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Pedro Lopes de Almeida
pedro_lopesdealmeida@brown.edu

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**Transnational Intimacies: Coloniality and the Environments of Travel
Writing in Portugal and Angola, c. 1900-1930**

Pedro Lopes de Almeida

Wa fula umbu kexi kwenda unyimenyime.
*[If you set a trap somewhere along your journey, you
should not walk backwards.]*

Chokwe proverb, Angola.

Se llega a un lugar sin haber partido de otro, sin
llegar.
*[You get to a place without having left another,
without arriving.]*

Silvina Ocampo

Timelines, Scales, Travel Writing, and Colonial Encounters

Around 1900 a complex set of events seems to recast the relationship between scales and politics in several places around the globe while, at the same time, the circulation of people, ideas, commodities and capital across these spaces spikes. In metropolitan Portugal and in the African colonies, travelers move around compelled by many different reasons, from scientific exploration to the prospection of natural resources, from military expeditions to leisure trips, from hunting journeys to photographic endeavors, to name but a few. Many such travelers record their impressions and notes, later to be published in their home countries as travel books. Aggregated, these books create a unique archive of movements and encounters that reflects perceptions of Otherness, but also representations of relative positions towards what was understood, within a framework of unequal actors, as ‘development,’ ‘progress,’ and ‘backwardness.’

I would like to introduce these notes by pointing toward a specific object that might illuminate my argument. The object (which can still be found today in some antique shops, libraries and bookstores) was sold neatly folded inside a green envelope, and had the appearance of a giant, ambitious colorful timeline, proposing to represent “the actual picture of the march of civilization.” Commercialized as the “*Histomap*,” it featured a temporal scale ranging from 2000 B.C. to approximately 1930, listing, side by side, the many “civilizations” [sic] that comprise “Human history,” each one ascribed a space proportional to its alleged importance in

political, economic and cultural value. The permanence and dissolution of these geographical spaces corresponded to enlarging and retracting flows of colors, forming fluid entangled bubbles that appear and disappear along the timescale. Among other striking features, two caught my attention when I first encountered the *Histomap*: African societies, nations, communities and tribes are completely absent from this representation, and Portugal practically disappears around 1900. Clearly dominating the bottom of the timeline, a large section in blue represented the United States of America. The *Histomap*, printed in 1931, embodied a certain understanding of the scales of time and history that forced me to go back to my own ideas about power, time, and geography.

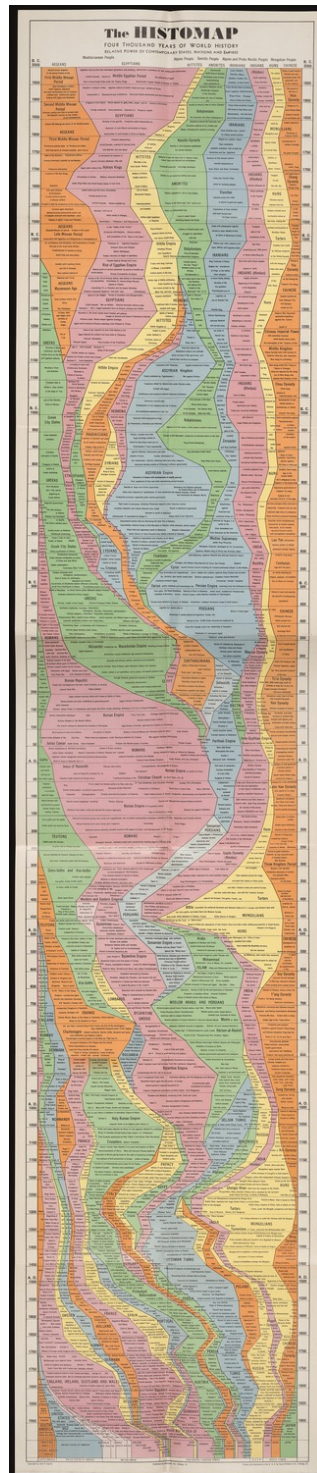


Image 1: *The Histomap*. Caption: “The histomaps, four thousand years of world history; relative power of contemporary states, nations, and empires.” Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Object ID: 2025152, available online at <https://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3534526>)

It is not difficult to surmise how this particular object invites us to reevaluate certain ideas about politics of scale, and, particularly, how conflicting perceptions of ‘historical time’ perform an instrumental role in the negotiation of ideas of modernity and belatedness. The underlying claims throughout this paper are closely connected to this map, and to the multiple ways in which the performance of scaling resembles the workings of transnational imperial projects. The allocation of shares of space to different national or supra-national political communities creates a scaled texture, an embodiment of power that can be read as the result of local interventions upon the places, bodies and lives quoted by the *Histomap*. If one is to assume that this object is not only a representation, but an attempt at spearheading a certain understanding of the processes of world making, we must superpose this textured scale to the actual landscapes that are manipulated in order to make this map legible. The fluidity of the movement enacted by these colored bubbles, enlarging and compressing, or their absence altogether, can be understood as an embodied form of silencing, a graphic representation that not only projects, but actually correlates to a certain kind of silence, a collapse that somehow has to do with politics of scale, and, as I will try to demonstrate here, the formation and maintenance of transcolonial regimes.

It is my intention, in this paper, to explore how travelogues not only reverberate subjective perceptions, but also create a sense of time and space in places that are not geographically bound together, yet, nevertheless, enter a relationship by the relative manipulation of local scales and temporalities. How does travel writing address speed, acceleration, and energy as the objects of dispute among the forces overriding (or overwriting) transnational environments in Portugal and Angola in the early 20th century? From the carbon-based extractive economy to the implementation of railroad projects, the modes of circulation have deep impacts on local and global ecologies, bringing to the table images of the past and the future of these places and the networks in which they participate.

By addressing these scenes of encounter in Portugal and Angola with a special emphasis on the spaces of intimacies, I hope to unpack a narrative that tells a story of uneven and combined paces of development, one that is inextricably intertwined with conflating timelines, changing landscapes, personal stories, political projects, and ambiguous collaborations.

Modernity, Coloniality, and Imperial Difference

The selection of documents to be the focus of this paper reflects a specific set of historical circumstances. As a whole, the travelogues published in the global north in the early decades of the 20th century share as their common framework of reference a foreign gaze over spaces perceived as anachronistic. In most cases, this meant that these spaces were considered as not having been able to keep up with other nations in the multiple waves of industrial and post-industrial revolutions.

Thus, they were labeled in the early decades of the 20th century as technologically archaic, giving rise to what Boaventura de Sousa Santos has characterized as the peripheral/semi-peripheral condition, which has also been analyzed in terms of belatedness, backwardness, or lagging behind the “train of modernity.”¹ In what follows, I would like to propose an interpretation of this time period that cannot be entirely subsumed, however, into these sets of dichotomies. Instead I attempt to read them as part of a system in which they become integral to the fabric of everyday interactions, a system that I will refer to as the matrix of coloniality, and that is not equivalent to the geographies of the political map of the period.

I am using here the concept of coloniality as it is proposed by Aníbal Quijano in his seminal essay “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality.” The key element of the social classification of colonizers and colonized, coloniality describes the most general form of domination, requiring the denial of intersubjectivity between the people at the different ends of the colonial relationship, and a relationship of subject/object, where the colonized is deprived of an epistemological apparatus, and simply has to deal with the fact that she has been classified as an object of knowledge, and never a subject.² However, I also want to use the concept of coloniality to account for the internal differences within colonizing and colonized societies, i.e. the pervasiveness of inequality that characterizes social entities which have never been homogeneous, but rather stratified and permeated by internal contrasts, in what would eventually mutate, in the economic sphere, into the globalized capitalist system of exchanges and exploitation.³

Such a radical dissociation had as one of the most enduring effects, as Quijano observes, that the other, the non-Western, is not only constructed as inferior. Their inferiority is translated by a conceptual operation that is central to the assumptions underlying the *Histomap*. If the knowledge of the non-Western is devalued and dispossessed of its actuality, their very existence, in addition to inferior, is placed in the past, along an imaginary temporal perspective in which the West corresponds to the present. As a consequence, one cannot conceptualize time without being aware of its function as the cornerstone of the imaginary of

¹ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Between Prospero and Caliban: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, and Inter-identity,” *Luso-Brazilian Review* 39, no. 2 (2002): 9; Boaventura de Sousa Santos, “Epistemologies of the South and the Future,” *From the European South* 1 (2016): 17; Catarina Fróis, “The Fate of ‘Backwardness’: Portuguese Expectations over Modernisation,” *Anthropological Journal of European Cultures* 21, no.2 (2012): 89.

