

# **Exploring Atmospheres Ethnographically**

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## 8 Waves of experience

### Atmosphere and *Leviathan*

*Julia Bee and Gerko Egert*

#### Coloured weather

An orange-reddish glow is bumping from the bottom into the blackness of the screen. Up and down. It pulsates rhythmically. Then it diffuses in the flurry movements of various colours that populate the first minutes of Lucien Castaing-Taylor's and Véréna Pavarel's 2012 film *Leviathan*. What emerges is a dance made of the boat's brownish-red glow amidst glistening flood lights at night, the greenish-white wave crests stirred up by the morning winds, the shimmering colours of the sea, reflecting and diffracting the darkness of the sky, and the flapping whites of the seagulls' flights.

The film is full of fleeting colours that in no way form clear-cut or even stable entities. They move in a constant flux, changing with the rising and setting sun, with its drying heat, with the wetness of the water, with the coldness of the wind. Processes of colouring: the whole scenario of the film is "colored by weather" (Taussig 2009: 251). One could even say that the colours themselves produce a meteorological scenario, a "colored weather" (ibid. 251) without any objects behind them: "[Y]ou cannot separate a color from what it is a color of," Michael Taussig writes (2009: 250). "Same as writing" (2009: 240), he subsequently adds. In this chapter, we will follow this concept of an inseparability of quality and entity, and transfer it to the movements of experience and atmosphere. Like the quality of colour and the process of writing, experience and atmosphere are not added to a pre-given thing or entity. Atmosphere, we argue, is a specific mode of becoming. It is the immanent relation that creates and combines the world as a non-linear chain of occasions.

Picturing the dazzling colours of the weather Taussig strongly emphasises how weather and aesthetic experience are entangled. Weather is full of experience without simply being its object. Coloured weather is atmospheric; it emphasises colour's processuality – colouring. He understands weather as an activity: In the interplay of its forceful movements, weather creates ever-new scenarios and colourful worlds.<sup>1</sup>

Weather is in all its colours not separable from any given material frame. It is part of the world's processes of becoming – its worlding.<sup>2</sup> Weather is – as Ingold (2011) describes – a scenario, without stable objects consisting of an ever-changing



landscape. Like the seagulls in the sky, also the mussels, the pebbles, or the ripples in the beach are formations of the weather. There is no material landscape, no object previous to, what Ingold terms the “weather-world” (ibid. 126–135), only a meteorology of movement. These movements are not *of* the weather, but the weather *is* movement. “We are not required to believe that the wind is a being that blows, or that thunder is a being that claps. Rather, the wind *is* blowing, and the thunder *is* clapping. . . .” (ibid. 73). Standing with his students on a stormy day at the beach, Ingold describes the “weather-worlds” as follows: “We had [. . .] to recognise that the ground on which we stood was not really a supporting platform upon which things rest but a zone of formative and transformative processes set in train through the interplay of wind, water and stone, within a field of cosmic forces such as those responsible for the tides” (ibid. 131). He goes on to describe the movements of the sea and the birds:

Against this background, we could dimly make out the wheeling forms of seabirds, but we recognised them not as objects that moved, but as movements. . . . We saw a world in movement, in flux and becoming, a world of ocean and sky, a weather-world. We saw a world without objects.

(ibid. 131)

This complex interplay of forces, where one cannot differentiate between a given setting (landscape), a number of active players (wind, sun, seagulls, humans), and a set of actions (blowing, shining, flying, watching, moving) produces the weather-world.

Following the movements of weather, *Leviathan* becomes a *colour-weather-worlding*: the green-yellow-red dances of the mussels and starfishes under the sea, the silver-white-red of the fish splashing on the deck of the ship, or the strokes of the seagull’s wings creating a choreography of contrasts in black and white. Even though one does not see any traditional weather scenarios – no oncoming storm or burning sun on the sea – *Leviathan* is full of weather. It is a weather of colours, of movements, and of experience.

