

Deterritorializing the Travelogue: Chronotope-crossing with Deleuze and Guattari in Ryszard Kapuściński's Travels with Herodotus

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Abstract: Historically, the genre of travel writing has been entangled with the discourse (and fact) of colonialism and imperialism. Contemporary travel writers have the opportunity to reflect on this complicity and generate works that can critique the genre's tendency to cement hierarchical assumptions against the other. This paper suggests that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari can help in the endeavor of theorizing the critical potential of travelogues. The Deluzoguattarian concept of the “nomad” is best understood in its habits of border-crossing, not necessarily as a direct subversion of the authorities that impose borders but a dilution of the borders themselves. With the nomad, this study delineates the overlooked attempts by travel narratives such as Ryszard Kapuściński's to reorient the genre beyond its imperialist roots. By travelling as a nomad, the narrating subject of Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus* transcodes two different space-times—that of Kapuściński and Herodotus—in order to critique the genre of travel writing and offer insights on what it could be. By traversing these relations, the essay also locates the

purchase of Deluzoguattarian philosophy in interrogating colonialism and imperialism as spatial phenomena.

Keywords: Deleuze, Guattari, Kapuściński, chronotope

INTRODUCTION

The rather eccentric philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari are best known for their playful and innovative writing, demonstrated by their inclination to appropriate humdrum words to mean a plethora of concepts. An example of which is *nomad* in what they refer to as *nomadology*, explicated in detail in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Garnering popularity in the same period when Lefebvre's theory of spatial production emerged, the collaborative work endorses a non-totalized multiplicity of thought, more well-known as the concept of the *rhizome*.¹ It spells out a mode of thinking that is not bound by fixed and often putative boundaries. Embodying the spatiality of the rhizome, the nomad as a model of subjectivity is best understood in its tendency to cross borders—whether physical, mental, cultural, or political—and its refusal to settle in place.² Deleuze and Guattari's nomad is a traveler-like subject that resists boundaries imposed by authoritative power. Seeing this critical potential, I trust that the Deluzoguattarian concept gains much purchase in the discussion of imperialism and the discourses that have facilitated and sustained it.

Imperial ambitions, fermenting in the West in the 15th century, have shaped the world as we know it. Geopolitical and socio-economic hierarchies among nations have been reorganized and intensified by imperial regimes, which have sought new markets, goods and labor across the world,³ spawning complex structures of exploitation. Historically speaking, the arts and letters have become an important means of producing the imperial European subject and the Other, the rest of the

¹ Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, *Postmodern Theory: Critical Interrogations* (London: Macmillan, 1991), 97.

² Robert Tally Jr., *Spatiality* (London: Routledge, 2013), 136; Dorothy Figuiera, "Cante Jondo: German Literary Gypsies and Theoretical Nomads," in *The Comparatist*, 23 (2003), 79-93.

³ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2015), 256.

world.⁴ Literature has circulated knowledge about the world,⁵ inspiring ambitions of conquest among powerful (mostly European) nations.⁶ This essay seeks to contribute to the discussion by soliciting from Deleuze and Guattari a rhizomatic way of approaching imperialism and literature, particularly the genre of travel writing. Contemporary travel writing has been studied under the framework (and impression) that it continues to cement imperialist ideologies: “the conventions of travel writing obviously are constituted ... by the discourses of the empire.”⁷ The imposition of alterity, a discourse that maintains and is circulated by imperialism, is inscribed in the language of travel writing. The association cannot be helped, because the genre “was the cultural bi-product of imperialism, often written by those actively involved in the expansion or maintenance of empire ... and dependent upon the support of the institutions of imperialism,” historically speaking.⁸ With the help of the Deluzoguattarian nomad, I wish to offer the possibility of the opposite: an interrogation of travel literature’s complicity to imperialism.

This paper delineates the overlooked attempts by travel narratives such as Ryszard Kapuściński’s to reorient the genre beyond its imperialist roots. Laureled as one of the 20th century’s most important journalists, Kapuściński served as a foreign correspondent for the Polish Press Agency

⁴ *Ibid.*, 76.

⁵ Edward Said’s *Orientalism* is one of the first and sweeping investigations of the ways in which literature informed the imperial imaginations of the West. For Said, texts produce geographical knowledge of sameness and difference, with writing and reading as practices of designation. Here, the immediate space is considered to be “ours” while unfamiliar spaces beyond “ours” become “theirs,” the Other. See Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 13, 54.

⁶ Julia Kuehn and Paul Smethurst, “Introduction,” in *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1.

⁷ Sarah Miller, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001), 72.

⁸ Justin Edwards and Rune Graulund, “Introduction: Reading Postcolonial Travel Writing,” in *Postcolonial Travel Writing* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1.

under the country's Communist rule.⁹ Most interestingly, Kapuściński had written from a distinct European postcolonial experience—Poland was a former Soviet colony. Given away internationally, the Ryszard Kapuściński Award for Literary Reportage gives homage to the travel writer's name and book-length accounts of travel enmeshed in political commentary. Kapuściński's last published work, *Travels with Herodotus*, like many of the travel writer's works, is a reportage, also known as literary journalism.¹⁰ While traditional journalism succinctly captures fleeting events, the reportage aims not only to gather the event and its aftermath, but also to reflect on them,¹¹ and in the Polish travel reportage in Kapuściński's time, the most common task is to reflect on the (political) status of the homeland by giving an account of another place.

By surveying the author's travels since his beginnings as a journalist, *Travels with Herodotus* takes a detour from the paths taken by his previous works, which focus on one itinerary. In other words, it reads like a memoir, interspersed with retellings of Herodotus' histories. Also, while books such as *Shadow of the Sun: My African Life* and *Imperium* deliver a critique of calcified imperial regimes (European nations in Africa and the proto-imperialist Central Committee in the USSR) by traveling and staying in those regions, *Travels with Herodotus* deals with the discourse of empire head on by tracing its relations to travel writing as a genre.

I contend that in Ryszard Kapuściński's *Travels with Herodotus*, the nomad interweaves a *temporal* and an *atemporal* chronotope to meditate on the historical (anti-imperialist) roots of travel writing. The text "comes with a built-in analysis of [its] own composition."¹² The subject

⁹ Micahel Sabelli, "Ryszard Kapuściński's Discourse on the Other: Literary Reportage's Perspective of Reality," in *Otherness: Essays and Studies*, 3:2 (June 2013), 1.

