Narrative Paths

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IN THE FORMALIST VEIN of narrative theory, where much of the effort has been to think the minimum story, the travel concept has tended to function as a model for the organization of a narrative, for the ordering of narrated events. The Russian formalist conception of the genre of travel writing, and the journey plot in the structuralist theory of plot functions, point out the importance of both temporal and causal dimensions in narrative. At the same time, they reveal that the constitutive forces of cause and effect are often difficult to separate. These two overlap easily, not least because the reader is inclined to experience causality in a temporal order. Boris Tomashevsky, for instance, argued that all narratives require causality in their organization, in addition to temporal sequencing, and justified the claim with reference to travel accounts: “If the account is only about the sights and not about the personal adventures of the travellers, we have exposition without story. The weaker the causal connection, the stronger the purely chronological connection” (1965, 66). Without causal connection, therefore, there is no story but a

1. Todorov, for instance, sees that temporal order and causality are closely linked and easily confused and further that “the logical series is in the reader’s eyes a much stronger relation than the temporal series; if the two go together, he sees only the first” (1981, 42). For Rimmon-Kenan, by contrast, temporal succession is a sufficient condition for a narrative since “causality can often (always?) be projected onto temporality” (1983, 18).
mere exposition, a list, or a chronicle. Ultimately, these investigations into travel writing and the journey plot also reveal that the causal organization of the elements of a narrative cannot be separated from the mediating perspective of the traveller’s personal experience, whether in the form of a narrator or character, through which the sequence of the events is seen.

In this theoretical tradition, travel writing plays out the rival conceptions of temporal succession and causal connection and has helped to establish the approximate point of demarcation between the narrative and the non-narrative. Travel writing occupies both the role of the episodic tale that fails to possess a sense of causality—because it portrays a mere sequence of places or events (the raw material of a story)—and so lacks narrativity, and also occupies the role of the simple narrative proper, a prototype of storytelling. This ambivalent positioning between narratives proper and their outside, the “not yet” narrative or the non-narrative, is related to two basic assumptions concerning the travel genre. On the one hand, a travel story is believed to possess clear temporal and spatial order: the traveller’s itinerary and his or her physical journey through some space structures the experience of time, be it the first-person narrative of an eccentric journey around one’s room (Xavier de Maistre’s *Voyage autour de ma chambr*, 1795) or a third-person narrative on a trans-Antarctic expedition (Alfred Lansing’s *Endurance: Shackleton’s Incredible Voyage*, 1959). In travel writing, time can be, as it were, compressed into space. On the other hand, the causal connection between places, events, and their meanings in travel, that is, the translation of space into the time of writing and some particular narrative order, is a crucial feature of the genre. The characteristic causal connection, however, may remain profoundly open in terms of its form and pattern.

Hence, one reason why the travel story, or travel writing in general, so easily lends itself to be considered both a borderline and nascent case of narratives is that it foregrounds a tension between consecutiveness and consequence. For instance, the order of telling in a travelogue may be quite different from the order of the travel events. “Anachronies,” by which Gérard Genette refers especially to forms of anticipation (prolepsis) and flashback (analepsis), and the effects of duration, speed and frequency, which result from alterations in the narrative order of events, can be found in literary fiction and travel narratives alike. The chronological presentation of the events of travel can be seen as the predominant form and expectation of the genre of travel writing but, at the same time, it can be powerful to temporarily let go of this expecta-

2. See Mikkonen 2007a.
tion, for instance, by interrupting the narrative of the places and events with recollections, anecdotes, and anticipations. Similarly, discrepancies between the time of the experience and the time of the writing can become as palpable and important in travel narratives as in some forms of autobiography or first-person fiction. The travel writers manipulate the relation between the order of events and the order of telling also in quite conventional narrative accounts of journeys such as Lansing’s *Endurance*, which starts in the middle of the Antarctic expedition as Sir Ernest Shackleton’s men are leaving their boat.

The history of the genre of travel writing, and the theoretical findings of the Russian formalists, suggest strongly that in order for a travel account to become a narrative in the proper sense, and not remain a mere chronicle of a journey, it needs to create a sufficient causal connection between the events or the places that it depicts. The travel writer’s, the narrator’s, or the character’s experiential frame, meaning his or her personalizing point of view, is a central means for establishing such causal links between events. In a travel journal, perhaps the genre’s most prototypical form, the speaker is expected to be constrained at some level by the immediate environment and the objects available there for description. At the same time, the mental processing of a world is also a means of engrossing the reader in the world of the story. As with Graham Greene’s *Journey Without Maps*, a literary version of a journey that is based on a travel diary, the reader is witness to the mental process by which the writer forms the representation of a world (a place, a destination, a home). The traveller’s movement and mental processing, therefore, realize the potential of the given space for experience.

