
Relational Personhood Revisited

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This article revisits one of the key heuristic devices archaeologists have used to appreciate personhood over the last 15 years—the idea that there is a tension between individual and dividual aspects of personhood. I argue that personhood is always relational, but in varied ways, and propose a revised heuristic approach to assist with appreciating diversity in the multi-dimensional and multi-modal character of personhood.

Introduction

Over the last 20 years, personhood has become an established topic for archaeological interpretation. Studies placing personhood centre stage and developing models for appreciating the relational character of personhood (e.g. Brück 2001; 2004; Fowler 2001; 2004; Gillespie 2001; Jones 2005) have increasingly been joined by studies embedding the investigation of personhood within other, related issues (e.g. the life course: Gilchrist 2012; the body: Robb & Harris 2013; cf. Meskell 2002; Meskell & Joyce 2003).¹ Some of the key concepts that archaeologists routinely use in discussing personhood have been critiqued, and this article reflects on some of that critique. There have also been a number of key developments in theoretical approaches which intersect with personhood. In particular, a broad ‘ontological turn’ and a ‘new materialism’ have been developing across many disciplines (see Thomas 2015 for a succinct summary of some of these developments from an archaeological perspective: cf. Alberti *et al.* 2011). Such perspectives extend exploration of the relational properties of things, persons, places and materials, and the distribution of agency—and in some cases personhood—well beyond human beings. Personhood has been identified as an ontological² issue (e.g. Harris 2016), or rejected as a subject of study on the basis that as a ‘social abstraction’ it does not have the same ontological weight as material things (Lucas 2012, 193). Debates over ontology and personhood raise some parallel and sometimes intersecting questions (e.g. Alberti *et al.* 2011; Watts 2013;

Wilkinson 2013; cf. Roscoe 2015): most notably, how to compare across cultures—or even across worlds—in a way that appreciates both radical difference and also similarity?

This article is closely focused on a single issue in the context of this broad and complex debate. It focuses on one of the most commonly used heuristic devices in studies of personhood: the idea that there is always a tension between fixed and relational, or individual and dividual personhood. By contrast, I argue that personhood is always relational, but in varied ways, and propose a revised heuristic approach to assist in appreciating the processual, multi-dimensional and multi-modal character of personhood. In the process, the article presents one way to respond to the problems caused by comparing personhood and ontology across cultural contexts.

The single spectrum model: a tension between dividual and individual personhood

I will start by outlining some of the key concepts in current use, as they were assembled in *The Archaeology of Personhood: An anthropological approach* (Fowler 2004). This book aimed to highlight differences in how personhood is generated and differences in the character of personhood, while also presenting an underlying framework for comparison. It presented a loose model intended to provoke further development of approaches rather than to be proscriptive. Key topics in the book included cultural variation in personhood, and the role of practices, objects, materials, animals

and places in the generation of personhood, both for humans and non-humans, and for singular and collective persons. Archaeological examples were drawn from within European prehistory as the remit was for a short book and I was most familiar with that material. At the general level, personhood was defined as ‘the condition or state of being a person’ (Fowler 2004, 7) and described as processual in that it develops during what Gilchrist has recently referred to as an ‘extended life course’ (Gilchrist 2012, 23; cf. Hockey & Draper 2005), from conception through life and death. I argued that personhood is ‘attained and maintained through relationships not only with human beings but with things, places, animals and spiritual features of the cosmos’ (Fowler 2004, 7). Non-human entities were described as potentially emerging as persons, either temporarily or more enduringly. Relationships between personhood and ontology were explored to some extent, under the heading of ‘modes of identification’ (Fowler 2004, 122–9: totemism, animism and naturalism, to which analogism (Descola 2013) could now be added).

I argued that there were a series of *key features* of modes of personhood that recurred in different cultural contexts. Indivisibility and individuality were described as predominant features of Western personhood, situated ‘at the core of a constant, fixed self’ (Fowler 2004, 7). Dividual personhood was defined as ‘composite and multiply-authored’ (Fowler 2004, 7) with each person composed of different elements, out of multiple relationships with and among others; in this case a person can potentially be altered internally by engaging in different relations. Two versions of dividual personhood were identified. In one version a dividual condition co-exists with partibility, a state ‘in which the dividual person is reconfigured so that one part can be extracted and given to another person’ (Fowler 2004, 78).³ This was based on Marilyn Strathern’s model for Melanesian personhood (Strathern 1988), but I also suggested a version of partibility could be detected in animistic circumpolar and Amazonian communities (Fowler 2004, 123). Dividual persons could alternatively be permeable to flows of substances and energies that moved between persons without extracting a part of the person. This concept of the dividual was derived from McKim Marriott’s (1976) analysis of social interactions in Hindu Indian communities, and Cecelia Busby’s (1997) analysis of a southern Indian Catholic community which emphasized the permeability of the body and person. Dividual personhood was also described as fractal, in that it is self-similar at different scales and across different entities (e.g. an axe, a human being, a clan). I described personhood as fundamentally relational, but

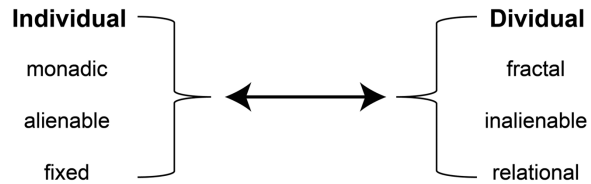


Figure 1. Tensions between dividual and individual personhood in which other terms are locked in position according to that tension.

also emphasized that in Western personhood ‘a persistent personal identity [is] stressed over relational identities’ (Fowler 2004, 7). I also argued that ‘(p)eople do not simply reproduce concepts of personhood’, but may act towards both such concepts and the practices generating specific modes of personhood in orthodox and unorthodox ways (Fowler 2004, 37–8).

The general approach set out in *The Archaeology of Personhood* was to contrast different kinds of relationships in which persons emerged as divisible or indivisible in different ways, although far more attention was given to the former. Relationality was generally aligned with dividuality in this interpretation. The aspect of that approach which needs most reconsideration is the idea that ‘there are two *imagined* extreme positions of Western individuality and extremely relational personhood, but that all societies provide frameworks for people to negotiate features of both’ (Fowler 2004, 157: original emphasis). This idea was derived from reading LiPuma (1998) and Chapman (2000), and had the advantage of providing a basis for widespread cultural comparability and a backdrop for appreciating distinctiveness. LiPuma was attempting to reconcile the differences portrayed in anthropological comparisons between Melanesian and Western persons, arguing that elements of dividual and individual relations existed among persons in both cases, and that human personhood always involves negotiating this duality. He did this by positing two *groups* of traits, with a tension between the two (1998, 56–61). In this model, personhood emerges locally as people negotiate the tension between those two ways of relating: dividual and individual, inalienable and alienable, fractal and monadic, divisible and bounded, contextual and essential, individualistic and communalistic. Even though the model allows for this tension to be negotiated in many varied ways—and I highlighted different kinds of dividual relations in *The Archaeology of Personhood* (Fowler 2004, 33, table 2.1, *inter alia*)—it risks producing only a single spectrum for analysis (Figure 1). This single spectrum is constraining, as Julian Thomas pointed out as I was writing *The Archaeology of Personhood* (pers. comm.; cf.