### *Leviathan*

The film *Leviathan* marks an important moment in the development of ethnographic research practices. The film addresses ethnography from a perspective of sensory experience. It adds to a long discussion on the relation of experience and abstraction as well as theory and sense in ethnographic research (e.g. Taussig 1993). In the *Sensory Ethnography Lab* in Harvard, where *Leviathan* was produced, sensory experience is actively involved on multiple levels. The studio’s films (for example *Sweet Grass* [2009], *Foreign Parts* [2010], *Manakamana* [2013]) deploys a complex synesthetic approach to ethnographic filmmaking and therefore to ethnography itself by connecting vision, sound, movement and hapticality to a complex ensemble. Anthropologist Paul Stoller once coined the term “radical empirical anthropology” (1992: 213) in relation to Jean Rouch’s

anthropological films. “Radical empirical”, we suggest, is an appropriate term for *Leviathan*, too, as will be shown below through the concept of radical empiricism by William James.

*Leviathan* follows the various movements of and around a fishing boat at sea off the New Bedford Coast. Weather thwarts any possibility of a linear narrative about a ship conquering the sea. With weather, one is kinetically, visually, and barometrically immersed in extreme scenarios. The movement of the sea and the boat are indistinguishable, and objects are often hard to recognise. Seasickness and nausea are caused by the lack of any stable frame of orientation or acoustic explanation.

Following the up and downs of the fishing vessel’s movement, the camera dashes into the water. White spray floods the image. Every time the view moves above the water, one catches a glimpse into the black night and of the circling seagulls accompanying the boat’s activities. The repetitious movements of the waves banging against the hull forge a rhythm of boat and sea, of sky and water. The bright green of the fishing net passes through the waters and onto the ship. The net hovers above the wet and shimmering deck, filled with fish waiting to fall into the machinic movements of washing, chopping, bleeding. One by one, the buckets of fish are brought below deck. A reddish-brown stream of waste and blood flows back into the sea. Seagulls dash into the water, diving for food. Tiredness and boredom run through the fishermen’s movements, shaping the repetitious gesture of chopping off the fish heads and tails. Boredom dominates the operation of the crane, and the eyes staring into the blackness of the sea at night. And tiredness runs through every muscle of a saggy body fighting against sleep in front of the TV after a long day of work.

In the interplay of all these movements, some monotone, some flurry, some steady, some bursting the filmic atmosphere *Leviathan* emerges. These varying movements made the process of production quite complex. As co-director Castaing-Taylor describes the processes of filming: “We started off filming with good-ish professional HD cameras, but we lost them one by one to the sea, so the only cameras we ended up shooting with were these small digital SLR cameras and the tiny sports cameras called GoPros” (Castaing-Taylor 2014: 82).<sup>3</sup> The movement, the water, the always-unstable environment made conventional modes of filming impossible. In the film, GoPros are attached to the bodies or the heads of the fishermen, but also to the ropes, the anchor and the crane. The cameras swim with the fishes in the water; they follow the seagulls, and they swash back and forth with the waste in the basins on board the ship. These cameras do not operate from a distance; they capture the moving meteorology from within. They work like barometers, sensing the changes of their surrounding by capturing the multiple movements and flows. Their super wide-angle shots (captured by fisheye lenses) and the extreme close-ups produce intensive images. Together with “an acoustic ecology, produced by new machinic agents” (Kara and Thain 2014: 193) they create “an immersive, materialist holding together of the film’s elements without a teleological arc” (Kara and Thain 2014: 194).<sup>4</sup>



Using multiple cameras and heterogenous perspectives, the film is not restricted to the human perspective. The cameras move round, they go up and down with the waves; attached to the ropes or to long sticks they move across the ship. They do not stop at the guardrails, but cross through the water and the air, moving with the swarms of seagulls and dead fishes. *Leviathan* refuses any central perspective: it does not represent a single human perspective (nor does it represent the perspective of *the fish, the seagull, the ship, etc.*). In *Leviathan*, the camera becomes part of these oceanic, biological, animalistic, technological dances. The various and intersecting movements and perspectives of the different cameras compose the meteorological choreography of the movie.