The cultivated tension or “confusion” between sequence and consequence, further, is an indication of narrativity and often features in travel writing. This dynamic may be illustrated through the question of turning points in the narrative. Roland Barthes observed in his essay “Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives” that

> Everything suggests, indeed, that the mainspring of narrative is precisely the confusion of consecution and consequence, what comes after being read in narrative as what is caused by; in which case narrative would be a systematic application of the logical fallacy denounced by Scholasticism in the formula *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*—a good motto for Destiny. (Barthes 1977, 94)

4. See Korte 2008, 33–35, for a helpful application of Genettean temporal structures in travel narratives; and Cohn 1999, 117, on similarity between fictional and nonfictional narratives in this respect. Korte also argues, rightly I think, that as far as the order of the events is concerned, “travelogues tend strongly towards chronological narration” (2008, 33).
Barthes’s scheme of narrative units, which we can see as an attempt to come to terms with the logical fallacy of “after this, therefore because of this” that he sees as characteristic of all narratives, is based on the sharp distinction between the purely chronological functionality of *catalyzers* on the one hand and the *cardinal functions* (or *nuclei*) on the other hand. The cardinal functions, the turning points of the narrative, are both consecutive and consequential functions that can be recognized as such when the action to which they refer “open (or continue, or close) an alternative that is of direct consequence for the subsequent development of the story” (Barthes 1977, 94). The opening and closing of alternatives in the journey, given specific form as the crossroads and the directions that are available in the physical itinerary of the journey, are a key feature in the genre of travel literature, and especially so when the travel account takes a narrative form. Within the conventions of this genre there are various potential, often foregrounded conceptual matches for the cardinal narrative units: the “launch” of the real beginning of the voyage (after the departure from home); the “telescoping” of logic and temporality in travel experience through the traveller’s moving perspective and points of attention, emphasizing the importance of a certain moment or experience in travel; the direction of movement and the choices at the crossroads open up alternatives and close them; the idea and experience of “turning back” (towards home or the place where the journey began); a sudden reversal of circumstances (*peripeteia*); chance encounters involve risks that both move the narrative forward and structure it; the landmarks and the description of places can be used to gauge progress in movement but also the unfolding of the travel narrative; and the return. Beyond this scheme, another obvious means through which travel writing builds on the relationship between consecutiveness and consequence are maps and itineraries. The maps, with their itineraries, show the physical route of the journey and the sequence of places, while the accompanying text describes the travel experience and gives it a causal form. All these conventions can increase narrativity in the story, combine consecution with consequence, quite possibly confusing them, and thus are potential nuclei of travel narratives.

By the same token, while the path schema provides the travel writing with a basic narrative structure, or a conceptual frame of a narrative, travel writing is also typically marked by a sense of profound openness as to the causal mechanisms that motivate a travelling character or narrator to issue reports about the aspects of his or her movement through space. This means that

5. On the conceptual metaphors of *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*, *CHOICES IN LIFE ARE CROSSROADS* (or *DECISIONS ARE JUNCTIONS IN THE ROAD*) see Lakoff and Turner 1989, 3–4, and for applications of these metaphors see Mikkonen 2007a and Dannenberg 2008.
what comes after in the temporally ordered events in travel is not necessarily triggered by what went before. In other words, not just the sequencing of the travel events but also the traveller’s experience of an event or a place, the meaning given to that event or place in relation to what has happened before, an impression or feeling of the time that has passed (see Korte 2008, 26), as well as the anticipation of what may happen next, are all essential features in travel narratives. To further illustrate these arguments about narrative organization, I now return to discuss Greene’s *Journey Without Maps* and consider the question of the relation between narrative consecutiveness and consequence in this travelogue and, furthermore, how this question involves the distinction between travel writing and fictional narratives. I will develop the ideas of consecutiveness and consequence around two specific generic features and expectations of travel narratives. On the one hand, travel experience and travel writing presuppose the sense of a consecution of places, and events happening in particular places. The travel concept, and especially the journey plot pattern, manifests a specific model of temporality and causality—travel entails the arrangement of points of actuality in temporal order. On the other hand, the notion of travel is prone to confer identity and narrativity to a series of events since it “humanizes” the experience of time and space. A travel story is dependent on the projection and experience of a world from a particular perspective, person, or group of people moving through space in a given time, thus enabling the treatment of space as a stage for possible narrative action. Narrative progress, therefore, is intimately related to, even if it does not always equal, the representation of the traveller’s experience of space and time.

Greene’s travel narrative is particularly pertinent to the questions raised here since it foregrounds the relationship between consecutiveness and consequence by questioning the meaning of maps and itineraries, and by projecting, as I aim to show briefly, a narrative voice concerned with the issue of how to narrativize the flow of travel experience in the first place. By “consequence” I mean more precisely the sense of logical relation that the writer-traveller constructs between the places and events of travel, intimately related to the traveller’s personal experience of space and time. The notion of “experientiality,” which comes from Monika Fludernik, is helpful in this regard. Narrative experientiality means that narratives project on someone’s state of mind, that is, they are based on the reporting, evaluation, and interpretation of someone’s experience of an event, such as what is surprising, exciting, or terrible

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6. In the sense that Frank Kermode (*The Sense of an Ending*, 1967) and Paul Ricoeur (*Time and Narrative*, 1983–85) discuss the function of emplotment.
in some event, filtered through consciousness (Fludernik 1996, 48–50; 2009, 59, 109).^7

Open-Ended Travel

_Journey Without Maps_ chronicles Greene's travel to West Africa, from January to April 1935. The itinerary of Greene's and his cousin Barbara Greene's 350-mile, four-week trek from Sierra Leone through Liberia, accompanied by a party of native guides and carriers, serves as a basis for the book's division into three parts and subchapters. The first section of the travelogue describes the journey from England to Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, and the train ride to the Liberian border; the second part tells about events on the trek from the border to the Liberian village of Ganta, including a passage in French Guinea; and the last part relates the trip from Ganta to Grand Bassa on the coast and the return boat to Monrovia, including a short note on the journey back from Freetown to Dover, England. The text, however, constantly diverges from the given chronological order of travel. The travel events, episodes, and impressions are punctuated by descriptions of people and acts of reading; the text includes anticipatory passages, memories and reflections on people and matters at home. Greene explained later, in his autobiography _Ways of Escape_ (1980), how he had conceived the form for the book to be neither a political essay like Gide's _Voyage au Congo_ nor an adventure story like Peter Fleming's travelogues. Furthermore, he wanted to avoid narrative structure in the sense of simple chronology or a sequence of places and travel events:

