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AN ANCIENT PRACTICE IN THE MODERN AGE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
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RONI JACKSON-KERR

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BY

Dr. Eric Kramer, Chair

Dr. Ioana Cionea

Dr. Elaine Hsieh

Dr. Kimberly Marshall

Dr. Sean O'Neill

In loving memory of my mother, Joyce Jackson, whose passion for knowledge and education pushed me to reach the highest limits of my potential. Your love made this and everything else possible. May we all strive to live life with your unbounded enthusiasm.

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Abstract

For more than twelve hundred years, sojourners have been walking the pilgrim routes of El Camino de Santiago de Compostela, also known as The Way of Saint James, in northern Spain. With a long and varied history, the Camino de Santiago is a fascinating phenomenon. In modern decades, pilgrimage has become a popular area of study, and the Camino is no exception. Nancy Frey's famous text, *Pilgrim Stories*, stands among the seminal anthropological works on the topic. However, much has changed in the two decades since Frey's work was originally published. The most notable change relates to technological advancement. From online forums to wi-fi access in albergues [pilgrim hostels], the modern Camino varies greatly from even its modern historic iterations.

The impact of such rapid technological advancement can scarcely be overstated. This dissertation seeks to explore the far-reaching impact of technology on the ancient pilgrimage, and the perceptions of pilgrims of the impact of technology along The Way. The Internet has changed everything for those who live within its far-reaching grasp, and the Camino is no exception. From the manner in which pilgrims gather information before embarking on their journey to the ways in which pilgrims stay in touch after returning home and every step in between, technological advancements have impacted the entire experience from start to finish. On the road, technology pervades the experience. While the Camino was once seen as an escape from modernism and a return to ancient ways of being, online pilgrim forums today are flooded with questions regarding the best "apps" [mobile applications] to download before starting the Camino, how to charge Smartphones and tablets while on the road, and what methods are

available for electronically mapping the route. Pilgrims are documenting their journeys online through online blogs and social networking sites such as Facebook and Instagram. They are maintaining close contact with friends and loved ones while on the road with the aid of communication technology, and wi-fi can be found in most modern albergues and in cafes along the trail.

This work seeks to understand the inevitable tensions and varying perspectives regarding the Camino in the modern age, the ways in which technology is affecting pilgrim interactions, as well as the reflective nature of pilgrimage in the age of personal broadcasting. Most importantly, this work will seek to explore the discursive and experiential elements of the Camino and the implications of modern technology on both discourse on pilgrimage and the experience of pilgrimage itself.

Chapter 1: Introduction

For more than twelve hundred years, sojourners have been walking the pilgrimage routes of El Camino de Santiago, also known as The Way of Saint James. While various routes to Santiago exist, the most frequently traversed is the Camino Frances, a 780-kilometer route that begins in St. Jean Pied de Port near the French Pyrenees, and passes through Roncesvalles, Pamplona, Burgos, Leon, and Galicia before making its way to what are said to be the remains of Saint James in Santiago de Compostela, Spain (Slavin, 2003). The pilgrimage, which began circa 818 CE (when what were believed to be the remains of Saint James the Apostle were discovered near the present-day Galician coast), experienced a sharp decline in the sixteenth century, until a strong resurgence of interest emerged in the 1980s (De Ceballos, 2000; Herrero, 2008). According to the Pilgrims' Office in Santiago de Compostela, 262,516 pilgrims successfully completed the trek to Santiago in 2015. Numbers have been steadily rising in recent years, with 237, 886 pilgrims completing the trek in 2014; 215,880 in 2013; 192,488 in 2012, and 183,366 in 2011 (Camino Statistics, n.d.). This is up from a mere 2,491 pilgrims completing the pilgrimage in 1986. It should be noted that these numbers only reflect the pilgrims who completed the pilgrimage to Santiago and received their *Compostela*, the accreditation by the pilgrim's office in Santiago of the successful completion of the pilgrimage [See Figure 1]. This does not reflect the many pilgrims on the trail who do not complete the pilgrimage. Failure to complete the Camino might result from injury or illness, time constraints or a change of heart on the path, to name a few. It does not include the many pilgrims who, due to time constraints, complete the pilgrimage yearly in small increments (with the exception of those who are completing

the final section and receive their Compostela. It can be reasonably assumed, then, that the actual number of pilgrims on the trail in a given year is much higher than reported, due to these reporting limitations.)

With a long and varied history, the Camino de Santiago is a fascinating topic of study. Unique from other Catholic pilgrimages, the Camino is only one of three pilgrimages in the world that, upon completion, results in ‘plenary indulgence,’ the absolution of sins by the Catholic Church (Bell & Dale, 2013). According to the Falvey Library (n.d.),

A plenary indulgence replaces the need for temporal punishment (penance) and grants the sacramental state of innocence achieved in accord with the perfection of the penitent's contrition. It is efficacious to the individual based on participation in a communal act of faith and devotion (n.p.).

It is also unique from many other Catholic pilgrimages in that it is not Marian (meaning that the sacred site is not related to a miracle associated with the Virgin Mary), setting it apart from such pilgrimage sites as Lourdes and Fatima. Interestingly, many of the pilgrims who make their way to Santiago do not identify as Catholic or even Christian, making the pilgrim route to Santiago even more of an anomaly.

Pilgrimage has been studied broadly across disciplines, although it has become a popular area of study only within the last few decades. One of the most famous broad sociological examinations of the pilgrim's experience of the Camino de Santiago comes from Nancy Frey (1998) in her seminal work *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago*. Her primary research questions centered around the dialectic between the inner and outer journeys of pilgrims, the message pilgrims are expressing as they transport themselves across such a distance using their physical bodies, and the transition back home once the pilgrimage is complete. She points out some key

distinctions between the Camino and various Marian pilgrimages. While many Marian pilgrimages are motivated by the suffering body, Frey (1998) notes that a pilgrimage along the Camino is often motivated by the suffering soul. She also challenges the notion that the pilgrimage begins and ends on the road itself. The pilgrimage, she suggests, begins long before the pilgrim sets foot on the path, and continues long after the pilgrim returns home. This is a provocative assertion, and fully illustrates the notion that this particular pilgrimage is a more inward journey than an outward one. This assertion is validated by the pilgrims she encounters along the way, as they elucidate their own experiences and perspectives. Many changes have taken place over the two decades since Frey has published her seminal work (most notably, the influence of technological advancements on modern pilgrimage) but findings such as hers remain largely unchanged.

Today, the pilgrimage maintains its temporal and experiential fluidity. To expand on Frey's thesis, it is my assertion that the expanded temporal bounds of the Camino experience that Frey outlines are not only being affected by technological advancements, but are also largely discursive; in other words, the experience of the Camino, particularly that which precedes and follows the physical pilgrimage itself is, to a large degree, communicative. This is not to say that the pre-and post-Camino elements are *entirely* discursive. These portions of the pilgrimage also maintain an experiential quality-the internal processing, the physical healing of the body- however, because they fall outside the parameters of the physical walk, and because of the distinctive qualities of the occurrences that precede and follow the physical pilgrimage itself, these stages are necessarily largely discursive in nature. This also does not mean

that the pilgrimage should not be thought of as one fluid sum, from the moment the idea is born in the mind of the pilgrim to long after returning home (perhaps even until the end of one's days.) While we may consider the pilgrimage one fluid sum, we will also be breaking the experience into before-during-and after for purposes of examination.

While on the trail, too, communication plays a significant role in the pilgrim experience, and technological advancements in recent years are affecting the communicative habits and behaviors of pilgrims. The discursive elements of the many technological developments on which this work will be focusing are, to a very large degree, driving the rapid changes unfolding on and relating to the Camino de Santiago. In other words, the ways in which pilgrims are communicating on and about the Camino de Santiago in the modern world are changing the very experience (and some argue, the very nature) of the pilgrimage itself. It is here, on the journey through the discursive elements before, during, and after the pilgrimage, that my investigation will find its locus of concentration.

A Brief History of the Camino de Santiago

Gitlitz and Davidson (2000) state that the history of Saint James “lies somewhere between legend and fact, between superstition and belief” (“The Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela”, para. 1). Certainly, the legends and tales of the Camino vary greatly. Yet the authors note that whether the story is fact or fiction, it has nevertheless inspired millions of pilgrims to set forth on the road to Santiago for centuries. Tradition maintains that the apostle James set out for Spain after the death of Christ, in hopes of evangelizing it (Rudolph, 2004). After little success in Spain, James returned to Jerusalem and was promptly beheaded by Herod Agrippa I, his body left to

be eaten by dogs (Agrippa's zeal for Judaism, both publicly and privately, is well-documented. Rudolph, 2004). The legend of James' posthumous return to Spain varies. As one tale asserts, James' disciples took his remains, placed them on a boat without rudders or crew, and set them off. Miraculously, the boat and its holy cargo found its way to Iria Flavia, near the Galician coast. The body was buried in a Roman cemetery nearby. Another version of the story insists that two disciples left Jaffa with the body, brought it to northern Spain by sea, carried it ashore and buried it some twenty miles inland (Marshall-Cornwall, 1981). In either account, legend agrees that the body of Saint James found its way to Iberia and remained undisturbed for nearly eight hundred years (Rudolph, 2004).

According to legend, early in the ninth century (circa 818 CE), a hermit from Galicia named Pelayo (Pelagio or Pelagius in some accounts) noticed mysterious lights shining from the area where the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela now stands (De Ceballos, 2000). Upon seeing this strange sight, Pelayo quickly informed Teodomir, the bishop of Iria Flavia. At the prompting of his diocese, Teodomir quickly went to investigate the strange lights. Upon doing so, Teodomir discovered the tomb containing "what were alleged to be the remains of Saint James the Apostle" (De Ceballos, 2000, p. 9). Word was immediately sent to King Alfonso II of Oviedo, who quickly set out to lay his eyes on the relics himself. In doing so, Alfonso II is said to have made the first official pilgrimage to Santiago. De Ceballos (2000) notes that this discovery was not altogether surprising. For two hundred years prior to the discovery, it had become a commonly held belief in parts of Europe that the apostles had divided up the globe for purposes of evangelism, and Iberia had been under the jurisdiction of Saint James. For

the area to be his final resting place was unsurprising to some. It is also worth noting that the discovery of Saint James' body occurred during a time when local Catholics were attempting to inspire Catholic enthusiasm in order to drive the Moors and their religion from Spain, and there is much speculation about the convenience of the timing. Yet, as Hanbury-Tenison (2004) notes,

The whole story is so exceedingly unlikely and so clearly concocted to provide a suitable focus for Christian unity in Spain against Islam, that it would be easy to dismiss it all as mere legend. But none of that matters; it is the pilgrimage itself which, from the very moment that the Saint's grave was discovered...has created its own momentum, rationale, and legacy. The myth is what matters, inspiring unnumbered men and women to lead-if only for a time-lives of hardship and self-sacrifice, buoyed up by the spiritual ecstasy which their journey created. (As cited in Dunn and Davidson, 2000, p. xxiii.)

After his visit to the relic, Alfonso II quickly recommended building a church to honor and protect the remains of Saint James. A church was built before Alfonso II's death in 847 (De Ceballos, 2000). The initial church, however, was demolished to make room for another, grander church under the rule of Alfonso III. In 997, however, this church burned to the ground. The cathedral that stands today in Praza de Obradoiro in Santiago de Compostela was constructed between 1075 and 1211 (De Ceballos, 2000).

After the discovery of the relic, pilgrimages began almost immediately to the sacred site. During its peak in the Middle Ages, pilgrims visited Santiago by the hundreds of thousands. The pilgrimage experienced a sharp decline as a result of the Black Plague in the fourteenth century, along with the Protestant Reformation and political unrest of the sixteenth century, and the numbers of pilgrims waned until the 1980s and 1990s, (although never completely dying out) when the Camino de Santiago experienced a strong resurgence (Herrero, 2008). In 1987, the Camino was named the first European Cultural Route by the Council of Europe (Gardner, Mentley, & Signori,

2016). Spain enthusiastically capitalized on the potential for growth and tourism the Camino offered. Travel journalists were invited to come experience the Camino for themselves, as a grand adventure, by the Tourist Office of Spain (Scott, 2017). Across Europe, many Catholic pilgrimages have experienced a resurgence since the 1990s. Badone (2014) notes that this resurgence has occurred despite a notable decline in participation in mass and other Catholic traditions. It seems clear that the act of pilgrimage itself offers something to both Catholics and non-Catholics alike, something that seems increasingly difficult to find in other ways in the chaos of the modern world. It affords travelers the opportunity to dive deep into themselves, a modern delight in the individualistic modern world.

Many things have changed over the last three decades since the Camino began its resurgence. Among the most notable changes since Frey (1998) published her seminal work on the Camino has been the broad advancement in communication technology, and the ways in which technology has, in various ways and to varying degrees, come to permeate the pilgrim experience. The Internet has changed almost everything, and the Camino is no exception. From the ways in which pilgrims gather information before embarking on the journey to the ways in which pilgrims keep in touch with one another once they have returned home, technological advances have impacted the entire experience from start to finish. On the road, too, technology has pervaded the pilgrim experience. While the Camino was once seen as an escape from modernism and a return to the ancient ways of being, online pilgrim forums today are flooded with questions regarding the best “apps” [mobile applications] to download before starting the Camino, which blogging sites are best, how to charge Smartphones

and tablets while on the road, and which methods of electronically mapping the route are best. Many of these technological developments affect discursive behaviors both on and off the pilgrim trail. Without question, they also call forth many philosophical concerns regarding the impact of technology on what is considered by many to be a sacred or spiritual experience.

Pilgrimage and Communication

Morinis (1992) stated, “It is especially desirable that future research on pilgrimage be conducted within a multidisciplinary frame” (p. ix). While pilgrim theory has been largely advanced by those examining it from an anthropological standpoint, it has been studied by a variety of scholars from a broad range of disciplines, adding to the richness of the exploration of the phenomenon. While there are communication scholars who focus on pilgrimage events (see Archer & Bradney, 2017; Howell & Dorr, 2007 and Li, 2014), they have not overall had the kind of impact on pilgrim scholarship that anthropology scholars have had. Typically, communication scholars have approached pilgrimage from one of three perspectives: performance, semiotic, or rhetorical (see Calafell, 2005; Carreño, 2014; Hasian Jr., 2004, and Padoan, 2019,). This researcher’s approach, in contrast, will have a phenomenological and social scientific approach, attempting to examine the meaning behind the modern pilgrimage as it comes to bear within a new and developing technological milieu. The research is also largely influenced by anthropology, given the ethnographic method employed and the firm anthropological foundation on which much of the existing literature rests. It will, however, focus particularly on how communication behaviors are shaping the pilgrim experience, and the ways in which technology is affecting both the process of meaning-

making for pilgrims and both the perceptions of the experience and the experience itself. It seeks to understand the manner in which various discursive behaviors are being influenced by technology within this particular cultural context.

Communicative behaviors influence every stage of the Camino, from planning to execution to reflection. In particular, the area on which this project focuses most intently--the effect of technology on the Camino de Santiago--is largely influencing the manner in which pilgrims communicate with one another before they embark on the journey, during the pilgrimage, and after returning home from the experience. Before embarking on the Camino, many modern pilgrims are utilizing the Internet to gather information, ask questions in online pilgrim forums, and begin the process of building a community and a sense of kinship and support before the physical Camino even begins. Individuals who are interested in learning more about the Camino have access to tremendous resources, including websites, blogs, documentaries and web series', social networking sites, podcasts, and instructional videos devoted to the topic. In particular, the support found in the pilgrim websites and forums is quite strong. British pilgrims (and beyond) have access to information through a London-based organization launched in 1983 called the *Confraternity of Saint James*, which publishes a monthly bulletin, hosts lectures, runs two albergues on the Camino de Santiago, and operates a Camino-centered library, as well as a webpage that highlights various published materials on the topic of the Camino. Online information produced by the confraternity, of course, is available to anyone with an Internet connection.

Pilgrims also have access to the American-based organization *American Pilgrims on the Camino* (APOC), an organization that also supports the Camino and

American pilgrims embarking on it. APOC provides, free of charge, pilgrim *credentials* (the pilgrim passport on which pilgrims receive stamps along the way), connects pilgrims to local chapters and events, puts out a monthly newsletter, trains *hospitaleros* (Camino volunteers) and offers various means of support both locally and along the Camino de Santiago itself. APOC also maintains a public Facebook forum, wherein pilgrims can ask questions, post photos, seek and offer support and words of encouragement, and engage with past and future pilgrims. APOC is one of several Facebook communities seeking to connect pilgrims. Another forum that has grown in popularity is CAMIGAS, a forum dedicated to female pilgrims on the Camino. This forum not only enables female travelers to connect with and ask questions specifically of other female travelers (some of which might be questions that some pilgrims might be uncomfortable discussing in mixed company, such as how to deal with menstruation on the trail) but also maintains an interactive calendar for those walking and enables solo female pilgrims to meet up with other women who are traveling the Camino as a safety precaution. This forum was created after the tragic murder of American female pilgrim Denise Thiem on the Camino (Burgen, 2015). The forum focuses, in part, on safety on the trail, as well as empowering female pilgrims to pursue their dreams of walking the Camino de Santiago. As stated, the level of support in these pilgrim forums is extremely strong. Though this technologically mediated forum, pilgrims begin to feel that they are part of the community before they ever step foot in Spain.

During the pilgrimage, communication behaviors are also changing as a result of technology. Many pilgrims use technology to keep in touch with friends and family back home, to let them know they are safe and tell them about their daily or weekly

experiences, depending on the frequency of contact. Some pilgrims keep in touch with business associates and keep tabs on work responsibilities while on the pilgrimage. This calls forth many questions regarding the ability to fully engage in the pilgrim experience when pilgrims are unable to fully disconnect from their devices. After completing the Camino, technology is also enabling pilgrims to continue to engage with others they met along The Way through social networking and other methods, as well as enabling them to continue to engage with the pilgrim community at large. This is undoubtedly profoundly affecting the re-entry process that Frey (1998) discusses at length.

Perhaps most notably, as the pilgrim experience is broken into before-during-and after, it becomes clear that the totality of pilgrimage moves in many ways from discursive engagement to experiential (the physical pilgrimage itself) back to discursive (upon the pilgrim's return home.) Pilgrims' notions of the Camino prior to stepping foot on the trail is entirely comprised of discourses they have encountered along the way. From books to blogs to Instagram photos and beyond, the discourses concentrated on the Camino are more numerous than ever before. This multitude of discourses influences, sometimes profoundly, the ways in which pilgrims conceptualize, develop expectations, and prepare for their own pilgrim experience. While on the trail, discourse centering on the topic of the Camino does not cease. Pilgrims certainly have numerous conversations about the pilgrimage itself, their daily challenges and insights, what constitutes authentic pilgrimage, what their personal motivations for embarking on the pilgrimage are, and much, much more. This discourse further enhances the physical, 'experiential' portion of the Camino. Upon returning home, pilgrims find themselves

having to reconcile both the experience of re-entry into their pre-Camino lives, and the tremendous challenge of attempting to put into words that which they have just experienced with their bodies, minds, and spirits.

Pilgrimage, Culture, and Technology

The relationship between technology and culture has long been examined (see Kramer, Adkins, Kim, & Miller, 2014, Mumford, 1934/2010, and Turkle, 2011). Although there are a range of perspectives regarding the nature of the relationship between technology and culture (e.g. technological determinism), many agree that the relationship is symbiotic, that culture serves to shape and cultivate technological advancement and in turn technology influences the manner in which cultures and societies develop and operate (Kramer et al., 2014). Although maintaining the understanding of the symbiotic relationship between technology and culture, this dissertation will predominantly examine how technology is affecting this cultural phenomenon. It will more intently on the one-directional impact of technology *on* culture, the impact of technology on the cultural experience of this pilgrimage. It will focus in that manner, however, with the understanding of the symbiotic relationship between the two, and with the understanding that ever-changing norms within Western culture are giving rise to the new technological demands on the Camino itself.

Technological advancement has demonstrated throughout history both positive and negative outcomes. The Camino is no exception. Advancements in technology, communication and otherwise, are no doubt influencing the Camino de Santiago in both positive and negative ways. The dominant focus of this dissertation will be information communication technologies (ICTs). As such, the work will focus significant attention

on social media and information-sharing practices and engagement. It will investigate the various ways in which pilgrims are reconciling the age of personal broadcasting and constant connectivity with an experience that is often deeply personal, individuated, and contemplative (see Frey, 1998).

The Sacred and the Profane

Mircea Eliade's (1957) seeks to differentiate and elevate sacred experience from that of the profane in his famous work *The Sacred and the Profane*. He does so through his theory of *hierophanies*, or manifestations of the sacred. Myths, he argues, indicate "breakthrough of the sacred (or the supernatural) into the World" (Eliade, 1998, p. 6). These breakthroughs are what Eliade refers to when he elaborates the notion of hierophanies. It is within these sacred boundaries that individuals find meaning. Notions of what differentiates the sacred from the profane are central to this exploration, as the delineation between the two is a common topic of discussion among both lay pilgrims and scholars who are investigating the relationship between technology and pilgrimage. Chiefly, those who lament the encroachment of technology (See Challenger, 2016, Scott, 2017) on the pilgrimage and the consequences of that encroachment discuss their intersection in a manner that suggests that "profane" technology (and the manner in which they intertwine with modernism/capitalism/Westernization) is spoiling the sacred nature of the pilgrimage itself.

Although Eliade's conceptions of the sacred and the profane have limitations, the differentiation between these two descriptors is central to this study, as the concept is frequently illustrated among Camino pilgrims. Pilgrims are grappling with the ways in which many modern influences may be stripping the Camino of some of its sacred

qualities. In the following section and in Chapter 2, I will discuss the primary limitation of Eliade's notions of the sacred and the profane and alternatives to his dichotomous vantage point.

Eliade stratifies his notions of the sacred into the following categories: sacred space, sacred time, sacred nature, and the sacred self. Each of these concepts plays a critical role in the act of pilgrimage, as most pilgrims will, at one point or another, see each of these concepts come to life. There is much contemplation and discussion among lay pilgrims regarding notions of the sacred versus notions of the profane on the modern Camino, as many pilgrims express concern that the traditional, sacred Camino de Santiago is disappearing at the hand of modernity, technology, and capitalism. Rebekah Scott (2017) refers to this as the "Disneyfication" of the Camino. In a presentation at a recent conference, she noted, "The increasing number of pilgrims has attracted the attention of the marketers, the entrepreneurs, the capitalists" (Scott, 2017, n.p.). This is nothing new, even along the Camino. At the height of its popularity in the Middle Ages, half a million pilgrims were making their way to Santiago de Compostela each year. During that time as well, merchants took full advantage of the large numbers in order to sell their goods and services. (Sumption, 2003).

In her speech, Scott laments,

The person who seriously wants a pilgrim experience will go as minimalist as he can. He'll leave behind technology and comforts and distractions. He'll throw himself onto the mercy of the trail itself, just as pilgrims have done for thousands of years (Scott, 2017, n.p.).

This is a common perspective among pilgrims, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Technology and modernism are categorically castigated as profane, whereas a return to the simple romantic past are seen as the desirable sacred. To be authentically pilgrim

means to maintain the sacred nature of pilgrimage--to reject modernism, to disconnect from technology, and to allow oneself to be at the full mercy of the Camino. It is the opposite of Westernization, of consumerism, of entitlement. 'The tourist expects; the pilgrim is grateful,' a sign in an albergue in Puente la Reina reminds visitors. It is within this struggle between the sacred and the profane where we find one of the most ardent tensions in the pilgrimage itself. Where is the line between the sacred and the profane? Where is the line between authentic and inauthentic pilgrimage? Is the authentic pilgrim the one who leaves her phone at home, or the one who brings one only for emergencies? The one who only checks in with her ailing mother in the evening, or could it be expanded to the pilgrim who blogs about her journey because she is using her journey to raise money for cancer research and wants to keep donors informed on her journey? As it turns out, most pilgrims tend to believe the line is somewhere just to the right of himself. It can be compared to drivers on a highway: Those going slower than him are idiots; while those going faster are homicidal maniacs. In much the same way, pilgrims tend to be of the opinion that those who engage technology more than they are 'part of the problem' while those who abstain from technology are either viewed as fanatics swimming against the inevitable current of modernity or revered as 'authentic' pilgrims. The problem with identifying the line between the sacred and the profane indicate the primary challenge of dichotomous thinking.

Sacred spaces, which Eliade might illuminate in such spaces as the cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, or in the numerous cathedrals and more modest churches along the route, are seen as qualitatively and cosmically distinct from 'profane' spaces. These *imago mundi* spaces, as he referred to them, were understood to symbolize the

cosmos. Eliade notes that the religious man's (sic) experience in these sacred spaces was vastly different than that of the atheist. Eliade suggested that the non-religious individual would in fact experience the entire world homogeneously, each space no different than the next. It seems quite clear that Eliade's limited scope did not offer room to speculate that there might be broad variations in the ways in which individuals might experience the world and find meaning within their experiences.

For example, Eliade suggests that sacred space is inherently so. He notes, "Men (sic) are not free to *choose* the sacred site, that they only seek for it and find it by the help of mysterious signs" (Eliade, 1957, p. 28). For the site of the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, legend holds that this may be true. The sacred site, did, in fact, come to be discovered quite mysteriously. Sites such as Phil's Camino, however, suggest otherwise. Phil Volker, in a documentary film called Phil's Camino, takes viewers on a journey through his battle with stage IV cancer, and his dream of walking the Camino de Santiago, which seemed all but impossible in the face of his grim diagnosis. Undeterred, he sets out to build his own Camino in his backyard, asked a priest to bless it, and began walking it instead, all the while tracking his progress and making note of where he would be on the trail in Spain. As the story of Phil's Camino spread, it has become itself a pilgrim destination, with hundreds of pilgrims traveling to Vashon Island, off the coast of Seattle, to walk with Phil in his backyard.

Contrary to Eliade's suggestion, it seems that sacred spaces can in fact be created by those with the vision to do so, although, in the case of Phil's Camino, it still required the intervention of a holy representative. In fact, it is not uncommon at all for even the most secular individual to have deeply meaningful experiences in certain

spaces, whether that space holds personal significance, such as a loved one's grave, or simply holds significance by way of its own magnificence, such as the Grand Canyon. That is not to suggest that the experiences of the secular and the religious individual within certain spaces might not differ. To be sure, one might find herself in deep prayer, while the other finds herself in contemplation or reverence of a different sort. Yet the lasting impact of each experience might be quite similar-both secular and religiously motivated pilgrims have discussed the transformative nature of the pilgrimage.

Eliade (1957) also delineates his notion of sacred time. He outlines both the time of origin (*illud tempus*) and the sacred time experienced by the religious individual during particular religious festivals and rituals. He differentiated sacred, circular time experiences from the ordinary, everyday, linear experiences of individuals. One might speculate that Eliade would have seen examples of sacred time in the yearly Festival of Saint James (*Festas do Apóstolo*), celebrated each year during the last two weeks of July. The festival reaches its height on July 25, Saint James Day. On years when Saint James Day falls on a Sunday (Holy Years), the number of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago jump dramatically.

Eliade's (1957) definitions also suggest that he might have also seen sacred time in religious rituals such as mass and pilgrim blessing rituals. Many pilgrims, and perhaps even Eliade himself, would regard the duration of pilgrimage as a sacred time, as many pilgrims with whom I spoke regarded the pilgrimage as time spent in communion with God. Three Catholic pilgrims with whom I spoke traveled together, prayed the rosary together as they walked down the pilgrim trail, said a variety of prayers designated for pilgrimage and personal worship. Often these pilgrims joined

together with other pilgrims to say various prayers, including an instance that they detailed wherein passing pilgrims, upon recognizing that the three pilgrims were saying the rosary as they walked into the city of Santiago, joined with them in a variety of languages, and prayed the rosary together as they walked into the city of Saint James, bonded by the sacred journey and their common faith. Modern pilgrims, however, might have varying opinions on which portions of the pilgrimage constitute sacred time and which do not. Many pilgrims I interviewed viewed time engaged with electronic devices as secular distractions at best, and profane nuisances at worst. One pilgrim in a public forum noted the following:

I love seeing all of the real-time posts, pictures, and videos shared here from the Camino, but when I walked, the best thing for me was to turn off all of the communication devices, especially social media, and experience being fully present.

This is a common perspective among pilgrims; that to be fully present in the moment, one must eliminate potential distractions, particularly technology and social media.

Another pilgrim with whom I spoke lectured passionately on the topic. He stated in no uncertain terms:

“You are either here or you’re there. If you’re there, you can’t be here. Distance from family and friends is good, because that’s what it means to be away.”

He went on to discuss a traveling theater group he had been involved with which had a strict no-photography policy for the audience. When no photographs are taken, he said, you make memories instead.

While few pilgrims adhered to such a strict technology-free policy, many pilgrims who did engage their technology did so with reservations. This will be discussed in greater detail in chapter five.

Eliade (1957) also discusses what he refers to as “sacred nature” or our relationship with the natural world and the cosmos. He states that nature itself is sacred, that it cannot be thought of any other way, since nature and the cosmos are “divine creation” (p. 116). Because creation came from the hand of God, the world itself is “impregnated with sacredness” (p. 116). With this revelation, there can be little doubt that Eliade would have seen the pilgrimage to Compostela as fully saturated with sacred experience, since the commune with nature toward a sacred site, in the midst of a sacred ritual, is perhaps the clearest example of that which he saw as sacred. He might, however, have questioned the manner in which some pilgrims engage the pilgrimage, just as many academic and lay pilgrims question it today.

Regardless, few pilgrims discuss their experience along the Camino de Santiago without referring to the intense beauty of nature encountered on the Camino. From the snails with their natural cargo in tow (a perfect metaphor for slow strollers) to the majesty of the Pyrenees to the fields of sunflowers to the rainbows, butterflies, rivers, and the field of stars-the Milky Way, which guided ancient pilgrims all the way to the shrine-there is no doubt that the beauty of the Camino leaves a lasting impression on those who walk. In the documentary film *Phil's Camino*, Phil can be seen mesmerized by a congregation of eagles flying overhead while he rests at a café along the pilgrim trail. “Look at the eagles”, he can be heard saying, “I’m weeping”. Another pilgrim with whom I walked expressed his awe of the beauty he encountered as we walked along the path. “Look at what my God has created!”, he exclaimed.

Eliade’s (1957) fourth and final category of the sacred refers to the sacred self. According to Eliade (1957), the sacred individual, far from limited to the modern,

literate, religious person, can be found prominently in the ancient cosmic faiths, which did not distinguish humans from nature. Because ancient man was fully integrated with nature, the same natural world infused with sacred quality, he himself was sacred as well. To be sure, part of the sacred quality of the experience of the Camino is the direct interaction with nature that it affords. While many modern individuals live their lives fully separated from nature, in climate-controlled homes and automobiles, walking without ever touching grass or dirt, enclosed with air that is perfumed with aerosol cans rather than honeysuckle, the Camino places pilgrims back into nature, at the mercy of the elements; warmed by the sun, drenched by the rain, subject to the, at times unforgiving, terrain. The physical act of walking and the exposure to the natural world certainly comprises much of what modern pilgrims view as the sacred act of pilgrimage. This is why pilgrims who opt for modern transport on the trail, such as trains and taxis, are looked upon with disdain and are viewed, by many, as inauthentic.

Turner (1978) seems to echo Eliade's assertions regarding the religious nature of sacred space and sacred experience. More modern pilgrimage research, as noted, has expanded the notions of the sacred beyond merely religious experience to include what might have been historically considered more secular or profane.

Over time, it has become clear that the lines between the sacred and the profane are not as clearly delineated as once thought. Sacred experience is not limited to the explicitly religious person or place. Pilgrimage, traditionally thought of as a spiritual quest, may offer a mystical experience to some quite unexpectedly while leaving those seeking religious or spiritual revelation wanting. The varieties of sacred and profane experience along the Camino de Santiago are as distinct as the pilgrims who set forth on

the journey. Yet an intuitive sense of Eliade's original distinction remains within the milieu, and pilgrim perceptions regarding the pilgrimage and the seeming encroachment of technology on the pilgrimage indicate that the questions regarding the distinction between the sacred and the profane still permeate the pilgrim mind.

Structures of Consciousness

While Eliade's notions of the sacred and the profane, and even modern conceptions of technology on the Camino de Santiago may be limited (because the reality of the modern Camino is not quite so black and white as it may appear on its face), it may be more clearly understood when combined with notions of structures of consciousness and the process of dimensional accrual and dissociation. Jean Gebser (1949) and later Eric Kramer (2012) discuss these phenomena in their respective works. Expanding on Gebser's (1949) work, Kramer's (2012) Theory of Dimensional Accrual and Dissociation (DAD Theory) posits that "as structures of consciousness accrue, dissociation increases, and different modes of expression and interpersonal and intergroup comportment prevail" (p. 140). Gebser (1949) argued that over time, our structures of consciousness have transitioned from the archaic structure (pre-time) and into those of the magic, mythic, and perspectival. As structures of consciousness develop, the previous modes of being are not lost. Rather, they remain and become integrated into the modern structure. According to Gebser (1949) and Kramer (2012), the magic dimension can be identified through magical ways of seeing and experiencing the world. Within this consciousness, the flag of the United States *is* America, and those who desecrate it desecrate the country. The mythic dimension is more symbolic. In it, the flag may represent America, but it is not America itself. Rather it is understood as a

symbol, and actions against it may still be considered offensive. In the modern perspectival dimension, dissociation allows individuals to see the flag as simply a piece of cloth, nothing more.

This manner of understanding human consciousness as a process of unfolding dimensions fits nicely into this examination of pilgrimage, particularly as ancient pilgrimage is colliding with the modern technological world. While it may be intuitive to see it as dichotomous, it may be more accurate to see it as different ways of experiencing the world through our various modes of consciousness. The concept of treating the pilgrimage as a touristic draw, as Spain has in many ways, is perspectival consciousness. The mental/rational mind sees the pilgrim route as a sensible way to draw tourists to Spain and thus increase revenue flow into the region. The magic consciousness, who sees the pilgrimage as a sacred space, cannot comprehend viewing the pilgrimage as simply a business opportunity. The entire space is seen as sacred, and cannot be thus polluted by thoughts of commercialization. The mythic consciousness which sees the pilgrim path as an opportunity to delve into one's own psyche is distracted and bothered by the sudden rise in numbers following the promotion of the pilgrimage, the noise, the posters taped to every tree advertising the next pilgrim hostel. For her this is no longer a space in which to clear her head and get back to nature. What we see here is the clashing of consciousness systems and the struggles of an increasingly dissociated world. These three consciousness structures do not fit comfortably together, creating the existential struggles reported by many pilgrims as they attempt to reconcile the ancient and sacred practice of pilgrimage in the modern dissociated world.

