DIVIDUAL PROCESSES OF WORLDING FROM PHILOSOPHICAL, SOCIOLOGICAL, AND AESTHETIC PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This philosophical essay starts with an explanation of the concepts of "world" and "worldliness" in the philosophy of Heidegger in order to trace their transformation into processes of worlding in the philosophies of Deleuze & Guattari and Edouard Glissant. Their reinterpretations insist on the temporal, relational, and composite-cultural character of processes of worlding and on the necessity of the respective actors and agents becoming minor, other, multiple, and heterogeneous. Secondly, the essay traces the explanation of sociopolitical and digitalized processes in sociological and philosophical texts: the concept of "world society" as defined by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck, characterized as a positive form of transnational collaboration between different nongovernmental organizations. As in Deleuze's negative assessment of digital control together with the constraint of personal flexibilization and dividuation in his final text (from the mid-1990s), the late Beck also provides rather negative descriptions of more recent processes of worlding. According to his analysis, these are provoked by global economic, technological, and political players and national interests exporting risks and catastrophes to neighboring countries, and subjecting certain people and populations to precarious dividual border existences. Finally, the text tries to uncover dividual processes as defined by Deleuze, including dividual processes in aesthetic articulations—in film, art, and exhibitions—due to their temporal, composite-cultural, and digital character and the inevitable mutual appropriations and resonances between these different aesthetic manifestations. Once again, using the concept of dividuation, this essay also diagnoses trends of aesthetic repetition and differentiation as well as of progressive homogenization due to international exchange and competition in the art sphere.

Keywords: World Society; Processes Of Worlding; Social, Aesthetic, Digital Dividuation

Philosophical Conceptualizations of the Becoming-World

German phenomenological philosophy, in the famous version formulated by Martin Heidegger in *Sein und Zeit* [*Being and Time*] (1927), tells us that, in order to discuss different "images of the world" (*Weltbilder*, 52f.), we must first unpack the idea of "world" (*Welt*). Since "world" is a constitutive factor of "human existence," the latter has to interrogate its foundation in the "world." Human existence grounded in a "being-in-the world" (*In-der-Welt-Sein*, §12, 53) has to bring about the ontological sense of "worldliness" (*Weltlichkeit*), which in turn presupposes a primordial and unreflected "reliance on world" (*Weltvertrautheit*).

All those elements that are essential for the understanding of this relation between human existence and world are called "existentials." "Being-in-the-world" is an existential, and is the starting point for philosophical reflection, since human existence has always already "discovered a world" (§24); this—nonexplicit—discovery reveals a spatial relatedness of existence through distance and orientation toward the realm of things. As a constitutive "encounter," it gives space; it spatializes, which once again is considered a precondition for a "circumspect taking care of the world" (*umsichtiges Besorgen der Welt*, §24). Asking "who" is in this world, Heidegger explains that this inevitable being-in-the-world is at the same time a necessary "being-with" (*Mitsein*) and a "being-with-others" (*Mitdasein mit anderen*, §26). These others cannot be separated from me; I am not even different from them. I share the world with them: "The world of existence is the world-with" (*Die Welt des Daseins ist Mitwelt*, §26); it has to be explained through the phenomenon of "worry/care" (*Sorge*, §27).

Heidegger's conceptualization of being-in-the-world has been criticized by French poststructuralist philosophers for its anthropomorphic and therefore reductive understanding of human existence and its being-with-others. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari argue that human existence and existence in general should not be qualified in terms of an immovable being-in-the-world or an abstract being-with. The authors shift the epistemological perspective and insist on temporal rather than spatial factors: human actors and other agents should be read as temporal and manifold ways of becoming, of becoming different and multiple, of becoming related and interconnected, and thus bringing about permanently changing processes of worlding, in unexpected aesthetic articulations beyond the human realm.

In his philosophical work *Différence et Répétition* [*Difference and Repetition*] (1967), Deleuze replaces Heideggers's term of "being-with-others" with the idea of becoming-other and stranger to oneself through processes of temporal repetition and affective intensification in which, at a certain point, repetition catalyzes an immanent differentiation of the same and a multiplication of otherness. The person may then start to lose his/her contours and recognizability, his/her undivided character and individuality. By directing attention to the affects of rhythms, voices, images, or speed—even through these qualities in nonhuman agents—human existences are characterized as self-altering and gradually deindividualizing processes, losing their boundaries and gaining unknown forms of expression thanks to their transversal affiliation with nonanthropomorphic articulations. Becoming-world is linked to the discovery of an "inner outside" of the self, to the loss of individual specificity and a sort of "general" speech, like what we encounter in Samuel Beckett's novel *The Unnamable*.

