A sacred social: Christian relationalism and the re-enchantment of the world

NOFIT ITZHAK *Universitat Rovira i Virgili*

This article intervenes in an ongoing debate as to whether or not Christianity introduces individualism into the lives of its converts. Drawing on an ethnographic account of Emmanuel, a French Catholic Charismatic community, it demonstrates that, counter to the argument that in social cases where Christianity is central, individualism emerges as a prominent value, in some cases it is relationalism that shapes Christian ethical aspirations. I argue that differences observed across contexts in expressions of value and configuration of personhood may be the result of the varied manners in which divine presence is experienced and understood to inhabit the world across Christian communities. Bringing God into the centre of ethnographic analysis in accounting for these differences broadens the debate's comparative reach, while underscoring the manner in which divine agency shapes the ethical aspirations of religious persons and their orientations to social others. Considering the ethical and political implications that one's orientation to the social can have, further investigation is called for into the manner in which the divine is experienced and invoked in social and ritual life.

A recent debate among anthropologists of Christianity focuses on the question of whether or not Christianity introduces individualism into the lives of its converts. While a largely consensual claim was initially established among scholars that Christianity had an individualizing effect on converts (Errington & Gewertz 1995; Keane 2007; Meyer 2004; Robbins 2004), a later argument was made that Christianity would be better conceived as a religion of dividualism (Mosko 2010), and that dividualism and other relational formations were a characteristic of Christian ritual life (Bialecki 2015; Daswani 2011; Vilaça 2011; Werbner 2011). Challenging the argument for Christianity's dividualism, Joel Robbins (2015) then suggested that to make a compelling argument on either side of this debate requires us to shift the conversation from one centred on the question of personhood into one concerned with the social realization of value.

Shifting the debate from the question of personhood to that of value has merit, insofar as it allows us to recognize how contrasting formations of the person or the social can coexist in a given society while one is nonetheless valued over the other, and Robbins makes a strong case for Christianity's individualizing effect in the ethnographic cases he examines. What I want to suggest here, however, is that even when treated as a value, individualism does not always emerge as the prominent one across Christian

contexts. Drawing on an ethnographic account of Emmanuel, a transnational Catholic Charismatic intentional community founded in the 1970s in France, I demonstrate that in some cases, it is relationalism and not individualism that emerges as a prominent value, shaping configurations of sociality and of the person in significant ways.

In making this argument, I do not seek to quarrel with previous observations made on either side of this ongoing conversation, as indeed my aim in the discussion that follows is not to suggest that Christianity in and of itself necessarily gives rise to relationalism and not to individualism. Instead, the position I take here assumes that Christianity's multiplicity affords instances where either individualism or relationalism would emerge as more prominent values, and asks instead how we might account for such differences across contexts. I argue that the case of Emmanuel hints at least at one possible explanation for this variability, linking the emergence of either individualism or relationalism to the manners in which religious persons relate to and experience divine presence as either more transcendent and removed from the world (in the case of individualism), or more immanent and suffusing of the material (in the case of relationalism).

As such, the argument I am making here advances the conversation on in/dividualism as it has taken shape within the anthropology of Christianity. It might be asked at this point, however, what is to be gained by this particular contribution beyond the mere nuancing of this debate. There are two ways in which this piece speaks to broader theoretical concerns. First, shifting the analytical focus from the supposed effects that Christianity per se has on the emergence of value and into the effects that the locus of divine presence might have on it broadens the potential comparative reach of the conversation. In this, it stands to generate a more systematic exploration of the questions central to this debate across Christian denominational contexts and potentially other religious traditions. This is because the experiential locus of divine presence is a more specific, and thus more measurable, category than is Christianity. At the same time, it is also a more general category in the sense that the question of divine presence cuts across religious traditions. The potential benefit of this shift in analytical focus is underscored by the fact that the initial argument for Christianity's individualizing effect took shape in conversation between ethnographers of mostly Protestant or Pentecostal Christianity.

By pointing to the potential link between the experienced locus of divine presence and expression of value, the argument I make here also joins recent calls by scholars of religion to introduce God into the centre of ethnographic analysis (e.g. Schielke 2019). China Scherz (2018) and Amira Mittermaier (2012), in particular, draw our attention to the need to consider seriously local claims regarding the role that divine agents may play in the shaping of ethical subjects. The ethnographic case of Emmanuel brings to light yet other ways in which the effects of divine agency on ethical life must be taken seriously, but in shifting the analytical focus from that of the individual subject to that of the formation of social relations.

The arguments I present here took shape during twenty-two months of fieldwork I conducted from 2010 to 2014 in France and in Rwanda with the Emmanuel community and its two humanitarian NGOs, Le Rocher Oasis des Cités and Fidesco International. While I spent considerable stretches of time in one place while serving as an NGO volunteer, in addition to time I spent as a volunteer for the Rocher in the south of France, and accompanying the work of Fidesco in Rwanda, I also followed the work of Emmanuel in two locations in France: Bordeaux, one of the community's most

vibrant local communities, and the pilgrimage site of Paray-le-Monial, Emmanuel's international gathering place, where I spent several months each summer, from 2010 to 2013. Although Emmanuel is a transnational community, and while community members from across France could meet each other during summer sessions organized by the community for the broader Catholic public in Paray-le-Monial, with the exception of those holding leadership positions, most members of the community maintained their most significant social ties with community members who also belonged to their geographical parish. As such, fieldwork in Bordeaux provided me with a window to the day-to-day life of community members, while fieldwork in Paray-le-Monial allowed for insight into the community's broader outreach and evangelizing efforts within the church.

Documenting Emmanuel across these diverse sites allowed me to trace the ways in which the community's ethos and overarching ethical project were enacted and shaped across various social domains, from the intimacy of one's life of prayer, family and community interaction, to global outreach initiatives carried out in pilgrimage sites and through development NGOs. Participant observation included day-to-day work alongside volunteers at the NGO centres, attending volunteer orientation and training sessions, participation in religious activities, prayer and worship, as well as observation of daily and family life, as throughout my fieldwork I shared the homes of either fellow volunteers or community members. Participant observation and interviews were supplemented by analysis of media materials and institutional documents produced by the community and its NGOs.

Christian in/dividuals

While Christianity has long featured in anthropological texts, it is only in the past fifteen years or so that an anthropology of Christianity, as a self-conscious intellectual project, has coalesced around Christianity as its main object of study (see Bialecki, Haynes & Robbins 2008; Cannell 2006). Although relatively nascent, this literature has now reached the point where certain claims about Christianity and the ways in which it is taken up by local communities have gained a relative consensus among researchers. One such claim is that individualism is a key characteristic of Christianity, and, as such, that Christianity introduces individualism into the lives of its converts. This suggestion is largely based on the repeated ethnographic observation that conversion to Christianity seems to push believers to disembed from social ties and obligations. This social disembedding takes various forms across cultural settings, such as the severing of ties with kin (Meyer 2004), withdrawal from social relations as a means of avoiding sin and achieving personal salvation (Robbins 2004), or engagement in communicative practices that do not adhere to social norms and fetters (Errington & Gewertz 1995; Keane 2007).