> The idea of A to Z has always scared me, like the thought in childhood of the long summer term, and I have always broken the continuity of a story with the memories of my chief character, just as I was now to break the continuity of the journey with the memories of 'I.' (1980, 48)

The “I” is in quotation marks, since this “I” indicates the writer’s self-consciously abstracted persona, a second reflective self. At the same time, Greene excluded any mention of his cousin during the journey, for the sake of the

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7. In Greene's fiction, there also emerges a Catholic sense of consequence that I do not discuss here, meaning the consequences from one's actions and sins. The notion is explored for instance in _The Heart of Matter_, where the protagonist Scobie (or perhaps the narrator in free indirect discourse) uses the expression of being “condemned to consequences” (1965, 154).
Figure 2. Map of Liberia, showing Graham Greene’s route in the spring of 1935 (Graham Greene. Journey Without Maps. © Graham Greene).
abstracted perspective. He thought that the outer journey into the unknown interior of West Africa needed to be intertwined with an inner dimension of personal experience, a journey into his mind, for the travel book to have any real meaning and interest:

The account of a journey—a slow, footsore journey into an interior literally unknown—was only of interest if it paralleled another journey. It would lose the triviality of a personal travel diary only if it became more completely personal. It is a disadvantage to have an ‘I’ who is not a fictional figure, and the only way to deal with ‘I’ was to make him an abstraction. (1980, 48)

The narrative of Journey Without Maps thus alternates systematically with memories and reflections of the writer’s personal life, supporting, as Greene says, “the uneventful record with memories, dreams, word-associations” (1980, 48). As the quotation also shows, Greene’s choice of narrative voice and perspective was made self-consciously in relation to kinds of choices that were available to him in writing fiction. The exclusion of his cousin from the narrative enabled Greene to focus on his own mind instead of dialogue and interaction with a companion. The choice is made for literary purposes and analogous to choosing between different direct or indirect modes of presenting consciousness, speech, and perception in fiction.

The title of Greene’s travel book is not literally true, at least not as far as Greene’s actual journey through Liberia is concerned. The travelogue also includes a small, sketchy map of Sierra Leone and Liberia. In fact, the title serves as a guide for numerous possible interpretations and calls for the reader’s response in terms of the relation between travel and narrative, potentially also drawing attention to the illusory transparency of maps, their illusion of referentiality. One of its meanings is almost true: in 1935 Greene and his cousin entered a relatively unmapped area of Liberia. The maps the Greenes were able

8. Greene mentions Barbara a few times in the book, however, and thanks her for accompanying him (2002, 21). In Ways of Escape, Greene explains further that “only in one thing did she [Barbara] disappoint me—she wrote a book. However, her generosity was apparent even there, for she waited several years, until my own book had appeared” (1980, 47). Barbara Greene’s travel book from the same journey, Too Late to Turn Back: Barbara and Graham Greene in Liberia, was published in 1938 (originally it was entitled Land Benighted). In Ways of Escape, Greene compares the notes in his diary, Barbara’s account in Land Benighted, and the description in Journey Without Maps, in what comes to the turning point of his sickness during the trek (1980, 49–54).

to find for Sierra Leone and Liberia showed whole areas left blank; they were inaccurate, useless, and imaginary (see Greene 2002a, 45–46; Sherry 1989, 512, 528–29). For example, an American military map of the area included empty spaces with remarks of the whereabouts of “cannibals.” Another aspect of the travel experience suggested by the title indicates is practical knowledge about the travel conditions. During his journey in Sierra Leone and Liberia Greene realized that travel which followed a timetable was impossible and that the only way to plan the journey was “to know the next town or village ahead and repeat it as you go” (2002a, 47). Therefore, instead of using maps and itineraries, he gradually became used to “drifting with Africa” (2002a, 66).

Andrew Thacker has pointed out that the title of Greene’s travelogue draws attention, on the one hand, to the ambiguous status of pictorial maps in travel writing as illustrations of a written text, posing as seemingly supplementary textual features while, on the other hand, suggesting how maps also act as a kind of guide to the journey, thus altering the way we travel and read works of travel writing (2002, 11). Thacker, moreover, interprets Greene’s emphasis on travelling without maps as a metaphor for “a covert exploration of unknown territory” (2002, 17), meaning both the archaic cartographic status of Liberia and the unknown, archaic qualities of the writer’s mind. Some features in the maps included in the earlier editions of the book, particularly the 1936 and 1953 editions, such as absent names or decorative African patterns, further emphasize Greene’s self-identification as an explorer rather than a traveller or a tourist (Thacker 2002, 13–17). To some extent we may also speak of Greene’s desire to identify himself with earlier famous British explorers in the region, such as Mungo Park, Mary Kingsley, or Sir Alfred Sharpe. The first half of Greene’s route followed roughly Sir Alfred Sharpe’s 1919 journey from Freetown through the roadless hinterland of Liberia (Greene 2002a, 109, 118, 164). Greene’s predecessors obviously had even less cartographical support.

