In the course of this book, I have explored the influences and convergences between travel journal keeping, the memoir, and fiction. The study has identified five main dimensions of interplay between fiction and nonfiction in this body of work: the author’s, the narrator’s, or the character’s mediating mind (the experiential frame of the journey); the conventions of description; the shared references and cultural givens concerning sub-Saharan Africa; the theme of narrativisation; and the issue of virtual genres. These dimensions reveal the important role that travel has played as a frame in Modernist fiction and the way in which fiction has been appropriated in the nonfiction travel narrative and journal during our period.

It seems that travel writing, with its particular traditions, conventions, and expectations concerning, for instance, the centrality of the mediating consciousness or the importance of description, provided many of these writers with a locus for experimenting with new strategies of voice, style, world construction, and perspectival techniques that could be tried out in fiction as well. In some of these cases, it appears that by interlacing different worlds with different reality status—be they real, possible, metaphorical, or fictional—modern writer–travellers thus asserted for their travelling persona and for their writing (and sometimes for the places visited or the people encountered) a kind of “transworld” identity between the actual, the possible,
and the fictional world. This effect, or illusion, is in turn reinforced by the sense of displacement and distance between one cultural zone and another. It is further strengthened in many of these texts by the modern topos of sub-Saharan Africa as a free, undetermined space and the imperialist notion of non-European places that supposedly do not have a history. The modernist authors included in this study inherit and affirm but also complicate and, in some cases, seek to undermine these imperialist notions.

The research also goes to show that the African travel writing produced by these writers was an important element in the development of their literary careers. The various findings that the comparison between travel writing, life narrative, and fiction yielded are important for the sometimes conventional interpretation of many of these writers—notably Waugh, Greene, Blixen, and Simenon (who emerged on the literary scene during the 1930s)—as working in the shadow of the great Modernist innovators such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and Marcel Proust. To read these authors’ nonfiction side by side with their fiction enables us to see better the full extent of their formal innovation and interest in experimenting with different narrative voices, styles, genres, varieties of realism, as much as the criteria of referentiality. Furthermore, this opens up new strategies for investigating the cross-fertilization and mutual influence between fiction and travel writing, or other forms of nonfiction narrative, in the literatures of early twentieth-century Europe.

The research has sought to highlight the worth of analyzing travel writing and journals in narrative-theoretical terms and studying fiction and nonfiction as intersecting categories, despite the distinct constraints of their narrative situation and generic expectations. These writers’ travel writing and journals make apparent how many identifying markers of the modern novel may be employed in nonfiction: the centrality of the mediating consciousness, the importance of detailed scenes and descriptions, the presentation of verbatim speech, shifts between observation and inner reflection, and even interruptions between different narrative levels are all evidenced across genres. Moreover, quotations from or references to fiction and discussions of reading fiction whilst actually travelling can be used in various important ways in nonfiction travel writing: as a guarantee of the reality of experience, to emphasize or to blot out certain experiences, or as a model for presenting those basic sources of autobiography that are not verifiable, such as thoughts and emotions, memories, associations, dreams, and desires. The references to hypothetical genres, furthermore, can draw the reader’s attention to generic expectations and their justification and emphasize an affinity between the narrative strategies and conventions or other means of expression across the fiction/nonfiction divide.
Dorrit Cohn’s signposts of fiction, listed and discussed in the Introduction, are only partly valid in terms of distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction in these examples. In the nonfiction works included here, the narrative regularly adheres to a bilevel story/discourse model; it focuses on the representation of the author’s inner life and experience of space and time, even if it does not (usually) employ narrative situations that open up to inside views of other peoples’ minds; and it may, in certain cases, articulate narrative voices that can be detached from their authorial origin (thus creating an impression of a traveller’s persona). The latter does not involve, however, a full break with Philippe Lejeune’s notion of “autobiographical pact” (i.e., the identity between the author, the narrator, and the character), to which Cohn refers, as may be the case with some contemporary examples of autofiction, literary journalism, or nonfiction novel. Greene’s and Waugh’s travelling persona, or Simenon’s pseudonym Georges Caraman, is a new and stylized version of the author’s self, evoked in the travelogue and by the experience of travel, and as such is somewhat detached from the autobiographical self. By contrast, in Gide’s and Leiris’s cases, their travel journals suggest a clear continuity with the autobiographical self and project.

