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# Onto emerging ground: Anticlimactic movement on the Camino de Santiago de Compostela

## Abstract

*Pilgrimage studies are frequently characterised as involving collective relationships, such as solidarity or contestation regarding discourses and attitudes, rather than travellers encountering "frivolous" things on the road. However, this paper argues that there are some similar performative actions in pilgrims' diverse walking practices on the road to Santiago de Compostela. It traces the manner in which walking movements constitute transformative forces that create a capacity for embodying a "different standpoint". This paper broadens the scope of pilgrimage studies to include not only human but also non-human aspects, such as the weather, traffic lights and the column at the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, that influence the pilgrims' journeys. Focusing more on materiality of body and place than on spirituality and thoughts in their heads, this theoretical perspective demonstrates that various encounters on the road are shaping today's Camino without the boundary of "ourselves" versus "others". Conforming to this perspective, three modes of a fractal-like deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation seen amongst pilgrims' various feelings are illustrated: going beyond to encompass something indeterminate, disciplined practices influenced by their transitive environments, and understandings of their experiences at the end of the journey.*

## Key words:

*pilgrimage; body and place; forces and forms; deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation; materiality; walking; Spain*

## Introduction

Studies of pilgrims have been based primarily on two theoretical approaches (see Coleman, 2002; Coleman & Eade, 2004), which demonstrate the production of difference. The first approach highlights apparently harmonious relationships amongst pilgrims separated from a society (see Turner & Turner, 1978), whilst the second emphasises actors' discrepant discourses that occur mainly at pilgrimage centres (see Eade & Sallnow, 1991). These studies have revealed the manner in which "differences" are produced by analyzing pilgrims' attitude and sociability. Although anthropologists Turner and Turner (1978) and Eade and Sallnow (1991) had profound insights, they avoided simplistic manifestations. In particular, Turner and Turner attempted to highlight the *flows* of social movements, whereas Eade and Sallnow (1991) implied that the *object* of a shrine dispensed multiple powers. In the introduction for the second edition of

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*Contesting the Sacred*, Eade noted that "a careful reader will notice the traces of Marxist ideas in our reference to fetishism and alienation" (Eade, 2000, p. xxi). The main argument of these two approaches in pilgrimage studies, however, has demonstrated that the difference is socially produced, either predicated from the moment of leaving home or intensified during the process of the journey. Despite these contributions to our understanding of socio-cultural modes through case studies of pilgrimage, each tends to emphasise the discontinuity of people's attitudes towards transformation in different social contexts.

Even though the Turners did not view society as bounded, their fundamental thesis was that a particular form of practice creates a type of homogeneity, which might provide a clue to understanding a society as a whole. However, this perspective has been criticized as relatively static and hegemonic (see Strathern, 1992; Bender, 2001). Studies based on the latter perspective highlighting heterogeneity deconstruct the oneness into socio-cultural specificities, which might enhance additional fragmentation, in order to challenge grand narratives. However, both perspectives are similar in the sense that differentiation shapes identity.

How can we overcome these dual emphases of homogeneity and heterogeneity to understand pilgrimage more dynamically and organically? This paper explores similar performative actions amongst pilgrims' various bodily experiences of walking on the road to Santiago de Compostela. I emphasise that similarity in their performative actions is not equivalent to uniformity; rather they are linked forces that form various discourses and cultural figures that influence each other for better or worse.

Conventional pilgrimage studies have mainly considered differences by focusing on the manner of thinking among different groups. Pilgrims have often been defined as chosen cohorts who rely on social belongings and backgrounds. This paper, on the other hand, focuses on the pilgrims' bodily experiences rather than beliefs and backgrounds. Thus, regardless of the *credenciales* that the pilgrims are supposed to carry, I shall refer to those who walk the Camino towards Santiago de Compostela as pilgrims' irrespective of what actually motivates them. This account is not equivalent to the definition of pilgrims as a certain peripheral social group, as denoted in general pilgrimage/ritual studies. An outline of pilgrims in this paper will be explained by exploring how they *feel* about their various unmediated interactions with other people and places.

In this context, this paper aims to investigate that some pilgrims create a capacity for dialogue with various things including other people, weather and buildings. In addition, this paper explores pilgrims' accompanying dispositions; the journey itself becomes more important than the final arrival at the destination, although the destination remains attractive.