Author's Aims

This dissertation examines, within the confines of the pilgrim context, the manner in which technology is influencing an ancient cultural practice. It also ambitiously seeks to stand as an example of the far-reaching influence of technological development in the information age, and demonstrate the ways in which technology is influencing even the simplest, least technological, and oldest of practices (pilgrimage and walking). To date, little academic research has focused on the influence of technology on pilgrimage, although we are beginning to see the topic gain ground in academic circles. While we are beginning to see more research focus on technology and the Camino de Santiago, the context remains ripe for examination. As pilgrimage as a topic has flourished over the last few decades, it is the author's hope that this dissertation will offer a unique insight into a fascinating phenomenon. In Chapter Two, I will offer an overview of the development of related research over time.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

In recent decades, pilgrimage has become a popular area of study, particularly within the humanities and social sciences. Cultural anthropologists have largely paved the way for the topic, and various academic fields have followed suit, with considerable attention offered to broad exploration of the topic. The Institute for Pilgrim Studies at the College of William and Mary is appreciably dedicated to the promotion and support of multidisciplinary research centering on pilgrimage, and has boasted a broad range of explorations to that end, both in the local and international academic community. With this, the current academic climate is both ripe and welcoming to new scholarship. Modern research rests also on a strong foundation of research that frequently traces

back to Victor and Edith Turner (1978) and Arnold Van Gennep (1960) before them. (It is worth noting that Campbell's (1949) work was also foundational to the topic.) While research that followed the Turners both hails and challenges that scholarship, the two no doubt blazed a trail that continues to be explored.

Pilgrim Theory Explored: A Journey Through the Sacred (and Profane)

For most pilgrim scholars, the theoretical exploration of pilgrimage begins with the work of Victor and Edith Turner (1978). Morinis (1992) has commented that Victor Turner "is owed credit for bringing pilgrimage to the forefront of anthropological consideration. Despite the valid criticisms that have been made, his work has been seminal and contains much that is insightful" (p. 8). Turner is a major pioneer in pilgrim studies in the field of anthropology. One of the prominent positions put forth by Turner (1978) is the assertion that pilgrimage functions as a rite of passage. Influenced by the work of Arnold Van Gennep (1960), Turner put forth a modified version of the ritual theory he proposed, adapted to accommodate the pilgrim context. According to Morinis (1992), the central notion of Turner's pilgrim theory is "that pilgrimage as performance stands as the anti-structural counterpart to the structured organization of society, with its rigid roles and statuses" (p. 8). According to Turner (1978), if society is structure, rites of passage in general and pilgrimage specifically stand as anti-structure. The key elements of pilgrimage put forth by Turner that have endured in terms of general discussion (whether in support of or in an attempt to contradict the ideas) are Turner's notions of *liminality* and *communitas*. Liminality, according to Turner, can be described as the period of time within a ritual during which one is "betwixt and between" time, space, and structure. During this state of being, those engaged in the ritual behavior

have moved beyond their pre-ritual state of being, but have not yet entered into the state that will constitute their post-ritual existence (Turner & Turner, 1978). It stands as the experience of being in-between two existential states of being. *Communitas*, according to Turner, can be understood as the feeling of community or kinship that exists between individuals who have shared a liminal, ritual experience together. Within a state of *communitas*, according to Turner (1978), social hierarchies cease to exist and are replaced by a sense of solidarity and equality among individuals. *Communitas* is similar in conception to Gebser's (1949) notion of *religio*. Kramer (2012) describes the concept of *religio* as "binding through emotional identification". Individuals identify with one another and act as a set. "We are in this together". This kind of cohesion can be seen in the documentary film "I'll Push You", in which two men, one of whom is confined to a wheelchair due to a degenerative muscular disease, set forth from St. Jean Pied de Port on their way to Santiago de Compostela. At one point, the two have to climb the steep mountain up to the village of O'Cebreiro. They had mentioned to pilgrims along the way that they would be reaching the bottom of the mountain on a particular morning. They arrived on that morning to find a dozen or more pilgrims waiting to assist them in reaching the top. Because the mountain was so steep and the trail so rocky, the group had to carry the wheelchair-bound pilgrim all the way to the top of the mountain. They were a unit, with a singular goal in mind. They were bound together in that moment, both by *religio* as they shared in the emotional identification of the event, and by *communitas*, as the shared experience brought them closer together and created a sense of equality and community.

While Turner viewed pilgrimage predominantly as a religious endeavor, modern Camino pilgrims are drawn to the pilgrimage for a myriad of reasons. Some, to be sure, are still drawn to the experience for religious purposes. Many pilgrims interviewed discussed their religious motivations, whether they were Catholic or Protestant (covering a broad range of Protestant persuasions.) Many, conversely, were not motivated by religious reasons. Some sought a spiritual experience, but not an expressly religious one, and others were motivated by health reasons; others were on more personal, introspective, existential journeys. Below, additional scholarship will be presented which challenges Turner's notions of expressly religious pilgrimage.

Morinis (1992), opposing Turner's somewhat limited conception of pilgrimage, stated that the pilgrim experience could not be reduced to the rite of passage, that to do so would in fact diminish the complexity and diversity of the pilgrim experience (as cited in Coleman and Eade, 2004). Morinis (1992) defined pilgrimage as, "a journey undertaken by a person in quest of a place or a state that he or she believes to embody a valued ideal" (p. 4). This definition of pilgrimage operated as my working definition throughout this investigation. He notes that two consistent components found in every pilgrimage are the journey and the goal (Morinis, 1992, p. 15). Morinis (1992) also states that "pilgrims tend to be people for whom the sacred journey is a limited break from the routines and familiar context of an ordinary, settled social life" (p. 19). Here too readers will notice themes from the Hero's Journey (Campbell, 1949). Morinis (1992) suggests that the contrast between the sacred journey and the familiar, ordinary life inspired Turner to draw the comparison between structure and anti-structure. He also suggested that those who study pilgrimage should be guided by the following

questions: “What prompts individuals to move out of their daily orbit to undertake a sacred journey? What is the nature of their undertaking? What are its results?” (p. 19). Variations of these questions did make their way into the list of questions provided to those interviewed within this study.

Badone (2004) notes that Eade and Sallnow’s *Contesting the Sacred* marked “the second major landmark along the route of anthropological study of pilgrimage” (p. 10). Prior to this, Badone (2004) asserts, the study of pilgrimage was in its infancy, and Eade and Sallnow pushed the field into “rebellious adolescence” (p. 10). Eade and Sallnow (1991/2013) criticized Turner’s assertions regarding liminality and *communitas* among pilgrims, arguing that, among many pilgrims and within many pilgrimages, the framework simply does not work. Eade and Sallnow, along with others, ushered in what has come to be known as the “Contestation” stage of pilgrim study. In his 1981 account of his fieldwork conducted in the Andes of Peru, Sallnow noted, “the simple dichotomy between structure and *communitas* cannot comprehend the complex interplay between the social relations of pilgrimage and those associated with secular activities” (p. xiii). Eade and Sallnow note that their work sought to illustrate “how analytical discussions could be linked to careful ethnographic research of particular cults without recourse to the universalist claims of structural models” (p. xiii). Coleman and Elsner (1995), as well as Michalowski and Dubisch (2001), moved forward with the notions that there was room within the academic pilgrim landscape for both *communitas* and contestation (Badone, 2004). Ultimately, what these scholars found was that there were instances in which *communitas* seemed to emerge within pilgrim experiences; however, it should not be considered a universal condition of pilgrimage. Coleman and Eade (2004),

promote the approach to pilgrimage along four specific dimensions (Badone, 2004). They assert that [pilgrim] movement should be seen or understood as either “performative action that constitutes social space” (Badone, 2004, p. 14), ‘embodied action’, a ‘semantic field’, or ‘a metaphor’. This work as well, views the notions of liminality and *communitas* in the same manner-as potential outcomes of the experience of pilgrimage rather than as necessary conditions.

Frey (1998), too, invokes Turner only peripherally in her work on the Camino de Santiago. Like Dubisch and Coleman and Elsner, she suggests that *communitas* can occur, but she does not treat it as a necessary condition for all pilgrim experience. Among Frey’s most lasting and fascinating contributions is the notion that the pilgrimage does not begin or end when the pilgrim’s foot hits the trail. Rather, the pilgrimage begins as a seed in the heart long before the pilgrim embarks on the journey and continues long after the pilgrim has returned home. The Camino “becomes a central organizing metaphor in the lives of pilgrims”, as pilgrims often return to complete the trek multiple times, or seek other pilgrimages to complete. Even for those who never return to the Camino de Santiago, the metaphor of the pilgrimage remains a lasting theme for many pilgrims within their lives. Many pilgrims become involved with pilgrim organizations or maintain contact with friends they met along the trail to keep the experience central and salient. They “see themselves as permanently transformed through the act of accomplishing the pilgrimage” (Badone, 2004, p. 17). Undoubtedly, modern communication technology is profoundly affecting the ability of pilgrims to engage with other pilgrims both before embarking on the Camino and after they return

home, and this new technological landscape is adding exciting new layers to the pilgrim experience.

Frey's key research questions center around the dialectical relationship between the inner and outer journey of the pilgrims she encountered during her research, and focus heavily on the internal emotional or spiritual suffering or longing that frequently motivate pilgrims to embark on the journey along the Camino de Santiago. While many Marian pilgrimages (such as the pilgrimage to Lourdes in France) are undertaken by those with physical or bodily ailments, those who choose to travel to Compostela are often moved by more existential motivations.

Gitlitz (2014) discusses the phenomena of the "new pilgrimage", pilgrimage in the modern age. He contends, like many pilgrim scholars do, that pilgrimage requires a journey to a special place, and that "both the journey and the destination have spiritual significance for the voyager...the pilgrim's performance during the journey and at that special place...confirm the pilgrimage's significance" (p. 35). He notes that the movement away from strictly religious motivation for pilgrimage began during the Renaissance and continues today. There are several important and insightful points that Gitlitz makes. First, he notes, "in essence, our age has shifted the focus of pilgrimage from the deity to the individual pilgrim" (p. 36). Importantly, he notes that modern pilgrimages have seen a key shift regarding the *journey* portion of the pilgrimage. The concept of the journey within pilgrimage has changed in two significant ways: either it has been eliminated entirely from the experience (due to modern advancements in mobility, many pilgrims opt to travel to sacred sites by plane, train, automobile, bus, or other form of motorized transport rather than by foot) or it has become the primary

focus of the experience (such as with the Camino de Santiago). In this instance, the journey itself, the movement, has become the sole focus of the pilgrim experience rather than the sacred shrine that waits at the end of the journey. Pazos (2014) notes that many who reach Compostela today do not even visit the relic once they arrive.

The pilgrim experience is no doubt a constantly evolving phenomenon. This study will attempt to highlight some of the ways in which technology is influencing that evolution, and the ways in which pilgrims perceive those changes.

Pilgrimage: A Hero's Journey

No discussion of pilgrimage or heart journeys would be complete without first addressing the work of Joseph Campbell (1949). The concept of the hero's journey, or monomyth, is a seventeen-stage template developed by Campbell (1949) to outline and codify the distinct but consistent stages that hero tales follow across cultural mythologies. This process can be found consistently through mythological tales throughout history and into the present day. The overlap of Campbell's work with the Camino de Santiago is often discussed, both formally and informally, among pilgrims. At the 2016 Gathering of Pilgrims organized by American Pilgrims on Camino, Margaretha Finefrock took pilgrims through the seventeen stages of the hero's journey and noted the ways in which Campbell's stages mirrored the experience of pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago. These narratives and mythologies, and the concept of the hero's journey itself, find themselves embedded in cultures around the world, inspiring individuals to set forth on their own journeys of self-discovery and adventure. Of all of Campbell's prolific work, his notion of the hero's journey is perhaps his most enduring legacy. Pilgrims today still note the influence of Campbell on their decision to embark

on the Camino de Santiago. The final chapter of this work will guide readers through Campbell's seventeen stages of the hero's journey and discuss both the ways in which the stages are represented on the Camino de Santiago and the ways in which those stages are being influenced by modern technologies.

Dimensional Accrual/Dissociation

As discussed in Chapter 1, notions of the structures of consciousness (Gebser, 1949) and of dimensional accrual and dissociation (Kramer, 2012) also lend themselves well to this investigation. Because we find evidence of magic, mythic, and perspectival thinking among pilgrims, and because the clash between these modes of consciousness are creating much of the tension modern pilgrims are experiencing as they strive to reconcile the ancient practice of pilgrimage in the modern technological world, these models offer valuable insight into many of the thoughts and experiences outlined by pilgrims. While the discourse often mirrors Eliade's notions of the sacred and the profane, these models also offer another perspective into the challenges arising as pilgrims navigate the experience of modern pilgrimage.

Humans are cultural products (Kramer, 2012). As such, human behavior is motivated in different ways. Over time, modern humans have become increasingly individualistic and dissociated. As structures of consciousness have moved from magic to mythic to perspectival, the functions and forms of societies have changed. As previously mentioned, the former structures of consciousness are not lost as dimensions accrue; so magic and mythic beliefs and behaviors are still evident, even as we adopt the new modern consciousness. For this reason, our structures of consciousness can come into conflict, and the modern person must find reconciliation within the personal

and cultural contradictions. The Camino de Santiago stands as a prime example of the kind of context in which this conflict might come to bear, for in it you will find magic, mythic, and perspectival consciousness demonstrated. Engaged in magic consciousness, a pilgrim walks along the trail conversing with her dead son, apologizing for her failures and telling him about all the sights she's seeing along the way. Immersed in mythic consciousness, the pilgrim lays a symbolic stone at the Cruce de Ferro, vowing to leave behind her fears of changing careers at this stage in her life. The perspectival modern pilgrim enthusiastically searches booking.com on her Smartphone before coming into the next village to see which hostel has the best ratings, private bathrooms, and the best food. Each of these may be the very same pilgrim. Yet there is something disconcerting to many pilgrims as they find themselves attempting to reconcile the varying degrees of consciousness and conflicting dimensions within the pilgrimage. Many struggle to find words, but feel "uncomfortable" or "unsettled" about the encroachment of modernism into the sacred and historic context. The models offered by Gebser (1949) and Kramer (2012) offer some insight into that struggle.

Technology and Culture

The relationship between technology and culture has long been debated. The notions of technological determinism versus technology as an autonomous agent are long-standing. Many scholars have sought to explore the complex relationship between technology and culture. Additionally, the notion of technology as an agent of change (often negative change) is nothing new. Postman (1992) reminds us that Socrates warned those around him of the perils of writing and the negative impact it might have on one's intellect and memory. Postman (1992) notes that the trouble with Socrates'

assessment of the influence on writing on culture was not that it was wrong, but that it was incomplete. Socrates was right-the ability to write has dramatically decreased the premium on memory. However, what Socrates failed to see was all of the positive cultural influences that writing could provide to society. Postman (1992) notes, “Every technology is both a burden and a blessing” (p. 5). So too can the Camino be understood. While much conversation centers on the negative impact of technology on the Camino de Santiago and other popular pilgrimages, there is no doubt that technology has had both positive and negative influences on the pilgrimage route and the pilgrim experience as well.

What is the relationship between technology and culture? Baym (2010) outlines four theoretical frameworks for understanding the relationship between the two: Technological determinism, the social construction of technology, the social shaping of technology, and domestication of technology.

To begin, Baym (2010) outlines the concept of *technological determinism*: According to Baym (2010), technological determinism refers to the notion that machines alter us in some way. The concept that humans are changing as a result of our technologies is not uncommon. Turkle (2011) suggests some ways in which habits and behaviors are being affected by our devices in a chapter entitled “Growing up tethered” in her book *Alone Together*. In it, she recounts a conversation with eighteen-year-old Roman, who admits that he sends text messages and engages social media while driving, and also notes that he has no intention of stopping his behavior, even though he understands that he may be putting his own safety and the safety of others at risk. He states, “I know I should, but it’s not going to happen. If I get a Facebook message or

something posted on my wall...I have to see it. I have to. Those who would argue in favor of technological determinism would argue that the devices themselves are influencing the compulsion to engage them.

Many individuals also seem to demonstrate shortened attention spans, and reading in many cases has been diminished to scanning for highlights or relying on headlines or the 140-character Twitter summary for information. The acronym “TLDR”, which stands for too long; didn’t read, is commonly found on popular content websites such as reddit.com, followed by a short summary of a preceding two-paragraph narrative; the conclusion being that the original content poster recognized that most people would not be bothered to read the long passage and thus provided a summary as an alternative to the laborious act of reading two paragraphs of information.

Baym comments that the technological determinism perspective posits that “something” changes us, that we are merely the “passive recipients transformed by outside forces” (p. 25). Technology is, as a result, viewed as “an external agent that acts upon and changes society” (Baym, 2010, p. 25). Baym notes that there are several variants of technological determinism. One is frequently linked to McLuhan’s (1964/1994) notion that “the medium is the message”. This notion contends that technologies maintain qualities or characteristics that are then transferred to users of those technologies. Baym notes that Claude Fischer (1992) refers to this as “impact-imprint”, the idea that over time, our individual and collective psyches are altered by the technologies we use. Turkle (2004) states that concerns regarding the impact of technology are often hyperbolic (although Turkle is not without her own concerns, as I will discuss later) and Baym adds that views of technological determinism are typically

either utopian or dystopian. Many who comment on technology as it relates to the Camino de Santiago approach it in a deterministic manner—they see the pilgrimage and pilgrims themselves as being affected by modern technological changes and the encroachment of wifi and devices such as Smartphones and tablets.

The next framework Baym (2010) discusses is referred to as *the social construction of technology*. This perspective switches focus toward the ways in which technological advances arise from social processes. Those who favor this view see technological determinism as “inadequate as explanations and dangerously misleading because human beings, not technology, are agents of change, as men and women introduce new systems of machines that alter their life world” (Nye, 1997, as cited in Baym, 2010, p. 39). The focus of this perspective looks into the ways in which social forces influence the invention of new technologies. From this viewpoint, those individuals who invent new technologies are “embedded in social contexts that make it feasible to use a garage to invent a computer or a bicycle repair shop to invent an airplane” (p. 39). These individuals are bound by and dependent on their social contexts. Additionally, the individuals determine which pursuits are worthy of their efforts. Another example Baym offers of the social construction perspective is the pornographic representation of women in many mature modern video games. Women are portrayed in this way, she notes, generally because the field is dominated by men, who are embedded in “a patriarchal culture that views women as sex objects and presents these images to a predominantly male audience embedded in the same male-centric culture” (p. 40). Ultimately, this view stands at the opposite end of technological determinism, noting that rather than social change occurring as a consequence of

technological advancement, new technologies are instead products of social factors. Proponents of this perspective would argue that modern pilgrims are to blame for the encroachment of technology, as they are the ones who elect to bring their devices on the trail, they decide that they would rather peruse Facebook than explore their currently inhabited village and speak to locals or other pilgrims. Pilgrims with this perspective argue that the pilgrims themselves have changed the nature of the modern Camino.

The truth, as Aristotle suggested, generally lies somewhere in the middle. This leads to the next theoretical framework outlined by Baym, which she terms *the social shaping of technology*. The social shaping perspective offers a middle-ground view between technological determinism and social construction of technology. From this perspective, technological consequences develop from both the social capabilities afforded by technological achievements and the ways in which human beings make use of those advancements. Thus, people, technologies, and institutions each maintain the power to influence culture and subsequent technological developments. Kramer et al., 2014, state that to question whether technology determines consciousness structure, reality, and social relations or whether technology is developed as a result of our needs and wants is to present a false dichotomy. They note, “the relationship is neither unilateral nor one of cause and effect. Rather it is cybernetic and symbiotic. Worldview and technology are co-evolutionary. Each determines the other (Kramer et al, 2014, p. 94). In this view, we see both sides of the metaphorical coin operating in tandem; the modern technologies are made available on the pilgrim trail, and pilgrims, appreciating the many conveniences they offer, elect to partake.

Finally, Baym (2010) introduces the notion of the *Domestication of Technology*. Baym notes that after a period of time, technologies become so engrained in our daily lives that they become “domesticated”. She points out that we no longer fuss over the social implications of the telephone, the alphabet, or writing, and states that the reason is their successful domestication. “What once seemed marvelous and strange, capable of creating greatness and horror, is now so ordinary as to be invisible” (Baym, 2010, p. 45). She notes that this perspective picks up where social shaping left off, and that it agrees with the notion that technology and society both serve to influence one another and together result in the consequences of new media, but this perspective is particularly interested in the ways in which technologies become domesticated, thus moving from marvelous to mundane. Over time, we may see the acceptance of wifi and devices as unremarkable and unworthy of concern. For now, however, they remain a major source of contemplation.

Technology and Communication

Notions of technological determinism relate to communication in many profound ways, particularly in the modern age of rapidly advancing communication technologies and the mediated and dissociated ways in which we are experiencing the world. Individual accounts of shortened attention spans are common. Sherry Turkle has spoken extensively throughout her career about the influences of technology, and has shifted her stance as a technological enthusiast to a more cautionary position over the span of her career. In a 2012 TED talk, Turkle warns that modern technology may be “tak[ing] us places that we don’t want to go”. She notes that over fifteen years and hundreds of interviews, she has found that our mobile devices, which have essentially

become extensions of our bodies, are influencing us in profound ways. She notes that they “don’t only change what we do; they change who we are” (Turkle, 2012, ted.com). For starters, modern humans are becoming more and more consumed with multitasking. Working professionals send emails during meetings. Students access social media during class rather than taking notes. The rare families who sit down to dinner together bring along their mobile devices. Turkle (2011) refers to this as being “alone together”. In this fascinating and complicated environment, we feel increasingly dissociated and isolated, and thus seek solace and connectivity in our mobile devices. In a constantly connected world, we are never alone. Yet the more we seek refuge in technology, the more we dissociate from one another. In this new world, even when we are in the company of others, we are frequently distanced. Turkle notes that we crave mediated communication because in that mode of communication we can control both the interaction and ourselves. We can determine when and if to reply. We can delete and start over if we believe that our original message may reflect negatively on us. We are able to keep others at a safe emotional distance. She states, “human relationships are rich and they’re messy and they’re demanding. And we clean them up with technology. And when we do, one of the things that can happen is that we sacrifice conversation for mere connection. We short-change ourselves” (Turkle, 2012, ted.com).

Additionally, individuals are now in the habit of fashioning elaborate images online. Particularly through social media, users can present their lives in the most favorable (or sometimes unfavorable) ways imaginable. Scrolling through Facebook, one is confronted with a sea of images of happy families with children who never stop

smiling and couples who never have a disagreement and live only to sing one another's praises.

I see this in my classrooms and in my relationships too. I worry about the shallowness of conversation that occurs when I crave depth. I worry about my students who cannot manage to disconnect from their phones for fifty minutes to pay attention in class, who seem to suffer from legitimate anxiety from the mere notion. Chandler (2012) discusses the feeling of technology as obligation, and notes that among the reasons for this feeling of obligation are competition (the adoption of technology so as not to become disadvantaged or "left behind"), a dependency on technology, and the immutable ideology of technology (p. 258). We have become addicted to our smart phones for want of connection in a dissociated and fragmented world. We want to feel connected and yet feel more alone than ever. We want to connect to others through our technologies and yet this results in a disconnect with those in our immediate company. We want to capture moments and as a result we do not experience moments, we miss them--and all we have accomplished as a result is the creation of a false world--constructing a false online reality that we wish we had lived or that we want others to believe we lived, (see Kim & Lee, 2011) but that in fact does not exist. Every picture is the inverse of reality. The moments we share (online) we did not experience and the moments we experience we do not capture.

This study seeks to examine the ways in which the encroachment of technology is impacting the modern pilgrim experience, to determine whether pilgrims are moving toward the experience of being "alone together".

Technology and Human Behavior

There can be little denial of the fact that our current technological landscape has altered human behavior in many ways. Step into any Western café, bus, waiting room, or coffee shop, and you are likely to find the majority of bodies hunched over their devices, hastily typing away, or mindlessly scrolling through their social media or news feed, in pursuit of momentary amusement. Our ability to instantaneously connect to our social networks and an endless stream of information is undoubtedly impacting us as humans. Turkle (2011) suggests in her *Alone Together* model of human behavior that technology has become “the architect of our intimacies” (p. 1). She notes that when she began studying the digital world, there was much discussion regarding “the erosion of boundaries between the real and virtual” (p. xi), and that views of the self were becoming “less unitary; more protean” (p. xi). The allure of the digital world, she suggests, is that it offers us the illusion of human connection without the social demands. The social interaction experienced online is less intimidating, because we have the ability to edit, to delete, to filter and enhance. Through these mediated spaces, we feel more connected, as they offer immediate social access to dozens, hundreds, maybe thousands of “friends” and “followers”, yet ultimately, we find ourselves more socially isolated.

Additionally, some research has also investigated the manner in which technology is changing us as humans, and to what extent it is changing the experience of being human. Human brains are malleable--everything from learning a new language to picking up an instrument can change the physical makeup of our brains. So, too, is technology impacting not only our culture, but also the ways in which we think. Carr

(2011) discusses the manner in which our brains are being affected by modern technology, noting that his interest in the subject developed as a result of his own awareness of the changes occurring within himself. He states,

Over the last few years I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn't going-so far as I can tell-but it's changing. I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I feel it most strongly when I'm reading. I used to find it easy to immerse myself in a book or a lengthy article. My mind would get caught up in the twists of the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through the long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration starts to drift after a page or two. I get fidgety, lose the thread, begin looking for something else to do. I feel like I'm always dragging my wayward brain back to the text. The deep reading that used to come naturally has become a struggle (Carr, 2011, pp. 5-6).

Citing McLuhan (2003), Carr notes that at present, we find ourselves at a critical point “in our intellectual and cultural history, a moment of transition between two very different modes of thinking” (p. 10). The linear mind is being replaced by one that prefers to seek out information in a faster and more disjointed fashion. To some extent, the adaptation of the mind to new technologies is not new. Carr (2011) points out that Nietzsche noticed a difference in his writing after he had been given a typewriter. While in many ways the typewriter opened the floodgates for his words to come pouring forth, he also noticed that his style of writing had changed since the adoption of the device as his writing tool. He went so far as to suggest that the writing tool “takes part in the forming of our thoughts” (Carr, 2011, p. 19). This notion echoes McLuhan's (1964/2003) suggestion that the medium *is* the message. To be sure, the engagement of these technologies while on pilgrimage is sending a very potent message, which many view as an alarming one. Additionally, engagement of social media is enabling

individuals to craft well-constructed presentation of themselves, and to control the manner in which their lives are displayed for others to consume.

Social Networking Sites and Self-Presentation

Goffman (1959) provides social scientists one of the most comprehensive and valuable theories on human social behavior. His use of the theater metaphor discusses in great detail the efforts to which individuals go in order to present themselves in positive ways to increase their social capital. He discusses human beings as ‘actors’ engaging in ‘performances’ when they enter into social situations. In his theory, he presents the notion of “performance” as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some influence on the observers” (p. 22). In many ways, his theory remains highly relevant in the modern world. Human beings still spend a considerable amount of time and energy fashioning performances for others who might observe them. What has changed in the modern world is the theater itself and the manner in which an actor engages with the audience. At the time Goffman’s theory was developed, social interaction still largely occurred in three dimensions. Being “on stage”, for the most part, meant physically being in the presence of other individuals during social encounters. These social encounters involved the expected variables of immediacy. While the telephone certainly affected social interaction, those who communicated through that channel did so largely one on one and largely off the cuff. Responses still required immediate attention and some degree of spontaneity. The modern world, however, has affected both the size of the audience and the degree of spontaneity required of social engagement. In many ways, notions of what it means to be front-stage

and back-stage have nearly flipped, especially when one considers the social performance of an event like walking the Camino de Santiago (at least, for those who share their pilgrimage with others through social media.)

With more than two billion users (Figerman, 2017), Facebook, the world's most popular social networking site, has undoubtedly impacted the manner in which many individuals around the world are interacting with one another. Because online methods of communication allow the users to edit and frame their content, and free them from the obligation of immediate response and interaction, social networking, and Facebook in particular has proven to be extremely appealing for the purposes of self-presentation (Kim & Lee, 2011). These online social platforms enable individuals to engage socially in much more selective ways, with greater control and protection from faux-pas (2011).

Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, and Shahar (2015) note that while self-presentation strategies have long been employed by individuals in social settings (Goffman, 1959), the explosion of social networking sites has influenced such behaviors significantly. Bareket-Bojmel et al. (2015), point out that behaviors that used to be unique to celebrities, what they refer to as "one-to-many self-presentation" are now commonplace for the everyday individual. As a result of social media, many individuals now present themselves online in purposeful ways, in an effort to foster positive images of themselves and their lives. The authors note that in doing so, these individuals "use strategies that influence the liking and respect they receive from others" (Bareket-Bojmel, Moran, & Shahar, 2015, p. 788). The need for self-presentation techniques on Facebook and other social networking sites, according to the authors, has been

correlated with such factors as self-esteem, self-worth, shyness, and darker factors such as neuroticism and narcissism.

Kim and Lee (2011) note that Facebook posts relating to impression management tend to fall in one of two categories: positive or honest. Often, according to the authors, users post either “highly socially desirable images of him/herself” or they opt to present themselves “honestly, without selectively putting their best face forward” (p. 360). In their study, Kim and Lee found that both positive and honest self-presentation techniques on Facebook led to greater subjective well-being.

Chapter 3: Research Design

Research Method

Because this topic of study is largely experiential, and involves a process of meaning-making, I employed an ethnographic approach to the research, and attempted to understand the experience of walking the Camino de Santiago through participant observation, as well as open-ended interviews that were conducted both during and after the pilgrimage. I used digital recorders to capture all interviews, and transcribed the interviews myself. Interviews were acquired through convenience sampling. Individuals interviewed were commonly approached in albergues at the end of walking days. After conversing a bit, in an effort to determine language proficiency, I would discuss my role as a researcher on Camino and ask pilgrims if they would be willing to be interviewed. All interviewees demonstrated conversant language proficiency and all were provided informed consent in compliance with Internal Review Board standards.

In addition, I also attended the American Pilgrims on Camino (APOC) gathering in Belleville, Illinois in 2016 and was able to learn from the many presentations during

that informative weekend, where additional field notes were taken. The university's Institutional Review Board approved an extension to my study in order for me to collect this additional data. Additionally, I also examined many various online outlets that center on the Camino de Santiago, including the public APOC Facebook forum, the Camino de Santiago forum, various blogs dedicated to the Camino, and various public Instagram accounts dedicated to the Camino. I had been immersed in these online spaces for years before collecting field data as well. In order to locate Instagram accounts to examine, I accessed the Instagram application, typed in 'Camino de Santiago,' and examined the first ten public accounts that were listed. From this platform I attempted to glean the types of visual posts that users were capturing, privileging, and sharing. Blogs and forums dedicated to the Camino were used for two purposes—to bring ideas to my field research, and for the purposes of triangulation—to determine whether the themes that emerged during formal and informal interviews were verifiable, insofar as they were common in other spaces as well. This will be further discussed in the following section. Once themes were established, I visited the Camino de Santiago forum and the APOC Facebook forum and typed in keywords relating to those themes. Next, I would type those keywords into the Google search engine and look through Camino-related blogs that resulted from those searches. Through all of these various outlets, I was able to build a thorough understanding of the broad online presence of the Camino de Santiago and the manner in which these various outlets serve to shape conceptions of the Camino, both for those who are planning for their first Camino and for those who have already had their pilgrim journeys. Though my focus was largely on the perceptions pilgrims have of their personal pilgrim experiences and

the ways in which technology impacted those experiences, as an ethnographer, I was careful to maintain reflexivity in my approach as well, maintaining a disciplined awareness of my own positionality and experiences that may have influenced my own perceptions as I walked the Camino and after returning home. According to Becker, Gans, Newman, and Vaughan (2004), through ethnography, the researcher comes closest to the individuals he or she is studying. I would add that ethnography brings the researcher closer to the experience or context itself, as well. One factor that no doubt impacted my experience, both as a pilgrim and a researcher, was the death of my mother shortly before embarking on the journey. While many pilgrims who set forth on the Camino are battling some sort of personal tragedy or existential question, my mother's death was not an element of the experience I anticipated encountering when I first set out to write on this particular topic, and it definitely added a new layer to the experience. The loss and subsequent grief unquestionably left its mark on me in every conceivable way, and, undoubtedly, left its footprints on this project as well. In many ways, I felt it gave me deeper insight into some of the personal experiences that inspired many of those whom I interviewed who set forth on their own personal pilgrimages, as many pilgrims with whom I spoke were inspired to walk by similarly earth-shaking events in their own lives. It also added a layer of significance to the pilgrimage itself, as it offered me space and time in which to reflect on the loss of my mother. While my focus was on learning about the pilgrimage, it was impossible to spend weeks walking, often in solitude, and escape the ever-present grief that the loss of a loved one can bestow upon a person. While some may view this as a distraction, to my mind, it only brought me to a more intimate understanding of the significance of the pilgrimage to

Santiago, and the personal healing that can be found along The Way. If ethnography is truly participant observation, then my own existential trials only made me a more authentic participant in this deeply personal journey on both fronts. It made me a stronger participant in that my own grief heightened and deepened my experience as a pilgrim. It made me a stronger observer because it provided me with keener insight into the profound personal experiences that led many pilgrims to walk this path. Along the way, I met parents who had lost children, children who had lost parents, brothers who had lost sisters, husbands who had lost wives, and families who were taking what might be their last trip together. I met individuals who were not inspired by the death of a loved one, but were facing other demons or questions. If anything useful is born out of loss it is a deeper empathy for the pain of others. It is my profound hope that the loss of my mother enabled me to approach this project and the pilgrims (and non-pilgrims, if there is such a thing) I've met and continue to meet with greater compassion and understanding than I might have otherwise.

