-lookers. The elderly drummer who is sitting with his back to the wall of the small room beats his drum [...] The young woman begins to dance to the rhythm all the while circling the fire. At one point she trips over one of the logs and falls badly on her side, almost into the fire. A middle-aged woman – her mother perhaps – tries to help her up. She continues around the fire one more time then she drags a large log that is partially burning with her to the edge of the temple floor to the left of the drummer and the small room. She is handing out coconut halves to pilgrims who come up to her to accept the prasad. "Who is this woman?" I ask people standing near me. "It is Devi, the Goddess," they answer.[1]

The story outlined in the ethnographic vignette brings us to the heart of the questions taken up in Part 2 of the publication. Possession or embodiment is a phenomenon existing in the contemporary 'modern' world that makes us aware of the possibility of an experiential reality in which 'the boundaries between an individual and her environment are acknowledged to be permeable, flexibly drawn, or at least negotiable' (Boddy 1994, 407). Embodiment presents us with a multi-dimensional self and forces us to seriously rethink modern notions of individuality, agency and subjectivity.

The *Kolleg-Forschungsgruppe* has set itself the task to explore and compare processes of religious individualisation and its institutionalisation in historical perspective and across a wide range of geographically different regions. By investigating individualisation processes in a variety of non-secular (religious) and non-western contexts the researchers express a strong theoretical concern, namely to question the standard narrative of modernisation that considers individualisation as a specific phenomenon of western (early) modernity or (post-Reformation) Christianity. While the majority of investigations give proof of individualising ideas, narratives and practices in ancient, medieval and modern religious contexts of the Western and (South-)Asian hemisphere – showcasing deviance, marginality and social critique, as well as more or less successful processes of conventionalisation of individualisation – some of the investigations did not easily confirm a straight path to individualisation but opened the view for other, additional dimensions of self-constitution. Research on Roman Christianity, heterodoxy in 16th century Venice, or Persian literature of the 17th

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1 Aditya Malik, 'The Swirl of Worlds: Possession, Porosity and Embodiment'; Section 2.3 of this publication.

century draws attention to multiple identifications, dialogic forms of writing, use of pseudonyms, the split between the poetic and the prosaic self, and thus to a certain way of parting and pluralising the self, or acting with multiple personae. Other examples challenging the one-dimensional individualisation narrative are performances of divine embodiment, which can be encountered even in contemporary religious contexts as illustrated in the ethnographic vignette above. While a spiritual medium presents herself as a singular, individualised person, her agency has to be understood as a shared or complex one – the human and the divine merge in an individual body. To understand such ambivalences and multi-dimensionalities the research group engaged with debates in the social sciences evolving around the notion of the 'dividual' or 'dividuality'.

The term 'individual' has become a commonplace even in contemporary everyday life and it easily escapes one's attention that it is a word modified by a prefix. In-dividual presupposes something dividual, a divisible entity which was turned into something in-divisible. More recently the 'dividual' and its broader conceptual history has received some attention, for example in publications of Michaela Ott (2014) and Gerald Raunig (2015). Raunig traces the term in various societal and historical contexts and academic disciplines. He starts with Roman theatre and Greek philosophy, continues with Christian scholastic tradition, contemporary philosophy and anthropology, but pays special attention to processes of self-division in modern 'machinic capitalism', digitalised communication, economy and financial engineering. In her reflections on dividuality, Michaela Ott focuses solely on the present and suggests applying the concept of the 'dividual' to understand the human condition in the context of modern realities. In particular, she explores the multiple bio- and socio-technological processes of (forced) participation and appropriation of the contemporary human subject. Ott recognizes the human subject as deeply relational and thus embedded in a web of relations and occurrences that have powerful effects although they are often imperceptible. While webs involve immediate persons, things, or events, Ott is mainly interested in those technological dispositives which spatiotemporally increase human communication, interdependencies, possibilities of intervention and information – in brief, which allow multiplication of participation (*Teilhabevervielfältigung*). However, such processes of 'subjectivation' are ambivalent, they have a flipside. They do not go along with increased autonomy and individualisation[2] but carry aspects of objectivation. Based on the concept of 'control society', applied by

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2 Ott uses the term individuation in her text (2016, 19) to characterize participation under the auspices of boundedness, distinctiveness, autonomy and freedom. We replace individuation, which for the *Kolleg-Forschergruppe* indicates the ontogenetic process of a human being, with individualisation. Later and with reference to Ulrich Beck, Ott also talks about individualisation.

Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, Ott asks whether freedom actually turns out to be unfreedom, action to be patiency (2016, 26).[3] She perceives the modern *anthropos* as embodied, governed, controlled and co-constituted by multiple others, embedded in partly unknown socio-technological dispositives of different scales (2016, 18). Against this backdrop of multiscale (inter-)dependencies, the modern human being appears increasingly self-alienated.[4] Ott suggests capturing such de-individualising (*deindividuierende*) and self-alienating processes with the term 'dividuation' (2016, 27, 63).

Both authors, Michaela Ott and Gerald Raunig, have (re-)discovered the semantic field of 'dividuum' and 'dividuality' to especially describe contemporary processes of multiple and often forced participation of the human being in larger configurations, leading to de-individualisation: that is, unintended and unwanted partibility, loss of control and agency and thus self-alienation. While this is definitely an important and legitimate analytical approach, with the contributions of Part 2 of the Individualisation-volume we want to indicate and open up another trajectory for research and interpretation: one which (a) (positively) emphasises the existential moment of relationality and porousness between human beings, things, and the transcendent, and acknowledges the capacity of relevant actors to co-create the human being and her/his perception of the Self; and (b) recognises the human potential of partibility and multiple identification and belonging as creative and enabling forces in human interaction. As a starting point for an investigation into spatio-temporal ways of constructing the Self as in-/dividual, we will start our enquiry by looking into the anthropological debate on personhood.