The argument for Christianity's individualizing effect held as mostly consensual until 2010, when Mark Mosko made a forceful argument to the contrary (but see Coleman 2004 for an earlier intervention). The emphasis given to individualism within the anthropology of Christianity, claimed Mosko (2010), was erroneous and based on a slanted interpretation of ethnographic data. Drawing on his own ethnography of the Mekeo of Papua New Guinea and a rereading of several ethnographic texts on Melanesian Christianity, Mosko made the argument that Christianity, in Melanesia and elsewhere, was best understood not as a religion of individualism, but as a religion of dividualism.

The term 'dividual' was first introduced to anthropology by McKim Marriott (1976) in his work on Hinduism. Inspired by Mauss's work on gift exchange (1990 [1950]), the term was further developed within the body of literature that Mosko (2010), following Josephides (1991), terms the New Melanesian Ethnography (NME) (e.g. Strathern 1988). Suggested by the term is the idea that persons, at least in Melanesia, are best understood not as bounded individuals but as 'dividual', 'partible', 'composite', or 'distributed'. In its broad iteration, the NME's primary concern is not with a cross-cultural categorization of modes of personhood, but with asking what would a theory of the person look like if it were read from Melanesia. Contrasted with the Western concept of the *in*dividual, the single bounded entity inherently separated from those with whom it interacts, the Melanesian dividual is a composite being constituted in the process of exchange of 'partible bits of the self' with others. This exchange of 'bits' occurs through the actual exchange of objects, which in Melanesia cannot be understood as we would an economic exchange of goods in Western terms, but rather must be conceived as a circulation of aspects or essences of the persons engaged in that exchange. The exchange of objects, in other words, is a means of establishing sociality through the gifting and circulation of detachable aspects of selves, an action that marks and produces persons not as bounded and autonomous, but as shared, dividual, and relational.

Christianity, claims Mosko (2010), constitutes dividual persons through similar kinds of exchange relations, which are established in the course of Christian worship between converts, God, and other members of the Trinity. More than that, it is exactly this commensurability between Melanesian and Christian models of the person, he suggests, that accounts for Christianity's rapid uptake throughout the region. Mosko, however, does not limit his argument to Melanesia, arguing that since these modes of exchange between believers and divine beings are a general characteristic of Christianity across cultural contexts, we would be better served to consider Christianity's effect upon converts as one of dividualization regardless of the particular sociocultural context in which it operates, and should then regard all Christians as 'dividuals' (see also Mosko 2015). The argument for Christianity's dividualism found purchase outside of Melanesian ethnography, as several scholars of Christianity working in Amazonia (e.g. Vilaça 2011) and West Africa (e.g. Daswani 2011; Werbner 2011), echoing Mosko's argument that anthropologists have neglected to attend to dividual aspects in their study of Christian communities, have since taken up the task of tracing elements of dividualism or other relational formations in the lives of born-again Christians (see also Bialecki 2011; 2015). What these ethnographic accounts collectively point to is that, albeit in diverse manners, dividualism or other non-individual formations of the person are, at least at times, a characteristic of Christian ethical and ritual life.

In a subsequent response, Joel Robbins (2015) argues that evidence presented by Mosko and others is insufficient to counter his own argument that Christianity introduces individualism to the lives of converts in significant ways. Drawing on the work of Louis Dumont (1994), who posits that individualism, as a value, can never be completely realized in all social domains in any given society, Robbins argues that evidence of a certain degree of dividuality or 'some emphasis on social relatedness' (2015: 179) among any social group must always be taken for granted. It therefore follows that among Christian converts, dividual formations would likewise continue to exist alongside individual formations even as one is valued over the other. As such, merely demonstrating that *some* dividuality is present in the lives of Christians, as

Mosko and others do, is insufficient to make the argument that Christianity is primarily about dividuality.

Making these observations, Robbins suggests we shift the debate away from the question of whether Christianity creates individuals or dividuals, and instead treat individualism as a *value*. This means that rather than focusing on the question of whether Christianity brings about the actual realization of an individualistic sociality, rendering arguments about Christianity and individualism compelling would require anthropologists to demonstrate that 'in social formations where Christianity has become important, individualism often emerges as a prominent value' (2015: 180), values understood here as ethical aspirations that persons attempt to realize socially. Providing examples from his own ethnography of the Urapmin of Papua New Guinea and those of others, Robbins then demonstrates that individualism indeed appears to be a prominent value in societal contexts where Christianity is important.[1] Drawing on the case of Emmanuel, however, I demonstrate that, contrary to Robbins's assertion, even when considering Christianity's individualizing effects in terms of value, in some cases it is relationalism and not individualism that emerges as the prominent one.

Before proceeding with the argument, however, a clarification of terms is called for. In shifting the debate away from the question of personhood and on to the question of value, Robbins abandons the terms 'dividual' and 'dividualism', using instead 'relationalism' as an opposite value for individualism, and 'relational' as describing formation of personhood among the Urapmin, terms I favour throughout this text as well. Although at least certain aspects of Emmanuel's ritual life could be interpreted as constituting persons as dividuals, the notion of the person as partible or composite as has been elaborated within the NME would not resonate with my interlocutors, nor would the notion of dividualism as value or ethical aspiration. In addition to the fact that 'relationalism' better resonates with my ethnographic case, I also find the term useful insofar as it not only accommodates variable iterations of nonindividual expressions other than dividualism, but also serves to shift the greater weight of our analytical attention from the question of personhood to that of relations.

The Emmanuel community

The Emmanuel community was founded in Paris in 1972 by a small group of French Catholics who experienced the Baptism of the Holy Spirit while visiting the United States in the early years of the Charismatic Renewal. The Catholic Charismatic Renewal is a lay movement within the Catholic Church. Since its inception in 1967 in the United States, it has rapidly spread around the world and is today represented in approximately 240 countries. With respect to theology and practice, the movement can be considered to be a synthesis between Catholicism and Protestant Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal or Charismatic elements in its ritual practice are exemplified in an emphasis on an experience of the Holy Spirit, the establishment of a close and personal relationship with the person of Jesus Christ, and the practice of Charisms or spiritual gifts, such as speaking in tongues, healing, and prophecy. Emmanuel is today the largest as well as the most socially and politically engaged of the Charismatic communities in France. It is also one of the more conservative of the French communities, something that, along with Catholicism's historical links to the former French monarchy, and in spite of the fact that the Renewal in France began in the 1970s as a largely middle-class movement, resulted in a marked increase in upper, upper-middle class, and aristocratic community membership throughout the years.