Another factor that undoubtedly affected my positionality was the array of injuries I sustained while on the trail. As any Camino pilgrim will attest, the road to Santiago is not an easy one. I scarcely met a pilgrim along the trail who was not struggling with some kind of physical ailment, and I was no exception. The first pain that I faced was in my knees, and that pain grew progressively worse as I walked. Next, I pulled a calf muscle about halfway to Santiago, forcing me to take four days rest to recover, and after which I was advised by medical professionals that I could no longer carry my pack. This forced me to utilize baggage transport services, which limited my flexibility regarding my daily destinations, since I would have to go where my pack

was. Finally, I dealt, as many pilgrims do, with blisters. The physical pain endured during this journey was unlike any I had experienced before. Yet, interestingly, the pain added a fascinating layer to the experience. It's easy to ignore one's body most of the time. This pilgrimage did not allow me to do that. Toward the end of the journey, when I had to walk down stairs and mountains backwards to get down them at all, pilgrims admitted to me that they could recognize me ahead on the trail by my hobble. Many said they were surprised to see me reach Santiago. Yet the experience of watching my body and spirit diverge was something I will never forget. Watching my broken body mimic my broken heart was one of the most emotionally powerful experiences of my life. As the experience of losing my mother brought me a more astute understanding of the struggles of other pilgrims, so too did the experience of watching my body break down. It was true experience, and one that could not have been replicated or understood any other way.

It was always clear to me that ethnography would be the most appropriate method of examination for this project. How could I accurately unearth the experience of this pilgrimage without experiencing it firsthand, or speaking with others who were experiencing it firsthand as well? How could I understand the feeling of catching the first glimpse of the spires of the cathedral in Santiago if I had not limped toward the Praza de Obradoiro and caught that first glimpse myself? Would I have been able to comprehend and relay the experience that pilgrims described of their broken bodies and their soaring spirits diverging had I not walked for more than 30 days on knees that I was not sure could take me another twenty meters while my spirit overflowed with the music and camaraderie in the albergues in the evenings? The full involvement, pain and

all, were central to the learning experience. The “participant” element of participant observation was central to this study.

Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2011) note that researchers setting forth into ethnographic territory will do so by entering “into a social setting” and by “get[ting] to know the people involved in it” (p. 1). With limited time (slightly less than two months) to do so, I did my best to make the most of the time I had. In many ways, however, the limited time that I did have mirrored perfectly the amount of time that most pilgrims spend on the trail before returning home. I believe that this amount of time in the field, too, had its benefits. While it may always be valuable to have more time in the field, the opportunity to mirror the time that other pilgrims have on the Camino, and being whisked away suddenly and dispensed back home offered insight into the abrupt returns that most pilgrims experience.

After spending two days in Madrid recovering from jet lag, I set forth toward the small town of Roncesvalles, where I would begin the pilgrimage. Roncesvalles lies approximately seventeen miles from St. Jean pied de Port, France, at the base of the Pyrenees, on the Spanish side. I opted to begin here due to the arduous trek through the French Pyrenees that accompanies the St. Jean starting point, as I did not find it advisable to risk injuring myself on the very first day through what is often described as the most treacherous section of the journey. Roncesvalles rests just one town over from St. Jean. While many pilgrims set forth from St. Jean, there are countless starting points from which pilgrims begin, and in fact most Spaniards begin the journey from Roncesvalles (Camino Statistics (a), n.d.). According to the “official” rules set forth by the Catholic Church, in order to receive the Compostela, or official pilgrim document,

one must complete a minimum of one hundred kilometers on foot, or two hundred kilometers if he or she is traveling by bicycle or on horseback (Frey, 1998). These completions are validated by the *credential*, or pilgrim passport, that pilgrims carry with them, which are stamped along the way. Stamps may be obtained in the albergues, at local churches and cathedrals, and even in some restaurants and pubs along the path.

Due to language limitations, interviews were restricted to English only, with pilgrims whose English was sufficiently proficient. I sought out not only American pilgrims, but also any pilgrim with sufficient English proficiency, taking care to seek out pilgrims from a broad range of countries. Thirty pilgrims from the United States, Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Tasmania, Denmark, Germany, France, England, and Canada offered to engage in formal interviews. There are obvious limitations here with respect to the interview pool. I was unable to encounter a Spanish pilgrim with sufficiently conversant English to interview. The interview pool was also dominated by Westerners. While many Koreans also walk the Camino, I did not encounter any with sufficient English proficiency. English proficiency was determined through casual preliminary conversations with pilgrims at the albergues and on the trail. If pilgrims demonstrated a conversant level of English, they were considered sufficiently proficient. Interestingly, although the pilgrimage takes place in Spain, English has, in many ways, become the lingua franca of the pilgrimage, as it is a common language held by many pilgrims, both from predominantly English-speaking countries and from those for which English is not the native tongue. My informal encounters with pilgrims which informed my data did span a much broader geographic

area-I was able to speak to a broad range of pilgrims from many countries beyond those listed above.

From Roncesvalles, I embarked on the pilgrimage, engaging in the pilgrim experience through personal participation, and conducting interviews along the pilgrim path, in the albergues at the end of walking days. I traveled from Roncesvalles to Santiago over thirty-six days, embarking on September 4th and arriving in Santiago on October 9th. Upon arrival in Santiago, I stayed fixed for an additional five days in order to complete additional interviews and research before returning home to the United States. Upon returning home, I continued conducting interviews, through personal contacts and snowball sampling. I sought to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How is the presence of modern technology in the broad realm of the Camino de Santiago (including preparing for the Camino, walking the Camino, and returning home from Camino) influencing the overall experience?

RQ2: How do pilgrims perceive the role of technology within the context of pilgrimage?

RQ3: How does the use of or abstinence from technology influence the pilgrim experience?

Data Analysis

This study rests heavily on notions of individuated, socially constructed reality, particularly those notions as put forth by Berger and Luckmann (1966). Social constructionism was born of the traditions of phenomenology and symbolic interactionism. It also rests heavily on Clifford Geertz' (1973) notion of *thick description*. This notion suggests that it is the ethnographer's job not only to describe

the behavior of those they observe, but the context in which the behavior occurs as well, so that the behavior can become meaningful to readers. Geertz (1973) believed that humans are defined by their capacity to create meaning, and that belief is central to this examination. Geertz (1973) understood the complexity of a given cultural context, often referring to culture as a *web of meaning*. This study took great care to examine closely not only the pilgrim experience, but the web of meaning surrounding the pilgrimage.

The study is predicated on the concept of the symbiotic relationship between individuals and their social worlds, and the manner in which they serve to reify one another. It was approached within the context of what Gadamer has referred to as a prejudicial, or prejudgmental (The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003). *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2003) notes that *prejudgment* plays an indispensable role in the evaluation of information, “in the sense that it is always oriented to present concerns and interests, and it is those present concerns and interests that allow us to enter into a dialogue with the matter at issue” (n.p.). The entry goes on to note that, within the dialogic process of understanding, “our prejudices come to fore, both inasmuch as they play a crucial role in opening up what is to be understood, and inasmuch as they themselves become evident in the process” (n.p.). Because the process of interpreting data is dialogic, containing both the dialogue that happens between researcher and data and researcher and self, and because the researcher approaches the ethnographic experience with both preconceived notions and those which develop along the process, it is understood that prejudices lie within. Gadamer (In the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, 2003) notes that by maintaining a ‘temporal distance’, researchers can be better prepared to identify those prejudices and recognize their

influence on the work. This temporal distance was something I aimed to maintain when necessary while analyzing the data, while acknowledging that there is no escaping fully the perspectives and lived experiences that brought me to and through this experience and the examination of it. To clarify: fully immersing myself into the pilgrim experience was central to my understanding of it. Maintaining ‘objective distance’ in that sense would not have lent itself to the richest understanding of the experience of being a pilgrim on the Camino de Santiago. Conversely, my opinions on technology use among pilgrims might well have colored my perspectives on that use and its impact. My lack of religious identification might well have affected my perceptions. For issues such as these, I attempted to maintain keen awareness of the ways in which those perspectives might influence the analysis of the data.

After collecting data and transcribing formal interviews, I began the process of amassing all of the various data available. I began by analyzing interviews and field notes. Having been involved in the forums for years, I had a strong understanding of the kinds of topics pilgrims approached in the forums before setting off to collect field data. From this understanding, I attempted, as Atkinson (2017) suggests, to bring ideas *to* the study. Atkinson (2017) notes that the successful social scientist will “bring ideas to the field as well as [draw] them *from* our field data and experiences” (p. 4). Once home, I sought to find “productive exchanges between data and ideas” (Atkinson, 2017, p. 1). Although Atkinson’s book was published during the course of my analysis, I found that his conception of the process of analyzing ethnographic data best represented my process. He discusses the process of *granular ethnography*, and emphasizes the importance of strong ideas standing as the basis of the research process. He encourages

an abductive process in which “whenever we encounter an observation, an event, a record, we ask ourselves ‘What might this be a case of?’” (p. 3). This recommendation was central to much of my process of analysis. When encountering a social media post or thread, a presentation on the Camino de Santiago, or a pilgrim articulating their experiences or perceptions, I always sought to determine what concepts and themes that piece of data represented.

Ultimately, relevant data and information sprung from formal and informal interviews, field notes, publicly available online information, publicly accessible social media (including blogs, Facebook groups, and Instagram accounts), published research as well as published memoirs on the topic of pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago, and current research on pilgrimage being presented at conferences, specifically, the American Pilgrims on Camino Annual Gathering and the College of William and Mary’s Annual Symposium for Pilgrimage Studies. With all of this information collected, I began analyzing the interview and field data for emerging themes. Angrosino (2014) discusses two distinct forms of data analysis, which I employed. First, descriptive analysis, which he describes as the process of identifying patterns and themes that emerge from the data. This is often referred to as thematic analysis. Next, the process of theoretical analysis, in which the researcher identifies the manner in which identified themes fit together. In this stage, the researcher attempts to incorporate these themes into a theoretical framework. Angrosino (2014) notes that during this phase, the researcher will move back and forth between the emic (from the perspective of the subject of inquiry) and etic (from the perspective of the researcher) vantage points. He refers to this movement as a *constant validity check*. Angrosino goes on to

point out that for ethnographic inquiry, the process of analysis is often necessarily customized to meet the needs of the individual project. Despite the lack of universality in the approach to analysis, this does not indicate that ethnographic analysis and research lacks rigor. Rather, all ethnographers will work through a process of data management, overview reading, and categorical clarification (thematic identification). The same can be said for this project. After field notes and interviews were secured and interviews were transcribed, I went through an initial read-through of the data, then a second, wherein I began to identify common themes. Transcripts were printed, and each theme was identified and color-coded. Once themes were established, having examined carefully interview data, field notes, and long-standing immersion in online forums and blogs, I began to seek out specific data from forums and blogs, in an effort to determine whether the themes that began emerging from data collection were similarly supported in other spaces. Because the influence of technology on Camino is a common existential question, one that is frequently discussed in pilgrim circles, these extended conversations were often easy to find, reifying the findings from the trail. This process of triangulation served to strengthen the proposed themes.

Atkinson (2017) notes, importantly, that social realities are not to be thought of as a 'given', that rather social scientists should take care to ensure that their study both reflects and respects the complexity of a given social world. There is no question that the Camino de Santiago is a vastly complex social life-world. A centuries year old practice-populated with individuals from 160 countries (in 2016), speaking a broad range of languages, representing a broad spectrum of religious and spiritual traditions (including none at all), walking for a myriad of reasons and facing individuated

personal and physical challenges-offers an unbelievably complex and rich context to explore.

Atkinson (2017) notes that, within socially constructed reality (constructivism), there are “degrees of tentativeness or certainty concerning ‘what is occurring’” (p. 21). To be sure, this study, which examined not only the experiences of pilgrims, but also their perceptions of those experiences, will find itself at times wading through vastly contradictory accounts of experiences of walking the Camino, broad differences in the meaning assigned to various rituals, and profound differences of opinion regarding the impact of technology within the context of the modern Camino de Santiago. Nevertheless, Atkinson (2017) assures readers that constructivism offers researchers “a powerful way of comprehending how everyday and specialist knowledge is produced, transmitted, used, validated, and legitimized” (p. 22). Atkinson offers what I found to be a supremely useful outline of the process of strong ethnographic inquiry. Through the process of identifying themes that emerged from the pilgrim trail and the American Pilgrims on Camino Annual Gathering, and verifying those themes through the process of triangulation within the pilgrim forums and Camino-themed blogs, the richness of the data was able to rise to the surface.

Chapter 4: The Pre-Camino Experience: Initial Discovery and The Process of Preparation for Camino

What is it that draws pilgrims to the Camino de Santiago? What inspires them to decide to set forth on this ancient pilgrim path, casting away their everyday lives, trading the comforts of home for long days in the hot sun, blisters, aching muscles, and a cacophony of snoring pilgrims at the end of the day when their bodies long for rest?

The reasons and inspirations vary as greatly as the pilgrims themselves. Some find themselves at a crossroads and long for time to collect their thoughts so that they may reach a decision regarding their life's path. Some are suffering the loss of a loved one, and long for solitude and a quiet place of reflection and healing (some argue this quiet is getting more and more difficult to find on the Camino Frances.) Some walk for health reasons; others to deepen their connection to God. Many are inspired by movies or documentary films they have seen, such as *The Way*, a feature film starring Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez, which tells the story of a man who finds himself unexpectedly on the Camino de Santiago after a tragedy, or *Phil's Camino*, a short documentary which follows a gentleman with Stage IV cancer who dreams of walking the Camino. Others have been inspired by Rick Steves' lively accounts of pilgrims on The Way, while others have been drawn in by Paulo Coelho's esoteric take on the pilgrimage. Whatever their point of recognition and the reasons that drew them to the pilgrimage, for each pilgrim, the experience of the Camino begins long before setting foot in Spain. It begins when the idea is planted, and, many say, it continues for the rest of one's days, as those who discuss the lifelong lessons learned along the way will account.

As stated, the process of preparing for and conceptualizing the forthcoming pilgrim experience is largely discursive. Pilgrims' knowledge and understanding of the pilgrimage is built upon discourses they have encountered. Additionally, pilgrims' online actions and interactions often serve to shape these discourses and the resulting expectations pilgrims might develop regarding their own Camino experience. While the pilgrims I spoke to cannot be expected to represent perfectly the entire population of

pilgrims (due to the small number of interviewees relative to the total pilgrim population), every single pilgrim with whom I spoke revealed that they did, in fact, turn to the Internet to research the Camino before setting forth on their own pilgrimage. Preparation through the aid of various online resources varied, but below I will outline the varieties of discursive activity pilgrims engaged before setting foot on the Camino de Santiago. I will also demonstrate the relevance of Berger and Calabrese's uncertainty reduction theory to the preparation portion of the Camino experience.

Online Presence

Before discussing the various ways in which pilgrims are turning to online resources during preparation for the Camino, it is important to first note that the mere presence of information online on the topic of the Camino de Santiago has increased significantly over the past decade, and continues to expand. On social media, one can find ever-increasing Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages dedicated to the Camino (see Figure 2). Individuals are sharing their pilgrimage on the relatively new social media platform Snapchat. Pilgrims who walk the Camino often share their own journeys through social media, email blasts, or online blogs. There are so many Camino-themed blogs that there are now blogs listing the best Camino blogs. (See Camino Adventures, 2015: <http://www.caminoadventures.com/best-camino-de-santiago-blogs/>.) A simple Google search of "Camino de Santiago" yields more than twenty million results. A Google Image search will offer users maps of the various routes to Santiago, pictures of varying landscapes along The Way, images of the Camino that are now iconic, such as the famous pilgrim monument of the Alto de Perdon outside Pamplona (see Figure 5) and trail markers with the famous scallop shell

and the infamous yellow arrow. (See Figure 7.) The Google search yields pictures of Camino-inspired tattoos, varying images of Saint James, pictures of albergues, images of backpacks adorned with the symbolic scallop shell, and much more. YouTube videos, both personal and instructional, are readily available. Articles are available on the Camino from a myriad of vantage points.

Rick Steves has, on multiple occasions, featured the Camino de Santiago on his popular television and radio programs. Web series and documentary videos can be found online as well. Podcasts dedicated to the topic of the Camino are also available, such as Dave Whitson's aptly-named *Camino Podcast* and Brendan Bolton's *Project Camino*. The mere presence of Camino-related information is significant, and will be discussed at greater length below. Such a broad range of information available at pilgrims' fingertips has made the pilgrimage more accessible than ever, both due to mere awareness and by serving to make the prospect of such an undertaking more viable to many, by reducing uncertainty about the experience. The broad availability of information, images, opinions, and perspectives on the Camino is also shaping expectations of the pilgrimage and enabling pilgrims to reduce uncertainty about the experience before setting forth.

Uncertainty Reduction

With the availability of such rich Camino-related resources across various mediums, many prospective pilgrims are finding it much easier to imagine themselves taking on the pilgrimage themselves. I attribute this fact, in part, to the opportunity for uncertainty reduction. According to Bradac (2006), Berger and Calabrese (1975) rest their theory on Uncertainty Reduction on the belief that "there is a human drive to

reduce uncertainty, to explain the world, and to render it predictable” (Bradac, 2006, p. 456). While Bradac notes that Alan Watts (1951) encourages humans to recognize the futility in the endeavor of creating predictability, given that “complete predictability is an illusion and...believing in this possibility is a product of an erroneous Western attempt to control nature” (as cited in Bradac, 2006, p. 456), a great many prospective pilgrims are nevertheless flocking online in an effort to mitigate the uncertainty that goes along with taking on an experience such as a lengthy pilgrimage in a (for many) foreign country. While Berger and Calabrese (1975) focus much of their theory on the process of reducing uncertainty in human interaction settings, the pilgrims I interviewed suggested that the desire to reduce uncertainty within the context of the Camino de Santiago extended far beyond the potential interactions with other pilgrims and into nearly every imaginable corner of the experience, including concerns about sleeping accommodations, available showers, terrain, weather, dietary restrictions, safety, and opportunity for growth and healing. Likewise, prospective pilgrims, as Berger and Calabrese’s theory suggests, find uncertainty about the experience of pilgrimage uncomfortable, and engage strategies in an effort to reduce their uncertainty. Every pilgrim with whom I spoke advised that they had turned to the Web to research the Camino de Santiago before setting forth on the trail.

The pilgrim forums are filled to the brim with questions about the Camino; questions that range from the practical and physical to the emotional and spiritual. It seems quite clear that many prospective pilgrims are keen to garner a sense of what the pilgrimage might entail, what challenges they might face, and how to best prepare for such challenges. The amount of information desired varied. Some pilgrims with whom I

spoke indicated that they avoided reading personal accounts of the Camino, because they did not want to create expectations for the experience and they wanted to be surprised by what they encountered. However, that did not stop those with whom I spoke from researching footwear, watching instructional videos on YouTube, and voraciously scanning the forums for ‘insider tips’. Others wanted to absorb as much information as possible. One pilgrim, when asked if he used technology to prepare for the trip, replied “Oh, way too much. Haha. There’s way too much information about the Camino on the, on technology. And it’s all right and it’s all wrong...there’s just a lot of opinions and everything.” He went on to suggest that the research itself may have been less consequential than simply his personal constitution. He elaborates,

And the reality is, I believe that...I believe a lot and I don’t get blisters. I think that somebody said to me well that’s because you chose the right shoes and you did this. I think a lot of it is genetics. I probably had travelers in my past who gave me tough feet. But, uh, if you go to a blog about the Camino, there’s seventeen hundred ways to treat your feet and fourteen hundred ways to walk and, you know, do you use sticks or do you, you don’t use sticks? I mean, there’s eighteen million opinions.

Frank makes an important point here about information overload, which pilgrims can easily reach when researching various topics relating to the Camino. Many pilgrims noted that the mass of (often conflicting) information available can also lead to information overload and create more confusion than it resolves. With so many conflicting accounts and opinions regarding the “best” footwear, the “best” villages in which to take rest, the “right” way to walk the Camino-virtually every question that can be raised regarding the Camino is contestable-pilgrims are finding themselves overwhelmed with the sheer volume of information and the seeming contradictions contained within. Pilgrims inquiring about the best footwear on the Camino might be

advised by one respondent that boots are best because they're sturdy, and by another that trail runners are best because they're breathable. Another might advise that neither is as important as the right socks, while another might advise that as long as the pilgrim is carrying surgical tape to immediately respond to "hot spots", or forthcoming blisters, the pilgrim is fine with any footwear. One pilgrim might advise that Compeed (a gel-plaster also known as 'second skin' used to cushion blisters) is a miracle product, while another might note that Compeed did nothing more than compound their blister issues. Contradictory opinions and recommendations are rampant and can often leave pilgrims even more confused than before their inquiry.

Some pilgrims express concerns that over-planning may actually interfere with an organic pilgrim experience. One pilgrim noted the following in a public forum:

Some pilgrims have a tendency to over-plan their trip (in my opinion) thinking it will make things easier and will make it easier to focus on the important aspects of their Way. This quote [an attached photo contains a quote that reads: Keep room for the unimaginable!] reminded me of how often it is the unexpected things in my own life that lead to some of the best outcomes-things I would never have dreamed of doing, having, trying, etc...so I want to encourage others to not be too attached to how things could be done, and to just let some of it unfold. And to accept the unexpected with grace and gratitude. It is usually the unexpected things that end up in our stories and memories. Enjoy the journey. Buen Camino!

What this pilgrim seems to be conveying is a concern that over-preparation will leave little room for the freedom to explore. Many pilgrims communicated to me that the unexpected challenges often left tremendous impressions on them, because they paved the way for kindly interventions, either from 'the universe' or from other pilgrims or locals. The common phrases "Camino magic" or "The Camino provides" are used by pilgrims to describe such instances of unexpected support or creative solutions that presented themselves during a pilgrim's time of need. In the documentary film *Walking*

the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago, one pilgrim, on a particularly difficult day of walking in which she was contemplating whether she would even be able to finish the walk or whether she would be forced to end her Camino early, was overtaken by a German pilgrim who, after seeing her hobbling along the trail, walked back to her and, without a word, took her pack from her and carried it, along with his own, into the next town. No words were needed, though they could not have shared any, but this remarkable act of kindness left a permanent mark not only on the pilgrim herself, but on others who watched the film as well. One pilgrim noted at a conference, “I want to be someone’s German pilgrim”, a nod to the act of kindness witnessed in the film. The sentiment points to the support offered by fellow pilgrims along The Way, and the impact that those unexpected acts of kindness can have. Additionally, these kinds of narratives accessed through blogs, documentary films, and social media, all serve to decrease uncertainty by offering insight into the kinds of interactions that occur and friendships that develop along the Camino. Each act of kindness can offer comfort to those who worry about the challenges the Camino might bring.

Furthermore, when asked whether the proactive exploration truly prepared pilgrims for the ultimate experience, many pilgrims (often while laughing ironically) said it did not. One pilgrim indicated,

I feel like walking the Camino is something no one can prepare you for. And I think even having now done the Camino, I feel like if I came back and when I came back a second time I’ll have the same feeling of not being fully prepared. Because you can’t....so there’s no way to, I feel like you can totally prepare yourself.

Others, however, indicated that the research was quite helpful, particularly from a practical standpoint in exploring such topics as blister care or how to properly use

trekking poles. One pilgrim expressed her gratitude in the Camino forum (affectionately known as Ivar's Forum) in the following post:

I've been meaning to say this for a while: Thank you for the wonderful posts on this forum. They were extremely helpful and encouraging as I made my way alone from Madrid to Fisterra. What a great journey it all was. Only after a week or so I was able to fully 'disconnect' and walk everyday in digital darkness (no guide, no map, only arrows) and without this forums (sic) help in the first stages I don't know when I would've gotten to that wonderful place of walking.

One pilgrim visited the same Camino Forum to help quell some of her uncertainty about the (potentially) forthcoming experience. She shared the following:

I am a 41 years old (sic) female from Canada. I have had the Camino on my bucket list for years, since my early 20s after reading the Pilgrimage (sic) by Paulo Coelho. I've been working very long hard hours at my job and banked up a lot of vacation time. I was told that I need to take it so I booked two weeks off at the end of August/beginning of September. I have no plans and am waffling in uncertainty about what to do and also about doing it alone. A coworker suggested that I do the Camino as she had done it before. So suddenly it is on my radar but until this point has just been a big maybe, or could be or what if. I recently watched the movie "The Way" and felt very inspired. Since then, I joined facebook (sic) groups and have started doing more research, and now joined this forum for advice. The signs all seem to [be] pointing to this being the time to do it. But my question is, can I do it with so little time to prepare? I haven't even started looking into flights, or planning what I need to take and buying a guide etc. etc. I don't want to be rushed so wonder if I should wait till next summer? But another part of me feels I should seize the time and the future is so uncertain, that maybe the time is now. I feel I am at a point in my life that I would benefit from two weeks to myself just contemplating life, walking and meditating. Spiritually and mentally and physically I need time away to recharge but wonder if I can do it or if this is really for me. I also feel anxious about going it alone as a middle-aged female. And whether my level of fitness is adequate. I signed up for a local group that does practice walks and hoped to join them to help me prepare and talk to people. I was meant to go this morning but unfortunately miscalculated the bus and couldn't make it on time. So, lots of questions. I thought it might help to join this forum and talk to others who are in the same boat or those who have done it before for advice and encouragement to just make the decision and do it. I have two weeks so figure I would need to start somewhere around Leon but if anyone has advice on where to start for a two week walk that would be much appreciated. Thank you so much.

This pilgrim, in posting this inquiry in the forum, demonstrates clearly the desire to decrease uncertainty about the experience and to seek support and affirmation from the online community. She demonstrates uncertainty about both practical and more esoteric elements of the experience, asking questions about her level of fitness, safety, and reasonable starting points as well as indicating some of her more philosophical desires for meditative time in solitude for spiritual exploration. This inquiry points to the complexity of the experience as a whole, as it does require one to consider their physical, mental, and spiritual preparedness--and for those who can get bogged down in details, planning a Camino can seem a bit like planning a wedding, with an endless stream of details to work out. Others may simply buy a ticket and figure it out as they go. As one pilgrim said, you've got feet and the trail is always there. In many ways, this pilgrim's very inquiry demonstrates that complex juxtaposition of the Camino against the modern world itself. Should one simply give in to the Camino, allow it to unfold, come what may, or should one attempt to assert more control over the experience with layers of plans and preparation? Many pilgrims with whom I spoke faced this very challenge on the trail as the (in many ways) non-Western experience of pilgrimage came face-to-face with Western habits. Often the internal struggles came down to a desire to control and/or predict one's circumstances. One pilgrim with whom I spoke injured her leg on the trail badly enough that her Camino had to end, as she was advised by medical professionals that she could no longer walk any real distance on that leg. This injury and the premature end of her Camino was, understandably, deeply upsetting, and the fact that it was beyond her control brought additional frustration and pain. Though she opted, optimistically, to travel by train to Santiago and enroll in a short

language course in an attempt to make good use of her time and immerse herself in the city and culture of Santiago despite not being able to walk into it. Nevertheless, she communicated great disappointment and indicated that it was difficult to engage with pilgrims who were able to successfully complete their pilgrimage on foot.

These kinds of injuries are not altogether uncommon on the trail. One pilgrim with whom I spoke was on his second attempt at walking the Camino, having severed a calf muscle on his very first day in the Pyrenees months prior, ending his first Camino just as it had begun. To be sure, an experience like the pilgrimage to Santiago holds within it vast amounts of uncertainty, and much of the experience will always be outside a pilgrim's control. However, the presence and use of technology is serving to mitigate some of that uncertainty and provide some psychological comfort. Uncertainty regarding the trip as a whole or simply at the beginning of a given day can now be addressed in many ways.

It is important to address another phenomenon relating to uncertainty: predictability. In many ways, pilgrims who seek to mitigate their uncertainty regarding the experience are making efforts to attempt to predict the likelihood of some event. Will he/she be injured? Is it likely to rain more in April or September? Will there be a bed available in the next town? Will he/she have enough money? Will he/she find enlightenment? The uncertainty extends beyond the practical and into the mysterious, and technology is playing a significant role in the process of attempting to reduce all of these various topics of uncertainty. Before setting foot on the trail, pilgrims can now check average temperatures in the various towns they will be crossing through, discuss the kinds of revelations others uncovered on the trail or after returning home, make

advanced reservations for hotels and even private albergues, learn basic first aid and blister care, calculate average costs, and learn about everything from the history of the Camino and the legends of Saint James to traditional pilgrim prayers to recite along the trail to the most popular accommodations along the way through YouTube videos, blogs, forums, podcasts, web series', and more. Each day, there is more and more information made available online, and while most pilgrims with whom I spoke are grateful for the mass of information available, some (even some who appreciated the availability of information) expressed concern that much of the mystery of the Camino is slipping away with every blog post.

While on the trail, too, pilgrims are arming themselves with information before stepping forth into the day to come. Many pilgrims consulted their guidebooks and electronic devices before leaving the albergue each day to check the weather forecast, the difficulty of the walk, the number and name of upcoming villages and the distance between them, the points of interest along the way, and the albergue they would aim for in the village in which they planned to stop for the night. Others preferred to be surprised by the trail and the day's events, walked until they were tired of walking or until they found a village that appealed to them, and enjoyed the experience of allowing the day to unfold organically. Many pilgrims noted that their everyday habits in the fast-paced, modern world continued on the pilgrim trail, while others noted that the ability to abandon those habits was among the most valuable aspects of the pilgrimage.

With so many online tales of healing and grace experienced on the Camino, it can create certain expectations for pilgrims as well. Since there is no way to predict the sorts of philosophical insights or mysterious encounters one might have on The Way,

these existing discourses can lead to disappointment for some who expect to have similar encounters on the pilgrim trail. Van der Beek (2016) suggests that social media posts on the topic of the Camino are serving to create narratives that inspire would-be pilgrims to walk the Camino, but at the same time become experiences that pilgrims seek to replicate, which has multiple outcomes. First, because each pilgrimage is unique and the Camino is ever-changing, individuals are often unable to satisfactorily replicate a particular experience. Next, because these narratives, for some, serve as a marker by which to compare one's own experience, expectations created by these existing narratives can often set pilgrims up for disappointment or even a sense that they are "doing it wrong". One pilgrim I spoke with, Wayne, noted, with noticeable despondence,

I don't really think that I achieved my initial objective but, uh, overall, I think it was very worthwhile to experience...I did have two small, um, sort of moving events, but uh, I was...not that I was anticipating more, but I was sort of hoping for more.

While stating that he was not anticipating more momentous experiences on the trail, Wayne seemed nevertheless disillusioned a bit by the experience. Pilgrims who are grieving the loss of a loved one may be most surprised to find that while the Camino can be a healing space, their grief may still follow them home. Others, however, indicate that they did find catharsis on the trail. The following pilgrim indicated that she found great comfort on the Camino after the loss of her mother while on the Camino:

I returned a couple weeks ago from walking the Portuguese from Porto to Santiago with my husband, Stuart. On my ninth day of walking, somewhere near Caldas de Reis, I got news from my sister that my mother died that morning. I knew that she was in decline before I left for Portugal, but did not see a reason to cancel my pilgrimage, and did not tell her that I was going overseas, as I did not want her to be concerned about that. I knew that my sister and nephew were with her, and I visited her bedside with my sister virtually on FaceTime, and my

sister and I were able to grieve together. I feel that the Camino was a good place to be to process my grief, and almost wonder if the universe conspired to put me there for this this reason. After walking the CF in 2012, my father died shortly thereafter, and I felt my pilgrimage helped me navigate the enormous upheaval in my life at that time. This time, I walked for three more days, and thought about my mother deeply and at length as I walked hour after hour, honored her with a candle at the Sepulcher of St. James, with a bouquet of flowers left on the Camino Portugese Great Gate outside Santiago, and poured my grief into the landscape, which absorbed and reflected its serenity back to me endlessly. My Camino family comforted me also. A photo of me holding flowers 5 km outside Santiago shows me looking like the spitting image of my mother, so I know she walked with me somehow. Now I am home, and dealing with the details of her death, and my complex web of feelings arriving in waves, and I feel so blessed to have been able to walk the Way at this time. It will forever mark this chapter of my life.

This pilgrim indicates the various ways in which she found comfort on the Camino in the wake of great personal loss: in the arms of her fellow pilgrims, in the ritual exercises at the Cruce de Ferro and the Sepulcher of the Saint, and in the beauty of the countryside and outside Santiago, where she felt her mother's spirit. There can be no doubt that some pilgrims do find great comfort on the pilgrim path.

As suggested, while information can be found on the Camino in a broad variety of forms and on a wide range of platforms, among the most interesting and influential spaces in which pilgrims are engaging the topic of the Camino are online pilgrim forums, where pilgrims engage with one another, build camaraderie among kindred spirits, and learn more about the pilgrimage

Online Forums

The role of the online forums on the modern Camino is perhaps the richest and most fascinating phenomena regarding pilgrim interaction. These interactive communities are effectively changing the nature and the manner in which pilgrims interact with one another in space and time. When referring to online forums, there are

many examples. One of the most popular online forums is known simply as the Camino de Santiago forum or the Camino Forum (www.caminodesantiago.me). In casual pilgrim vernacular, many pilgrims refer to this forum as “Ivar’s Forum”, after the site administrator, Ivar Revke. Boasting itself as the ‘original’ Camino forum, this forum has been active since 2004. The home page of the forum promises visiting pilgrims the opportunity to ask Camino-related questions, engage in conversations with other (often seasoned) pilgrims on the topic of the Camino, access to photos and documents with relevant information as well as guides and other helpful resources, and also offers those who sign up a weekly newsletter with highlights from that week’s most popular topics of discussion. Popular topics discussed on the forum include safety concerns, foot and body care, hiking gear, accommodations, philosophical musings, and stories from along The Way.

Another extremely popular and heavily-trafficked forum is the Facebook group associated with the group American Pilgrims on the Camino, or APOC. As of September, 2017, the page had more than sixteen thousand active members. Like ‘Ivar’s Forum’, seasoned pilgrims and prospective pilgrims alike can visit the interactive space to ask questions or seek advice on any number of topics, share experiences or photos, (though strict rules dictate how many photos members may share in a given post) seek encouragement, or simply connect with others who share a common interest in the pilgrimage.

Various related Facebook groups also exist, with certain variations but similar themes. Several regional Facebook groups are available, such as South African Pilgrims on the Camino, Australian Pilgrims on the Camino, Sacramento Pilgrims, etc. Some

groups are targeted toward female Camino pilgrims; the most popular of which, CAMIGAS, was launched after the disappearance and subsequent tragic murder of American pilgrim Denise Thiem in 2015. This group, which only accepts female pilgrims, also offers an interactive document that prospective pilgrims can use to indicate when they will be walking the Camino, so that if desired, they may join other female walkers to avoid walking alone on the trail. While many pilgrims enjoy the solitude that the trail can provide at times, others are comforted with the option of having accompaniment for safety's sake.

There are also forums dedicated to more specific portions or variations of the Camino. One group, for example, is specifically dedicated to the planning stage of the Camino. It does not even permit members to post pictures. Other groups are dedicated to specific routes to Santiago, such as the Camino Portuguese. Many of these forums have strict guidelines that must be followed, and members who fail to comply are often removed.