Deleuze and Guattari intensify their research into the rhizomatic relations between disciplines, concepts, organisms, affects, and unusual groupings in their seminal text *Mille Plateaux. Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* [*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*] (1980). They describe the aesthetic procedures of mutual capture and nonnatural interpenetration between human and nonhuman agents, which provoke the loss of ordinary language and individual faciality. They set free ways of stammering and unlearning, of refusing to enter "normal" systems of behavior and discipline, like in Melville's novel *Bartleby*. These

aesthetic processes are characterized as becoming molecular in the sense of "minorizing" oneself to the point of achieving the "virtues" of "becoming imperceptible, undistinguishable and impersonal" (1987, 382). "Becoming all-world" is thus conceived of as an unlimited process of becoming a nonspecific multitude and of bringing about a commonality not due to an aesthetic judgment, but due to nonnatural captures between minor entities of different kinds. Processes of becoming-animal are discovered in the novels of Virginia Woolf or Hermann Melville; "dividual" screams are heard in Luciano Berio's musical compositions. All in all, the authors highlight processes of worlding mainly in aesthetic expressions deriving from procedures of deindividualizing and of providing articulations that do not belong to a certain person, to a specific culture, an aesthetic norm, or a recognizable place.

Deleuze and Guattari also discover analogue processes of minorization in areas beyond the anthropological realm, such as in the biosociological sphere. They even claim that art is not a human invention, but began with the occupation of territories by animals and their specific sounds. They call birds the first artists, who can therefore become performers in certain musical compositions of Olivier Messian. Elucidating research in different scientific disciplines, the authors try to prove that there is no such thing as a fixed world, only ever-new processes of worlding according to the chosen epistemological, affective, or aesthetic choice. In order to philosophize new ways of becoming all-world, they search for tendencies to dissolve conventional forms, taxonomies, and epistemological boundaries, instead creating transversal and cross-disciplinary connections and thus highlighting continuous aesthetic creations by undefined multitudes and packs.

Their emphasis on minorizing processes culminates in an analysis of literary texts and filmic examples, in which they eventually diagnose a becoming-everybody of artistic expression, which equates to a becoming-nobody. In direct opposition to Heidegger, they postulate the loss of name, home, and bourgeois attributes and advocate for nomadic existences, for the freeing of a general desire and of creating new processes of worlding, of becoming all-world in (nonin)dividual aesthetic articulations of a countless many (Ott, 2015/2018).

Deleuze also elaborates a becoming-dividual of film in *Cinéma 2. L'image-temps* [*Cinema 2*] (1986). The image of time in its exposition of fading temporality is similar to the temporal and heterogenous expression of contemporary musical compositions. Because of their incessant auditive (and visual) shifts, their articulations cannot be identified as a durable and representational expression and are therefore denied an "individual" expression. Their becoming-dividual is supposed to set free aesthetic articulations of undetermined ensembles, including nonhuman speakers. Such processes are called "un devenir tout le monde," a "becoming all-world": "Car tout le monde est l'ensemble molaire, mais devenir tout le monde est une autre affaire, qui met en jeu le cosmos avec ses composantes moléculaires. Devenir tout le monde, c'est faire monde, faire un monde" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 343). Processes of worlding are thus conceived of as a becoming-dividual and becoming-coequal

of all sorts of participants. Nowadays, it would be considered a becoming-world in an ecological sense.