Two main impulses can be identified in the community's activity and social imaginary: that of a convergence inwards, exemplified in the community's stewardship of, maintenance of, and annual activities at the pilgrimage site of Paray-le-Monial, which attracts tens of thousands of participants a year; and that of an expansion outwards, as exemplified by its global missionizing efforts and the operation of its own faith-based NGO, Fidesco International. Paray-le-Monial, a site where in the seventeenth century cloistered Catholic nun Marguerite-Marie Alacoque experienced repeated visions of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, serves a practical purpose for the community, providing members from across France and the world with a space in which they can convene annually, as well as carry out their missionary work with the thousands of lay Catholics who attend the sessions each summer. At the same time, Paray is also a very particular place, its history making it an especially apt spiritual and symbolic centre for the Emmanuel community, considering its self-definition in terms of the three Charisms or spiritual gifts of Adoration, Compassion, and Evangelization. Put together, these three Charisms form a motivational thread, whereby the divine love that adherents experience from Jesus (particularly at times, and as a result, of Eucharistic Adoration) is transformed into a sense of compassion for all of humanity, which in turn motivates community members to evangelize the world. Community members are expected to spend at least one hour a day in Eucharistic Adoration, a form of contemplative prayer that consists in sitting in silence in the presence of the exposed sacrament.

As is often the case with Charismatic movements, Emmanuel's initial Charismatic fervour has cooled down over the years, a change generally viewed by members as positive and indicative of a development of a more mature spirituality. The community's sedate temperament is also due to the fact that in blending Pentecostal and Catholic elements into its ritual life, Emmanuel is positioned much closer to the Catholic end of the Charismatic continuum, something which is evident, for example, in greater deference to more mediatory models of divine inspiration (cf. Csordas 2014). Finally, as they do not live together, most members of Emmanuel come into sporadic contact with each other through parish activities, as well as various events organized by the community at the local and regional levels, such as pilgrimages, teaching seminars, communal prayer sessions, monthly regional weekend meetings, bi-weekly small sharing group meetings (*maisonnée*), and other social gatherings.

Relationalism as value in Emmanuel

In his 1985 essay, 'A modified view of our origins: the Christian beginnings of modern individualism', Louis Dumont argues that the concept of the individual developed in Christianity is anchored in a replacement of the person's obligational ties to society with those to God. Like the figure of the Indian ascetic renouncer, Christian individuals are primarily devoted to their own salvation, detached from the social world, their gaze fixed not on the inner-worldly but on the other-worldly, not on this earthly life, but on the promise of eternal life in communion with God. It is the renunciation of lateral social obligations, the creation of the 'individual-in-relation-to-God', that Dumont, following Protestant theologian Ernst Troeltsch, considers to be the concept of the person derived from the teaching of Christ.

Indeed, much of the evidence of Christianity's individualizing effect on converts within the anthropology of Christianity is measured as a function of a withdrawal from this-world sociality and a reorientation towards God. In the case of Emmanuel,

however, an analysis of community members' attitudes towards the social reveals an inverse impulse. Rather than abandoning social ties in favour of a relation with the divine, for members of Emmanuel, the social itself and enactments of relationality become conduits for the divine or its medium of expression in the world, as well as the means of approximating it. I demonstrate this in the analysis that follows by focusing on three broad relational contexts in Emmanuel's ritual life: the personal relationship community members form with God; the relationships they form with other community members; and the relationship they attempt to establish with society at large.

I begin by examining how believers' personal, vertical relationship with God is transposed into the establishment of lateral social relations with others in the context of daily life, through interaction with family members, friends, or complete strangers. I argue that the transposition of the divine into social relations serves both to affirm sociality and to imbue the social itself with a sense of the divine, resulting in at least a potential sacralization of social interaction. I then examine the work of community-making, pointing to the fact that for members of Emmanuel, the act of enacting a community is in itself an ethical project approximating the divine, facilitated not through the avoidance of social friction, observed in such ethnographic cases as Robbins's (2004), but by plunging purposely into it. The establishment of sociality is construed in the case of Emmanuel, then, not as a conduit towards sin, but as a safeguard against it. Finally, I examine the community's attitudes and efforts towards conversion and evangelization, demonstrating that efforts nominally concerned with the individual transformation of non-believers into believers are likewise defined and enacted by Emmanuel through the establishment of relations. Taken as a whole, this ethnographic portrait of Emmanuel underscores the prominence of relationalism as a value shaping community members' ritual and social lives, and the potential role that adherents' relationship with God plays in giving rise to this particular ethical aspiration.

Finding God in social relations

In the context of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, where God is conceived of not as a distant and punitive figure, but as a close and loving companion with whom believers seek to establish a direct and personal relationship, contact with God is often achieved through cultivating believers' capacities to imaginally experience and interact with the divine, such as through the exercise of Charisms (Csordas 1994; Luhrmann 2012). Inspired by those ethnographic cases where persons imaginally interacted with God, where they heard, felt, and saw God, I often asked my interlocutors whether and how they spoke with God in their daily lives. The great majority of them asserted that they indeed received messages from God. When asked to provide examples, however, they would invariably recount to me a social interaction they had with another person. This was the case with Clement,[2] who felt he had received a life-changing message from God in the early days of his career as a special-needs teacher, a profession he disliked and felt he had been coerced into through parental pressure:

> [O]ne day, I had crossed paths with a friend of my father's. He had studied philosophy at a very, very high level. And all his life he worked selling tyres for Michelin. That's what he did. And one day I met him and he asked me, how is it going, your work? And so I told him, I'm working with disabled people and I find it very difficult, because it's not what I should be doing. He told me, what should you be doing? And I said, I would like to create art, I love to paint and design. And he told me, you know? Me neither, I wasn't made to sell tyres. What interests me is to read philosophy and teach philosophy.

And he said, we don't always do what we love, but we can always love what we do. *Voilà*! And through him, the Lord spoke to me. Because I brought myself to love what I was doing. And this had changed everything in my life. It helped me to look at the world differently. This was good. It was illuminating. The Lord spoke to me through this man.

What was it that made Clement interpret the tyre salesman's words to him as a message from God? The key lies in the effect the words had. Not only was the exchange with the man transformational, in the sense that it helped Clement accept his profession and find fulfilment in his job; it was also a moment of disorientation, surprise, a moment of 'illumination', through which he was able to see his reality through different eyes. More importantly for our argument, however, is that by identifying such moments of disruption as divine in origin, Clement is infusing the social with divine presence, making social relations into potential sites for divine revelation and personal transformation.

Not unlike Clement, Gilles, who worked as a director of one of Emmanuel's NGO branches, also felt that his interaction with God was made possible primarily through others, but for him those experiences of the divine were evident not in moments of rupture, illumination, or realization, but in the very substance of everyday life. God was revealed for Gilles in the love that others had for him, and it was this love and goodwill that he felt allowed him to love others in turn, fulfilling the terms of his mission:

> [O]ften, the manner of being loved by God passes through someone else … And so, in order to live our mission, which is a mission of comforting, a mission of a gaze of hope (*regard d'espérance*), you need to have another person look at you with that gaze of hope. I receive the gaze of hope from God through the eyes of Claire, or Jean Paul, or others. They look at me, they know me, they know my weakness, and they forgive me. They accept me as I am. And so through their manner of being with me, they demonstrate that God has a tenderness for me, that he admires my qualities, and he forgives my weakness and my sin. And it's like that that I receive the love of God. This love of God, later I can re-give it, I can pass it on in my mission.