### Immanent atmosphere

How do *Leviathan's* movements relate? We suggest that its movements are gathered by atmosphere, whilst at the same time the film's atmosphere is also co-created through the way these movements relate. Atmosphere is nothing secondary to any given situation. It does not envelop an object (the ship, the fish, the fishermen) or a movement (the swimming, the fishing). With its multiple cameras, the film captures the atmosphere barometrically. *Leviathan* starts in the midst, and unfolds by taking up and recomposing various movements in the acts of filming, editing and watching the film. Atmosphere becomes the very specific mode of how *Leviathan* unfolds. Alfred North Whitehead calls this unfolding the "affective tone" (Whitehead 1967: 180).<sup>5</sup> The affective tone is at the heart of Whitehead's concept of the event: it is the way the event unfolds. By feeding into each other, the occasions relate and form the movement affectively and atmospherically: atmospheric movement events. All of the movement in *Leviathan* is made of occasions feeding into each other, forming a chain. Chaining thus becomes movement's atmosphere.

*Leviathan* does not consist of discrete shots or movements. It is not a sequence of disparate chain links or elements, like the wavering ship, the sea, the rotating crane or the tired fishermen, but is a sequence of events. The movements in *Leviathan* cut across the various shots and compose a series of events that feed into each other. The relations between the events are not a linear effect and cause. It is the event's affective tonality taken up by another event. It is a qualitative "carry-over". As Brian Massumi explains: What the affective tonality "does is carry-across the qualitative nature of what happens. It gives an abstract, purely qualitative background continuity to the two moments" (Massumi 2011: 65). The affective tonality of one event becomes the first phase of another one. Atmosphere is the immanent relation that creates and combines movements as non-linear chains of occasions.

These movements do not form any kind of coherent entity. With every event they deflect their direction and shift the whole choreography. There is no atmosphere of *one* movement (this could be called the movement's affective dynamic, its rhythm, its speed or force). Rather, atmosphere is the way movements relate and choreograph the intensive milieu – it is the way affects compose (and thereby



we include human as well as nonhuman affects). This filmic choreography is atmospheric in a double sense: at one and the same time, atmosphere is the movement's immanent relation, the becoming of its continuity, *and* the process of differentiation of the atmospheric milieu. In atmosphere relation and difference are no opposites but mutually inclusive. With every linkage of movements and every production of continuity new differences emerge. In atmosphere, there is no division between act and milieu – both are folded into each other. Act and milieu co-evolve simultaneously in a field of differential becoming.

As a force of qualitative carry-over, atmosphere does not exclude content. Often, content is seen as the already given in a particular situation. It is the ground that creates atmosphere as a second level. Content, in case of *Leviathan*, works the other way round: “[t]he contents are precipitation” (Massumi 2011: 66). The fishermen's work, the dead fish, or seagulls flying create a “rain of [. . .] gestures in the micro-climate that is life at this moment, coming in drops” (Massumi 2011: 66). This content is part of the atmosphere's specific mode of actualisation. In this process of formation, new movements, new differences and new affective tonalities emerge. The atmospheric force does not dissolve in content. Like every wave flows back into the sea of movements, every actual gesture, image or thing also feeds back into the process of atmospheric becoming.

The atmospheric choreography of *Leviathan* is a composition of differential becomings. Atmosphere is the shape-shifting force of its own alteration. Only in its alteration can atmosphere be perceived. The slowness and speed of the movements, the rhythms of the waves or the (sonic) refrains of the crane, the darkness of the sea and the sky, the flickering white of the seagulls, the brownish-red of the boat, and most of all, the contrast between these colourful movements are what compose the atmospheric choreography called *Leviathan*. The film's atmosphere is in no way coherent. It is an ongoing process differentiating itself into multiple – often contradictory – intensities: hectic pace, tiredness, threatening darkness, and the repetitive and calming sound of the waves. None of these tonalities is in themselves stable. They are, instead, a precarious meta-stability brimming with potential to become different – to alter its speeds, its intensities, its brightness and colours, its affective tonality.