This idea of "becoming all-world" (*devenir tout le monde*) has been taken up by the Caribbean author Edouard Glissant in his work *Traité de Tout-Monde/Treatise on the Whole-World* (Glissant, 1997). In a reference to Deleuze and Guattari, he brings into play a becoming all-world due to composite-cultural and aesthetic relations, and a being-together-apart in manifold ways. But he also asks for certain reevaluations and reversions of Western terminologies and understandings from a postcolonial Antillean perspective. He agrees that it is necessary to abolish standardized hierarchies and taxonomies, including the distinction between center and periphery, by developing a *Poétique de la relation/Poetics of relation* (Glissant, 1990/2020). In a sort of postcolonial critique, he points at the antecedent, but colonially suppressed relations of repetition and differentiation between the Caribbean islands. In his novel *Mahagony* , he explores the idea of a clandestine subterranean order of earth by emphasizing the unnoticed relations of mahagony trees. Additionally, in a pre-ecological sense close to the thinking of Bruno Latour, he strives for a philosophy of the becoming of planet earth while insisting on the necessity of remaining at home—a nomadic existence while remaining in the very same place: "La circulation et l'action de la poésie ne conjecturent plus un peuple donné, mais le devenir de la planète terre" (Glissant, 1990, p. 44).

From his postcolonial perspective, he underlines the opposite and problematic side of the concept of minorization: the fact that the people of Martinique and Guadeloupe have been minorized by the French colonialists. Minorization therefore cannot be understood as a necessary condition for becoming all-world, in his view. He applies a related critique to the European obligation of enlightenment; Glissant offers, as its opposite, the right to opacity. Notwithstanding this, he interprets minorization as an appropriate tool for the subversion of the French colonial language: changing the pronunciation of the French words and mixing them with words of other origins brings about a creole that is situated between "la multiplicité des langues africaines d'une part et européenne d'autre part, la nostalgie enfin du reliquat caraibe" (Glissant, 1990, p. 83). Diversifying the imposed language becomes an act of resistance in his eyes, bringing about dividual expressions and the language's becoming-insignificant and becoming-poetic at the same time. Glissant praises the literature of the Caribbean islands for exposing the different "origins" and the aesthetic tensions between their different cultural layers. Becoming all-world, then, means the actualization of these different heritages by relating not only to the neighboring islands, but even to the languages and aesthetic articulations of the African continent. Together, they contribute to an "emmêlement mondial," a worldly intertwinement and commingling, bringing about a "parole du monde" (Glissant, 1990, p. 133), a world idiom of the kind encountered in music such as jazz, hip-hop or rap.

World Society and Social Processes of Worlding

Before elucidating processes of worlding in the contemporary aesthetic realm, I want to question the actuality of these philosophical elaborations by relating them to sociological explanations of world societies and the social processes of worlding today. These explanations

reveal different and disillusioned estimations of social processes within the so-called "world society" and the current processes of worlding.

At the end of the twentieth century, German sociologist Ulrich Beck (1997) referred to the concept of world society in order to highlight the relatively recent transformation of sociopolitical processes due to non-state civil cooperation across national boundaries:

> We have long since lived in a world society, and this relates to two basic facts: on the one hand, the totality of non-nation state politically organised social and power relationships, on the other, the experience of living and acting outside of boundaries. The unity of state, society, and individual presumed by the first modernity is being dissolved. World society does not mean world state society—for example United Nations governance—or world economy society like in the WTO, but a non-state civil society, an aggregate condition of society, for which state-territory guarantees of order and the rules of publicly legitimate politics lose their binding character. (Beck, 1997, p. 174)

This evolution of a transnational form of information exchange and collaboration between different nongovernmental organizations not identified by territory or national culture is of course fostered and enabled by the shift from analogue to digital communication. The organizations Beck has in mind—Transparency International, Amnesty International, Medecins Sans Frontières—are bottom-up initiatives, operating regionally and transcontinentally, not striving for a world government or aiming to construct a coherent world order like the UN. On the contrary, the world society Beck tries to sketch wants to be a heterogeneous and mobile structure composed of single or group initiatives, of increasingly transcultural connections, and of boundary-breaking power relations—maybe even stimulated by the philosophical demand for molecularized power structures, for independent and culturally transversal associations. On the other hand, these nongovernmental organizations operate on the basis of common interests, affects, and competencies and the willingness to engage and to pursue well-defined political or humanitarian aims in a sort of practiced enlightenment. Beck's enthusiastic description of "glocal biographies of contact and crossing points of human beings" (1997, p. 178) expanding in a growing world society is not only applicable to the global North, but also to the global South. Today, however—some twenty years later—Beck's affirmation of these multidirectional digital connections of persons and organizations have to be read in a more ambiguous way. They realize a world society as an interest-guided and capitalized coherence of many sociopolitical actors and their power relations, contradicting or complementing the global order of nation-states and the world government of the UN; in this respect, they are very different from the kind of limitless rhizomatic connections and composite-cultural ensembles Deleuze & Guattari and Glissant have in mind.