Thomas 2004, 125), and as Darryl Wilkinson (2013, 425) has highlighted sharply recently (cf. Brittain & Harris 2010, 588). It creates a single yardstick for measuring all features of personhood, and presumes that yardstick to be able to operate effectively in all circumstances. It compresses together many axes of possible variation, so that the tension between individual and dividual oversimplifies the situation: there are *many dimensions* to personhood that this yardstick either does not measure or reduces to a singular form. This forces us to focus on dividual and individual features of personhood as ‘packages’ that exist in opposition and are always present, and this repeatedly steers us back towards the societies upon which the model was based. This constrains the appreciation of different ways personhood can be relational. Before I consider an alternative to this model, it is necessary to appreciate some of the criticism anthropologists have recently levelled at the concept of the dividual and partible person, and to illustrate why a single-spectrum tension is a constraint to archaeological analysis.

Anthropological critiques of dividual personhood

Some anthropologists have recently questioned the analytical basis of dividual and partible personhood (e.g. Gillison 2013; Roscoe 2015).⁴ Gillison refutes Strathern’s formulation of the dividual (which cites Gillison’s early work on the Gimi), arguing that ‘the “dividual” does not correspond to social reality among the Gimi . . .’ (Gillison 2013, 118). However, her conclusion that Strathern ‘defines the “dividual” in a way that seems to me to echo Gimi men’s formulations . . .’ (Gillison 2013, 121) suggests to me that the concept of the person as dividual presents the view of personhood held by, and desired by, (only) that male sector of society, rather than that it is completely invalid. Strathern’s analysis presents only part of the indigenous story, and Gillison reminds us that this story is partial and has vested interests. Roscoe expresses concern that Melanesian metaphor is treated as literal truth in Strathern’s work (Roscoe 2015, 69; cf. Gillison 2013, 122). His own field observations among the Yangoru suggest that ‘transgendered imagery’ is treated as amusing, ‘a clever pun’ (Roscoe 2015, 69). This is doubly important given the fundamental role of material metaphor in detecting past tropes about personhood (e.g. Brück 2004), but even playful or subversive metaphor can be effective in shaping personhood. Roscoe highlights other indigenous metaphors that Strathern overlooked, revolving around throwing spears and referring to exchange partners as enemies where ‘donated pigs were their “killed” bodies’ (Roscoe 2015, 69): these suggest different themes in

partibility, but do not seem to explode the general model.

The way these concepts have been widely adopted has also been critiqued. Roscoe (2015, 71) reminds us that Strathern’s analysis produces a model for recasting anthropological study (cf. Gell 1999), rather than a close description suitable for analogy. Such models are nonetheless useful for thinking about personhood: this is as much the case for theories developed in studying Western contexts, such as Butler’s (1993) performativity. What is at issue is *how*, as well as when, the terms of these analyses should be used. Marshall Sahlins (2011a,b) has argued that kinship, rather than personhood, is really the proper term under which to comprehend social relationships. He defines kinship as ‘mutuality of being’ (Sahlins 2011a, 2). Concerned over the proliferation of dividual persons in anthropology and archaeology, Sahlins claims there is ‘some confusion between personhood and kinship relations, with its corollary of partibility and participation’, and suggests there is a ‘category mistake of rendering the relationships of kinship as the attributes of singular persons’ (Sahlins 2011a, 13). Here Sahlins sees in the ‘partible dividual’ elements of ‘the bourgeois individualism’ of the west (Sahlins 2011a, 13). A Western person may act differently in two social contexts, in each case presenting some aspect of his or her identity temporarily as the whole: shifting relationships in this way involves a kind of partibility, he argues, but not necessarily dividuality—the incorporation of another *within* the person (Sahlins 2011a, 13). By contrast, Sahlins considers that ‘bourgeois persons are *in their intimate kin relationships* as “dividual” as Melanesians’ (Sahlins 2011a, 14, my emphasis). Sahlins is implying that definitions of individual, dividual, and partible persons are *too similar* to appreciate fully the diversity in underlying relationships, in which he accords a special place for kinship, around the world.⁵ He also argues that studies of personhood have focused too much on persons rather than their relations, and attempts to redress this ‘by privileging intersubjective being over the singular person as the composite site of analysis’ (Sahlins 2011a, 14). For instance, he discusses ‘the kinship I’ identified among the Maori by Prytz-Johansen (1954). This is a mode of speaking in which ‘I’ refers to all the descendants of a common ancestor, and that ancestor is the ‘I’, the person, that encapsulates them all (this has been variously identified as aligned with the encompassment of other persons and a kind of partibility: see Rumsey 2000).⁶ The speaker refers to doing things that happened generations ago.⁷ As much as this is clearly about kinship, perhaps we can also perceive here a kind of ‘transgenerational’ personhood.

Furthermore, not all relationships that shape persons are relations of kin, even those that are mutually constituting. Sahlins himself mentions the involvement of non-human forces—'. . . ancestors, gods, dream-time spirits, or the potency acquired from captured enemies . . . '—in conception, birth and death as well as life of the person (Sahlins 2011a, 3). Sacrifices as exchanges with deities, communication with spirits of places, hunting animals, and a host of other practices may take place between entities who are not designated as kin. An example comes from Emma-Jayne Graham (in press), in a fascinating study of body-part votives at Etrusco-Latial-Campanian sanctuaries in Late Iron Age central Italy. Graham explores the significance of these votive deposits for the partibility, permeability and dividuality not only of single living human persons, but also of the religious community, including the gods who were also manifest, embodied, in the collections of body parts left at their shrines. Graham argues that the power of the divine beings to heal the living permeated the assembled body-part votives and the bodies of the living, while the practice of deposition shaped the divinities as 'multi-authored persons, composed of the bodies, prayers and offerings of human supplicants . . . ' ⁸

Placing personhood alongside kinship and a series of other factors—such as sex and gender (e.g. Joyce 2001), age (e.g. Appleby 2010) and age cohorts (cf. Larick 1986), life cycle (e.g. Meskell 2002), life stage and life course (Gilchrist 2012; Fowler forthcoming) and power relations (Gillespie 2008)—as many studies do, therefore seems more fruitful to me than abandoning relational personhood in pursuit of kinship (which itself has featured in studies that consider personhood, human–animal relations, ancestry, houses and other relations of mutuality: e.g. Gillespie 2001; Ray & Thomas 2003; cf. Ingold 2000, 77–88; and Gamble 2007 on 'growing children'). The most pertinent question here is whether describing all forms of relational personhood as 'dividual' remains useful, or whether further refinement is needed. In order to further illustrate the limitations of an individual–dividual tension, I turn to a recent archaeological study.