The interaction between travel writing, journal keeping, and fiction in these writers’ works makes evident the porosity of the boundary between nonfiction and fiction, while the analyses also reveal the way in which their distinction constantly reasserts itself, despite the many juxtapositions, borrowings, and boundary crossings (actual or hypothetical) between the genres. The relative stability of their distinction is in part due to, as I argued in the Introduction, certain extratextual generic expectations. The form of the text, such as the narrative voice, style, and perspective that is employed in the text, for instance when fiction makes the reader share in a character’s experience of time through free indirect discourse, is likely to have some influence on our classification of a given text’s genre. Yet a text’s formal and semantic features also invite interpretation in relation to generic expectations, pertaining for instance to the expectation, in nonfiction, of a correspondence between the world of the text and actual reality (in so far as the reality can be known through other descriptions, narratives, and documents). The expectation of

1. However, Alex Demeulenaere has convincingly argued that Leiris adopts different narrative identities in his travelogue (adventurer, ethnographer, intimate self-analysis) and, gradually, towards the end of his travel journal, apparently transforms himself from an observing narrator to a character of his own narrative, thus becoming a kind of fascinated spectator of the theater of sacrifice and possession in Gondar (2009, 264, 270). A more profound analysis of Leiris’s autobiographical series would allow us to evaluate whether similar instances of identity adaptation take place there.
referentiality in travel writing, at least in the sense of the traveller being true to his or her subjective experience in some given geographical space, affects these writers’ and the readers’ understanding of the narrated world as well as the usage of devices that are more characteristic of fiction.

Cohn illustrates the meaning of the referential level in the analysis of nonfiction narratives under the issue of plotting versus “emplotted” in a way that is useful for our discussion. She argues that in the process of transforming archival sources into a narrative form, which is necessary both in the making of fictional and nonfictional narratives, fictional narratives are distinct in that they are plotted compositions whereas nonfictional narratives are both plotted and emplotted: “A novel can be said to be plotted, but not emplotted: its serial moments do not refer to, and can therefore not be selected from, an ontologically independent and temporally prior data base of disordered, meaningless happenings that it restructures into order and meaning” (1999, 114). Fiction, in other words, creates a world by referring to this world, whereas nonfiction travel writing or a memoir gives narrative form to lived experience. However, Cohn’s prototypes for a referential (nonfictional) narrative—a historical narrative (historiography that relates past events in a reliably documented way or a historical autobiography) and a psychoanalytical case study—appear to be, generally speaking, more constrained by the principle of correspondence to reality in their process of emplotting than the modern fiction writers’ travel books, journals, and memoirs. In other words, the latter genres, at least in the works that are included here, are more relaxed about the obligations of testimonial evidence or correspondence to the actuality of the narrated events, despite the journalistic motivation and documentary impulse that also characterize some of these writers’ African nonfiction.