## Waves of experience

Experience is key in atmosphere's differential becoming. Like atmosphere, experience is not added to a given scenario. It is part of the process of atmosphere's unfolding. As *Leviathan* constantly experiments with points of view from material and nonhuman perspectives, experience cannot be attributed to the human subject as its centre. The perspectives in the film are neither human nor do they belong to specific nonhumans: instead, the result is an atmospheric experience consisting of many perspectives from within a certain environment or milieu. One could even say *Leviathan* is one such milieu. Moreover, it is an atmospheric milieu, as it is not strictly divided into material and immaterial parts. This multi-differentiated human and nonhuman material and immaterial characterisation of experience can

also be found in the work of philosopher and psychologist William James (1912). He writes about experience, comparing it to the rolling up and down of waves, rather than as an objective account of events:

We live, as it were, upon the front edge of an advancing wave-crest, and our sense of a determinate direction in falling forward is all we cover of the future of our path. It is as if a differential quotient should be conscious and treat itself as an adequate substitute for a traced-out curve. Our experience, *inter alia*, is of variation of rate and direction, and lives in these transitions more than in the journey's end.

(*ibid.* 69)

Here, the wave is an experience itself: a non-personal feeling that consists in its “speeds and slownesses” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 262) of rolling and vanishing. In James’ philosophy of so-called “radical empiricism” (James 1912), experience is chance, flux, stream and becoming. It refuses a stable representation in the subject of events taking place outside.<sup>6</sup> Experience is an immanent event of chance in nature and culture, in waves, humans, in seagulls, as well as their flight and the waves’ movements. It neither represents nor consists in one object, one motive, or one isolated event taking place; instead, it is made up of the constant interweaving of multiple processes and events.<sup>7</sup> Experience in *Leviathan* is an atmospheric, immersive and a non-reliable source for positivist thinking, even though it is a documentary film. Nonetheless, it takes up and creates an atmospheric event by focusing on relations and processes and not on isolated objective accounts of reality. Although James is a philosopher and *Leviathan* is a documentary, they both share a concept of experience that is different than the positivist idea of experienced-based research practices. Their shared understanding is a sensational, sensory and atmospheric construction from within an atmosphere, and not from an objective distance (see also Thain 2015). Their thinking can be characterised as a movement within the *flux* and the waves of experience.

## Experiential atmosphere

The concept of the sensory, as in the name of *Sensory Ethnography Lab*, can be related to the notion of atmosphere. Atmosphere is a complex of material and immaterial “tissue[s]” of experience that constantly “grow[s] by its edges” (James 1912: 87), meaning it constantly differentiates and weaves new ends. James himself states that “thoughts in the concrete are of the same stuff as things are” (1912: 37). Deriving from James’ thought and from *Leviathan*, atmosphere can be understood as the intermingling, the relation and the process of becoming of experience. For James, “experience as a whole is a process in time” (1912: 62). It is a woven tissue that consists not in subjects that perceive a world: it is the very change the world consists of. A world he termed “a world of pure experience” (1912: 39ff.). “Experience itself, taken at large, can grow by its edges. That one moment it proliferates into the next by transitions which, whether conjunctive or



disjunctive, continue the experiential tissue" (James 1912: 87). Here, experience is neither objectivist nor subjectivist (see Massumi 2011: 29ff.). On the contrary, in James' notion of experience "pure experience" (1912: 39–91) is divided into subject and object afterwards: "'inner' and 'outer' are not coefficients with which experiences come to us aboriginally stamped but are results of a later classification performed by us for particular needs" (1912: 146). In his philosophy, he crafts a *world of (pure) experience*.<sup>8</sup>

In the atmosphere of thoughts articulated in and with *Leviathan* and James, one can think about the medium film and its connection to atmosphere neither as an unmediated, purely documentary notion of reality nor as a simple opposition to subjective perspective. On the contrary, *Leviathan* becomes the modulation, construction, and crafting of the reality: Film is not the medium of a reality given to the camera and the sound recording. Rather, *Leviathan* is itself a process of change and flux, and it takes part in the construction of the atmosphere. Film itself, especially and intensely *Leviathan*, is crafted from experiences. It actively takes part in the differentiation of the *milieu of experience*. It becomes a process of taking up an atmosphere and constructing a different process that exceeds what is given and produces something new. Differentiation of the atmosphere thus has productive as well as receptive aspects.