² Aníbal Quijano, “Coloniality and Modernity/Rationality,” *Cultural Studies* 21, no. 2/3 (2007): 170-174.

³ See Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del Poder, Cultura y Conocimiento en América Latina,” *Dispositio* 24, no. 51; ‘Crítica Cultural en Latinoamérica: Paradigmas globales y enunciaciones locales’ (1999): 141; and “Colonialidad del Poder, Eurocentrismo y América Latina,” *Espacio Abierto* 28, no. 1 (2019): 263.

coloniality — something that the *Histomap* effectively keeps reminding us. The Argentinian scholar Walter Mignolo explains how such a structure of superposition of time and place came into existence:

If you enter the civilizing mission into the equation modernity vs. tradition, you would understand that societies around the planet began to be measured and classified according to their similarity or dissimilarity with the natural order offered by cosmo-polis. But that was not all. History as ‘time’ entered into the picture to place societies in an imaginary chronological line going from nature to culture, from barbarism to civilization following a progressive destination toward some point of arrival. Hegel, as it is known, organized Kant's cosmo-polis on a temporal scale that relocated the spatial distribution of continents (Asia, Africa, America, and Europe) in a chronological order that followed a certain directionality of history, from East to West. The planet was all of a sudden living in different temporalities, with Europe in the present and the rest in the past.⁴

While the processes of social racialization were the first and foremost device used to construct the colonial difference described here at the level of a temporal difference, the evolution of imperial models was accompanied by processes of subalternization that coopted temporal difference in many different ways, reaching a variety of geographies. As Mignolo notes, by the 18th century, part of that process involved the construction of an imaginary of Southern Europe in tandem with the construction of the Orient, and equally subject to criteria of a different temporality. As a place of “sun, love, tourism, good life, and slow speed,” this “imperial difference” conditions the fundamental division between the North and the South, one that would eventually have repercussions at the economic, social, political and racial levels — if East and South live in a slow time, the North “is the location of speed, progress, and of living ‘by the clock’.”⁵ In this sense, as Mignolo notes elsewhere, the notion of “Global South” does not coincide with the portion of land south of the equator, but rather to a shifting, fluid “sector of the Earth where underdeveloped and emerging nations exist,” that is subject to the status of provider of natural resources for the Global North.⁶

⁴ Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 151.

⁵ Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity*, 173.

⁶ Walter Mignolo, “The Global South and World Dis/order,” *Journal of Anthropological Research* 67, no. 2 (2011): 166.

Boaventura de Sousa Santo's thesis according to which Portugal occupies an ambiguous place within the structures of global colonialism (with the metropole being a semi-periphereic nation, dependent upon other larger economies, not having joined the industrial revolutions and the ensuing economic transformations, and not fully integrated into the racial, cultural and historical patterns of Europe) can be read in articulation with Quijano and Mignolo's points on coloniality. For Santos, despite the geographic location of mainland Portugal in the Iberian Peninsula and, therefore, in continental Europe, Portuguese subjects have been historically regarded as subaltern vis-à-vis the hegemonic imperial spaces of the global north, semi-colonizer and semi-colonized at once, in a constant oscillation between the figures of Prospero and Caliban.⁷

If, on the one hand, my argument here does not aim to offer a rebuttal to any of Santo's claims, it does try to expand the interpretive possibilities opened by his frame of analysis in different directions. In short, I am interested in how understanding the modes of production and effects of coloniality upon bodies across different geographies, focusing on the patterns discernible at the level of the very small interactions, rather than polarizing the approach on predicaments of nationality or belonging to larger communities. While this approach assumes that the major tenets developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos are overall accurate and valid interpretations, I also want to move away from the broad generalizations and what I regard as the excessive concentration on constructs of nationality, in order to read more closely the embodied differences constitutive of identities, as they appear across travel writing from the early 20th century. A time period, moreover, that has not yet been carefully taken into account in the realm of the research into the production of coloniality in Portuguese colonial and metropolitan areas, and that requires that we expand the field of analysis to other geographic areas, if we want to gain an understanding of the relative power dynamics and structures of inequality in place during this "time of Prospero" of the expansion of global capitalism, mostly though the increased outreach of corporate colonialism, as we will see.

It is my contention that a corpus of travel literature in Portugal and Angola in the first years of the 20th century not only possesses an internal coherence, or structure, but also that its existence is indispensable to understand the production of colonial regimes in these spaces. The major conditions accounting for the particular environment reflected in this literature can be schematically summed up in the following points:

1. This time frame corresponds to a period of fast paced change in both Portugal and Angola. In Portugal, the period that marks the end of

⁷ De Sousa Santos, "Between Prospero and Caliban," 35.

the monarchy and the short-lived First Republic, coinciding with World War I; in Angola, a period of increased colonial presence, the expansion of administrative rule, and the emergence of movements of resistance to the colonial occupation. All of this concurring to making this a span of three decades of intense change.⁸

2. After the settlement of disputes over the borders of Angola in the late decades of the 19th century among European occupying colonial powers (the Berlin Conference and its aftermath, particularly with regard to the “Pink Colored Map”), this period saw increasing foreign investment and the development of infrastructural projects that will bring highly skilled workers to the territory, many of whom would eventually write about it.⁹
3. In tandem with the growth of international tourism companies (Thomas Cook and others), there is a democratization of the experience of traveling, now more accessible to the middle class. This will make Portugal a desirable destination within Europe, in no small measure due to its also being a cheap one, which will translate in an increased number of foreigners and published accounts, as well as travel guides (for example, the iconic project of the *Guia de Portugal*, compiled by Raúl Proença, is launched in 1924).¹⁰
4. Travel literature becomes more available at this time, with publishing companies specializing in this niche of the market and funding professional travelers on commissioned journeys to Portugal and Angola, among other destinations.
5. This extended temporal arch comprises a period of artistic transformations, both in Portugal and in colonial Angola, with deep repercussions, which would reshape perceptions in literature, photography, visual arts, music, interventions in the public space, and many other levels of expression. These changes often do not go unnoticed in travel writing, offering us a perspective that is rarely taken into account either by traditional literary criticism or by historians.

⁸ A. H. de Oliveira Marques, *A Primeira República Portuguesa: Para uma visão estrutural* (Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1971), 23-24; Rui Ramos et al., *História de Portugal* (Lisboa: Esfera dos Livros, 2009), 561; Lawrence W. Henderson, *Angola: Five Centuries of Conflict* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1979), 103; Douglas L. Wheeler and René Pélissier, *Angola* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1971), 109.

⁹ René Pélissier, *História das Campanhas de Angola. Resistência e Revoltas 1845 - 1941*, vol 1. (Lisboa: Estampa, 1997), 206; David Birmingham, *A Short History of Modern Angola* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 55.

¹⁰ António Sérgio, *Breve Interpretação da História de Portugal* (Lisboa: Sá da Costa, 1975), 138.

Reading these travelogues allows us to cut through the formal and abstract discussions around some of these common coordinates of historical reference. While all the encounters accounted for here exist within political formations and cultural horizons that condition the positions of the intervenients and, at least in part, cast their roles in the event of the encounter, they also afford us the opportunity to gain access to concrete events narrated from a subjective perspective. Throughout this archive we should be able to isolate moments of negotiation of power, authority, presence in the shared space, and identity. In this sense, modern travel literature goes beyond the sometimes reductionist grand schemes of political projects and focuses on individual testimonies in context.