The assertions that I have made here about the interplay between fiction and nonfiction obviously depend to some extent upon the choice of examples. This research has focused on early twentieth-century European writers who wrote both fiction and nonfiction set in sub-Saharan Africa and, in addition, on works that have certain recurring themes, patterns, and intertexts in common. The selection is artificial, however, in that there are other writers whose work might have been discussed within the same framework. To mention two examples, the French writer Paul Morand’s travel book to West Africa Paris-Tombouctou (1928) and his novel entitled Magie noire from the same year, which is framed as a travel narrative, could have been investigated within this comparative analysis. Similarly, the English aviator and adventurer Beryl Markham’s memoir West with the Night (1942) and her autobiographical and fictional stories set in Africa from the 1940s (collected posthumously in The Splendid Outcast, 1987) would meet the same criteria.
More importantly, however, I believe that the main assertions and the general framework of the study, concerning the issue of cross-fertilization, borrowing, and hypothetical potential between the genres, and the dimensions of interplay between fiction and nonfiction that I have identified, could be tested with regard to other kinds of examples from the same era, involving for instance a different place of departure or travel destination. If I had included American writers in this study, Ernest Hemingway’s account of a month-long hunting safari in East Africa in 1933, *Green Hills of Africa* (1935), and his subsequent short stories about African safari-life—“The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber” (1936) and “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (1936)—would have provided me with a similar case to the ones that I investigated. For instance, the way in which literary discussions between Hemingway and his companions alternate with hunting scenes in *Green Hills of Africa* is a delicious example of the role that books can take on the voyage. Hemingway also calls the reader’s attention to the generic relation between travel writing and fiction in the Foreword to his travel book, declaring that “the writer has attempted to write an absolutely true book to see whether the shape of a country and the pattern of a month’s action can, if truly presented, compete with a work of the imagination” (1994, Foreword).

A greater geographical scope would have made it possible to include, for instance, Isabelle Eberhardt’s North African travel fiction and nonfiction in my case studies. Eberhardt travelled and lived in Algeria between 1897 and 1904, including a period dressed as an Arab man and calling herself Mahmoud Essadi, Mahmoud Saâdi, or Si Mahmoud. She published essays and articles from Algeria and Tunisia, wrote travel books that were published posthumously, including *Notes de route Maroc, Algérie, Tunisie* (1908), and *Dans l’ombre chaude de l’Islam* (1921), and wrote fiction such as the short story collection *Amours nomades* (posthumous) and the novel *Trimardeur* (1922, finished and published by her Algerian mentor Victor Barrucand). She also kept a diary that was published posthumously (*The Nomad: The Diaries of Isabelle Eberhardt*). The twelve short stories of *Amours nomades*, some of which came out in the journals of Paris and Alger during the author’s lifetime, are all set in Arabic-speaking North Africa and draw regularly on the writer’s life and travels there.

Other non-European travel destinations would obviously allow a great body of works to be investigated within the same research framework. Early twentieth-century European authors who published fiction and nonfiction travel set in the same places include, for instance, the French writers Paul Claudel, Victor Segalen, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, and André Malraux and the British writers D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, and George Orwell. The
Swiss writer Annemarie Schwarzenbach, whose travel writing and fiction were rediscovered in the 1980s, travelled to Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran, and elsewhere between the wars and also visited the Belgian Congo in 1941. Her book Death in Persia (Tod in Persien, published posthumously) would provide an interesting opportunity to test the same theoretical assertions: although it is labelled a novel it also documents the author’s four trips to Persia between 1933 and 1939. Likewise, the French writer Henri Michaux’s travel books might offer an interesting test bed for these assertions. Michaux poses the question of intercultural translation in terms of a paradox in the motto of his travelogue Un Barbare en Asie (A Barbarian in Asia, 1945, written in the 1930s). In writing about India he observes, “There is nothing to see—everything to interpret” (1986, 3). In Michaux’s Ecuador (Ecuador: A Travel Journal, 1929), likewise, the pseudo-ethnographic observations during a year-long journey to Ecuador often become fantastic, or too subjective (where just about everything is seen as a matter for interpretation), whereas his works of travel fiction, including Voyage en Grande Garabagne (1936) and Au Pays de la Magie (1941), use conventions of ethnographic writing to speak of imaginary people and impossible spaces. For Michaux, to write about travelling involved the exploration of the very notion of travel.