¹⁰ Diana Kuprel, "Literary Reportage: Between and Beyond Art and Fact," in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe: Junctures and Disjunctures in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Pub. Co., 2004), 256.

¹¹ Norman Sims, "International Literary Journalism in Three Dimensions," in *World Literature Today*, 86:2 (2012), 33.

¹² Elton Glaser, "The Self-Reflexive Traveler: Paul Theroux on the Art of Travel and Travel Writing," in *The Centennial Review*, 33:3 (1989), 193.

explores space nomadically, allowing for the fluid alternation (*transcoding*, as Deleuze and Guattari would phrase it) of the spaces he traverses (the temporal chronotope) with those of Herodotus (the atemporal *relational* chronotope). By allowing the two chronotopes to interact, the text proffers that the reportage necessitates a nomadic appreciation of spaces and the other, opposing the imperialist tendencies of superiority and hierarchy which critics cannot help but ascribe to the genre. The emancipatory potential of travel writing (“*podróżopisarstwo*” in Polish) to address its problematic history is open to Kapuściński and his nomadic appreciation—if not celebration—of difference between the self and the other that manifests in his reimaginings of space.

THE NOMAD’S TRAIL

In the first proposition of *A Thousand Plateaus*’ 14th plateau, Deleuze and Guattari assert that the “war machine”—a more politically-charged sobriquet for the nomad—stands outside the state apparatus.¹³ As a subject, it exercises agency by means of movement. Their border crossings are often subversive by dint of their conceptual (and even spiritual) abolition of socio-spatial practices of the state (or in this study’s case, the empire). The establishment of boundaries, urban and rural planning, roadmaking, land expansion (or colonization)—these are all impositions of power over space in order to facilitate control, and the nomad transcends these boundaries. Nomadic subjects are thus open to unconventional spatial orientations, making new connections in their comings and goings.¹⁴ The nomad’s movement transgresses the itineraries, routes and borders set by the state

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 531.

¹⁴ Tamsin Lorraine, “Ahab and Becoming-Whale: The Nomadic Subject in Smooth Space,” in *Deleuze and Space* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 160.

or empire, as its experience of space is detached to a comprehensible whole rationalized by authority.

This controlled and measured (by the delegation of geographical meanings) space under state influence is called *stratified space*, which the nomad territorializes and mobilizes.¹⁵ To counter this space, Deleuze and Guattari explain that

The nomads are there, on the land, wherever there forms a smooth space that gnaws, and tends to grow, in all directions. The nomads inhabit these places; they remain in them, and they themselves make them grow, for it has been established that the nomads make the desert no less than they are made by it.¹⁶

Smooth spaces, in other words, are contingent on the nomad's presence, which is beyond the control of hegemony.¹⁷ These nonmetric and decentered spaces are by no means homogenous (the form of striated space). It allows for multivalent modes of movement and living that can frustrate the rationality of the empire, and thus the nomad and the smooth spaces it organizes can be useful in approaching texts that counter stratifying imperial discourse.

With this, we realize that the nomad and its accompanying smooth space are not essentially emancipatory and explicitly anti-state. Deleuze and Guattari point out that "the struggle is [only] changed or displaced in [the smooth space], and life reconstitutes its stakes, confronts new obstacles, invents new paces, switches adversaries." Robert Tally Jr. observes that the kind of resistance the nomad poses is not exterior to the given relations of power. Rather, the nomad effectuates changes within the

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 361-2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 382.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 447-452.

“elaborate, mobile, and ever shifting web of spatial relations.”¹⁸ Imperial regions eventually assimilate smooth spaces to draw up boundaries, thus enforcing discipline.¹⁹

In Ryszard Kapuściński’s *Travels with Herodotus*, the nomad disrupts the territory of the empire within a *transcoding* of two space-time paradigms, that of his travel account and that of Herodotus’. In Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*, transcoding refers to the manner in which different singularities (such as spaces) interact with each other.²⁰ In this mode of narrativizing space, one singularity “serves as the basis for another, or conversely is established atop another,” dissipating in it or is constituted by it.²¹ One space *seeps* into another. Most travelogues spatialize only one dominant space-time, or as literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin calls it, *chronotope* where thought and event take place. In *Travels*, the observations and stories Kapuściński lifts from *Histories* are hardly consequential to the encounters recounted in the narrative. Connections are made only tenuously, and even philosophically, by the nomadic subject through the transcoding process. Thus, the concept can be better explored in the discussion of *Travels with Herodotus*, which delineates two distinct chronotopes, an atemporal relational one and a temporal.

Critic Sanja Bahun inflects Mikhail Bakhtin’s chronotope to particularize a certain type, referring to it as the “relational chronotope.” It is a space-time that “spreads and disseminates, penetrating narratively into various other ... places and experiences, and binding these places and experiences to the interiority of the [displaced] narrative subject.”²² As its

¹⁸ Tally, *Spatiality*, 139.

¹⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 495.

²⁰ Eugene Young, Gary Genosko, and Janell Watson, *The Deleuze & Guattari Dictionary* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 320.

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313, 345.

²² Sanja Bahun, “There was Once a Country: An Impossible Chronotope in the Writings of Slavenka Drakulić and Dubravka Ugrešić,” in *European Journal of English Studies*, 14:1 (2010), 63.

name suggests, this chronotope relates to and affects other chronotopes. It is essentially *atemporal* because it is already an object of history—a resolute space-time, unlike the chronotope of a speaking subject’s narrative that unfolds towards its completion at the act of reading.

Through transcoding and the relational chronotope, this study aims to make visible the author’s anti-imperialist position, articulated by a nomadic subjectivity and spatiality in *Travels with Herodotus*. By establishing the transcoding of chronotopes taking place in *Travels*, I shall turn to what Herodotus, as some kind of “teacher,” imparts to the Polish journalist: a meditation on the historical (even anti-imperialist) roots of travel writing and the reportage.

TRAVERSING AN/THE EMPIRE

Being “part autobiography, part literary criticism and part meditation,”²³ Ryszard Kapuściński’s *Travels with Herodotus*, first published in 2004 and translated into English in 2007, does not turn to Herodotus merely for a handy quote to describe an encounter taking place; rather, Herodotus’s journeys allow the narrative subject to “acknowledge how generic, literary and formal constraints have wider political effects.”²⁴ This exploration of generic conventions can only be done by a nomadic movement across space.