The American anthropologist and South Asianist McKim Marriott was one of the first who took up the notion of the 'dividual' to characterise what, from an allegedly 'emic' perspective[5], appears as the composite nature of the human

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3 Ott quotes literary and media scholar Mark B. N. Hansen, who sees agency no longer as the prerogative of privileged single actors. He states: 'Weit davon entfernt, eine unabhängige Kraftquelle zu sein, die von der restlichen Umwelt [...] irgendwie abgeschnitten ist, operiert menschliche Handlungsmacht als Konfiguration [...] innerhalb größerer Konfigurationen' (Hansen 2011, 366f., in Ott 216, 17). Ott states that in the light of the potency and spatiotemporal dynamics of those larger configurations it seems increasingly puzzling why an individual person still imagines her/himself as an independent source of power and agency, as an undivided and distinctive individual (2016, 17).

4 Ott understands the basic relationship of human beings to their significant Others already as a form of dependency and thus as alienation: 'Grundsätzlich selbstentfremdet, weil schon aus Gründen des Überlebens und Gedeihens auf menschliche Andere angewiesen und durch deren sprachliche Akte in seiner psychischen Realität mithervorgebracht [...]' (2016, 18).

5 The emic perspective refers to a view from within and Marriott claims to represent the indigenous-Hindu view. The 'emic' is opposed to the 'etic' perspective, the external and

being in Hindu India (Marriott 1996).[6] In contrast to the bounded individual of Western imagination, which relates as an undivided unity to other such unities, the Hindu person appears as open, permeable and divisible, constituted by incorporated relations and transactions. Marriott designates Hindu culture as a 'transactional culture', characterised by institutional forms of giving and taking in the areas of kinship, parentage, services, ritual and worship.

> To exist, dividual persons absorb heterogeneous material influences. They must also give out from themselves particles of their own coded substances – essences, residues, or other active influences – that may then reproduce in others something of the nature of the persons in whom they have originated. [...] Dividual persons, who must exchange in such ways, are therefore always composites of the substance-codes that they take in [...].
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> (Marriott 1976, 111)

The crucial point, so Marriott, is to understand that in Hindu contexts 'those who transact as well as what and how they transact are thought to be inseparably "code-substance" or "substance-code"' (Marriott 1976, 110) – the personal and the material element are seen as necessarily connected, as an entity. This has further assumptions: The substance-code-entities are of different quality and partible; the parts of substance-codes are in constant circulation; and all natural units (like persons) transform themselves by partition/division and absorption/combination of substance-codes. With regard to the concept of personhood one has to conclude that a singular person is not *in*dividual but dividual.

Within the framework of composite personhood, hierarchical structures and caste relations open up for new interpretations. Marriot argues that in Hindu contexts strategies of exchange differ between castes, respectively *varnas*. In view of the fact that giving or absorbing substance-codes transform the composition of a person, those who consider themselves of high and pure status are constantly alert not to negatively influence their nature and composition by incorporating inferior, impure substance-codes. 'Persons [...] may preserve their particular composite natures and powers by stabilizing [...] their constituents, and by admitting into themselves only what is homogeneous and compatible [...]' (1976, 111).[7]

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objectifying perspective of the western socio-philosophical theories of society and action.

6 Marriott developed his approach by engaging with the theoretical works of Louis Dumont (especially *Homo Hierarchicus* 1970) and David M. Schneider (*American Kinship: A Cultural Account* 1968). Empirically he relied on Ronald Inden's ethnographical studies on kinship and marriage in West-Bengal. Deeply influential was also Marcel Mauss' essay on 'The Gift' (1954; French original 'Essai sur le don', 1925).

7 Marriott distinguishes between four ideal-typical transaction strategies, outlined in 'classical moral code books' and observable in Hindu everyday practices in all South Asian regions (1976, 122–9). Firstly, the asymmetrical *optimal* strategy of Brahmins: the Brahmin, as member

South Asia scholars criticized McKim Marriott's approach, especially for claiming an emic perspective while in fact applying abstract models and using mathematical language to illustrate the allegedly Hindu way of thinking (e.g. Moffat 1990). Another aspect seems to be similarly, or even more, problematic. Dividuality in Marriott's argument is meant to explain and legitimise the power of normative codes grounded in Brahmanical ideology, and with that the belief in and acceptance of *karmic* destinies and hierarchical social relations. Further on, Marriott exoticises the Hindu concept of personhood by presenting it as the unbroken Other in comparison to the Western individual, imagined as absolutely free and self-contained.

McKim Marriott's conceptualisation of dividual personhood did not cross the disciplinary boundaries of South Asian anthropology and even remained of limited influence within the discipline. When more than a decade later Marilyn Strathern re-introduced the concept of the dividual in her book *The Gender of the Gift* (1988), it made a far greater impact and triggered an intensive but also controversial debate within anthropology and across disciplines.