The practical meanings of poorly-mapped forest areas are inseparable from various metaphorical and ideological connotations in a mapless West Africa. The latter include, for instance, a writer’s search for new, unexpected material; a means of self-analysis; and the colonial notion of African space as void of history and culture. Thacker argues convincingly that Greene’s anti-cartographic discourse is deeply embedded in a spatial history of Africa that has been constructed by “European imperialist views of the continent’s seeming achronicity” (2002, 19). Here, however, I will concentrate on another

10. By “self-analysis” I mean that West Africa serves Greene in *Journey Without Maps* as scenery for posing moral questions about oneself and one’s culture. Further, the lack of maps is a religious-philosophical allegory—involving the intention to know “one’s place in time”
specific meaning of Greene’s cultivated resistance to maps and itinerary that bears significance in terms of the problem of narrative consecutiveness/consequence. Greene’s growing determination to drift on unmapped paths reveals an excitement not only in unstructured adventure and open-ended travel but also in travel writing that does not respect the structure given by maps and itineraries. This drifting involves, further, a hesitation to use the conventional “life is a journey” and “life is a narrative” metaphors of an autobiography, at least in the sense that there could be a neat analogy between the experience of life, the order of travel, and the order of narratives. In this respect the book’s second epigraph, by the American physician and poet Oliver Wendell Holmes, becomes important. In the passage that Greene cites, Holmes claims that

The life of an individual is in many respects like a child’s dissected map. If I could live a hundred years, keeping my intelligence to the last, I feel as if I could put the pieces together until they made a properly connected whole. As it is, I, like all others, find a certain number of connected fragments, and a large number of disjointed pieces, which I might in time place in their natural connection. Many of these pieces seem fragmentary, but would in time show themselves as essential parts of the whole. What strikes me very forcibly is the arbitrary and as it were accidental way in which the lines of junction appear to run irregularly among the fragments. With every decade I find some new pieces coming into place. Blanks which have been left in former years find their complement among the undistributed fragments. If I could look back on the whole, as we look at the child’s map when it is put together, I feel that I should have my whole life intelligently laid out before me. (Greene 2002a, 7; Holmes 1896, 28–29)

The central metaphors of this passage, the problem of the “dissected map,” the “fragmentary pieces” of life and the arbitrary “lines of junction,” link Greene’s travel narrative to the metaphorical notion of “life is a journey” in the form of a question: in what sense, if at all, can life (and travel as a microcosm of life)

(2002, 19)—for searching what has been lost in European culture (sense of seediness, brutality, childhood, primitive virtue). Among the cultural and ideological “maps” evoked by Greene’s commentary in the book is the lop-sided information about West Africa by British newspapers and Government sources. In the same category we can count Greene’s own Africanism, meaning the frequent superimposition of notions of childhood and primitive virtue on African spaces—“a quality of darkness is needed, of the inexplicable” (2002, 20)—that recalls colonialist notions of Africa as void of history and any advanced human culture. For more on Greene’s “anti-cartographic discourse” and its relationship with imperialist views of Africa’s achronicity, see Thacker 2002, 19–20.
be experienced as a connected whole like a narrative? Or can one, so to say, live out narratives?" The metaphor of a child’s dissected map in the Holmes epigraph evokes the dilemma that characterizes Greene’s travel book and the meaning of travel as “drifting”: the contradiction between the promise of understanding one’s life as a connected whole—life has not only a spatialized temporal order like a map and an itinerary, but it is also causally organized like a narrative—and the distrust of that very same possibility (since life is an ongoing process without clear beginning or end). Two further dimensions of this piecing together, and ones that Greene occasionally evokes in the travelogue, are psychoanalysis—the method of bringing the patient back to the repressed idea, “the pain or the memory” (2002a, 96–97)—and fiction, the possibility in fiction to give life a narrative form.

Greene’s idea of a travelling that is not fully conscious—“it is not the fully conscious mind which chooses West Africa in preference to Switzerland” (2002a, 20)—since it is repressed in the traveller’s mind, draws on psychoanalysis and the idea of a specifically African “unconsciousness.” At the same time, this idea reflects the ambiguous dynamic of plotting between a grasp of the connected whole and a sense of an open-ended process. Journey Without Maps suggests that there is always potential ambiguity in the status of the itinerary just as there is in the concept of the fabula (i.e. the set of narrated situations and events in their chronological order, see Prince 2003, 29). Itinerary is, on the one hand, the map that the traveller follows (temporal and spatial order), but, on the other hand, it is also a history of travels—the map as narrative (combining temporal and causal orders in the told story). In the same way the narrative sequence of the story may be thought to exist both before and after the discourse (in the sense of the order of presentation, as distinct from fabula). The notion of journeying as drifting celebrates the open-ended and not fully conscious possibilities of both travel and narrative but also draws attention to the topos, since rivers and droves are obvious conduits in difficult, roadless terrain.

The Itinerary and the Map

An important feature of graphic maps in classical travel narratives is that they concretize the fabula of a travel story; or at least the fabula can be conceived

11. This is, of course, a much debated question in interdisciplinary narrative studies and narrative theory. See Alasdair MacIntyre (1984, 212) for the famous claim that we live out stories before they are told, “except in the case of fiction,” and Jerome Bruner for a similar claim that “in the end, we become the autobiographical narratives by which we tell about our lives” (1987, 15). For an antithesis to this Narrativist thesis of identity, see Strawson (2012).
of, with the help of the map, in terms of actual space, of geography. In the event that the map is missing, travel stories often prompt their readers to provide a map: in various editions or on the internet one can, for instance, find a large amount of competing maps of Odysseus’s travels. The number of people who are driven to draw maps of Odysseus’s itinerary is indicative of the seemingly inherent potential of travel narrative, be it fiction or nonfiction, to be thought of as a substantial spatial configuration.\footnote{Gibson’s insights that the various spaces in *The Odyssey* are rigorously separated but “cannot be reduced to any homogeneous or global whole,” or that “the mythical adventure of Odysseus is nothing more or less than the connecting up of these incommensurable spaces,” are in line with the idea of the incomparable maps (1996, 17). On the complexities involved in charting a map of a fictional world, see Ryan 2003.}

The great variety of these maps points to the relative openness in the fabula, at least in the sense that Odysseus’s route can be conceived in different ways within certain basic parameters (major events and locations) while it is also evidence of divergence in reader response.