The reportage details the first dispatches of Poland’s most renowned journalist, accompanied by traveler-companion Herodotus and his *Histories*. A year after Kapuściński told his editor-in-chief in *Sztandar Młodych* (The Banner of Youth) that he wishes to go abroad, the young journalist is sent to India as the press’s foreign correspondent. After navigating through the “narrow, dusty, fiendishly hot streets,” of India,

²³ Sara Wheeler, “Two for the Road,” in *The Guardian* (2007), <<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/jun/30/featuresreviews.guardianreview6>>.

²⁴ Debbie Lisle, *The Global Politics of Contemporary Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 267.

“with their stifling odor of tropical fermentation,”²⁵ Kapuściński procures a ticket back to Poland via Kabul and Moscow.²⁶ By then it was 1956, and “people were still coming out of the gulags” of the Soviet Empire.²⁷ Within a few months of work back in his office, Kapuściński is again assigned to a dispatch: “you’re going to China.”²⁸ He reaches China on foot, Autumn of 1957.²⁹ In 1960, he first sees the Nile,³⁰ which marks the beginning of his cycles of visit to Africa.

Travels with Herodotus shuttles from one dispatch to another in order to show the scope of Kapuściński’s travels, which spans most of Eurasia and Africa. Incidentally, this is the expanse traversed by Herodotus thousands of years ago.³¹ What makes the text a unique contribution to Kapuściński’s oeuvre is that, while it preserves the standards of the Polish reportage mode, the text hardly reports about the spaces the subject travels to, as foreshadowed by the swiftness of my summarization in the preceding paragraph. Rather, it gives premium to recounting the life of Herodotus and inflecting scenes from *Histories*.

Herodotus, known as the “Father of History,” contributed much to ancient geography and ethnography by virtue of his magnum opus, *Histories*, which intends to describe in detail the Persian wars and the conditions that led to it. Of course, these include the geography, history, and ethnography of each of the countries annexed by Persia, which comprise the first half of the compendium. The latter half tells about the war itself. Like Kapuściński, Herodotus meshes his observations (*opsis*) of local customs and traditions with knowledge about infrastructures and

²⁵ Ryszard Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, trans. by Klara Glowczewska, (New York: Penguin, 2007), 19.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 49.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

³¹ Klaus Karttunen, “Herodotus,” in *Literature of Travel and Exploration: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2003), 557.

interviews with people (*akoe*).³² To bolster his commentaries, he quotes passages from other Greek writings.

The structure of *Travels with Herodotus* parallels that of *Histories*; they both employ observations (*opsis*) and reports (*akoe*). Instead of collating notes from many writers, Kapuściński expands his literal voyages across the globe by intertwining it with only one: Herodotus's journeys in the fifth century BC, recorded in the above *Histories*. To Sara Mills, travel writing is constructed by certain regularities of discourse; "that is, by the books which have already been written about other nations," like Herodotus's.³³ Arguably half of *Travels* comprises of inflections of and reflections on Herodotus's *opsis* and *akoe*. Primarily about the territory of the Persian empire, these are juxtaposed with Kapuściński's report on his personal experience of learning English in India, on the gulags of the Soviet Empire, on the rigidity of the Maoist regime in China, and on the decolonization of Africa, all compressed as the other half of *Travels*. As you may have noticed, the image and theme of empire pervade the various spaces sited in the text, from Herodotus's Persia in war to the Africa undergoing multiple coups. *Travels* questions imperial expansion at its onset. At night in downtown Benares, Kapuściński remarks that he "cannot fathom this need for a life of congestion, of rubbing against one another, of endlessly pushing and shoving—all the more so when right over there is so much free space."³⁴ To him, the world is much roomier for everyone before colonialism and imperial expansion, and his disappointment towards the consequence of which seeps into *Travels with Herodotus*.

The interrogation of the discourse of empire is also expressed indirectly. At times, the present social order is compared to the past. Kapuściński's stance against imperial power manifests quite evidently in

³² *Ibid.*, 556-7.

³³ Sarah Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 76.

³⁴ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 39.

his stay in China. The subject delivers a lengthy reflection on the Great Wall of the first time he witnesses its grandeur:

The Great Wall! People come from the ends of the earth to see it. It is one of the wonders of the world, a unique, almost mythical, and in some sense unfathomable creation. The Chinese constructed it, with interruptions, over the course of two thousand years. They commenced when the Buddha and Herodotus were alive and were still building it when Leonardo da Vinci, Titian, and Johann Sebastian Bach were at their labors in Europe

Variouly, because there is no single Great Wall—there are several of them. And they were built at different times, in different places, and from different materials. They had one thing in common, however: the originating impulse.³⁵

In what seems to be a lecture on the history of the Great Wall, Kapuściński already renders the Great Wall as a signifier for imperial power. His emphasis on the time, materials and the effort it took to build the Wall(s) articulates his dissatisfaction with the imperial Soviet Union, where the energies of the nation are misused to carry out the will of the ruling elite. The imposing *éclat* of the Walls also exude an originating impulse, an aura of superiority that surpasses even the lives of famed Europeans such as da Vinci, Bach, and Herodotus himself. This apotheosis stages Kapuściński's claim that the Great Wall "was only a metaphor—a symbol and a sign, the coat of arms and the escutcheon of what had been a nation of walls for millennia."³⁶ He continues picking at such imperial tendencies, in the metaphor of the Great Wall, saying,

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 57-8.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 58.

That is how the world's energy is wasted. In complete irrationality! Complete futility! For the Great Wall and it is gigantic, a wall-fortress, stretching for thousands of kilometers through uninhabited mountains and wilderness, an object of pride and, as I have mentioned, one of the wonders of the world—is also proof of a kind of human weakness, of an aberration, of a horrifying mistake; it is evidence of a historical inability of people in this part of the planet to communicate, to confer and jointly determine how best to deploy enormous reserves of human energy and intellect.³⁷

Notice that here, he refers not to the Chinese dynasties behind the construction, but to the world in general. He sullies the proud show of authority and superiority as nothing more than a fear of the other, “a kind of human weakness.” This lengthy—and impassioned, for that matter—commentary on the “Great Metaphor” frame Kapuściński's stay in Maoist China, whose people seem to echo the former empires' fear to communicate with the other.³⁸

To enumerate all the instances in which the text insinuates a critique on the discourse of empire will take much time. What interests this chapter is how spatiality gets involved in this expression of dissent against the empire, and as Soenke Zehle would ask, how the reportage mode would frame the encounter with the other.³⁹ This, I suggest, is attained through *Travels with Herodotus's* hybrid composition; the text alternates between reporting experiences while traveling and excerpting what Herodotus had reported in *Histories*. In the mid-1940's in Poland, *Histories* “had been