Still another limitation in my corpus is the missing African perspective on travel, relating both to the important role that the Africans played during these European writers’ journeys and the African writers’ travel accounts of journeys to Europe. Comparisons between European and African travel writers could have provided us an interesting counterweight to the chosen examples and possibly prompted quite different kinds of questions, for instance, about the uses of African imagery or the relation to the legacy of colonialism. To mention some potential candidates for such comparisons, the Senegalese writer Birago Diop’s short story “The Humps” (“Les Mamelles,” 1947) describes an African storyteller’s return from France to Africa. In this story, a fellow female passenger, a European, makes an ironic comment about the famous hills called Humps—“So that’s all your famous Humps are?” (1985, 1) (“Ce n’est que ça les Mamelles?”, Diop 1961, 32)—that mark the western-most point of Senegal and, thus, the African continent (the extremity of the Cape Verde Peninsula). As a belated response to the woman’s question, the writer–narrator then relates the story of the fantastic origin of the Humps as it has been told to him by Amadou Koumba, the legendary West African storyteller and musician, a griot, to whom all Birago Diop’s stories are ascribed. According to the story, the Humps belong to a jealous wife who threw herself into the waves, but the sea did not manage to swallow her entirely. The arrival scene on which the story focuses thus portrays an African writer’s journey “back”
from the European “center” to Africa, contrasting African and European perspectives in the description of the scene, quite unlike in the examples studied in Chapter 1.

The question of African representations of travel also raises the issue as to what this study might contribute to the body of postcolonial studies that has critically examined European colonial travel literature in recent decades. There are three principal ways I would suggest. First of all, the focus on European preconceived notions of Africa and Africans in this body of travel literature is relevant for the postcolonial inquiry about the ways in which travel literature can be imbued with colonial ideology and ethnocentrism. One historical specificity of this corpus, written and published just prior to the anti-colonial and independence movements in Africa, is that these works reflect the loss of the great opposition between the civilized and the exotic primitive, whilst maintaining and reaffirming this opposition through reversal, estrangement, or irony. The distance from nineteenth-century heroic and exoticizing travels that is evident in these works makes it possible to modify some of the accepted views of European travel writing—for instance, the ways in which this genre “produced” non-European cultures for our consumption or how it opened up issues of inter-culturality and imperial relationships (for instance, how the colonial periphery helps to define the metropolitan centre). Second, the focus on the modes of functioning in a particular genre of writing (rather than merely on content), including the question of a hypothetical audience that is related to generic expectations, can help us ask more precise questions about narrative voice and authority and the writer’s strategic location vis-à-vis a colonized culture. The study of generic conventions, expectations, and cross-generic relations may be highly relevant if we seek to understand how a text grasps and represents another culture and cultural encounter, or wish to make claims about literary genres as ideologically infused categories. Third,

2. Compare this with Aimé Césaire’s anticolonial poem *Cahier d’un retour au pays natal* (1939, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*) that relates the poet’s return from France to his native Martinique. An early African travel account of an arrival in Europe is included in the Senegalese infantryman Bakary Diallo’s memoir *Force-Bonté* (1926), which is the first African soldier’s narrative of the First World War. In his memoir, which is also a vehement apologia for French colonialism in Africa, Diallo describes a warm welcome at a French home when his infantry unit arrives in Sète (Hérault) in 1914. Aedín Ní Loingsigh (2009) focuses on the cultural and historical realities of African textualizations of travel, including generic considerations, within the tradition of French-language travel writing. Loingsigh investigates, for instance, the Senegalese writer Ousmane Diop’s *Mirages de Paris* (1937), a semi-autobiographical novel in which the writer incorporates personal experiences of an affair with a French woman in Paris. See also Miller (1998, Chapters 1 and 2). Early twentieth-century African travel stories from England include, amongst others, Ham Mukasa’s *Uganda’s Katikiro in England* (1904) and A. B. C. Merriman-Labor’s *Britons through negro spectacles* (1909).
Fiction, Colonial Travel Narrative, and the Allegorist • 299

postcolonial studies and theory do regularly, and sometimes uncritically, argue that the dividing line between fiction and nonfiction travel writing, or other forms of colonial nonfiction, is wholly elusive and, as such, irrelevant. This study specifies the grounds on which the argument about cross-fertilization across the fiction/nonfiction divide can possibly be made, as it analyzes the features that imaginative and real journeys share and identifies the dimensions of their infiltration in this particular body of work. In the light of this approach it might also be possible to reevaluate the grounds for the claim often made in postcolonial studies that Western nonfictional travel writing and fictional narratives conspired to form an ideological apparatus in the service of colonialism.

