Heliotropism at the terminal beach of critique

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Abstract
In this essay, previously published in its English version in *The Large Glass magazine. Journal of Contemporary Art, Culture and Theory* (No. 27/28, 2019, pp. 48-57), Jeff Diamanti reflects on the status of criticism in the context of the ecological crisis. Is it feasible to sustain the position of the critical subject in the face of the hyper-object dimensions of phenomena such as climate change, of that enveloping and potentially catastrophic reality of which we are a part and in which nature and history appear strongly imbricated? From some passages from the work of Theodor W. Adorno, from the installation of Olafur Eliasson in the turbine room of the Tate Modern and of references of contemporary visual culture (such as the *Leviathan* series), Diamanti presents an intellectual exercise that updates the humanities (specifically, the perspective of the so-called "energy humanities") from the incorporation of the urgencies and challenges that for cultural criticism bring critical events such as global warming or burning of fossil fuels.

In this essay, my interest is in returning to a primary figure of climate discourse which, while primary, has been under-regarded as a source of critical and creative thinking about climate: the sun, or rather modes of relating to the physical and conceptual force of the sun by way of what, building on Rudolf Arnheim and Elizabeth DeLoughrey, I term heliotropism. It's not that the sun —or solar power— has not figured at all in climate discourse. That is what I mean by a *primary* figure: photo voltaic power generation is, next to wind energy, the most immediate technology that comes to mind when you think of sustainable energy transition. So technologically, the sun figures as a kind of key to something like an environmentally conscious capitalism, a sustainable techno-fix to a world broken by fossil fuels. What I am interested in is not necessarily the politics of solar power, but the ways in which the sun figures itself into cultural forms of imagining a different relation we might have to the world, to other people, but also to non-human animals and to objects. It is for this reason that I claim heliotropism is an under-regarded source of creative and critical thinking about climate: because while solar power has become what Foucault would call a *dispositif* of the discourse of climate, gestures toward

the sun (a relation to solarity) points to a radically different structure of feeling and relation to environment. In order to draw out the critical import of heliotropism, I think with two cultural interventions that turn the beach into a terminal landscape upon which multiple futures —carbon, aquatic, and psychosocial— wash up against the habits of critical thinking today.