According to the author herself, *The Gender of the Gift* can be read as 'ethnography of Western knowledge practices'. Strathern critically dismantles anthropological and feminist approaches and confronts them with what she constructs as Melanesian knowledge practices (1988, xi). As a starting point she challenges the Western assumption which claims that, also at the heart of Melanesian cultures, there 'is an antinomy between "society" and the "individual"' (1988, 12). According to Western conceptualisations, it is society (sociality) that connects individuals, creates relationships and works as a unifying force, gathering people together 'who present themselves as otherwise irreducibly unique' and distinct from each other (ibid.). While Strathern considers sociality as a useful concept to describe the process of creating and maintaining relationships *between* individuals, she suggests a new vocabulary, which will allow describing social relationships also

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of the highest *varna*, is predominantly a giver; he does not accept any lower and imperfect forms of substance-codes in order to preserve his ritual purity and power. Secondly, the asymmetrical *pessimal* strategy of Sudras: the Sudra is primarily a receiver of substance-codes that are considered valuable as they are coming from higher castes; the Sudra's givings are limited to deferential services. Thirdly, the symmetrical *maximal* strategy of Kshatriyas: as a member of a politically and economically dominant landowning group, a Kshatriya strives to preserve his power through cooperation and alliance-formation by exchanging goods and women. Giving and receiving practices are balanced. Fourthly, the symmetrical *minimal* strategy of Vaishyas: members of this *varna* are traders, merchants, and highly skilled artisans; they do not own landed property and are not involved in agriculture. They try to retain independence and economic mobility by minimizing exchange. They preferably give and take money, metal and grains and avoid goods attached to bodily substance codes.

within an individual, or, in her own words, 'to talk about sociality in the singular, as well as the plural' (1988, 13). Based on Marcel Mauss' idea of gift exchange and referring to the work of McKim Marriott, Strathern understands Melanesians as 'dividual'. Partibility and permeability are markers of Melanesian persons: these are the product of gifts, divine or human substances; they are constituted of the detached parts of, and relationships with, other persons through prior practices and exchanges (see Mosko 2010, 215). The following quote reflects not only the core of Marilyn Strathern's theoretical approach but also of the New Melanesian Anthropology (NMA), which builds on her approach.

> Far from being regarded as unique entities, Melanesian persons are as dividually as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalized sociality within. Indeed, persons are frequently constructed as the plural and composite site of the relationships that produce them. The singular person can be imagined as a social microcosm (1988, 13).

For Strathern, the plural and the singular – the collective and the person – are homologues. The collective as a unity of many is achieved by eliminating what differentiates them, and the same happens when a person is individualised: then the causes of internal differentiation are suppressed. She further highlights that a pluralised context can be the group, but it can also have a particular form – the dyad or the pair. In his 'Strathernograms', art anthropologist Alfred Gell has emphasized the importance of the dyadic structure, which underlies all (triadic, multiple) relationships (1999, 36). Why is the dyad, the pair so important? Single, composite persons do not reproduce, answers Marilyn Strathern: 'it is dyadically conceived relationships that are the source and outcome of action'. Consequently, '[t]he products of relations – including the persons they create – inevitably have dual origins and are thus internally differentiated' (1988, 14). However, for two persons to be able to come together as a pair, each must eliminate the internal dualistic (and multiple) differentiation to become the unitary individual.

The dual structure of agency in Melanesian life-worlds contrasts with the Western concept that imagines persons in a 'permanently subjective state', being the sole cause and source of activity (1988, 338). In Melanesia, so Strathern, though the agent acts from her or his vantage point and consequently also for her- or himself, s/he always acts with another's vantage point in mind; therefore cause and action, person and agent are split. The *cause* is the objectified *person* the agent relates to and with whom s/he wants to maintain or transform this very relationship. The *agent* is the one who, because of this relationship, is revealed in his or her *action* and constitutes a 'self'. However, activity and passivity, action and cause, subject and object are part of a mutual process and are evenly distributed. 'The one and the same figure is both an object of the regard of others (a person) and one who takes action as him or herself on behalf of these others (an agent)' (Strathern 1988, 273f.).

To roughly summarise Strathern's complex ideas: In Melanesia, sociality appears in two forms of plurality – the collective and the singular – and the singular plurality has also two forms: it appears as composite and dual (dyadic). As a dividual, the singular body manifests itself as partible and permeable, and represents a social microcosm of multiple relationships. However, dividuality is only one state of being. To be able to *act,* the singular *dividual* must become individuated: the multiplicities have, firstly, to be reconceptualised as dual, and then, internally, the dually conceived entity has to detach part of itself, to 'shed half the dual form' (1988, 275), namely that of the opposite sex partner, to be able to, externally, come together with another individual to form a pair. In her social life, a Melanesian person constantly moves from one state to another: 'from a unity (manifested collectively or singly) to that unity split or paired with respect to another' (Strathern 1988, 14). Although a person is intrinsically both dividual and individual, usually, and according to the social context, one of those characteristics features more prominently than the other.

Marilyn Strathern's book has been praised as 'a milestone in Melanesian studies', as the 'culmination and synthesis of analyses of the person' in anthropology (LiPuma 1998, 74f.). However, it has also triggered critique. Relevant in the present context is the argument that she contrasts a widespread Western ideal or 'imaginary' of the autonomous and detached individual with a Melanesian dividual reality, which is in fact constructed from an idealist point of view. Strathern 'describes a world in which the real is an idea, or a system of ideas, signs, and so on [...]' (Gell 1999, 32). Gell even does not see the Melanesia of Strathern's discourse as a real place that one could visit to verify or falsify the claims of the anthropologist; it moreover 'stands for an intellectual project rather than a geographic entity'. Melanesia and Melanesian cultures are the 'setting for a sustained thought experiment' (Gell 1999, 34). Despite his critique Gell strongly emphasises the methodological usefulness of Strathern's work, as it opens up new ways of imagining the person not as opposite to the social but as an inherently relational being. However, if we believe Edward LiPuma (1998, 74f.; 2000, 131), the strength of Strathern's account of dividuality is also its weakness: a project, meant to relativize our own categories, can easily lapse into an essentialisation of the opposites and invite an ahistorical and relativistic reading. Melanesian and Western personhood then appear as incommensurable, the dividual as the 'other' of individuality.