To understand these complex properties of walking practices, I draw on a philosophical concept suggested by the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the anthropologist Tadashi Yanai. Deleuze presented difficult and broad ideas, which also produced different interpretations by other scholars. In this sense, Deleuzian philosophy could resonate with the idea that realities are continuously emerging in (re-)assembling processes instead of simply being identified as something. Deleuze noted that "becoming" or transformation are not related to *formes composées*, composed forms, but to *forces composantes*, component forces (Deleuze, 1986, cited in Yanai, 2002). Pilgrimage and tourism studies have extensively discussed the way in which certain socio-cultural forms have been represented or constructed, which may unintentionally exclude *a priori* other social groups, such as Asians participating in a "European pilgrimage" or secular tourists in a religious practice. These studies, however, have been slow to address the question of how human beings are continually reshaping their socio-cultural forms. The component forces mentioned by Yanai's interpretation of Deleuze are not necessarily oriented to collective traits or contestations. Rather, they allow various centrifugal movements of people who appreciate a variety of different experiences (Yanai, 2002). In other words, these forces would be associated with artistic creativity and transformation in that an opponent and an ally in social discourses are not necessary.

Because it is impossible to summarise the entire conceptual scope of philosophy here, this paper considers the aspects of "deterritorialisation" and "reterritorialisation" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, 1980). These concepts in the anthropology of globalisation seem to have been used as cultural units that transcend specific territorial boundaries in a world where socio-cultural entities are in a constant state of flux. This paper, however, leans more towards the interpretation by Yanai (2003), which highlights personal experiences over those of a socio-cultural entity. Inspired by the philosophy of Deleuze, Yanai (2003) claims that these concepts should be understood as a form of being-in-the-world; each living thing constantly leaves its organised familiar environment and self-centred world, its so-called *Umwelt* (see Uexküll, 1973), to embark on unfamiliar worlds, changing itself in the process and then creating new perspectives or a new *Umwelt* in tangible ways. By considering pilgrims' bodily movements and their environment within this theoretical framework, I will illustrate three modes of a fractal-like deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in various socio-cultural activities: going beyond to encompass new bodily engagements, disciplined practices influenced by their transitive environments, and understanding their experiences at the end of the journey. In this paper, "fractal-like" refers to things that are observable sporadically in various activities and are not a reduced-size copy of the whole.

## Methodology

In this paper, it is important to understand that people, including pilgrims and field-workers, travel *on the land*, not in *space* (see Ingold, 2010). I am cautious about the term *space* that is occasionally substituted for *place*. The word *space* in social sciences tends to be treated as an abstract socio-symbolic overlay. In this regard, pilgrimage studies have been broadly concerned with the way in which secular space is trans-

formed into sacred space and vice versa. In terms of physicality, space often involves pure open space or a position *above* the ground. In contrast to the ideational nature of space, this paper considers the materiality of place. Despite many debates on the definition of a place, this paper treats place as a field where people invest meanings, emotions and memories in the process of direct interactions between bodily movements and environmental conditions (see Creswell, 2004; Vergunst & Ingold, 2008). Thus, this paper dismisses the more positivistic structured forms of data collection to clarify its specificity and typicality in a certain social space, and heuristically analyses pilgrims' movements that form diversity.

The fieldwork involved 10 months of participant observation between 2007 and 2009 in the form of sharing walks and semi-structural interviews with 48 diverse pilgrims. Diaries written by six pilgrims, simply given upon request, were also analysed as primary documents for investigation. Weblogs by Camino walkers have also been used to understand the experiences of pilgrims whom I have not met on the road. There was no selection process for informants as I made an effort to listen to as many pilgrims' voices as possible, regardless of nationalities, gender or sexual orientation. Of the 48 pilgrims, 28 were male and 20 were female; two were under 18 and 46 were adults including employees, entrepreneurs, migratory workers, students, Catholic priests, agnostics, yogis, the physically challenged, heterosexuals, multilinguals, married and retired. The informants were either Spanish, English or Japanese speakers.