## Radical atmospheric filmmaking

*Leviathan* concentrates and intensifies concepts of experience and sensation in a pictorial or audio-visual way that is key for ethnographic film in general. In its modes of documentation, its perspective is from within the atmospheric milieu and without a verbal commentary framing the experience. It is an experience-centred way of doing visual research. By using images, sounds, and movements as a trans-sensual form of media, it stimulates the spectators' visual or auditory as well as kinaesthetic senses. As a film, *Leviathan* is felt and it is a philosophy of experience at the same time. Yet it is not *about* experience. Rather, it consists *in* experiences that are of a complex intermingling atmosphere. This experience is not only human, it is "more than human" (Manning 2013: 89).

Lucien Castaing-Taylor once used the reference to philosophies of experience himself as a framework for doing ethnographic film: In an interview with ethnographic filmmakers Judith and David MacDougall, Taylor terms the style of filmmaking close *to* and from *within* an experience a "radical documentary filmmaking" (Barbash and Taylor 1996; Taylor 1996; in relation to Rouch's work: Stoller 1992).<sup>9</sup> Here he refers to James' concept of "radical empiricism". Years later, it is *Leviathan* that takes up James philosophy of "flux" and "stream". It seems as if Taylor, when writing about research practices of ethnographic film, also references James implicitly (Taylor 1996). He uses film, as opposed to discourse and text, as a medium that focuses on the complex relations, movements and changes that happen as ethnographic research. The atmosphere of the film can be understood exactly as the running together of material and immaterial forces, things, events and affects that specifically intermingle in the event of producing



an ethnographic film. In his films, Castaing-Taylor (with Ilisa Barbash in *Sweet Grass* and Verena Paravel in *Leviathan*) takes up the notion of experience he found in James and develops it further on another plane of thought. In his 1996 text, Taylor is concerned with discussions in anthropology and ethnography about film, in which the medium is being accused of not having sufficient distance to be considered scientific. In 2012, he and Verena Paravel affirmed the constructivist, modulating and synesthetic way of experiencing the complex environment or milieu (not only a social milieu but one of things, people, movement and affects) in their radical empirical way of filmmaking.<sup>10</sup>

The film is a process built from the atmosphere of the milieu of the New Bedford Coast. It is a form of *reception* of the atmosphere of which *Leviathan* consists. The complex interweaving of processes like fishing, the works on deck of the ship, movements of the workers, the flights of the seagulls, and the constant movement of the ship build an atmosphere that is taken up by the various cameras' perspectives. The camera and its point of view are not secondary to the existing relations and processes, but they produce and further differentiate the milieu of what is happening around the fishing boat. Experience is also another becoming or *production*. The film evaporates from the complex milieu as (nonhuman) experience: The film composes and is composed with and by perception. It is a "weaving of experience" as James describes the becoming of the world, a world that consists of experiences that are material and immaterial at the same time.

Here, the spectator's experience might be understood as taking part in the modulation of the atmosphere of the film and not as perceiving it from the outside or as a secondary force. Atmosphere might be understood as taking part in the constant play of documentary as well as in the construction of artful images – an art that cannot be reduced to the work of a human artist. Here, experience composes the film as well as the spectator: Inside and outside (subject and object) are not the proper starting points to describe experience in *Leviathan* from a radical empiricist perspective.<sup>11</sup> Just as the camera does move with the milieu around the fishing boat, the spectator's perception is also interwoven in these processes. It is actively forming a new atmospheric assemblage of experience.

The construction of *Leviathan* is not a human one. It is the complex doing of an atmosphere *as* reception and production at the very same time. The atmosphere is another form of abstraction; something that cannot be reduced to the accumulation of the doings of people or even the interplay of cultural, social or natural forms of meaning. Abstraction is a construction that works and modulates atmosphere as sensual perception and affective process. Not only do subjects perceive atmosphere, atmosphere is an experience *as* abstraction.