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 58-9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁹ Soenke Zehle, “Ryszard Kapuściński and the Borders of Documentarism: Toward Exposure without Assumption,” in *Literary Journalism across the Globe: Journalistic Traditions and Transnational Influences* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 2011), 285.

translated by Professor Seweryn Hammer, who deposited his manuscript in the Czytelnik publishing house.”⁴⁰ After wriggling through the censorship of the Soviet Union, “the book finally did not go to press until three years later, at the end of 1954, arriving in the bookstores in 1955.”⁴¹ When his editor-in-chief told him that he will be dispatched to India, Kapuściński receives a present for the road, a “thick book with a stiff cover of yellow cloth. On the front, stamped in gold letters,” is the title *Histories*.⁴²

It is implied that Herodotus has already accompanied the Polish journalist in the travels recounted in the two texts. The choice to emphasize the presence of the Greek geographer in *Travels with Herodotus* might owe to the “Anglophone tradition of travel book writing represented particularly by Bruce Chatwin, Paul Theroux and V.S. Naipaul.⁴³ Theroux for example, brought with him a copy of *Life of Johnson* for companionship—literally, for *talk*, as the author says so himself—in one of his journeys on train.⁴⁴ Sometimes, these authors and books are brought in to supply information that the travel writer must know to understand current attitudes and conditions of a certain location.⁴⁵ Unlike other reportages which borrow from a handful of secondary sources, the text at hand relies on only one source.

Enlisting Herodotus as a travel guide expresses the author’s desire to weave a form that can best communicate its stance against imperialism. Deleuze and Guattari’s theorization of space, the nomad and *transcoding* can help elucidate on how an alternating travel narrative contribute to Kapuściński’s critique of empire. Incidentally, this hybrid structure also

⁴⁰ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴³ Grzegorz Moroz, “Ryszard Kapuscinski: Between Polish and Anglophone Travel Writing,” in *Studies in Travel Writing*, 19:2 (2015), 169.

⁴⁴ Glaser, “The Self-Reflexive Traveler,” 198.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

gives insight into the matter of genre, as we shall see by the end of the chapter.

The above-mentioned articles expose, albeit generically and temporarily, some possible characterizations to Thomism based on the expositions of these Filipino academicians. One observation that can be gleaned from these arguments is that Filipino Thomists continue to interpret the writings of the Angelic Doctor from the eyes of the traditional Catholic faith. This is possibly due to the cultural leaning of the Philippines—at least still the majority— towards this religion; or possibly due to the fact that many of the scholars of Thomism came from Catholic universities in the country. Such can be seen more clearly with Piñon who reiterated the necessity for obedience even to the position of the Holy Father despite the fact that such an opinion has not been declared *ex cathedra*. This can also be seen with Aguas who utilized the philosophy of Pope John Paul II in establishing the foundation of human dignity. Although Calano and Angeles exposed various ways by which the Angelic Doctor and Thomism in general could be expressed and taught, they nonetheless did not digress significantly to alter the faith upon which the philosopher relied upon.

This observation does not, however, degrade the notion that Filipino Thomists were not aware of the philosophical issues in the global philosophical sphere. Many of the issues they tried to resolve originated from outside the country. Cariño reiterated this when he tried to reconcile the fact that the Church has no official philosopher, and that St. Thomas could act nonetheless as an inspiration for creative fidelity. Arguments extending the interpretation of *Humanae Vitae* is also a global issue during that time as the use of new contraceptives has been debated in a lot of legal jurisdictions. Other ideas such as the popularity of overcoming metaphysics and the theological issues surround grace has led to various schools of thought within Thomism itself. This only goes to show that Filipino Thomists were in tuned with these issues even before the internet age where digital academic interrelations were not yet feasible. The article

of Quito, for instance, while it dealt with a common issue such as predestination, offered avenues for humility and acquiescence.

The aforementioned Thomists also seem to be consistent with one another, and at certain times, even support each other's positions. One of these is the position of Piñon to follow the Holy Pontiff even if he is just providing his opinion as long as there is enough illocutionary force in his exhortations; and Calano who introduced a novel interpretation of the overcoming of metaphysics—normally unacceptable to traditional Thomists. Nonetheless, despite utilizing contemporary philosophers (and not Thomists) he attempted to provide an interpretation of analogia by looking at convertibility and reversibility by way of difference, which if understood correctly, does not really digress significantly from the traditional positions, albeit even improving upon them. In addition to this, Angeles continues to opine that despite the differences in Thomistic schools of thought, there remains the spirit of St. Thomas alive in such disagreements. This opens up the possibility of diversions in interpretation without compromising the academic loyalty to the Angelic Doctor.

MAPPING THE TWO CHRONOTOPES

As I mentioned earlier, in *Travels with Herodotus*, a nomadic subject interweaves a temporal and an atemporal chronotope, and the former refers to the subject's travels across Europe, Africa and Asia in the 20th century. To discuss the nomadic movement of the subject in the spatiality of the text is to expound on the characteristics of the temporal chronotope as well.

Deleuze and Guattari note that one of the distinguishing capabilities of the nomad is the “conceptual demolition of the boundary lines” that demarcate difference between spaces.⁴⁶ Kapuściński later realizes that his occupation as a journalist in a sense *necessitates* a nomadic

⁴⁶ Tally, *Spatiality*, 136.

tendency to travel. A few years after his first dispatch, he finds himself astir in his office, because “all day long, dispatches arrived ... from various countries, which I had to read, translate, condense, edit, and send on to newspapers and radio stations.” There is a difficulty in comprehending the world because of the volume of events taking place across space and time: “news reached me daily from places like Rangoon or Singapore, Hanoi, Manila, or Bandung, my travels through the countries of Asia—commenced in India and Afghanistan, continued in Japan and China—went on uninterrupted.” While the subject acknowledges the multiplicity of the world, he does not mention any need to master his discovery, avoiding the monarch-of-all-I-survey disposition usually directed to depictions of the “world.” The nomadic attitude of the journalist subject position is further compelled by the geographical changes brought about by the World Wars. He uses “a prewar map of the Asian continent, over which I often wandered with my finger.”⁴⁷ Due to his occupation in the Polish presses, he is always “at home on the road.”⁴⁸

The nomadic subject demonstrates this desire for difference even when describing spaces. Take India for example. Trying to learn the historical caste system that pervade the country, Kapuściński imbibes a different lesson: “India is all about infinity—an infinity of gods and myths, beliefs and languages, races, and cultures; in everything, and everywhere one looks, there is this dizzying endlessness.”⁴⁹ Indian culture, he realizes, covers “hundreds” of (sub)categories, smashing a homogenous, simplified image of an India with a sedimented caste system.