Finally, I acknowledge that the corpus of this paper reflects an intellectual commitment to broadening the scope of analysis of transnational encounters — by foregrounding new perspectives and questions concerning the definition of literature in the contexts and periods under analysis—and it will hopefully start new conversations about the limits (in the geographical but also methodological sense) of the field. While this might imply, to a certain extent, disrupting the logics of the national systems of literatures, I am confident that it also entails an important critical investment in areas of production of meaning that question the dichotomies of literary versus non-literary, as well as the borders of genres such as chronicle, essay, novel, and historiography.

Scalability, Intimacies, and the Archive

In 2013, the forum of the *American Historical Review*, “Conversations,” a platform for discussion that every year invites several practitioners in the discipline to debate current trends and the future of the field, selected the notion of *scales* as the topic for that issue, under the title “How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History.” If most traditional history — and, one may add, literary studies — after all, “is spatially defined by categories such as the nation-state, or chronologically constrained by the temporal boundaries of an event or era, or otherwise contextualized in terms of time and space by implicit givens,” today we witness a move towards highly variable “sliding scales” of space and time.¹¹ A move prompted, in no small measure, by factors such as the scientific and technological developments that allowed us to look further into the past and to tackle larger amounts of texts than ever before, but a move, also, owing to a deeper global environmental conscience, an increased scientific awareness of the far-reaching implications of seemingly local or regional events, as well as the sense of connectedness brought about by the revolution of the world wide web. Either through the ‘shift upwards’ of global and deep history, or the zooming in on

¹¹ “AHR *Conversation*: How Size Matters: The Question of Scale in History,” *The American Historical Review* 118, no. 5 (December 2013): 1431, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ahr/118.5.1431>.

microorganisms and their regimes of history, optical ranges have been challenged by a broad discussion on scales and their use in the humanities.

Travel writing invites us to take very seriously the call to reimagine the workings of scales in our investigative projects.¹² Writing about travel literature means (not unlike writing about any other literary genre) writing about stories, many and detailed stories of trips, encounters, experiences, perceptions and emotions, that are tightly interwoven with history, or rather, with the many versions of it that cut through the political spaces traversed by the travelers.¹³ It is also for

¹² In the late eighties and early nineties a number of scholars turned their attention to travel literature as a central source of knowledge to understand the changes occurring in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among them, I would like to highlight the work of Dennis Porter, author of *Haunted Journeys: Desire and Transgression in European Travel Writing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), whose Freudian and Barthian analysis of travel journals by male writers, scientists and philosophers (from Boswell and Diderot to D.H. Lawrence, Lévi-Strauss, or V. S. Naipaul) contributed to a more thorough understanding of the role played by fantasies, emotional investment, and anxieties in the production of travel writing; and James Buzard and his *The Beaten Track: European Tourism, Literature, and the Ways to 'Culture,' 1800 - 1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) the result of highly comprehensive research done over nearly a decade and published in 1993, in which the emergent experience of the tourist (and all the textual production that it entails, such as travel guides, pamphlets, travel photography, etc.) is connected to a series of mutations in the understanding of 'culture' by European elites. Notwithstanding the valuable contributions offered by these studies to my own research, I would argue that the defining moment for the consolidation of travel writing studies as a field would not happen until the publication of Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992). By looking at instances of travel writing from a critical perspective that included the confrontation with a wide variety of other sources (historiography, visual arts, diaries, legislation, periodicals, personal accounts, among many others), including the voices of those who were, in the travel books, the *object* of the gaze, Pratt was able to come up with a vivid image of the inseparability of imperialism, colonialism, and travel writing. Her landmark work advances the study of the processes of world shaping as an effect of modern travelers, by zooming in on what Pratt calls *contact zones*, the "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination." (*Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006):7) More recently, in Carl Thompson's *Travel Writing* (London: Routledge, 2011), significantly published in 2011 in the Routledge series "New Critical Idiom," an ample set of new tools and problems are brought to the field of travel writing, demonstrating how this corpus of works is paramount for the key debates currently developing in the humanities, especially to reconsider wider discussion happening within the subfields of environmental studies, post-colonial and decolonial studies, and across area studies.

¹³ Many of these topics would be addressed by David Spurr's *The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration*, setting out the commonalities between the languages of imperialism and travel writing, and identifying what the author perceives as *colonizing discourses*: "how does the Western writer construct a coherent representation out of the strange and (to the writer) often incomprehensible realities confronted in the non-Western world? What are the cultural, ideological, or literary presuppositions upon which such a construct is based?" (*The Rhetoric of Empire: Colonial Discourse in Journalism, Travel Writing, and Imperial Administration* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993), 3). By pinpointing rhetorical strategies in non-canonical genres, such as journalism, travelogues, and

this reason that I hold as especially important the transnational — and translocal — perspective adopted here, one that has been absent from the traditional approaches to travel writing in Portugal and Angola. If it is true that even the field of postcolonial studies has been historically biased towards the magnetism of the nation-state or the region, as our collective understanding of the global nature of the processes of world-making and environment-shaping becomes more clear, it is, I believe, all the more urgent to test new frames of reference, decentering and disrupting the hegemony of the nation-state, the region, or the territory — units bound together by geographic contiguity — as our default scale of analysis. That is why, in this paper (written at a time when one ceaselessly hears about ‘walls’) I have tried to move beyond the paradigm of borders, in the direction of a more flexible, fluid rendition of the geographic relationalities enacted within travel writing.

And in fact, in recent years the question of scalability seems to have acquired a central place in the fields of social sciences as well as in critical studies. This concern has frequently been raised in discussions on which frames of reference we are using, and how that affects the outcomes of historical studies. In the context of Spanish and Latin-American studies, Christopher E. Schmidt-Nowara has consistently pointed toward the need to move beyond “the analysis of rivalries among empires, states, and peoples,” and promote fresh frameworks for thinking about analytical particularities, overcoming the received wisdom about “failures and absences” that accompany what he regards as unproductive conceptual

memoirs, Spurr overcomes the bias of traditional travel writing studies to focus on famous authors, and brings to the spotlight techniques of appropriation, aestheticization, classification, surveillance, idealization, insubstantialization, and eroticization in a multitude of texts that shape the general discourses about non-Western spaces. Along the lines of Pratt’s work, Ali Behdad, in his *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* provides a critical reappraisal of Said’s notion of orientalism applied to travel writing. Behdad moves away from what he considers to be the “essentialist views of Orientalism” (as a monolithic and purely reductive discourse of power, leaving no room for the possibility of different forms of relationship with the non-Westerner) that constitute theoretical limitations to Said’s perspective. He proposes, instead, to focus on the complexities of *micropractices* evidenced in travel writing, dealing with the “dispersed network of representations that include strategic irregularities, historical discontinuities, and discursive heterogeneity.” (*Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 12). Some of the broader methodological concerns that inform my project evolved from my response to James Clifford’s incisive scholarship in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, in which travels and contacts are reflected upon as crucial sites for an unfinished modernity, inasmuch as displacement and stasis challenge the roots of our sense of place and time. I regard as tremendously valuable Clifford’s attempt to “make some sense of people going places,” by revisiting “practices of crossing and interaction that troubled the localism of many common assumptions about culture.” (*Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 3.