Here, atmosphere is neither the glue that connects the subject of the research to its object; nor is it a medium, in the sense that it is the secondary relation between two already given entities. Atmosphere is at the heart of the events unfolding. Like the affective tonality, discussed by Whitehead, it is "something we find in ourselves, not something we find ourselves in" (Massumi 2011: 65). In the atmospheric event, knowledge emerges as a differential becoming. Experience is therefore not an experience of the atmosphere but is an *atmospheric experience*: it neither starts

nor ends with a secured set of facts, it creates a shape-shifting choreography of manifold movements.

Atmosphere and media are not necessarily situated on different planes, in a sense that media apparatuses *represent* experience only. This is an argument often used to resist naïve realism. Creativity, construction and nonhuman experience and the plane of experience as reception-production are in no way contradictory. The aesthetic crafting of experience as a taking-up (reception-production) of atmosphere, i.e. the relational processes of entities, affects, things and thoughts create a field of pure experience as the Jamesian concept describes it. Therefore, the medium of film is in the midst of the events around the fishing boat – it is part of the atmospheric events of experience as an emerging form of film, of sound and of movement.

Speaking with James, the *stream of consciousness* is neither pre-mediated nor mediated, but *immediate* in the way that the medium emerges as a production of atmosphere. This might be another sense of sensory ethnography of atmosphere. Here, the connection of atmosphere as the very material, the tissue of experience, can contribute to discussions around ethnographic filmmaking. However, atmosphere is seen not as something that resists depiction or loses reality in its mediation. Following James and *Leviathan*, one can affirm a nonhuman, atmospheric, constructionist style that operates *in* and *with* the milieu of the New Bedford Coast. It takes part in a procedural and relational approach to further build up the atmosphere.

Like James' wave crest, the film consists of experiences. It is made of movements and perceptions that evolve around the boat, the shipping, the working, the colours, etc. The film is part of the sensation of the events and *how they enrol in time*. It is a form that takes part in and mediates the atmosphere without only giving objective access to what is happening. Atmosphere can be seen as a productive force that builds a film. It is what we see *in* the film as well as the processes of cutting, editing, etc. Here, atmosphere provokes new experiences as ongoing process: the milieu of experience "can grow by its edges" (James 1912: 87).

### ***Leviathan's* perspectivism**

Filming is the production of perspectives – as is ethnography (Viveiros de Castro 2014). In ethnography, perspective is often discussed as either objective or subjective. *Leviathan* offers a new perspective on perspectives. It was the emphasis on the perspective that led to the acknowledgement of the filmmaker's point of view in ethnography. *Leviathan* puts this more radically and turns towards the perspective as *relation*. As atmosphere is not the atmosphere *of* something (e.g. an ensemble of a certain number of material things or processes), the filmic perspective is not directed at a given object. The film rather uses perspective to create new relations. The cameras differentiate the process of fishing and turning it into the filmic event *Leviathan*.

In the process of adding and multiplying the perspectives in and of *Leviathan*, the film creates other ways of fishing. These perspectives are not partial in a sense



that only their sum can get us the whole picture. The proliferation of perspectives creates a world consisting of nothing but perspective: perspectives in their transversal differentiation.

Multiplying the perspective does not lead to a relativism of experience, but to perspectivism. If relativism argues for multiple perspectives on a pre-given world, perspectivism – as Eduardo Vivieros de Castro argues – calls for a world that is made of multiple perspectives.<sup>12</sup> Perspective changes the world *as such*.<sup>13</sup> There is no object, or world, not even process or movement behind the experience and its perspective. Perspective becomes itself processual. It is the perspective that worlds. This process of worlding is composed of the sea, the fishing, the ship – and here especially – the atmosphere *Leviathan* is made of. In its proliferations of perspective, *Leviathan* differentiates the given: Every perspective opens up another possible world and thereby questions the very modes of existence of the existing world. Following Deleuze on the notion of the possible world, “the possible is not here an abstract category designating something which does not exist: the expressed possible world certainly exists, but it does not exist (actually) outside of that which expresses it” (Deleuze 1990: 307).

Vivieros de Castro’s perspectivism shifts the goal of anthropology from the question of epistemology to the question of ontology (or, to be more precise: to ontogenesis). *Leviathan* shifts the perspective of experience from a phenomenological to a radically empirical documentary. By multiplying the perspectives of experience, the film creates many possible worldings.<sup>14</sup> This is fishing as fishing was never before.