A number of anthropologists concentrating on Melanesia and inspired by the work of Marilyn Strathern, took an effort to further develop her approach on dividual personhood; they especially aim to avoid her essentialist bias and, by following a historical approach and focussing on processes of social transformation, try to understand individuality and dividuality as two dimensions of both

the pre-modern and the modern Self. To this end, they argue, historical developments like the Melanesian encounter with colonialism and the colonial state, with Christianity, and with new forms of commodity exchange and labour in the context of capitalism have to be taken into consideration. They ask, whether and in which way Melanesian personhood became modified, reshaped, and altered within the new socio-historical contexts?

Most prominently, Melanesian Christianity was established as a major anthropological research area, in which concepts of personhood were discussed.[8] The debate was triggered by an article of Mark Mosko (2010) in which he criticises scholars who present Melanesian Christian personhood as strictly individualistic, and instead argues that Christianity lends itself to a dividualist interpretation and tries to illustrate the dividual character of personhood and agency among Melanesian Christian communities. He sees the relations between Christians, and those between them and their deity, as based on forms of reciprocal gift-exchange: Jesus and the Holy Spirit are considered detachments of God, who enter people's lives, are with them, help and heal them through 'visitations', and in return people give them praise through prayer, songs, sermons etc. Mosko argues that the concepts of partibility and detachment are deeply compatible with Christian ideas and teachings, a fact which could explain people's willingness to adopt the new faith as well as the rapidity of conversion in the region.

Edward LiPuma (1998; 2001) made the concept of dividuality fruitful for anthropological debates on the dynamics of Melanesian history and modernisation. He takes note of the fact that structures and processes of capitalism, the (colonial, national) state, international organizations (like The World Bank) and globalized Western culture engulf non-modern socio-cultural life-worlds – a process he calls an 'encompassment' of others (2001, 20). LiPuma recognizes that due to the powerful forces of encompassment, new structures and practices, but also desires, emerge and 'the cultures and people of Melanesia are tellingly transformed' (ibid.). For example, he highlights the mediating function of capitalist forms of labour and commodity exchange, which somehow reshape the cultural (dividual) form of the person in such a way that it 'becomes progressively reified as a self-contained, self-shaping, independent agent' (2001, 134). LiPuma strongly dismisses and argues against a perspective which disregards the complexities of the transformation process, ignores the possible resilience of local social structures as well as conscious resistance against new influences, and

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8 See for example the following publications: Hess 2006; Mosko 2010; 2015; Robbins 2010; Errington, Gewertz 2010; Knauft 2010. See also the contributions of Barker, Dureau, Scott and Wilkes in 'Individualisierung durch Christliche Mission?' (2015). Aparecida Vilaca (2011) tries to make the concepts of dividuality and partibility useful for an exploration of Amazonian Christianity.

instead assumes an un-contradicted embracing of modern ideas and practices that do not leave traces of previous cultural particularities. LiPuma is convinced that both 'dividual and individual aspects of personhood will vary across contexts for action' not only in colonial and postcolonial Melanesia, but within *any* given culture (2001, 131); they are constitutive for personhood in *all* cultures and societies. LiPuma becomes even more explicit by arguing that the dual person, delineated by dividual and individual facets, is the ontological or existential form: The 'person emerges from the tension, itself always variable and culturally/ historically shaped, between these two aspects of personhood and the ways in which they are objectified and embodied' (1998, 75).

Tracing partibility and dividuality in an anthropological, but also in a distinctly modern, context is the merit of art anthropologist Alfred Gell. In his foreword to Gell's posthumously published book on 'Art and Agency' (2013), Nicholas Thomas highlights Gell's concept of agency, applied to the field of art and strongly influenced by the thoughts of Marilyn Strathern. Actions are not expressions of individual will (the agent is not the one who causes events to happen, see above), but an outcome of mediated practices in which agents and patients are implicated in complex ways. Neither is the agency of the artist self-sufficient, nor is the art-product (the index) simply outcome and 'end-point of action', but a 'distributed extension of the agent' (Thomas 2013, ix). Gell does not restrict agency and patiency to human beings, but includes things and artefacts. They all possess a 'kind of second-class agency', which develops once they are interwoven into a texture of social relationships, are in conjunction with human associates (2013, 17), or as sociologist Jane Bennett (2010) would say, are part of an 'assemblage' (a term borrowed from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari). Gell also attests agency to the recipient of an artwork: here agency can manifest either as patronage or in the form of seeing, in which perception 'goes beyond the information given' ('active spectator'); the recipient constructs the image of the thing perceived; the particular way of seeing comes as a function of previous experiences, etc. (2013, Chap. 3).