The ones who come closest to the social multitudes appreciated by Deleuze and Guattari are the several billion internet users who affirm the technological offers of association and bring about dense sequences of aesthetic responses in social media and thereby a certain loss of

individuality. They are already moving toward a becoming-everybody-and-nobody thanks to their analogue behavior in digital communication, often in the same lingua franca, the English idiom. And yet, in a late remark in *Postscript on the Society of Control* (1990, pp. 3–7), Deleuze uses the term "dividual" in a negative sense to label this new form of human subjectivation, which was just becoming apparent in his lifetime. In this short text, he states that the processes of worlding no longer depend on the difference between single persons and social masses, but between dividuals and banks, data, and the samples of which they are part, in which they are participating (often without being aware of it). In a general sense, he draws attention to the flexibilization of persons under the digital regime of visibility and control, the compulsion to engage in lifelong learning, the substitution of the human signature by machine codes, and so forth. The fact that the relationships of single persons are captured by abstract and nonpersonal control powers and computing systems—and are registered, directed, and intricately lent enhanced value by them—causes Deleuze to outline new subjectivation modes: "Individuals become 'dividuals' and masses become samples, data, markets, or 'banks'" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 5). In this late text, he takes a gloomy view, foreseeing the strategies of registration of the worldwide population by privatized and economicized regimes of control and the compulsion to be fluid, following the model of stock prices and currency devaluations. The persons appear involuntarily dividuated due to their being reduced to statistical values, to participation being imposed on them at all times, and to their abilities and performance being modularized according to market requirements. These dividual processes of worlding now encompass violently minorized subjects; the former positive evaluation of becoming all-world is now substituted for a pessimistic or even dystopian one.

Beck, for his part, also drops his description of a positive world society, pointing at powerful global economic players that render even nongovernmental politics dependent on market dynamics. He now differentiates between macroeconomic transnational operations, encompassing transfers of goods and finances, natural resources, and ecological dangers, from mesoeconomic and involuntary transnational operations, which include labor migration, refugee movements, the exportation of illegal goods, and poverty. He also criticizes the way that active and passive transnationalizations are distributed to different regions of the world. In view of this, he asks for a transnational interior politics. Being aware of the risks of digital control and security measures, of cultural homogenization and excessive management, he nevertheless hopes that, within the contemporary processes of worlding, "contours of a utopia of ecological democracy" (Beck, 1997, p. 170) will begin to emerge.

In a more recent text (2010), Beck is even less optimistic, accentuating globally accepted social and economic inequalities as part of current processes of worlding. He states that the former territorial, political, economic, and socially established space has been replaced by the "ambivalence of co- and multinational action spaces" (2010, p. 24) and a "contingency of non-congruent boundary constructions." Since these boundary constructions bring about unequal and unrecognized processes of worlding, he aims to examine all movements that penetrate the boundaries of nation-states. This new, expanded perspective results in the insight that the ability and possibility of crossing boundaries has today become a significant resource for survival, for social participation, for access to state welfare institutions, for general security

and a better standard of life. However, social inequality may not even be the fault of a specific state, but an incidental consequence of political decisions made elsewhere that have consequences across nation-state boundaries: "Often it is the case that one exports the danger, either spatially […] or temporally: to the future of unborn generations. One saves money by transporting the risk to somewhere where the security standards are low and the arm of the law does not reach […] This applies to the export of torture as it does to the export of waste" (ibid., p. 28). Here, Beck outlines significant political-economic processes of dividuation of risk and security without using this term. Those responsible for certain decisions are not the ones who bear their consequences; active and "passive transnationalization" (ibid., p. 32) are distributed between different persons, states, or even continents: "The distribution of the 'latent incidental consequences' follows the pattern of exploiting marginal, peripheral regions where few rights exist, because in these places civil rights is a foreign term" (ibid., p. 28).