## Indefinable pilgrims

Frey's (1998) ethnographic accounts of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela suggested that there is too wide a variety of pilgrims walking the route to be able to generalise their motives, social backgrounds or beliefs. Furthermore, in the last decade, it has become increasingly difficult to draw precise profiles of the pilgrims, who increasingly come from various countries and backgrounds. In 2009, 145,877 people belonging to 139 different nationalities received the *Compostela* certificate from the Pilgrim Office as "traditional pilgrims" travelling to Santiago de Compostela on foot, by bicycle or on horseback (*Oficina del Peregrino*, 2010). The profile of "white, urban, European, middle-class men and women" (Frey, 1998, p. 7), typical of pilgrims in the mid-1990s, is no longer very representative. The pilgrims come from all over the world, which makes it difficult for fieldworkers to study them. For this reason, it is difficult to generalise why people undertake the journey, i.e. for religious reasons or for self-discovery. This methodological difficulty has prompted me to observe the perceptions and feelings of pilgrims in a particular mode of travel rather than attempt to categorise the pilgrims themselves or analyse typical pilgrims' ideologies or social backgrounds.

Journeys take many forms. Some people like to walk alone, and others walk with friends, partners or family members. As a symbol of the Church's ideals of tradition, suffering and self-sacrifice, the Pilgrim Office, *Oficina del Peregrinos*, in Santiago de Compostela give certificates (*Compostela*) to visitors who have travelled a minimum of 100 km to Santiago de Compostela on foot or on horseback or who have cycled a minimum of 200 km. While approximately 15%–25% of them only walk the last 100

km to Santiago de Compostela in order to obtain the *Compostela*, quite a few pilgrims start from the French border, Saint Jean Pied de Port, and walk all of the 800 km or part of the route. Others begin their walk from their homes in France, Germany or elsewhere to Santiago. While the route appears to be linear, it is actually part of a wider network stretching across Europe. Some pilgrims see themselves as real walkers because the Camino de Santiago crosses other long-distance paths (GR footpaths) in many parts of Europe. Some of these pilgrims actually pass through Santiago de Compostela and go on to Finisterre on the Atlantic coast.

Amongst these diverse ways of walking, I managed to grasp two resonances amongst pilgrims in the first stages of my fieldwork. First, the Spanish word *camino* generally translates as "path" in English, but for people who are on the road, mostly in Spain, the Camino refers not only to the pilgrimage route (e.g. *en El Camino*/on the Camino), but also to a non-motorised mode of travel towards Santiago de Compostela (*hacer El Camino*/to do the Camino) and the art of communicating with people along the way who speak different languages (*hablar Camino*/to speak Camino). Second, a physical sensation, pain, was common in many pilgrims. They, however, interpret these aspects of the journey differently and I was unable to find much consensus amongst pilgrims in terms of how they perceived the pain. For Miriam from Madrid, pain involves retracing the route she took with her husband who died recently. A Franciscan monk told me that the bruise on his knee and the blisters on his feet were a way of purifying his spirit. Some suffer from a combination of futility and fatigue. In addition, because of the Camino's recent surge in popularity, many hostels for pilgrims, *albergues de peregrinos*, are overcrowded, causing difficulties for those who cannot find a bed.

**"Going Beyond to Encompass":  
Textual interaction  
among pilgrims  
and place**

In pilgrimage studies, a pilgrim's experiences of suffering have been considered to be a sort of personal witnessing of faith or even an index of his or her religiousness. It is, however, not particularly helpful to conclude that pilgrims share an embodying concept of pain according to the Roman Catholic doctrine. In fact, one pilgrim repeatedly asked, "Why do we keep on going through a discursive landscape regardless of whether it is hot or cold, trying to sleep to the sound of other people snoring, always wondering whether we will find a bed for the night?" When I asked pilgrims such questions, some of them answered, "Because it is wonderful to walk with others who share our pain." However, if someone walks the route as a form of mourning, people tend to leave him or her in peace. Furthermore, some people openly take painkillers to help them complete the route. This issue is not straightforward, and pain seems to have more of a figurative meaning.

Turner (1974) provides a starting point for examining the implications of pain for pilgrims. Although Turner warns of the potentially misleading persuasiveness of a metaphor, where ideas do not immediately or literally apply, an "analogical extension" that he calls a root metaphor, basic linkage of scattered facets, is useful to understand them (see also Basu, 2004). Turner combines philosophers Stephen Pepper's concept of the root metaphor with Max Black's conceptual archetype, and Turner prefers to use the

term root metaphor in a manner that emphasises a moving image. Turner claims, "The social world is a world in becoming, not a world in being (except insofar as "being" is a description of the static, atemporal models men have in their heads), and for this reason, studies of social structure as such are irrelevant" (1974, p. 24). He explains a root metaphor as follows:

*A man desiring to understand the world looks about for a clue to its comprehension. He pitches upon some area of common-sense fact and tries if he cannot understand other areas in terms of this one. The original area then becomes his basic analogy or root metaphor. (1974, p. 26)*