Finally, in my case studies, a few pertinent traditions of travel literature and récit de voyage emerged that can be sketched out briefly here. First of all, most of these travelogues, as well as much of the fiction, refer in one way or another to the traditional storyline of travel into the interior of Africa. This occurs, for instance, by way of references to or recountings of famous expeditions, such as those of Mungo Park, Sir Richard Francis Burton, Stanley, and Livingstone, or the romantic ‘disappearance’ of Arthur Rimbaud and the fictional travels of Charles Marlow and Kurtz. Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, as has become obvious during this study, is a common point of reference for all of our texts written after 1902 (with the possible exception of Evelyn Waugh). The readily recognizable storyline increases narrativity both in fiction and nonfiction. At the same time, it can also be argued that there is a difference of degree between the ways in which fictional and nonfictional narratives use this storyline: travel writers then often seem to “emplot” (in Cohn’s sense of the term) their travel experiences by borrowing plots from fiction, while in fiction the aspect of emplotting is missing or refers to an imaginary narrative situation.3

A story about an adventure into the interior of Africa remains an oft-repeated topos in Western travel narrative and fiction today. The hero of this storyline, typically, is fascinated by the sense of the marvellous and the danger that he or she associates with the unknown interior of Africa that, typically, serves as an allegory for our ancient past, the darkness of our minds, or the powers of natural forces. A similarly allegorical but simultaneously ironic African take on this storyline is the Guinean Camara Laye’s novel *The Radiance of the King* (*Le regard du roi*, 1954) that tells the story of Clarence, a wandering white man who has been shipwrecked off the coast of Africa.

3. I would like to thank one of the anonymous readers for The Ohio State University Press for this formulation.
Stripped of his belongings and fantasies of superiority over the Africans and abandoned by his compatriots, Clarence goes deeper and deeper on the path of disorientation and humiliation, ending up as a slave in a harem in an unnamed Western African country. Clarence's languishing at the overwhelming scent of African flowers and vegetable molds upon entering a great forest parallels some of the African forest scenes in the European writers' travelogues discussed above.⁴

Contemporary Western travel writers who still follow this storyline are often motivated by an effort to retrace some hero–traveller's route and thus recover the expressive content of the original experience despite the burden of the colonial past. For instance, among the many present-day followers of Mungo Park belong the travel writer Peter Hudson, who pursued Park's route on a moped in 1989, as described in his travelogue *Two Rivers: Travels in West Africa on the Trail of Mungo Park* (1991), and the travel writer Tom Fremantle, who retraced the two journeys that Park made in the years 1795 to 1797 and 1805 in West Africa, as reported in *The Road to Timbuktu: Down the Niger on the Trail of Mungo Park* (2005). Inspired by Park's diary, Fremantle emphasizes in his travelogue that he has set as his objective the investigation of the mystery of Park's personality as much as the famous expeditioner's route, asking himself: “So how would I trace Mungo Park, this man every bit as intriguing as the river he had so doggedly pursued?” (2005, 9).⁵ Fremantle thus assumes for himself a position in a long tradition of travel, expeditions, and travel writing, like so many other European writer–travellers in Black Africa in the early twentieth century, including Waugh in Ethiopia, Gide in the Congo, and Greene in Liberia or Paul Theroux, who reads Conrad's novella no fewer than twelve times between Cairo and Cape Town, as explained in his travelogue *Dark Star Safari* (2002),⁶ thus beating Gide, who read *Heart of Darkness* four times during his African journey in 1925 and

---

⁴ See Laye 1981, 94–95. I would like to thank one of the anonymous readers for The Ohio State University Press for drawing this novel to my attention.