God didn't always appear as a loving figure, however. For some, he made himself present in difficult times, where social interaction revealed itself to be taxing and unpleasant, or the presence of others was something one wished to avoid. This was the case for Jeanne, a mother of five, who had two severely disabled sons, Antoine and Patrice. 'Raising handicapped children', she once told me,

> was the harshest thing. It's like a light, a strong light of truth that shines on you all the time, showing you the hardness of your heart, showing you that you don't love your children, that you love your other, normal children better. You can't escape it, there is nowhere to go.

But the judgement of God did not descend on Jeanne from above. It was in her youngest, healthy son's eyes that she could see God's light shining on her, it was through his reproachful words – 'mother, don't yell at him, he doesn't know what he is doing'[3] – that she could hear God speaking to her, exposing to her the hardness of her heart, reminding her of her inability to love her disabled children.

At the same time, purposely transposing God into social relations often served Jeanne in her daily struggles of caring for loved ones in need. In addition to tending to her sons, Jeanne was the sole carer of her elderly mother, who suffered from a particularly debilitating form of Parkinson's disease. Reflecting on her burden of care, Jeanne referred to the Gospel:

> I was thinking about Jesus telling his followers … 'Every time you denied care for others who were in need, you turned me away'. This is what I remind myself when I'm with my mother, when she just sits

there and she can't talk, or with Antoine, or Patrice, when they make me angry, and I feel I have no patience. I look at them and I remember that when I am with them, I am with God.

For Jeanne, then, the intentional transposition of the divine into the social serves to maintain social interactions or relations she finds difficult.

In addition to experiencing God as immanent in social relations, members of Emmanuel also at times felt themselves as embodying divine presence. This is most clearly evident in the way Eucharistic Adoration is practised in Emmanuel. Adoration is simple, consisting of sitting silently in front of the exposed sacrament, believed by Catholics to embody the real presence of Christ, incarnate in the bread host through transubstantiation. Unlike kataphatic prayer practices, which aim to augment God's 'realness' by actively engaging with him through imaginal interaction (Luhrmann 2012), or Buddhist meditative practices, which are aimed at training the mind into a state of unattachment (Varela, Thompson & Rosch 1992), adoration is primarily a process of establishing a state of co-presence with Jesus, one of observing and being observed by a caring deity. The time passed in prayer is not primarily geared towards establishing an active, verbal communication with God, asking for help, advice, or direction, but rather is aimed at 'keeping God company', observing God and being observed by him in return.

Adoration was necessary, I was told, not merely or primarily to establish a relationship with God, however, but in order to facilitate love in one's social relations. Christ, as a presence of absolute unconditional love, in this instance, is thought to radiate forth from the Eucharist and enter those who are seated in front of him, likewise filling them with love for their fellow human beings. Emmanuel's self-definition in terms of the three Charisms, or spiritual gifts of Adoration, Compassion, and Evangelization, clearly outlines this supposed process. It is through the practice of Adoration that one is filled with an unbound divine love, which, translated into Compassion for all humankind, finally motivates community members to evangelize the world. Adoration, then, is ultimately geared towards the enactment of a *social* project of salvation, rather than merely a personal one. What is enfolded in this process, therefore, again, is not a withdrawal from the social in favour of the divine, but a pulling of the divine into the social, in this case through the bodies of believers, who become, through prayer, imbued with the real presence of God.

Having reviewed the various ways in which believers' relationship with God is transposed into social relations with others, the argument could be made that in projecting God into social relations, what we are really seeing is an effacing of the social, in the sense that all sociality could be seen as being reduced to instances of personal communication with the divine, coming at the expense of the agency, identity, or actual alterity of the social other. This, however, would miss the true work that such a repositioning achieves. The momentary transposition of the divine into relations does not result in a consistent effacement of the identity or the agency of social actors. What it does achieve is a *reorientation* of one's perception and engagement with the other, a reorientation specifically geared towards the affirmation of social ties.

A push for social friction

The argument that Christianity introduces individualism to the lives of its converts is largely supported by the observation that conversion to Christianity is often accompanied by a disembedding from social ties. In his work on the Urapmin of Papua

New Guinea, Robbins (2015) supports this position by pointing to the fact that a great part of what Urapmin constitute as sin has to do with the establishment of sociality, the processes and the effects of relating to others. For example, the arousal of such emotions as anger, frustration, and desire, which are the unavoidable results of social interaction, are understood by the Urapmin as sinful or as indicative of sinning, and the attempt to avoid such sinning is such that it drives them to attempt to withdraw from social relations.

Interestingly, a central aspect of Emmanuel ritual life reveals to us a diametrically opposed preoccupation with sociality, not as the medium of sin, but as a conduit for salvation. Emmanuel's preoccupation with the creation of relations is such that significant parts of the community's ritual life as well as broader missionary and humanitarian work are built around an intentional effort to create social friction, facilitated by encounters with social otherness or alterity, which would provide members with the opportunity to form relations across various divides of difference. The implicit logic behind this is based on the notion that relating under social conditions where conflict or friction are absent poses no real challenge for the formation of relations. I examine here how the push for social friction and the ethical work it entails are achieved through a central institution of community life: the *maisonnée*, or non-residential community household.

As they do not live together, most members of Emmanuel come into contact with each other through various activities at the parochial, regional, national, or international level. Among those, the most frequent, intimate, and important means of gathering are *maisonnée* meetings. The *maisonnée* is a small sharing group made up of fewer than ten people who convene once every two weeks in a different member's home. Its stated purpose is to allow community members to share their life experiences in light of God's Word and to provide a forum for spiritual support in the form of advice, group prayer, healing, or laying on of hands. *Maisonnées* are meant as intimate gatherings where members expose their personal concerns, experiences, and insights and reflect on God's presence in their lives. As they are meant to be a safe, criticism-free space for sharing, members of the group do not comment on the content of each person's reflections, but serve primarily in a listening capacity.

Maisonnée groups are assigned each year by the regional director and include both lay and consecrated members of the community, ideally from different walks of life or socioeconomic backgrounds. It is significant that this should be the case, since the function *maisonnée* meetings fulfil beyond allowing members to monitor their relationship with the divine is to give them the opportunity to cultivate and consolidate relationships with others with whom they might otherwise not come into contact under normal social conditions. Specifically, *maisonnées* are designed to force members into social interactions with others whom they might normally avoid, whether due to dislike, apprehension, or social difference, providing them with the opportunity to form relations across such differences. Since one could not choose one's *maisonnée* companions, and since they demanded an intimate engagement with the same group of people for a full year, *maisonnées* were sometimes suggested to me as an example of how the community served its members as a 'school for love', a term often used by my interlocutors in general reference to their communitarian life. For Gilles, *maisonnée* was an opportunity to overcome his dislike of a particular community member:

Because perhaps there is somebody that I have some bad issues with, but then he brings up a text that touches me, or when I have need for others to pray for me, he prays for me and says a Word of God for me. This way, I receive this goodwill from him, and this makes him my brother … And so, when I hear my brother who shares what he lives, I also develop a compassion for him. And the way I look at him is transformed. I think of somebody … he really used to aggravate me, and one day he shared something very profound about his family, of what he had lived, and that sharing stimulated a compassion within me, and he became a brother. Because he made an act of confidence, we shared intimacy.

