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Solar: A Meltdown

Vorgestellt von NAOMIE GRAMLICH

In «allen «Kreisläufen», in allen Kapitalströmen, Autoströmen, Datenströmen», schreibt Gerburg Treusch-Dieter, bringt sich «das Verdrängte am Verdrängten eben da zur Erscheinung [...], wo nichts mehr fließt, sondern das «System» sich selbst blockiert».¹ Ho Rui Ans Bildstrecke erzählt von solchen Blockierungen in wortwörtlicher Weise, indem sie die Arbeit der Tropen, Techniken und Identitäten vorführt, die am kolonialen Beginn der Globalisierung nötig war, um Zirkulation als universalistische Logik zu installieren.

Die Erzählung beginnt im Amsterdamer Tropenmuseum, das neben ethnologischen Fotografien mittels einer lebensgroßen Puppe auch den weißen Mann hinter der Kamera in Szene setzt. Als wäre dessen Präsenz nicht schon ungewöhnlich genug – schließlich imaginiert die koloniale Logik Weißsein als Transzendenz jeglicher Materie und als Reflexion von Sonnenlicht –, tritt die in Fotografenpose aufgestellte Figur als arbeitender, schwitzender Körper auf: eine Darstellungsweise, die im kolonialen Bildregime sonst nur indigene und Schwarze Menschen markiert.² Inmitten der durch koloniale Zirkulations- und Aneignungsprozesse ins Museum geratenen und dort festgesetzten Dinge steht der Schweiß für die institutionelle Angst, sich kritisch mit der Museumsgeschichte auseinanderzusetzen. Ho fragt: «What does it mean to make a museum of colonial sweat?»³ Wenn Sara Ahmed schreibt, «[m]emory hence works through the swelling and sweating of the skin: the memory of another place»,4 dann ist der «andere Ort» von dem aus hier an das solar unconscious (Ho) der kolonialen Moderne erinnert wird, nicht der Ort musealer Dinge, sondern der von vergeschlechtlichten und rassifizierten Körpern, in denen sich Herrschaft bis heute aufrecht erhält.

Hos Vorgehen lässt sich als eine Art archäologische Mikropolitik beschreiben, in der filmische Imaginationen von *tropical malady* nicht nur an den Globalisierungsimperativ rückgebunden werden, sondern denen auch auf verblüffende Weise bis ins Jetzt gefolgt wird: der schwingende Rock in *The King and I* (1956) geht über in die winkende Hand einer solarbetriebenen Spielzeug-Queen; die Arbeit des *punkawallah* in Britisch-Indien wird als kolonialer Vorgänger des Air-Conditioning erkennbar. Durch den solaren Optimismus heute scheint die Sonne als letztes Territorium überwunden; selbst der Klimawandel, «die Verstopfung»⁵ der Zirkulationswut, kann als solare Energie die globalen Ströme nun einmal mehr in Bewegung setzen – womit sich die koloniale Logik der Zirkulation bis in «grüne Technologien» fortschreibt.

- 1 Gerburg Treusch-Dieter: Blutsbande. Nachdenken über Flüssiges und Festes, in: dies.: Ausgewählte Schriften, Wien, Berlin 2014, 239–256, 248.
- 2 Tiffany Lethabo King: The Black Shoals. Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies, Durham, London, 2010. 10.
- 3 Diesen Satz sagt Ho in seiner gleichnamigen Lecture Performance Solar: A Meltdown (2016), aus der auch das Material dieser Bildstrecke stammt.
- 4 Sara Ahmed: Strange Encounters. Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality, London, New York 2000, 92.
 - 5 Treusch-Dieter: Blutsbande, 248.