The desire for difference drives the subject to the extent of locating distinction in China, where people are admittedly submitted to homogenization, in the following example in terms of clothing. “If someone is carrying a bag, then that bag is identical to all the rest,” the subject explains. But then he wonders, “What happens when there is a large

⁴⁷ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 76.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 30.

gathering and everyone must leave their caps and bags in a cloakroom? How do they distinguish their belongings from those of thousands of others?” He cannot find the answer himself, but logically, the Chinese would still be able to tell one thing from another, especially their possessions. Kapuściński concludes that differences “can indeed dwell not only in large things, but in the smallest of details—in the way, for instance, that a button has been sewn on [a bag].”⁵⁰

Linking travel to the thirst for difference (which he quenches by border-crossing, by *movement* itself), the subject renders Herodotus’s world and the countries he has traveled as *relays*.⁵¹ To Kapuściński, “with each new expedition the world expands on him, multiplies, assumes enormous proportions. It turns out that beyond Egypt there is still Libya, and beyond that the land of the Ethiopians, in other words, Africa.”⁵² In the above examples, multiplicity in *Travels with Herodotus* is expressed through the movement among a number of countries and the location of differences in each, as seen in India and, indeed interestingly, in China.

Further proving the subject’s nomadic character is the number of smooth spaces in the reportage. These spaces are understood to be “beyond the control of the rational and administrative machine.”⁵³ To put it simply they desist the efforts of authority to striate and imposed borders on space. In smooth spaces, the subject thrives with the other. For instance, Kapuściński notices the number of temples in India, which is supposed to match the numerosity of deities in Hinduism. India is pervaded by these sites where spirituality is concentrated, and so the subject finds himself in “the sphere of the unfathomable” that

is boundless, and the rich variety of what lies within it is characterized by the most bewildering, mutually

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 380.

⁵² Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 80.

⁵³ Figuiera, “Cante Jondo,” 80.

contradictory, and stark contrasts. Everything here turns in the most natural way into its opposite, the boundaries between material things and mystical phenomena are fluid and fleeting, one becomes the other or, simply, eternally is the other; being is transformed into nothingness, disintegrates and metamorphoses into the cosmos, into a celestial omnipresence, into a divine way that disappears into the depths of bottomless nonbeing.⁵⁴

The border between the physical and spiritual is blurred due to the ubiquity of religion in the cityscape. Of course, the mystical quality of India is expressed on the textual level of space; it is the nomadic subject who *writes* of a *smooth* Indian space. As such, “nomads continually map and remaps.”⁵⁵

The subject constructs a smooth space not only for the other, but also for himself. Headed to mainland China after this dispatch in India, Kapuściński feels deterritorialized—removed from the space he is beginning to be accustomed to. As a journalist (and a nomad), he must treat India as a relay and move on.

The train was empty. The cars resembled those on the train from Hong Kong—seats arranged in rows, no separate compartments. Finally, we were on our way. The landscape we traversed was sunny and green, the air coming in through the windows felt warm and humid and smelled of the tropics. It all reminded me of India, the India from the area around Madras and Pondicherry. Through these subcontinental analogies, I began to feel at home. I was among landscapes I knew and liked. The train stopped

⁵⁴ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 40.

⁵⁵ Tally, *Spatiality*, 136.

frequently and more and more people got on at the little stations.⁵⁶

To address his deterritorialized state, he *reterritorializes* China by melding it with the landscape of Madras and Pondicherry, places more familiar to the subject (and readers). In contrast to the emphasis on difference earlier, the location of similarities in singularities so distinct also presage the presence of smooth space, which is “constantly being translated, transversed ... reversed, returned.”⁵⁷ The analogies made between disparate spatial units the field of vision of the narrative, inviting the reader to a space distinct from India and China. As Kapuściński optimistically conveys, “with each new expedition the world expands on him, multiplies, assumes enormous proportions,”⁵⁸ and—if I may add—becomes more like home.

As we have seen in the above examples, the subject travels nomadically, rendering the places he traversed into smooth spaces by privileging difference. Smooth space, being “a space of multiplicities,” is “constructed through local operations involving changes of direction that may shift in keeping with the journey itself or the shifting nature of the journey's goal.”⁵⁹ The journalistic occupation of the subject is a factor in the constant shifts in his direction. Nonetheless, the “local operation” that unifies these smooth spaces as the temporal chronotope of the reportage is the recognition of the linguistic and semiotic basis of spaces.

Sometimes, people would find themselves lost because of “misleading signs,”⁶⁰ but to some, like the subject, the recognition of the semiotic of space—that the landscape we move in is constructed out of signs—enabled communication and understanding. In India, his “not knowing English helped [him] feel closer, more akin to the ordinary folk in

⁵⁶ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 51.

⁵⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 474.

⁵⁸ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 80.

⁵⁹ Lorraine, “Ahab and Becoming-Whale,” 164.

⁶⁰ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 142.

the cities or the peasants in the villages I passed,” people he is comfortable with, as he is used to the destitute conditions of colonized Poland.⁶¹ Note that this belongingness is forged not in the similarity between languages spoken, but rather in difference. Kapuściński further exhibits his nomadic subjectivity by “rethinking the space-time coordinates of the conventional reality,”⁶² stripping down what we know simply as space into its linguistic basis.

Surveying these snippets from Kapuściński’s travel narrative, we clearly see how he moves in the spatiality of *Travels with Herodotus*. Firstly, he accentuates differences, drawing out the multiplicity inherent in the spaces he explores. Secondly, he reterritorializes striated spaces (where authority can stratify inhabitants) into smooth spaces. Thirdly, and most interestingly, he reflexively points out to the fact that space is a linguistic and semiotic construct, and this construction of meaning takes place in the production of the text. These markers of nomadic subjectivity and smooth spatiality characterize one of the reportage’s chronotopes.