For Beck, this does not mean that passive societies are not part of the processes of worlding: "Rather, the reverse is true: they are the worst affected owing to the scant resource of silence that they can offer: a fateful magnetism prevails between poverty, social vulnerability, corruption, and accumulation of danger" (2010, p. 28). He thus draws the conclusion that "the resource and capacity of 'boundary profit,' that is, of crossing nation-state boundaries or instrumentalising them for the accumulation of life opportunities, has become a key variable of social inequality in the globalised world" (ibid., p. 31).

In the form of the "average migrant," Beck therefore discovers the consummate contemporary embodiment of the one who benefits from the boundary condition. As an "artist of the border," he explores an existence that, in its multiple economic, political, and cultural orientations and its often clandestine movements, can be called the prototype of a becoming-imperceptible and becoming-impersonal, but in an involuntary way. Thus, the becoming all-world in the abovementioned philosophical sense receives a dramatic and endangered connotation today: "In these forms of life that are tested in border-crossing opportunities, different national-state spaces of social inequality intersect and interpenetrate in them" (Beck, 2010, p. 32). Because of these increased political, economic, and cultural intersections, I would call these persons highly dividual incorporations of current processes of worlding.

From an intersectional perspective, these precarious forms of dividual existence reveal contradictory subject positions even within a single individual. In the lives of both border-crossers and average users of digital technology alike, they may provoke simultaneous experiences of subjugation and empowerment, of self-valuation and devaluation. These experiences depend on social contexts and cultural acceptance, on gender, race, or composite-cultural backgrounds: any of these factors may add to the preexisting forms of exploitative practice, and may thus produce increased personal dividuation and highly contradictory self-estimation in the process of becoming all-world.

Aesthetic Processes of Worlding

At this point in my reflections, I would like to turn to questions of aesthetics. The condition of aesthetic articulations and artistic practices is somehow analogous to that of human existences, depending on digital and composite-cultural production and distribution, but also on inequalities concerning their reception and estimation.

Today, we are informed that the media communicability of the artistically in-demand, the increased circulation of artworks, and their digital advertising mean that practically no artistic practice can be understood as fully independent and as an individual creation, unless the desire is to situate it in a local tradition, far from any technological reach or very much outside of the art market. Since aesthetic expressions are digitally accessible and often downloadable, processes of thematic repetition, artistic appropriation, and targeted adaptation can be observed everywhere. Even an art composition conceived with difference production and criticism in mind refers to antecedent forms of expression and necessarily dividuates itself, if only in becoming part of a certain aesthetic tradition.

Yet the artistic practices differ in the intensity of their repetition and transformation, depending upon their critical approach: self-reflexive artistic creations enact their temporal conditionality and aesthetic non-concludability, evoke their artistic references, and refer to their cultural situatedness and possible blind spots. In so doing, they set free daring artistic articulations, negotiations of the relation between the (in)dividual and the common, and thereby jolt awake unseen processes of worlding. With regard to this, I would like to quote Okwui Enwezor on the notion that art from the global South, more than that of the global North, consists in composite-cultural expressions and formal amalgamations of art practices from different corners of the world—prompting further aesthetic fractalization and evoking composite-cultural intertwining as a form of becoming all-world in Glissant's sense.

Interestingly, the adaptations of aesthetic expressions and cross-cultural compositions found in film can be observed in two directions: Mauritanian filmmaker Med Hondo's wonderful film *Soleil Ô*, which portrays African immigrants and their struggle for survival in the French "motherland" in the '70s, their search for work in Paris, and their rejection is dramatized in an experimental aesthetic style. It is a fantastic example of a demanding aesthetic dividuation: it adapts the film style of the French New Wave, with its effects of distanciation, jump cuts, and surprising audiovisual disparities, in order to create a sarcastic portrayal of the self-confident and racist French attitudes of the time.

Prior to this adaptation, another aesthetic appropriation changed the French style of narrating films: Godard's first feature film, *A bout de souffle/Breathless* (1959) was inspired by the film *Moi, un noir*, a 1958 ethnofiction directed by Jean Rouch in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. It depicts young Nigerian immigrants looking for work in the capital. They call themselves Edward G. Robinson, Eddie Constantine, and Tarzan due to their admiration for these cinematic characters. The film itself blurs the line between fiction and reality, narrating the dreams of these young men as idealized movie stars. The main character of Godard's film, performed by Jean-Paul Belmondo, is created in analogy to these dreamy African city strollers, and

thereby introduces a completely new dividuated film aesthetic. The New Wave movement is identified with French film aesthetics up to today.