In these highly interactive spaces, pilgrims can ask questions ranging from "Which airport is most convenient to fly into if I'm beginning my pilgrimage in St. Jean Pied de Port?" to "Are boots or trail runners more appropriate for the trail?" to "How many rest days should I plan for?" and even more esoteric questions, such as "What was the biggest life lesson you took away from the Camino?" or "How have you changed as a result of the pilgrimage?" Once these questions are posed, individuals in the forums are often met with dozens of responses in real-time. It also enables past and future pilgrims to build a rapport; to begin to feel, even if they have yet to set forth on the trail, a sense of kinship, and many begin to feel as though they are part of the pilgrim

community. In this sense, pilgrims truly are changing the manner in which they interact in space and time. Prior to the Internet, it would have been much more difficult to find and build this kind of community with fellow pilgrims outside the trail itself.

Because pilgrims are now able to interact in this manner and build rapport with one another before ever setting foot on the Camino, they are effectively changing the notion of ‘*communitas*’ put forth by Turner in relation to the ritual process, though perhaps not entirely. While the sense of community begins to spark in this early connectivity, the feeling of kinship and equality at sharing the experience together is perhaps unique to the pilgrim trail itself.

Instagram

Users of the social networking application Instagram will find several pages dedicated to the Camino de Santiago [see Figure 3]. Instagram is a social networking application designed to allow users to share photographs and videos with their network of friends or the greater public (Moreau, 2017). Similar to other social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, users are provided a profile page and a newsfeed (Moreau, 2017). A user’s profile page will display photos and videos shared by the user, and their newsfeed will be comprised of photos and videos shared by other users in their network. Unlike Facebook or Twitter, the primary purpose of Instagram is “visual sharing”; it privileges photographs over text, although it does allow users to comment on and “like” shared photos. Instagram accounts range from personal to topical; an ever-increasing number of pages dedicated to pictures of the Camino de Santiago are available for users to follow. Interestingly, occasionally there are seemingly paradoxical posts that I have termed *meta-anti-technology*, in which users will find posts online

encouraging users to turn off their electronics and enjoy nature. [See Figure 4]. The paradox, of course, is that users must engage their technologies in order to stumble across these messages encouraging them to put their electronics away. Additionally, users who post these types of images will also often use *hashtags*, words or phrases designed to identify a particular topic, which then allow other users to locate posts dedicated to that topic. Hashtags are intended to increase the visibility of a user's posts. This suggests that a user would hope to find others interested in their topic on social media, only to encourage them to break with social media and go outside, unburdened by their technologies.

Blogs/Instructional Videos/TED Talks

Blogs and instructional videos relating to the Camino are also commonplace on the Web. How-to videos have become wildly prevalent on the popular video-sharing website YouTube. A YouTube search for "Camino de Santiago" yields almost one million results. The videos range from *Camino Tips: 10 Money-Saving Tips for the Camino de Santiago* (Cowie, 2015) to the popular *Camino de Santiago Documentary: A Journey of the Mind* (Robinson, 2013). Users can find videos on everything from how to properly use trekking poles to how to use kinesthetic tape, from photo montages of various Camino journeys to video blogs from the trail. Many individuals elect to document their personal pilgrimages on YouTube, either in real time or after returning home. The popular TEDx forum boasts multiple talks on the topic of the Camino de Santiago as well (See Kim, 2016; Skeesuck & Gray, 2015; and Tanigaki, 2014).

Many pilgrims choose to maintain a blog of their Camino experience simply for documentation and the opportunity to share their journey. One user posted the following inquiry about the decision to blog while on Camino,

This post is in response to [@C clearly](#)'s most recent post on her blog. In it she reflects on whether she will walk again (hubby asked it (sic) it was now out of her system) and ends wondering about blogging. And deciding she will keep engaging in this "self indulgence". C_clearly, (so glad to have been part of the pleasure portion of your Montreal trip), my take on blogs in this: why is one blogging?

To share operational infor (sic) with others?

To solidify memories by committing things to a keyboard?

To construct a personage?

To brag?

I have so enjoyed reading about your mother on your blog, and obviously read about your VDLP just a few weeks ahead of mine. Thank you for the operational tips! Because ypur (sic) blog is about so much more than Caminos and kms, I think ot (sic) is for you a wonderful place to document your own history, for yourself, but also your children and sibblings (sic). Never did I get the feelijg (sic) from your blog that it is there to impress the readers, to invite accolades, in fact ot (sic) is deaply (sic) personal at times, and when you think you may have pushed the envelop (sic) a bit, you delete. I have also enjoyed the blog from the member from Singapour (sic) walking the Norte with his wife. Very operational, never giving the impression he is hoping create an image of himself as somesort (sic) of Camino hero, hoping to market hos (sic) experience in some way. So please keep blogging away, and walking . Though perhaps spending a bit more time at home as you seem to want to now. Just see about tweaking your blog, as when I tried to respond on it, it said the page is missing.

Here, the user indicates that the blogs posted by pilgrims are both helpful and enjoyable, and she encourages the blogger directly to continue the practice. In response to this post, another user stated the following, "Blogging is a response to all the amazing experiences on the Camino! I enjoy writing my blog and I also enjoy reading other people's. It also gives you something to do in the afternoons!"

Interestingly, this response suggests that some pilgrims struggle a bit with idleness, and technology serves to fill the void at times. As others have suggested, however, many pilgrims are opting to blog, engage social media, or otherwise utilize

their devices at the expense of interacting with other pilgrims, exploring the villages or towns, or reflecting on their journey in a more personal manner.

Another pilgrim responded with her reasons for blogging,

On reflection, I blogged our Camino for three main reasons. Initially, it was to keep friends and family informed of our journey, But as the Caminho da Costa was not well documented at the time, I also hoped it might be useful for others contemplating this route. Finally as [an] older peregrino [pilgrim] there was a little bit of 'you're never too old' as I hoped other septuagenarians might be inspired to pick up the walking poles. I enjoy technology, writing and photography so this format suits me well. I was therefore very surprised when my daughter (who said she enjoyed reading it each day) commented that it seemed self-indulgent for an introvert (me) to be so public about our trip. Rocked me a bit. I have just reread the entries and I am really happy to have this journal of a very significant time. And it does seem to have served the second purpose.

Here we see the clash of perspectives between those who value the experience of blogging for many of the reasons this pilgrim articulates and those who view blogging as a self-centered indulgence that stands in contrast to the experience of pilgrimage. Regardless of the criticisms, however, this pilgrim remains happy to have blogged, particularly as it provides a record of the experience. Of course, one can certainly maintain a private record of the journey through journaling. However, as this user articulates, another function of her public blog is to inspire other potential pilgrims who might be advanced in age to consider taking the pilgrimage.

In addition to all the blogs, instructional videos, and TED Talks dedicated to the Camino, there are also a number of mobile applications, or apps, dedicated to the Camino that have made their way into the marketplace and the Camino milieu. Many pilgrims are enthusiastically embracing this new technology and the convenience it affords. As with many pilgrimage-related advancements, the benefit of the mobile applications is that they replace the need for a physical guidebook and thus serve to

reduce weight. Among the most popular applications adopted by pilgrims is the Wise Pilgrim guide, available for Android or Apple devices. Touted by developers as “smart Camino guidebooks”, the application lists effectively the same information one might find in a traditional guidebook—distance between towns, lists of albergues in each town with contact information, history and points of interest of each town and municipality, and physical descriptions such as altitude and terrain. The Wise Pilgrim app has information available for a broad range of Camino routes, including the Camino Primitivo, the Camino Norte, the Camino Aragones, the Camino San Salvador, and the Camino Portuguese. The added benefit of mobile applications when compared with traditional guidebooks is that they can be updated constantly, without the lag that occurs in the process of book publication and print. One pilgrim with whom I spoke was using the application, and said the following about it,

I use my phone, I have a guidebook kinda type thing installed on it...So it says it's got the albergues, how many beds they have, um, it gives you information about the town and if they have supermarkets or cafes or restaurants and then it gives you a bit of the history. Um, and I think it's actually, it's better than carrying a book.

For pilgrims, a lot of consideration is given to pack weight. Many pilgrims carefully consider every ounce that goes into their pack, and many find any opportunity to reduce pack weight highly desirable.

Documentaries/Web Series/Feature Films

Films and web series on the topic of the Camino de Santiago have become popular over the last three decades as well, and seem to be growing even more popular in recent years. The 1993 documentary film *El Camino de Santiago* is among the older films on the topic of the Camino [in French with English subtitles], and explores the

spiritual significance of Saint James the Apostle, examining both his legend and his legacy.

Unsurprisingly, there are many Spanish-language films on the subject, including *La Via Lactea* (1969), directed by Academy award-winning director Luis Buñuel, *O Apostol* (2012), a stop-motion animated feature, and *Tres En El Camino* (2004), which follows three different pilgrims as they walk the Camino de Santiago in various seasons, offering viewers insights into the motivations and experiences of each (Martinez, 2016).

The 2010 American film *The Way* is perhaps the most popular and well-known film that focuses on the Camino de Santiago. The full-length feature film stars Emilio Estevez and Martin Sheen, and tells the story of a father (Sheen) who unexpectedly finds himself on the Camino de Santiago following a personal tragedy. Sheen's character makes his way down the trail to the apostle, making many friends and learning many lessons along the way. The Camino de Santiago saw a sizeable increase in American pilgrims following the release of *The Way*, and it continues to inspire pilgrims today.

German comedian Hape Kerkeling's popular book *Ich Bin Dann Mal Weg* (*I'm Off Then* in English) was adapted into the feature film with the same name, and drew a large fan base due to the comedian's popularity in Germany. Much like *The Way* opened doors for a wave of American pilgrims on the Camino, *I'm Off Then*, both the book and the movie, has inspired many Germans to take on the pilgrimage.

The 2014 documentary *Walking the Camino: Six Ways to Santiago* drew an impressive following, and is second only to *The Way* in terms of popularity among American pilgrims. Featured pilgrim Annie O'Neil followed up her involvement with

Walking the Camino with the short documentary *Phil's Camino*, which has received critical praise. The highly anticipated documentary film *I'll Push You* will be screened in limited release across the United States on November 2, 2017. The film tells the story of Justin and Patrick, two childhood friends who decide to travel the Camino de Santiago together. Justin's advanced neuromuscular disease makes traveling the Camino a unique challenge, but together these lifelong friends overcome all odds to make their way to Santiago, together.

Andrew Suzuki has created a popular web series called *Beyond the Way*, which follows pilgrims along the Camino Frances and delves into the various reasons pilgrims elect to walk the Camino de Santiago. The second season of *Beyond the Way* followed pilgrims along the Camino Portuguese. In addition to *Beyond the Way*, Suzuki also created a sister series called *Don't Stop Walking*, which functions more as a practical guide to walking the Camino de Santiago, complete with advice and information on how to walk the pilgrimage and what to expect on a given day on the trail.

All of these documentaries, web series, and feature films have increased visibility for the Camino, and have inspired countless pilgrims to make their way to the pilgrim trail. Those who have encountered the films and series' after walking the pilgrimage have also found great value in them, as they offer pilgrims a welcome opportunity to make their way, vicariously, back to Spain, for a little while.

Chapter 5: Walking the Camino: Technology along The Way

“Matter in the wrong place is dirt. People get dirty through too much civilization. Whenever we touch nature, we get clean”-Carl Jung

Sabini (2002), in her collection of Jung's writings on nature and technology, notes that Jung was quite concerned with our loss of connectivity with the earth and time spent in nature. He expressed concern for modern consciousness, noting that in the West, our fragile modern consciousness was being mostly developed through science and technology, as opposed to "art, social interaction, cultural development, or spirituality" (p. 11). Interestingly, each of these elements, the very elements of consciousness that Jung was concerned with neglecting through our obsession with technology and modernity, are the very elements that are nourished on the Camino de Santiago. There is no shortage of art to explore, nor social interaction with other pilgrims, volunteers, and locals, cultural experiences, or spiritual encounters experienced by many on the pilgrim path. The modern Camino, however, is finding technological engagement happening alongside these four elements, something Jung would no doubt observe with apprehension. As technological development continues to flourish on the Camino, how will both the Camino itself and pilgrims on it be affected? Are technological advancements and our deeper consciousness necessarily at odds?

Before discussing the nature of technology on the Camino trail, it is important to first discuss the transition from discursive understanding to the experience of walking the Camino itself. From the moment that the idea of walking the Camino is born until the pilgrim sets foot on the path for the first time, their understanding of what the Camino is, what it will be like, what it will look like, what one will experience, whom one will meet, what one will eat, and much more, has been fashioned through existing discourses. The images in the pilgrim's mind to that point has been developed through books, radio programs, blogs, movies, documentaries, online literature, photographs,

and conversations with other pilgrims. In many ways, these existing discourses have served to shape expectations of the Camino to come. Yet once the body comes directly in contact with the trail, those discourses are confronted with and replaced by (or, at the very least, supplemented by) the experience of the body on the trail itself. Suddenly, the senses are awakened. Instead of looking at photographs of the sweeping landscapes, the yellow arrows, the sweaty pilgrims, one is standing in the middle of those landscapes, searching for the yellow arrows, and smelling the sweaty pilgrims (and becoming one.) Those pre-existing discourses do not disappear; they are simply expanded with the addition of the embodied experience of walking the Camino firsthand. All these new experiences (the weight of the pack on the shoulders, the crunch of the ground beneath the feet, the click of the walking poles on the ground, the passing shouts of “Buen Camino!” from other pilgrims, the sun on the skin, the sweat down the back, the movement, the pauses, the snails, the flowers, the vistas) suddenly flood the senses, shaping the experience and confronting the existing expectations created through the previously encountered discourses. Both the connections made with other pilgrims and the profundity of quiet solitude, shape the experience as it unfolds. Certainly, the use of or abstinence from technology is also serving to shape the pilgrim experience.

Technology use is unquestionably something that pilgrims are thinking and talking about. Jusino (2016) discusses her decision to limit her screen time on the Camino in a blog post entitled “Why I Turned Off My Cell Phone on the Camino” (2016).

I admit it: I have the twitch: The instinctive urge to reach for the phone every time there’s a pause in life: waiting in line, or before a show or movie starts, or on the bus...or when there’s just a break in conversation. Am I missing something? What are other people doing? The desire to take a picture and share

it, immediately, so that other people know what I'm doing, and what they're missing.

Is life real if it's not documented? (Emphasis added)

In the age of personal broadcasting, there is something about the sharing of life experiences that seems to bring them to life, or make them 'real'. The age of social media has put everyday lives on display and made each user a star of their own profile. The old adage says that when people fall in love, they want to shout it from the rooftops. Nowadays, it seems, we want to shout from our Facebook pages when we find a good Indian restaurant-but walking a five hundred mile-pilgrimage provides much more interesting content than tikka masala, no matter how mouth-watering the latter is. Jusino (2016) goes on to discuss her decision to break from technology while on Camino. Before leaving, she describes her relationship to technology in the following way,

[T]he relentless day-to-day demands of postmodern adult life had burned me to a crisp. It didn't feel like I was really living anymore, as much as I was trying to keep up with all of the beeping and buzzing machines that demanded my attention.

Thus, she continues with her decision to break from technology while on the Camino:

When we left for our Camino, we decided to turn off all of our electronic devices. We would offer no live updates from the trail, no Instagram filters, no email, no streaming music. We would skip the Google maps and apps. I carried a camera, but those pictures stayed locked away until I got home. I took them only for myself... I wanted to be *present* on the Camino in a way that I knew I couldn't be if I had a pocket full of distractions. If I was constantly thinking about faraway people, I reasoned, I would lose precious moments with the ones who were with me.

Another pilgrim commented in the American Pilgrims on Camino forum on Facebook,

This is a question I asked myself when I joined this forum, and I shared my thoughts with friends and family. Most think I should look for the finer moments of the camino (sic) by doing research. I think I will do a little of both:

This last peak season, a few thousand Americans hiked the journey, and many of them used blogs, Facebook or other media to share their stories. I could write down in order all 150 villages we are going to pass through and with a few keystrokes, find information about each one. Which hostel has thin beds, no pillows and no hot water? Which hostel has new beds, friendly hosts, good English skills or free wine? Where is the best restaurant, which road gives the best view? The temptation is there to micromanage the entire affair into 35 days of a blissful adventure. However, I could also leave it all up to God, Fate or Luck. There is something to be said for just putting on my shoes in the morning and walking until I am hungry or tired, and experiencing the good or bad of whatever is at my feet.

This particular post inspired many responses, some of which indicated that they found comfort in at least some planning, while others stated that, indeed, the micromanagement of the experience was contrary to the purpose of a pilgrimage. One individual replied, “That's exactly what I did. I lived my Camino. Each step was my prayer. Some were so busy blogging they forgot the camino (sic) is a pilgrimage. This walk is sacred. Not a tourist attraction.”

Again, here we see the delineation between the pilgrimage and touristic travel. We also see here the expressed sentiment that modern technology and modern communication behaviors simply serve as distractions from the pilgrim experience. We also see the observation from pilgrims that electronic devices exist as an obstacle to being fully present on the pilgrimage. The pilgrimage itself, for many, offers a reprieve from the dings and buzzes that command our attention in daily life. For many, the break from technology becomes an integral part of the experience, and adds layers of value to it. For those who are seeking time for quiet reflection, the disconnect from technology and from everyday life can be invaluable.

Solitude: Quiet Reflection on the Camino

Koch (1994), in an exquisite examination of the phenomenon of solitude, describes the profound human experience of being alone. In a world of constant connectivity, solitude is no doubt becoming a state of being that is more and more elusive, and the effect on both the individual and society as a whole is significant. Koch (1994) notes that there are three necessary features of solitude: physical isolation, social disengagement, and reflectiveness (p. 13). He is also quick to point out that within these necessary features, there is room for exception. One can certainly find herself in a state of solitude, even among other people, and the anthropomorphizing of physical objects and ethereal beings certainly call into question whether one is truly ever ‘alone’ (here we enter the realm of magic behavior). Regardless, Koch (1994) notes that the act of purposeful social disengagement is central to the experience of solitude. He settles on the following definition: “It (solitude) is a time in which experience is disengaged from other people” (p. 27). Here, within the notion of purposeful social disengagement, we find an essential element of pilgrimage that is being profoundly influenced by the modern, hyper-connected world. There is no doubt that the ability to be alone has significant consequences. One need only look toward the great thinkers to realize the impact that solitude had on their thinking and writing. As modern research suggests, we are getting worse at being alone, and the result of this inability is shallower thinking and shallower human interactions (Carr, 2011; Turkle, 2011).

Koch (1994) insists that the mind needs to wander “along its pathways alone” (p.49). He quotes Henry Bugbee (1974),

I think solitude is essentially a bringing to consciousness of the manner of our being in the world with other beings and of engagement in the working out of

the import continually and cumulatively borne upon us of this participation. (as cited in Koch, 1994, p. 50).

It is important to note that, for the time being, while wi-fi access is limited to bars and (some) albergues, and many pilgrims cannot call, text, or engage in social media without wi-fi connection, there is still ample opportunity for quiet reflection while walking. However, if individuals with local SIM cards are any indication of what is to come, it is only a matter of time before the technology opens up and digital connectivity is available for all at any given time. At that point, pilgrims will need to be intentional about limiting their connectivity if they wish to stay in the present moment and afford themselves time for deep reflection. To stay mindfully in the present moment means to rid oneself of petty distractions and to make space for the contemplation of ‘bigger’ thoughts. Koch (1994), citing Petrarch, admonishes “the wretchedness of the busy man” (p. 101). He continues with the following:

The busy man, a hapless dweller of the city, awakes in the middle of the night, his sleep interrupted by his cares or the cries of his clients, often even by fear of the light and by terror of nightly visions...full of troubles, replete with dining and wining, gripped by fear and envy, dispirited by the checks he has encountered or vainly elated by his successes, afflicted with melancholy, busting with wrath, at war with himself, not master of his own mind...his life is like that of the fiends (p. 101).

Petrarch, it seems, equated busyness with wickedness, suggesting that if individuals do not take care to quiet their minds and take time to assess their behaviors, they risk losing touch with honorable existence.

If solitude is a necessary human experience, and pilgrimage is ripe for quiet, reflective time, how might the engagement of communication technologies interfere with that reflectivity? Challenger (2016) believes that the engagement of technology is having profound effects on the experience. In a guest contribution to *On Being*, a

program of National Public Radio, he noted that before setting out with a group of students along the Camino de Santiago, he had misgivings about technological engagement while on the trail, stating,

We wanted the students to not be “plugged in” and “checked out” while on their pilgrimage. We didn’t want them to be distracted by the technology from their own experience of solitude and the sounds around them, or to miss out on the opportunities to converse at length with others they would be walking with and meeting along the way...the more we habitually turn to our phones and other devices for virtual connections, the more we are losing the capacity for solitude-time spent alone in conversation with one’s self. Without solitude, we can’t really know ourselves-the prerequisite for forming genuine attachments to others.

He goes on to say,

The beauty of the Camino for me has been that you could put technology aside and leave the world back home. In its place, you immerse yourself in solitude, the kindness of strangers, fellowship, and conversation with your fellow travelers. To the degree that we allow ourselves to be transformed into device people hopelessly hooked on our smartphones and continuously occupied e-mailing, texting, Facebook liking, Skyping, watching YouTube videos, and playing Candy Crush, that kind of retreat will be in jeopardy.

He noted that the opportunity for extended time spent on the pilgrim trail was a rare gift, and he wanted students to be mindful of that. He states that that time along the Camino was,

a rare opportunity to live in an unfamiliar place, to “wake up,” and to live more mindfully through daily walking and the simple rituals of pilgrim life. We believed that if they could limit their use of the Internet and their contact with home while on the Camino, it would help them develop a more intimate relationship with themselves and with each other, and reflect on their lives.

In the article, he acknowledges that as time has progressed, he has been met with increasing resistance from students regarding the engagement of technology.

Eventually, he and his co-leaders succumbed to the pressure of allowing students to bring and engage with their mobile devices, but he also notes that many of his students

did eventually come to see the benefits of breaking their technological habits, even if they were reticent to do so initially (Challenger, 2016).

As pilgrims continue to navigate the ways in which the ancient practice of pilgrimage collides with modern technology, there will continue to be tensions that must be acknowledged and travelers will be met with the decision whether to engage their technologies or not and the various ways in which their pilgrimage will be affected by that decision.

Much of the Camino is walked at least partly in solitude. Time is spent alone with one's thoughts. Even social interactions happen away from one's typical social milieu. While there is certainly social performance that occurs between pilgrims, and between pilgrims and locals, and pilgrims and volunteers, another element of the social performance of the pilgrimage to Santiago has emerged, for many, online. This performed pilgrimage occurs in front of a broader audience. This performance is carefully constructed and heavily filtered. Whereas Goffman's social world saw much of the "front stage" performance occurring while individuals were in the physical presence of their audience and the more relaxed "back stage" existence occurring in solitude or in spaces not traditionally thought of as social spaces (think utility spaces such as laundry rooms, or historically, kitchens), the modern world sees much of the "front stage" performance happening digitally, away from the physical presence of others, with much of the "back stage" or unseen performance simply happening away from the broader audience of one's online social network-in the case of the Camino, the actuality of walking. While some video or document their walking experiences, there can be no doubt that the pilgrimage that is documented and the pilgrimage that takes

place off-camera are qualitatively distinct in many ways. When one is preoccupied with the presentation of the experience to an audience, they will focus less on the inward journey. Additionally, one's profile page is always available, constantly working to present the individual in a particular way, offering a social history, a timeline of experiences, photos, commentary, and publicly preserved social engagement.

Social Media and the Self-Presentation of Pilgrimage

Many pilgrims, while on Camino, are now electing to document their journey through social media or blogging platforms. While journaling has long been a common activity in which pilgrims engaged, as they sort through and try to make sense of their daily experiences, as well as preserve the memories of their day-to-day journey, the act of sharing that documentation publicly is a relatively new phenomenon. It can be expected, as Nietzsche suggested, that this new mode of recording our thoughts and experiences, along with the incorporation of an audience, is changing the nature of the writing (as cited in Carr, 2011). When one writes for an audience, new considerations enter. The writer becomes more conscious of the manner in which the material will be received. A pilgrim might privilege one memory over another, if it makes a 'better story'. He or she might be less likely to share stories that do not reflect favorably on his or her character. The pilgrim might find certain details of the day lack appeal, and therefore omit them altogether. As a result, memories of the experience will be affected based on what finds its way into the blog or social media post.

Some might argue that time once spent quietly reflecting on the day's events or voraciously writing in one's personal journal is now being spent, for many, recounting the day's events to family members and a broader online social network. Many feel that

the experience has, for some, become more about performance and less about deep reflection. To be fair, however, it is difficult to pinpoint the validity of such value assessments, and such speculations ultimately have limited value. One pilgrim articulated his experience of sharing his pilgrimage on social media in the following way:

In so many respects, I would have been fine personally if I had never written down a word and if I had never told the story; and I think some things are so special and so dear to us that they shouldn't be for public consumption. I think they should just belong to us. As a pilgrim I would've been fine if the story had never been told; every step and every moment would've belonged to me. But then, there's another very profound side of me that is a storyteller. And I don't think a thousand years ago pilgrims looked at it the way I'm about to explain it, but this is one thing that I think technology has done for us: on the one side, it [the pilgrimage] belongs to all of us without technology. But it's a big world now and how many of us out of seven billion people on the planet are going to experience something like that? For some of us it's important to us that others somehow get to share that experience. I know for a fact due to the way people communicated with me that there were people who felt that they were with me on the journey. And they would wake up excited to check in and see what happened on the trail.

He elaborated,

There was a personal journey and another part that was so special that I wanted other people to share. There were some parts I'll never share with anyone. There are a lot of people who blog and make posts but they don't tell the whole story. I wanted people to know everything. I wanted them to know it was beautiful and special but it was also cold and there were times I was pissed off and grumpy and I experienced cultural differences-and I try to think of myself as a pretty worldly guy and I find myself in a situation where cultural differences are pissing me off. And I think it's good to let your guard down. It's ok to say sometimes we try and we fail. That's the part I wanted people to know.

Interestingly, the pilgrim indicates that he values the ability to let the audience in on both the beautiful and the messy elements of the pilgrimage, but on certain terms. Even when individuals are sharing their experiences candidly, it is still crafted for an

audience and the blogger still has editorial control over content. As the pilgrim stated, there are still portions of the experience that are too personal to share.

As mentioned in the review of literature, through these mediated spaces [social media], we feel more connected, as it offers immediate social access to dozens, hundreds, maybe thousands of “friends” and “followers”, yet ultimately, we find ourselves more socially isolated. Interestingly, the Camino at times offers the opposite. On Camino, most pilgrims report creating deep connections with other pilgrims. Conversations are often deep and heartfelt, a contrast to the often-superficial communication that occurs in some mediated spaces. Connections between pilgrims most often happen in person, rather than through the screen, so all of our senses are awakened. Nonverbal communication enhances the interaction. Pilgrims help one another up or down hills, embrace, congratulate one another with pats on the back and high fives. They clink glasses, break bread, and join together in prayer. There is understandable concern about what the increase of technology on The Way is going to do to these types of pilgrim connections. These are human encounters that the digital world simply cannot replicate. Since the connections created between pilgrims are an important part of the overall pilgrim experience, will this interaction be hindered with the encroachment of technology on the pilgrim path, as pilgrims spend more and more time engaging their devices rather than fellow pilgrims?

There is also another side of the coin. While we might well be getting worse at social interaction as a result of technology, we may also be getting worse at being alone. Deresiewicz (2009) laments that, in the contemporary world, “The camera has created a culture of celebrity; the computer is creating a culture of connectivity” (n.p.). The

camera and computer combined, through the use of social media, is serving to make celebrities of pilgrims as they connect to online audiences comprised of both friends and strangers. Author Steve Watkins documented his entire pilgrim journey on the online pilgrim forum American Pilgrims on the Camino, and garnered quite an enthusiastic following. Pilgrims throughout the digital world cheered as he overcame tremendous physical challenges to finally walk into Santiago, and identified with the fortitude it takes to complete such a journey as Watkins discovered the title for his book “Pilgrim Strong”. Steve’s engaging posts were both cathartic and brilliant marketing. They also fully demonstrated the interweaving of the pilgrim experience with modern communication technologies, the sacred with the profane, and demonstrate that there can be positive social engagement that can occur when pilgrims opt to invite digital others into their journey. His posts always garnered comments expressing gratitude for his willingness to share his journey and for lending his unique, honest voice to the experience for those following along. On one post, a fellow pilgrim commented, “Thank you Steve for your post and pictures. It is great to see the Camino through your eyes and thoughts!” Another stated, “Love, love, love following your pilgrimage!!”

The interesting thing about the phenomenon of incorporating technology on the Camino is that it runs counter to pervasive notions of what constitutes authentic pilgrimage. The pilgrim went on to say:

The first few days of the pilgrimage I had very specific ideas about how I was going to do the pilgrimage. I was going to limit my technology, I would quietly contemplate my life and be with my thoughts. But by day four I was over the thought that I was gonna live in this solitude. I just saw all these stories happening around me and it became impossible for me not to cross that boundary [into engaging technology] and when I finally did it was like breathing fresh air.

This pilgrim offers a fascinating account of his efforts to avoid the use of technology, and elaborates his efforts to participate in the pilgrimage the “right” way-without technology, quietly contemplating his life and his faith. Yet something was missing. Ultimately, he recognized that in an attempt to engage the pilgrimage in a way he thought was authentic, he wasn’t being true to himself. In an effort to participate in the pilgrimage ‘authentically’, he was participating in a way that felt inauthentic, and the way to correct that was to listen to his heart rather than to the opinions of others regarding the “right way” to participate in the pilgrimage.

As noted, Kim and Lee (2011) found that Facebook posts relating to impression management tend to fall in one of two categories: positive or honest. Individuals on social media often tend to either attempt to create a positive social image with their social media pages, or they opt to present themselves with utter honesty. Unsurprisingly, a great number of Camino-related posts on social media tend to fall into one of these categories. Social networking pilgrims who elect to post pictures and summaries of their experiences tend to post either beautiful photos that show the user bravely embarking on a unique adventure in Spain, or they tend to candidly discuss their trials, tribulations, and even shortcomings along the way. As a result, responses are often elicited that either offer respect, awe, or admiration for the former, or social support and encouragement for the latter. As the number of Camino-related groups continues to expand, so does the sympathetic, engaged audience.

Technology and Religious Engagement

Technology is also impacting the ways in which pilgrims engage some of the religious aspects of the Camino. One pilgrim with whom I spoke indicated that he had

downloaded and was actively using prayer apps [mobile applications] on his cell phone while walking. He stated,

I use two different prayer apps...it's something called The Divine Office...and I'm required, I'm a Catholic deacon, so I'm required to do the Office every day...Catholic ministers, we are required to say the Office every day. And I use that to do the Office. And I use an app for the rosary, Rosario. And that app has helped me say the rosary every day, not by myself. Saying the rosary which is a Catholic tradition. This is a very Catholic pilgrimage for me.

Here, we see the clash of dimensions, as the modern perspectival, the progress of technology, enables the modern pilgrim to acquire mobile applications that enable him or her to engage holy rituals. Langr (2015) outlines popular mobile applications that Catholics may use to invigorate their Catholic experience, remarking “Even Pope Francis is using technology for the glory of God” (n.p.). Among the apps listed are iBreviary, effectively the digital Catholic Breviary in five languages, Relevant Radio, which allows users to stream live Catholic radio programs, and the Catholic Mass Time Church Directory, which enables users to locate local Catholic masses.

While many wrestle with the intersection of the sacred and the profane, others are welcoming new technologies as they open up new pathways to welcome worshippers. In the fast-moving modern world, the church is finding new entry points for believers through these developing technologies.

Photography on the Camino

In his fascinating treatise on photography, *Camera Lucida*, Roland Barthes (1980) notes that “The photograph mechanically repeats what could never be repeated existentially” (p. 4). In other words, the camera enables us to freeze otherwise fleeting moments in time and allows us to hold on to those moments, to carry them with us, to

return to them at will, and to remember them more fully (or perhaps even differently.) Kramer (n.d.) quotes Lowry in an investigation into what he terms *visiocentrism*, noting, “We are seeking permanence in the midst of what was only perpetually evanescent” (p. 1). Kramer (n.d.) notes that humans demonstrate a propensity for mimesis, associated with reproduction, in an attempt to control nature and render the impermanent permanent.

Many pilgrims carry cameras with them on the Camino, from simple point-and-click cameras to more sophisticated (and often heavier) styles; still more in modern times hail the modern cell phone for its ability to serve as a camera in addition to its many other utilities. While there are pilgrims who carry neither cell phones nor cameras with them on Camino, these pilgrims seem today to be in the minority, with the majority of pilgrims photographing their Camino experience. The act of photographing one’s Camino is not without consequence. The photos one takes will serve to shape in many ways the memories of the experience. While some special moments, feelings, or notable experiences will endure in one’s memory of the Camino regardless of whether they are captured in a photograph, due to their emotional potency or personal significance, some photographs captured will become privileged memories that might have otherwise slipped away. Alternately, many fleeting moments on the Camino will fall away from our memories, and slip into the great abyss of life’s forgotten moments. Perhaps this is one reason many pilgrims ultimately opt to return to the Camino, to recapture some of those lost moments. It is also worth noting that, despite efforts to render many moments of the pilgrimage permanent, the experience itself maintains its ephemeral quality, as evidenced by the frequency of return pilgrims.

The act of taking photographs, too, becomes part of the pilgrim experience. In many ways, looking at the Camino with the photographer's eye changes the manner in which one sees the Camino. Scanning for quality shots and even looking at one's surroundings through the lens of the camera itself serves to frame the object of one's gaze differently. Failure to capture a special moment may result in disappointment; capturing the moment at just the right angle might create joy. The ability to return to the photograph may create contentment or enable the pilgrim to revisit the happy moment again and again. Stopping to take photographs may open conversations along the trail. One pilgrim with whom I spoke remembered an encounter she had with another pilgrim on the trail. She noted,

I had stopped to take a picture of a snail, something that had become almost habitual to me, as the snail was sort of my spirit animal on the Camino. Another pilgrim observed me doing so, and said to me as he passed, "If you stop to take a picture of every snail on the Camino, you'll never make it to Santiago, love!"

Returning to the photographs in remembrance of the experience is also meaningful, which will be discussed at greater length in the next chapter.

Down Time on the Camino: Alone Together?