dichotomies like backwardness versus modernity.¹⁴ Reflecting on the turn to ‘Atlantic history’ as a matter of sliding scales, historian Eliga H. Gould signals the potential of larger and fluid constructs (not associated with any historical unit, such as religion, culture, or political tradition) to transcend the confines of ‘metropole’ and ‘nation’ and move our attention into other directions, while also cautioning against the implied risks, especially of highlighting the perspectives of literary centers, leaving aside the histories of lesser documented spaces.¹⁵ This concern seems to be shared by Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, when he observes that the “new versions of the Atlantic” tend to overlook the “fourth continent,” Africa, and that a change of scales should aim at “deliver[ing] narratives on the circulations of peoples and staples (to say nothing of ideas), carving out a distinctly transnational space in the process,” in order to do more than “only occasionally upset the normative narratives of the [geographical] core.”¹⁶ In similar terms, Josep M. Fradera argues that “larger holistic frameworks” offer a pathway to overcoming what he regards as the two basic difficulties faced by historians today: historiographies compartmentalized by nations, and the separation that persists between historians who work on economies, public finances, trade, and precious metals, and historians who concentrate on the racial and cultural identities of the individuals, groups, and communities.¹⁷ Furthermore, these interventions upon the scales of interpretation allow us to take a more realistic approach, and give access to the transformations of formal empires into broad and not always formalized structures of power connected to what we know as globalization.¹⁸

If scaling is, in itself, one of the devices of world-making through imperial and colonial projects, one must ask how to undo the kind of hegemonies that are performed through representations such as the ones offered by travel literature or objects such as the *Histomap*. In this essay, I would like to propose the concept of intimacy as a possible interpretive tool, one potentially able to dismantle the workings of major scales, and an idea of the world that instrumentalizes landscapes, bodies and lives as manipulable tokens that can be expanded or compressed in accordance with strategic needs. The very big picture favored by the *Histomap* is, therefore, somehow offset by this focus on the very small, the singular interactions

¹⁴ Christopher Ebert Schmidt-Nowara, “Borders and Borderlands of Interpretation,” *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (1999), 1226; Christopher Ebert Schmidt-Nowara and Mónica Burguera, “Backwardness and its Discontents,” *Social History* 29, no. 3 (2004): 280.

¹⁵ Gould, Eliga H., “Atlantic History and the Literary Turn,” *Early American Literature* 43, no. 1 (2008): 200.

¹⁶ Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?,” *The American Historical Review* 112, no. 3 (2007): 796-799.

¹⁷ Josep M. Fradera, “Spanish Colonial Historiography: Everyone in Their Place,” *Social History* 29, no. 3 (2004): 372.

¹⁸ Josep M. Fradera, *The Imperial Nation: Citizens and Subjects in the British, French, Spanish, and American Empires* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 236.

and exchanges that are actively suppressed from the texture of the map (or from many travel guides, postcards, travelogues). This is the realm where two or more bodies engage in a close relationship, often marked by violence, domination, collaboration or negotiations. As a pivot for my approach to travel literature, intimacies describe the spaces where the contrasts between the very small and the larger picture are problematized, contested, and deconstructed by real landscapes, bodies, and lives.

But how can intimacies be defined as a platform for critical inquiry? Intimacies have to do with bodies and embodied interactions, and this is why they offer such a powerful counter-narrative to the workings of scalability. As an interpretive framework, where can intimacies be found? What do they look like? On what grounds can one ascertain this seemingly vague idea as a relevant platform for analysis of critical entanglements?

In *The Empire of Love* (2006), anthropologist Elizabeth A. Povinelli proposes an understanding of intimacy as “an intensified form of social relation.”¹⁹ The core project of her book is to conceptualize intimacy in two very different social worlds, both emerging in settler colonial societies, that do not appear side by side very often: the indigenous men and women living in Belyuen, a small community in the Northern Territory of Australia, and the progressive queer community in the United States who identify as or with radical Faeries. Her work highlights the contrasts and commonalities, stressing how intimacies serve to counter the modes of governance of love, sociality and the body in these two social contexts. Povinelli introduces some useful distinctions in our approach to intimacy, adding nuance to possible ways of understanding what she labels as “the intimate event.” While the discourses and their material anchors about the body are seen as instances of carnality (the socially built space between flesh and environment), corporeality refers to the “physical mattering forth of th[o]se maneuvers,” or, in other words, the embodiment of the discourses surrounding the body.²⁰ In Povinelli’s account, the uneven constitution of the flesh is not solely an effect of liberal biopolitics and the governance of identities, but also “an independent, unruly vector at play within these biopolitics:”

In other words, the flesh may be an effect of these discourses but it is not reducible to them. To make sense is to shape, etch, and engender discourse as much as it is to direct and frame physicalities, fabricate habitudes, habituate vision, and leave behind new material habitats that will be called on to replicate, justify, defy, and interfere

¹⁹ Elizabeth Povinelli, *The Empire of Love. Toward a Theory of Intimacy, Genealogy, and Carnality* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 45.

²⁰ Povinelli, *The Empire of Love*, 7.

with given sense-making and with the distribution of life and death, wealth and poverty, that this sense-making makes possible.”²¹

Povinelli’s account proposed a reconceptualization of liberalism in order to tackle the multiple ways by which in settler colonial spaces it attempts to frame and define carnality, although being continuously reorganized and defeated in that effort by singular, discrete projects that challenge the normative rule of intimacy. Her theoretical framework does not provide, however, many answers to the questions posed by historical contexts where such governance is ostensibly a constitutive element of the imperial practices. Her main concerns being linked to contemporary practices, one is left with several questions on how carnality can be thought about in colonial and transcolonial contexts, as well as the relationships between major political endeavors and the constitution of intimacies.

More recently, Lisa Lowe has provided valuable insights that might begin to formulate answers to some of these questions. Her work *The Intimacy of Four Continents* (2015) constitutes an inquiry into the archival constitution of intimacies, and how these are integral to projects of imperial rule, as the defining element of liberal governance. According to Lowe, archival work has the potential to unsettle the genealogy of modern liberalism, connecting liberalism’s abstract promises (“human freedom, rational progress, and social equality”) to the global conditions on which they depend, and the resulting tensions that become evident when the boundaries between liberalism’s discursive constructs and the global realities it produces are read against each other within the liberal archive.²² Her project encompasses a kind of archival thinking that challenges the limits and divisions of traditional scholarship on regions, borders, and entanglements.

Lowe proposes a broader understanding of intimacies. The circulation of commodities extracted in the “New World,” such as tobacco and sugar, consumed by the European bourgeoisie created an embodied connection between men and women across the Atlantic, bodies that enter in touch through objects manipulated by both, at different ends of the chain of production. These connections have given rise to modern disciplinary divisions, which in turn have shaped how universities and departments in the global North have been organized, and produced epistemic divisions that follow the archival compartmentalizations determined by liberal exchanges. To read these connections against the archival structure dictated by liberal logics (and logistics) is the premise of Lowe’s work, one that implies breaking with the geographic and political boundaries set by imperial formations, and reading intimacies across archives.

²¹ Povinelli, *The Empire of Love*, 7.

²² Lisa Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015), 2.

In pursuing particular intimacies and contemporaneities that traverse distinct and separately studied “areas,” the practice of reading across archives unsettles the discretely bounded objects, methods, and temporal frameworks canonized by a national history invested in isolated origins and independent progressive development.²³

Lowe’s work creates a renewed perspective on the scales of analysis of the archive, following the intimate contacts unfolding across imperial and colonial spaces, and promoting a radical criticism of Empire, as it appears within the archive.

In addition to the importance of thinking with intimacies to destabilize the workings of scalability, one must also consider a further reason to take intimacy as a focal point here. This reason has to do with the historic circumstances associated with the study of Portuguese colonialism — particularly around the time period studied here, and in the African occupied territories.

Unravelling Paper Trails: Possible Itineraries

With the increased access to affordable travel in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a vast array of publications geared towards travelers is given to print, shaping some of the main ideas that would eventually make their way into travel literature. Among such instances of travel writing, guides become a central means of obtaining information about your destination. Popular, cheap, pocket-sized, compiling useful information in a very practical way, travel guides are also often the first sources of information about the culture, the arts, society, and politics for the aspiring travelers. One manifestation of this circulation of references and ideas is the fact that we will frequently encounter in travel books information directly extracted from them, as well as commentaries and impressions that would not have been possible without the mediation of the travel guide. However, the data amassed in these volumes reflects already complex and often problematic interpretations, grounded on assumptions of primitivism, racism, and the alleged picturesque of the culture in Portugal and Angola.