A few important insights emerge from Gilles's account about the work that the *maisonnée* achieves by means of its manufactured sociality and the resulting social friction. The most evident is the facilitation of empathy, what Gilles refers to as moments where sharing in the course of meetings allows him insight into the suffering of someone he normally finds unlikeable. Gaining this new perspective on the person's experiential reality then moves him closer to understanding and a 'feeling for' the other. Perhaps less obvious, but just as significant, however, is the manner in which *maisonnée* is experienced by Gilles as providing him the opportunity to commune with God vis-à-vis social others. In sharing the Word of God with each other – an inspired text which each member receives in the course of prayer – members of the *maisonnée* are interceding on behalf of each other with the divine. Receiving a message from God through a group member rather than directly from the divine does the work of establishing a relation not merely between the person suffering and God, but also between members praying on behalf of each other. In its intercessory form, then, prayer in Emmanuel serves the formation of sociality vis-à-vis the divine, and a facilitation of divine presence vis-à-vis the social.

While *maisonnées* appear to serve the function of enabling an encounter between members from different social backgrounds with the understanding that sharing will lead to empathy and affinity, meetings fulfilled a greater purpose than simply facilitating empathic process. On the contrary, *maisonnées* were just as often the place where friction was created in the first place. 'The community is a school for love', one of my interlocutors once told me. 'It is a bag full of stones with sharp edges, and through our community life the bag just gets tossed and tossed, until all the stones become polished and smooth. Or at least that's what we would like to happen'. Although the creation of conflict was not an outright goal of *maisonnées*, it was generally agreed that they afforded the opportunity for *potential* social friction, and hence also provided community members with the occasion to work through and overcome this relation-inhibiting tension.

As direct confrontation, criticism, complaining, or blaming is not accepted or permitted in the course of meetings, and gossip about community members is likewise strongly discouraged, in cases where friction was not overcome in the course of *maisonnée* and tensions persisted or were amplified, members often turned to prayer in an attempt to overcome their inability to relate to others. They did so, however, in a very particular way. Rather than praying for the resolution of the conflict, to be granted a better understanding of the person (an empathic move), or for the person with whom they were having difficulties to change, community members simply prayed for that person's well-being. The purpose of this prayer, during which one 'entrusted the person to God', Jeanne explained to me, was to resolve the conflict not by interfering with the other person, but rather by 'stretching one's heart':

> With every prayer that I say, my heart stretches. And this happens because with each prayer, we entrust (*confie*) the person to Jesus. Sometimes there are people I meet in *maisonnée*, and there is nothing in them I find likeable. And when you pray, this is what happens: every person has something beautiful in them, even if it's just a sliver, and God is capable of seeing that, the good thing that we can't see. And when we pray for that person, gradually, Jesus helps us see that beauty for ourselves … When Lazarus was sick, Mary ran after Jesus and called to him, he whom you love is sick. And this is what we do when we pray for someone, we tell Jesus, he whom you love, we entrust to you.

What work does prayer, as described by Jeanne here, achieve? The move we are observing is one of reorientation, of an intentional disruption of one's habitual perspective through an implicit adoption of God's supposed perspective. In this way, the 'positive aspect of the person', the sliver of beauty which Jeanne acknowledges must exist, invisible to her but not to God, is eventually made experientially real for the person praying. This happens, however, not by directly asking God to show one this positivity in the other person, but through the indirect acknowledgement that God himself does see it. In this way, the love and care for the other are established vicariously through one's empathic stance towards the divine, in the sense that one attempts to gain a quasi-first-person perspective of the deity. Through this reorientating gesture enacted through prayer, 'he whom I do not love' is transformed into 'he whom you [God] love'.

The broader ethical work of *maisonnée*, then, reveals itself to be concerned not merely with the maintenance of one's relationship with God, but also with the establishment of relationality, a work that is made possible by allowing an opportunity to create familiarity between persons who might normally not interact with each other, as well as by instigating social friction, and as such the opportunity for overcoming it. Again, what we observe here is that rather than a withdrawal from the social in favour of the divine, or the location of the divine as exclusively transcending human sociality, Emmanuel ritual life identifies the divine as immanent in social life, and, furthermore, as facilitating it. This happens through self-processes based in a disruption and reorientation of one's perceptual perspective resulting in a realignment of one's habitual mode of being in the world with others.[4] The transposition of the divine into relations achieves a gradual reorientation of the ways in which one perceives and engages with the other, a reorientation that is specifically geared towards the flourishing and affirmation of social relations.

Evangelization, conversion, and world transformation

That relationalism functions in Emmanuel as a prominent value is evident not only in the manners in which members' personal relationship with God is transposed into social relations with others, or the ways in which the ritual life of the community is geared towards the cultivation of relations across difference. It is also evident in Emmanuel's ethical project vis-à-vis society at large. The year 2012 marked the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the community, and thousands of members from across the globe gathered for a week-long session of celebrations and worship at Paray-le-Monial for the occasion.[5] On the last day of the gathering, Laurent Landete, the then-moderator of the community, gave a closing speech in which he addressed the future of the community and the core lessons members were to take on with them following the celebrations of the jubilee year. The talk focused on the community's call to evangelize the world, opening by drawing a sharp distinction between evangelization and proselytism. Evangelization, Landete reminded the crowd, was not proselytism, not about a Christian duty to persuade others to embrace Christ. Evangelization was

simply an act of living a life that is in itself a demonstration of God's love, the living in community:

> We are not here to seduce, to convince. The impact of our community, for society but also for all of the Church, is to do with our way of life. This is the key for the New Evangelization. People in the world need to see this communion … St Peter didn't say look at *me*, he said, look at *us*. And he could do his miracle in the name of God because he wasn't alone. He had his brothers next to him. This is a community witness. The importance of being together. Fraternal relationship is the door to the relationship with God.

Conversion, mission, the ultimate transformation of society, are posited by Landete as the result of an embodiment of a particular sociality, as the result of the cultivation of relational, fraternal ties. Rather than the Christian individual serving as a sign of one's relation with God, it is the Christian community here, the display of fraternal love, that serves as a 'visible sign of the kingdom', a living testimony of God's love, made real through one's loving relation with others.

The notion that social change, specifically in the form of conversion and evangelization, would be brought about through community efforts to embody a particular sociality was not merely a speech, or an idea, but a principle I had observed my interlocutors attempt to live throughout my time with them. This was evident, as we have already observed, in their conceptualization of Eucharistic Adoration as ultimately an evangelical act anchored in the embodiment and demonstration of love for others, but also in members' accounts of their personal conversion, or experience of the Charismatic baptism in the Holy Spirit. Conversion narratives in Emmanuel were most often stories about how one became not only a practising, but also a Charismatic Catholic, after having grown up in either non-practising families, or else traditional Catholic families where worship was experienced to be mechanical, stale, or oppressive as opposed to 'alive', spontaneous, and personal. What was striking about these narratives was that for many of my interlocutors, the decisive moment (or process) of conversion followed not a direct spiritual union with the person of Jesus Christ, but an experience of fraternal love. It was through the caring gaze of others, through the love and care shown to them by other community members, that my interlocutors believed Christ to have revealed himself to them, made himself present in their lives. And so whether conversion was a process that was described to me as sudden or as processual, the locus of divine revelation was often identified not in imaginal moments of interaction with God, but in interaction with social others. Considering the centrality of one's conversion experience to one's life narrative as a Christian, the identification of one's process of conversion as primarily anchored in social relations is significant.

