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Afterword: dividual socialities

Dividuality is neither simply a counter-concept to individuality, nor simply complementary to it. Instead, it is also the dynamic foundation, the processual primary basis, from which individualities emerge. In order to move away from an understanding of the individual as an autonomous, singular, self-contained and isolated ontological being, dividuality underlines the continuous and inevitably social nature of all individuals. Hence, individualization encompasses both the dividual and individual dimensions capturing the dynamics of belonging and becoming. From the outset, dividuality points to the individual as part of the social fabric – to one's ability to reach out and open up to others, while at the same time long for self-development. Self and others are no opposites either, but dividuality expresses them as a moving social continuity that gives contours, sometimes even edges, mutual shapings and re-shapings, and stands for attraction, interpenetration and repulsion. Bridging the existing distinctions between the individual subject, the process of individualization, the concept of individuality and the ideal of individualism, dividuality encompasses all four notions as their dynamic foundation. Despite the fact that the foundational dividual sounds as being non-individual, dividuality is not a pseudo-ontological condition of individuality, but these two are mutually and intrinsically interwoven.

The articles presented in this section outline the historical trajectory leading from an ontological construction of personhood, self and individual to more dynamic, mutual, reciprocal and non-hierarchical models, which lend themselves to contemporary cultural and sociological concepts of dividuality and individuality.

While a dominant line in western tradition from contemporary astrophysics back to Plato and Aristotle assumes a primordial single hierarchical principle, which mirrors the nature of the individual, the first contribution on Albert the Great by *Julie Casteigt* shows that Albert develops the concept of the identity of the individual differently. Starting from the self as a substance to which properties either substantial or accidental are attributed, Albert goes beyond this Aristotelean substantial model of identity, building on Augustine and Boethius by introducing potentiality, the dynamic inner relationship of the faculties of the soul. Still dissatisfied with this model, he is inspired by Neo-Platonic, Islamic and potentially further Eastern sources and envisions a conception of mutual relationality of the faculties of the soul.

The chapter by *Markus Vinzent* on Albert's student, Meister Eckhart (ca. 1260–1328), presents Eckhart's idea of the first principle as 'dividual'. According to him, there is no first principle without what is principled, and yet, principle

and principled have to be conceptualized not only as mutual inner relationality, but as strict reciprocal relation. Any principle only becomes what it is, it cannot be without what it principles, and no principled is only a product of a hierarchical prior principle, but is itself the principle for it being principled. The sphere might be the highest form – in good Platonic tradition – but according to Eckhart it is not the best form. The best form is the dividual, as the respectful condition of you and I. Respect is the form of recognition and self-recognition. The significant other is not entirely other, but the signifier of the self and vice versa. Dividuality stands for co-constitution of any self and other. Co-constitution happens through reciprocal interpenetration, which simultaneously is differentiation.

The dividual nature of the human being, set out in philosophical terms, is always culturally conditioned and thus leads to another dimension of dividuality (see introduction). People are born into specific social contexts, at particular times and in concrete spaces. The lived reality of the dividual and individual, and the social imaginary of the individual and dividual are expressed in varying symbolics, cultures, religions and semantics, as shown by the next two articles.

Starting in the seventeenth century, as the third contribution by *Antje Linkenbach* highlights, the social qualities of sympathy and empathy are conceptualized as counteracting and weakening individual forms of superiority, disentanglement, and maintaining impermeable boundaries between oneself and the other. In the context of suffering, sympathetic and empathetic abilities are closely linked to ideas of communicability of pain, healing and morality. Sympathetic imagination is the moral and practical imaginary looking out for the sentiments of others by putting oneself into the place of the other, while empathy, as conceptualized by recent philosophico-phenomenological approaches, creates a contact room of bodily resonance and communication, where, for example, a cry is enough to make one reach out to and touch the other, establish a relationality and trigger dividuality. Through empathy the self becomes understood as one deeply affected and marked by the other, and the other by the self, within a mutual and reciprocal communicative process. In contrast to the medieval Eckhart, the article stresses the qualitative difference between the self and the other, mitigated by the partibility and divisibility of the self, which allows for intersubjectivity.

In the last chapter of this section, *Arthur Bueno* addresses Georg Simmel's series of homologous distinctions between two forms of individuality: quantitative and qualitative, intellectual and sensible, Romanic and Germanic. While in the former the individual appears as an entity composed by a set of clearly defined, bounded and abstractly universal attributes, the latter emphasizes the singular sensible shadings that characterize each individual life, blurring its boundaries with others and the world. Quantitative individualities relate to one another through the mediation of general law-like forms (e.g. money, defined cultural

lifestyles, or social norms) that make their properties comparable, commensurable, and by the same token, either distinctive or common. Implied, in this case, is a relation between particular *in-dividuals* and general patterns. Qualitative individualities, for their turn, find themselves embedded in rather indeterminate and shared – though heterogeneous and possibly conflict-ridden – atmospheres which they jointly create. Crucial, here, is the entanglement between singular *in-dividuals* and pervasive moods. While for Simmel both forms of individuality are part and parcel of modern life, some of life's most central institutions (e.g. science, the money economy, and the bureaucratic state) are seen to rely on the prevalence of quantitative individuality, which would even display a tendency to 'colonize' the totality of cultural life. In this context – and in line with discourses on sympathy and empathy developed since the seventeenth century – Simmel views the model of qualitative *in-dividuality*, with its emphasis on co-created spaces of bodily resonance and sensible communication, as a possible counterweight to the excesses of the quantitative *in-dividuality*.

From a methodological point of view, these four contributions aim at illustrating the diversity of the levels (ontological, psychological, sociological) on which dividuality as a dynamic, reciprocal and non-hierarchical condition for identity can be studied. They vary the focus on the identity of the individual taken in herself or himself and in relation with social elements, highlighting the metaphysical foundations of the different conceptions of her or his dividual identity as well as their different social expressions.