So far, the discussion on dividuality has clearly identified the problematic status of a theory of modernity which contrasts the Western imaginary of individuality with the constructed 'dividual other' of social and cultural anthropology. It has further highlighted the need to approach the question of dividuality versus individuality more broadly, namely from a historical as well as from an ontological angle. The historical (and praxis-oriented) perspective allows seeing the different and context-related ways in which dividual personhood may be transformed under conditions of 'encompassment' in colonial and postcolonial settings. It also allows identifying dividual aspects of personhood in Western modernity, and even may show how, in particular modern Western

contexts, real life conditions often contradict the idea of self-contained, independent individual personhood and agency.[9] The ontological perspective brings the (primary) relational sociality of the human being into focus. Relationality, as *conditio humana*, implicates openness, partibility and vulnerability of the human subject even in its fully individuated form and in all social constellations, including modernity. While thus the co-existence of dividual and individual elements is constitutive for human subjectivity (personhood) throughout human history, the socio-economic and cultural challenges are decisive for the degree in which dividuality or individuality are required and valued in a particular historical formation.

The previous reflections may find support in Charles Taylor's book, *A Secular Age* (2007). As one crucial aspect of the process of 'secularisation' in the European world, Taylor addresses the changes in human self-perception ('sense of Self'). A modern social subject can no longer experience the 'fullness' of life by focussing her (his) highest spiritual and moral aspirations exclusively to God; in fact, these can now be related to different sources, even to those which deny God. Exclusive humanism, with its confidence in human powers of moral ordering, replaces an enchanted view of the universe, and a 'buffered' Self replaces a 'porous', vulnerable Self which is open to a world of spirits and powers (2007, 26f.).

The enchanted world of Charles Taylor is the outer, the natural world, inhabited by spirits, demons and moral forces, all endowed with thoughts and agency, and providing meaning. This world vanishes in a process of disenchantment, caused by the rise of naturalistic materialism and science. It makes space for a different world – or better, a world that is differently perceived – 'in which the only locus of thoughts, feelings, spiritual élan is what we call minds' (2007, 30). The only minds, however, are human minds; they are bounded, they are 'inward spaces', and thoughts, feelings, agency and meanings are situated within them (2007, 30f.). An inward/outward geography represents the separation between the inner world of the human mind and the outer natural world and is also mirrored in the new way of sensing the Self. While the 'porous' Self characterises a state of being in which the 'line between personal agency and impersonal forces'

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9 Karl Smith (2012) hints at the imbalance of the possibilities of individual agency and self-determination in patriarchal, multi-ethnic and class-based societies. He writes: '[...] men *might* be able to construct themselves as such, while women are expected to conform to socially ascribed roles. In multi-ethnic societies, the dominant ethnic group *might* permit individual authorship, while oppressed and marginalised groups often have their identities ascribed by the dominant culture. In class-based societies, the dominant class *might* permit its members to author their individual identities (but only within clearly circumscribed parameters), while subordinate classes are expected to perform their socially prescribed roles and so on' (2012, 58).

is not clearly drawn, the inner/outer boundary works as a buffer to the Self, 'such that the things beyond don't need to "get to me"' (2007, 38).

While Charles Taylor concentrates on the significant transformations the human subject undergoes in its relationship to the outer world, he also traces changes regarding the subjective and the social world. All changes seem to be intertwined with an increasing consciousness of being an individual, and this sense of individuality could even pass over into atomism. On the subjective side, Taylor mentions shifts in identity,[10] reflected in disengaged reason and the disciplined self-remaking as described in Norbert Elias' 'civilizing process', including the 'narrowing and intensifying of intimacy' (2007, 300). Yet, such positive identity shifts also have a negative side: Boundaries can operate as limits, as 'prisons', which do not allow experiencing what is hidden by the instrumental-rational access to the world. The invulnerability of the buffered identity 'opens it to the danger that not just evil spirits, cosmic forces or gods won't "get to" it, but that nothing significant will stand out for it' (2007, 303).

Regarding the social realm, Taylor asks whether disengagement – an attitude towards the natural world – is also carried out 'in relation to one's whole surroundings, natural and social' (2007, 42). Living in an enchanted, porous world was, so Taylor, living socially – it was the whole society, which dealt with the positive and negative forces collectively, for example in ritual. By contrast, the modern, disciplined, buffered individual 'moves in a constructed social space, where instrumental rationality is a key value, and time is pervasively secular' (2007, 542). 'Responsible individuals' constitute societies 'designed for mutual benefit' (ibid.). However, there is also another side to the rationally constructed sociality. Taylor points to internal spaces of the modern buffered individual, which he considers pertinent for social relationality based on emotions. Discipline, self-control go along with an increase of privacy, which in turn demands intimacy.

> Intimate space is, of course, social space, in that it is shared with (a few, privileged) others. But there is a close connection between inner space and zones of intimacy. It is in these latter that we share something of the depth of feeling, affinity, susceptibility, that we discover within ourselves. Indeed, without this sharing, be it in prayer, conversation, letters, without the sympathetic reception by close interlocutors, much of our inner exploration couldn't take place (2007, 540).

Charles Taylor postulates a qualitative difference between the sense of Self of the pre-modern and the modern human being. While both pre-modern porosity and modern boundedness are most obviously apparent in relation to the outer (objective)

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10 Taylor himself uses the notion of identity and speaks about 'buffered identity' (e.g. 2007: 136, 300, 303ff).

world, this qualitative difference also applies to the subjective and social world. However, if we take Taylor seriously, the pre-modern/modern difference seems to be not so clear-cut. Even in the modern constellation the individual as an emotional and a social being is characterised by a certain degree of permeability, which s/he can display in particular areas of life.