The limitations of the single-spectrum model

Chapman and Gaydarska (2011) have attempted to explore the diversity in everyday tasks, skills and experiences that characterized life for persons in Mesolithic and Early Neolithic southeast Europe. Their approach is important in its identification of 'social roles and embodied skills' as key features of personhood that have not been extensively explored (at least in European prehistory), highlighting the narrow range of

categories of person that have featured in archaeological accounts (e.g. warriors, chiefs and shamans⁹), and focusing on the implications of emerging new activities during the Early Neolithic for 'ordinary' persons. It also traces how new kinds of relationships join, supplement and transform older ones. However, they rely on a single-spectrum tension between dividual and individual personhood, arguing that 'relational personhood [is] characterized by "dividuals" . . . ' (Chapman & Gaydarska 2011, 21), and equating 'individualised' persons with life experiences that produce a distinctive personal biography and skill set. While acknowledging the presence of both relational and individualizing features of personhood in the Mesolithic, they explore what they see as the emergence of increasingly individualizing personhood during the Neolithic, arguing for 'a wider diversity of persons with different skills and a greater likelihood of new skills combinations leading to more individualised identities' in this period (Chapman & Gaydarska 2011, 36).

There is much to celebrate in Chapman and Gaydarska's article—especially the way they highlight the increasing diversity in Neolithic tasks and new forms of interrelatedness between persons, and among persons, things, materials, seasons, animals and places. They present a compelling argument that new relations and new categories of person are co-emergent with new materials, things and practices, and the light they shine on diversifying social roles is important. But the idea of a simple tension between dividual and individual is problematic, no matter how subtly they articulate the two. Dividual relations and persons can be characterized as an example of relational personhood, but dividual relations can operate in a range of different ways (explored above), and as explored below relational personhood can take other forms and individualization is also relational. Throughout their article they repeatedly illustrate how Mesolithic and early Neolithic tasks and skills relied on enchainment (dividual) relations, but fail to present any clear evidence for these skills as generating (in their terms) 'strongly' individualized persons in the Neolithic.¹⁰ It is not clear which skills were bundled together as the province of a single category of person, nor is it explained how this claim relates to the ethnographic studies of personhood on which their conception of relational personhood ultimately rests. I would note that the same ethnographic studies that identify partible and dividual personhood indicate that the persons in question are differentiated through their skills, abilities and life histories, but this differentiation is not interpreted as formative of individualistic and indivisible personhood. My point is simple: prehistoric persons were differentiated from one another through their skills,

abilities and personal histories (as too in their heights, weights, sex and age, etc.), but this has no *necessary* (universal) connection with a specific mode or feature of personhood. There may be junctures at which specific categories of person emerge, but we have to establish how easily a person could shift into and out of that category, or occupy multiple categories at once. Rigid categorization of persons, as in a caste system, need not be associated with particularly individualistic personhood. A skill may be innate to a person, learnt during life, bestowed selectively by supernatural powers, an inherited property or entitlement of a caste group, and so on. Personhood in the caste-based community in northern India studied by Marriott (1976) was both highly diverse (across the wider community) and also heavily regulated (most notably within each caste), meaning that distinctions in personhood, and in the interaction strategies, activities and relations constitutive of personhood, coincided tightly with social age, gender, religious community, and caste membership. Certain skills and professions were the province of specific castes. Here persons are clearly diverse, and have distinct skills, lifestyles, and personal biographies, but (while I am not saying that individualization is absent in these communities) they are also the very basis from which the concept of dividual, relational, personhood was first developed.

Rather than positing a prehistoric evolutionary shift from dividual to individual, however gradual or nuanced we make it, and whenever we locate it (cf. Whitley 2013, 396, 410), we might instead suggest that new opportunities for relational personhood arose over time as the material conditions of existence changed (Fowler 2010a, 143–4; Harris *et al.* 2013, and below). The nature of relations and persons changed, and the extent to which this became at some times more or less restricted needs further investigation. New categories of persons do indeed emerge over time, and those persons are involved in different relations and practices, just as Chapman and Gaydarska argue, but we need to describe such categories on many more axes than dividual versus individual: those terms are rather too broad by themselves to be very meaningful, in part because they consist of bundles of other terms which are also not necessarily opposed or exclusive.

Pattern and diversity

While I am suggesting a revised approach is needed to capture further dimensions of difference in personhood, the same characteristics nonetheless seem to coincide with one another in many ethnographic studies, such as dividual and inalienable, fractal and

divisible. This suggests there is reason to believe such features commonly ‘go together’, unless we think single-spectrum thinking has also obscured difference in these accounts. Roscoe (2015, 73–5) has suggested we turn to cognitive anthropology as an evidential basis to consider degrees of cultural similarity and difference in how people understand themselves and their worlds. At a general level the patterns identified in cross-cultural comparisons of psychological experiments seem to affirm those indicated by anthropological studies, but I want to review some here to outline the extent to which the single-spectrum model still has some utility and also to illustrate that still more is to be gained by working beyond that level of generality.

Psychological experiments test very specific factors, and the way the results for tests on one factor do and do not correlate with the results for other factors among a given community underlines why comparison on multiple intersecting axes is needed. Henrich *et al.* (2010) shine a critical light on the way test subjects from ‘Western Educated Industrialized Rich and Democratic [WEIRD] societies’ are presented as representative of humanity as a whole. This is important, because these test subjects are, apparently, most often psychology undergraduates. Henrich *et al.* (2010) highlight differences in results correlating with just how WEIRD each person is, on a sliding scale, and explore variation in psychological patterns between different communities including a range of non-industrialized and non-Western (but industrialized) communities. At a broad level, the less WEIRD societies exhibit greater emphasis on relational, holistic thinking (Henrich *et al.* 2010, 72), drawing out ‘patterns and contexts’ rather than ‘separate entities’, compared with an emphasis on the ‘categories and laws’ (Roscoe 2015, 74) of ‘analytical’ thinking; understand themselves more often as interdependent than independent; explain motivations more often in terms of social roles and situations than internal, consistent personal traits; more often exhibit self-effacing than self-enhancing behaviour; exhibit ethics focused on community and cosmology (‘divinity’) more than the protection of personal autonomy; and locate things in the world with respect to cardinal points or features of place rather than ‘relative to the self’ (e.g. left/right) (Henrich *et al.* 2010, 70–74). In a comparison of Western (primarily North American, Dutch and German) test subjects (often students), WEIRD North Americans stood out as highly individualistic and independent (rather than interdependent) in many tests (Henrich *et al.* 2010, 74–5), and ‘respond more defensively to death thoughts than do those from other countries’ (Henrich *et al.* 2010, 75). At the same time, there are notable variations among communities that were