I. Leviathan's mood

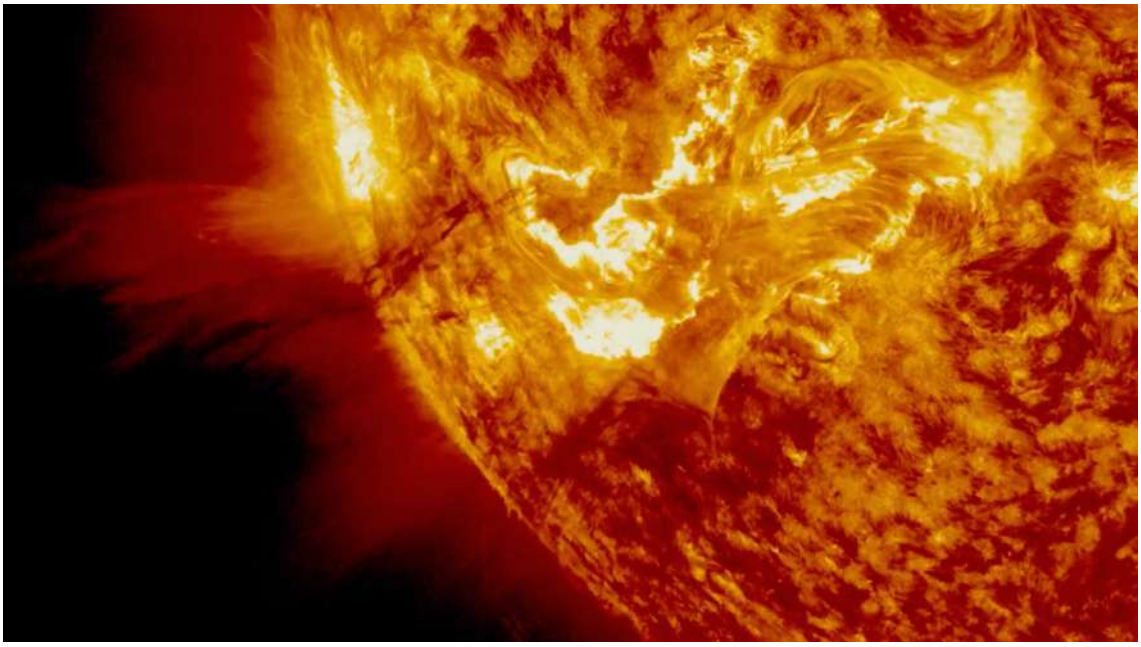

Figure 1. *Leviathan*, "Ben". Shezad Dawood. Video installation 2016.

Ben, the male subject who speaks throughout the opening episode of Shezad Dawood's ten-part video cycle *Leviathan*, does not fare so well. He meets Yasmine, it's true, promising some semblance of heteronormative continuation past the point of what the film suggests is a kind of civilizational meltdown, but her attachment to him seems at most an extension of "really need[ing] to fuck" as opposed to some romantic attachment; and while he seems to have a pretty good time in the Venetian orgy in episode three, he is beaten up on a beach in Morocco in episode four, and finally raped repeatedly by the captain of a cargo ship in episode five. But one of the peculiar features of Dawood's Leviathan cycle is that the question of how Ben fares turns out not to be much of a question, which is to say a concern, at all. He figures in a plot, but what I will argue here is that *Leviathan* turns plot into a kind of scene, and that the mood of its multiple scenes (or landscapes) is what is at stake in its bifocal commitment to figures of the non-human alongside human discourse. Ben not faring well is, if I can put it this way, beside the point.

This bifocal commitment is established in the opening sequence of *Leviathan,* as the camera is drawn closer and closer to the sun. Ben is talking, and he is here half blaming the sun for the social crisis that precedes his present; but in half blaming the sun, he also half points to an incongruous relationship between the human, climate, and solarity, by which I mean he also appears to rationalize the apocalypse that the film takes as its starting point by emphasizing the insignificance of the human in relation to earth systems that dwarf the centrality of human affairs. In setting up the whole cycle through the figure of a sun that is both hostile and indifferent to the human subject, *Leviathan* turns the very paradox of dominant discourses on climate change into a narrative contradiction: the human is the agent of climate change, at the same moment that the very distinction between nature and human history folds in on itself, and with it the edifice of Liberal Reason responsible for our concept of the human to begin with. To be clear, this is a foundational problem for all manner of post-anthropocentric social and environmental theory in the humanities and social sciences over the past two decades: the double bind that comes with our collective coming to consciousness of our own agency *as a planetary force* named by climate change**,** at the same time that the multiplicity of agents distributed across the non-human world appear as the solution (either ethically, conceptually, or politically) to the problem of climate change. And importantly, in the post-anthropocentric move that seeks to relegate the human to its biophysical place in the world, there typically comes a certain resistance to narrative, since narrative brings with it a set of genealogies and drives that are (usually) resolutely human. This double bind goes by many names, including the Anthropocene, the becoming geological of the human, the geontological turn, and more broadly, the posthuman. So how does such a contradiction possibly get stretched out into a narrative like *Leviathan*'s, when narrative seems always and everywhere to demand a human set of drives, if not a human centre, to begin with?