⁵ Fremantle travelled from The Gambia to Nigeria carrying with him a copy of *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa* (1799) and some other Park-related books. In his rewriting (and re-travel) of Park's journeys into the interior of Africa, Fremantle tells the story of Park's travels in alternating passages with the story of his own journey. The bookish context of the journey also becomes apparent in the writer's numerous references to other famous European travellers in West Africa, including Mary Kingsley, Daniel Houghton (whose route Park followed in the beginning of his journey), Friedrich Hornemann, Captain Gordon Laing, René Caillié, and Richard Lander.

⁶ Among Theroux's most important literary references in *Dark Star Safari* are Flaubert's travel notes in Egypt, Richard Burton's travels in Ethiopia and East Africa, Waugh's *Tourist in Africa* (while in Tanzania), Nadine Gordimer's works (when Theroux comes to Johannesburg), and Montaigne's "On Cannibals" (during the final train ride to Cape Town).
1926. Some of the writer–travellers who are included in this study have also had their own followers, such as the journalist Tim Butcher, who retraced Graham and Barbara Greene's West African trek in 2009 and published the travelogue *Chasing the Devil: The Search for Africa’s Fighting Spirit* (2010) on this experience, thus continuing the same storyline of adventure, to which Greene's travelogue belongs.

Second, many of my early twentieth-century examples of travel writing maintain an ambivalent relation with the Romantic and Orientalist tradition of literary travel, established in the early nineteenth-century travel books by Goethe, Hugo, Lamartine, Gautier, Nerval, and many others. In these European Romantic travelogues, the traveller, better known as an author of fiction or poetry, travels in order to write a book about the experience. During the Romantic period, the genre of travel writing entered the field of literature and was acknowledged as a creative form of self-expression and, thus, a potential contribution to the author’s literary works. Typically, the Romantic writer–traveller concentrates on the movements, associations, and various impressions in his mind, as the sole subject of the experience, loosely inspired by the exotic locations of his journey (Turkey, Greece, Egypt, etc.). In the examples that I have examined, sub-Saharan Black Africa still enjoys a similar capacity to collect and exhibit alterity, including the traveller’s alterity towards him- or herself. Evidence can still be found in these writings of some remnants of the exoticist discourse of the marvellous,7 the “incredible” and “empty” heart of Africa, reflected for instance in the threatening “madness” of the surroundings, the decadence of “the white man’s grave,” or the stupefying vastness of the forest.

However, all the writers featured in this study could be identified as post-exotic writers in the sense that they are self-conscious about the disappearance of unknown worlds yet to be discovered. Exoticism has clearly lost much of its relevance as an attitude or a form of expression in this context, even if it remains imaginatively powerful. In *Journey Without Maps*, Greene refers to his disappointment with Western civilization, and this sense of disillusionment characterizes his own search for a total experience of authentic Africa as well. Many of these writers attempted to undermine and ridicule the West’s favorite representations of black Africa, such as when Simenon critiques the picturesque or Gide challenges the preconceived notion of the African “enemy.” What emerges with Michel Leiris is the (pseudo)ethnographic traveller who, partly in reaction to the scientific impulse towards ethnographic

---

7. Bongie argues that the underlying project of exoticism was to recover the possibility of “total experience” and “sovereign individuality” (1991, 9).
investigation and partly in response to the demand to treat different cultures and societies on an equal footing, promotes the idea that non-European cultures can be positive sources of knowledge. Critical of earlier proponents of Romantic exoticism and local colour, and the narrative of progress that measured types of society according to their supposed place in the evolution of human culture, this new (pseudo)ethnographic traveller comes to the conclusion that he must refuse to see the world from a European perspective.