Filmmakers from African countries often complain that filmmaking is still dependent not only on Western technologies and financing, but also on aesthetic choices and norms of narration that claim to be European and prescribe dramaturgies, TV formats, and forms of acting. These obligations have been criticized, for example, in Jean-Pierre Bekolo's film *Aristotle's Plot* (UK, 1995). His filmic and philosophical parody engages in an intramedial game with the genre conventions that reflect "Africa," while at the same time proclaiming that Africa is no longer to be found solely within a geographic continent. Created on commission for the British Film Institute to mark the hundredth birthday of the cinema, with the idea being that the Cameroonian filmmaker should provide an "African" contribution, the film asks what might constitute the Africanness of a feature film shot in Africa: perhaps folklore-style images with zebras and giraffes?

Bekolo problematizes the action film genre, its stereotypical settings and heroes, and its narrative laws—that is, Aristotle's poetics and their adaptation in Hollywood, the precepts of unity of space and time, and the unfolding of the plot through mounting tension, climax, and catastrophe. He proclaims that these structural elements cannot be translated into the African context. In that context, no linear development can be represented, only stillness, dead ends, or cyclical recurrence.

His film shows young people lounging around and killing time by watching US action movies and projecting themselves onto protagonists such as Sylvester Stallone, Jean-Claude Van Damme, Bruce Lee, and others. The filmmaker, however, an ET (extraterrestrial) displaced to Africa, travels through Africa with rolls of film, seeking to gain adherents for his aesthetically challenging auteur cinema, provoking a misunderstanding of "cineaste" as "silly ass." The aesthetic allusions in this film language include both US genre cinema and the French New Wave alike: the protagonist, calling himself a cineaste, is looking for a specifically African film language. The conclusion that the film inevitably reaches is that the aesthetic of African film is a dividual one, oscillating between French-European and US-American dictates, and the search for its own filmic expression corresponds to its situatedness in nonspecific African surroundings. The film deplores the lack of aesthetic independence and the lag in developing a specifically African process of worlding. Bekolo sarcastically comments that Aristotle is relevant to the African situation in one respect only: because Africa has had more than its fair share of massacres and misery, it is particularly good for the production of sympathy and fear that Aristotle demands; Africa is the continent of catharsis par excellence.

Even Ugandan video artists who work independently in the international film market produce videos that can be considered affirmative reenactments of standardized film genres, of aesthetic conventions and modes of narration in a heightened, dividual way. The film

production center Wakaliwood in Kampala, located in a modest area of the capital, fabricates action movies at low costs: these are combinations of US action movie patterns with kung fu scenes, situated amid African scenery, played by local actors and oriented toward a local urban audience. They often have no original soundtrack, but are dubbed with a voiceover explaining what is shown. In their composite-cultural character, they bring about an aesthetic process of worlding in an act of social and symbolic empowerment. Their undertakings have received high acclaim in the German press. By inventing a small aesthetic difference through accentuating the African context, repeating and exaggerating filmic stereotypes, and thus producing a specific dividuation, a new form of social expression and fan community was born within the urban landscape of Kampala and beyond.

Big art exhibitions can also be characterized as dividual processes of worlding today, since renowned biennials and art fairs have gained international attention and multiplied to the point that their programs and the organization of their displays may unintentionally respond to one another. They are compelled to be aware of each other and to resonate with each other in the art they select, in their aesthetico-political difference making, curatorial presentation, marketing policy, and educational side programs. They have to place the artworks in a relation of responding to the same or related artworks in other exhibitions, which in turn impacts them, the exhibitions, the exhibitions' resonance with others, and the worldwide art scene. They contribute to the processes of worlding in the sense that they intensify processes of aesthetic, cultural, symbolic, and economic exchange, the travel of persons interested in art, digital communication of art practices worldwide, and the becoming-dividual of artistic expressions on all levels. Moreover, they boost aesthetic dividuation: the more the density of the biennials increases, the more a certain aesthetic homogenization of art exhibitions is part of the actual processes of worlding.