The Murray’s *Handbook for Travellers in Portugal* (1887) asserts that the carts and horse wagons in the country “have probably not altered their shape since the time of the Romans, and maybe reckoned among the curiosities of the country.”²⁴ Baedeker’s guide (1913) states that Portuguese railway stations are “very primitive,” and offers advice on how to politely refuse any food that is offered by the indigenous on board of the trains, adding that “[i]n the inhabitants, originally of Iberian and Celtic stock, the mixture of races is still very perceptible. In the

²³ Lowe, *The Intimacies of Four Continents*, 6.

²⁴ *A Handbook for Travellers in Portugal [...] With a Short Account of Madeira, the Azores, and the Canary Islands* (London: John Murray, 1887), 15.

S.[outh] the Moorish type prevails, while the peasants of the N.[orth] mountains not unfrequently suggest a Germanic element. The Negroes and Mulattoes that are so numerous in Lisbon are a feature due to the extensive colonial system of Portugal. As a rule, the Portuguese are modest and courteous in their bearing.”²⁵ Finally, Muirhead’s celebrated *Blue Guides on Southern Spain and Portugal* (1929) informs the reader that here “the fame of historical, romantic, and tragic episodes plays a greater part in the national life than in many other lands, for widespread oral tradition more than makes up for the illiteracy of nearly three-quarters of the population,” only to acknowledge, a few pages later, that “[t]here is perhaps a tendency in English-speaking countries to regard Portugal as little more than a rather backward adjunct of Spain.”²⁶

Similar considerations on the nature of the territory and its economic exploitation can be found in Martens and Karstedt’s *African Handbook and Travellers Guide* (1932) with regard to Angola, whose financial condition is deemed “unsatisfactory,” and, having been so for a long time: “[i]t has been found impossible to balance the budget, and deficits accumulate year by year.”²⁷ The guide strives to prove the inability of the indigenous and the Portuguese colonists to optimize the economic exploitation of lands in Angola, based on statistical data. In doing so, the authors formulate what would become the basic line of argumentation in most travel literature written by foreigners (especially from the global North) in Angola and Portugal: “Although Angola is in every respect suited for the raising of valuable tropical and sub-tropical products and is also, in many parts, well adapted for European settlement, its development has not advanced at such a rate as might have been expected.”²⁸ In light of this, “favourable prospects” of railways and exportation are praised as the only beacon of modernity and the sole possibility for the modernization of the territory, as long as it is integrated into the wider networks of global commerce. A striking resemblance is to be found between these guidebook tips and the remarks put forth in the report prepared by the British Foreign Office in 1917 to be distributed among the delegates to the Paris Peace Conference, meant to provide them with all the necessary information regarding the countries with which they might have to deal. “Colonization from Portugal is slowly being extended not only here but on many other parts of the high plateau, which has a great area. The opening up of this magnificent and healthy

²⁵ Karl Baedeker, *Spain and Portugal: Handbook for Travelers* (New York: C. Scribner’s Sons, 1913): 474.3.

²⁶ Findlay Muirhead ed., *The Blue Guides: Southern Spain and Portugal* (London: Macmillan/Hachette, 1929): 172 and 182.

²⁷ Which, interestingly, enlists the island of Madeira as an African territory (619-623) under the West Africa rubric. Otto Martens and O. Karstedt, *The African Handbook and Traveller’s Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1932): 574.

²⁸ Martens et al, *The African Handbook*, 576.

plateau country by railways and roads is one of the most important features in the modern administration of Angola.”²⁹

In many respects, travel guides set the tone for travel literature, and arguably other literary genres as well, on these spaces, which, as providers of resources for exploitation, must have their relationship to time framed in the terms of the “developed” economies. Global networks of capitalist flows of commodities and money require the conversion of the territory in an area for extraction of resources, and that implies converting the landscape into a stock of potential goods. Of course, it is also in the interest of the wider readership of this kind of literature (affluent audiences in cities within the metropolitan hegemonic spaces) to make the case for the present inefficient management of such resources, allegedly resulting in a waste of natural wealth. In most cases, as we shall see here, this is a claim modeled after ideas of relative temporalities, resorting to the images of spaces stopped in time, trapped in the past, or unable to fulfill the prospects for the future. These texts are designed to produce in the reader an anticipation of a potentially unpleasant experience or, at least, to justify the different temporality that the traveler is supposed to find there. In this sense, one might say that these guides perform roles similar to the *Histomap*, in promoting a certain understanding of non-hegemonic places that conjoins ideas of space and time, ascribing specific temporalities to the bodies that the traveler can find there.

As narrative accounts of the travel, travelogues will reproduce these themes, telescoping them into the realm of situated experiences and interactions, framed by concrete dynamics of power between the agents/characters.

A Portuguese Somersault and A Fossicker in Angola: Two Case-Studies in Intimate Entanglements

Jan Gordon (1882-1944) and Cora Gordon (née Cora Josephine Turner, 1879-1950) listed as their primary occupation “artists,” and they both considered painting (especially landscape painting) their métier. As a side job, the couple penned short columns in British newspapers focusing on their journeys abroad, as well as book reviews and short notes on art exhibitions. Besides this, the two enjoyed relative success as authors of travel books. In the summer of 1926, Jan and Cora Gordon spent two and a half months in Portugal (mostly staying in the North), returning in 1933 for a second trip along the Southern countryside. *Portuguese Somersault*, published in London in 1934, by George G. Harrap & Co., and in New York in 1935, by Robert M. McBride (with several reprints by the National Travel Club), was the result of these journeys.

Malcolm Arthur Burr (1878-1954), a British citizen, was a veteran of World War I, stationed in the Macedonian Front, who became well-known for his

²⁹ *Angola, Including Cabinda* (London: Great Britain Foreign Office, Historical Section. H.M. Stationery Off., 1920): 20.

linguistic skills, being able to communicate in more than five regional idioms in Salonika. Burr was a respected engineer, specializing in geology and entomology, and was hired by the consortium in charge of the Benguela Railway Line to prospect the high plateaus of central Angola for the existence of fossil fuel basins, after rumors about recent findings of coal deposits. *A Fossicker in Angola* is published, with eight illustrations and a map of Angola, in London, in 1933.

Jan and Cora Gordon cross the border from Spain to Portugal in the northernmost city of Caminha. The narrative conflates the perception of economic and social traditionalism with physical traits of Portuguese women, described, as seen from the entry point, as “(...) a regiment of sinewy, dirty bare feet, with muscular legs disappearing into the hollows of ragged skirts. The perspective was almost embarrassing.”³⁰ The blatantly racialized quality of the metaphors chosen to illustrate the group of female porters also highlights the properties of their collective movement through the streets, as erratic, slow, labored. The travelogue will compare the women to a military column under the command of the new customers, an unruly and unmanageable body, pointing in many directions and gesturing.³¹ It is quite revelatory that the travelers decide to make their perception of a moving group of women the first contact accounted for in the book. Defined, in the terms of the foreigners, by their slowness, by the non-conformity of their gestures and movements across the visual field of Jan and Cora, these women mark a sudden and abrupt stop in their journey. Exiting the political space of Spain is compared to coming to a stop, or, more specifically, being forced to adhere to the decreased pace of the indigenous bodies they will find in Portugal. The negotiation

³⁰ Jan & Cora Gordon, *Portuguese Somersault* (London: National Travel Club, 1936): 21.

³¹ Gordon, *Portugues Somersault*, 21.