Pushing Taylor's insights a bit further one could suggest recognising the porous and the buffered self not as dichotomy representing historical stages (pre-modern vs. modern, enchanted vs. disenchanted, engaged vs. disengaged), but as imagined end-points of a socio-historical continuum (see also Smith 2012). However, this does *not* mean that such 'ideal-typical' endpoints coincide with the *social realities* of personhood – persons are never only porous dividuals, nor unambiguously buffered individuals. Rather, the idea of a continuum allows acknowledging the necessary *co-existence* of relational/dividual and individual aspects of the human Self, although in varying degrees. It would thus allow exploring ideas and realities of permeability and partibility on the one hand, of closeness and boundedness on the other, in particular historical and socio-cultural contexts as well as in particular areas of life and particular situations.

So far we can conclude that throughout history persons move in different social contexts or areas of life – in which they relate to other persons, things (objects) and 'not unquestionably plausible' agents or authorities (the transcendent, the divine)[11] – and these contextual relationships require dividual as well as individual traits, each in different degrees.[12] Thus in/dividuality always includes both the openness (relatedness) and partibility of human beings as well as their capacity to become more bounded, indivisible, possessive and autonomous entities under particular historical circumstances.

Having said this it seems fruitful to briefly relate our reflections on in/dividuality to another debate – the one on the notions of belonging and multiple belonging.[13] This debate emerged as a continuation of reflections on 'identity', but rightfully claims to go beyond this concept and avoid its limitations.[14] The

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11 Jörg Rüpke (2015, 348) defines religion 'as the temporary and situational enlargement of the environment – judged as relevant by one or several of the actors – beyond the unquestionably plausible social environment inhabited by co-existing humans who are in communication (and hence observable)'.

12 This is also illustrated with reference to Bhakti in Section 1.2 of the publication.

13 Significant contributions in this debate come for example from Anthias 2002; 2006; Hage 2002; Yuval-Davis 2006; Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, Vieten 2006; Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013.

14 Identity, a concept deriving from psychology (Erikson 1980), relies on the drawing of sharp boundaries. In anthropology, but also in other social and political sciences it is strongly linked with the concept of ethnicity (Barth 1969; Nagel 1998) and ideas of nation and region (Anderson 1983; Elwert 1998; Gellner 1994). Studies on diasporas and multicultural environments as a result

notion of 'belonging' perceives human beings in their multiple relations to their social, natural and transnatural environments and thus strongly highlights positionalities, connections and attachments. Looking into these dynamics and flexibilities of personal belonging implies focusing on the ways persons 'navigate' diverse constellations of their life-worlds.

The concept of 'belonging' refers to 'an emotionally charged, ever dynamic social location – that is: a position in social structure, experienced through identification, embeddedness, connectedness and attachments' (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2013, 13). Belonging has three dimensions: commonality, reciprocity, and attachment. It is about sharing values, experiences, practices and relations (including with non-human beings, artefacts and landscapes); it is about loyalty, trust, feeling safe, having strong linkages and possibilities (ibid.). Regimes of belonging such as families, ethnic groups, religious groups, or associations are defined through allegiances and bonds; to belong, they require particular orientations and moral commitments from those who want to belong. However, belonging (inclusion) also points to the other side of the coin – it always comprises exclusion as its opposite.

From the perspective of a person in a particular socio-historical context, belonging is always multiple; not only do in/dividuals live in several life-worlds at the same time, these life-worlds are also internally differentiated, and they may conflict with each other. Thus personal attachments, allegiances and solidarities have to be constantly negotiated, re-visited and re-formed – persons have to re-orient and re-position themselves – in short, they have to navigate the diverse constellations of belonging.

Multiple constellations of belonging and the need for at least some forms of personal manoeuvring are typical for all life-contexts throughout history and regardless of geographical location; however, they become especially evident with the ever-growing number of diverse socio-moral worlds and life-options on the way to modernity, as well as in situations of socio-political transition, (religious) conflict, or ecological risk, when established forms of coexistence begin to erode, and many people are forced to move to other geographical regions and adapt to new social environments.[15] Such need for navigation of multiple contexts and belongings shapes not only a person's behaviour and practice, but has

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of migration processes started to challenge concepts of identity and ethnicity (Gilroy 1991; Brah 1996; Anthias 1998; Hall 2004). For a comprehensive anthropological discussion on identity and multiple identities, see Soekefeld 1999; for a discussion from the perspective of social and historical sciences, see Friese 2002.

15 See for example recent research in anthropology and sociology on the issues of diaspora, migration, refugees, displacement etc.

impacts on the perception of the self. First of all it means that a person has to (tacitly or consciously) divide his/her orientation and allegiance, gain the ability to operate in various life-worlds and then integrate the multiple normative orientations and positionings. The person presents her/himself as partible, as dividual, and this may allow a pluralisation or even a hybridisation of commitment and action.

This idea of *pluralisation* becomes extremely relevant for the European early modernity (1500–1800). It makes a big difference whether we describe this epoch using concepts of teleological processes such as secularisation and individualisation, or whether we think more cautiously in terms of a field of tension of pluralisation and authority, within which we can find a place for other characteristics of the time (Schulze 1998; Müller et al. 2010). Pluralisation means here principally the multiplication of social environments, frameworks of orientation, religious confessions and world-views, all of which made absolute claims to validity and consequent demands for loyalty. There were no factors, such as privatisation of religion, tolerance, and democratic institutions, mitigating the intensity of this competition; it bore down with its full weight on individuals, who had to find a way to come to terms with this plurality. One reaction was often the reinforcement of authority: to hold fast to one's own confession, way of living or world-view, if necessary under forcible imposition by a ruler. But this was not enough for some; there were certainly intellectuals or religious seekers who tried to steer their own course through the different possible social environments and systems of authority, to adapt to and withstand pluralisation and to respond to it constructively. We can connect this new perspective on the early modern era with the debate on 'multiple belonging', at least as far as individuals are concerned. There were for example professors and politicians who carved out careers crossing confessionally diverse territories with multiple conversions and reconversions (Mulsow 2003), and there were libertines and freethinkers who devised conceptual constructs to give plausibility to their navigation beyond the reach of binding claims to the absolute.