Living in an enchanted world

At a certain point during my first few months of working as a volunteer for Emmanuel's NGO, the Rocher, something about the way I felt myself inhabiting the world had dramatically changed. I had occasional glimpses of such odd moments, times when my experience of the world around me seemed foreign, altered, disorientating, but it was one day in particular that I go back to now, one when my own unfamiliar reactions to the world were foreign and impactful enough to compel me to log the experience in my field notes.

We were rushing, my fellow volunteers and I, accompanying an elderly parishioner in her wheelchair to the cathedral on our way for Easter mass after a long day of work. As we were passing through the bustling streets, passing by shops, restaurants, people

smoking, chatting, going their way, I had the distinct and startling feeling that I did not belong to the same world inhabited by these people. I felt that I belonged to a different world, a Catholic world, a cleaner and more self-aware world, where one reflected on one's life and one's obligations to others, and one's place in the world. I felt I belonged to a world where people cared, and did something about it.

As I was working full time as a volunteer for the Rocher, my days were filled by much more than simply attending to or documenting the NGO's activities and interactions with the population of the *cité*, or inner-city neighbourhood, in which it operated. During the months of my work, I was living in the *cité* itself, sharing my home with two other volunteers, attending mass daily and spending one hour a day in prayer, praise, and Eucharistic adoration alongside my fellow volunteers. Like them, I also shared fully in the ritual life of the Emmanuel community. Weekly evening prayer groups and community weekends punctuated my year, alongside various sacred days and holidays, becoming an integral part of my living routine. Gradually but surely, the world 'outside' seemed to diminish, to dull down. It became, at times, baffling in its superficial preoccupations and in what increasingly seemed to me to be a sad emptiness. Recognizing the foreignness of this perspective, however, did little to diminish it. As we were walking the streets, people rushing or chatting about seemed to me as if they were living an almost mindless, meaningless existence. As I shared this experience with my friends and co-workers, they seemed familiar with it themselves. I was experiencing what it felt like to be, it seemed, '*in* the world, but not *of* the world'.

Being in the world but not of the world, or what some of my interlocutors referred to as the 'spiritual battle' (*le combat spirituel*), is often used by Christians to reference the difficulties inherent in living in a fallen world, where one must endeavour to always avoid the temptation of sin – the difficulties of dwelling in the world, but not partaking of its nature. This notion resonates with a familiar image of Christianity, one of an ascetic religion of transcendence where the valuation of the spirit and contempt for the material corresponds to a disembedding of the individual from the social. For my interlocutors, however, not being *of* the world was only the beginning of the story. The real challenge was not to avoid the world. The real challenge was to truly and fully be *in* it.

I have argued here that in some Christian contexts, such as the case of Emmanuel, relationalism rather than individualism emerges as a prominent value, and that this shapes not only configurations of the person, but also orientations to social others. Answering Robbins's (2015) suggestion that relational configurations of personhood will coexist alongside individual ones due to the inevitable incompleteness of any individualizing project, I have demonstrated that in the case of Emmanuel we are observing not merely the residual or partial presence of non-individual configurations in social life, but the prominence of relationalism as a value in the community's self-definition and ethical project. The establishment and affirmation of relationships, facilitated through the transposition of the divine into human sociality, emerge as central to the community's ethical vision and ritual life.

In reconciling this portrait of Emmanuel with other accounts of Christian communities where individualism emerges as prominent, I have suggested that rather than arguing for Christianity's global promotion of one value over another, we turn to investigate the causes and conditions under which different formations of the social emerge across Christian and other religious contexts, and the various forms they take. The ethnographic case I have presented here alludes to at least one potential explanation

that might help us account for the differences observed across Christian communities, one based in the manners in which members of Emmanuel conceive of divine presence and its relation to the material world.

In his classic study on the relationship between Protestantism and capitalism, Max Weber identifies the Protestant Reformation, and Calvinism in particular, as having impacted sociality in a manner that instilled believers with an 'unprecedented inner loneliness of the single individual'. This growing isolation and individualization of the person was a result of a reconfiguration of how Christians following the Reformation learned to relate to the figure of God, as God became 'a transcendental being, beyond the reach of human understanding' (Weber 2005 [1930]: 60). The path to salvation was now a solitary road which each person must traverse completely alone, bereft of the aid of either church or sacrament. This, according to Weber, was the logical and eventual outcome of disenchantment, of the removal of magic from the world (see Gauchet 1999; also Robbins 2012). What we observe in the case of Emmanuel is an inverse gesture: the pulling of the divine back into the world and into human sociality, an act aspiring and amounting to a re-enchantment of the world, and, alongside it, the imbuing of sociality with a sense of the divine. What this also means is that the spiritual and the material, for Emmanuel, do not relate to each other antagonistically. Indeed, where God is understood and experienced as incarnate, as at least partially immanent in the mundane, the material is always already imbued with the spiritual.

This orientation to the divine and the mundane is captured, to a degree, by the notion of 'being *in* the world but not *of* the world' which Emmanuel members, and I towards the end of my fieldwork, came to experience. At first glance, the notion seems to invoke the image of the disenchanted, ascetic Christian individual, other-worldly-orientated in his or her attempt to detach from the evils of this world by disembedding from the social. This is the position, in Weber's (1978) terms, of world-rejecting asceticism, where the pursuit of salvation and communion with God turns one away from the world. Indeed, for some Christians, being in the world but not of it means just that. As my interlocutors conceived of this phrase, however, not being *of* the world was merely one's opening position. After all, one's detachment from the world was already established through ritual, something which even I, a Jewish non-believer, found to be the case. For Emmanuel, the challenge lay not merely or primarily in not falling into the world. The challenge lay in bringing one's already existing other-worldly perspective *into* the world, in fully inhabiting this mundane world while pulling the transcendent into it by virtue of one's presence.

In this sense, Emmanuel could be considered to embody what Weber termed a position of inner-worldly asceticism, where the path to salvation must pass through action in the world (although still in opposition to it), through the enactment of one's charisma on the world, and serving as an instrument of God. Weber gives ascetic Protestantism as a prime exemplar of this form of orientation to the world, and his characterization partially fits Emmanuel, insofar as community members are bent on the systematic transformation of the world, an expression of what might be considered the community's Charismatic or Pentecostal impulse. Where the model of inner-worldly asceticism does not fit Emmanuel is in their orientation to the materiality of the world, to its 'creatureliness', as Weber refers to it. The world, for the ascetic, 'abides in the lowly state of all things of the flesh' (Weber 1978: 543), and while it is still a creation of God, God's presence finds expression in the world *despite* its creatureliness.