similar in the extent to which they were WEIRD, such as the way some Papuan communities routinely played economic game tests in an ‘over-generous’ way when giving while refusing to accept such ‘over-generous’ offers when in a receiving role (which seems to chime with anthropological studies of gift exchange and indebtedness) (Henrich *et al.* 2005, 811). By contrast, in most non-industrialized societies subjects were far *less* generous givers and accepted far lower offers than among more WEIRD communities, where 50/50 splits of rewards were prevalent (Henrich *et al.* 2010, 65). While North American psychology undergraduates seem to be outliers on some tests compared with subjects from other communities, some of those other communities were outliers at the other end of the scale, or in some tests trumped the North Americans as outliers in the same direction, highlighting that any simple singular spectrum setting ‘the west against the rest’ will fail to appreciate real variability.¹¹ Comparing different spectra therefore gives a fuller appreciation of the distinctiveness of each community. I have factored some of the dimensions explored by such comparative studies into a new heuristic model.

Multiple dimensions of personhood

In place of a single-spectrum model, I propose considering a series of dimensions foundational to personhood that may intersect with one another in varied ways. Each dimension can still be characterized, heuristically, as a tension or gradation between two terms. This looser ‘exploded’ heuristic model allows for greater flexibility in considering how different factors may articulate with one another in the generation of personhood in different cases and situations (see Figure 2). I have set out below some examples of terms that may be held in tension, but it must be stressed that there is no presumed *a priori* relationship between any one of these tensions and any others, which is why I have not presented these as a table with columns, and that other tensions could (and probably ought to) be distinguished:

- indivisible and divisible
- inalienable and alienable
- fractal and monadic
- holistic and analytic
- fixed and mutable
- distinctive and typical
- singular and plural
- permeable and impermeable
- focused and distributed
- independent and interdependent
- autonomous and embedded
- individualist and collectivist

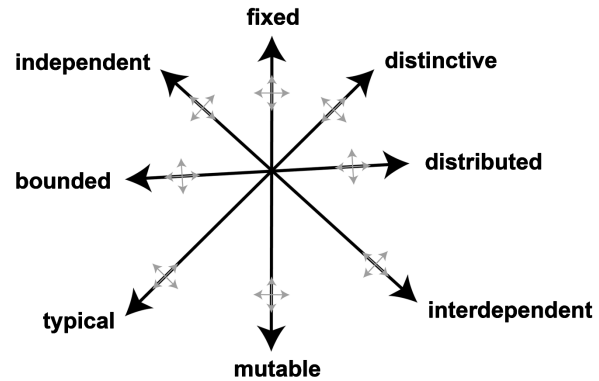


Figure 2. *Tensions in multiple dimensions. Each axis is ‘free’ of others and ‘elastic’: the position and arrangement of paired terms, and the ‘length’ (or extent) and ‘angle’ of each axis are flexible. Terms can be added and subtracted as needed. This image is intended to illustrate the difference between a multi-dimensional and a single spectrum approach, not to form a practical device for ‘recording’ personhood.*

- orthodox and heterodox
- egalitarian and heterarchical (including hierarchical)¹²
- essential and contextual
- special and ordinary
- human and more-than-human¹³
- and so on.

Each of these terms describes an axis of relationality. This approach still relies on tensions between opposed terms, but does not bundle two groups of opposed terms together under two higher-order headings. Furthermore, it may be that one term ought in some cases to be opposed with a different locally relevant ‘pair’ (e.g. heterarchical with hierarchical)—the idea is not that the tensions in this list will always be relevant, but to use these and other terms selectively to interpret specific past modes of personhood. Some of these dimensions may be relevant in some cases but not others, and weakly or strongly present.

The scale at which the terms apply and the media in which they are detected are crucial: for instance, are human persons inalienable from close kin but alienated from others? In this heuristic device the extent to which specific dimensions of personhood are fixed or mutable can be considered as intersecting in a variable way with, say, the tension between indivisible and divisible, and permeable and impermeable, and the extent to which personhood is fractal. This may vary between categories of persons within a community (e.g. those with various kinds of leadership roles, who in some cases may encapsulate more of the community

and cosmos than others (cf. Gillespie 2008)). The point is not simply to say whether personhood is divisible or indivisible, but the extent to which each can be identified, through what media, in what contexts and assemblages, and so on. Appreciating the ways that personhood is distributed in time and space with respect to bodies, objects and materials is the goal, tracing: the modes of action that individualize, or make permeable or essentialize; the domains of activity in which different dimensions of personhood are brought to the fore; the events in which a person is made more or less indivisible, for instance. This approach can also sit alongside the now well-established practice of considering specific social technologies, ways of doing and being, and their attendant material metaphors, which, as Gamble (2007, 278) argues, 'have to be appreciated as the basis of a relational identity' (cf. Brück 2001; 2004; Fowler 2004, 39–41, 108–10; 2008; Tilley 1999).

The emphasis on plural intersecting axes of analyses allows for further diversity in considering social organization and power relations as important factors in personhood. For instance, some psychologists draw a distinction between vertical and horizontal individualism (and vertical and horizontal collectivism) (e.g. Triandis 2001; Triandis & Gelfand 1998). Horizontal individualism describes the appreciation of distinctiveness while not attaching rank or value over others as a result of that distinctiveness, and self-reliance rather than self-aggrandizement. Vertical individualism describes a competitive independence, in which a person is concerned with achieving high status. A person can be (horizontally) individualized in some activities in a way that does not transfer to others, or individualized as a highly skilled and famed flint-knapper, whether or not other benefits adhere to that (cf. Olausson 2008; Spikins 2008, 176), or individualized by being relatively free from the demands or reproach of others, or (vertically) individualized by occupying a rare position with authority over others which also constrains that person's choices for expression and action in public—but these are each rather different things. Horizontal collectivism appreciates interdependence and group cohesion without ranking groups in relation to one another, while vertical collectivism prioritizes the importance of some groups over others (e.g. kin *versus* non-kin, or some kin groups in a community above others). The personality, appearance and biography of each person in a Mesolithic hunter-gatherer community, say, might be highly distinctive, and in that sense horizontally individualistic, but without converting that difference into hierarchical or competitive value. Sticking with the same example, while individualistic in this sense, personhood might also be partible with, for instance,

the risk that some part of oneself may be lost in interacting with non-human beings. Distinctiveness in some ways might be counter-balanced by sameness in others. For instance, a group of people all eating and drinking the same meal together from identical receptacles might be experiencing a shared act of *collective* individuation (Hamilakis 2013, 155), which could have a horizontal and/or vertical effect (e.g. depending on how inclusive the event is).