Starting from this point, an alternative narrative to that of 'individualisation' in the European early modern era can be developed. This would be based on the idea, as with LiPuma and with our transformed approach from Taylor, that there have always been two aspects of personhood, one more individual and one more dividual. The individual aspect has often been described: from the self-assertion of the Renaissance person; the direct relation to God in Protestantism, further intensified in Spiritualism and Pietism; the moulding of the self by confession of sins; the Cartesian *cogito*; the discovery of autobiography; sensibility; and the Declaration of Human Rights (Van Dülmen 2001). But the altered awareness offered by the concept of dividuality is required to discover beside this a con-

cealed history of dividualisation, which runs alongside it and complements it, and which paradoxically often made an individual and distinct standpoint possible precisely by means of dividualising strategies.

Various conceptual tools were available for these strategies; they were forged by individual libertines and freethinkers, in order to enable an understanding of themselves as navigating between different worlds with varying systems of authority and validity (Mulsow 2007, 106, 206ff.). Initially these tools were theological distinctions, such as those between human beings in their originally biological nature (*status naturae purae*), and their condition as beings created by God (*status gratiae*). One could then ask the question whether, for instance, the philosophy of the ancient world, developed by thinkers who did not know of the Christian God, was one which saw the human being in '*status naturae purae*', even though this was for Christians merely an abstraction from the full image of mankind. Or one could maintain that one was putting forward a particular thesis from the standpoint of the *natura pura* only, while abstracting from 'grace', i.e. from Christianity. In this way some Renaissance philosophers tried to carve out a free space in which they could speak freely, purely as philosophers (for instance on the mortality of the soul), while otherwise submitting to the views of the Church. In doing so, these thinkers split their personhood into a part which was independent of theological prescriptions, and another which respected them. (Mulsow 2012, 58–79).

In the late 17th century Samuel Pufendorf's theory of natural law offered the possibility of refining this differentiation and of no longer expressing it in borrowed theological terminology. Pufendorf adapted the late scholastic doctrine of the *personae morales* (Kobusch 1997) for his own purposes, reframing it so that the different 'personae' which one could assume were something like social roles: one was at the same time, for example, a king, a father, a student of riding and an author, all according to the context one found oneself in. Shrewd proponents of the early Enlightenment such as Theodor Ludwig Lau saw in these concepts the opportunity to reformulate the free spaces which the Renaissance philosophers and libertines had created for themselves: an author could in one respect advance atheistic theories, and in another respect, privately so to speak, be nevertheless a good Christian (Mulsow 2012, 68). He would then have two different 'personae': an intellectual one in relation to his readership, and an inner one which rested on his private conduct. Lau related this notion to the contemporary idea of an 'eclectic' choice of convictions – the idea that one should not be confined to a single tradition (*secta*), as this would lead to pointless demarcation disputes, but should be without allegiances and free to select from all traditions, choosing only what stood the test of one's own judgement. The 'persona' which has this freedom is the intellectual one.

We can see in this a 'division of knowledge' which became ever more pronounced in the course of the 18th century, and which the theorist of literature Michael McKeon has described as a process of 'domestication' (McKeon 2005). This process goes hand in hand with experiences of, for instance, theatre productions, seeing and being seen, and increasing reflection on the question of what should be public and what should be private. The publication of the private, but also conversely the creation of imagined public realms, and the setting apart of a realm of the domestic and of the body, all contributed to the new sensibility for the division of knowledge. This was soon followed by philosophers such as Adam Smith, who no longer viewed the self as an 'individual' point, as Leibniz had represented it to be, but as something which was actually constituted only through being seen by others and in interaction with others. This was a social theory of the self (Haakonssen 1996, 131), through which Smith sought to understand morality as an attempt, founded in our gift of sympathy, to identify ourselves with the standpoint of an impartial observer.

To see the extent to which the idea of a dividual, social self – a self which constantly distinguishes between its own position and the public space of observers, but which allows each to be dependent on the other – has gained ground in the thinking of modern times, we only need think of how this theory of Smith's found its influential 20th century reformulation in the work of George Herbert Mead (Costelloe 1997). Mead stressed the importance of the distinctions between the 'I', the 'me', the 'self' and the 'mind' – distinctions informed by language – and although Marilyn Strathern comes from another school of thought, some of her proposals are closely aligned with Mead's: 'it is through the separation of persons from one another that specific relations are created, and through relations that persons are defined [...]' (Strathern 1999, 16). Even the transactional analysis developed by Eric Berne, though rooted to an extent in psychiatry, through its model of different ego states (child-like, adult-like, parent-like) – related to Freud's structural model of the psyche – developed a possibility of analysing complex interpersonal communications in such a way that individual acts of communication can be thought of as emanating from different 'egos' or persons. In sociology, Bernard Lahire speaks of the 'homme pluriel', in the sense that in modern times one must be able to respond quite differently across a range of very different levels and situations (Lahire 1998); while theorists of literature examine 'relational authorship', detaching the creation of works from exclusive dependence on the individual.