In their function as a graphic interpretation of the sequence of places and events, and as potential narrative programs, the map and the itinerary suggest further affinities between travel and narrative. In this analogy, the map indicates both the route followed and the trace that is interpreted as a story. Often the map, in its graphic form, also suggests possibilities of choice, possible lines of travel that are not chosen. The map, therefore, is not only a model of a referential world, affirming the referentiality of travel writing, but may presuppose a narrative. The itinerary, the succession of traversed spaces in the map, is already a part of the transformation of travel into narrative. The map indicates the literal space of places and events but it is also realized and practiced by the traveller.\footnote{There are, naturally, great differences between maps in regards to the way a map can be incorporated in the verbal narrative, how text and image interact within the map, or how visible the map’s enunciation as narrative discourse may be. Such differences are discussed, for instance, by Jacob 1992, 247–51.} The itinerary, whether in graphic form on the map, a written list of places and times, or implied in the reported events, mediates between the possibilities of the space of the map and the transformation of the experience of space in writing. The itinerary traces the order and the direction of travel, its sequence.

However, if the itinerary in travel writing may function as an index of narrative structure, there remains the difficult question of the relation of the itinerary to the process and experience of travel. This difficulty is due to the fact that the order in a journey is often only created in the very act of travelling itself (in its open-ended temporal process) or can be known only after the journey (as a retrospective outcome of the experience). For more the-
oretical insight into the relation of the map and the itinerary to temporal and causal narrative structure, we can turn to Louis Marin’s study of utopian spaces and signifying practices, *Utopiques. Jeux d’espaces* (1973), and Michel de Certeau’s *L’invention du quotidien* (1980), a theory of everyday practices. Both Marin and de Certeau develop an analogy between the map-itinerary opposition, on the one hand, and the Russian formalist (and later narratological) distinction between fabula and *syuzhet*, or story and discourse, on the other. Moreover, their theories involve an interactional model of the relation between the map and the itinerary, a sense of a meaning-making process between the two. Marin argues, for instance, that the itinerary of travel narrative also “constitutes the map, which is, as representation, the product of the narrative” (1984, 44). For de Certeau, similarly, the spatial reference of the map implies the structure of the narrative by pointing to the transformation of geographic inscription into discourse, space into time. In de Certeau’s model, the narrative nature of walking in a city can thus be distinguished as an interaction between “place” (*lieu*) and “space” (*espace*). Place, for de Certeau, is “the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence,” while space is composed of intersections of mobile elements: space “occurs as the effect produced by the operations that orient it” (1984, 117). A sense of space, in other words, is a practiced place.

The title and the second epigraph of Greene’s travel book rely on the analogy between travel and narrative, but also on the dilemma between a conception of travel as a meaningful, connected whole of events, in the form of a pre-understanding or retrospective knowledge, and the uncontrollable process of the disjointed experiences travelling often includes. The emphasis on the importance of going astray and drifting in a mapless territory, excitement of travelling to “unmapped” Africa, instead of colonial British Africa, involves an interruption in the relation de Certeau describes as obtaining between place and space. The excitement of travel and unknown territory is,

14. Franco Moretti is also principally in line with this argument as he suggests that the literary map enjoys a position between the pattern of experience, or chronotope, which is described in the story and that may also structure the story, and narrative discourse (or “narrative flow” as he calls it). Moretti argues, more precisely, that even if the literary map may not be an explanation itself of the spatial and temporal pattern of the story, it is a specific form of knowledge that shows to the reader “that there is something that needs to be explained” (2004, 84). For a more extended application of de Certeau’s concepts to Greene’s book, see Thacker 2002, 21–25.

15. The idea equals Mieke Bal’s distinction between “frame-space” and “thematized space,” the first meaning the place of action and the latter meaning “acting place” or space transformed into a story (1997, 136).
furthermore, implied in the travelogue’s first epigraph, the second stanza from W. H. Auden’s “O Where Are You Going?,” and the beginning of the narrative.16 In Auden’s poem, which is structured around a dialogue between a passive and an active person, the active agent, who is called a “rider,” “fearer,” and “hearer,” boldly moves onwards, regardless of the passive speaker’s threats and warnings about the dangers and uncertainties of travel. The first subchapter of Journey Without Maps, entitled “Harvest Festival,” revolves around an experience of losing the sense of fixed points of direction. The book starts with Greene entering, by accident, the harvest festival preparations in the vestry of St. Dunstan’s Church while trying to find the Liberian consulate.

As the title, the epigraphs, and the narrative’s beginning suggest, travel is always to some extent multidirectional and even threatens to be nonnarrative because too much can be recounted, even the boring and the uninteresting, or simply because a chronological account of the journey from A to Z would be too tedious, too uninteresting. Traditionally, travel narrative is organized by the cumulative, observational enterprise of documenting geography, landscape, flora, fauna, people, and customs in the chronological order of the journey. We can easily recall the ocular obsessions of sightseeing guidebooks. An important single event in this respect, building on but also questioning this convention, is Greene’s description of the Liberian forest as lacking any interesting detail, and the accompanying confusion of the sense of time discussed in the previous chapter.