The list of terms above is not intended to be exhaustive nor used as a check-list, and it will not be possible to address all aspects in all cases. While it is desirable to move away from opposing concepts, and opposing contexts, we cannot work without terms such as 'bounded' or 'inalienable', and these terms have opposites that in part define them; but we can articulate such terms with others in sophisticated ways and consider, for instance where the boundary lies and how it is constituted, and when it becomes unbounded or when the boundary shifts. Such states may be described at a community level or as temporarily obtained during some stage in the course of life and death, or in specific contexts, and so on. Importantly, fixed and mutable are what should be in tension rather than fixed and relational, since fixity is itself produced relationally and all properties are in any case relational (see below). Indivisibility is not the same as individuality, which bundles up indivisibility with other concepts such as distinctiveness. Dividual is not opposed to or contrasted with individual, because these concepts describe two specific assemblies of constituent relationships: the same can be said for partible or permeable personhood, or any other key features of modes of personhood.

Key features of modes of personhood

A mode of personhood is a way of being a person, consisting of trends in action and ideas: an ontological condition. In *The Archaeology of Personhood*, I highlighted a series of 'key features of contemporary modes of personhood' (Fowler 2004, 8): indivisibility, dividuality, partibility and/or permeability, as defined above. I suggested that we were only starting to explore personhood, and had to date only examined a narrow range of ways that personhood could operate (Fowler 2004, 157). Since then indivisibility, dividuality, partibility and/or permeability have remained popular as principles identified in past modes of personhood. These concepts have been useful in demonstrating that personhood in the past might not be how we might have conventionally imagined it, and there have been some excellent archaeological studies of personhood that have made sophisticated use

of these terms, some of which are discussed in this article. However, focusing on these principles may constrain the identification of further diversity in past relations. It has also been questioned as to whether it is possible to identify such key features and extract them from local modes of personhood for transfer elsewhere (e.g. Robb 2010, 502; Sahlin 2011a, 13). I think there is significant value in distilling out some principles in how relations can work, provided how a term is meant is precisely defined (Brittain & Harris 2010). We can also benefit from using these principles as *counterpoints* when exploring other key features of modes of personhood.

Situated in a brilliant critical reconsideration of models of relational personhood, Wilkinson's (2013) account of the personhood of the Inka Emperor Atawallpa exemplifies the value of describing the relationships fundamental to personhood in each case. He writes, 'anything Atawallpa touched was transformed into himself, through a kind of divine "contagion" . . . it was necessary for him to be repeatedly reined in and his ongoing accrual of bodily components periodically checked' (Wilkinson 2013, 422–3). Atawallpa appears to have been composite but indivisible, and not partible, and to have existed at a far greater scale than his biological human body. He was clearly bounded, Wilkinson argues, but that boundary was not defined by his biological matter, and so, in our terms, he was distributed widely throughout space (e.g. being co-present with idols depicting him). Wilkinson's characterization of Atawallpa's personhood as 'contagious' provides a useful, distinctive, description of his mode of expansive, additive personhood.¹⁴ By explaining why Atawallpa's modes of personhood does not match that of Western individuals, nor Melanesian partible and dividual persons either, Wilkinson makes a clear case for Atawallpa's specific kind of indivisibility. Wilkinson sheds new light on a 'technology of the person'—the 'technology of the Inka Emperor' (or at least, this Emperor)—which can be *compared and contrasted with* technologies producing the bodily boundaries of Highland New Guinea partible big men, Western individuals, Tuareg persons, or Keralan husbands and wives, or other categories of person in the Inka Empire, etc., and all their attendant ontologies. What is especially significant about his analysis is that it adds to our understanding of the range of ways personhood can operate, the range of relationships constituting persons. It finds new terms that describe the most salient features of Atawallpa's personhood *in contradistinction to* concepts derived from other contexts, rather than just defining Atawallpa in the terms of those other studies.

The idea that there are modes of personhood with key principles playing a major role in those modes is still useful. However, there remains further scope to identify a wider range of key principles that may occur in different modes of personhood among different communities.

Relational is not opposed to individual: all modes of personhood are relational

Wilkinson argues Atawallpa is not a relational person, and neatly draws attention to two differing ways that the term relational has been used in analysing personhood (2013, 418–19). On the one hand, relational has been opposed to essential, so that relational personhood in some communities has been contrasted with understandings of persons as fundamentally distinct biological individuals in others (especially Western concepts of the individual). On the other hand, *everything* has been posited as relational (e.g., following a Latourian perspective; cf. Fowler 2013; Fowler & Harris 2015), which must include all persons. If we take the latter stance, then it does not make sense to talk about some persons as 'highly relational' and others as less so (Wilkinson 2013, 419). As I see it, personhood is always relational, but *the relationships involved vary qualitatively in nature and strength*, draw different boundaries and identify different features of personhood as axiomatic, from case to case. I have argued elsewhere (Fowler 2001, 140), drawing inspiration from Bird-David (1999, 88), that individualizing personhood such as that posited for Britain in the twentieth century AD, is not opposed to relational personhood but can be understood as a specific mode of relational personhood involving relations that individuate, that alienate, and that bound the person in a specific way. This was not drawn out in *The Archaeology of Personhood* in what I now find to be a satisfactory way,¹⁵ although I argued that modern Western individualized personhood is produced through specific technologies of the self (Fowler 2004, 13), and that different social technologies underpin the production of differing kinds of personhood (2004, 38–42). Social technologies also produce other entities, such as families, clans, castes, nations, as well as persons. Such entities *may be*, but need not necessarily be, naturalized or fixed so that, for instance, clans may be mutable and open to manipulation (Harrison 1990; 1993). Western personhood sits in relation to modern Western ontologies, which have tended to privilege indivisible, monadic, 'naturalist' (Descola 2013), or 'particularist' understandings of the world (Barad 2007, 333; Thomas 2004; cf. Henrich *et al.* 2010) (but please see below!). For instance, physicist Karen Barad (2007) explores the emergence

of quantum physics out of a predominantly ‘particularist’ physics (i.e. focused on the specific properties of particles): around the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century AD, ‘relationality’ rose to the fore in physics, most famously through Einstein’s theory of relativity. Quantum physics broke down the view of atoms as bounded, isolated, essential and particular entities that had been part of a Western world view—a world view also stressing bounded individual persons, nation states, and so on.¹⁶ The rigid identification of equivalent boundaries and essences to entities at different media and scales, in a restrictive ‘regulatory’ way, enabled some ways of doing and thinking, and constrained others. Different enabling constraints occur in other ontologies. At this scale of comparison Western personhood is not ‘less’ relational than elsewhere; rather some or many of the practices and relations constituting persons (as essential, as bounded, etc.) differ from elsewhere. Modern Western ontology may not privilege relationality, but it nonetheless consists of relations. Equally, Wilkinson’s Inka Emperor was situated as an essential, bounded and indivisible being in a relational field which did not cast all other persons in the same way. Wilkinson’s analysis illustrates diversity in the kinds of bounded, indivisible persons that can exist—but rather than pitting kinds of ‘relational’ and ‘non-relational’ persons against one another, I think it is most useful to consider (as he does) the range of practices, materialities and relationships that support any kind of person (e.g. producing and maintaining boundaries).