While the use of cell phones on the trail itself, with the exception of the camera or GPS function, is relatively uncommon, the same cannot be said for instances of 'down time' on the Camino. The lack of available wi-fi on the trail itself prevents many pilgrims from having access to social networking, texting, or other social functions, although some pilgrims in possession of local SIM cards can occasionally be heard talking on the phone as they walk. In cafes or albergues, however, the presence of wi-fi access draws many pilgrims to their electronic devices and into their mediated worlds. It is now a common sight to see pilgrims in cafes or in common areas of albergues

hunched over their devices, physically in the presence of their fellow pilgrims but attentively elsewhere. This behavior perfectly illustrates the phenomenon that Sherry Turkle (2011, 2012) described as being “alone together”. [See Figure 3]

Unquestionably, there is much to be lost in the function of being “alone together” while on Camino. Pilgrims, while choosing to focus on their devices and engaging in electronic communication, are missing out on the potential for conversations with other pilgrims in their immediate presence, a diverse range of pilgrims from all over the world and all walks of life, and on the richness of the experience of engaging with other pilgrims and deepening the bonds of a shared experience. In a post on the Camino de Santiago forum about the concept of being “alone together” on Camino, one pilgrim commented,

Based on others' comments I reminded of a similar experience I had while staying at the San Martin Pinario. I went downstairs to use the lounge area since it was the only place where one could get wifi and felt oddly alone in the room where people were gathered together. Nobody spoke, each was busy doing something of their mobile device. I guess in future, we may find signs posted stating "Quiet Please: People Surfing". Since then I have been acutely aware of people being "alone together". Everyday (sic) I pass couples walking, hand in hand while holding their respective iPhones in the other free hand, periodically stopping to check their devices, entire groups at dinner tables, all checking their respective devices, not saying a word, and kids at the parks, lying around, taking in the sun, again each glued to the screens of their mobile devices. I guess in future we may find signs posted stating " Quiet Please: People Engaged - Just not with each other".

This pilgrim offers a clear example of Turkle’s (2011) *Alone Together* experience among pilgrims on down time in the albergues. This is a common sight--to see pilgrims gathered together in the wi-fi accessible area, each engrossed in their devices but not engaging with one another. The pilgrim goes on to express fears of continued dissociation among pilgrims as well as in the broader culture, echoing the very fears

that Turkle has stated, that our devices may be causing us to socially isolate ourselves from those in our immediate presence.

Another pilgrim pondered in the Camino de Santiago forum whether modern devices were truly the culprit, or if individuals would always find distractions that might interfere with social interaction. She posed the following challenge:

To give a different outlook, try changing the word "phone" (or "new technology") to "book." In years past, I have

1. Walked into a lamp post because I was engrossed in a book.
2. Taken a book into a restaurant because I was dining alone.
3. Been accused of being antisocial because I had my nose in a book.
4. Felt bereft when I found myself somewhere with time and no book.

As [another user] points out, many of the people in the lounge at San Martin Pinario were only there because the wifi was good. Otherwise they'd be in their solitary rooms having even less social contact! I am a bit on the introvert side and find that sitting in that lounge, using my phone, is a good way to be semi-social to a degree that I'm happy with. I don't always want to chat indiscriminately with everyone who passes by, so the phone (like a book or a diary or knitting or the state of my shoelaces) can be a way to gently ease in or out of interaction if desired. But I am there, in the public area, receptive to other people - I can always pause from my phone, look up and around, smile at someone or greet them. On my long daily walks around home, I ponder the state of my life and think about my family, friends, forum acquaintances, my garden, sewing projects, Camino equipment, etc. I confess that sometimes I pause in the shade of a tree and pull out my phone to exchange short text comments with my daughter or sister-in-law, who live thousands of kilometers away but with whom I have daily communication that truly enhances our relationships. I have even replied to comments on this forum. I think about how much pleasure this brings to me and how fortunate I am to have this technology. Of course, we all need to manage our time - that includes time spend on work, internet, TV, reading, talking over the fence with neighbours, gossiping with friends. And I agree that we need to be aware of both the negatives and positives of constant electronic communication, and manage them as best we can. I just object to some of the "tut tutting" about modern times!

As pilgrims continue to navigate the modern Camino and the role of communication devices, these kinds of exchanges are rampant. This pilgrim points out that for many, the device offers a reprieve from social awkwardness, as individuals can simply slip into their device the way they would into a book or any other object that might act as a

social barrier. She also reminds pilgrims that there are benefits to the technology, and that perhaps some of the judgment is unnecessary, and not in keeping with the spirit of the Camino. Others would argue that the reticence to accept these modern behaviors is entirely appropriate. Herein lies the tension as pilgrims attempt to reconcile the ancient with the modern.

Another pilgrim noted that even the ability to connect with loved ones back home has its limitations. He stated,

But you know, perhaps the most wicked thing is using WhatsApp (a communication application for Smartphones that allows users to exchange text messages, phone calls, and audio messages for free when wi-fi connections are available) to contact my wife. And I've quadrupled my use of Facebook, which I've never used really, but my siblings and nieces and nephews are on it, so I've used it more...and I'm not afraid of technology, but it also has its limitations. 'Cause as much as my wife and I can communicate with WhatsApp, the reality is I can't hold her. And she can't hold me.

Here, Frank reveals the greatest limitation of digital communication technologies: the lack of immediacy. While some pilgrims did comment on the tremendous value of being able to connect with loved ones back home, the lack of immediacy that Frank articulates is an intimacy that cannot be attained through mediated channels of communication. While modern technologies allow individuals to bridge many aspects of separation, they cannot overcome physical distance entirely. They cannot touch, hold, or physically engage those who are far away.

For some, the ability to connect to others meant the difference between being able to go on the Camino or staying home. One pilgrim with whom I spoke stated,

My mother is ninety-two years old. There is no way I could have come on this pilgrimage if I weren't able to contact her frequently and let her know I was ok. The stress would simply be too much for her to bear and I would never do that to her. With technology, I can be here experiencing this pilgrimage and my mother can be reassured of my safety, which alleviates her worries.

Other pilgrims said that they, too, would have been unable to go on the Camino without access to their devices. Many noted, though, that their technological habits were merely that-habits that they had not broken while on pilgrimage. One pilgrim said,

If I wasn't necessarily staying in touch with him [her business partner] I was checking the bank balance. I was, you know, I was...ergh. Have you chased them up? Have you thought about this? Rahrahh. But I think part of that is addiction as well, I think...it is really hard to just let that go...because there was free wi-fi everywhere, which I just wasn't expecting. Um, yeah...I-I stayed in contact a lot more than I thought I would. It took me longer to sort of wean off Facebook and things as well.

This pilgrim conveyed a sense of frustration at her seeming inability to break her online habits, a sentiment that was not at all uncommon on the trail. Many pilgrims lamented that they were engaging their technologies much more than they ought to. Another pilgrim noted, brusquely, "It's an addiction. There is no moderation when it comes to addiction. The only choice is to abstain". Many pilgrims articulated the complicated relationship that they had with their technology. While they appreciated the convenience and peace of mind that connectivity could provide, most could not help but feel that something was being lost as well--namely, the connection with pilgrims around them, and the freedom of being fully untethered from their home life. In addition, many seem to long for the "authentic" experience of the medieval pilgrim, and seem to indicate that all of the modern conveniences available on the present-day Camino route make the pilgrimage so pampered that it seems to more closely resemble a holiday rather than a pilgrimage. This view is a reminder that many pilgrims see suffering as an integral part of the experience.

Because our devices have become such a pervasive extension of ourselves and our daily lives, quite often individuals find themselves using technology much more

than they realize until they begin to examine their own actions. An example of this phenomenon can be found in the following interview I conducted with two pilgrims, a married couple who were on their second Camino.

R1: Did you, either time [on pilgrimage], use any kind of technology along the way?

John: First time we used, we did not-

Velma: Well, we used cell phones

John: We used our cell phones.

Velma: Both times, as cameras.

John: Only cameras

Velma: Only cameras. And to keep in contact with our girls back home, our daughters.

John: Just to let 'em know where we were.

Velma: And then, also, you know, as you get close, like this time I had to make, um, reservations ack home at the hotel, on our train back to Seattle. 'Cause we're flying into Portland, so...

R1: Oh, ok.

John: But the second time was mostly for reservations. Calling up places to stay.

Velma: Well, that's true, yeah. We didn't personally call. [Joyce] called for us, 'cause she used Spanish, but we didn't have to use phones every night to call for reservations. But we don't do iPads and all the other. All we had were our iPhones.

R1: Yeah...were you social networking or anything like that?

Velma: Oh, I would get on Facebook. Our friend [Joan] who is with us, I'm what they call a Facebook stalker. 'Cause I'm just on it so I can follow my girls. And they call me a stalker. Because I never post; I don't do anything. [Joan] posted pictures of our group, which helped our girls, and so I would go on to look at what [Joan] was posting and then our, you know, our family and our girls could go on and see pictures, and that, I have to say was very handy and very nice. But I don't even know how to post on Facebook so I'm a stalker. I just look.

R1: So, but you enjoyed being able to share that with your daughters and all that.

Velma: Yeah, I was really happy that [Joan] was doing that, 'cause it was, to have that real-time, they could see where we were and what we were doing, that was, that is kinda fun.

This exchange illuminates several interesting, and common, experiences. First, as the conversation continued, Velma and John began to realize just how much they had been using their technology. From beginning with "Just using it as a camera" to

“communicating with loved ones back home” and finally to “some social networking”, many pilgrims do underestimate the amount of time they spend engaging their devices. Additionally, Velma expresses the frequently expressed view that there is something special about being able to share the experience of the pilgrimage in real-time with friends and loved ones. This was a very common sentiment expressed by pilgrims-not only do they enjoy sharing the pilgrimage with others, but the audience often expresses joy at being able to share the experience, and often followers encourage pilgrims to continue the process of sharing. The practice of sharing the experience in this way unquestionably adds a performative layer to the experience of pilgrimage, as so many pilgrims are sharing their pilgrimage with an audience of family, friends, and even acquaintances and strangers. Since the pilgrimage is being acted out in front of these audiences, pilgrims are unavoidably paying close attention to the elements they elect to share and the ways in which sharing such experiences might reflect on them. Additionally, because the modern tendency to engage personal electronic devices is so reflexive, often pilgrims have to be quite intentional about breaking the habits of reaching for the devices any time there is a lull. Another pilgrim I interviewed had the following to say about that phenomenon,

I think what I’ve noticed is the wi-fi; the push for wi-fi, and I notice this when I go into cafes, and I find myself doing this and I’m starting to pull back. The ‘Oh, quick, what’s the password? Oh, I need to connect!’ You don’t need to. You don’t NEED to. Um...and I think it would’ve been a better experience in terms of talking with people and meeting people if there was no wi-fi in a good majority of the albergues.

This behavior is undoubtedly changing the nature of pilgrim relationships, and the *communitas* that Turner (1978) discusses. Interactions between pilgrims are now opening up into new mediated spaces, and past, present, and future pilgrims are all able

to interface in wonderfully rich ways. Pilgrims presently on Camino can discuss their experiences in real-time with other forum members, eliciting sympathy and advice from seasoned pilgrims and offering insight into the experience for pilgrims who have yet to walk. David Gitlitz and Linda Davidson illuminate this modern phenomenon in an episode of Dave Whitson's (2016) Camino Podcast. During the interview, Gitlitz comments that in Turner's original conception of pilgrimage and liminality, the pilgrim experience required separation from one's daily life. The separation and subsequent re-integration were key components to the pilgrim ritual. With the presence of the modern cell phone, Gitlitz and Davidson note, this separation is no longer fully experienced. We no longer separate ourselves from our home lives. Most modern pilgrims keep consistent contact with friends and family, and even work, from the trail.

Interestingly, the tension between the convenience of technology and the sense that the trail might be better off limiting opportunities for connectivity can be found among pilgrims, scholars, and administrators alike. Two fascinating announcements at the 2016 American Pilgrims on Camino Annual Gathering illustrate this tension clearly. The first announcement came from two representatives from Santiago de Compostela, who were reporting on the ongoing investments being made in an effort to make improvements in Spain to the trail and, ultimately, the pilgrim experience. Among these were replacement of waymarkers on the trail in an effort to make the milemarkers more accurate, the grand opening of a new pilgrim office in Santiago intended to streamline the process of receiving one's credential (*Compostela*) upon arrival, and finally, "we will be putting wi-fi everywhere!". The representatives noted that many of the complaints they received had to do with access to quality wi-fi connections in albergues

and in other spaces, and that they would be doing everything they could to meet this common request.

The next announcement came from a representative of the Confraternity of Saint James in London, who was announcing the sponsorship of a new albergue to be opened on the Camino Norte, the Northern route to Santiago. After advising that the albergue would be opening soon, she concluded the announcement with a firm statement that, “There will be NO wi-fi at the albergue. That’s not what the pilgrimage is about”.

The juxtaposition of these two announcements illustrates clearly the tension between the desire for the convenience of access to wi-fi and the sense that something about the nature of the pilgrimage is being lost in the midst of the desire for constant connectivity. There are unquestionably both positive and negative effects of modern advancements on the trail, and pilgrims continue to navigate the space between tradition and modernity.

Chronic Urgency

For many, a chronic sense of urgency is present while on the Camino. Urgency stems from many sources--chiefly, time. Most pilgrims have a limited amount of time allotted to the pilgrimage, and most have a return date that must be honored, meaning that a certain number of kilometers must be covered each day in order to reach Santiago in time to return home. Many pilgrims have a limited time off of work or away from other obligations, and as a result find themselves rushing down the Camino in an effort to maintain their obligatory schedule. This (often necessary) preoccupation with time and hurry can serve as a distraction from the contemplative nature of the journey, and for some, can cause injury. This chronic hurrying is also causing pilgrims to rush home,

back to jobs and family and obligations, without adequate time for decompression, making the transition home difficult.

Bed panic [the deep concern that one might not find accommodations at the end of a walking day] can create another sense of urgency. Because of the crowds seen on the Camino during busy months, many pilgrims find themselves rushing to the next town, hurrying through villages rather than stopping to explore them, walking briskly through forests rather than stopping to admire their beauty, and hurriedly rushing past streams rather than stopping to soak their feet in the cool waters.

Naturally, when pilgrims are consumed with the stress of “rushing” through their pilgrimage, it can make reflection and contemplation more difficult. Many pilgrims stated that calling ahead to hotels and private albergues for reservations helped to alleviate some of this anxiety, and enabled them to walk at a more leisurely pace and free their head space for prayer or contemplation. In this sense, technology, rather than causing individuals to speed up or find themselves distracted, actually enables them to slow down and remain present.

Problems of Overcrowding, or Will Technology Save Us?

The numbers of pilgrims on the Camino have been rising steadily and considerably since the 1980s. The Camino de Santiago is now reaching numbers not seen since its height of popularity in the Middle Ages. While locals are responding in kind to the demand by building more albergues, cafes, and tiendas [stores] to serve pilgrims on the route, ‘bed panic’ is still a common concern. Frey (1998) notes that bed panic was a phenomenon even in the nineties, but the ever-increasing number of pilgrims on the Camino has only exacerbated the sense of scarcity, as infrastructure has

struggled to keep up with demand, not only on the popular Camino Frances, but on routes like the Camino Portuguese as well. Pilgrims frequently worry whether there will be a place of rest available to them at the end of the day. This unease on the trail is palpable—the thought of walking twenty to thirty kilometers, often in pain, heat, cold, or rain, only to find no accommodations at the end of an arduous day, is no minor concern. Perhaps the most vivid encounter I had on the trail with this phenomenon was in the small village of Villamayor de Monjardin. I arrived around one in the afternoon to receive one of the last available beds in town. A fellow pilgrim, a young Danish girl, arrived a couple of hours later in a tremendous amount of pain, her feet covered in infected blisters that would soon require medical attention. When she arrived into the town and was advised there were no beds, she promptly dissolved into tears, unsure what to do. She simply could not walk another step. She finally elected to sleep outside, seeing no other alternative. As a team of pilgrims inside the albergue schemed to sneak out pillows and blankets to her and to find her a spot in the garden with an overhang to protect her from any potential weather, the hospitaleros finally (hours later) advised her of a previously reserved bed that had just become available due to a cancellation. The Danish pilgrim had a bed after all. These encounters are not altogether uncommon, and pilgrims often have to find creative solutions to the seeming shortages. Many pilgrims elect to set out in the wee hours of the morning, often before sunrise, in order to arrive early enough into town to find available beds. Some are forced to taxi into the next town to find beds. Others find comfort and shelter through kindly locals who offer their homes. Some sleep in the cloisters of local parishes. In Zubiri, on my first official day of walking, I arrived into town to find the albergue full and found myself sleeping that

evening on a mat in the local gymnasium. The locals, in their kindness and experience, have become accustomed to finding creative solutions to the ever-rising numbers of pilgrims.

Issues with overcrowding on the Camino Frances are particularly present in the final one hundred kilometers to Santiago, the minimum distance required to receive the Compostela. Since pilgrims can walk from this point and receive their pilgrim credentials, many opt to begin from this point, both Spaniards and others alike. Sarria, the common starting point for pilgrims wishing to complete the final one hundred kilometers, stands as a significant point for pilgrims today, as many see it, both practically and symbolically, as the beginning of the end of the Camino de Santiago. Here, pilgrims see the commercialism of the pilgrimage at its height, and many find it difficult to maintain their peace of mind during this stage. Many pilgrims who elect to start from this point also struggle with judgment from other pilgrims, and often feel as though they are not treated as true pilgrims by others who have walked greater distances. One pilgrim on the Camino Facebook forum said, “When I walked from Sarria to Santiago, some pilgrims showed some animosity toward us because we were “100kers” as they put it. If I start in Roncesvalles instead of SJPP [Saint Jean Pied de Port], do you think people will do the same?” Here, the pilgrim speculates that no matter the circumstances, pilgrims will find some means by which to judge other pilgrims. One pilgrim responded with the following,

[T]he long distance pilgrims do get annoyed with the new boots. i (sic) suspect that you will not encounter that problem if you start anywhere east of pamplona (sic). You will find that by the time you get to sarria (sic) you are in a more meditative mood reflecting on your journey near the end. you will also recognize your own pilgrims and maybe self-segregate. it's (sic) not so much

animosity as annoyance, it's like high school where seniors don't really mix with freshmen.

Interestingly, this pilgrim indicates that the additional weeks and miles spent on the Camino change pilgrims in such a way that they have a harder time relating to and intermingling with “newcomers”. Others disagreed. One pilgrim responded, “Ignore them. If by the time they got to Sarria they didn't learn any lessons from their Camino, you can't help them”. This pilgrim seems to suggest that the time on the pilgrimage should have taught the long-distance pilgrims more tolerance and open-mindedness. This seems to echo the common sentiment “Walk your own Camino”, which is a mantra adopted by many pilgrims. It essentially suggests that each pilgrim is on a personal journey, and that good fellowship commands pilgrims to meet each other with open hearts, regardless of their circumstances and manner of engaging the pilgrimage.

Many pilgrims, however, are turning to technology to alleviate the anxiety caused by overcrowding. Most private albergues now allow pilgrims to reserve beds in advance (municipal, or state-sponsored albergues maintain a policy of not accepting reservations.) Pilgrims can generally reserve either online or by phone, for those that accept reservations. Websites such as Booking.com now feature pilgrim hostels alongside hotels in the area. Response to this practice is mixed. Some individuals I interviewed noted that reservations enabled them to walk each day without anxiety, focusing their attention instead on prayer, reflection, or the immediacy of their surroundings. Others, however, complained that the practice of reserving disadvantages pilgrims who are seeking to walk the Camino more ‘authentically’. Many prefer not to make reservations, since without reservations they are afforded the freedom to stop when their bodies or their whimsies dictate. Many pilgrims, as noted, also refrained

from engaging technology, which makes it more difficult to reserve in advance. Many bars along the way are accommodating to pilgrims in such circumstances, and can help connect pilgrims with albergues further down the trail and even taxi services that can take them there if they are unable to walk due to injury or fatigue. (Taxi service is a loose term, as, at times, a ‘taxi’ was merely a local bar patron interested in making a few euros.) A few pilgrims I interviewed noted that ‘Camino magic’ was often made present in the midst of these difficult situations, that the kindness demonstrated by others when it was needed most was among their most cherished memories, and that circumventing these encounters and these struggles took away some of the precious lessons and experiences of the Camino.

Pilgrims can also find options in some areas through sites such as Airbnb.com and Couchsurfing.org, which connect travelers to locals in the area who open their homes to travelers, for a fee in the case of Airbnb, or for free in the case of Couchsurfing. Both have become extremely popular resources for travelers around the globe. As of 2016, Airbnb boasted more than one hundred million users (Chafkin & Newcomer, 2016), and Couchsurfing claimed fourteen million users worldwide (Couchsurfing.org, n.d.).

Beginning April 24, 2017, the municipal albergue in Roncesvalles announced that they would be limiting the number of beds available and closing the overflow camp, increasing the likelihood of pilgrims being turned away for beds. This is particularly problematic considering the walk from St. Jean into Roncesvalles is considered by most to be the most difficult day on the Camino Frances. After the arduous, sometimes injury-inducing trek through the Pyrenees, walking past

Roncesvalles in an effort to find accommodation is simply not an option for many who arrive in Roncesvalles on what is often only the first or second day of the pilgrimage.

Problems of overcrowding are not likely to be alleviated any time soon.

One area in which technology does appear to be saving pilgrims is through search and rescue efforts. One route in particular, known as the Napoleonic route, which tracks down through the Pyrenees, becomes a hazard once the snow comes, with occasional pilgrims failing to heed warning signs of the passage's closure, frequently resulting in the need for rescue (Criddle, 2016). From helicopter search capabilities to social media alerts, technology has enabled many pilgrims to find their way to safety after finding themselves in precarious circumstances. When American pilgrim Denise Thiem disappeared, (Burgen, 2015), it was her sudden break in communication that raised suspicion from her family.

The Structures of Consciousness on The Way

As discussed, two related models that can be used to explain the conflict between the ancient practice of pilgrimage and the modern technology available on the trail is Gebser's (1949) model of the structures of consciousness and Kramer's (2012) model of dimensional accrual and dissociation. Along the Camino de Santiago, there is clear evidence of the intersection and sometimes conflicting magic, mythic, and perspectival modes of consciousness. This conflict can well explain the discomfort many pilgrims feel regarding the encroachment of modernity and capitalistic efforts along the sacred path. They see extravagant hotels, group tours, and posh services such as luggage transport as contradictory in nature to the less expensive albergues, which offer a less remarkable stay but one that is more generally accepted as 'authentic'. Here

we see the perspectival consciousness, which may see addressing a practical need such as overcrowding as reasonable and even necessary. However, for those who see parity, modesty, and even suffering as a necessary condition for pilgrimage, comfortable accommodations are not symbolically aligned with the act of pilgrimage. There is a conflict between the modern perspectival consciousness and the symbolic consciousness. As previously mentioned, the rise in affluent accommodations, pre-arranged tours with offer services such as luggage transport, and other high-end services that can be found along the modern Camino, such as high-end hotels, also interrupt the sense of *communitas* among pilgrims, because they sever the sense of equality that comes from sharing the experience of the pilgrimage.

The role of suffering in the Christian religion is pervasive. Sister Jane Dominic Laurel (2017) notes that the concept that suffering is redemptive is central to the Christian religion. The apostle Paul discusses the role of suffering at length, suggesting that suffering endured on Earth enables Christians to emulate Christ. Stories of suffering, redemption, and grace are powerful and common within a variety of faiths. Testimonials, during which Christians discuss their earthly struggles and the grace afforded to them by God, are often encouraged for this very reason. It is possible that notions of suffering have become central to many along the Camino de Santiago for the same reasons-many pilgrims share their common tales of aching joints, infected blisters, sprained ankles, snoring pilgrims, and more with one another. These tales are often followed with stories of grace or kindness that have become almost synonymous with the Camino. The phrase “Camino Magic” is well-known among pilgrims, but often those “magic” moments could not have occurred without the preceding suffering, and

they likely would not have been as powerful to the individuals who experienced them. The more that development along the Camino serves to alleviate suffering, the fewer opportunities for magic moments, kindness, grace, and life lessons that occur as a result of suffering.

At the same time, there are instances in which modern perspectival advancements can actually serve to bring about magic and mythic encounters. I actually experienced such an instance while on the pilgrimage. One evening as I rested in Foncebadon, a small village that rests just before the Cruce de Ferro, I happened upon a post in the American Pilgrims on Camino forum from a woman asking for a profound and very personal favor. Her post read as follows: “If any pilgrims are nearing Cruz de Faro (sic), please place a stone for my sister who is in surgery now for cancer. Your prayers will be greatly appreciated.” Since I happened to be at the very spot, and would be arriving at the Cruce the following morning, I immediately responded to the request, “Going tomorrow. I will happily do so. Planning to be at the Cruce at sunrise. Praying the light shines on your family as it will there”. She responded with her sister’s name and added, “Thanks for doing this for me. I find magic on the Camino.” These kinds of connections across space and time can and do happen in the modern age of pilgrimage. While pilgrimages by surrogate are not a new concept (Hoffman, 2014), the manner in which individuals can reach out, connect with pilgrims, and make personal requests is being affected by the new technological landscape. To be sure, many pilgrims with whom I spoke noted that friends and family members had asked them to carry a stone to the Cruce for them, or to say a prayer for them in Santiago. Yet the presence of modern online forums and instant connectivity enable individuals to reach out in real time, often

in response to their own ever-changing circumstances, and to find others willing to include them in their prayers and rituals.

This particular act, with respect to structures of consciousness, this could be interpreted as occurring either magically or symbolically. If I am seen by the young woman reaching out as merely a proxy, this act can be seen as merely symbolic-I am laying a stone at the Cruce de Ferro symbolically for her family; I am standing in for her. If, however, she sees me *as* her-if I am erasing space, time, and metaphysics-then we are dealing in the magic state of being.

There are countless examples along the Camino de Santiago of the complex intersection between these structures of consciousness. At times they can serve to feed into one another, as in the previous example. Conversely, there are many instances in which these varying structures conflict, creating discomfort and frustration. Pilgrims making their way home, back into their dissociated, modern lives, often have the greatest struggles, after having shared many magic and mythic experiences while on pilgrimage. Chapter 6 will discuss the process of re-entry and the challenges within.

Chapter 6: The Post-Camino Experience or Managing Re-Entry

Gitlitz (2014) noted that while many pilgrims still find their way to Compostela on foot, (in contrast with many modern pilgrimages), few pilgrims actually walk *out* of Compostela. Many, in fact, are on a plane home within one or two days of completing their Camino. This is in stark contrast to medieval pilgrims who, upon arriving at the remains of Saint James, would find themselves only at the halfway mark in their journey, and would soon after turn around and make their way home again on foot (Frey, 1998; Gitlitz, 2014). Importantly, Gitlitz (2014) points out that the elimination of

the return journey shortens or virtually eliminates the opportunity for pilgrims to process the layers of meaning and the complex emotions and experiences that the pilgrimage provided. Without the time and distance provided by the return journey, Gitlitz (2014) states, pilgrims who rush home via modern transportation miss the opportunity to “process, gradually, the spiritual effects of the visit to the holy place and to allow those insights to evolve” (p. 43).

Because the pilgrimage comes to a bit of an abrupt end in Santiago, many describe a sense of melancholy upon arrival or as they near Santiago. One pilgrim in the Camino forum said the following about arriving in Santiago,

We've walked multiple caminos (sic), one with very dear friends that we met crossing the Pyrenees, and the rest we have walked alone. The sense of achievement for the physical endurance is certainly there when you arrive in Santiago, but after that 3 minutes of satisfaction, there is, for us, a very real melancholy and sense of loss. As much as we complained every day about our knees, ankles, feet and the weather while walking the camino (sic), it just felt devastating to know we wouldn't be getting up in the morning and walking again. (We tried to overcome this sadness by adding Finisterre one year, and adding Camino Ingles another year). I am now prepared for the "I Can't Believe It's Over!!!" and I get through it, but definitely don't stay in Santiago more than 2 days. It would just feel wrong. So be prepared for this letdown. There is no welcoming committee, no congratulations, no marching bands :wink: . Spend a few minutes being satisfied with your achievement, walk around and find friends and then move on to experiencing Santiago before you return home.

This pilgrim elaborates a feeling that is commonly expressed by other pilgrims—a sense of sadness that the pilgrimage has come to an end, and a lack of climax to an experience that has felt much more momentous than the arrival appears to capture. This is not a universal experience, to be sure, but it is not an uncommon one either.

As stated, many pilgrims, as Frey (1998) points out, find themselves on a plane home, in some instances, merely *hours* after their arrival into Santiago. [It is important to note here that the jolt of returning home from pilgrimage can be shocking, regardless

of whether the end point is, in fact, Santiago. For those pilgrims who complete the pilgrimage in sections or who are forced to terminate their pilgrimage early for any number of reasons, the shock of leaving the pilgrimage route and returning home so abruptly can be startling, regardless.] Since, as Frey and many others point out, the pilgrimage really *begins* at the end, as pilgrims begin the introspective process of unraveling the lessons and experiences of the Camino, this sudden re-entry into their pre-Camino lives can be quite difficult to navigate. Even those who elect to take time at the end of the pilgrimage to relax, travel elsewhere before returning home, or spend time quietly reflecting on their experience do not usually have available the same amount of time and space to process the experience as would pilgrims whose journey reached only its mid-point in Santiago. There are exceptions. A few pilgrims I met along the way were planning to make the return journey on foot. One pilgrim from Scotland, traveling in the manner of medieval pilgrims, set forth out his front door and was journeying back home on foot when I met him in Pedrouzo, just outside Santiago. However, this pilgrim was unique in his approach to the journey and was certainly the exception rather than the rule. Most pilgrims, after a month or longer spent propelled over the earth, transported by their own feet, through nature, through town, through city, are suddenly whisked away by the magic of modern travel, thousands of miles covered in mere hours, and plopped promptly back into a world that may now feel foreign to him. As Heraclitus (2007) suggests, both the river and the man have changed, and the process of navigating this now unfamiliar world with new eyes begins.

Navigating the Return Home: The Unfamiliar Familiar

One of the most difficult experiences to navigate, according to pilgrims, is that of exiting the Camino and re-entering their former lives. Because this transition back home is often accompanied by a sense of melancholy or listlessness, some online pilgrims have coined the emotional reaction to this transition the “Camino Blues”. Pilgrim Leslie articulates this on her blog Camino Adventures. In her post entitled “Transitioning from Camino Life to Real Life”, she notes, “But, for all of us, when we step back into normal life, the longing of the Camino will eventually come our way” (Camino Adventures, 2016, n.p.). There is a common and frequent longing for the Camino that pilgrims experience after returning home, and many opt to return to the Camino, either as a pilgrim or as a volunteer, with some returning multiple times and to various routes.

One pilgrim had the following to say about the return home, which he chose to call “Post Camino Syndrome”,

Post Camino Syndrome. Its (sic) a thing. I expect that nearly everyone feels at least some of the symptoms. I bet the regular veterans on this forum are multiple-symptom sufferers for the most part. In my view, its (sic) the clarity and simplicity of life on the Camino that has such power to affect people in such a positive way. Not everyone of course, and not everyone the same way, or with the same intensity. Coming off the Camino leaves many feeling lost, because their mission is complete, and for the first time in a month, there is a wide choice in what to do next. Choices are hard - they have implications, complications, and consequences. Nothing like that on Camino. For others, they have to abandon one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives to go back to "The Real World", whatever that may be. Either way, all those old implications, complications and consequences are sitting in the trunk of their car at Long Term Parking, waiting for them to get off the airport shuttle bus. You are FAR from the only one who feels this way. I had lunch with a BA Airline pilot in Santiago. She finished a day before me and grabbed onto our group as we arrived at the cathedral. She looked so sad as we were feeling so elated. She confessed that 24 hours after her elated moment, she realized that she was no longer a pilgrim, and hanging around the square, she was just

another tourist taking up table space meant for pilgrims. I thought to myself, "well that's a Debbie-Downer point of view", and felt much the same as she did the next days as I was greeting former walking partners in the square. It passes.....sort of. The Camino has a lasting effect on many. Its (sic) hard to forget. It can become addictive. It takes time to digest. Search for this on the forum.....lots of points of view to be had.

Returning to the 'material world' of home after being on Camino for a long period of time can bring about a broad range of emotions, making the process of re-entry challenging. Transitioning from the simple, uniform experience of walking the Camino each day, with only the pack on their back, connecting with nature and spending time with their thoughts, meeting new people who are sharing the same experience and facing many of the same challenges, to their previous lives, can leave many pilgrims feeling a myriad of emotions. Since quite often those in their social milieu back home cannot relate to the experience the pilgrim has just endured, coming home can feel socially isolating. Many pilgrims report feeling overwhelmed with the sheer volume of "things" in their home upon returning home, having spent so much time with only the most basic of necessities. Ridding oneself of material belongings can be quite liberating for pilgrims on the path, and returning home to so many possessions can be overwhelming. Some pilgrims, upon coming home, end up purging many of their belongings. Additionally, after significant amounts of time spent each day in beautiful, quiet nature, alone with their thoughts, coming home to the noisy chaos of everyday life can be overwhelming as well, and can create feelings of frustration, since it is often the cacophony of daily life that inspired the journey in the first place. Returning to one's job is frustrating for some, since many eagerly welcomed time away from work responsibilities. Many people experience the "vacation blues" after returning home from time away, and coming home from the Camino can leave travelers with similar

feelings. Another pilgrim, upon returning home from Camino, posted the following inquiry in the Camino forum:

I got back from completing my first camino (sic) June 14th of 2015.... I fell in love with the camino (sic) way and the camino (sic) life. I've returned home and although I "threw" myself back into work and life here to try to normalise as quickly as possible. I can't. Yeah ok I can go about my day and see my friends... But there's something missing from my heart. I returned to my husband.... Which I hate to admit, but didn't miss as much as I thought I would. He doesn't understand the adventure (almost hippie) part of my personality. And this need to live a different life ... One away from the 9-5. (Not that there's anything wrong with that.... It's just not for me.... And being on the camino, (sic) showed me this even more so than before)...I actually didn't think I'd return after the camino (sic). But "reality" sets in and made me think I had to come back. But now I'm back and trying to live here but all I want to do is go on my next adventure, to leave.... Everything...and by adventure I don't (sic) necessarily mean a walking journey.... Just a different path for my life. But maybe I just need to give it more time? Anyone else feel so extreme after returning to loved ones? Anyone able to share the experience or advice?