Each episode of *Leviathan* in turn is focalized through a new character, though the means of that focalization varies along at least two axes that will come to matter, in my account, for the dethroning of the subject that the climate of *Leviathan* helps figure. Ben, Yasmine, Arturo, Jamila, and Ismael take up the narrative discourse of each episode —they speak in different languages, and with different proximities to what it is we see in these films— but they are not responsible, strictly speaking, for the mood of each episode. Mood and voice in narratology are distinct categories because, in Mieke Bal's classic account, a story can be narrated from one or many perspectives, while the focal point of that narrative can be a person or thing that never speaks (the golden bowl in Henry' James' short story of that name, or Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights,* who speaks but doesn't narrate, and whose character is predominantly responsible for the mood or affective

atmosphere of the novel). The distinction between mood and voice is important in the study of narrative because it helps name the distance between discourse, or what is said, and what is felt —those shifting centres of gravity that concern the cultural object as a whole, or what make a cultural object irreducible to characters or narrators who speak. Mood, in other words, need not (indeed, often is not) an effect of voice. More typically, and indeed more strangely, mood is just as much a quality of objects as it is of subjects.

What I want to do today in this essay is offer a reading of two recent cultural objects that help figure a new way of thinking about how climate changes theory, which is to say how critical theory has imagined, and might yet imagine, the relationship between the physical environment and the unfolding relationship between first nature and second nature in a context of planetary global warming —a context, in other words, in which what had been previously figured as the background to human history (the environment) suddenly turns (in Bruno Latour's phrasing) into the foreground of global affairs. Multiple concepts of the nature of the subject and the vitality of the material world have already made inroads into upending what looked like hardened and fixed categories of theory, namely the subjects and objects of history, but what I want to do here is draw out some of the concepts and aesthetic modes of perception made available by a set of cultural objects that in some ways already prefigure a new climate of critique in their very structure: *Leviathan*, which makes plot horizontal with landscape, and a canonical installation at the Tate Modern in London that recreates the scene of a sunny day in order to make an experience of collective pleasure available to a viewership increasingly nervous about a warming world.

Figure 2. *Leviathan*, "Ben". Shezad Dawood. Video installation 2016.

We are ten minutes into Ben's narration of *Leviathan's* present —our foreshortened future— when he tells us in the past tense of the planetary attunement that marked the collapse of civilization. As the sun begins to "squeeze" and "amplify pressure", triggering a speculative terminus to earth's human subjects, and as the fires roar, the floods rush in, and that most Shakespearian melodrama of all, "*The Tempest"* turns the environment strange, Ben notes, at precisely the moment that we finally have Ben the character before us in the frame, that "The weather seemed to parallel the mood of earth's remaining inhabitants. Sorry, Monkeys!" At this, we return from Ben's past tense analepsis —a past tense that is our present today— and take up *Leviathan's* own present tense, but with a new relationship in narrative voice and character. Ben, the character in the frame, spills something on his pants while the narrator refers to the spill in the present tense. For the rest of the episode, the narrative voice will speak in the present tense of the frame, speaking from the viewpoint of Ben. But rather than tie narrative voice to mood, as is more typical of this diegetic attunement (where a character is also a narrator, though speaking from outside the frame of the camera), we get the opposite. The effect here is paradoxical: precisely because Ben's narrative voice is *not* the voice of Ben the character, since Ben the character doesn't speak to the camera as we follow him through an abandoned house, the distinction between mood and voice has now been exposed precisely as *distinguishable* at the moment that it looks as though they've become synchronized. For the minute or so that they share space, Ben and Ben's voice are only tenuously shared, and we know it is tenuous because when they break once again in what will be the final scene of episode one, we land on the terminal beach, anchored now to the mood of a whale's corpse —a whale that doesn't speak but doesn't need to. This will matter for the conclusion of my argument today where I suggest that the mode of perception that *Leviathan* makes available is one that is distributed between landscapes, characters, and matter.

Figure 3. *Leviathan*, "Ben". Shezad Dawood. Video installation 2016.