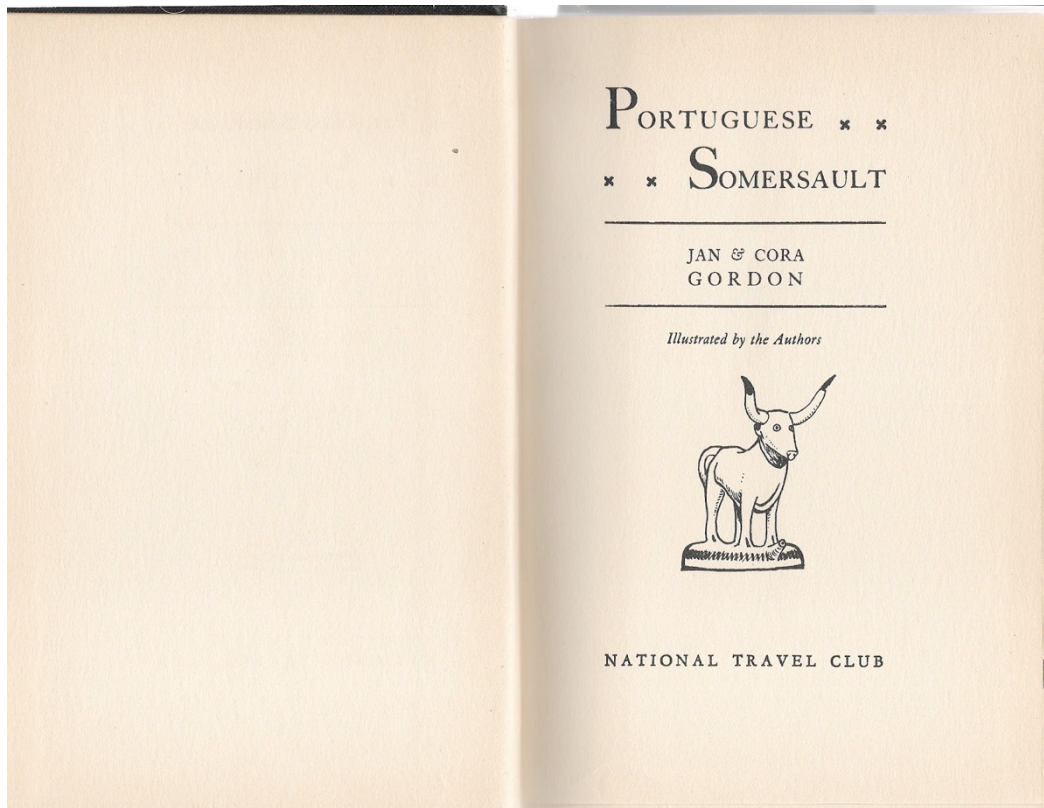


Image 2: "Portuguese Somersault. Gordon, Jan & Cora Gordon. Illustrated by the Authors. National Travel Club." (Frontispiece)

of speeds, therefore, is set from the very moment they set foot in the country, in a way that dialogues with the racialized description of the female bodies. Somehow, the rant quoted above serves as the embodied correlate of their experience of coming to a halt.

Malcolm Burr arrives in Angola, more specifically Lobito Port, coming from Lisbon. From there, he heads to Benguela. Burr will travel to the interior of the country, searching for coal basins. The account of the journey upcountry is marked by advances and pauses that Burr manages to negotiate with his hired porters (exceeding 150 in number, to which one has to add personal servants, each one carrying over 50 pounds of load). Despite the indigenous individuals' knowledge of the territory, confirmed at every step of the journey by the warnings issued by the porters, the author of the travelogue constantly dictates the rhythm of the march, increasing the speed or imposing sudden stops along the way. Burr takes the train in Lobito and travels up the plateau. He leaves the train in Huambo (Nova Lisboa), where he will meet Frank Varian, who hosts him. He then proceeds to Silva Porto. Burr does not fail to recognize here the conversion of the slave trade landmarks into symbols of the modernization of the territory: "Today the once redoubtable slave mart is a station on the Benguela Railway."³² Burr and the group go further to Chindumba and eventually reach Villa Luso. While hiring the carriers for their journey, they are confronted with the brutality of the social relations between servants and the staff of the company.

The native staff made a good impression on us. Fine upstanding men with pleasant smiling faces, they looked smart in the red or blue and white singlets and length of white material for skirt with which we provided them. (...) "No need to stand in ceremony with the boys," explained Neezer and, going up to one, forced open his lips to show us his teeth, just as though he were a horse, without so much as "by your leave."³³

In what seems to be understood as a demonstration of ease toward the Angolans destined to appease the newcomers, the guide, Neezer, repeats a repertory of gestures inextricably embedded in historical meaning, activating a body language modeled after the practice of enslavement of African men and women. The violation of African men's bodies by touching their face without consent and force opening their mouths signals who the addressee of this travelogue is not — the fundamental non-coincidence of subject and intended reader in travel literature — and aims at remaking the boundaries between the bodies of travelers and the

³² Malcolm Burr, *A Fossicker in Angola* (London: Figurehead, 1933), 23.

³³ Burr, *A Fossicker in Angola*, 27.

bodies of indigenous workers, through a mode of forced intimacy. The white bodies and the black bodies enter in contact mediated by the presence of an imaginary of



Native types in the country opened up by the new Benguella Railway. Types of the WaChokwe tribe. See page 30.

PIONEER SERIES

A FOSSICKER IN ANGOLA

by

MALCOLM BURR

D.Sc., A.R.S.M., F.R.E.S., Etc.

Author of 'In Bolshevik Siberia'
Translator of 'Hunted Through Central Asia'
'Marfa,' Etc.

WITH A PREFACE

BY

HENRY W. NEVINSON



Eighteen
Adam Street

Adelphi
London, W.C.2

Image 3: [Left Side:] "Native types in the country opened up by the new Benguella Railway. Types of the WaChokwe tribe. See page 30." [Right Side:] "*Pioneer Series. A Fossicker in Angola by Malcolm Burr D. Sc., A.R.S.M., F.R.E.S., ETC. Author of 'In Bolshevik Siberia' Translator of 'Hunted Through Central Asia' 'Marfa,' Etc. With a Preface by Henry W. Nevinson. Eighteen Adam Street, Adelphi London, W.C.2*" (Frontispiece)

historical violence, instituting the right to touching for the white male traveler and denying the right not to be touched by the workers as part of the logistics of industrial modernization through railways.

If we are to consider this brief moment in the narrative as a point of emergence of a reality of colonial aggression we must question how the practice of travelling and writing about it participates in a system of exploitation that serves as the baseline for the travelogue. Within the narrative itself, preparations are being made for the acts of spatial occupation and violation that are to come. What does this tell us about the relationship between intimacies and temporalities of imperial violence?

If we look closely at how it unfolds throughout this scene, intimacy opens a space of analysis that operates across historical registers. In this sense, it aligns with Lowe's qualifications of the archive of liberalism — a space that emerges through singular figurations of archival violence, not necessarily anchored to specific temporal frames. What this means to our inquiry into the meaning of scales for the constitution of a transnational imaginary through travel writing can perhaps be put as a collapse of the present of temporality. Everything happens here in the terms proposed by Johannes Fabian as the *denial of coevalness*, the anthropological construction of a temporal distance between the observer and the observed, marked by “a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse.”³⁴ This collapse is instrumentalized by embodied interactions, creating maps of violence and invisibility, and operating through material entanglements that suppress non-white bodies.

The collapse that we witnessed here can be thought of as a perforation into the tissue of the archive: as if a sharp pencil was to puncture the folded paper where the *Histomap* was printed — a singular moment that erupts into the archival order, cutting through layers of supposedly discrete historic temporalities, suddenly brought together as a form of distortion of enmeshed temporal tissues. Post-abolitionism and white supremacist slavocratic violence are thus conjoined, occupying a role in the logistics of a liberal transnational economic project for infrastructural development.

Jan and Cora's train journey across the Portuguese countryside is depicted in terms of a descent to Hell. The windows of the carriage are blocked by a human mass, and the smell of sweating bodies occupies the field of perception of Cora and Jan, “(...) for under meridional midday conditions compacted, garlic-eating humanity can be far more odorous than mere horses.”³⁵ The fellow passengers are compared to dogs, cats, or cattle. Just before getting to their destination for the day

³⁴ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other. How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 31.

³⁵ Gordon, *Portuguese Somersault*, 24.