Another user responded,

Part of the problem for me has been that "reentry" after the Camino, after two years of volunteer teaching in Vietnam, after a year in Haiti, etc. means coming to grips with the fact that others who have not really had the same or a similar experience can only briefly empathize. They try, eager to ask what it was like, but they cannot sustain their interest. There has seemed to me so much to talk about, but the attention span of nearly everyone who has not had a shared or similar experience has just fizzled out. And so I, and maybe you now, have felt a little disappointed that I have not been able to share the experience the way I would have liked to. But I'm "over it", because I have been through this four or five times and I just know what it's going to be like coming home. So now I just try to keep it short unless my audience appears to really want more information. A second part of reentry is that it means a return to the day-to-day routines of life. This is so completely different from waking up each day with no script but some blazes to follow and gronking (sic) on the landscapes and conversing pleasantly and sometimes meaningfully with random strangers. Oh yes, and thinking about things, sometimes the "big things" in life. No chores to do (except washing clothes), no errands to run, no dog to walk, etc. Life has become gloriously unstructured. And then a return to...the grind back home? I hope not, but at a minimum it's back to life as usual. My wife has accompanied me on our Camino hikes and our adventure in Vietnam. So I never had to deal with reentry problems with my life partner and so I cannot offer much advice on your feelings in this area. But if you found the Camino deeply satisfying, somewhat life changing, then maybe a redo in the near future with your partner.

As both of these pilgrims suggest, returning to the structure of everyday life can be quite difficult, for many reasons. The original poster is struggling with a sense of direction for her life, which is a question that leads many pilgrims to the Camino in the first place. The responder also touches on a common struggle for many pilgrims returning home--sharing the experience with others.

One challenge for pilgrims is the ability to take the lessons of the Camino and implement them into everyday life once home. For many, this can be quite difficult, as the chaos of the fast-paced, stress-infused daily life is in stark contrast to the simplicity of the pilgrim life. The forums and other outlets give pilgrims access to spaces in which they can discuss ways of incorporating the lessons of the Camino into their home lives. Brendan Bolton has also launched a program called Project Camino, “a weekly platform for people to share their personal insights as to how they have ‘taken the Camino home with them’” (Project Camino, n.d., n.p.). This podcast invites pilgrims to share their stories of the pilgrimage, and the ways in which the Camino has continued to influence their lives once home (Project Camino, n.d.).

Part of the difficulty in returning home from Camino, as many pilgrims have noted, is the difficulty in speaking about their experience to others. Frey (1998) discusses this challenge, noting, “Despite the positive aspects of retelling, pilgrims repeatedly comment on their inability to transmit the experiences of the Camino on a deep level because ‘no one really understands’” (p. 187). She goes on to note that this inability to share the experience with others can lead to a sense of isolation and loneliness.

Talking about the Camino can be difficult for a number of reasons. First, it can be difficult to explain the magnitude of such an event to those who have not shared such an experience. Second, because a pilgrim returning home may feel a sense of being a stranger in their own lives, it can take time to feel comfortable sharing such a personal experience with others who might feel more like strangers upon returning home. Finally, it can be difficult to discuss the Camino because the experience itself can be difficult to put into words. Kenneth Burke (1961), in *The Rhetoric of Religion*, notes that “the supernatural is by definition the realm of the ‘ineffable’. And language by definition is not suited to the expression of the ‘ineffable’” (p. 15). Burke’s words seem to echo Frey’s (1998) observations on pilgrims returning home. She states,

In going home, pilgrims have the opportunity to remember, re-view, and analyze the pilgrimage from the perspective of daily life, though they still may be lacking the vocabulary, voice, or an audience to express what has happened on a more profound level. (p. 186)

Burke (1961) goes on to indicate that the words selected to describe a particular religious experience behave as spirit does to matter. He explains, “The word’s “meaning” is not identical with its sheer materiality. There is a qualitative difference between the symbol and the symbolized” (p. 16). Put differently, words are insufficient in capturing the true essence of such experiences. The deepest religious or spiritual experiences cannot fully be expressed through language. Such experiences are beyond words. As such, they can be extremely difficult to convey to others, which can lead to frustration and even feelings of alienation once home. One pilgrim in an online forum described feeling “a little fuzzy/numb around the edges and a bit disconnected” upon returning home. Another pilgrim responded,

You're going from a simple world that very few back home can relate to. (sic) They want to hear all about it, but get easily bored because they can't relate. I then get tired of trying to explain it because it is impossible for me to relate my Camino experience to someone who has never had one. So then my response to their questions becomes very short and unenthusiastic. The things I learn eventually fade and then I have to go back and do it all over again for a refresher course.

This points to another important factor in the experience of the Camino de Santiago, that of the “return” pilgrims. Although there is currently no statistical data available on the number of pilgrims returning for a second, third, or tenth Camino, many pilgrims do, in fact, return, some again and again, in an attempt to recapture the experience. Some return to the same route, while others branch out to alternative routes. The Camino Portuguese is rapidly growing in popularity, and has become a common “second Camino” route. It has become the second most frequently traversed route behind the Camino Frances, with 52,145, or nearly nineteen percent of pilgrims receiving a Compostela in 2016 after walking the Portuguese route. The crowds on the Camino Frances have been pushing many pilgrims toward alternative routes, as the allure of a quieter path for reflection and the hope of reprieve from bed anxiety makes the draw of less popular routes highly appealing (although, with the rising popularity of the Camino Portuguese, many pilgrims are finding no surplus of beds on that route either.) For some, these less common trails toward Santiago may also satisfy the desire for what is thought to be a more “authentic” pilgrim experience, given that these less popular paths are less frequently traversed, and as a result can be considered to be less commercialized. For wherever the crowds are, the vendors and capitalists are sure to follow, and follow they have. There is also, potentially, the draw of the more novel experience available on such paths as the Camino Primitivo (The Original Way, the first

Camino route to Santiago), the Camino Ingles (The English Way, which traditionally begins in either A Coruña or Ferrol), and the Camino del Norte (The Northern Way, which runs along the northern coast and passes through San Sebastian, Santander, and Gijon before trekking downward to Santiago). Many pilgrims feel that because these paths are less frequently patronized by pilgrims, they more closely resemble the pilgrimage of days gone by, before the Camino was “ruined” by commercialization.

The previous pilgrim’s indication of the need for a “refresher course” is highly insightful. Although many pilgrims attempt to capture their pilgrimage and make it permanent through photographs, blogs, and social media, the fact that many pilgrims return again and again suggests that ultimately, no matter how hard one might try to incorporate the lessons of the Camino into everyday life, and no matter the manner(s) in which the experience is captured, the experience of the Camino is ephemeral. For many the only way to recapture the essence of the experience is to return.

Remembrance: Photography and Online Chronicling

Because photography has been made both easier and more common along the Camino with the ubiquity of the pocket-friendly Smartphone, modern pilgrims now have the ability to revisit their pilgrimage again and again through photographs that most elect to take throughout their journey. As previously discussed, the moments and images that pilgrims ultimately capture do, in many ways, come to influence the manner in which the pilgrimage is remembered. Captured moments become privileged, and serve to shape the personal narrative. Moments that were not captured on film or published online may be consigned to oblivion. The privileging of certain moments happens in other ways as well. Experiences that are posted on social media, in blogs, or

in personal journals, often survive as others fall away. While pilgrims have chronicled their journeys since early days, the modern methods of chronicling are rapidly changing, and the introduction of a public audience reforms what was once a personal reflection into a public performance. While many Camino blog entries do, in fact, delve into extremely personal, and even unflattering, feelings, behaviors, and narratives, the mere act of writing for an audience changes the process of writing. The knowing presence of ultimate consumers of one's lived experience cannot help but influence the manner in which the drama unfolds on the [electronic] page.

Facebook, Instagram, and other social media outlets also serve as a modern virtual photo album, wherein pilgrims can return again and again to revisit the words and memories captured during their time on Camino. With Facebook's "On this day" feature, (which appears at the top of a user's Facebook homepage upon logging in and excitedly reminds them what they were posting about on this date in years past) pilgrims are prompted to acknowledge and think about (and even share again) past experiences. Pilgrims have reported feelings of nostalgia, joy (at remembering) or sadness (at missing) the Camino when these reminders and commemorations have appeared. Whereas photo albums require an individual to make the decision to revisit those memories, features like "On this day" offer these captured moments without the user's prompting.

Continued Communitas: The Pilgrim Community at Home and Online

Victor Turner (1978) discusses the notion of *communitas*, a communal spirit shared by individuals who experience a common ritual experience together. In the realm of communitas, social hierarchies fall away and the ritualists enjoy a profound sense of

solidarity. While Eade and Sallnow (2013) and other pilgrim scholars from the Contestation period noted that *communitas* cannot be considered a prerequisite of the pilgrim experience, scholars and pilgrims alike acknowledge that such bonds can be created between pilgrims while on pilgrimage. With the popularity of online pilgrim forums, many pilgrims are finding that that sense of solidarity now begins before the pilgrimage commences and lasts well past the last step into Santiago. One pilgrim, before setting off on her Camino, commented, “By participating in the forums, I already feel like I’m there. I have one foot there [in Spain]”.

Another pilgrim posted the following message in the American Pilgrims on Camino forum:

Camino Friends,
I dont (sic) know you and you dont (sic) know me. Why am I so drawn to this forum? I try to explain to my family and friends what I am about to embark on and the response is not of enthusiasm as I receive from YOU pilgrims ...who I do not know.. Thank you for welcoming me into this family who I have found every day to turn to as I prepare for this journey. YOU...you know what I will be facing and YOU who understand me as you have become my family who gets it. Thank you and buen camino (sic)! Cant (sic) wait for my journey.

This pilgrim seems to feel strongly that the camaraderie and support she has received in the forums has been tremendously valuable, to the extent that she contrasts her experience with those in the forum with her own family members and friends, and indicates that she feels perhaps even more supported by pilgrims in the forum, because they understand the experience and can offer insights into the experience that those close to her cannot.

Pilgrims have far more options for remaining in touch with other pilgrims, both those pilgrims they met on the trail and others, in the modern age of technology. Pilgrims communicate post-Camino through social media, email, text, phone, blog

comments, forums, and even through pilgrim organizations such as American Pilgrims on Camino, which consists of local chapters across the United States, and a gathering of pilgrims hosted each spring which draws pilgrims from across the country and even abroad. Local chapters of APOC have been rapidly growing across the country over the past few years. The first official chapter of American Pilgrims on Camino began in Puget Sound circa 2010. By the end of 2014, twenty-seven chapters were active around the United States, and six additional chapters were added in 2015. As of August, 2017, there are forty-four chapters across the United States, including a chapter in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which serves pilgrims across Oklahoma, Northwest Arkansas, and Southeast Kansas (S. Pate, August 20, 2017, personal communication.)

Chapter 7: An Ancient Practice in a Modern World

The question this chapter seeks to answer is, “What does all of this *mean*?” What are the philosophical implications of the practical ways in which technology is being observed throughout the process of “being a pilgrim”? Within this clash between the ancient and the modern, what are the perceptions of lay pilgrims and academics regarding the effects of technology? How do these modern technologies influence the ways in which pilgrims experience and derive meaning from walking the Camino de Santiago?

Many lay pilgrims and scholars alike lament the secularization of the modern Camino de Santiago and other pilgrim routes. Morpeth (2007), citing previous scholarship, notes that “pilgrimage routes are increasingly becoming secularized, with the explicit promotion of routes for tourism, leisure, and cultural engagement” (p.156).

He goes on to point out that notions of sacred and secular motivations for taking a pilgrimage have blurred considerably.

In many ways, there are more similarities between the medieval Camino de Santiago and its modern iteration than one might expect. From guidebooks and phrasebooks to enterprising Europeans offering pilgrim tour packages, many of the modern enterprises that come under scrutiny as contributing to the present-day “tourigrino” actually existed in the era many consider to be the “authentic” age of pilgrimage.

Though the traditional pilgrim attire has changed, the identifiable “pilgrim uniform” remains an important mark of pilgrim identity. Whereas today’s pilgrim uniform typically includes quick dry shirts, zip-off cargo pants, carbon fiber trekking poles, a hydration-compatible backpack, and advanced footwear, the medieval pilgrim attire typically consisted of a staff, a long tunic (or *sclavein*), and a scrip, or pouch (Sumption, 2003, p. 244). Both medieval and modern pilgrim realized the value of a broad-brimmed hat for sun protection, and both marked their journey with the acquisition of the iconic scallop shell, although the medieval pilgrim acquired their shell upon their arrival at the coast (Finisterre, “the end of the world”), about ninety kilometers past Santiago, and carried it home as evidence of the journey, whereas modern pilgrims typically acquire their pilgrim shell before setting off or upon arrival at the beginning of their journey, and attach the shell to their pack or wear it around their neck as a badge of pilgrim identity. There is a transformation of sorts that takes place once the pilgrim sheds their everyday attire and slips into the pilgrim uniform. Many pilgrims commented on the significance of their pilgrim clothing and the sense of

pilgrim identity that overcame them once they “looked the part”. Additionally, many modern pilgrims opt to burn their pilgrim clothes at the end of their pilgrimage to signify that their pilgrimage has ended. Pilgrim clothing, then, has stood as a significant mark of pilgrim distinction for centuries.

Sumption (2003) also informs readers that as early as 1120 CE, pilgrims had foregone the extra kilometers to the sea to claim their shell and were instead purchasing small lead shell-shaped badges that were sold outside the cathedral in Santiago. Enterprising merchants who have managed to find ways to make the journey easier for pilgrims have often found a market for their goods and services, and as Sumption advises, the market for pilgrim souvenirs long pre-dates the modern day. It wasn't long before the church got involved with the souvenir market. Badge-sellers near the cathedral required a permit, and Sumption (2013) notes that after the year 1200, the archbishop of Santiago received a percentage of sales from licensed merchants and “it was for many years a major source of revenue” (p. 250). He also points out that unlicensed merchants also sold badges, and that not all those who received unlicensed badges were true pilgrims. Even neighboring bishops were found to be engaging in the bootleg badge trade.

The *Guide for Pilgrims to Santiago* was to medieval pilgrims what John Brierley's (2015) pilgrim guide is to the modern pilgrim to Santiago. The medieval guide contained “a few useful words of the Basque language, an architectural description of the Santiago cathedral, and precise directions on how to get there” (Sumption, 2003, p. 252). It contained many tips similar to what one would find in the

modern Brierley guide. In many ways, the practical information needed to successfully complete the pilgrimage has not changed.

Pilgrims who traveled to their pilgrim destinations by sea had unique obstacles that overland pilgrims did not face. Fortunately, the enterprising Venetians were able to capitalize on their command of the sea to offer “the earliest all-inclusive package tours” (Sumption, 2003, p. 266) to places like Jerusalem. Package tours would include food, board (aboard the ship and in the Holy Land), taxes and tolls, baggage transport (via donkey), and even guided tours of the holy city of Jerusalem. There is much discussion in the pilgrim community about what constitutes authentic pilgrimage. Many feel that organized tours fall outside those parameters, yet hail medieval pilgrimage as the ideal. It is interesting then, that even in the medieval age of pilgrimage in Europe, astute entrepreneurs were already organizing these prearranged tours.

In the pre-modern world, Gitlitz (2014) notes that “travel for its own sake was not widely endorsed” (p. 34). In fact, Gitlitz (2014) states that during this period, there was no word for tourism; the concept of “vacation” did not rightly exist. Pilgrimage, then, offered one of the only acceptable reasons for individuals who were not merchants or soldiers to set forth from their villages into the unknown world. Gitlitz (2014) reminds readers that while most ancient pilgrims were motivated by a religious calling, there were, certainly, pilgrims who were drawn simply by the urge to leave their everyday lives in search of new adventures and new surroundings. The pilgrimage, he indicates, offered “a few days or months away from the plough, the squalling children, the mother-in-law” (p. 35). Gitlitz cites the writings of Jacques de Vitry, who, around the year 1220, noted that “some light-minded and inquisitive persons go on pilgrimage

not out of devotion, but out of mere curiosity and love of novelty” (as cited in Sumption, 1975, p. 257).

Gitlitz (2014) also reminds readers of the spiritual significance of both the journey and the destination of the pilgrimage. While in earlier times, the rituals and performances enacted during a pilgrimage were guided by religious doctrine and firmly held within the parameters of the church, pilgrim behaviors in modern times are much less rigidly confined. Much of this change began to occur during the Renaissance, according to Gitlitz (2014). During this period, pilgrimage became a reason to set forth in pursuit of the education that travel afforded. Following the Renaissance, the Enlightenment also impacted the act of pilgrimage significantly. As Gitlitz states, “the Enlightenment...ultimately weakened the ties between temporal and religious authority” (p. 36). Finally, he notes, “Romanticism, whose proponents wore their egos on their sleeves and brought to the fore a philosophy of *me*, doing *my* things, for *my* reasons and *my* pleasure” (p. 36). This perspective, as Gitlitz suggests, fits cozily with the modern notions and experiences of many individuals on pilgrimage, particularly of those pilgrims who set forth along the Camino de Santiago.

The modern concept of pilgrimage, according to Gitlitz, “has taken on new meanings and has accepted new forms, sites, and modes of travel” (p. 36). Modern pilgrims feel comfortable performing pilgrimage on their own terms, in their own unique ways, and for their own purposes. This freedom has expanded the scope of pilgrimage as an area of study to include destinations and experiences not previously thought to fall under the pilgrimage umbrella, such as Burning Man, visits to the

Vietnam Memorial Wall, and beyond, to sites such as Graceland and the Baseball Hall of Fame.

One key development in the ways in which pilgrimage is practiced today relates to the journey itself. Until fairly recently within the scope of pilgrimage as an enterprise, the exercise was completed entirely on foot, with pilgrims leaving home, making their way to the shrine or sacred place, and returning in the same manner. Nowadays, the pilgrimage has, for the most part, changed in one of two paradoxical ways, according to Gitlitz (2014): either the journey itself has been eliminated (or, more accurately, replaced with modern transportation alternatives) or the journey itself has become the primary focus of the experience. For many pilgrim sites, such as Lourdes, Mecca, or the Wailing Wall, it is the former. Most pilgrims make their way to these sacred sites via airplane, train, and/or automobile. The significance lies in the destination rather than the journey to get there. For the Camino, it is the latter. While the cathedral that houses Saint James and the rituals that are conducted inside its walls remain significant, the journey to arrive in Santiago has become the focal point of the experience. Frey (1998) and Gitlitz (2014) both indicate that many pilgrims experience a feeling of sadness before entering Santiago, a feeling of disappointment that the journey is coming to an end, and that some do not visit the relic at all once in Santiago.

The 'Authentic' Pilgrim Experience

Certainly, not all modern journeys are imbued with sacred qualities. As the magic world recedes into the modern, dissociated world, what many travelers are left with is the disappearance of their sacred experiences at the hand of modern consumerism. Yet, at the same time, there is increasing longing for sacred travel.

Pilgrimages and walking holidays are becoming more popular each year (Feiler, 2014). As routes such as the Camino Frances become increasingly crowded and commercialized, pilgrims are branching out to other routes in search of peace and solitude. As a result, the more secluded routes are becoming more heavily populated with pilgrims, and peace-seeking pilgrims are forced to continue their efforts of seeking out quieter paths. For those who see ‘authentic’ pilgrimage as a quiet journey in solitude through nature, that experience is being disrupted by teenagers with loud music playing, spirited cell phone conversations, advertisements stapled to each passing tree, and copious amounts of toilet paper and plastic bottles littering the trail (Scott, 2017). Many pilgrims have commented that the Camino Frances, in particular, has ceased to offer the special pilgrim experience it once did. Preconceived notions of what pilgrimage ‘is’ or ‘should be’ often change the manner in which pilgrims participate in the pilgrimage. These preconceived notions are often affected by existing narratives encountered in books, documentary films, blogs, and photographs.

Many pilgrims, for example, believe that staying in albergues is a crucial part of experiencing the pilgrimage authentically. Those who would avoid albergues in favor of hotels or higher-end accommodations are often looked down upon as tourist-pilgrims or *tourigrinos*, as they are referred to by some. In a thread that explicitly asks pilgrims why they choose to stay in albergues, one pilgrim stated the following:

I stay in Municipal Albergues, churches, convents etc. because, I believe, they represent the closest means today to the way previous pilgrims traveled the Camino. I also like the communal atmosphere of sharing meals, conversation and space with other Pilgrims. That said, when I get to Santiago, I do enjoy the comfort of my own hotel room.

Another pilgrim in the same thread expressed a similar sentiment,

I undertake the Camino as a spiritual exercise. Part of that is to divest myself of as much of the clutter of civilisation as possible. That includes luxury and spending money. I stay in the albergues to spend as little as possible while on the Way. I have undertaken this discipline when I was working full-time and when on a medical retirement pension. For my 50th birthday my sister paid for me and my wife to stay in the Hotel de Catolics de Reyes (sorry about the spelling) and in the end I hated it. I felt an intruder who did not belong there. I also feel guilty because my feelings seem to me to be a kick in the teeth for my sister's wonderful generosity; anyone who mentions this to her will be joining St James in the crypt: shock. I loved the fact that I have slept in the oldest pilgrim hostel in the world, let alone the Camino, but for the same money I could have walked from SJPP to SDC. Stripping ones (sic) life down to the simplest and barest of necessities is a joy. So wherever possible it is the albergue for me.

However, one pilgrim made the following point in a public forum:

Whenever I read a post complaining about albergues, or about other pilgrims in the albergues, I want to tell people that they don't have to stay in albergues. There are plenty of other places for pilgrims to stay. When albergues were first mooted by the Spanish Federation in 1988, the idea was that only pilgrims should stay in albergues (not tourists) and that they should cater for the less affluent pilgrims. It was never the idea that thousands of pilgrims should only stay in albergues. The intention was not to compete with the fondas, pensiones, hostales, habitaciones in private homes, or small hoteles. Don't feel obliged to stay in albergues just because they are there. If you don't like bunk-beds, sharing rooms with dozens of strangers, rustling packets, torchlights flashing at 4am and overcrowded ablutions, don't stay in albergues. Spread the wealth, and your happiness, and choose alternative places to stay.

The latter post seeks, in part, to address issues of overcrowding in albergues on the Camino Frances. As the original post points out, the albergues are full, in part, due to pilgrims who could otherwise easily afford more expensive accommodations, and who may be miserable staying in albergues, but stay because they want to be perceived as authentic pilgrims. For many, traveling modestly and suffering through challenges are all a key part of the pilgrim experience. Yet this pilgrim is suggesting that making space in albergues for pilgrims who may not be able to afford any alternative is an act of kindness that is foundational to pilgrim conduct. Rather than trying so keenly to be

‘authentic’, be gracious and charitable, she suggests. To this pilgrim, these qualities more adequately represent the true spirit of pilgrimage.

This exchange raises considerable questions regarding the role of suffering in notions of authentic pilgrimage. Many who walk consider suffering, modesty and a sort of false penury as requisite pilgrim qualities. As the previous pilgrim suggests, a divestment from one’s everyday luxuries is central to the pilgrim experience. This is a common conception, as many pilgrims look toward those who choose comfort over modesty on Camino as boastful and unwelcome. One pilgrim shared with me that after splurging on an evening at one of Spain’s opulent Paradores (after several sleepless nights in albergues), another pilgrim referred to him as a “pseudo-Christian asshole”. Harsh words, undoubtedly, and ones that require a great deal of presumption on behalf of the one hurling them. It is important to note that this insult extends beyond notions of what it means to be a pilgrim, and into what that individual believes it means to be a Christian. (Many would argue that throwing metaphorical stones does not fall squarely under Christian behavior).

If we turn to Turner (1978), we can see some explanation for this phenomenon. Turner notes that one of the components of *communitas* is that of parity that exists among those sharing in a ritual experience. When pilgrims share the same space, regardless of their economic circumstances, this equality can be more easily observed and experienced. Yet a broad variance in accommodations creates disparity and class distinction, interrupting that sense of community. It can also create a sense of envy and injustice. Additionally, as the pilgrim above suggested, the communal aspect of sharing space and sharing meals with other pilgrims in albergues also enriches the sense of

communitas. There is, undoubtedly, a bond that occurs between pilgrims who share common experiences, particularly of suffering, that is difficult to replicate otherwise.

Many pilgrims still question what it means to engage in the Camino de Santiago 'authentically', and many worry that, as time goes on and the Camino becomes ever more popular, some special aspect of the pilgrimage is being lost. The following pilgrim elaborates this concern in the APOC Facebook forum:

I am struggling with the meaning of the Camino. The Camino was for over a thousand years a journey of penance. Penance and spirituality. I did the Camino solo in 2005. I never met an American and there were no electronics. In fact, I was told I couldn't be an American because Americans don't take 33 day vacations. Today, thousands of American's (sic) prepare and walk The Way. Some carry electronics, stay in hotels etc. Is it the same?

The pilgrim seems to be expressing reticence at the thought of electronics and hotel accommodations being commonplace on the pilgrimage, maintaining the common perspective that comfort and modern technologies are not compatible with the practice of pilgrimage. One pilgrim responded:

It is full of kindness, calmness, and sore fit. Just finished the Camino Frances on June 2nd. The phrase Buen Camino still brings out the smiles. People from America just the same as the other twenty some countries we walked with - pilgrims without egos or status....

Here we see another example of status being perceived as contradictory to pilgrim identity.

Another pilgrim noted the following:

The pilgrimage to Compostela as, at first, just for the wealthy. It then became open-house for anyone who could walk or ride a horse! Penitential pilgrims, spiritual, religious and non-merchants, travelers, adventurers, businessmen, clergy, robbers, highwaymen, prostitutes and paupers, mendicants and masons. By the 16th C pilgrims were reviled by most and barred from entering many villages and towns-even Compostela. When people hanker for the 'old days', I wonder which era they want to return to! Most of the modern (20th and 21st c) pilgrimage accounts are written by people who did not carry backpacks, used

whatever means of travel was available including bus, cart, donkey and then trains. Doing the Camino has become the destination-not revering the remains of Sant Iago in the cathedral of Compostela.

Here, the pilgrim is pointing out that while we might look toward ancient pilgrimage as ‘authentic’, we tend to idealize the past. This is a human tendency that is not limited to those gazing sentimentally at ancient pilgrimage, but across contexts. While many modern material phenomena did not exist on the ancient Camino, pilgrims nevertheless engaged with behaviors that might contradict notions of ‘authentic’ pilgrimage.

Another pilgrim noted that change was an inevitability, in life as well as on Camino:

Nothing is ever “the same”. That’s a fundamental principle of this changing world. To wish otherwise is the conservative’s curse...Each thing we do is different from everything else. We need to appreciate the ephemeral nature of, well, life.

Still another responded, “What it means to YOU is the only meaning that matters. If you did the Way today the same way you did it then-would it change the meaning for you?” Here, the pilgrim suggests that it is not external factors such as crowds, merchants, or technology that determine the authenticity of the experience, but rather the person’s personal orientation toward the pilgrimage.

Concepts of authentic travel are not unique to pilgrimage or the modern day. Raj and Morpeth (2007), citing Boorstin (1964), state the following:

In lamenting the ‘lost art of travel’, [Boorstin] cited the example of Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Travel by Donkey* as a metaphor to contrast the slow and meditative forms of travel with the more rapid characterized by air travel, seeing tourism as a ‘superficial pursuit of contrived experiences-a collection of pseudo-events’ (as cited in Richards, 2001, p. 14).

Rebekah Scott (2017) discusses a notion central to the conception of authentic pilgrim travel, that of the continued commercialization of the pilgrimage. She refers to this as

the “Disneyfication” of the Camino (n.p.). In a rousing speech presented at the American Pilgrims on Camino Annual Gathering, she laments,

On the Camino Frances alone, there are now more than 400 places for pilgrims to spend a night. There are 1,200 places to stop and eat. I am not a statistician, but I can blithely say the number of pilgrim-targeted businesses on the Camino Frances has quadrupled in the ten years I have lived on the trail. The increasing number of pilgrims has attracted the attention of the marketers, the entrepreneurs, the Capitalists. And hereby hangs a conflict.

She goes on to suggest that the authentic pilgrim will cast down their material desires, leave behind their technology, and ultimately engage behaviors that fly “right into the face of our ingrained consumerism, and the travel industry-the people who are selling a safe, clean, dreamy Camino” (Scott, 2017, n.p.). Interestingly, she notes that her first exposure to the Camino came in 1993 when she was invited to visit the Camino as a travel journalist by the Tourist Office in Spain. It is noteworthy that the Camino that she laments today is exactly the Camino that the tourist office in Spain envisioned three decades ago-one that would invite scores of travelers to the allure of the pilgrim road, where they would spend money on lodging, food, gear, and keepsakes. What has come to pass is exactly what the Office of Tourism anticipated and desperately wanted.

Journeys into the Self: Individualism and the Camino (A philosophy of *me*, doing *my things*, for *my* reasons and *my* pleasure)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks (2017), in a rousing TED Talk, notes that when future historians look back on the modern day, they will undoubtedly surmise that beyond any God, what humans worship today is in fact the ‘self’. Self-help books line the shelves of bookstores, guiding readers through processes of self-care and increased self-esteem. Social media is inundated with “selfies”, and enables users to become the stars of their own profile pages. Goods and services are being increasingly customizable

to individual tastes and preferences. The self, the singular point from which life is experienced, has become our obsession.

Travel, too, has become an important part of this journey toward the self, for the self. According to Becker (2013), tourism creates three billion dollars in revenue every day around the globe (p. 17). In 2012, for the first time ever, “the U.N. tourism organization celebrated reaching 1 billion international trips in a single year” (Becker, 2013, p. 17). This is up from twenty-five million trips taken by tourists to foreign lands in 1960, according to Becker (2013). The graph line, she notes, “goes straight up” (p. 17). In addition to a significant increase in travel and tourism over the past five decades, more individuals are going on pilgrimage. A U.N. study, presented at the First International Congress on Tourism and Pilgrimages, found that one out of every three tourists is in fact a pilgrim, “a total of 330 million people per year” (Feiler, 2014, n.p.). Raj and Morpeth (2007) note, “the emerging experience economy has implications for how an expanding symbolic economy has the capacity to change the expressions of religious tourism and pilgrimage” (p. 1). The ‘experience economy’, as Raj and Morpeth term this modern phenomenon, is directly related to modern preoccupation with the self. An article in *Forbes* encourages readers to ‘spend money on experiences, not things’ (Bradberry, 2016). Citing a longitudinal study conducted at Cornell University, Bradberry notes that the satisfaction that comes from buying things quickly fades, while the satisfaction of happy experiences endures. Investing in the self means investing in travel, novelty, and experience.

The modern world, in many ways, has disrupted and revolutionized the manner in which we experience our social world. Goffman (1959) discusses the ways in which

we thoughtfully and purposefully perform the role of “self” in front of a crowd. He discusses the distinction between our front-stage and back-stage lives. In the modern world, wherein so much of our communication is mediated by technology, our front-stage lives now happen largely digitally. “Real life” has become more of a back-stage phenomenon. Through social media, I can construct the life I choose. I can present myself in any manner I like. Rather than discussing my cranky disposition upon arriving at the albergue, and admitting that, before I even greeted the hospitalera taking down my information I asked for the “weefee” password, I focus today’s blog entry on the butterfly I saw on the trail and the significance of the beauty of nature. The more time we spend crafting our lived experience online for an audience of mostly strangers, the more our frontstage lives become digitized, the more we become mere avatars of ourselves.

Dean MacCannell (1999) notes that the “tourist” does not concern herself with authentic experience, but rather with simply ticking items off a list of places one “should” visit. Many modern peregrinos view other travelers along the Camino in the same way. The term “tourigrino” is now a derisive term used for the “inauthentic” pilgrim who sleeps in fancy hotels rather than pilgrim hostels, ships his or her bag, or starts in Sarria, the town which boasts the minimum distance to Santiago to obtain a Compostela.

Interestingly, self-publishing has made it ever-easier for individuals to publish accounts of their Camino experience, without the need for publishing houses. Many pilgrims who document or blog their journeys ultimately turn those accounts or blogs into books. Some pilgrims set out from the beginning on their journeys with the intent

to publish a memoir at the end of the journey. As a result, the marketplace is overwhelmed with books on the topic of the Camino de Santiago. Many are guidebooks or offer practical support, some are academic inquiries, but the vast majority of books available are first-person accounts of pilgrims on the Camino. A search for “Camino de Santiago” on Amazon.com, the largest online book retailer, results in more than four thousand hits. The explosion of pilgrim tales is directly indicative of the modern perspectival motivation of the self (Kramer, 2012).

The Paradox of Technology

Technology use among pilgrims and within the broader cultural context presents humans with a number of paradoxes. We hail the many conveniences afforded by technology while expressing concern about the consequences of engaging such technology. Within the pilgrim community, many pilgrims lament the widespread use of technology even as they, themselves, snap photos, check in with family, and post to social media; many lament the rising numbers while speculating that the world would be better if more people could experience pilgrimage. There are many contradictory and paradoxical perspectives which will be expanded below.

Ian McIntosh (2017) has studied pilgrimage as a peace-building endeavor for many years. He notes that in the Wari pilgrimage in Maharashtra in India, “caste is set aside for the duration of the long-distance walk” (n.p.). Similarly, at the interfaith pilgrimage site of Adam’s Peak in Sri Lanka, at one point in time pilgrims would travel to the site by the tens of thousands to gaze upon “a natural rock formation in the shape of a foot” (McIntosh, 2017, n.p.). This foot was seen to be the footprint of the Buddha by Buddhists, while Hindus recognized it as representing Shiva. Some Catholics

acknowledged it as the footprint of Saint Thomas, while Muslims believed it to signify Adam. He notes that, in such places of diverse but shared worship, pilgrimage can act as a process of peace-building. Those who can worship alongside one another in peace, respectfully sharing the sacred space amidst the diverse conceptions and expressions of their respective faith traditions, can help move peace forward.

The European Peace Walk (EPW) was launched one hundred years after the start of the first World War, as a way of celebrating “the current European culture of peace” and honoring the war-torn past (Lynch, as cited in europeanpeacewalk.com, n.d., n.p.). The EPW takes travelers through Hungary, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Italy. Its founder, Grattan Lynch, was inspired to start the walk while on Camino. He noted that he looked around at a table of pilgrims one day and saw pilgrims from different countries and cultures who, one hundred years, prior, “would have been killing each other” (europeanpeacewalk.com, n.d., n.p.). This relative new pilgrimage stands as yet another example of pilgrimage as peace-building.