For Emmanuel, however, this dichotomy between the spiritual and the material is not as sharp nor as hierarchically set. Indeed, while Christianity is often represented in anthropological texts as an ascetic religion of transcendence, characterized by a strict and hierarchical separation between the (celebrated) spiritual and the (tainted) material, this description is far from universal, and particularly inaccurate in the case of Catholicism, where neither the dichotomous division between the material and the spiritual, nor the notion of God's flight from the world find strong purchase (e.g. Bynum 1987; Mayblin 2010; Mitchell & Mitchell 2008).[6] Rather than denigrating the material in favour of the spiritual, Catholicism's grounding in sacramental logic means that materiality, in the form of either things (relics, water, oil), people (the Virgin, the saints), or places (shrines, churches), is a conduit of God's grace. The near sacralization of social relations we have observed in the case of Emmanuel, then, can be seen as a particular instantiation of the broader Catholic inclination to identify the material as a potential site of divine presence.

When articulated in this fashion, the link becomes apparent between the centrality of relationalism as a value in Emmanuel and the identification of the divine as immanent in the world. Just as an other-worldly orientation, an aspiration for a union with a transcendent and distant God, leads the ascetic to disembed from this-worldly relations, so the (partial) location of the divine in the world itself serves to orientate believers to the social, standing in itself as a potential medium of the divine. An association between divine immanence and the centrality of relationalism as an orientating value can be gleaned in other ethnographies of Catholic and Orthodox Christianities. Andreas Bandak's (2015) account of Syrian Christianity, a tradition that strongly underscores divine immanence, shows how religious devotion, facilitated through the emulation of saints, is based in the creation of relational chains spanning across this world and the next. Liana Chua (2015) likewise identifies that, more so than their Pentecostal counterparts, Anglican and Catholic Bidayuh conceived of salvation as conditional not simply upon their relation to God, but also upon their relationship with social others. This, she suggests, results from these traditions' embedding of the congregation 'firmly amid the living community on the basis that the best way to honor the dyadic bond between individuals and God is to act in and on the world' (2015: 350).

There is an association between denomination and the experienced locus of divine presence implied by the examples I have presented so far. To put it simply, it appears that Catholic and Orthodox Christianities tend towards immanence and so relationality, and Protestant iterations of Christianity tend towards transcendence and so individualism. However, I would suggest that we avoid the temptation to adopt this division, either fully or simply. For one thing, the expression both of the locus of divine presence and of value is likely to also be shaped by political, social, and cultural forces and may vary across Christian contexts in spite of similarity in denomination. A good cautionary example in this respect is the case of Prosperity Christianity, a form of Protestantism where the divine is often rendered as immanent in the world (Coleman 2004; also Bialecki 2011; Haynes 2017).

In their introduction to a special issue on the subject, Jon Bialecki and Girish Daswani (2015: 290) argue that the either/or position on the question of in/dividualism, as well as the somewhat lukewarm assertion that in all social contexts 'there exist both individual and dividual modalities or aspects of personhood' (LiPuma 1998: 56), should be abandoned in favour of more nuanced lines of analysis. My account of Emmanuel is a step in that direction. To begin with, moving away from the question of whether

Christianity per se inspires more individual or more relational configurations of personhood opens up a space for a more systematic exploration of the questions central to this debate across different Christian contexts, and possibly other religious traditions, refining a discussion crafted primarily in conversation between ethnographers of Protestant and Pentecostal Christianity (see Mayblin, Norget & Napolitano 2017). At the same time, my analysis expands on this debate as it has taken shape within the anthropology of Christianity by shifting the analytical centre of gravity from the question of personhood to that of relationships.

In arguing that the varied manners in which religious persons experienced and conceived of the locus of divine presence impacted expressions of value and orientations to the social, I also join recent voices (e.g. Scherz 2018; Schielke 2019) that point to the need to introduce God, or the divine more broadly, to the centre of ethnographic analysis. As I have demonstrated here, the analytical benefits of doing so can be considerable, allowing in this case for an understanding of the ethical aspirations of religious persons and their orientations to social others. Considering the ethical and political implications that one's orientation to the social can have, in an age that some refer to as post-secular, bringing into sharper focus the role played by God in the lives of religious actors seems like a worthwhile effort.

NOTES

[1] Robbins's claim here, like the debate as a whole, is reminiscent of the anthropological debate on egocentrism and sociocentrism which dominated much of the literature on the self and person in the 1980s and early 1990s. Growing out of an attempt to establish the cultural particularity of the Western concepts of the self and person, this debate contrasted the supposedly egocentric, bounded Western self with the supposedly relational or sociocentric non-Western self (e.g. Markus & Kitayama 1991). Marilyn Strathern's original argument about the dividuality of Pacific people, on which much of the current debate about dividuality and individuality in Christianity draws, for example, features squarely within this broader debate (see Strathern 1988). The sociocentric/egocentric dichotomy collapsed, however, as anthropologists began to note that sociocentric selves were to be found in supposedly egocentric societies and vice versa. Melford Spiro (1993) demonstrated that much of the confusion on the subject stemmed from the fact that when referring to the 'self' or to the 'person', anthropologists were variously referring to cultural conceptions of the self, the person's own conceptions of the self, the person's representations of their own self, and the person's actual experience of themselves, without making a clear distinction between these categories or acknowledging that they need not overlap. A similar imprecision of terms characterizes the current debate on dividualism and individualism. While a systematic treatment of this issue is beyond the scope of this article, engaging directly with Robbins's argument on value rather than the broader debate on personhood or selfhood sufficiently sidesteps this problematic for our purposes. However, since value in the sense discussed by Robbins is bound to at least partly shape formations of the self and person as well as modes of sociality, were it to further progress, this debate would benefit from a more careful clarification of terms.

[2] The names of all interlocutors mentioned throughout this text are pseudonyms.

[3] A paraphrase on the words of Jesus on the cross (Luke 23:34).

[4] The notion of self-process draws on Hallowell's (1955) conception of self as orientational. See Csordas (1994) and Itzhak (2015) for an explication of these processes in the context of religious healing.

[5] Unlike other sessions at Paray-le-Monial, which were managed by the community but were open to any participant, the anniversary session was open to community members only.

[6] See also Cannell (2005: 341), who traces this characterization of Christianity in the anthropological literature to an overly simplistic reading of Weber, whose argument on the relationship between capitalism and Puritanism required a stress on Christianity's ascetic characteristics.

REFERENCES

Bandak, A. 2015. Exemplary series and Christian typology: modelling on sainthood in Damascus. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **21**: **S1**, 47-63.

Bialecki, J. 2011. No caller ID for the soul: demonization, charisms, and the unstable subject of Protestant language ideology. *Anthropological Quarterly* **84**, 679-703.

——— 2015. The judgment of God and the non-elephantine zoo: Christian dividualism, individualism, and ethical freedom after the Mosko-Robbins debate. *New Directions in the Anthropology of Christianity* (available online: *https://www.new-directions.sps.ed.ac.uk/occasional-paper-bialecki-the-judgment-of-god-and-the-non-elephantine-zoo/*, accessed 10 February 2021).

——— & G. Daswani 2015. Introduction: What is an individual? The view from Christianity. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **5**, 271-94.

———, N. Haynes & J. Robbins 2008. The anthropology of Christianity. *Religion Compass* **2**, 1139-58.