Individuality itself may be negotiated according to various relational bases. To give an example, Miller (2010, 11–41) contrasts a British ‘depth ontology’ stressing a true consistent personal identity ‘deep inside’ with a Trinidadian ‘surface ontology’ in which personal identity is openly and repeatedly negotiated. While his analysis outlines two different ways that individuality is expressed ‘on the surface’, in both cases individuality is a key factor. In London, he argues, people think that choices in clothing reveal something of their internal self; they are cautious in how they do this and how they react to other people’s dress. It would be rude to comment on another’s choice of clothing and people seldom take risks in clothing style. In his Trinidadian study the distinctiveness of each outfit for each event demonstrates individuality in terms of personal creativity and this is publicly commented on. Different ontologies and relationships contribute to individuality in the two cases; and of course individuality is not the only factor shaping personhood in either case, and of course the generalization hides variations by age groups and many other factors.

This stance may potentially be seen as universalizing the term ‘relational’, and thus, from a certain perspective, devaluing it: if personhood is always relational, if modern Western individuals are relational, why bother to talk about relational personhood at all? Identifying personhood as fundamentally relational, but in *many* differing ways, qualifies the extent to which we see Western personhood as distinct from all other contexts, but in so doing it also provides refined grounds for highlighting further difference (including within the wide range of communities we might otherwise lump together as ‘Western’ or ‘modern’). Equally, other modes of personhood may identify certain entities, aspects of personhood, and so on as essential or fixed in nature, but these have to be understood relative to their context.

Multi-modality and ontology

Multiple concepts of the person, and multiple modes of personhood and relationality, potentially exist in any context, although some ontologies may allow for this more than others. A powerful argument for multi-modality has recently been developed explicitly by Tarlow (2010) and Harris and Robb (2012).¹⁷ These accounts, inspired by the work of Paul Veyne (1988) and Annemarie Mol (2002), consider how beliefs about the human body have changed over time. They argue that one set of beliefs and practices does not simply give way to another or disappear, but that new beliefs and practices co-exist with older ones. Indeed, it is questionable as to whether ontologies exist as singular and distinct or multiple and interwoven (Harris & Robb 2012, 670–71), and the extent to which a singular ontology is insisted on varies historically and culturally (Harris & Robb 2012, 674; 2013, 18–19). So, for example, we might think of our bodies as like machines in one context (e.g. medical), or like vessels in another (e.g. religious), for instance. A person may shift between quite disparate ideas and practices, diverse modes of thinking and doing that have long and complex histories, in the course of any given day (say, in visiting a church, a doctor’s surgery, a library, a laboratory, a cinema, a café, and a clothing shop; or in preparing dinner for a wife and child, paying a gas bill, giving a lecture, accepting a cup of coffee from a partner, receiving a birthday gift from a parent, and giving blood). When pressed, an informant may present a singular narrative of this complex reality (Harris & Robb 2012, 674). We could posit that some persons may inhabit some modes of relations more frequently than others, and again stress the diversity in modes, relations and persons in the process.

A single person may shift modes repeatedly over time, event by event (as, indeed, in Strathern's analysis of acts in which dividual persons are made partible). This may coincide with changes in community relations and composition. For instance, Wengrow and Graeber's (2015) consideration of seasonal modulations in social organization and 'entire systems of social roles and institutions' (Wengrow & Graeber 2015, 4) within hunting, gathering and fishing communities living in highly seasonally-varied environments points out dramatic oscillations in interpersonal relations (Wengrow & Graeber 2015, 10–12). Personhood at one time of year might feel quite different to another. Wengrow and Graeber give an example of different names being used for the same person at different times of year. In other cases, at times non-human entities might be treated as persons, when at other times the same entities may not be treated as persons by the same human beings (e.g. Barraud *et al.* 1994, 36–7). Personhood is subjective and inter-subjective, and different people in a community may have varied ideas about what behaviour is individualistic, how prone to permeation or influence a certain person is, and so on; indeed, these are arguably contested, negotiated or ambiguous issues among communities (see, e.g., Ortner 1995; Schram 2015). Gauging *diversity* in the relationships generating personhood in any given context, and the *range* of that diversity, which may be greater in some cases than others, is potentially a fruitful, if challenging, area of investigation. Where archaeologists make inferences about modes of personhood at a general level, these are built from patterns of more specific relations evident from the remains of specific events, so it ought to be possible to achieve some discussion of diversity alongside whatever dominant trend we might detect.¹⁸

Four examples

Before concluding I want to consider four brief cases to illustrate the potential of the multi-dimensional and multi-modal approach I am advocating. I will start close to home. While to some extent contemporary British personhood is located 'internally', it is also expressed and generated externally through shaded layers of media radiating out from the body which are more or less intimate and personal; as well as clothing, discussed above, we could include names and images which can potentially circulate widely. For instance, a wide range of media are vital in commemorating and transforming the dead beyond the funeral, including photographic images, objects intimate to the deceased, and monuments marked with their name, such as dedicated benches in public places (cf. Gibson 2010,

table 1). Increasingly, funerals are personalized to convey the relationships key to that person in life and recount memories of experiences shared with the dead (e.g. Caswell 2011). The rise in cremation has been adapted into new practices for curating the remains of the dead and extending relations with them, including jewellery containing cremated remains and tattoos in ink made with cremated remains (cf. Heessels *et al.* 2012). To give one event reported in the media as an example, in 2013 Englishman William Mullane had an image of his recently deceased father tattooed on his arm.¹⁹ The tattoo was produced using ink containing his father's cremated remains. Mullane stated: 'he will literally be with me forever'. The father and the son also already shared the same name. The inalienability of the two men was reiterated through the tattooing, sharing substance (permeating bodily boundaries) just as they share names (a feature of the person): the facial image of William Mullane (senior) was depicted realistically, naturalistically, drawn from a photograph, as a way to capture individual features of the deceased. The tattoo adds to the embodied biography of his son. Both William Mullane senior's individual image and his kinship with his son were materialized anew, in a practice of family commemoration that is unusual for its time, unorthodox, individualistic and distinctive. A range of effects is therefore evident, which partly individualize horizontally (e.g. presenting distinctive character) as well as illustrating relationships of kinship and the extent of bodily permeability, negotiated by the persons involved within the possibilities open to them.