As McIntosh and Lynch have realized, the act of pilgrimage offers itself as an opportunity for individuals to quietly reflect on the world and their place within it. Many pilgrims ponder what the world might look like if more people could experience pilgrimage. The paradox enters when, even as pilgrims ponder the better world that might result with more pilgrims populating it, they find themselves cursing the increasing numbers that they are seeing on the pilgrim paths. There is a very real and practical consequence to increasing numbers of pilgrims flocking to ever-increasing pilgrimages. Beds become scarcer; trails become more crowded, noisier, littered with more garbage. Even as pilgrims celebrate the explosion of pilgrimage and ponder the

ways in which the world might be made better by the surge in popularity, many find the rising numbers regrettable.

Finally, another paradox of technology lies in the contradictory feelings many have toward technology and its presence along the Camino. Many pilgrims enjoy the comforts and conveniences that modern communication technology affords, yet express concern for the distraction and temptation of ever-present technologies. One pilgrim said the following about the benefits and drawbacks of access,

But there's something about that instant when you're, you know, you can-and on WhatsApp you can see they're online and they can, you can chat back and forth. Or you can like do like the WhatsApp phone calls. Every once in a while, the wifi's good enough that you can do that. But then you find, like I found that I'm, you know, pulling away from doing something with a bunch of other people that are you know, in this once in a lifetime experience I'm having, I'm moving away from them so I can go talk to my best friend at home that I'm gonna see every day for years. You know so it's like a...sometimes you have to consciously be like I don't want to be around my phone or around...it's hard. So there's a, I don't know, it's very interesting.

This pilgrim expresses what many pilgrims have reported feeling: while they appreciate the ability to stay in touch with friends and family back home and share the experience with them, they cannot help but feel the opportunity cost of doing so. As this pilgrim indicates, many times pilgrims are choosing to communicate with those they see all the time, those they will see frequently or even daily once returning home, yet they are sacrificing time spent with those they might never see again and within a context they might never revisit. Yet because the walk is so physically and emotionally challenging, being able to reach out to loved ones for comfort and support is welcoming. The pilgrim went on to say, "Everyone needs encouragement. And sometimes...you know, it can't always come from a stranger".

As the interview went on, however, she seemed to feel more reticent about her use of technology. She went on to note the following,

But I was thinking about it the other day, uh...when you go, when you go for a certain amount of time away from home...and I've worked at a camp where there's no, there's no cell phone service, there's no wifi, there's no nothing. I mean you're really like, you're in the mountains, if there's an emergency someone has to drive up and contact you. And I think that if you're able to spend a certain amount of time away and unplugged, you really, I think it-you really depend on other people around you more. And you...just have a different experience. and I think that because we all have our cell phones and we all want that comfort of contacting home we're not getting to that level because we don't have to. It's not a comfortable level to get to. Right? It's really kinda miserable. And you have to be really vulnerable. Because like, I mean there's...the other thing is that because I have my phone there's a day that I got bad news from home. And then it was like, well I'm in the middle of Spain and, it happened to be one of the days where I didn't know anyone, I'd, we'd all split. It was like I'm in the middle of an albergue in the middle of the night, you know and there's no one, I don't know any of these people and like you don't want to be vulnerable in front of a group of strangers. But I think that that's probably one of the best things that could possibly happen on the Camino. But I think that our technology prevents it from happening. 'Cause the times where I'm like, you know, I'm sad or I'm like oh gosh, I don't want to keep going...I can WhatsApp a friend and they can encourage you. So it's like a...it's a crutch.

This pilgrim demonstrates exactly the kind of internal conflict that many pilgrims face when attempting to determine the appropriate role technology should play in the pilgrimage. As she notes, because the journey is so physically and emotionally demanding, one naturally longs for the support and encouragement of loved ones, and our modern devices offer access to that kind of support. Yet as she later comments, there might be an opportunity cost to that easy connection.

The paradox of technology that we're seeing here is that many pilgrims long for the benefits of modern technology without the cost; they value the concept of seeing a world more populated with pilgrims yet lament the actual increase in numbers on pilgrim trails. Yet with progress, there is always a cost. Writing did result in poor

memory. What remains to be seen on the Camino de Santiago is whether the benefits of technology will outweigh the costs.

Perceptions of the Sacred and the Profane

A common theme in pilgrim circles and forums centers on the notion of the authentic pilgrimage. Pilgrims spend a considerable time speculating the necessary elements that constitute an ‘authentic’ Camino. These conversations echo those discourses outlined by Eliade (1957) in his examination of notions of the sacred and the profane, and those addressed by Dean MacCannell (1999) in his investigation into notions of authentic tourism. Pilgrims, unquestionably, have strongly held opinions on what the Camino is, and what it should be. Those perspectives often find their way into rich discussions on the deeper nature of pilgrimage, the Camino, and the ways in which it is being influenced by modernity. Many pilgrims articulate a clear delineation between tourist and pilgrim. Interestingly, another common mantra in Camino circles is that of “Walk your own Camino”. Because the pilgrimage is so dearly held by so many who have walked and who hope to walk in the future, ideas surrounding the ‘purity’ of the pilgrimage and whether the pilgrimage is being negatively influenced by modern technology and perceived commercialization of the experience are both personal and passionate. These impassioned perspectives lead to rich dialogue on the topic of the current state of the Camino.

In one thread in the Camino de Santiago forum, pilgrims engaged in one such dialogue, in which they discussed the commercialization of the modern Camino.

One user stated the following:

Whenever I think of the commercial exploitation of the Camino, I also think about Jon Krakauer's book *Into Thin Air* in which he chronicles a famous

disaster on the slopes of Mount Everest. One of the reasons why so many people died on that fateful day is that there was an amateur on the mountain. A very wealthy woman, who had started a television network, had paid an enormous sum of money to be literally drug up the mountain by two Sherpas just so she could claim on the New York and Los Angeles cocktail circuits that she had summited the mountain. She became a huge liability in a devastating storm because she had no training and no business being on the mountain. Like Everest, the Camino is now commercialized. It's no longer about it's (sic) original purpose. It's instead a trendy "thing" to do and it's rapidly losing the last vestiges of it's (sic) original identity.

Another user responded,

I have a more optimistic view: Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has been here for centuries and centuries. Endured wars, epidemics and yes " trends " too...Identity is not a fixed but rather a fluid concept. As long as there is religion or spirituality and kindness there is hope for the Camino and for mankind.

This user noted that much of the increased enterprise along the Camino has come in response to demand,

In 2009 before the Holy Year in 2010, there was under 150,000 *compostelas*/pilgrims. Can you imagine the bed rush if no infrastructure had been added for the 277,854 pilgrims last year? I think we should be grateful for the "commercialization." When there are as many t-shirt shops on the Camino as *albergues*, it will be time to become concerned...

Another user noted that there is a benefit to locals for enterprise along the Camino to be increasing,

I am delighted to see prosperity in the villages along the Camino Frances. The first time I walked through Foncebadón it really was abandoned. For the pleasure I get I am more than happy to make a contribution to Spain's economy and to improving the lives of the people along the route.

This pilgrim had this to say,

I agree with a lot of what Rebekah Scott says here. The Camino will survive in some shape or form but I fear there are rough times ahead. For those of us who have known the Camino Frances for many years and have seen the experience of walking it change almost beyond recognition there is almost inevitably some sadness and anger at what it has become. Those of us who express a longing for a return to a simpler, smaller and less commercial pilgrimage are often accused of being elitist and wanting to deny others an experience which we ourselves

have enjoyed. Perhaps there is a grain of truth in that. But as numbers continue to increase rapidly and the Camino is increasingly being promoted and sold as an activity holiday its unique character and spiritual heritage *is* being undermined. There is a real danger that those who come in future will be unable to find what others before them have enjoyed and cherished.

Many pilgrims express similar sentiments about the nature of the Camino de Santiago being compromised by hyper-commercialization and the resulting increase in crowds.

There are many who feel that the sacred nature of the pilgrimage is being lost at the hand of commercialization.

This forum member drew a contrast from the modern experience to the pilgrimage as it was just two to three decades before,

Not always. Certainly, there was a great deal of exploitation during the medieval pilgrimage boom. And undeniably there is a lot now too. But it was not true of the early part of the modern Camino revival in the 1980s and 1990s which was very much driven by the personal dedication and commitment of enthusiastic individuals and small local confraternities. I walked my first Camino from St Jean to Santiago in summer 1990. At that time the vast majority of pilgrim refugios were small and run by local councils, churches and confraternities. I cannot recall a single private commercial refugio. The majority were *donativo* and some even had a strict policy of refusing all donations because they saw their work as an act of service. That included the relatively large municipal albergue in Burgos which provided bed and meals but would accept no payment. On a number of occasions I stopped in a bar or restaurant for food and drink and found on leaving that payment was refused: sometimes "on the house" because I was a pilgrim and at other times quietly and anonymously already paid for by a generous fellow customer. This was quite embarrassing at first until I learned to accept gracefully with thanks. Such generosity and altruism was possible when the number of pilgrims was very small and we were frankly a novelty and a curiosity to local people. Even with the best of intentions it could not continue with the numbers walking today.

To which another member responded,

I'm puzzled by some of this discussion. Ivar started and runs this Forum, the on line (sic) shop and luggage storage as a business to make money. And we love these services. John Brierley by his own admission spotted a gap in the market and as he was unemployed started writing and publishing guides - as a business to make money. And every year makes more. This is the way the market works. If we don't like the style or quality of some businesses that's OK too but it is

their right to produce their services and try to sell them. It is our decision to buy.
'Twas ever thus.

It is clear in this exchange that pilgrims have strong and varying opinions and feelings regarding the changes seen on the modern Camino de Santiago and how those changes relate to concepts of authentic pilgrimage.

Dean MacCannell (1999) describes the concept of *genuine structure* as “composed of the values and material culture manifests in its “true” sights” (p. 155). He offers examples such as homes inhabited by locals and historically-built worship centers as genuine structure, and contrasts sights such as these with spurious elements, which he describes as “detached from and...mere copies or reminders of the genuine” (p. 155). He goes on to define the ‘dividing line’ between the two as the *realm of the commercial* (p. 155). MacCannell (1999) reminds readers that it was Mauss (1967) who elaborated the moral implications of the ‘commercialization of exchange’ (p. 156). For many pilgrims, this commercialization of the exchange is the source of much discontent, as elaborated by Rebekah Scott (2017). What was once an exchange of goodwill has become merely a commoditized exchange of goods and services.

MacCannell’s words hold particular relevance to the modern dialectic between the sacred elements of the existing pilgrim path and the profane, commercial efforts that have been undertaken in an effort to boost Spain’s economy by encouraging travelers around the globe to experience the majesty of the historic trail. If we look back to the 1990s when Spain began investing time and effort into revitalizing the Camino in an effort to inspire visitors to the region, it is important to note that this was an investment in Spanish cultural tourism.

What have these notions of sacred and profane demonstrated? We have seen the impact of technology in various stages before, during, and after the journey. The following chapter seeks to elaborate and summarize the modern Camino through the lens of Joseph Campbell's notion of The Hero's Journey.

Chapter 8: The Hero's Journey: Examining the Impact of Technology on the Camino de Santiago through Campbell's Model

There is frequent comparison between the act of pilgrimage generally, as well as the Camino de Santiago specifically, and The Hero's Journey as outlined by Joseph Campbell. Gower (2002) points to this overlap as she recounts multiple individual accounts of pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago in her dissertation entitled *Incorporating a Hero's Journey: A Modern Day Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago*. Phil Cousineau (1998), in his renowned book *The Art of Pilgrimage*, reconfigures Campbell's seventeen stages into seven, but the overarching framework remains and the presence of his mentor's influence is undeniable. Paulo Coelho's (1987) infamous esoteric adaptation of his experience along the Camino de Santiago follows the basic format of Campbell's identified stages. Literature is not the only place where one can find traces of the overlap of the Camino de Santiago and Campbell's elaboration of The Hero's Journey. They can also be found in individual pilgrim accounts, both online and on the trail. One pilgrim, when discussing her motivations for going on Camino, noted,

I was inspired by the idea of a journey...I am also really interested in...the idea of the hero-hero's journey that Joseph Campbell talks about and I feel like there are really few opportunities to experience that in the modern world and so that's kind of my idea of pilgrimage is to try to experience that somehow.

In the popular Camino de Santiago online forum, one pilgrim discusses the pilgrimage along the Via de la Plata, the southern route to Santiago that begins in Sevilla, as follows:

All of us, like you, have at some point been called to give up our humdrum lives and go out and find our true passion. For me there is no better place to do that than on the VdIP [Via de la Plata]. It becomes a Hero's Journey where I can find something greater than myself. I've walked with [other pilgrims] like you who quit their jobs, sold their houses, and walked off across the farm roads of Spain looking for a new life. They all found something wondrous...The trick is the Camino, the Hero's Journey, isn't supposed to make sense or be objective. It's a journey of the heart.

Another pilgrim, in the same Camino forum, outlined Campbell's stages of the Hero's Journey and noted that it lined up well with the experience along the Camino. He had the following to say regarding the comparison,

As [user] said, there is a little hero in all of us. The hero's journey is something that is universally appealing. Stories throughout time and in every culture use elements of it. The Camino gives us the chance to be the hero of our own story. And that's why we walk.

Campbell's (1949) work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, identifies, iterates, and codifies seventeen distinct stages associated with what he referred to, and what is now commonly referred to as The Hero's Journey. These seventeen stages, according to Campbell, are subsumed under three general stages: Departure, Initiation, and Return. The remainder of the chapter will be dedicated to an examination of the parallels found between the pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago and Campbell's Hero's Journey, as well as the ways in which technology may be influencing each of the seventeen stages identified by Campbell.

Departure

Campbell refers to the first general stage as Departure-an experience of withdrawing oneself from their everyday experiences and setting off in pursuit of a more novel experience. Within the Departure section, the following sub-stages are experienced: The Call to Adventure, Refusal of the Call, Supernatural Aid, Crossing the Threshold, and Belly of the Whale.

The Call to Adventure

According to Campbell (1949), The Call to Adventure refers to the starting point of the adventure, the point at which the opportunity presents itself. He notes that often, blunder or chance “reveals an unsuspected world” (p. 51). He points out that these blunders or chances can be quite deep experiences, “as deep as the soul itself” (p. 51), and that the blunder or chance may open the door to one’s fate or destiny. In this stage, something happens to indicate to the individual that he or she should set forth in a different direction. My rediscovery of the Camino de Santiago as a topic of study happened in such a way. I intended to commit to a topic in my first semester of graduate school, so that I might direct all of my coursework in the direction of my chosen topic. As an avid book collector, I decided to spend an evening perusing my bookshelves, confident that some academic text would stand out to me, such as some work by Edward T. Hall or Viktor Frankl. Instead, I found myself standing in front of Paulo Coelho’s *The Pilgrimage*. At that moment, the book was practically illuminated, as was the path before me. This chance encounter with a book I had read some fifteen years prior, started me on the journey toward the Camino de Santiago.

Each pilgrim at some point receives this call, and the call itself serves as the starting point of one's path toward the Camino de Santiago. Quite often, the Call to Adventure occurs when a pilgrim first learns of the Camino. In discovering the existence of the Camino, the seed is planted. For some pilgrims, The Call is a quiet, occasional reminder that the pilgrimage is out there. For others, The Call is more aggressive, a scream that cannot be quieted. Regardless of the intensity of the call, it remains until satisfied. Each pilgrim I interviewed indicated the point at which they felt the call of the Camino, and it became clear that technology is playing a role for some in The Call, since in the age of the Internet, more and more pilgrims are learning about the Camino through mediated spaces. More and more books are being published on the subject of the Camino. Through the development of self-publishing, it is becoming ever-easier to publish a book on the topic, without having to rely on the mercy and interest of a publishing house. As a result, more and more personal accounts of experiences along the Camino are emerging in the literary marketplace. Books are frequently shared or recommended, either in person, through social media, in book clubs, or through websites such as goodreads.com. Amazon.com, which accounts for forty-three percent of US online retail transactions, sends recommendations to shoppers based on previous interests and purchases ("Amazon Accounts for 43% of US Online Retail Sales, 2017). Many pilgrims indicated that a motion picture or documentary film inspired them to set forth on the Camino. Technology is also making the process of filmmaking more accessible and affordable. In particular, many American and Canadian pilgrims indicated that the motion picture *The Way* starring Martin Sheen and Emilio Estevez served as the catalyst that propelled them to pursue the Camino, to the point

that citing it as the catalyst became almost cliché. One pilgrim I spoke with, when asked what motivated him to come on Camino stated with a lilt, “I saw *The Way*. I’m one of *those*”. Steve Watkins (2017), in his book *Pilgrim Strong*, states that his call came after watching the film. At the end of the movie, Watkins turned to his wife and said simply, “You know I’m going to do that, right?” Interestingly, another pilgrim observed

[When asking other pilgrims about what brought them on Camino] I was consistently getting responses that were things like “Oh I watched a film” and for me that didn’t seem like a big enough inspiration for somebody to walk across Spain. Hahaha. And I was thinking, so I thought either they’ve just watched the film and they’re like ‘I just want to repeat what’s in the film’ but that didn’t make any sense. ‘Cause I’ve watched James Bond Movies, and I didn’t want to be James Bond. I watched Star Wars, but I didn’t want to do all the things that were in Star Wars, except when I was seven. Um...but what happened through conversations was that it seems that it takes longer for people to start to drop off some of the barriers to explain why I’m on Camino.

What is important to note from this observation is that although a movie, or a book, or a Facebook post often plants the seed, there is generally a much more personal reason that the movie, book, or post speaks to people, an internal longing that is inflamed by the realization that this experience not only exists, but is attainable.

Refusal of the Call

Upon receiving the call to set forth on the Hero’s Journey, many resist it, for one reason or another. Very few learn of the Camino and then find themselves on the trail immediately thereafter. There is often a process that unfolds. When this author first learned of the Camino, fifteen years passed before it was the “right time” to answer the call. Timing, personal and professional responsibilities, familial responsibilities, financial limitations, can all dissuade pilgrims from heeding the initial call. For many, anxiety and fear of the unknown stand as a powerful barrier between them and the

journey. When reading the pilgrim forums, many posts center on the desire for individuals to quell their anxiety and minimize uncertainty-that anxiety often manifests as refusal to answer the call. The timing is not right, the circumstances are less than ideal-many mental and practical barriers can prevent pilgrims from immediately setting off. For those for whom uncertainty is a barrier, the online forums can help overcome some of those immediate concerns. Because pilgrims are no longer separated by time and distance, they have experienced travelers available, day or night, ready to answer their questions and quell their fears. Even if they do not interact with other pilgrims directly, the wealth of information available at one's fingertips can serve to comfort reticent pilgrims. Videos, photographs, and inspiring tales can also serve to motivate would-be pilgrims to answer the call rather than postpone the adventure. Each of these and more can be found on blogs, varying social media accounts, and platforms such as YouTube and Vimeo. A wealth of information is only a Google search away.

Supernatural Aid

After refusing the call, Campbell suggests that within the mythical structure of The Hero's Journey, a supernatural liaison intervenes to ensure that the hero does not ignore the call, but rather pursues his or her calling. Within modern mythical stories, this person might appear as an Obi Wan or a Hagrid or a Gandalf. For those navigating the pilgrim journey in the modern technological world, the supernatural aid might come in the form of an online contact. Pilgrims telling tales of their Camino experiences often refer to encounters with "Camino angels" who appeared at just the right time to offer water, food, or a hand so that the pilgrim could continue. In the age of the Internet,

those “Camino angels” are now accessible before the pilgrim ever steps foot on the trail, and may appear to offer encouragement, answer questions, and quell anxieties.

One pilgrim had the following to say to other members of the APOC Facebook forum before setting out,

After 18+ months of planning tomorrow morning I will begin my journey to Saint Jean to begin my Camino. I cannot express enough gratification to this group for all of the sage counsel and encouragement over the past months! The day has finally arrived!!

Crossing the First Threshold

In this step, the hero encounters the threshold—the space wherein one passes from his or her current surroundings into this new realm. Turner (1978) refers to this space as liminal space, transitional space. He describes this space as being “betwixt and between” realms—no longer the former self in the former space but not yet the person one will become, or by Campbell’s (1949) definition, not yet existing within the space in which change will occur. Certainly, as technology has developed over time, both the ways in which we conceptualize and actuate that threshold have changed drastically. In medieval times, pilgrims would exit their front door and begin the pilgrimage to Santiago. The “threshold” was, literally, their front door. In many ways, stepping out one’s front door still represents the beginning of the journey; however, the transitional space and experience from home to the Camino is drastically different nowadays, as pilgrims commonly travel by plane, train, bus, and automobile to their modern designated starting points. The starting points themselves, rather than being individuated, are, in the present day, more commonly agreed-upon designated locations.

The concept of a physical threshold, indeed the very notion of leaving one’s present space and physically relocating in pursuit of the Hero’s Journey, is under

dispute as well in a modern world. Virtual reality and the Internet are changing the nature and conception of what constitutes “real” pilgrim experience. For example, the use of aerial drone footage is contributing to the virtual recreation of an ancient pilgrim route in Scotland, the road to Whithorn (The Galloway Gazette, 2017). This endeavor will serve not only to grant at-home pilgrims the ability to travel virtually to the Scottish pilgrim route, but is also intended to provide a journey back in time. The development manager of the route stated,

We will be using aerial film to guide the walker via smartphones and online platforms and the latest in 3D modelling to reconstruct virtually the ruins of the great abbeys and churches. Blended with the live footage, this should give a vivid impression of what the mediaeval pilgrim heading for one of the greatest shrines in Scotland would have seen en route (n.p.)

The concept of virtual reality pilgrimage is itself deserving of a dissertation-length inquiry, unquestionably, and it is revolutionizing the ways in which we conceptualize and consider pilgrimage within the scope of the “real”. Though exploring pilgrimage on the Internet (cyberpilgrimage) rather than virtual reality pilgrimage, Hill-Smith (2011) noted that even virtual pilgrimage can leave those who undertake them transformed, enlightened, and fulfilled. It certainly can be said to open the experience of pilgrimage to those who are not able, for various physical, financial, or personal reasons, to complete the traditional physical journey. However, with embodied experience: pain, bodily suffering, bodily dangers, face-to-face interactions, and physical presence in the space playing such a key role in the conception of traditional pilgrimage, the emergence of virtual reality is no doubt changing the very nature and scope of traditional examination of the phenomenon. It is also changing the nature of what Campbell referred to as the “threshold guardian” or gatekeeper that must be passed in order to

access this new world. Whereas previously, one's physical limitations might have acted as a gatekeeper, in the realm of cyberpilgrimage and virtual reality, that gatekeeper may vanish in a puff of smoke. As Hill-Smith (2011) states, "we are witnessing the birth of one of a number of largely uncharted ways by which people are beginning to experience themselves spiritually on the Internet" (p. 236). The same can be said about the introduction of virtual reality to the realm of pilgrimage. The very concept of what is 'real' and how meaning can be derived through these new conceptions of pilgrimage is challenging our present understanding of both pilgrimage and the concepts of liminality and thresholds, without question.

Belly of the Whale

This stage, according to Campbell (1949), represents the final separation from one's everyday life, and the point of being "swallowed into the unknown" (p. 90). While in much of folklore the 'swallowing' is quite literal, the notion of pilgrim in the belly of the whale is, as expected, much more figurative. Here, he or she might well feel as though she is most vulnerable, that there is no turning back. This may occur upon arrival at the first albergue or as she takes her first steps on the trail, but the sense that the threshold has indeed been crossed and the pilgrimage is underway is very real and very strong. For those walking the physical pilgrimage, this stage is being influenced by technology in the sense that the ultimate separation from one's home is not fully realized. The technological connection, for better or worse, keeps pilgrims tethered to home and, ultimately, keeps the mouth of the whale ever-visible--the way "out" is always within sight. Pilgrims can reach out to their loved ones back home at virtually any time. Through applications such as Face-time and Skype, pilgrims can be

immediately connected to loved ones, pets, and visions of home. The benefits and drawbacks of this ability draws passionate debate from pilgrims. As one pilgrim noted,

You are either here or there. You can't be both. If you're there, you're not here. And if you're not here, you're missing out on this extraordinary experience. You can be there any time. It's your everyday life. You can only be here now.

This pilgrim indicates that to fully realize the pilgrim experience, one must lose sight of the portal home (the mouth of the whale) and must fully enter the belly of the whale.

Initiation

Campbell (1949) refers to the second general stage of the Hero's Journey as Initiation. Here, the hero has passed into the next realm of the journey, having escaped the belly of the whale. Campbell states that at this point in the journey, "the hero moves in a dream landscape of curiously fluid, ambiguous forms" (p. 97). Within the Initiation stage, the following sub-stages exist: The Road of Trials, The Meeting with the Goddess, Woman as Temptress, Atonement with the Father, Apotheosis, and The Ultimate Boon.

The Road of Trials

Aptly named, the road of trials is ever-present on the Camino de Santiago. On pilgrimage, there is no shortage of challenges and trials that must be met and overcome. It is with good reason that pilgrims commonly note the parallels between the Camino de Santiago and life itself. In order to begin the process of transformation, the hero must undergo a series of tests that must be passed in order to proceed. Hercules had his labors, and pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago have their blisters and their heartbreak, their plantar fasciitis and their uncertain futures, their shin splints and their personal loss. Mind and body suffer in tandem, as the pilgrim comes face to face with the

motivations that brought him or her there. Certainly, technology is playing a role in the road of trials. As previously noted, pilgrims are able to speak to family members and loved ones back home, as well as with their online social contacts. Through social networking sites such as Facebook, and through communication platforms such as Skype and WhatsApp, pilgrims can receive positive encouragement from loved ones and even strangers thousands of miles away. A pilgrim in the American Pilgrims on Camino forum posed the following question while on Camino:

Arrived in Villafranca today and sorry to say I was in so much pain and hot I was unable to enjoy/be in the moment. It's day 7 for our family and didn't think I'd be struggling with foot pain so quickly. Have decided to taxi to La Faba with my daughter tomorrow while my husband and son continue to walk. I've been laying (sic) in bed pretty much since we arrived trying to recover. Wondering if this is common? Got a couple of small blisters and rash on legs but it's the foot pain that's unbearable. Seems to (sic) soon to be down 😞 😞 On a positive note...continue to experience blessings, big and small, no matter how I'm feeling.

Pilgrims responded in kind with messages of understanding, support, and practical advice. One pilgrim replied,

I had it the whole walk. Plantar fasciitis. We've been home a month and while it's better I still can't go for a walk. While on the Camino I took therapeutic doses of ibuprofen and the Spanish equivalent of Tylenol 3x a day. It was still a struggle and colored my whole experience. I feel for you.

The Camino de Santiago is by definition a road of trials. From physical, to emotional, to spiritual, each stage presents new challenges that the hero-pilgrim must overcome.

However, there are those who would provide help and comfort along the way.

The Meeting with the Goddess

In this stage, according to Campbell (1949), the hero finds himself or herself deep in the bounds of unconditional love. To be sure, the love and support, the kinship and connection that happens between pilgrims is powerful and impactful. Those who share

such a life-changing event together are sure to be bound together by their shared experience. They lay their souls bare, they share vulnerabilities, heartbreak, and personal faults. They share a connectivity through the call that brought them to the Camino in the first place. Some pilgrims find romantic love on the trail as well, some of which turns into lifelong commitment, and some that fade as soon as the physical pilgrimage ends. For Campbell, the unconditional love expressed in this stage is often thought of as romantic love. On pilgrimage, the love can take many forms. In the pilgrimage, as in life, it is the love of others that carries us through our trials and our triumphs. One pilgrim shared her Camino love story in the Facebook APOC forum, as she and her fiancé prepared to return to the Camino to take their engagement photos:

Good morning!! Two years ago July 1, my fiancée, Andreas and I met while walking the Camino de Santiago. Andreas is from Sweden and I am from Texas. He is a graduate student studying Work Life Science and I am a registered emergency nurse who is working on my Masters. As I said earlier, Andreas and I met while walking the Camino de Santiago two years ago. I was three months post recovery from terminal cancer when I started walking. I was walking the camino (sic) as a way to be thankful that I was still alive and able to do so. Andreas was in search of adventure and nature. We found each other and have been traveling back and forth across the two countries to see each other ever since. We have decided to return to walk the Camino again this year August 4-September 13! We are looking for a photographer that will be in Santiago de Compostela the first week in September that might be interested in taking our engagement photos. We are happy to pay you for your time; however, we are both graduate students, so we would like to keep the price low as possible without sacrificing quality. We were thinking a two hour photo session and enough photos to capture Santiago in our photos...a session that captures the essence of the Camino and the city where our love began. Anyone interested in capturing our Camino Love Story?

This pilgrim illuminates just one kind of love that can be found on Camino, romantic love. It is not uncommon for lovers to find one another while on pilgrimage, but romantic love is certainly not the only kind of love experienced on the pilgrimage.

Pilgrims demonstrate love in a myriad of ways—by bearing their souls, by sharing their wine, by helping others in distress, and by offering a shoulder to cry on.

Woman as Temptress

In this stage, we find perhaps the most fascinating aspect regarding the changing Camino de Santiago; for in the modern age of the pilgrimage, the temptress comes not in human form but in the form of the handheld electronic device. As many pilgrims indicated, the allure of the cell phone is difficult to resist, and giving in to temptation has the potential to draw pilgrims away from the experience at hand, just as the temptress of folklore can draw her prey from the hero's journey. One pilgrim in the Camino de Santiago forum shared Douglas Challenger's (2016) article from *On Being*, and posted the following inquiry to pilgrims in the forum:

I just stumbled on this wonderful and very thought provoking article. It made me really sit down and think. I have no interest whatsoever in rehashing the old argument of whether 'real pilgrims' use phones or whatever electronic devices they might bring on the Camino. We probably have to get over it: most people take at least a phone along with them. Me too. But several times this year I had the experience of being "alone together" in the common space at an albergue--when people were so engrossed in their devices that there was no conversation--and I felt that it'd have been rude to interrupt in order to start one. It was sad, because part of the joy of the way is meeting people, and sharing from the heart. And so what got me thinking as I read this article--and wondering what you all would think--was this line: "Given the fact that cell phone and social media use will remain a reality along the Camino from now on, our observations have taught us that we need to develop a more intentional set of rules to limit our use of this technology." So how do you manage your electronics--and what guidelines (if any) do you follow for yourself when you walk? What works, and what challenges you in this area? Here's my general strategy, to start the discussion off...I generally like being 'off the radar,' so I always have an away message on my emails. And I don't do FB & etc, so that's not an issue--my version of social media is mostly this forum, and I find that there is not so much posting that happens after a few days.

This inquiry is interesting in many ways. First, it points to technological advancement and its presence on the pilgrimage as an inevitability. Although the presence of

technology along the pilgrim route is ubiquitous, many pilgrims still refrain from discussing it as such, choosing instead to implore fellow pilgrims to put away their devices and attend to the experience in front of them. Next, it appeals to pilgrims to be mindful of their technologies, and to recognize that it will impact their experience. One forum member responded with the following insights:

I have so many thoughts on this but don't want to peck with one finger all day to post them now. I remember last year when I arrived in San Martin Pinario and went into the bar to meet someone-- every single person was on a phone or iPad. I agree about the intentionality of dealing with it but it seems almost impossible to buck the tide. On these remote Caminos that I walk, technology has given me the opportunity to be "together alone." My family and the forum have virtually been my only social contacts on the Castellano-aragones. Sure, I've had many lovely conversations with villagers, bar owners, shop keepers, etc but I so enjoy being able to communicate with my loved ones (face time from Pozalmuro, population 35--how incredible is that). I will use technology very differently when I'm in an albergue with a group of pilgrims but for these weeks it has been my lifeline. In fact, both of you were so very helpful when I needed to figure out a logistics problem coming up next week. That was from Pozalmuro as well!!

This pilgrim notes the pragmatic value of having communication access, even in remote villages on less commonly-traversed Camino routes, but also echoes some concerns regarding the rampant use of technology by pilgrims in traditionally social settings. She notes that without the access to her technology, because she was on a more remote route, her social connections would be naught. Clearly, the allure of the technological temptress is influencing the manner in which pilgrims not only experience their pilgrimage, but also the ways in which they perceive and contrast the pilgrimage to what it might have been without the intrusion of technology. As noted here, both the value and the disadvantages of technology are considered within the modern milieu. Another pilgrim in the forum indicated just that in her response to the OP: "That's the double-edged sword of this technology, isn't it--both lifesaver and potential isolater."

Karauskos et al (2010) note that many individuals suffer from social media addiction, and suggest that Facebook addiction should be added to the DSM, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* used by the American Psychological Association. The authors describe Facebook addiction as “an urge-driven disorder with a strong compulsive component” (Karauskos et al., 2010, p. 855).

The paradox of modern communication technologies on the Camino de Santiago is that they are both a marvel and an intrusion; they are both a blessing and a curse. They allow pilgrims to transcend social distance between themselves and their loved ones back home, but they increase social distance between pilgrims who are traveling together. They create social scenarios of being “alone together”, as Turkle (2011) indicates. They have become, for all intents and purposes, the modern temptress.

Atonement with the Father

In this stage of the Hero’s Journey, midway through the journey, Campbell (1949) indicates that the hero will ultimately confront that which holds power over him or her. For pilgrims, this experience often holds. As previously stated, pilgrims are often inspired to walk the Camino de Santiago in an effort to heal their suffering souls, to find peace within their circumstances, or to find answers to questions. Often, it is these lingering challenges that have become centerpieces in their lives, and those challenges demand their attention. Whether they grieve the loss of a loved one, struggle with an important decision, or find themselves searching for meaning, the yearnings that lead them to set off on this journey across Spain are often significant and must be confronted. Ultimately, the pilgrimage demands that the affairs of the heart be tended.

Yet how are these big questions being affected by technology? Many express concerns that social media and constant connectivity serve only as distractions from the bigger picture and the important questions that inspired the journey. Yet despite the ubiquity of technology, many pilgrims still report profound experiences and healing during their journey along the Camino. Van der Beek (2016) suggests that the existence of visual narratives on social media creates expectations of pilgrim experience that may go unrealized. Pilgrims who might seek healing, for example, may find that their pain, rather than being resolved on pilgrimage, follows them home. For many pilgrims, however, while the journey may differ drastically from a pilgrim's preconceptions, there is ultimately no escaping the self on the pilgrimage, and confronting the self is often the greatest atonement of all. Ultimately, most pilgrims indicated that while they may not have found exactly what they were looking for on the Camino, they did find at least some valuable lessons.