By episode four we return once again to the beach, except this time it is a Moroccan beach. Life under water and life above water are in this landscape at their most proximate so far in *Leviathan*, sharing both the frame (featuring constant jump cuts from under water to the beach) and what Jamila calls "old shit, new shit, brown shit, dead shit" or, put differently, the shared relation to, and as, detritus. We see shit on the beach, are told that these nomads built homes out of the shit of the past, and watch living bodies turn back to decaying matter as Ben and Yasmine are saved in turn on the beach. But if our shared materiality is a temporal one (we came from, and will return to raw materiality over time) then it is the concluding split between what Jamila says and what Jamila sees that signals *Leviathan*'s commitment to something like bifocalization able to distribute mood across landscape, character, and matter. "How am I recalling this?" Jamila asks, self-reflexively, "for on the beach I can see myself running, my heart pounding out of rhythm with this new imported beat, running for self-preservation." Jamila sees herself running and is more than a little troubled by this split in voice and body. Narrative discourse has once again been made *distinguishable* from the body to whom it is assigned, at precisely the moment that the body to whom it is assigned is running for self-preservation —which is to say, running for her life. It will turn out that the camera has not been scanning the landscape to set the scene, so to speak, but that the scene of each landscape is already a way of seeing. The film's visuality is distributed, never fully reducible to the attempts by any of its narrators to monopolize its point of view. The terminal beach, I have been arguing so far, is the scene for what *Leviathan* prefigures as an aesthetic of perception able to dethrone the subject of late liberalism.

Figure 4. *Leviathan*, "Jamila". Shezad Dawood. Video installation 2016.

But what I want to say next is that this dethroned subject of late liberalism is *not* the same subject that —as we'll see in a moment— helped harden the core concepts of critical theory in the postwar era, around which so many critiques of culture, of capital, of ideology, of sex, and indeed of climate have since flowed. In short, the genealogy of critical theory carries forward in its core concepts a way of conceiving social emancipation not yet alert to the theoretical pressures that come with global warming. What *Leviathan* is imagining for us is the erasure of that originary subject of capital and critical theory alike. For this subject, on this beach, has already been unplugged in *Leviathan* from what we'll see was in the 1960s an ideological and embodied relation to environment coded by capital. But in returning to canonical positions to 20th century critical theory, we can also begin to tease out the *social* environment through which fossil-fueled modernity implied a kind of tragic dissociation of the subject from an experience of physical environment.

II. Adorno's tan lines and the scene of modern boredom

Recall that for Adorno, the scene of modern boredom is a sunny day, and its landscape is a beach. We do not need to imagine the scene, because it is imagined for us**.** For him, sunbathing is not just "physically unpleasant," but more profoundly "illustrates how free time has become a matter of boredom".[1] By 1969 when the essay is first written, boring weather for Adorno is boring because its leisurely draw is no longer heliotropic, as we might say of the flowers that dramatize Monet's fair weather or Arnheim's sunflowers, but pathological. These bodies turned toward the sun do not

occur to the critical theorist as a floral metaphor, much less a kind of aesthetic mimesis wherein the worker desires not just to behold the picturesque but *to be* picturesque. In order to read it this way we would have to imagine a different kind of aesthetic analysis on Adorno's part, much closer, that is, to Lukács' much earlier distinction between first and second nature —a distinction that proves not to be a difference but a process whereby an idea of first nature (unmediated, or immediate nature) re-appears on the other side of second nature as its constitution (where desiring a direct experience of nature comes to verify one's own distance from the natural— a symptom, in other words, of one's socialization into second nature): here, the mediations of the picturesque (or in our example, the desire for an experience outside of history, the terminal beach) appear from within the historicity of second nature (an aesthetic sensibility on the one hand, and a subjective drive to escape the domination of second nature over all experience on the other). But that is not what Adorno is after here: these people, he insists, are not after the appearance of first nature at all.

Adorno has something else in mind. The scene sits at the heart of the penultimate chapter of *The Culture Industry* entitled 'Free Time' and the purpose of that chapter more generally is to historicize the dialectic of labour productivity in 20th century capitalism and the free time it generates outside the work environment. "Free time," Adorno states at the outset, "has already expanded enormously in our day and age. And this expansion should increase still further, due to inventions in the fields of automation and atomic power, which have not yet been anywhere like fully exploited".[2] He is being both descriptive (noticing a postwar upsurge in energic power put to use in the factory) and anticipating the paradox of labour productivity in the postindustrial era we'd call our own today: namely that the calculus of work begins to structure the subject's creative, personal and intimate desires so that the time of work will begin to resemble what Jonathan Crary has called the *24/7* work schedule. Free time becomes a form of unfreedom in Adorno's account, because it turns mimetically towards a productive impulse: whether through self-cultivation on a campsite (he is just as grumpy about camping as he is about sunbathing), or passive rejuvenation before the next day at work in front of the mass cultural object *par excellence*, the television set. It is this unfreedom which Adorno thus encounters on the beach, where the great unfree turn to the sun out of compulsion.