An archaeological example of multi-dimensional, multi-modal and processual personhood might be found in Emma-Jayne Graham's (2009) fascinating study of the death, funeral, and particularly post-funerary activities associated with Imperial Roman senator Marcus Nonius Balbus. Graham draws out different arenas and technologies of mourning that transform the deceased. Balbus was a key public figure for Herculaneum during his life, giving of himself to the town: for instance, he funded the construction of key public buildings. After he died, the town gave back, perpetuating and proliferating Balbus: there are at least 10 public statues of him, an annual festival bore his name and a seat at the theatre was kept free for him. In the years following his death, the community would participate in a procession around the town, visiting an altar and some of the statues dedicated to him. Balbus was also given a special funeral rite —*os resectum*—in which a finger was removed before the rest of his body was cremated, and after the cremation, and probably after the whole period of mourning was over, that finger

bone was buried at a newly commissioned altar. So Balbus was distributed throughout the community, and this was made visible and enduring after his death. His body was divided up through his funerary rites, and his face and body were proliferated through statuary—although his body may well have been idealized in the statuary (rather than a realistic, naturalistic depiction) in a way that partly illustrated his transcendence to the state of a revered ancestor. His personal achievements and contributions to the community were commemorated through such imagery and through engraving his name—and at the same time his composite three-word name was also a statement of his being part of a particular family or house. Different funerary and post-funerary acts arguably drew on and contributed to different modes of relations, forming and transforming Balbus in varying and multiple ways, sometimes accentuating his relations to family and town, sometimes his idealized image, with his individual facial features, name, and personal history playing recurring roles within this. We could add that Balbus' senatorial status suggests vertical individualization, while his integration into the town suggests collectivism and his bodily fragmentation and enshrinement suggests increased divisibility and inalienability from the town following his death and perhaps increasing idealization as a person of a certain type.

A third study illustrates how key features of modes of personhood are manipulated in distinct events. Recently, Duncan & Schwartz (2014) have argued that the bodies of Mayan persons simultaneously exhibited features of partibility (in 'a mosaic corporeality': 2014, 151) and permeability along with other forms of relationality. Different bodily substances and parts had different properties, and were activated in specific Mayan activities. Duncan & Schwartz (2014) use knowledge about Mayan understandings of the body to make sense of the violent dismembering of bodies and the structured disposal of body parts in a Mayan mass grave. They emphasize the contrast between bodies in Mayan art, 'normally not shown touching one another' (2014, 165) and the jumble of remains in the grave which may have alluded to the chaos of the underworld. Bone elements from the 'superordinate' right side of some bodies were missing, seemingly taken as trophies by the aggressors, while buried remains were sealed with a layer of white limestone lumps 'to seal in the potency' (2014, 164) that may otherwise exude. Making these bodies so fragmentary and leaving them in jumbled parts was a clearly political, visceral, violent act, and its abhorrence was understood in terms of the

many other relationships that composed and decomposed Mayan persons.

Turning to a longer term and larger scale of analysis, Harris *et al.*'s (2013, 82) discussion of changes in beliefs about the body and personhood from the European Neolithic to the Bronze Age presents an alternative to the single-spectrum perspective used by Chapman and Gaydarska (2011). Their study is part of a larger account of *The Body in History* (in Europe) (Robb & Harris 2013), in which they adopt a multi-modal perspective, and their discussion of personhood in prehistory suggests (just as Chapman and Gaydarska do) that older ways of doing things do not disappear even as new relationships arise. In their analysis, personhood in the Neolithic is generally held to shift by context and task (Borić *et al.* 2013, 57), while Chalcolithic to Bronze Age personhood is presented as more rigidly prescribed, over a large geographical scale, particularly in terms of gender—but the roles and identities are stereotypical rather than individualizing (Harris *et al.* 2013, 82–3, 93). The overall account stresses multiplicity and complexity without relying on a single spectrum for comparison. Other factors, such as changing relationships between kinship, life stage and personhood, and further regional and chronological variation, can also be considered to further refine this account (Fowler in press).

As these cases illustrate, personhood is not only relational but multi-dimensional and multi-modal, and its generation and transformation is meaningful, purposeful and emotive. How, when, and how frequently personhood might modulate might be extremely varied, while in many cases attempts may have been made by some persons and communities to constrain or deny such multiplicity for others and impose forms of regulation. Personhood forms a field of struggle and negotiation, and this struggle should not be reduced to just 'competition' for the self-aggrandizement of individuals. Equally, change should not be framed only in terms of shifts from a predominantly individual to individual form of personhood, or *vice versa*.

Summarizing some propositions

In this article I have considered some recent developments in thinking about relational personhood, and in light of these developments I have suggested a revised heuristic approach. The resulting approach is designed to appreciate better diversity in how personhood operates within as well as between communities. The key points are summarized below:

1. Identifying personhood as involving a tension between a single set of traits deemed to be

characteristic of individual or dividual personhood oversimplifies in a constraining way. Personhood is always relational, making the key concern a study of the *ways* in which it is relational in the context under investigation.

2. There are many dimensions in which features of personhood can be appreciated, and while several of these dimensions may be aligned with respect to one another in the same way in many cases (e.g., personhood as contextual, mutable and interdependent), other factors may cut across one another in diverse and important ways. A *multi-dimensional approach* can help further appreciate diversity while facilitating comparison.
3. Principles such as partibility, dividuality, and permeability are still of value in this pursuit, sometimes in describing the case in hand, sometimes in contradistinction to it, but other terms are also needed to identify further such principles.
4. Personhood is not only relational and processual, it is *multi-modal*. More than one mode of relations, more than one mode of personhood, is likely to be present in any cultural context, and one person may move between different modes of personhood as they engage in different activities. The extent and nature of such modulation may change during the life course, and modulation may occur routinely, or seasonally or during only special events: variation in the extent of multi-modality and frequency of shifting between modes requires further research, including consideration of whether and how this intersects with different kinds of ontologies (*qua* Descola 2013). Changing diversity in categories of persons is an important topic for continued consideration alongside this.
5. The techniques and technologies of daily life, ways of doing things and getting along with others, shape personhood and involve material metaphors by which persons and relations are understood. The articulation between one metaphor and others, one domain of activity and others, remains important in considering key features of modes of personhood and the extent and character of any multi-modality.
6. Personhood should be considered alongside, and in relation to, kinship, sex, age, life course, and also subsistence practices, cosmology, religion, and ontology.