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the cosmos comes in to fill the emptiness. It can be said that the sun ontier that the imperial project failed to overcome. This is the sun capable finds no escape, being trapped in a body in relentless perspiration. Yet, one can rarely fin there can be no histories of sweat, only stories. Sweat, after all, is the remainder of history If. Such stories can only be told outside historical time, within the dead time of Empire, its idle m es in to fill the emptiness. It can be said that the sun blazing down on the colonial officer as he con rial project failed to overcome. This is the sun capable of blinding the eye and beating the back such apped in a body in relentless perspiration. Yet, one can rarely find any sweaty tales in the official historic s of sweat, only stories. Sweat, after all, is the remainder of history, that which must remain in excess in or told outside historical time, within the dead time of Empire, its idle moments, moments of waiting, during It can be said that the sun blazing down on the colonial officer as he conquered the land represents the final me. This is the sun capable of blinding the eye and beating the back such that, however one turns, one finds perspiration. Yet, one can rarely find any sweaty tales in the official histories of Empire. This is because there fter all, is the remainder of history, that which must remain in excess in order for history to write itself. Such thin the dead time of Empire, its idle moments, moments of waiting, during which the cosmos comes in to fill g down on the colonial officer as he conquered the land represents the final frontier that the imperial project failed ling the eye and beating the back such that, however one turns, one finds no escape, being trapped in a body in r nd any sweaty tales in the official histories of Empire. This is because there can be no histories of sweat, only stori that which must remain in excess in order for history to write itself. Such stories can only be told outside historic lle moments, moments of waiting, during which the cosmos comes in to fill the emptiness. It can be said that th is he conquered the land represents the final frontier that the imperial project failed to overcome. This is the he back such that, however one turns, one finds no escape, being trapped in a body in relentless perspiration. Yet, cial histories of Empire. This is because there can be no histories of sweat, only stories. Sweat, after all, is the remaind ess in order for history to write itself. Such stories can only be told outside historical time, within the dead time of E , during which the cosmos comes in to fill the emptiness. It can be said that the sun blazing down on the coloni s the final frontier that the imperial project failed to overcome. This is the sun capable of blinding the eye and b one finds no escape, being trapped in a body in relentless perspiration. Yet, one can rarely find any sweaty tales in se there can be no histories of sweat, only stories. Sweat, after all, is the remainder of history, that which must re elf. Such stories can only be told outside historical time, within the dead time of Empire, its idle moments, mom es in to fill the emptiness. It can be said that the sun blazing down on the colonial officer as he conquered the rial project failed to overcome. This is the sun capable of blinding the eye and beating the back such that, hov apped in a body in relentless perspiration. Yet, one can rarely find any sweaty tales in the official histories of E s of sweat, only stories. Sweat, after all, is the remainder of history, that which must remain in excess in order I told outside historical time, within the dead time of Empire, its idle moments, moments of waiting, during It can be said that the sun blazing down on the colonial officer as he conquered the land represents the fina me. This is the sun capable of blinding the eye and beating the back such that, however one turns, one perspiration. Yet, one can rarely find any sweaty tales in the official histories of Empire. This is becau

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"Heliography" literally means "sun-writing". This was the telegraphic practice adopted by military men and land surveyors between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that involved using a small mirror to reflect the rays of the sun. These flashes of sunlight communicated coded messages across large distances, thus enabling the colonial man to at once traverse and reinscribe a punishing terrain through which his body could never pass. By bringing the sun into his hand, the colonial man captured the land.



There is no white whiter than colonial white. The technological power of colonial fashion rechanneled the excesses of the tropical into the tropological, from which emerged the mythical tropes of the shiny white man who has dropped from the skies and the dark native he comes to illuminate. No longer was the colonial man simply holding a heliograph in his hand; he became heliography itself.







The Global Domestic is not a perfect sphere, but contains numerous hidden corners within which sit the true climate workers-the neglected transnational crew of labourers pulling the cords and working the fans so as to keep the cool breeze flowing. While seemingly too dispersed and disenfranchised to assume a legible collectivity, they can in fact be identified anachronistically through the punkawallah, the manual fan operator once employed across the British Raj who would be sweating by the sides to sustain the fantasy of a perfectly ventilated world.

Often, the punkawallah would sit at the very edge of the room where he swung the punka, usually a large screen hung from the ceiling, by pulling an attached cord. It was also at this outermost margin of the colonial house where he would listen in and quietly gather the gossip and intelligence to be disseminated to his fellow workers. His stoic presence in the room was the Outside that could never be fully incorporated, and from which the Inside would begin to unravel.





I swear I saw her sweaty back.