However, the passage that Greene quotes from Oliver Wendell Holmes also strongly implies that one may discover an important meaning in pieces


“O where are you going?” said reader to rider,
“That valley is fatal where furnaces burn,
Yonder’s the midden whose odours will madden,
That gap is the grave where the tall return.”

“I do you imagine,” said fearer to farer,
“That dusk will delay on your path to the pass,
Your diligent looking discover the lacking,
Your footsteps feel from granite to grass?”

“O what was that bird,” said horror to hearer,
“Did you see that shape in the twisted trees?
Behind you swiftly the figure comes softly,
The spot on your skin is a shocking disease.”

“Out of this house,” said rider to reader,
“Yours never will,” said farer to fearer
“They’re looking for you,” said hearer to horror,
As he left them there, as he left them there. (Auden 1991 [1931], 59–69)
of a dissected map in retrospect, upon discovering a hidden structure of the whole or new pieces that may join and complement the fragment. The fact that the itinerary can usually only be known after the end of travel exemplifies not only the backward logic of causal relation—the possibility of looking back on the whole experience—but also points to the importance of the crucial experiences of unresolved direction, unrealized possibilities, and shattered expectations during travel. Digression and chronological deviation, typical of odyssey and nomadism, increase the sense of narrativity by upsetting expectations about the agents’ goal. Most classical, episodic travel stories, from Homer to Joyce, capitalize on detouring, and explore the experience of dislocation. They occlude causal relations, present examples of the discontinuous, the amorphous, and the surprising; in the case of Journey Without Maps, the path of travel, while structuring the time and space of narrative, suggests contingency, chance meetings, and ever-new associations. An open-ended journey, such as drifting in a mapless territory with no sense of time, is at one end of the spectrum of travel experiences. Another ultimate metaphor for digressive narration is the experience of being stuck in a labyrinth or a maze, a sense of journey in which all possible itineraries are predetermined. A labyrinth has only a single path but it is maximally circuitous. A maze is emblematic of narrative mechanisms that threaten reversible sequence with irreversible consequence and a closed-up space. In a maze, every turn in direction is fatal not only since all sequences have different consequences but since all points in space are part of a closure and confusingly similar.

In Journey Without Maps, the sense of (nearly) directionless drifting, as well as the experience of acute boredom in the middle of the great monotonous forest, are framed by the time of writing, the retrospective frame of the narration that connects the various events together. The moment of writing, as distinct from the time of travelling, provides the text with connections based on circularity between departure and return. Retrospective knowledge of the final shape of the itinerary is clearly there right from the book’s opening lines: “later sitting before a hut in French Guinea, where I never meant to find myself, I remembered this first going astray, the buses passing at the corner and the pale autumn sun” (2002a, 15). Different moments and memories of travel overlap, and the time of writing, including the creation of stylized memories and literary portraits, constantly interrupts the time of travel. At the same time, a sense of consequence between places and events becomes apparent, entirely distinct from the temporal order of movement through space.

The complex relation between sequence and consequence in Greene’s travelogue suggests that the circular hermeneutics between departure and return
can be thought of as a retrospective memorial reconstruction of a series
of events and experiences. However, the relation between the travel expe-
rience and the travel narrative is also a theme in Journey Without Maps
that invites questions about their order and causal connection. Jean-Didier
Urbain has argued, with regard to travel writing in general, that the relation-
ship between travel and story (récit) can also be circular in the sense that the
story is a structure within or simultaneous to the travel experience, and not
merely an a posteriori frame of travel, a literary translation of the experience.
It is therefore also possible to write about travel first and experience it later,
or to experience travel while writing about it, thus making the real journey
a citation of the preceding narrative (“la citation jouée d’un récit antérieur”; 1998, 370). In Greene's travelogue, the time of the writing and the time of the
travel experience are generally clearly distinguishable, but at the same time,
the narrated moments of travel, the author's memories and associations, and
the perspective of the time of writing inform one another reciprocally.

Over the course of the narrative, Journey Without Maps, wanderings with-
out maps gradually make more room for contingency, chance encounter, and
the risks of travel. The traveller begins to repeat the sense of the present (he
could only know the name of the next village). At the same time, however,
the hermeneutics of departure and return is always re-affirmed by the writer's
retrospective point of view, where the goal of remembrance is to integrate
events into a well-crafted narrative. Greene's travel book makes manifest to us
the complexities and the rich possibilities in the relationship between narra-
tive and travel, or narrative sequence and consequen-
tie by evoking (but also questioning) travel metaphors like “life is a journey” and “narrative is travel”
(or “travel is narrative”), and by questioning the bias towards chronological
organization in travel writing.

**Potential Characters**

Greene's constant and skillful manipulation of the relation between the order
of the events and the order of their presentation in his travelogue makes
manifest that nonfiction travel narrative and fiction can be indistinguish-
able in terms of the complexity of their temporal organization. The fact that
Journey Without Maps is finely segmented into three parts, twelve chapters,
and over sixty subchapters also facilitates constant transitions in perspec-
tive, time, and place, between the more descriptive observations of places
and events en route and Greene's personal memories, associations, and sto-
ytelling. The structure is clearly indebted to the form of a modern novel.
In some cases, chapter divisions reflect transitions not only of perspective, narrative mode, time, and topic, but create juxtapositions of time and place that may remind one of the functions of segmentation and chapter divisions in fiction. Perhaps the most interesting case in this respect is the subchapter “The Way Back,” which ends the first part of the book, and which consists of a series of short literary portraits and caricatures of people at home in England whom Greene remembers during the journey. The subchapter has an important structural function in the travelogue and, moreover, frames these portraits in relation to fiction-writing, as potential material for the creation of literary characters. Thus another area of interplay between travel writing and fiction opens up.