(the city of Porto), Jan and Cora have the chance to witness the outbreak of a skirmish among fellow passengers, involving two shepherds. Despite the danger of physical confrontation between two men armed with staffs, the travelers watch the scene with undisguised pleasure.³⁶

Immediately after the fight aboard the train, the contenders are removed from the carriage, leaving the windows unobstructed, and allowing the couple to look through the glass and contemplate, for the first time, the moving landscape outside. Cora comments to Jan: “If Portugal is all like this, we’ll get some magnificent sketching stuff.”³⁷ The scene of violence that had just taken place had the effect of liberating the car from the crowd that prevented the tourists from fully appreciating the nature outside. But the reader can hardly avoid seeing in this statement a bittersweet comment on the scene of the fight, and their position as spectators. It is worth noting how the moving carriage transforms not only the landscape into a form of spectacle but even the other passengers. By enveloping the passenger in a transitory situation, the moving body sets the stage for a state of unaccountability of the beholder, that leans back into his protected position, actively separating herself from the surrounding context.

The traveler’s gaze continuously dehumanized the indigenous bodies aboard the train. The Portuguese bodies lose density as they are the object of the foreigner’s attention and are gradually converted into an element of landscape. Somehow, we witness here a process analogous to what we have seen with the *Histomap*, a collapse of sorts. However, unlike Burr’s travelogue in Angola, the threshold of intimate contact is never crossed here. Jan and Cora never enter into direct tactile contact with the fellow passengers, even if their remarks often aim at the corporality of the indigenous. It is worth noticing how the early comments produced by the Gordons regarding female bodies (which recur, with different modulations, throughout the book) perform a role in occupying their intimacy, by assimilating the corporality of the other into their discourse — bodies are textualized as they are quoted, by enacting a deformation upon them, a visual distortion that constitutes them as the object of *this* narrative, inasmuch as they are continuously mutilated, manipulated — as did the *Histomap* with the landscapes it collapses.

Burr guides himself by a map produced by “the railway people” as a blueprint for the future charts and timetables of the Benguela Railway Company.³⁸ He and the group traverse this space looking for the best pathway to lay down the railway lines as well as for signs of coal deposits to feed the train engines. As they do so, they also chart the natural resources to be found along the way. Animals, insects, minerals, and vegetation all are similarly encompassed and engulfed by the

³⁶ Gordon, *Portuguese Somersault*, 29-30.

³⁷ Gordon, *Portuguese Somersault*, 31.

³⁸ Burr, *A Fossicker in Angola*, 65-66.

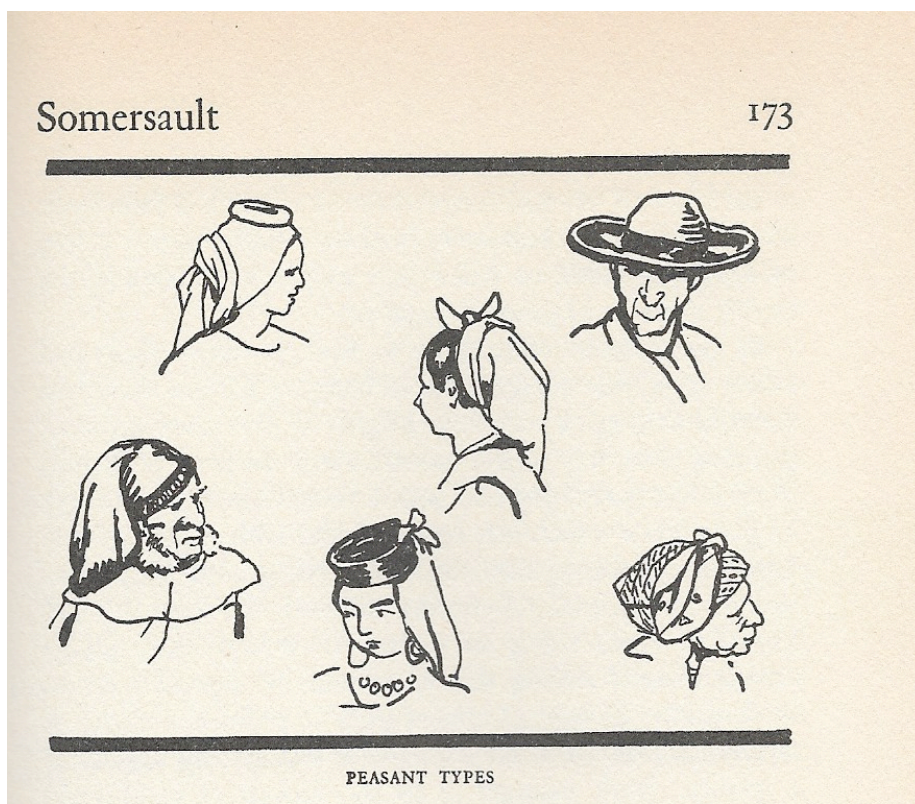


Image 4: "Peasant Types" (in: *Portuguese Somersault*, p. 173, detail)

pace of the coming machines — the train. Everything happens as if the roaming specter of the train reorganizes the territory—even before the metallic machine arrives. After all, the railway is the reason why they are here, and they are prospecting this soil to nourish the acceleration of the machine. I would like to suggest that here the metabolization of environmental resources can be interpreted as a byproduct of the advancement of the locomotive. Almost as though the train is already consuming the ants, the ferns, bushes, snakes, and a myriad of other living elements.

Malcolm Burr shares with the reader that oftentimes sparks released from the train engines would start fires in the forest surrounding the line and create “clear areas” around the tracks.³⁹ He then goes on to elaborate on the transformation of landscapes by effect of these wildfires: the profusion of large extents of black patches of land, dotted with carbonized trees and dust.

Malcolm, not unlikely Cora and Jan, interacts with the environment using the train as his interface — an artificial body extending the reach, speed, whiteness, energy and power of Burr’s own body. But the train is also appropriated by the black Angolan workers as a way to come together and dispute Burr’s ownership over the machine and its movement. The workers often create obstacles to the activation of the train, regulate when the work journey begins and ends, create resistance to the workload, and engage in multiple forms of negotiations of the advancement of speed across the landscape. These voices, that become audible in Burr’s narrative though their interventions upon the politics of acceleration, create an active mode of resistance in face of transcolonial modes of governance.

Let us go back for a moment to the scene from *A Fossicker in Angola* where foreigners are force opening the mouths of black African men about to be hired for the party. I would like to stop and sit with this single frame, pausing Burr’s narrative where it was meant to gain momentum, and meditating on this still as if we were contemplating a photograph (there is, in fact, a photographic register of the instant immediately preceding this event). What do we see if we freeze the vertiginous stream of events here, preventing the development of this narrative from going any further and radically questioning this event? What does it tell us about the topics of this reflection — scales, entanglements, and intimacies? A certain kind of scale is created when this interaction takes place. A very small scale — two men, one touching the body of the other, in the open field, a few miles out of a small city. The white man, the perpetrator of the gesture of violation, is not, for all we know, a citizen of the metropole, and his whiteness, in a context where structural racism is coopted by the regime, is the only factor enabling him to proceed in such a way. The jurisdiction granting him this kind of unbridled authority is his affiliation with CFB, the Benguela railway company. And yet, the group composing the subject of

³⁹ Burr, *A Fossicker in Angola*, 121.

this still frame is enacting a form of power which creates a new map and a new scale of critical relationalities. The aggression we witness as readers of Burr's travelogue creates a new cartography, propelled by the project of extraction of fossil fuel to feed the trains running along the Benguela Railway Line.

I would like to suggest that the foreigner's practice of force touching the black Africans can be linked to the project that took them there — the extraction of resources from the landscape. The relationship here is a circular one, in which the violation of the workers' intimacies plays an instrumental role. White travelers touch black bodies because they are there to unearth resources, and they perform that practice of extractivism because they can touch the black men. This micro-scale of intimacy creates, however, a wider projection upon the landscape. The soil can be opened up too, because people are forced to open their bodies to the foreigners. The symbolism of the gesture could not be any more evident. Unearthing coal deposits and force opening the mouths of workers are placed upon a continuum, designed to structure uneven and combined networks of relationality and oppression.