As I boded, the reportage features two space-times, and the nomadic travel discussed in this section, spanning Poland, India, the USSR, China, Africa, Iran and Greece, comprises of the *temporal* chronotope of the text. These disparate dispatches across the world come together into one space-time not only because they take place right after one another. Firstly, they are all the “relays”—as Deleuze and Guattari would phrase it—of the nomadic subject, as described in this section. Secondly, we consider it as the text’s temporal chronotope because it unfolds to its completion upon the progression of the narrative. Through the act of reading, these voyages begin and end. Like explorations which expand space, “each reading ... will reveal another layer, previously overlooked themes, images, and meanings.”⁶³ This space-time bears the sign of the present; it is

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶² Tamsin Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Immanent Ethics* (New York: SUNY Press), 169.

⁶³ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 219.

“conscious experience, informed as it is by the spatial and temporal orientation of individuals.”⁶⁴

Now that it is clear how Kapuściński’s nomadic travels in the 19th century stand for the text’s temporal chronotope, let us detour to the opposing path, the *atemporal* chronotope. Here, we must keep in mind that Kapuściński conceives of travel *writing* as an iconographic (symbolic) journey; it is where “one could stop at any point, calmly observe, rewind to the previous image, etc., something for which on a real journey there is neither the time nor the chance.”⁶⁵ Given that space itself is a system of signs (as explained above), the journey narrated and taken in the reportage is a representation of the writer’s earlier journeys into language itself.⁶⁶

The nomadic subject’s reflexive acknowledgement that space in narrative is but a linguistic construction blurs the borders of the narrative’s temporal chronotope (the space-time of his travels around the world). In other words, it suspends the assumptions of reality surrounding it. *Travels with Herodotus* puts up signposts telling us that whatever is represented in the text exists as part of *text*, and this allows for the juxtaposition of Kapuściński’s temporal chronotope to the atemporal chronotope of Herodotus’s *Histories*.

While covering in Africa, Kapuściński himself confesses that with Herodotus to “accompany” him, his experience of space is defined into two worlds:

I thought about this frequently, sensing at the same time, not without surprise and even a measure of anxiety, that as I immersed myself increasingly in Herodotus’s book, I identified more and more, emotionally and cognitively, with the world and events that he recalls ... The world that I was

⁶⁴ Lorraine, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Immanent Ethics*, 159.

⁶⁵ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 49.

⁶⁶ Frances Bartkowski, *Travelers, Immigrants, Inmates* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), xviii.

experiencing was not only the African one, about which I was supposed to be writing as the correspondent of a press agency, but also that one far from here which vanished hundreds of years ago.⁶⁷

Here he makes clear to the reader the two space-times of the text: the one he explores as a foreign correspondent, and the one that has already “vanished,” and he means this literally, as the maps of today are vastly different from that of Herodotus’s. *Histories* itself, by virtue of being a book, holds its own chronotope, this “vanished” space-time. Compared to the temporal chronotope which unfolds in the narrative, this one is *atemporal*, because it is recognized by the text as an object of history, something already completed.

The subject’s tendency to break the narrative of his travels to linger in the world of Herodotus intricately weaves the two chronotopes together. In one instance, he surveys some of the spaces that comprise *Histories*, such as Greece, Babylon, Scythia, Persia, Thermopylae and Salamis, in order to exhibit the expanse of Herodotus’s travels across Europe and Asia. However, smack in the next paragraph, he starts with “The newspaper office. Field trips. Assemblies. Meetings. Conversations.”⁶⁸ The narrative, which first provides an image of Herodotus’s ancient world, plunges past centuries to modern day Poland. The subject facilely moves from one landscape to another.

It gets a bit more complicated a few pages later. To begin the chapter “Honors for the Head of Histiaeus,” which tells of the contributions of Histiaeus to the Persian rule, Kapuściński explains that he just “left Persepolis and now [he is] leaving Tehran, going back twenty years and returning once more to Africa.”⁶⁹ Here, not only does he travel from

⁶⁷ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 220.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 155.

Persepolis to today's Tehran, but from Iran, he transitions twenty years back to Africa. These episodes which appear later in the narrative exemplify how the text interweaves the two space-times more fluidly as it progresses. Framing space as a linguistic construction, as explained earlier, blurs the border between present reality and the reconstructed past, and the subject experiencing space as such allows for his "time-traveling" at the level of the text.

Provided these instances of "time-traveling" in the text, we must note another nomadic characteristic manifested by Kapuściński-as-subject in *Travels with Herodotus*. Here, the subject acts as a porous figure, through which two chronotopes flow through. In other words, subjectivity is constructed beyond the two space-time configurations. A nomadic subjectivity, after all, "involves all kinds of deformations, transmutations, passages."⁷⁰ In *Travels with Herodotus*, the temporal and atemporal chronotopes engage each other through the speaking, narrativizing subject, a process I shall unpack later. Kapuściński is, in other words, the *axis of movement* in the narrative, because all movement between the two chronotopes take place in his subjectivity.⁷¹

DETERRITORIALIZING THE ROOTS OF THE TRAVEL REPORTAGE

The movement between Herodotus's world and the space-time of Kapuściński's nomadic travel has been referred to as a simple "alternation." However, this interweaving of chronotopes, along with a nomadic subjectivity, is better understood as *transcoding*, the narrative strategy employed by Kapuściński.

We witness how the subject, as an axis of movement, allows for the transition of one chronotope to another. This configuration of movement

⁷⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 362.

⁷¹ Gabriel Zoran, "Towards a Theory of Space in Narrative," in *Poetics Today*, 5:2 (1984), 319.

forges an affirmative relation to the “absent political and cultural entity.”⁷² Simply said, the alternation between the two chronotopes allows for a dialogue (“affirmative relation”) between Kapuściński-as-subject and the absent and yet important entity in the text (who I hardly discussed up until now), Herodotus himself. This dialogue—a nomadic act, because it is a key to breaking down borders⁷³—is afforded by transcoding, “the processes by which [spaces] interrelate in a ‘rhythm’ or ‘co-ordination of heterogeneous space-times.”⁷⁴

Given that the narrative alternates between the two chronotopes, it suffices to say that transcoding operates all throughout *Travels with Herodotus*. Notwithstanding, particular encounters in the narrative illustrate how one chronotope influences the other. In the chapter “Herodotus’s Discovery,” which reflects on the renowned geographer’s ethics and methods, Herodotus is again pulled back into the text’s temporal chronotope. Kapuściński explains, “If [my friend] and I had lived in Herodotus’s times, we would have been Scythians—they had inhabited our part of Europe.”⁷⁵ Scythians, the cultural other, are a community unbeknownst to Herodotus until late in his travels, hence the subject’s identification with them, punctuating his spatio-temporal distance from Herodotus. Distinct space-times are coordinated through a common entity (the subject as the axis of movement) which in turn allows for the interrelation and engagement between the two singularities, Kapuściński and Herodotus.