However, in this early twentieth-century context of colonial travel writing, it is still impossible to envisage a travelogue in sub-Saharan Africa that could focus on the encounters with the local people and let the Africans speak for themselves. Leiris and Blixen showed great interest in the ways in which their contemporary Africans lived, made a living, told stories, and practiced their religion, but these interests are still far removed from the late twentieth-century or contemporary European travel writing that explicitly focuses on encounters with local people, who themselves may have a travel story to tell. For instance, much of the interest in the recent rewritings of Mungo Park’s travels, or in Paul Theroux’s account about his journey on land from Cairo to Cape Town, lies in the traveller’s encounters with others on the road and his interviews and dialogues with local people. What, in other words, has become important in much contemporary travel writing is the experience of those who live in the places where Europeans travel, the “what it’s like” to be an African.

In his On Human Diversity (1993), Tzvetan Todorov has proposed an illustrative typology of modern French exoticist travellers, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Pierre Loti and Victor Segalen, according to the forms of interaction in which these writer–travellers engaged with others in the course of their journey. By this typology, which includes ten different categories (such as the assimilator, the profiteer, and the tourist), Todorov wanted to draw our attention to the relation of contiguity, or coexistence, in the travelogue. This means posing the question “How does one live with others?” instead of investigating the way in which the traveller represents the others and their cultures. The latter has been a central concern in the study of Orientalism and Africanism, for instance.

In the course of my research it became clear, somewhat to my surprise, that Todorov’s typology is not terribly relevant. It was not that the typology was incompatible with my corpus but that most of these writers and their travelogues, with the notable exception of Blixen’s African memoir and perhaps Waugh’s Waugh in Abyssinia (since Waugh was in some sense an assimilator due to his open support for Italian imperialism), fall within one type of interaction with the others, or to be more precise, within a similar combina-
tion of Todorov’s categories. All of these writers were *allegorists* and at the same time also exoticists (*exotes*), who, moreover, had an ambivalent relationship with the *impressionist traveller*. Todorov defines the latter as a highly perfected tourist, as someone who is mainly interested in the impressions that countries or human beings leave him with, not the countries or the people in themselves (1993, 345). Pierre Loti, Todorov argues, was the first to systematize the impressionist attitude of travel. As *allegorists*, all of these writers speak of African places and people in order to discuss something else, such as their own supposed primitivism, the history of humanity, their poetics or the art of storytelling, the disturbing modernity of Europe, Western prejudices, the life of the settlers, problems of colonialism, and so on. Furthermore, as *exotes*, they sought to break the automatism of life at home and, thus, renew perception of the everyday and their literary art.

Blixen’s place in this typology is complicated in that she was both an *exote* and the *assimilated*, that is, because she also reached out toward the Africans around her to make herself in some way like them (see 1993, 346). If we discount Blixen’s colonial memoir, where the encounter with Africans is the writer’s central concern, and Leiris’s (ethnographic) interest in the African experience of sacred ritual of which he learns through his informants and translators, or the end of Leiris’s travel journal where he gradually attributes a true individuality to Emawayish, the other writers’ travelogues do not include many descriptions of encounters with actual Africans, especially not with black Africans. It is, nevertheless, implicit in many of these texts, and as was already the case with Mungo Park’s travel journal from West Africa (1799), that the Africans whom they met and portrayed were not simple embodiments of preconceived notions. It is implied, in most of these cases, that the Africans could also speak for themselves, even if they hardly do so within the space of the text. However, the actual focus in these travelogues is neither the dilemma of how to represent other cultures nor how to coexist with them but the processes of self-reflection, self-analysis, and self-fashioning. Their primary interest, in other words, is the traveller’s subjective experience (how he or she personally felt in the foreign African setting). This means the way in which the authors perceived themselves in Africa and in their travels and, further, how the personal experience of Black Africa in some sense created an identity for the writer–traveller.

---

8. Mary Louise Pratt also points to Mungo Park’s interest in “reciprocal vision,” that is, how Park “often takes pains to report the Africans’ relations to him as well as his to them, and to affirm the commensurability of European and African lifeways, different though they may be” (1992, 83).