This scene illustrates the kind of movement I have tried to gesture toward here: a scale of biopolitical power that cuts across political boundaries, to project transcolonial forms of governance. These forms of governance operate under the umbrella of liberal projects associated with the kind of dynamics that we know as globalization. Actors coming from the global North impose their bodies upon bodies and spaces of the global South. New scales also imply different analytic compositions. How can one tackle these movements of world-making, while keeping aware of the new design of scales created by the movements fueled by the transcolonial projects of liberalism?

Perhaps new transnational frames of reference become necessary in order to understand these movements and circulations originated by displaced bodies and creating new scales of power across national and colonial spaces. What we have tried to identify here, therefore, are not so much derivations of the practices of settler colonialism, but maybe what one can label as *mobile forms of transcoloniality*. Not centered around projects of fixation of white settlers, neither corresponding to geopolitical cartographies of colonial claims, they follow the circuits of capital and racialized exploitation of non-white workers. But they do create new planetary scales, based on entanglements that do not necessarily match any major imperial demarcation. By highlighting these interactions taking place in

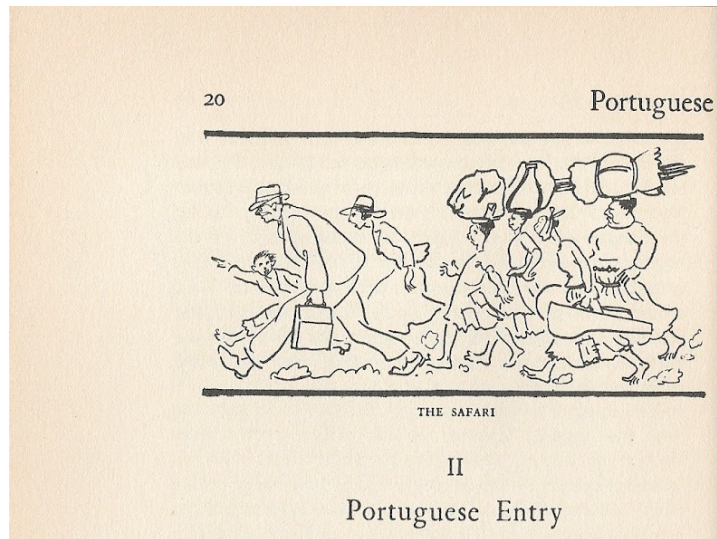


Image 5: “*The Safari [Chapter] II Portuguese Entry*” (in: *Portuguese Somersault*, p. 20, detail)

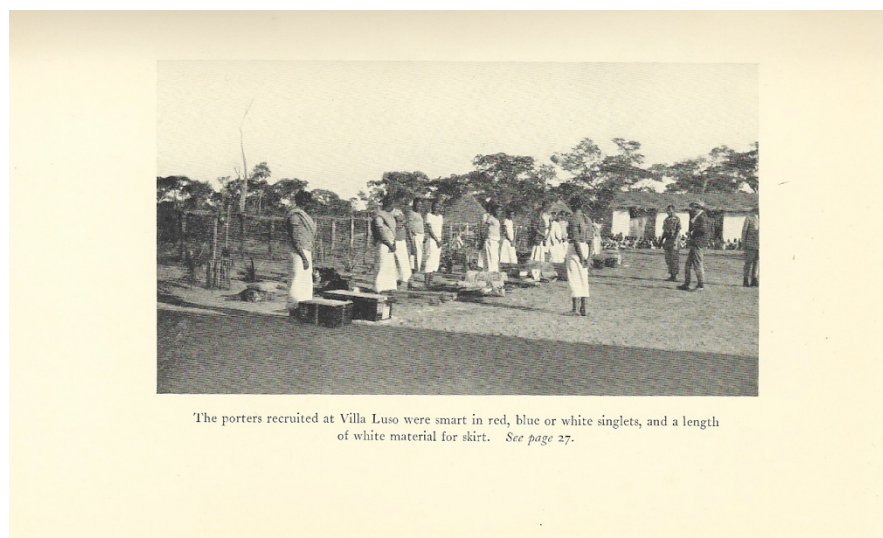


Image 6: “*The porters recruited at Villa Luso were smart in red, blue or white singlets, and a length of white material for skirt. See page 27.*” (in: *A Fossicker in Angola*, p. 10, detail)

what Mary Louise-Pratt designates “the contact zone,” — sites of encounter where relative positions are made, unmade and negotiated (Pratt 2006, 7) — travel writing contributes to a more nuanced approach to the works of such scalings. By reading the mobile trajectories of people like the Gordon’s or Burr, composed of transnational and transimperial movements, and how they challenge the political order determined by borders and traditional scales of imperial power, we are able to cut across the static imperial formations, and gain a better understanding of globalization, and how it continues and complicates the scalings of colonial and imperial geographies.

Travel Writing, Entangled Times, and Entangled Gazes

I have tried to point out here some ways in which changing modes of scaling local and transnational histories might challenge assumptions based on imperial models of space and time. While I do not know exactly how a world map would look like according to these scales, I hope it has become clear how travel literature is one way through which such a map becomes imaginable.

I was moved to look at these travelogues side by side to accentuate the effects of the exercise of imperial power upon non-contiguous geographies. I believe it is now safe to conclude that these mobilizations produce zones of intimacy that reorganize the scales of traditional geopolitics, creating different scales, and forcing us to adopt a critical stance toward objects as the *Histomap* — both to understand what it meant when it was coming out of the printer, and its afterlives, extending to our time.

Developmentalism, one of the core tenets of travel literature in non-hegemonic spaces, promotes narratives centered on the idea of progress, shifting the focus to a “New Portugal” or “New Angola,” that, according to most accounts, could only be obtained by overcoming the dominant slowness of the indigenous, and implementing modes of social organization, technologies, and infrastructures originating in the global North. In this sense, railways, broad and new roads apt for automobile circulation are seen as a political device, but are also endowed with affective value: in bringing to southern latitudes the influence of the distant cities and territories of origin of the travelers, they represent connection, hope, wealth, work, light, transcendence, access, travel, etc., hence serving as an abstract promise of redemption from the belatedness of the periphery, continuously defeated by the imposition of brutal intimacies at the level of everyday practices.

One important feature of travel literature stems from the fact that the reader here is oftentimes truly an implied party. While there is a chance that such reader is the eternal armchair traveler that may never set foot in these countries, it is likely that the consumer of this literature has personal ties to these spaces, has visited them or lived there, harbors expectations of doing so one day, or considers engaging in a form of relationship with them. Any of these reasons may explain the drive to

obtain more information, and/or read a story about a determined place, country, or region. This implied reader, then, is not exactly a neutral party when she or he arrives at the page of the book. And neither is the author, who, as a rule, has lived or visited these places. The exchange that takes place within the space of the page of travel literature, therefore, is anything but devoid of consequences.

Intimacies must be seen as a central stage for the reappraisal of embodied exchanges. I have tried to address the critical dimensions of the appropriation of carnality by positions of power, as one finds them in published travelogues focusing on Portugal or Angola, covering the fast-paced changes occurring in the early decades of the 20th century.

The exercises of scale that I have proposed here, resulting in spatial assemblages that contest the geographical logics of the Nation-state, reveal yet another thing. The condition of periphery and/or sub periphery is made through textual practices such as the ones present in the travel guides, travelogues, and photographs that accompany many of them. By looking at these documents, we are given an opportunity to pinpoint powerful insights into the ways in which peripheric/semiperipheral bodies are produced through singular encounters, exchanges, and entangled gazes. They showcase how dynamics of power are translated into the level of everyday practices, structuring the reorganization of positional subjectivities. By continuing my readings of this archive, I hope to be able to further extend some of these threads, which are here only sketched.