In the play of numberless perspectives, atmosphere is experienced as manifold. Here, atmosphere is not *of* something – e.g. a perspective – but a multiplicity of atmospheric becomings. In the same way the act of worlding does not describe the creation of an individual world; perspective is not the core of an individual atmosphere. The creation of perspectives is rather the ongoing process of atmosphere differentiating itself. This is not about *Leviathan*’s atmosphere but about *Leviathan*’s opening up of new differentials in the atmosphere immanent to its processual becoming. Only when atmosphere is infinite can one think of it as a modulation or mode of experience, which is not attributed to anything pre-given (be it a subject or object, a specific culture, an object of investigation, a practice, a process, a movement or a perspective).<sup>15</sup> In its immanent infinity, atmosphere is not enveloping anything but differentiates in ever-new ways. In these atmospheric differentiations the human and nonhuman perspectives of *Leviathan* produce new experiences *as possible worlds*.

## Conclusion – or a passage in the atmospheric sea of sensations

Drawing from various process-oriented theories we regard atmosphere as a concept that moves beyond dichotomies of subject and object in film and ethnography likewise. The atmospheric force does not envelop any content. It is relational yet contrary to the idea of a fog that glues together pre-given entities of subject and



object. Atmosphere is a milieu that consists of manifold heterogeneous perspectives and therefore overcomes the strict division of material and immaterial qualities. Thereby it crosses any division between act and milieu – in atmosphere both are folded into each other. The atmospheric perspectivism proposed in this paper embraces a productive excess of experiences. Experience – in the sense of James' radical empiricism – is not a representation of atmosphere in the receiver. It is not even a perspective on atmosphere from outside. Rather it is immediately participating in atmosphere's proliferation of perspectives: Experience is *of* atmosphere.

*Leviathan* expresses how atmosphere operates immediately as process of becoming. As an immanent force atmosphere modulates the way experience unfolds. Experience is at the very heart of atmospheric processes: Like experience, atmosphere is a flux of (dis)continuous differentiation, creating ever-new differences. Yet, in atmosphere, relation and difference are no opposites but both part of the very same event. *Leviathan's* excess of (non)human perspectives demonstrates how experience contributes to the atmospheric milieu from within. Perspectives create *Leviathan* like the sea consists of waves and in the multiplicity of waves ever-new atmospheric patterns emerge. *Leviathan* – a passage in the atmospheric sea of sensations.

## Notes

- 1 In the last chapter of his book *The Color of the Sacred*, Taussig turns towards the relationship between color and weather. By borrowing Marcel Proust's phrase "colored by weather", (2009: 251) he focuses on the processuality of colouring. Turning towards Nietzsche, he emphasises the movements and different speeds of this "colored weather" (2009: 252).
- 2 With the concept of worlding we foreground the world in its flux of becoming. The processes of worlding are manifold and neither start nor end with "the world". Erin Manning writes: "An otherness of worlding is always more than one. It composes-with experience, refuting the notion that the world is already known, pre-formed. This worlding is thought in motion, thought individuating in an amplifying incorporeality, a vibratory materiality" (Manning 2013: 169).
- 3 GoPro cameras are used most often to film action sports like skiing and surfing. Normally these cameras are attached to a helmet or body, but they can also be mounted on various devices. In her contribution to a special issue of the *Visual Anthropology Review* (2015) entirely dedicated to *Leviathan*, Alanna Thain describes the excessive use of GoPro cameras as a turn toward an "observation without distance" (2015: 47). Thereby she connects the filmic practices to Raymond Ruyer's concept of *survoler*: "Survoler, here as a tactic of sensory ethnography, refuses the corrective distancing from sensation as a way of knowing the world, proposing an immanent alternative to a politics of representation through ethico-aesthetic experience". (2015: 42).
- 4 Here, the notion of ecology is – like weather – not limited to nature. The "eco-logic" as proposed by Félix Guattari (2000: 44) rather describes the linkages of such diverse realms such as the social, the psychic, the economic, the physical, the acoustic or the visual.
- 5 In *The Adventures of Ideas*, Alfred North Whitehead develops the concept of "affective tone" involved in the occasion of experience: "It must be distinctly understood that no prehension, even of bare sense, can be divested of its affective tone, that is to say, of its character of a 'concern' in the Quaker sense. Concernedness is of the essence of perception" (Whitehead 1967: 180).