Sophisticated approaches attending to specific differences between past practices and those described in ethnographic studies of personhood have made selective use of existing concepts such as partibility or highlighted specific features of past modes of personhood that are not identified in ethnographic

studies. Archaeological studies have set also personhood within studies of long-term change and multiple and shifting ontologies. As new studies of personhood increasingly open up novel ways to consider variation and multiplicity, it should be possible to ask, and face the challenge of answering, further questions about personhood in the past. How much did personhood change during the life course? How much multi-modality was there in different periods and regions? How much has personhood changed over the long term, and in what ways?

Notes

1. It is not my intention to review a comprehensive sample of all of the archaeological work that has examined personhood over the past 20 years in this article, since this would leave little room for the points it focuses on: GoogleScholar's list of citations for *The Archaeology of Personhood* alone ran to over 350 entries as of August 2015. Elsewhere I have commented on the approaches adopted by some different key studies to those discussed in this current article (Fowler 2010a; 2010b).
2. An ontology is defined here as a framework of 'basic assumptions as to what the world contains and how the elements of this furniture are connected' (Descola 2014, 273).
3. Partible relations do not require the fragmentation of objects or bodies (Fowler 2004, 67), although this may be involved (cf. Brittain & Harris 2010; Chapman 2000; Fowler 2008).
4. There are other important critiques of relational personhood, and the use of analogy and comparison, by archaeologists and anthropologists that I have omitted here in order to focus on developing the specific model below.
5. Strathern (1992, chapter 2) explicitly compares the role kinship plays in twentieth-century English personhood and in twentieth-century Melanesian personhood, concluding at one point that in England '(k)in relationships are about how individual persons are connected to one another, yet not as whole individuals, only as kin, so that kin ties appear as but a part of that unitary entity, the individual person' (1992, 78). What varies, she suggests, is that English persons are made of kin relations and many other kinds of relations; 'kinship is only a "part" of society' (1992, 76), whereas Melanesian persons are embedded within kin relations, which comprise them thoroughly. Sahlins' view of kinship seems to agree with this latter part of her analysis.
6. Descola (2013, 293) describes a different yet similar phenomenon where 'a Pitjantjatjara identifies with the Dream-being of his birthplace when he says "I" in order to refer to that Dream-being'.
7. This presents another element that archaeological analysis could consider, and which might have interesting implications for archaeologists interested in memory,

- oral tradition, and the replication of actions separated by hundreds of years in the prehistoric past (cf. Kelly 2015).
8. Perhaps a basis may be found in kinship for how this religious community related to one another (as is often the case in religious orders, or even 'ordinary' or lay congregations, populated by brothers, sisters, mothers and fathers), but this would not undermine the value of tracing the relationships comprising the persons, singular and collective, human and divine, interacting at these shrines.
 9. Many archaeological studies of personhood are concerned with persons who are to some extent special: elites, warriors, shamans, Roman senators and Inka divine monarchs. It seems that persons who are particularly able to transcend scales, translate across boundaries, or become magnified—special persons—are represented frequently in these analyses, perhaps in part due to the material legacies involved in generating such personhood. There are various other kinds of special persons, including sacred and holy persons, persons of special virtue, fame or rank, abject persons, ascetics and persons renouncing relations with others, witches and other anti-social persons who are threats to ordinary, 'healthy' personhood, and more besides. Further work is still needed on 'special' personhood (cf. Fowler 2011), including the extent to which increased opportunity for individualization accompanies such 'specialness'.
 10. Triandis (2001, 912) suggests that hunting generally promotes individualism because it involves a high degree of self-reliance, while agricultural activities promote communalism. He does not give much detail of the supporting evidence for this, and one can image a range of different hunting, fishing, gathering and agricultural activities that require more or less or different kinds of co-operation, but the degree of self-reliance and communal effort involved in food procurement or production seems an important axis of variability. Chapman and Gaydarska (2011, 28, *inter alia*) suggest increased interdependency among Neolithic compared with Mesolithic communities, but their overall model for the Neolithic emphasizes the individualizing role of skills over these co-operative relations as the most distinctive change.
 11. The prehistoric European remains I study were not produced by WEIRD communities, but this discussion highlights that we cannot assume anything about where along the axis of a given spectrum members of a certain prehistoric community may lie. By investigating the media of past practices we have to consider factors such as independence and interdependence, the importance of cosmology, or the extent to which action was contextually varied, and make inferences on that basis.
 12. Heterarchical relations may be ranked or stratified, but only in some and not all domains of activity; or relations may not be ranked or stratified, but differentiated horizontally so society is not organized homogeneously, as would be required to define a community as truly egalitarian (Rautman 1998, 327). A hierarchy is a very specific state of affairs in which the *same* rank and strata are apparent in all areas of life. Egalitarian, heterarchical and hierarchical relations form a triad that can be used to appreciate a wide range of diverse power relations sedimented in categories of personhood.
 13. Obviously this pairing could be greatly unpacked into many different tensions.
 14. Wilkinson's presentation of Atawallpa as carefully bounded and yet also widely distributed illustrates why the tensions set out above are intended as heuristic suggestions that need to be considered locally, rather than a set of rules of opposition.
 15. Arguing that '[m]odern individuals are, to some degree, still relational persons' (Fowler 2004, 21), for instance, does not quite do this justice.
 16. Arguably this twentieth-century shift in understanding, at the intersection between philosophy and physics, has been a major inspiration in the development of relational thinking in very many disciplines since.
 17. This is part of a wider trend—Graeber (2011, 113), for instance, provides an example focused on social relations and conceptions of economics and debt. Strathern's (1988) analysis highlighted modulation between dividual and partible conditions, and some recent debates on personhood in Melanesia consider shifting between modes an important feature of how personhood is negotiated (e.g. Bailecki & Deswani 2015; Schram 2015).
 18. In this article I have left aside the issue of varying 'types' or 'qualities' of evidence, because I wish to focus on the theoretical schemes being deployed. Obviously there is a difference in the range and nature of the material that can be investigated in studying the personhood of Atawallpa, Marcus Nonius Balbus, and those buried in a British Neolithic chambered tomb. My point here is not that we can always get to diversity, multi-dimensionality and multi-modality in the same way or to the same extent, but rather that if we draw inferences about modes of personhood we should allow for diversity and multi-modality in those accounts.
 19. A news item reporting this event, with images, can be found at <http://uk.news.yahoo.com/ashes-tattoo-arm-tribute-father-william-mullane-142306033.html#Q68AIWO> 'Tattooist Brendan Mudd, creates the unique portrait of William Mullane's father'.

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