Apotheosis

After facing down the temptress and reckoning with one's personal demons, ultimately reconciling with them, Campbell (1949) suggests that the hero passes through to a new stage; one in which a higher level of consciousness can be attained. Once this new level of awareness and personal growth is achieved, the hero finds herself ready to face even harder challenges that lay before her on the journey.

It is said that the Camino itself has stages. The first is a test of the body. During this step, the pilgrim fights his or her way through blisters, sprains, sunburns, illness, shin splints, twisted knees, and plantar fasciitis, all the while learning how to cope with pain and, for some, truly connecting with or even noticing their bodies for the first time.

The second stage is a test of the mind. In the endless flatness of the Meseta, the mind which has previously been occupied with mountains and rocks and physical challenges now finds itself free to wander, and the pilgrim comes back in direct contact with his or her past, her future, her grief, her doubts, her regrets, or her uncertainty. The experiences that inspired the journey are waiting for her, and will not be forgotten. Ultimately, though, the pilgrim will pass through to the final stage, the test of the spirit. In this stage, it is said, pilgrims will ultimately turn their attention toward spiritual rejuvenation. The ritual at the Cruce de Ferro [See Figure 8] is significant to this experience. At the iron cross, pilgrims have laid down their stones and their sins for hundreds of years. Nowadays, pilgrims climb up a small mountain of stones to lay theirs at the foot of the cross, and in doing so are said to unburden themselves so that they might walk into Santiago with a light and joyful heart. Of course, even this ritual experience is being impacted by technology and commercialism, as the Cruce has become a popular stop for tour bus-filled travelers, eager to watch pilgrims lay their stones, and pilgrim and tourists alike feverishly take photos of the stone ritual. Despite this, however, most pilgrims still report having moving experiences at the Cruce, although many take pains to arrive at the Cruce at first light, before the tour buses arrive.

The Ultimate Boon

In this stage, the hero's journey reaches its climax, as the hero sets forth to achieve the goal of the journey. For some who walk the pilgrimage, the achievement is less climactic and more holistic, and for some, the goal is never fully realized. Some, however, do report a climactic experience that seemed to mark the journey. Some

pilgrims experience this moment at the Cruce de Ferro, as the act of ceremonially laying down one's burdens or sins can be extremely powerful. Even those who do not experience such an identifiably transformative moment, nevertheless, find themselves changed by the experience of the Camino; some describe the pilgrimage as among the most significant experiences of their lives. One pilgrim described a particularly significant occurrence at the Cruce de Ferro, after having dealt with a lot of internalized spiritual uncertainty and personal pain that sprung from a prior divorce, which he felt was a sin. He noted that he walked away from the Cruce de Ferro feeling lighter, as though the burden of guilt and pain had in fact been lifted from him by God's grace.

One post in the American Pilgrims on Camino Facebook forum asked pilgrims whether they had made any major or radical decisions that changed their lives significantly while on the Camino or after returning home. One pilgrim indicated that she decided to end her thirteen-year marriage. Another stated that she quit her job and moved to a new town to start a new career. Still another indicated that she left her steady job to start her own business. While each pilgrimage is unique, many pilgrims indicated that they made pivotal decisions that ultimately changed the course of their lives. Many look back to their pilgrimage as a turning point.

In many ways, the simple act of discussing these personal experiences with strangers over the Internet is a significant change from years past. In the Camino-related forums, pilgrims find kindred spirits who understand the magnitude of the pilgrimage and the challenges and triumphs that occur along the way. Access to these spaces allow pilgrims to share their experiences with others who might have similar tales.

Return

Campbell (1949) refers to the final general stage of the Hero's Journey as Return. Here, the hero makes his way back to his former life, forever changed by his experiences on the journey. Subsumed under this stage are the following sub-stages: Refusal of the Return, The Magic Flight, Rescue from Within, The Crossing of the Return Threshold, Master of Two Worlds, and Freedom to Live. Some versions of the Hero's Journey also discuss the reward of the journey in conjunction with the return home.

Refusal of the Return

The Refusal of the Return is one with which many pilgrims can relate, as previously stated. In this stage, the hero wishes to stay in the new world, for it has brought with it excitement, adventure, and happiness. This is a commonly expressed sentiment among pilgrims on Camino. Many pilgrims begin to feel a sense of sadness when they find themselves nearing Santiago, as they are not yet ready for the journey to be over. Campbell (1949) himself notes that some heroes never really find their way back from their adventure. He states, "Numerous indeed are the heroes fabled to have taken up residence forever in the blessed isle of the unaging Goddess of Immortal Being" (p. 193). Indeed, there are pilgrims who, unable to leave the Camino behind, pack up their life and take up permanent residence in Spain. Scholar Nancy Frey, after publishing her seminal book on the Camino, moved to Spain and began giving tours along the pilgrim trail. Author Rebekah Scott moved to Spain and opened an albergue. Thus, some pilgrims demonstrate the ultimate refusal.

As Gitlitz (2014) notes, the experience and purpose of modern pilgrimage, in many instances, has shifted from the destination to the journey, and many pilgrims regret seeing the journey come to an end. (This can also be understood as the hyper-ego in the perspectival world, since the focus has diverted from the holy shrine to the self.) According to Campbell (1949), at this point in the journey, the hero, having found peace and enlightenment on the road, may be reluctant to return to his everyday existence. This is an important elaboration of the narrative expressed by pilgrims on the path-not only are pilgrims saddened to see the pilgrimage come to an end, but they also express reticence to return home because they have found peace and joy on the Camino, and are uncertain whether the lessons and feelings of the pilgrimage can be carried back into their busy, chaotic lives.

As previously discussed, because most pilgrims do not elect to return home on foot, the end of the pilgrimage in Santiago can leave one feeling quite listless. For those who must return immediately home at the end of the pilgrimage, many may dread the end of their journey. For those who have more flexibility in their schedule at the end of the pilgrimage, some may elect to continue their travels in other parts of Spain or Europe. One blog post focuses on alternatives to immediately returning home, for those pilgrims who simply are not ready for their pilgrimage to be over (Delahunt, 2017). One recommendation it offers are continuing on to Muxia or Finisterre, towns just past Santiago on the coast. This extension offers pilgrims a few more days of walking, while allowing them to process the experience of walking the Camino de Santiago to Compostela. Another recommendation the blog offers is simply to spend a few more days in Santiago itself, resting and recovering and communing with other pilgrims. In

doing so, one finds themselves immersed in the culture of the famed pilgrim city and can celebrate the successful completion of the pilgrimage alongside others who arrive each day. Whether friend or stranger, the arrival of pilgrims in the cathedral square is a joyous sight to behold, and time spent relaxing in the pilgrim center can offer pilgrims a positive space in which to rest and reflect. Another recommendation the author makes is to spend some time volunteering in Santiago or along the trail. This offers pilgrims an opportunity to give back to the experience, and to lend a hand to other pilgrims on the journey. Ultimately, however, the return cannot be denied for most pilgrims.

The Magic Flight

In this stage, the hero, having come to terms with the return, must begin the journey home. Once the pilgrim finds herself past the climactic Boon, she finds herself once more at odds with the antagonist. Campbell (1949) refers to this point in the Hero's Journey as The Magic Flight. Here, Campbell notes,

If the hero in his triumph wins the blessing of the goddess or the god and is then explicitly commissioned to return to the world with some elixir for the restoration of society, the final stage of his adventure is supported by all the powers of his supernatural patron (pp. 196-197).

In some instances, however, Campbell (1949) notes that “the hero's wish to return to the world [may] be resented by the gods” (p. 197). As such, the return may be celestially challenged. In many ways, the antagonist in this tale is represented by the existential crises that each pilgrim faced down on the trail. For while the journey may well provide comfort and healing, the unavoidable pains of life are not erased by a pilgrimage; while the journey may provide tools, the hero must still continue to face down personal demons, even after the journey has ended. Whether the return home is challenging or blessed by the gods, the return is undoubtedly marked by technological

advancement. After weeks of traveling by foot, the hero is suddenly spirited away and returned home, often thousands of miles away, in mere hours. In many ways, the journey home is equally arduous and eventful as the journey forth, and the modern journey is no exception. Most modern pilgrims will ultimately find their way home in the same manner they found their way to the pilgrim trail. Of course, the modern antagonist might be a delayed flight, a missed train, or an all-too-common European worker's strike. Some pilgrims might certainly take these delays as signs that it is not yet time to return home.

Rescue from Without

At this point in the journey, in the process of returning home, the hero finds himself or herself in need of saving one last time. The support of the pilgrim network is scarcely underestimated by pilgrims on the trail, after finishing the Camino, and after the return home. As noted, because modern communication technology enables pilgrims to connect with other pilgrims at virtually any time, there is constant access to others who have experienced the pilgrimage and who may be able to relate and lend support to the process of returning home and beginning to unpack the experience of the journey. Many posts in the Camino forum and in the APOC Facebook forum discuss the experiences pilgrims have returning home. One pilgrim posted, "We completed the Camino Frances in the middle of October and were a little bluesy returning from Canada." Another posted the following about his arrival in Santiago,

I finished the Portuguese (Coastal Route) Camino on 17 October. When walking the last couple of kilometers into Santiago and then up to the Cathedral, I had an overwhelming sense of anticipation. I was finishing my first Camino and could not wait to get to my final destination, the Cathedral. I was so excited with the adrenaline pumping that I nearly started to run the uphill to the Cathedral. After months of preparation and training, I was on the final stretch to reach my goal.

When reaching the Cathedral, and walking onto the plain in front of the Cathedral, I just suddenly felt an emptiness I cannot explain. I was standing there, empty. Not the WOW that I thought I would experience. I just sat down there on the plain between all the tourists and tried to understand this emptiness. After a couple of minutes (could have been half an hour), I came to the following conclusion.

The reason for me feeling empty was probably because of the following two reasons:

1. I have reached my goal. I have finished my Camino. After months of planning and excitement, after 11 days of walking, from Porto to Santiago, everything had ended. The WOW of the last 11 days are now gone. Now I only have the memories and I have to return back home.
2. Walking onto the plain (I am a Christian and I walked the Camino for religious reasons), I walked into this ants nest of tourists. My sacred end to my pilgrimage was not sacred at all. I did not want to go into the Cathedral because of the queue of tourists standing at the entrance of the Cathedral. When walking to the pilgrims office, I walked past a small Cathedral at the bottom of the steps. I entered the Cathedral and it was quiet. I then had my silent moment with my Lord in this small Cathedral, and not in the Cathedral where pilgrims are supposed to finish. Are there any other peregrinos that also had a moment of emptiness finishing there Camino?

This pilgrim illustrates a common feeling that many pilgrims describe—a sense of emptiness upon arriving at the end of the journey. He also reiterates the common contrast of the sacred/profane or pilgrim/tourist. It is clear that some pilgrims are reaching out to their fellow pilgrims for external support through the process of ending their pilgrimage and beginning the journey home, and that this technologically-afforded benefit is of vital emotional importance to many.

The Crossing of the Return Threshold

In this stage, in perhaps one of the most emotionally puzzling portion of the journey, the hero must return to his or her previous life, crossing the return threshold and leaving the journey behind. In the physical sense, it is clear that modern advancements have significantly changed the process of returning home. Since modern transport can enable pilgrims to make their way home so quickly, sometimes covering

thousands of miles in mere hours, the return journey is an entirely different experience from that of the ancient pilgrim. As the pilgrim attempts to reconcile the experience of the pilgrimage, she also has access to tremendous online resources, from online blogs written by pilgrims who have experienced the transition home before, to forums that enable the pilgrim to engage directly with other pilgrims, to ask questions and seek support, to simple pleasures such as looking through photos of the trip on one's Smartphone or reviewing the journey on one's social media page. Thus, the manner in which the return home has changed can scarcely be overstated. The crossing of the threshold is generally deemed significant by pilgrims. As previously stated, some pilgrims make life-changing decisions while on Camino, such as to start a new career or to terminate a relationship, and for those individuals, the return home marks the beginning of a new and vastly different chapter. As previously stated, crossing the return threshold can, for some, feel foreign and uncomfortable. One pilgrim in the Camino de Santiago forum stated the following,

I just finished my first Camino and today is two weeks back home. Camino homesickness is hitting hard, which is arguably why I've been participating in so many forum conversations in the last couple of days. I did not expect that - I thought once I'd finished, I wouldn't need the forum so much. In fact, it is the opposite. I need / want it much more. Summing it up, it feels like I've changed, but nothing else has. In picking up my backpack, I'd gotten rid of a lot of baggage. Coming home, I have to pick it all up again. My life is pretty amazing and I have a lot to be thankful for - but right now I have to keep reminding myself of that an awful lot. As I reread that last sentence, I realize I just gave myself the reminder that I need (reciting all the things I was thankful for in the moment was how I kept going sometimes. I will have to restart that practice!) I saw a thread a few days ago about a book on coming home, and I will read it soon. But I must believe I am not alone in the post-Camino blues. Anyone willing to share what they felt, and how they coped? Many thanks

Removing the pilgrim uniform and returning to everyday attire is significant. For women, returning to a space where one's appearance is more heavily scrutinized may

also be an adjustment. The return is, for many, quite significant, and it can take time to adjust to being home.

Master of Two Worlds

This stage holds unique challenges, as all the lessons of the hero's journey must be transferred from the magical realm to that of the everyday. Within this stage of the process, the pilgrim will attempt to bring the lessons of the Camino home with them and attempt to become the master of both worlds. Nearly every pilgrim I have encountered has recounted lessons learned along the Camino, and has attempted to incorporate those lessons into their lives after returning home. For many, incorporating these lessons into their life back home can be a challenge, as the fast-paced modern world can make it difficult to reconcile lessons that might encourage more enjoyment and less work-which is often why so many pilgrims ultimately find their way back to the Camino. Many, however, do take strides to keep the lessons of the Camino de Santiago alive after returning home. In an article written for the *Huffington Post*, Claire Marshall (2015) recounts some of the key lessons she learned along the pilgrim trail. First, she notes, she began to understand the importance of connecting with others, with nature, and with herself. With so much time alone on the trail, she notes, there is a lot of time to get acquainted with yourself, and it is important to turn our attention inward, both on the trail and off, from time to time. Next, she states, she began to find meaning in suffering. She comments,

A friend I met along the way reminded me that pain is the Camino's way of making sure you are living in the present...finding meaning in the challenges, feeling joyful regardless of the pain, that's what it's about. Pain is an inevitable part of life; it's how we deal with it that matters.

Next, Claire notes that on the Camino she learned to simply keep walking-in other words, to keep moving forward through all the ups and downs. A pilgrim with whom I spoke echoed similar sentiments when I asked her what it meant to her to be a pilgrim. After thinking for a long while, she simply stated, “Pilgrims only move forward. A traveler may move any which way, but a pilgrim only moves forward”. Finally, Claire noted that she learned that life truly is about the journey rather than the destination. While we often become preoccupied with our goals and our destinations, life is what happens in the everyday moments. The joys and the sorrows, the friendships and the solitude-all of these things make up our individual journeys, both on the Camino and off. This concept offers a nice segue into the final stage of Campbell’s Hero’s Journey: The Freedom to Live.

Freedom to Live

In this stage, having successfully completed the journey, the hero has earned the right to live life on his or her own terms, free from the negative emotions and self-doubt that might have proven a barrier in the past. The hero can move forward with a renewed sense of confidence and comfort, knowing that he or she has all the tools needed to live a successful and happy life-and if ever a pilgrim finds herself in doubt, reassurance is only a click away. Pilgrims returning home from the Camino often discuss a renewed sense of confidence and a devaluing of social expectations. Pilgrims discuss living life authentically, finding the courage to be themselves, and pursuing goals once thought impossible. The Camino teaches many pilgrims of their own fortitude, pushing them past limits previously thought unsurmountable.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Pilgrimage has been described as a “self-imposed exile”, in which pilgrims set forth in search of truth (Villarrubia, 2010). The experience of setting forth into the unknown, away from the comforts of familiarity, is unique to each who endeavors to take it, and yet the experience binds those who share it. The physical and emotional intensity of any arduous journey is often life-changing, and the modern age of technology has not changed that fact.

Every pilgrim experience is unique, and likewise, the ways in which pilgrims engage technology before, during, and after the Camino also varies dramatically, as do opinions and feelings regarding the engagement of technology. Some pilgrims interviewed were extremely enthusiastic about the many benefits of technology as it related to the pilgrimage, whereas others pointed out concerns about the ways in which technology may be negatively impacting the pilgrim experience. Still others expressed vehement opposition to the bridging of what they saw as profane behavior within a sacred space and experience. Some pilgrims expressed a combination of both concern and enthusiasm. Regardless, the topic of technology was ever-present, as the effects were far-reaching and observable to all pilgrims, even those actively attempting to avoid the use of technology on The Way.

Technology is having a profound effect on the modern Camino de Santiago, both in practical and in philosophical respects. From the introduction to the pilgrimage to the process of unpacking the experience once a pilgrim has returned home, modern technologies, particularly communication technologies, are influencing the whole experience, from start to finish. In many ways, the manner in which technology plays a role in the pilgrim experience is as varied as the pilgrims themselves. However, there

are many ways in which technological advancement are affecting the macro-environment, and many of the perceptions and experiences with this new technological milieu are nearly universally experienced by pilgrims. The presence of wifi in most albergues and bars, for example, affects connected and disconnected pilgrims alike. The ubiquity of available information on the Camino, too, is evident to nearly all pilgrims, even as the level of immersion into that information varies.

Pilgrim discourse, too, is seeing profound effects of technology. Much of the discourse about the philosophical elements of the modern Camino trace back to technology and the ways in which the pilgrimage is being affected by technology and rising numbers. The manner in which pilgrims are conversing has changed dramatically in the age of the Internet and social media. Pilgrims now have the ability to connect and converse long before their feet hit the trail and long after they return home, through a myriad of platforms. Pilgrim interaction on the trail is changing as well, as pilgrims find themselves “alone together” in albergues, or lose themselves in their headphones rather than in fellowship with passing pilgrims. To be sure, connections are not being lost completely. Shouts of “Buen Camino” and connections over pilgrim meals and on the trail still happen commonly. Yet, as pilgrims continue to use their devices to connect with others and to isolate themselves from fellow pilgrims, the connections and *communitas* among pilgrims is undoubtedly being impacted.

Most pilgrims I encountered, either in person or online, are drawn to the act of uncertainty reduction when it comes to the Camino de Santiago. It has been said that reducing uncertainty is like photograph upside-down (Kramer, 2017, personal correspondence). Whereas photographs enable us to return to privileged memories,

research done in an effort to reduce uncertainty about a forthcoming event allows pictures to enter our mind *before* the event has taken place. In some instances, literal pictures demonstrate the landmarks and landscapes that are to come. In others, vivid descriptions and responses to questions help to build pictures in one's mind of what is to come. While there certainly are pilgrims who attempt to limit their exposure to information and Camino narratives, in an effort to avoid certain expectations and preconceived notions, many pilgrims are enthusiastically consuming tremendous amounts of information before setting forth on their Caminos. Much of the mystery of the Camino is certainly being lost in the modern world, where photos, videos, commentary and individual narratives are merely a click away. It is important to remember the link between uncertainty reduction and the desire to reduce suffering as well. While the desire to reduce suffering is natural, it is also important to remember the role of suffering within pilgrimage, and to consider the ways in which suffering and uncertainty can enhance the lessons of the Camino. The pilgrim, uncertain whether she is on the right path, may have a pleasant encounter with another pilgrim or a local who, in seeing their bewilderment, may offer to show them the way. The smiling face of a local might well leave the pilgrim with a warmer feeling than their GPS might while offering the same information. The full albergue may frustrate the weary pilgrim at the end of a long walking day, but the owner of a bar who opens a room at the top of the stairs and welcomes the pilgrims with open arms may quickly become a Camino Angel, restoring one's faith in the kindness of others. While it is natural to seek preventative solutions, there is also a value in remaining open, at least periodically, to the possibilities of the trail, however daunting they may be. Level of technological

engagement, among other behaviors, are affecting notions of what constitutes authentic pilgrimage.

Discourse among pilgrims suggests that conversations will continue regarding notions of authentic pilgrimage, and the overlap with conceptions of sacred versus profane travel. In the meantime, pilgrims will continue to seek out meaningful experiences on the pilgrim trail, and for the time being, those who anxiously pursue a quieter, more remote pilgrimage will continue to seek out alternative pilgrim routes, until they too become subject to overcrowding, as the Camino Frances and the Camino Portuguese have demonstrated. For now, though, the enthusiasm for pilgrimage continues to spread through Spain, throughout Europe, and around the globe, as more and more pilgrims are finding their way to such routes as the Via de la Plata and the Camino Primitivo to Santiago, the Via Francigena in Italy, the European Peace Walk in Eastern Europe, the Way of the 88 Temples and the Kumano Kodo in Japan. Pilgrims along each of these routes and others will continue to grapple with the conflicting structures of consciousness, as the modern perspectival world continues to intersect with the magic and mythic structures along these ancient and sacred routes. In the stress and chaos of modern life, more people are finding themselves yearning for the kind of experience that pilgrimage can provide—a chance to reconnect with nature, simplify their routine, and reconnect with themselves. In a chaotic world, pilgrimage can offer a reprieve from the noisy frustrations of daily life, and, if current trends are any indication, the practice will only continue to grow.

As a result of the reprieve pilgrimage offers from the stresses of everyday life—the opportunity to slow down, to take in one’s surroundings, to pay attention to the

sights, sounds, smells, and sensations of the body, it is not a coincidence that pilgrimage is becoming more popular as the world stretches ever-forward. Technology is both making travel more accessible and urging individuals to step outside their fast-paced, hyper-connected milieus. Pilgrims will need to take care to ensure that they remain intentional about that presence, lest pilgrimage become just another act in an audience-centered performance.

With respect to technology use, while it may have been expected that younger pilgrims might have been inclined to view technology use-particularly social media engagement-as a natural extension of any experience, having grown up in the age of the Internet and having come of age in the age of social media, and that older pilgrims might be more inclined to view technology as an encroachment, the reality of the landscape was much different. Many pilgrims who opted to leave their Smartphones at home were in fact younger pilgrims, and many of the most enthusiastic tech users were actually older pilgrims. In retrospect, this made sense. Many younger pilgrims indicated that leaving their cell phones behind and experiencing the pilgrimage disconnected and untethered was in fact a crucial element of their experience. This stands to reason, when one considers that life untethered was in fact a new experience for many millennial pilgrims. Conversely, many older pilgrims, having experienced life both pre- and post-Internet, were quick to marvel at the conveniences that Smartphones afforded. Yet, naturally, these orientations toward technology did not fall uniformly along these lines. I met enthusiastic technology-adopters in all age groups, as well as the technology-averse.

What does all of this mean for the kinds of experiences pilgrims will have, and for the meaning that may be drawn from the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela? While many pilgrims express profound concerns for the changing Camino and worry that the nature of the pilgrimage may be irreversibly lost, history suggests that the pilgrimage will remain. Through wars, famine, plagues, and Protestant Reformation, the Camino de Santiago has not ceased, although it may have evolved over time. It is likely that it will survive the modern era as well. Despite the changing technological climate on the trail, pilgrims still report meaningful experiences, life-changing encounters, and unimaginable struggles. The kind words of a stranger, the ache of grief, the swollen knee, and the celebratory clink of glasses over a pilgrim meal have not yet been erased by the advancement of technology. Additionally, when pilgrims speak of the lasting impressions of their experiences along the Camino de Santiago, they quite often turn to themes such as this—the stranger who appeared out of nowhere and carried a pack for a pilgrim who was visibly struggling, the lasting friendships made with pilgrims for all corners of the earth, the unique challenges brought on by the broken body or the suffering spirit that the pilgrim fought their way through—while the occasional tale of faulty wi-fi connections or forum posts might certainly make their way into conversation, rarely were the “highlights” punctuated by technology. If anything, they were merely a backdrop to a more universal story. The story of the hero on the journey of life.

Figure 1: The Compostela



Figure 2: Map of the Camino Frances

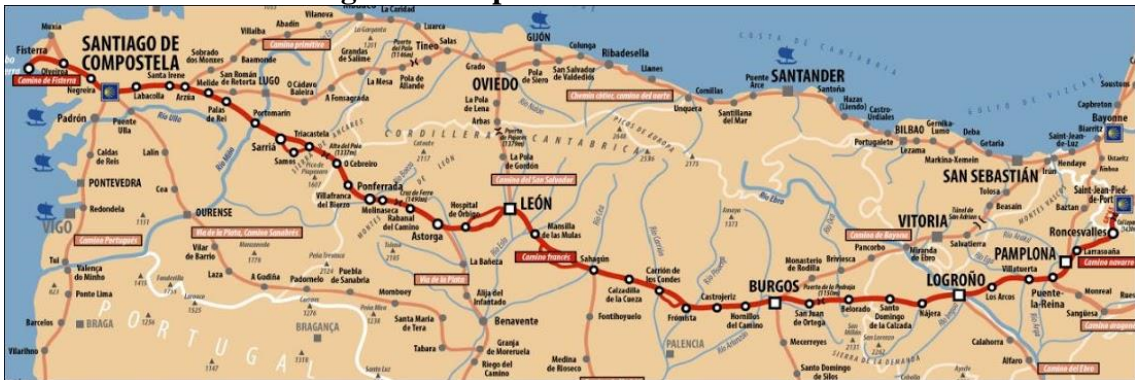
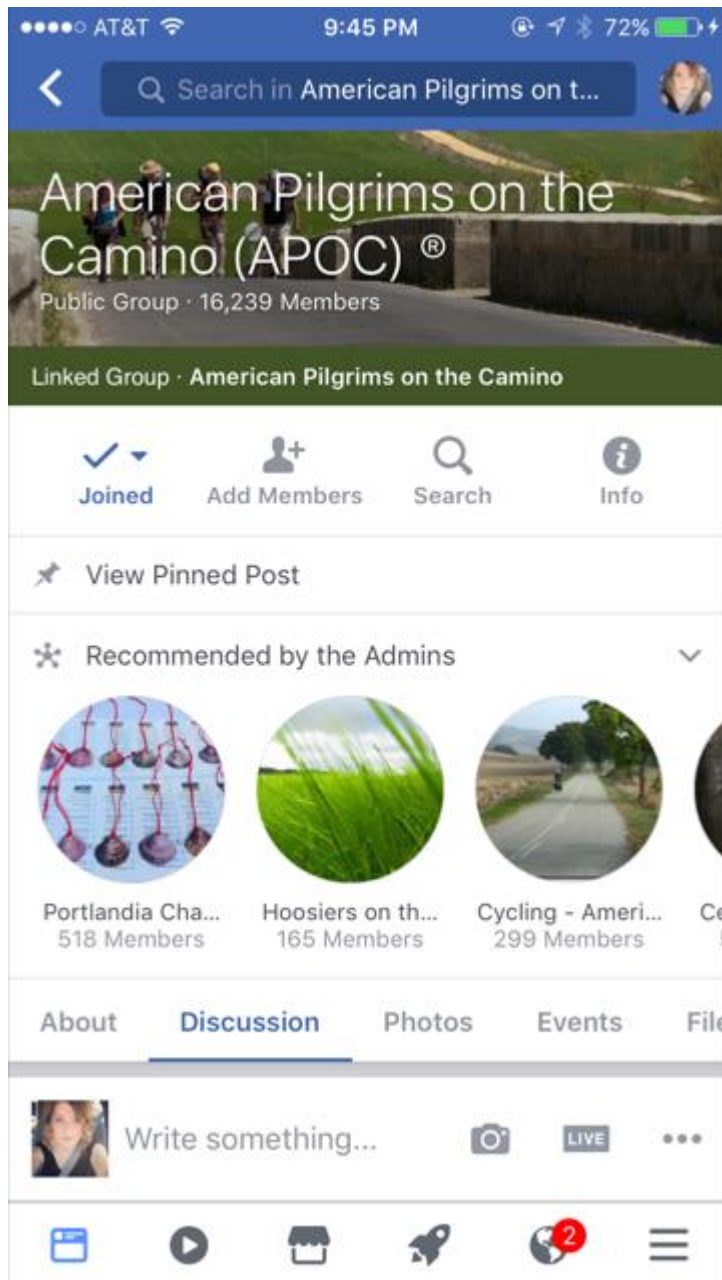


Figure 3: Facebook and Instagram pages dedicated to the Camino de Santiago



●●●●○ AT&T 11:54 AM 69%

< elcaminodesantiago ...

 270 posts 8,942 followers 143 following

Following ▾

CaminoDeSantiago
El Camino de Santiago / The Way of St. James / Chemin de Saint-Jacques / Jakobsweg on Instagram. Buen Camino.

Followed by littleyellowarrow, pilgrimhousesdc, facesandplacesofthecamino + 24 more

SEE TRANSLATION





Figure 4: Pilgrims using Smartphones outside albergue



Figure 5: Examples of meta-anti-technology



Figure 6: Alto de Perdon outside Pamplona



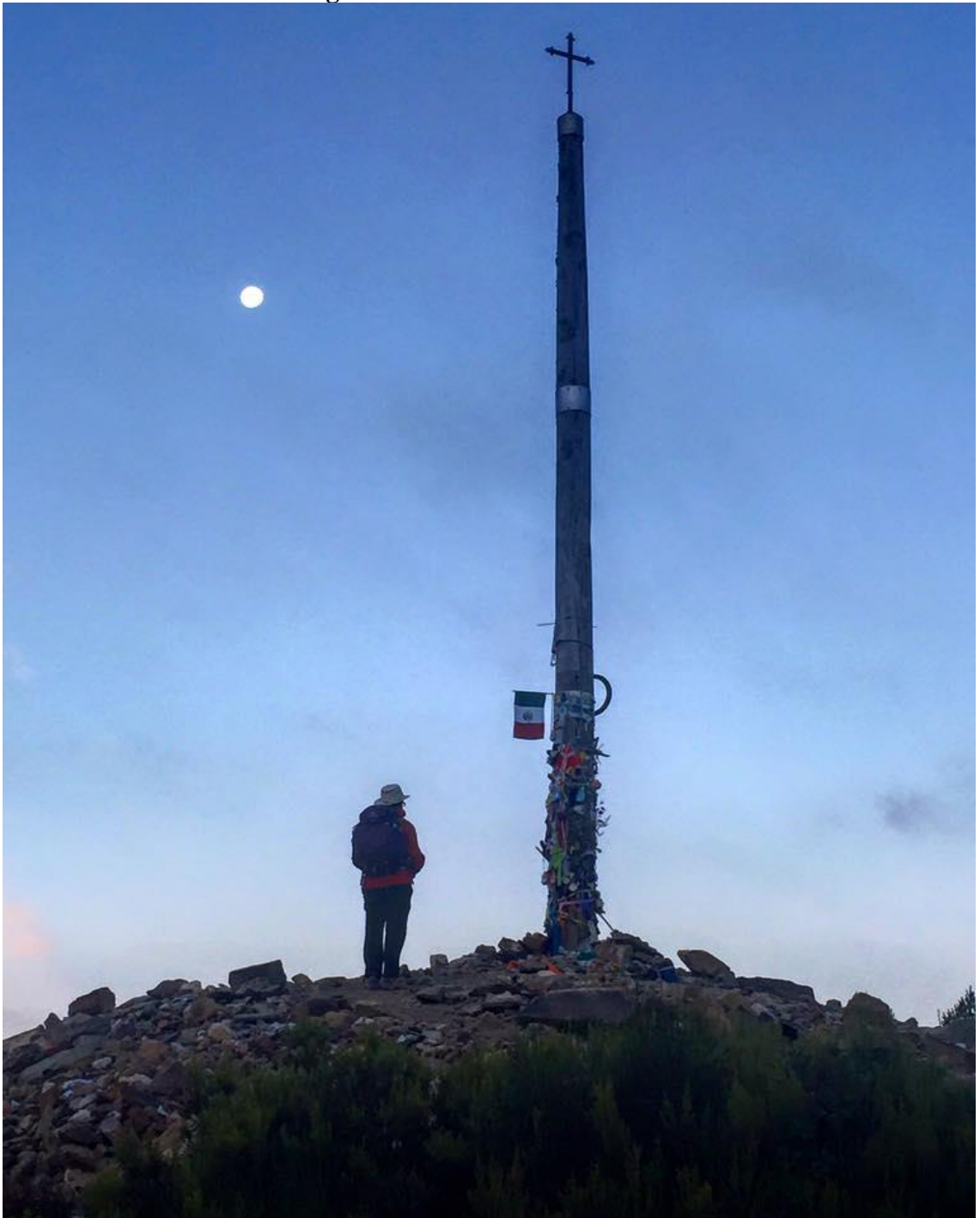
Figure 7: Cameras and Cell Phones in Santiago Cathedral



Figure 8: Trail markers



Figure 9: Cruce de Ferro Ritual



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Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What inspired you to walk the Camino?
2. Can you describe your experience so far?
3. Have you been using any kind of technology while on Camino? E.g. cell phone, tablet, e-reader, laptop, GPS device?
4. How has your use of or abstinence from technology influenced your overall experience?
5. Did you use technology before setting out on Camino in an effort to gather information? If so please elaborate.
 - a. Probe: How did this affect your Camino experience?
6. What is your perception of technology use by pilgrims along the path?
7. Describe some of the pilgrims you have met. How have other pilgrims impacted your overall experience?
8. Where are you from?
9. How long have you been walking/Where did you begin your pilgrimage?
10. Have your feelings changed or evolved regarding technology use since you began?
11. May I ask your age?
12. What does it mean to you to be a pilgrim/Do you identify as a pilgrim?

Appendix B: Subject Data

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Country of origin/residence (If different)
Anja	F	28	Denmark
Sandy	F	37	United States/Spain
Susan	F	40	Canada
Charles	M	63	Holland (born) /South Africa (raised)/France
Liam	M	52	England
Irene	F	66	Australia
Pat	F	60-70 (would not specify; provided range)	Scotland
Bill	M	66	United States
Steve	M	44	New Zealand
Harper	F	41	New Zealand
Catherine	F	25	Germany
Paula & Dean	F/M	52/55	United States
Michelle	F	27	United States
Meredith	F	51	Canada
Frank	M	65	United States
Harry	M	66	Canada
Birte	F	36	Germany
Wayne	M	57	Canada
Mike	M	66	South Africa/United States
Patsy	F	66	United States
Ailis	F	50	Ireland

Velma/John	F/M	65/71	United States
Joyce	F	69	United States
Daisy	F	66	Australia
Connie	F	46	United States
Travis	M	62	United States/Mexico
Kip	M	42	Singapore/Australia
Monica	F	58	United States
Elizabeth	F	60	United States
Agnes	F	64	Venezuela/Mexico (American citizenship)