Again, transcoding entails that one chronotope “serves as the basis for another, or conversely is established atop another,” dissipating in it or is constituted by it.⁷⁶ It is evidenced by the above encounters, among many

⁷² Bahun, “There was Once a Country,” 64.

⁷³ George Gasyna, “The Poetics of the Borderlands: Ryszard Kapuściński’s Poland,” in *The Polish Review*, 53:1 (2008), 57.

⁷⁴ Mark Bonta and John Protevi, *Deleuze and Geophilosophy: A Guide and Glossary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 164.

⁷⁵ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 256.

⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313-345.

others *Travels with Herodotus*, that the text at hand does not postulate any fixed chronotopes. Both, like the nomad, are mutable. The difference between the two space-times lies in how they engage each other. Given that it allows for reflection and an establishment of an affirmative relation (as shown in the two preceding examples), Herodotus's chronotope is posed as "flexible and *relational*," disseminating into and spreading over the other chronotope, that of Kapuściński's nomadic travels.⁷⁷ In essence, in this process of transcoding, while it is the temporal chronotope (Kapuściński's travels) that occasions the atemporal chronotope (recounted travels of Herodotus), it is the latter, being relational, which deterritorializes the former.

The "relational" function of the relational chronotope appears most manifestly in Herodotus's "instructive" engagements with Kapuściński, which begins at the onset of the reportage itself. "Before he experiences a hundred different places and sees a thousand inconceivable things, he will appear for a moment in a lecture on ancient Greece, which Professor Biezuńska-Malowist delivers twice weekly to the first-year students in Warsaw University's department of history. He will appear and just as quickly vanish."⁷⁸ It is not only the subject, but also Herodotus himself, who oscillates between the past and the (historical) present. Kapuściński's reimagination of his first meeting with Herodotus establishes two things: (a) the dual-chronotopic framework of *Travels*, and (b) Herodotus's function in the narrative as a *teacher*. The first European geographer travels past centuries to pay Kapuściński his first lesson on travel writing, so to speak.

To critic Elton Glaser, this elevation of Herodotus as a transhistorical teacher figure is no surprise. He points out that for traveler-turned-writers, books accentuate their status as students of "of travel

⁷⁷ Bahun, "There was Once a Country," 64.

⁷⁸ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 3

writing as a literary art.”⁷⁹ As such, *Travels* also frames Herodotus’s *Histories* as one of the first works of travel reportage.

Motion. Travel. Herodotus’s book arose from travel; it is world literature’s first great work of reportage. Its author has reportorial instincts, a journalistic eye and ear. He is indefatigable; he sails over the sea, traverses the steppe, ventures deep into the desert—we have his accounts of all this. He astonishes us with his relentlessness, never complains of exhaustion. Nothing discourages him, and not once does he say that he is afraid.⁸⁰

Kapuściński, a writer of travel reportage himself, positions himself as a student of Herodotus by framing the latter as a forerunner in the field. Whereas scholars through time have concurred upon Herodotus’s significance in the development of geography and ethnography,⁸¹ it is Kapuściński who makes the bold claim that the “instinctive,” “journalistic,” “fearless” and “relentless” Herodotus is a primo contributor to literary journalism. Furthermore, by noting that “he sails over the sea, traverses the steppe, ventures deep into the desert,” Kapuściński also installs Herodotus into the literary history of travel writing.

What propelled Herodotus to seize the preoccupation of a travel writer? Kapuściński “think[s] that it was an optimistic faith, one that we men lost long ago: faith in the possibility and value of truly describing the world.”⁸² It is not a far cry to consider this “faith” symptomatic of an imperialist aspiration, for it entails that the traveler achieves “a symbolic or psychological mastery over the people and places [it] describe[s].”⁸³ However, we must realize that Kapuściński lauds not a mastery over space

⁷⁹ Glaser, “The Self-Reflexive Traveler,” 201.

⁸⁰ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 259.

⁸¹ Karttunen, “Herodotus,” 557.

⁸² Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 259.

⁸³ Carl Thompson, *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), 119.

or the other, but rather Herodotus's construction of the (travel writer) self in his *Histories*, which Kapuściński interprets as an exemplar nomadic subjectivity. He believes that Herodotus recognizes "the world's essential multiplicity," and to bolster such claim, "he undertakes his journeys to the ends of the earth." Kapuściński imagines Herodotus prodding his countrymen: "We have neighbors, they in turn have their neighbors, and all together we populate a single planet." The appreciation of multiplicity ("neighbors") that exists in a homogenous singularity ("single planet") is characteristic of the nomad; it is "a way of conceiving reality in terms of dynamic processes that privileges difference rather than identity, movement rather than stasis, and change rather than what remains the same."⁸⁴

This tendency, Kapuściński would argue, is engendered by the borderland origins of Herodotus: "his father was called Lyxes, which is not a Greek name, so perhaps he was a Carian. It was his mother who most probably was Greek. Herodotus was therefore a Greek Carian, an ethnic half-breed."⁸⁵ This elucidation on Herodotus's genealogy at the beginning of the reportage functions as a "symbolic identification" between him and Kapuściński, whose subjectivity is incubated by his "native borderland region and the small towns that dotted it."⁸⁶ The nomadic subject contends that "people who grow up amid different cultures, as a blend of different bloodlines, have their worldview determined by such concepts as border, distance, difference, diversity." Affirmative relations i.e. dialogue is forged out of these symbolic identifications. To put it differently, those of borderland origins have the potential to be nomads (in the Deluzoguattarian sense).

Critic Debbie Lisle is critical of these homages to forebears of travel writing, because it is "politically suspect to the reproduction of earlier

⁸⁴ Lorraine, "Ahab and Becoming-Whale," 159.

⁸⁵ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 45.

⁸⁶ Gasyňa, "The Poetics of the Borderlands," 71.

power relations.”⁸⁷ It is reassuring to know that Kapuściński would not let her down; *Travels with Herodotus* proffers criticism to the father of the travel reportage as well. After reading about India in *Histories*, Kapuściński puts down the book and later “traveled to Madras and Bangalore, to Bombay and Chandigarh ... How can one describe something that is—and so it seemed to me—without boundaries or end?”⁸⁸ He criticizes Herodotus for one of his attempts to striate India.