What Adorno's scene of boredom imagines for us is a commodity fetishism that has become fully embodied in the subject of the commodity itself —the body of mass culture, and the mass market, now treated *as a unified body* instead of some conflicted or split subject, the other to capital's domination. Laid out, precisely not like a flower, these bodies "who grill themselves brown in the sun merely for the sake of a sun-tan" express so literally the

reach of this pathology: "In the sun-tan, which can be quite fetching, the fetish character of the commodity lays claim to actual people; they themselves become fetishes".[3]

What I want to suggest here is that Adorno's tan-lines give us a rather remarkable insight into something like an internal limit to mid-century critique. A threshold because it is to the frame of the weather on the one hand and the "damaged life" on the other that this scene gets played out at a conceptual register, and not the frame to which I will suggest next has come to unnerve the former: namely, the frame of climate and planetary life so central to recent work responsive to global warming in the humanities, as well as the social and physical sciences. The mass cultural body is heliotropic, to be sure, but solarity is paradoxically incidental to the scene, if by solarity we mean a social relation and rhythm somehow calibrated or attuned to solar energy. We are at the very cusp of a threshold to thought, here, on this beach; a threshold that Adorno, Benjamin, and so many others in the tradition that traces its roots back to Hegel, will call time and time again the dialectic of nature and history. And it is a threshold for at least two reasons that I want to explore from the vantage of today's still nascent but increasingly historicist experience of what Andrew Ross calls "strange weather" and Amitav Ghosh has so provocatively termed "uncanny weather" —adjectives that in both accounts describe first the becoming climate of weather, and second the supremely unhomely quality that it wreaks on our shared sense of habitat.

This is another way of asking the question my book project tracks regarding how climate changes critical theory. Namely: what happens to social theory when climate change bids farewell to boring weather on the side of the object —when the weather turns strange, uncanny? For one, the heliotropic pleasure of a nice day becomes relative to the heatwave, to the violence of late fossil capital, and to the surge in atmospheric volatility, occasioning in turn an ecopoetics of climate, *and an emergent climate of critique.*

For Elizabeth Povinelli, this new terrain "put[s us] on the edge" of new genres of "antagonisms": namely, "the clash between human beings and nature, between societies and natures, and between entangled species and the geological, ecological, and meteorological systems that support them".[4] The stakes here of course are multiple and exist at multiple scales of reference (from the animal to the meteorological), but the focal point of this "edge" is the category of the human in what Povinelli calls the "geontology" of the present, and the late liberal discourses and figures of reference that seek to inoculate the human against a world that appears to have a mind of its own. "The simplest way of sketching the difference between geontopower and biopower," Povinelli explains, "is that the former does not operate through the governance of life and the tactics of death" —as was

true of what Foucault earlier termed the biopolitical— "but is rather a set of discourses, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife." In this contemporary form of power, "Nonlife" is not a description but an effect of being governed over as non-sovereign stock —from plants and animals to minerals and hydrocarbons. Life (or bios) becomes metabolic, reproductive, while Nonlife merely the biophysical means for life. But geontologies also names an anxiety and a threshold to reason: no longer is the governance of Life and Nonlife merely an originary premise of settler liberalisms but a reaction against its fault lines, its real material limits —the sometimes slow and sometimes rapid erosion of its "backdrop to reason".[5] So if I can put this more simply, late liberalism is no longer operative merely along the difference between the western subject and its orientalization of the other who can be put to death by the state (the colonial other, the racial other, the gendered other), so not just an "us" and an "other" but now too an *otherwise* beyond even the other, which gets disfigured into Nonlife. Climate change in this way of thinking is the erosion to this backdrop. What a weird idea, no? That the backdrop to late liberal reason is an anxiety about the distinction between Life and Nonlife. Perhaps this is why *Leviathan* reduces Ben's plot, and plot more generally, to a feature of the landscape: the landscape, like McCaw's sun, is rushing into the frame.