“The Way Back” subchapter is placed in between two passages that describe Greene’s arrival at the Liberian border and his encounter with the customs officers. The interruption of the journey creates a juxtaposition of place and time that is only partially explained by the transitions into and out of the subchapter. At the end of the previous passage, entitled “To the Frontier,” Greene had related his amazement at seeing twenty-five carriers obeying his orders, and the “odd feeling of pleasure” and “an absurd sense of pride” that had resulted from it (2002a, 68). Upon arriving at the border, Greene then explains that

One couldn’t help having, however unjustifiably, a sense of the dramatic; the way forward through the clearing was as broad as the primrose way, as open as a trap; the way back was narrow, hidden, difficult, to the English scene. (2002a, 68)

The transition points to the fact that the narration, and the direction of Greene’s thoughts, shifts backwards at this point, back to the “English scene” and memories of the people he had met or heard about. The character portraits that then follow include Major Grant who frequents brothels; Miss Kilvane who is a follower of the religious prophetess, Joanna Southcott; a runaway gypsy boy called Buckland, who pretends to know how to milk a cow so as to be employed; and Mr. Charles Seitz, the mystery of whose madness and death by freezing had attracted many rival stories. At the very end of the subchapter, Greene then hints at the reason why his journey was interrupted:

We turned away from Major Grant and Miss Kilvane, from the peace under the down and the flat off the Strand, from the holy and the depraved individualists to the old, the unfamiliar, the communal life beyond the clearing. (2002a, 74)
It now becomes evident that the portraits highlight Greene's impression of the differences between English individualism and the West African communal lifestyle, while they also dramatize the contrast between the harsh winter in London and the heat of the African noon sun. The notion of West African communal lifestyle is reflected, for instance, in Greene's description, just prior to the subchapter, of the twenty-five carriers who act as a group and are set in motion “like a long mechanical toy” (2002a, 68). At the same time, Greene associates his reminiscing with a movement in space, as moving on a path that may narrow or broaden at will. After the “The Way Back” subchapter begins Part Two of the book, where the narrative returns to the present moment of the journey, Greene's arrival at the Liberian border.

Major Grant and Miss Kilvane represent to Greene the kinds of people who are of high interest to the novelist from a creative point of view. Greene collects such stories, as for instance is evident in his “Congo Diary” that is included in In Search of a Character, as rough material to be used, transformed and sometimes caricatured in his fiction. At a later point in Journey Without Maps, at the very end of the second part of the book, the author returns to Grant and Kilvane as potential literary characters. They are reintroduced by way of an encounter with an interesting Liberian called Wordsworth:

Already he [Wordsworth] was intent on joining that odd assortment of “characters” (the Grants and the Kilvanes) one collects through life, vivid grotesques, people so simple that they always have the same side turned to one, damned by their unself-consciousness to be material for the novelist, to supply the minor characters, to be endlessly caricatured, to make in their multiplicity one's world. (2002a, 165)

The mention of the Grants and the Kilvanes points back to the division into Books One and Two, but also marks the transition between Books Two and Three. Later in Book Three, Greene gives a description of meeting with Mr. Wordsworth, junior, whose father was the District Commissioner and “like a stern and sadistic papa in a Victorian children's story” (2002a, 299). For the third and last time Major Grant and Miss Kilvane are brought up at the end of the travel book, where Greene reveals that they and others like them, people of the mythical Coast, represent to him a Western version of “central darkness,” that is, the sense of being close to an ancestral, communal life “with its terror and its gentleness” (2002a, 249). For that reason, these people make good characters. Here, Greene associates the mental image of “Miss Kilvane listening to the ghost of Joanna” with a circle of black Africans in Tailahun listening to the enigmatic speech of Landow, a leader of a local religious
movement. All the book’s three major segments, through their closure, are thus tied to the question of characterization and the process of fiction writing. In this way, the travel, and the travel book, anticipates the novel, illustrating how interesting and credible characters may be found and constructed.

Greene made the analogy between travel, and in particular travel into an unknown territory, and the invention of fictional characters explicit in his 1952 essay “The Explorers.” Here he asks: “Is it that the explorer has the same creative sickness as the writer or the artist and that to fill in the map, as to fill in the character or features of a human being, requires the urge to surrender and self-destruction?” (Greene 1969, 318). Greene’s question actually involves two different comparisons between travel and literary narrative: to create a fictional entity, such as a literary character, is like exploring an unknown territory and, subsequently, both the travel exploration and the creation of characters may necessitate that the agent, the traveller or the writer, to some extent effaces himself in the process. In Greene’s “Congo Journal” (1959), the analogue between exploring a territory and creating new characters is further enhanced by the idea of mysterious African space. During his 1959 trip to the Congo as he was working on his next African novel (A Burnt-Out Case), Greene wrote about the demands of creating characters based on his travel and the atmosphere of (Conradian) West African mystique. In planning the narrative perspective for his next novel, Greene insisted that the story should not be told through the main character’s eyes and, moreover, that the author “should not penetrate into the thoughts of any character—which must be indicated only in action and dialogue. This makes for the mood of mystery which I wish to catch” (1968, 20). In his earlier novels, Greene had made ample use of free indirect discourse, but in A Burnt-Out Case the device is rarely used. Only on a few occasions does the narrator’s report of a character’s thoughts and emotions include words, phrases, or questions that might come from the character. Direct presentation of his thoughts, except for the frequent dialogue scenes, is similarly exceptional and brief. In the first chapter of this novel in particular Greene carries out his principle of mysterious indirection effectively by giving the reader very limited access to the protagonist’s mind. The only exception is the initial and intriguing quotation, a parody of Descartes, from the character’s diary: “I feel discomfort, therefore I am alive” (Greene 1975, 9). The protagonist’s identity, who is not yet called Querry but some anonymous “passenger” moving deeper into Africa on the Congo River, and the reason for what he has written, remain open and mysterious.