- 6 "To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced. For such a philosophy, *the relations that connect experience must themselves be accounted for real as anything else in the system*" (James 1912: 42).
- 7 His central argument about experience is its relational character expressed in formulations like the following: "Every examiner of the sensible life *in concreto* must see that relations of every sort, of time, space, difference, likeness, change, rate, cause, or what not, are just as integral members of the sensational flux as terms are, and that conjunctive relations are just as true members of the flux as disjunctive relations are. This is what in some recent writings of mine I have called the 'radically empiricist' doctrine (in distinction from the doctrine of mental atoms which the name empiricism so often suggests). Intellectualistic critics of sensation insist that sensations are *disjoined* only. Radical empiricism insists that conjunctions between them are just as immediately given as disjunctions are, and that relations, whether disjunctive or conjunctive, are in their original sensible givenness just as fleeting and momentary (in Green's words), and just as 'particular,' as terms are" (James 1912: 4).
- 8 Literary artists like Virginia Woolf and Marcel Proust experimented with the notion of *stream of thought* or *stream of consciousness* – two concepts that James addressed in his *Psychology* from 1892 (James 2001).
- 9 Scott MacDonald (2013) argues that experience as a whole is key for Harvard School of ethnographic film. He also sees a strong influence of the philosophy of William James in the works of Robert Gardner, Timothy Ash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor.
- 10 Lucien Taylor and Ilisa Barbash used the term "radical empirical documentary" to characterise MacDougall's Style of filmmaking (Barbash and Taylor 1996).
- 11 The division of subject and object, knower and known comes afterwards for James: "Knowledge of sensible realities thus comes to life inside the tissue of experience. It is *made*; and made by relations that enrol themselves in time. Whenever certain intermediaries are given, such that, as they develop towards their terminus, there is experience from point to point of one direction followed, and finally of one process fulfilled, the result is that their starting point becomes a knower and their terminus an object meant or known. That is all that knowing (in the simple case considered) can be known as, that is the whole of its nature put into experiential terms" (James 1912: 57).
- 12 In his discussion of Amerindian thought Viveiros de Castro exposes the concepts of perspectivism and multinaturalism: "(Multi)cultural relativism supposes a diversity of subjective and partial representations each striving to grasp an external and unified nature, which remains perfectly indifferent to those representations. Amerindian thought proposes the opposite: a representational or phenomenological unity which is purely pronominal or deictic, indifferently applied to a radically objective diversity. One single 'culture', multiple 'natures' – perspectivism is multinaturalist for a perspective is not a representation". (Viveiros de Castro 1998: 478)
- 13 Viveiros de Castro phrases this idea in the pointed sentence: "[A]ll beings see ('represent') the world *in the same way*; what changes is *the world they see*" (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 71).
- 14 In his discussion of Michel Tournier's novel *Friday*, Gilles Deleuze describes the concept of the other as "the expression of a possible world" (Deleuze 1990: 308). "But the Other is neither an object in the field of my perception nor a subject who perceives me: the Other is initially a structure of the perceptual field, without which the entire field could not function as it does" (Deleuze 1990: 307).
- 15 A similar argument can be found in Viveiros de Castro's discussion of nature: "[H]uman nature could be conceived as something like a minimum common multiple of difference – bigger than cultures, rather than smaller – or something like the partial integer of the different relational configurations we call 'cultures.' The 'minimum,' in this case, is the multiplicity that is common to humans – *humanitas multiplex*. Thus conceived, nature would no longer be a self-same substance situated within some



naturally privileged place (such as the brain, for example)” (Vivieros de Castro 2013: 481–482). This question of a multiplying nature, a multinaturalism, is also very closely connected to his writings on anthropology’s turn towards ontology (see Viveiros de Castro 2013, 2014).

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