Povinelli's periodization of late liberal reason works to update Foucault's genealogy of power for the present, but the expressions of this new threshold to reason are for Amitav Ghosh even more pressing on the limits of cultural form. Ghosh's sustained critique in *The Great Derangement* is of what he sees as a resistance to climate change in contemporary literary realism. His worry is that contemporary fiction does not have the formal or historical capacity to engage fully with the strangeness of climate change. Strange and sudden weather events fit uneasily within the probabilistic disposition of contemporary realism, Ghosh maintains: it simply refuses to turn to uncanny weather events, for historical reasons pertaining to the institution of literature and the bourgeois sensibility attached in the 19th century to different genres of gradualisms, but also for reasons that bring us back to the subject and objects of climate change. Ghosh is looking in cultural form for an anagnorisis of climate change and a peripeteia in keeping with it, referring to the recognition of the true nature of events in Aristotle's *Poetics,* and the panning out of the narrative following that recognition. But here are the stakes of this anxiety: the uncanny is what precedes anagnorisis, or recognition of the true nature of things in the classic theory of tragedy —since the uncanny *defamiliarizes* the protagonist's sense of homeliness, a planetary home turned strange. You can see why Ghosh wants to think about climate change in these terms: it is the inexorable rise of the past 200 years of industrial civilization now expressing itself in all manner of natural phenomena that we *understand* as

bound together, but lack cultural means of *recognition,* of cultural re-attunement. The tragedy of anthropogenic climate change, in this account of contemporary realist literature, is that it cannot yet figure the double bind of uncanny weather: on the one hand the "nonhuman forces and beings" that animate climate change, and on the other hand the manner in which "they are the mysterious work of our own hands returning to haunt us in unthinkable shapes and forms".[6]

Haunted in the uncanny character of strange weather, the human and non-human get mutually figured and disfigured, and the "edge" of reason Povinelli claims for the anxiety of late-liberal geontopower returns us to the scene of the sun bearing down on the terminal beach. Except that the beach in this reading has now been doubled, so that there is one produced from within the bored subject of capital, and one that marks the "edge" of late-liberal reason. One feels awfully tempted to call them in turn the beach of first nature and second nature, but is this not already the distinction that is under erasure in the new climate of critique? We are not here after an antihumanism latent in in so many eco-fascisms or fascism as such, around which flows any number of romanticisms of *the natural*. Instead, it is to an extended critique of bourgeois humanism in the face of its uncanny reappearance as strange weather that leads us back to the beach, looking for a heliotropism that breaks with the pathology of unfree time.

IV. The weather as social form

In Olafur Eliasson's 2003 *The Weather Project*, this split exists on the same beach, a beach laid out beneath an artificial sun that holds the viewer in its gaze. Bathing beneath an enormous assemblage of monofrequency lights resembling the sun, in Tate London's Turbine Hall, this beach returns the terminal landscape to the institution of art and imagines a version of the heliotropic that is self-consciously infrastructural. Certainly we are on the brink here of something like the participatory turn in art, if not the full-blown relational aesthetics so troubling to Claire Bishop.[7] But it is the material specificity of the encounter with other bodies here that I want to end on, since it is not for a normative investment in the relational as such (in short, Bishop's beef with the erasure of friction and antagonism in the relational turn) but an experience instead of a being together *in infrastructure* that 'The Weather Project' helps make available. But it is a cheeky kind of togetherness whose cheekiness is part of the re-attunement that this heliotropism helps trigger, because the ease, pleasure, and drives that come with an infrastructural modernity that feels *precisely* like second nature is what is here being indexed by the sun. Turbine Hall figures in 'The Weather Project' not behind the backs of the viewer as a backdrop or frame but as the condition of its encounter. It is not for an illusion of modernity's