A rather modest example of this tendency could be observed some years ago thanks to the voguish exhibition of the artworks of William Kentridge that were encountered at different art institutions of Germany and South Africa more or less at the same time. Kentridge's artistic interventions animated and recontextualized historical German sculptures and paintings in Frankfurt's Museum Liebighaus; they interacted with South African dancers and drummers in his performances in Johannesburg; they changed the atmosphere of the imperial Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin by projecting an impressive brass music procession along the walls and filling the rooms with haunting sounds. By aesthetically connecting these distant places and provoking echoes and even transcontinental resonances in the minds of some visitors, they brought about new aesthetic experiences, insights into the lives of people living in South Africa, and dividual processes of worlding transversal to the bourgeois art institutions of the global North.

In recent years, the artworks of Kader Attia have also been simultaneously encountered in different cultural places: in the German context of documenta 13 in Kassel, in museums in Frankfurt and Berlin, and at Dak'Art in Dakar, as well as at the La Colonie performance center in Paris and in different places in the Maghreb. While he has been presented and praised as a postcolonial artist, Attia's contribution has been to push artistic research further and to revisit

the aesthetico-political claim of "reparation," which in fact changed—though once again partly homogenizing—the atmosphere and self-understanding of art institutions worldwide. Since this claim went hand in hand with Felwine Sarr's and Benedicte Savoy's claims of restitution of non-Western artworks to their countries of origin, it stimulated new and important aesthetico-political processes of worlding across all continents.

In this regard, it is instructive that certain important art events, such as the Sharjah Biennial, the Fespaco film festival in Burkina Faso, and the Dak'Art event in Dakar, try to assert a distinctive character by dedicating themselves to the presentation of specific and "regional"—Arabic and African, respectively—art productions, while nevertheless contrasting them with artistic statements from other regions, mainly regions of the global South. Having observed the Dakar Biennial for several years, I can recount that I saw a certain amount of artwork exposing interesting differences with the aesthetic articulations known in the West. Either they referred to African history—like the paintings of Senegalese artist Abdoulay Diallo, who tried to reappropriate the drawings that German ethnographer Leo Frobenius asked to copy in different African countries at the beginning of the twentieth century—and combined them with actual motives, or the artists worked with minor materials, such as recycled crown caps pieced together to form huge wall tapestries, as seen in the work of El Anatsui; by assembling and combining these disdained objects, he creates a sort of general articulation and an impressive aesthetic work in the abovementioned philosophical sense. This art practice may initiate a new aesthetic experience, like the *arte povera* installation of Ghanaian litter by Ibrahim Mahama at the DAAD-Galerie in Berlin (2019), which evoked the colonial past and ongoing violence toward people from Africa. In so doing, these art practices widen the realm of aesthetic expression and its symbolization of the precarious processes of worlding.

As a sort of conclusion, I would like to add that, in our current epistemological and aesthetic research at the University of Bayreuth, particular interest attaches to African art practices that engage in self-reflexive and composite-cultural statements based on the insight that, thanks to technology-based communication, aesthetic and conceptual repetitions and differentiations are inevitable, thus providing an explicitly dividual character to theoretical statements as well as to artistic works. Nevertheless, we should be cautious and not understand these art practices or philosophical statements as unidirectional appropriations of Western art languages or philosophical concepts. Who could venture to decide whether an abstract Indian painting is a continuation of US expressionism or a reference to Japanese abstract traditions, or whether it draws on the internet, or on all of these things at the same time? Reversing the direction of the gaze, certain forms of aesthetic expression classified as European could be recognized as borrowings from colonialized cultures; the role of African sculptures in revitalizing modern painting is well known. Aesthetic expressions should thus be decoded as the results of multidirectional orientations and of appropriations from different cultural and media sources.

With this caution in mind, it might be possible to discover that the South African concept of *ubuntu*—which is a compound of *ubu-*, to signify the unfolded entirety of the world, and *-ntu*,

to signify its unfolding in human actors' ways of thinking and speaking—is a precursor to the new concept of dividuation. In a general sense, it would be meaningful to amplify our perspective and our historical frame in order to discover and to heighten the long-lasting cultural entanglements in the aesthetic and conceptual realm between the continents. We should not stop searching for ever more complex forms of artistic dividuation so as to include as many speakers as possible. And we should test new articulations and perspectives in order to bring about the intertwined and permanently changing character of our shared worldliness and our necessary reliance on the ongoing actualization of processes of worlding.

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