Later in Algiers, Kapuściński admits that he fell for the (unnecessary) spectacle that he encounters in *Histories*: “I had been searching for spectacular imagery, laboring under the illusion that it was compelling, observable tableaux that somehow justified my presence, absolving me of responsibility to understand the events at hand.”⁸⁹ This self-reflexive critique on the tendency of the travel writer to fantasize spaces is directed to Herodotus as well, whose descriptions of the world also inform how the subject constructs his landscape, as seen in the examples earlier.

These instances that denigrate a predecessor manifest a critical, self-reflexive view of the art of travel writing. Nonetheless, weighing Kapuściński’s insights regarding Herodotus’s contributions to the genre, the text’s verdict remains clear. He realizes that his adherence to Herodotus derives from his desire to learn from him: “I was quite consciously trying to learn the art of reportage and Herodotus struck me as a valuable teacher. I was intrigued by his encounters, precisely because so much of what we write about derives from our relation to other people—I-he, I-they.”⁹⁰ The narrative transcodes this relational chronotope to that of Kapuściński’s as if the former imparts knowledge to the latter, which touches upon the discourse of the other in travel writing—“I-he, I-they.”

⁸⁷ Lisle, *The Global Politics*, 266.

⁸⁸ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 36.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 176.

This dialogue allows for the meditation on the historical (even anti-imperialist) roots of travel writing and the reportage. By deterritorializing the narrative's spatiality, the relational chronotope is vital in writing practices that deal with history because it urges the present to meditate on the past.⁹¹ *Travels with Herodotus* achieves this firstly by framing *Histories* as the historical predecessor of the travel reportage genre, and secondly by transcoding it into the narrative as a relational chronotope. What Kapuściński discerns from this is a nomadic attitude towards space, the other, and history—the variables of the travel narrative which are synthesized in such relational chronotope. This is disclosed by the subject in the text's concluding chapters.

While the expansive nature of the subjectivity exemplified by Herodotus is reminiscent of travel writing's function in imperial expansion, Kapuściński affirms Herodotus's nomadic attitude towards space, which he treats as a relay. "To be a conduit is [the travel writers'] passion: therein lies their life's mission. To walk, ride, find out—and proclaim it at once to the world" through writing.⁹² Kapuściński imbibes this attitude proffered by Herodotus by treating spaces as relays, like India and China earlier. As a journalist, he travels and writes, "feeling that all around [him] important and unique things are occurring to which [he] must also bear witness, however fragmentarily," like a sponge.⁹³

This leads to the ultimate "lesson," that the practices of travelling, writing and reporting must amount to a better understanding of the other. From then until today, travelers and journalists have been crossing borders to broaden knowledge.⁹⁴ While the expansion of knowledge about foreign lands is a function of travel writing in imperial history, Kapuściński observes that

⁹¹ Bahun, "There was Once a Country," 72.

⁹² Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 267.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 176-7.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 71.

Herodotus, wherever he was, always tried to note the names of tribes, their location and customs. Where someone lives. Who are his neighbors. This is because knowledge of the world—whether back then in Libya and Scythia or today here in the northern Congo—accrues not vertically but horizontally, synthetically from a bird’s-eye view ... And who is to gather up all these bits and arrange them?

No one.⁹⁵

The geographical knowledge of the world formed by Herodotus through his travels is not intended to be used by imperial authority to arrange (or striate, as Deleuze and Guattari would have it) space. Rather, the subject imagines the “classical” reportage mode to have regarded knowledge rhizomatically (“horizontally”), resisting the presumption of hierarchies between the “discovering” traveler and the “discovered” travelee.⁹⁶

What for, then, is the creation of knowledge through travel? Herodotus is entangled in the same “insoluble dilemma: he devotes his life to preserving historic truth, *to prevent the traces of human events from being erased by time*; at the same time, however, his main source of research is not firsthand experience, but history as it was recounted by others ... therefore as it was selectively remembered and later more or less intentionally presented.” Is not the objective of the reportage to establish the truth?

As explained above, one of the discoveries of Herodotus, the imagined predecessor of the genre in *Travels*, is that truth claims, liable to cementing well-circulated hierarchies and asymmetrical relations, are only secondary to the goal of forging an understanding with the other.

Kapuściński expresses an awareness of this predicament: “however evolved our methods, we are never in the presence of unmediated history,

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 263.

but of history recounted, presented, history as it appeared to someone, as he or she believes it to have been. This has been the nature of the enterprise always, and the folly may be to believe one can resist it.”⁹⁷ Herodotus reports only what is offered by the multiplicity of worlds he traverses.⁹⁸ While the recognition of the other, expressed through the “discrimination with regard to everything that is ‘other’ to the narratorial self: the places that the traveler [*sic*] visits, the cultures that they encounter and the individuals with whom they interact,” is an aspect of travel writing “that has prompted considerable ethical unease in many recent critics,”⁹⁹ what Kapuściński and Herodotus advocate is the understanding of the other. The function of the travel reportage then, is to record the dialogue between the subject and the other.

Kapuściński final contribution to the repertory of travel writing, *Travels with Herodotus*, “wants to say something about how to be in the world,”¹⁰⁰ akin to a guidebook. However, Kapuściński ascribes this guidance to Herodotus and his *Histories*, which challenge the complicity of the genre in the discourse of imperialism. The travel reportage, both he and we readers learn, is one of the best modes to articulate the other—contrary to general sentiment—due to its tendency to cross spatio-temporal borders. It virtually pieces a new world all together.¹⁰¹

From this relation, we realize the insights that can be drawn from Deluzoguattarian thought in understanding and theorizing colonialism and imperialism in their contemporary cultural/textual iterations. All in all, *Travels with Herodotus* “simultaneously offers a deconstructive commentary of the nature of travel, travelers, and the genre of travel writing.”¹⁰² Emphasizing that at the heart of the travel reportage is a nomadic attitude towards the world, the travelogue at hand emerges as a

⁹⁷ Kapuściński, *Travels with Herodotus*, 272.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁹⁹ Thompson, *Travel Writing*, 119.

¹⁰⁰ Rebecca Tuhus-Dubrow, “Traveling Light,” in *Dissent*, 55:1 (2008), 117.

¹⁰¹ Zehle, “Ryszard,” 285.

¹⁰² Glaser, “The Self-Reflexive Traveler,” 195.

redeemer of a genre associated to centuries of domination, othering, and, in the Deluzoguattarian sense, striation. In a phrase, imperialistic ideology.

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