control over the sun, over a solar economy re-harmonized with the meteorological, that the project invites its viewer in for heliotropic pleasure. The 'weather' in 'The Weather Project' is an expression of an electrified culture that experiences weather as, and as an effect of, the built environment —of a landscape that is coextensive with mood. We are returned to Adorno's tan lines then, the scene of modern boredom: a beach that is not a beach, in front of a sun that serves the subject of capital.

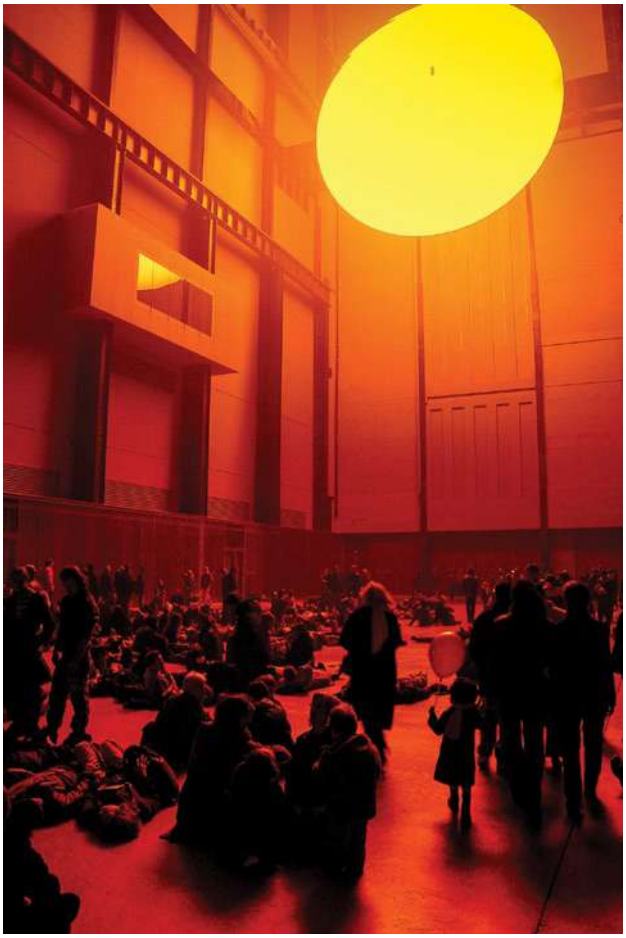

Figure 5. *The Weather Project.* Olafur Eliasson, 2003.

Well almost, because remember that this was never at stake on Adorno's beach to begin with, and so treating Eliasson's installation as a betrayal or deviation from the experience of first nature would seem to presuppose the capacity (or desire) for such an experience in the first place. For Louise Hornby, Eliasson's installation and his more recent engagement with ice in 'Ice Watch' "undermines notions of nativity and the natural environment" by turning the experience of the subject into the focal point of environment, in turn alienating environment from itself.[8] For the optics of towing melting ice from Greenland and Iceland to Western Europe, I find Hornby's objection compelling and worth pursuing amidst the larger trend in recent ecological aesthetics to bring climate to the subject, as it were. But the critique of 'The Weather Project' on the shared grounds of 'Ice Watch', namely that they

determine the conditions for an experience of weather first by simulating an environment in the mode of a soft-militarization of climate, misses what in my reading is the character of *collective* experience that for Hornby does nothing more than "(justify) the human domination of the engineered environment".[9] Climate change is inextricably bound to resource-intensive infrastructures that turn daily life in a place like London into a feeling awfully hard to distinguish from first nature, precisely because infrastructure is the material grounds through which habitus hardens into the given. To my mind it is the defamiliarization of this infrastructural condition of modern habitus that needs drawing out rather than an aesthetic project that would naturalize a site-specific fantasy of second nature's supposed other.