17. See also Bergonzi 2006, 153.
Only gradually will the reader learn that this sense of secrecy and anonymity, and a rejection of a life that feels like a story, is something that Querry seeks by travelling to the Congo in the first place.

**The Writing Process**

Many of Graham Greene’s travels involve a multiphase and multilayered process of writing, and a two-way movement between nonfiction and fiction, similarly to the texts written by Evelyn Waugh, Georges Simenon, and André Gide that we will discuss in the next sections of this study. On his travels Greene usually kept a diary. He wrote two important travel books, *Journey Without Maps* and *The Lawless Roads* (1939) (also published as *Another Mexico*), which were to some extent based on the travel diary. This also becomes evident in Greene’s references to and quotations from his Diary in *Journey Without Maps* (see Greene 2002a, 128, 214). Furthermore, the travel diaries and the travel books are continuous with the writer’s fictions set up in the same locations. Greene’s journey through Liberia in 1935 produced a short story, “A Chance for Mr Lever” (*London Mercury*, January 1936) that was later included in *Nineteen Stories* (1947). The story mirrors closely the writer’s experience, for instance in relation to the notion of travel in Liberia without maps, or the protagonist Mr. Lever’s difficult confrontation with the carriers who want a raise in their pay. *Lawless Roads*, describing Greene’s five-week trip in Mexico, when he was investigating the effects of the government’s campaign of forced anti-Catholic secularization, and the novel *The Power and the Glory* (1940), share the same Mexican background and describe some shared events. In *The Heart of the Matter*, in turn, the exact West African location of the events remains anonymous, but is generally held to be Sierra Leone, where Greene was stationed as an intelligence officer in 1942–43. Some details from Greene’s earlier journey in Liberia are also reused in this novel. Greene’s travel to the Belgian Congo in 1959 had the purpose of gathering material for *A Burnt-Out Case*. *In Search of a Character* (1961) includes the diary of that same journey (“Congo Journal”), and an earlier short diary, “Convoy to West Africa,” consisting of diary entries made in December 1941 and the first days of 1942, when Greene travelled from Liverpool to Free-

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18. We find, for instance, a place called “France” in *The Heart of the Matter* (1965, 105), while in *Journey Without Maps* the colony of French Guinea is known as “France” among the natives of the Liberian Republic (2002, 145). However, Greene’s stay in Lagos and Freetown during the war was different from most of his other travels in that he could not keep a diary for security reasons.
town. The story of *The Comedians* (1966) draws on Greene's travel to Haiti, and so on.

The relation between Greene’s travels and fictions was often seen to be so close that the writer thought it was important to list, in the beginning of his autobiography *Ways of Escape* (1980), those of his travels, such as his reportages on the Mau Mau rebellion in Kenya in the 1950s, which had not produced any novels or stories. Here he claimed that he was not purposely looking to find material during his travels, but that the material just came his way: “More rarely than might be supposed the places I visited proved sources for my novels. I wasn’t seeking sources, I stumbled on them” (1980, 9). Be that as it may, Greene’s travel diaries also confirm the close relation between his travels and fiction.

**Conclusion**

A travel narrative such as Greene’s *Journey Without Maps* provides us with a model for negotiating the relationship between the process of experience and narrative order, the difference between the shape of experience and the shape of narrative. What adds to this capacity is that to write about travel usually means to reenact earlier journeys and to succumb to pre-existing literary models. Greene, for instance, uses preexisting texts—mainly canonical works of fiction and poetry—as an intertextual filter to mediate the gap between the “open” order of the travelling experience and the order of writing. Quotations from books and descriptions of reading experiences punctuate the travel throughout *Journey Without Maps* and, as in the disturbing case of going through a dull, dead forest, the writer is engaged in reevaluating earlier readings in regard to the travel experience.

The experience of distance and the foreignness of the described world also increase narrativity in Greene’s travelogue. The “exhausted discourse” of certain modern travel writing, even if it challenges the possibility of evoking an authentic foreign world, is based on the premise of constructing a world through negation (as a reaction against the others’ experience of the exotic, the strange and the marvelous). Greene’s “mapless” Africa is, at least partly, a personal and imaginary construct rather than a strictly real, geographic space. The literary references, the interspersed memories, and the juxtaposition of the time of travel and the time of writing help to impose a spatial-temporal

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19. Greene also claims in the introduction to his “Congo Diary” that “I have very little visual imagination and only a short memory” (1968, 8).
method on the static, map-like structuring of space. Writing thus resists the notion of space as a static entity.

To summarize, Greene’s *Journey Without Maps* helps to raise the question of the process-versus-product aspect of narrative in a palpable way: how to represent freedom and contingency within a structure? Travel writing shows explicitly how causality and chronology, narrative consequence and temporal sequence can fuse. But typically travel stories tend to break this conjunction, at least provisionally, during the course of the narrative. As regards the increase of narrativity, the very suggestion of travel produces narrative, or increases narrativity, since the idea of travel personalizes the experience of time and space through the subjective perspective of movement and of perceiving a world. Greene’s African travel narrative explores the ways in which time can be personalized as a narrative and how the traveller’s viewpoint introduces a sense of consequence to the sequence of places and events.