Bynum, C.W. 1987. *Holy feast, holy fast*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cannell, F. 2005. The Christianity of anthropology. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **11**, 335-56.

——— (ed.) 2006. *The anthropology of Christianity*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.

Chua, L. 2015. Horizontal and vertical relations: interrogating 'in/dividualism' among Christian Bidayuhs. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **5**, 339-59.

Coleman, S. 2004. The charismatic gift. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **10**, 421-42.

Csordas, T. 1994. *The sacred self: a cultural phenomenology of charismatic healing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

——— 2014. A global geography of the spirit: the case of Catholic Charismatic communities. *International Social Science Journal* **63**, 171-83.

Daswani, G. 2011. (In-)dividual Pentecostals in Ghana. *Journal of Religion in Africa* **41**, 256-79.

Dumont, L. 1985. A modified view of our origins: the Christian beginnings of modern individualism. In *The category of the person: anthropology, philosophy, history* (eds) M. Carrithers, S. Collins & S. Lukes, 93-122. Cambridge: University Press.

——— 1994. *German ideology: from France to Germany and back*. Chicago: University Press.

Errington, F.K. & D.B. Gewertz 1995. *Articulating change in the 'last unknown'*. Boulder, Colo.: Westview.

Gauchet, M. 1999. *The disenchantment of the world: a political history of religion*. Princeton: University Press.

Hallowell, A.I. 1955. The self and its behavioral environment. In *Culture and experience* (ed.) A.I. Hallowell, 75-110. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Haynes, N. 2017. *Moving by the spirit: Pentecostal social life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Itzhak, N. 2015. Making selves and meeting others in neo-shamanic healing. *Ethos* **43**, 286-310.

Josephides, L. 1991. Metaphors, metathemes, and the construction of sociality: a critique of the New Melanesian Ethnography. *Man* (N.S.) **26**, 145-61.

Keane, W. 2007. *Christian moderns: freedom and fetish in the mission encounter*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

LiPuma, E. 1998. Modernity and forms of personhood in Melanesia. In *Bodies and persons: comparative perspectives from Africa and Melanesia* (eds) M. Lambek & A. Strathern, 53-79. Cambridge: University Press.

Luhrmann, T.M. 2012. *When God talks back: understanding the American Evangelical relationship with God*. New York: Knopf.

Markus, H. & S. Kitayama 1991. Culture and the self: implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review* **98**, 224-53.

Marriott, M. 1976. Hindu transactions: diversity without dualism. In *Transaction and meaning: directions in the anthropology of exchange and symbolic power* (ed.) B. Kapferer, 109-42. Philadelphia: Institute for the Study of Human Issues.

Mauss, M. 1990 [1950]. *The gift: the form and reason for exchange in archaic societies* (trans. W.D. Halls). New York: W.W. Norton.

Mayblin, M. 2010. *Gender, Catholicism and morality in Brazil: virtuous husbands, powerful wives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

————, K. NORGET & V. NAPOLITANO 2017. Introduction: The anthropology of Catholicism. In *The anthropology of Catholicism: a reader* (eds) K. Norget, V. Napolitano & M. Mayblin, 1-29. Berkeley: University of California Press.

MEYER, B. 2004. Christianity in Africa: from African Independent to Pentecostal-Charismatic churches. *Annual Review of Anthropology* **33**, 447-74.

MITCHELL, J. & H. MITCHELL 2008. For belief: embodiment and immanence in Catholicism and Mormonism. *Social Analysis* **52**, 79-94.

MITTERMAIER, A. 2012. Dreams from elsewhere: Muslim subjectivities beyond the trope of self-cultivation. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **18**, 247-65.

MOSKO, M. 2010. Partible penitents: dividual personhood and Christian practice in Melanesia and the West. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **16**, 215-40.

———— 2015. Unbecoming individuals: the partible character of the Christian person. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **5**, 361-93.

ROBBINS, J. 2004. *Becoming sinners: Christianity and moral torment in a Papua New Guinea society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———— 2012. Transcendence and the anthropology of Christianity: language, change, and individualism. *Journal of the Finnish Anthropological Society* **37**: **2**, 5-23.

———— 2015. Dumont's hierarchical dynamism: Christianity and individualism revisited. *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* **5**, 173-95.

SCHERZ, C. 2018. Enduring the awkward embrace: ontology and ethical work in a Ugandan convent. *American Ethnologist* **120**, 102-12.

SCHIELKE, S. 2019. The power of God: four proposals for an anthropological engagement. *Programmatic Texts* **13**. Berlin: Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient.

SPIRO, M. 1993. Is the Western conception of the self 'peculiar' within the context of the world cultures? *Ethos* **21**, 107-53.

STRATHERN, M. 1988. *The gender of the gift: problems with women and problems with society in Melanesia*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

VARELA, F., E. THOMPSON, & E. ROSCH 1992. *The embodied mind: cognitive science and human experience*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

VILAÇA, A. 2011. Dividuality in Amazonia: God, the Devil, and the constitution of personhood in Wari' Christianity. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* (N.S.) **17**, 243-62.

WEBER, M. 1978. *Economy and society: an outline of interpretive sociology* (eds G. Roth & C. Wittich). Berkeley: University of California Press.

———— 2005 [1930]. *The Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (trans. T. Parsons). New York: Dover.

WERBNER, R. 2011. The charismatic dividual and the sacred self. *Journal of Religion in Africa* **41**, 180-205.

Le sacré dans le fait social : relationnalisme chrétien et réenchantement du monde

Résumé

Cet article intervient dans un débat en cours cherchant à déterminer si, oui ou non, le christianisme introduit l'individualisme dans la vie de ses convertis. En s'appuyant sur un témoignage ethnographique de la Communauté de l'Emmanuel, un mouvement français se réclamant du renouveau charismatique catholique, l'autrice démontre que, contrairement à l'argument selon lequel l'individualisme émerge comme une des valeurs de premier plan dans les situations sociales où le christianisme est central, c'est parfois le relationnalisme qui façonne les aspirations éthiques chrétiennes. L'autrice avance que les différences observées, d'un contexte à l'autre, en termes de valeur exprimée et de configuration du statut de personne, proviennent peut-être des diverses manières d'expérimenter et de comprendre la présence divine en fonction des communautés chrétiennes. Placer Dieu au centre de l'analyse ethnographique lorsque l'on témoigne de ces différences permet d'augmenter la portée comparative du débat, tout en mettant en évidence la manière dont l'agencéité divine façonne les aspirations éthiques des croyants et leurs relations avec l'Autre social. Étant données les implications éthiques et politiques dont sont porteuses l'orientation des personnes envers le social, l'article en appelle à des recherches plus poussées concernant la manière dont le divin est expérimenté et invoqué dans la vie sociale et rituelle.

Nofit Itzhak is a Marie Sklodowska-Curie Fellow in the Department of Anthropology, Philosophy, and Social Work at the Universitat Rovira i Virgili. She is currently writing a monograph based on her research with Catholic Charismatic Humanitarian Missions in France and in Rwanda.

Department of Anthropology, Philosophy, and Social Work, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Campus Catalunya, Av. Catalunya 35, Tarragona, 43005, Spain. nofit.itzhak@urv.cat