Hence my argument here runs against the grain of the normative discourse of the environmental humanities, which prefers an unmediated or *immediate* relation to the biophysical, since for me (finally) weather in 'The Weather Project' gets turned into a source of *social form* that surges through the subject as much as it does London's grid, and by extension the energy apparatus that binds the polis to fossil-fuelled planetarity. Another way to put this would be to say that the weather of 'The Weather Project' is the opposite of a Romantic concept of nature, since it is here knotted to the built environment. We might term this instead man-made weather, not in order to promote the hubris of a modern discourse that plans to geoengineer its way out of climate change, but instead to underscore the lived experience of attaching oneself to the social, to a provisional collectivity, *amidst* infrastructure. In other words, Eliasson's work registers the historicity of climate, more obviously as one approaches its mechanical arrangement up close, where the last thing one sees before entering the interior of the Tate Modern is 'The Weather Project''s interface of aesthetic experience and the infrastructure of modernity. Whether or not pleasure turns into pain here, the force of the project's intervention is to refuse any knee-jerk moralization of form and instead expose the necessary relation between social form and the materialities with which it is entangled. The future tense of anthropogenic climate change might yet not depend on a simple opposition between techno-capitalism on the one hand and a kind of technophobia on the other. Modernity might yet resolve into a collective project of social and ecological justice that puts infrastructure to work in the service of a radically unimaginable future. The critique of the weather on the grounds of its (re)production from the assemblage of second nature seems to miss the whole point about both the weather and what its relation to climate unsettles. It unsettles the scene of modern boredom, and asks us to bid farewell to boring weather.

So how, finally, is the sun with which we open into the world of *Leviathan* different from the electric sun of 'The Weather Project'? In the account I

have offered here, heliotropism always draws us back to the terminal landscape of critique, not because it offers a vista onto sublime nature as such (that is, this is a terminal landscape of critique not because it is the *outside* of critique), but because the *historicity* of the gesture is what is made available as an aesthetic experience in each of these works. On Adorno's beach, it is an experience of modern capital in the form of a fully fetishized body. In Eliasson, on the other hand, heliotropism is a means toward reconfiguring the medium of experience, via the infrastructurualization of pleasure. In *Leviathan*, finally, the conditions have been imagined for us to bifocalize the materialities of landscape and character coequal with plot, but this bifocalization is also coextensive with how Dawood's films figure a historicity that is a future tense of our own today —that is, only because *where we are* in *Leviathan* is in the wake of the nation-state, the global economy, the pathologies of late-liberal reason, and finally, the originary conditions of boring weather from which Critical Theory first emerged. But nobody ever said the post-anthropocentric turn would be easy, or that it would of necessity feel very good. And part of my argument has been that it will not feel very good, at least not until some new social form (or perhaps what Kathryn Yusoff has called a geosocial politics) emerges to care for us in the wake of which *Leviathan* re-attunes our aesthetic faculties, which is to say a radical social form capable for the first time in human history of caring for an "us" that is human in voice but not necessarily in mood.[10] Anything short of that is going to continue to feel really, really bad.

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Notes

[1] Theodor W. Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 191.

[2] Ibid., p. 188.

[3] Ibid., p. 191.

[4] Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "The Ends of Humans: Anthropocene, Autonomism, Antagonism, and the Illusions of Our Epoch," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (2017), pp. 293-310.

[5] Povinelli, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/78/81514/geontologies-the-figures-and-the-tactics/

[6] Amitav Ghosh, *The Great Derangement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), p. 32.

[7] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics", *October* 110 (Fall 2004), pp. 51-79.

[8] Louise Hornby, "Appropriating the Weather: Olafur Eliasson and Climate Control", *Environmental Humanities* 9, no. 1 (2017), p. 62.

[9] Ibid., 64.

[10] Nigel Clark and Kathryn Yusoff, "Geosocial Formations and the Anthropocene", *Theory, Culture and Society* 34, nos. 2-3 (2017), pp. 3-23.