These newer developments in the theory of dividuality make clear that an understanding of personhood in modern times cannot be based solely on the individual aspect – from the theoretical relation to the self, to self-awareness, to the 'singularities' of society (Reckwitz 2017) – but must always also include

the dividual. Whether we can deduce from this a process of dividualisation, which is consistently present alongside that of individualisation, is doubtful. Just as the *Kolleg-Forschergruppe* has already questioned the linear coupling of individualisation with modernisation and secularisation, we would not wish to describe dividualisation as a teleologically conceived thread, but as a moment – one which has taken on different forms again and again in different epochs and in different cultures, and which should always be taken into account, in any situation.

The structure of Part 2

By now it will have become apparent that we consider human beings being constituted by both dividual and individual qualities. Part 2 of the publication lays emphasis on the dividual side of the human being, and we consider dividuality to manifest itself in a twofold way. Firstly, dividuality is the dynamic foundation of human sociality and individuality, indicating the irreducible relationality of social subjects and their openness towards fellow human beings across different temporalities and societies. This basic relationality is not necessarily acknowledged in a respective social context and can be even suppressed in constructions of the Self, in social imaginaries and ideologies (e.g. in Western individualism).

Secondly, dividuality is a lived social reality and concrete social praxis in particular societies and social environments. Here social subjects may be aware of their relationality, permeability and their deep social bonds with others; they may also be aware of their partibility, allowing navigating diverse social contexts which require different ways of self-representation and action. However, while they possibly express this awareness in everyday life as well as in ritual practices and performances, they do not always and necessarily have an explicit (epistemological) concept of dividuality.

The three sections of Part 2 of the publication engage with different ways of understanding dividuality – in focus are in turn relationality, partibility and permeability. The distinct contributions refer to different geographies and temporalities, and this is exactly why the texts have intertextual qualities – they speak to, enforce and supplement each other. However, while addressing multiple ways of conceptualising dividuality or in/dividuality, the authors do not claim to be able to cover all possibilities of how to approach the concept.

The contributions will only be introduced briefly at this point. An afterword to each section, written jointly by the respective authors, will summarise the papers and highlight their connections.

Section 2.1 takes up *dividuality as ontological basis and pre-condition of humanity and human sociality*. All contributions develop their argument by looking into the Western scholarly tradition. *Julie Casteigt* and *Markus Vinzent* trace the development of relationality, reciprocity, respect and recognition in scholastic thinking, referring to the work of Albert the Great and Meister Eckhart. *Antje Linkenbach,* consulting debates in western intellectual history and contemporary phenomenological anthropology and philosophy, discusses empathy (sympathy) in its particular form of co-feeling the pain and suffering of fellow-beings and thus as basic element of morality. *Arthur Bueno* concentrates on the work of sociologist Georg Simmel, well known as an advocate of modern individuality. Bueno carves out a different perspective in Simmel's writings, in which a dimension of sociality comes into view that does eliminate and even blur the boundaries between individuals.

Section 2.2 focuses on *dividuality as partibility*. The contributors emphasise both the capacity of the person to move within different, often conflicting (religious) life-worlds and thus navigate multiple ways of identification and belonging, as well as the internal pluralisation of the person in literary accounts. *Riccarda Suitner* introduces the reader to the cosmopolitan, multi-religious environment of 16th century Venice, discussing confessional eclecticism and multiple conversions. *Shazad Bashir,* in his account, tries to make us familiar with 17th century Persian poets and poetry, presented as a biographical dictionary compiled in Agra (India) by one single author. Here, in/dividualisation as partibility comes to the fore through the complexities of two voices, the prosaic and the poetic self. *Martin Mulsow* presents an analysis of pseudonymous philosophical and theological works from 17th century Europe, while *Matthias Engmann* directs attention to the pseudonymous writings of Søren Kierkegaard. Both contributors highlight the dialogic structure of the texts and the use of multiple pseudonyms, representing different (conflicting) theological positions or perspectives on existence.

Section 2.3 discusses dividuality primarily as *porousness or permeability*. The first contribution, the one of *Harry Maier*, brings us to Christian Rome in the 1st century and effectively links the previous and this section. Maier examines a letter of the apostle Paul to Philemon, in which Paul asks Philemon to accept Onesimus, a previous slave, as brother. Maier shows that the protagonists are not only engaged in multiple roles, are polypositional and multifaceted, but are also interpenetrated by superior powers and, accordingly, reveal shared agency. Complex agency and embodied experience of openness to the divine are also at the centre of *Esther Eidinow's* paper on ancient Greek divination. In addition, she draws attention to a reflexive sense of distance from self of those who (in a state of possession) gave and those who received oracles, creating a shared narrative

of the experience. *Aditya Malik* focuses on contemporary forms of embodiment in the Himalayan region of Kumaon (India); he refers to the example of a young woman embodying the Goddess in the temple of the God of Justice, Goludev. Malik poses the question whether the permeability of the individual person, realized in actual embodiment of the divine, results in radical alterity, in 'being another'. The two last contributions again relate to Christianity. *Christine Dureau* reflects on the ideal of self-sacrifice as the core of Christian personhood, an ideal shared by missionaries and converts in the Salomon Islands (South Pacific). She sees Christian views as perfectly in line with ideas of dividual personhood characterised by partibility, exchange of substances and thus by the significance of the gift. *Jutta Vinzent* investigates the field of visual art and concentrates on representations of Christ's crucifixion in (documentation of) performance art. She again brings up the issue of complex agency and raises questions concerning the authorship of the artwork, but also about the role of the spectator. Corporeality in art, in particular, evokes partibility and shared creativity, and creates sensual, embodied viewing.

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