As Vergunst (2008) suggests, for each human being, the pain of each footstep reminds the walker that he or she is becoming part of a textual interaction with their environment. To understand pilgrims' similar performative actions of experiencing different types of "pain", I drew on the principles of the root metaphor to examine a proverbial expression used by pilgrims to describe pain: "no pain, no gain", known as "*sin dolor, no hay gloria*" in Spanish, which translated into English means "no pain, no glory". Pilgrims sometimes use these expressions in jest as a form of encouragement, and they are also used as the wording which are on rather kitschy T-shirts sold in souvenir shops along the Camino. While it may not be fully accepted as a catchphrase, pilgrims would probably not deny that it is frequently heard on the Camino.

Turner, drawing on notions of the root metaphor by philosophers Black and Pepper (see Turner, 1974, p. 29), argues that a metaphorical statement has two distinct subjects, a principal subject (pain/*dolor*) and a subsidiary one (gain/*gloria*/glory). The metaphor selects, emphasises, suppresses and organises features of the principal subject by implying statements about it that normally apply to the subsidiary subject. The connotations of future "gain/*gloria*/glory" implicit in the subsidiary subject mitigate the catastrophic images of the past "pain/*dolor*" in the principal subject and emphasise the idea of stepping outside and groping around for something bright. Components of one system enter into dynamic relations with components of the other ("stepping outside and groping around" makes "gain/*gloria*/glory" a physical concept). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who are more interested in pre-reflexive conversations than in rhetorically refined phrases suggest that interactive metaphors indicate that the actors attempt to replace the original scope of the meaning of a word with a new scope (the act of walking counteracts the concept of pain, implying a heuristic approach rather than the more literal definition found in a dictionary). The double negative style also emphasises the "ground" more than the "figure" and replaces a concrete definition with the one in which the consequences of the action are largely defined by the actors. Such expressions are no longer simple messages such as "Be patient to gain" but have become more indeterminate sensory expressions.

Although the concept of pain is interpreted in different ways by pilgrims, the root metaphor "no pain, no gain" or "no pain, no glory/*sin dolor, no hay gloria*" deserves careful attention in the sense that it involves "stepping outside and groping around for

something" and may characterise a more fundamental aspect of movement in pilgrims. In other words, the "pain" entailed in the movement of pilgrims denotes a tactile quest rather than the pain mentioned in religious doctrines or dictionary definitions. It is not simply a one-way embodiment as an internalisation of external factors; rather, it is more frictionally operated by pilgrims' steps in encountering other people and objects. Given this context, deterritorialisation appears in pilgrims' leaving their *Umwelt*, and the lure of embracing something new is marked by reterritorialisation.

The example of the root metaphor examined here may be embraced in certain respects by the sociologist Bauman (2000) in *Liquid Modernity*, where pilgrimage is seen as a modern representation of nomadism in the sense that it represents a restless search for "identity". However, in a more profound sense, pilgrims are attracted towards walking through a "territory" or a "place", not wandering in a fluid sense or roaming around *space* indefinitely. What does it feel like to walk through a "territory" or a "place" of the Camino? In the next section, I consider this question by focusing on what each footstep reveals and examining feelings and perceptions described in pilgrims' diaries.

### **Transitive relations to an emerging environment**

The analysis of pilgrims' diaries is helpful for researchers for insights into their pilgrimage (Coleman & Elsner, 2002; Ingold, 2008). Although each day of every diary contains a unique episode, it is important to consider the process by which pilgrims experience new environments and reveal similar perceptions and actions. The first diary analysed was by Lenka, a Spanish teacher from the Czech Republic, who walked the Camino with her husband Petr in 2003. I met her during a summer Spanish course at the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2008. The second one was by Gideon, who was walking with his friend Tom, both young American writers. I met them on the road on 5th in July 2009.

*We take a look inside the church for a while and start looking for an albergue (pilgrims' hostel) but there is no sign of one. It is just after five o'clock. When we reach the end of the village, we have to decide what to do next. The next village is 5.5 km away, and according to the leaflet, there is no albergue there. We still hope to find one and we move on with uncertainty. It is getting dark. While walking, we carefully look at places where we could possibly sleep in — tubes next to the road, new subways under the highway under construction or a shelter by the church. In the village of Lorca (670.7 km from Santiago), it is almost dark and it is raining. At the very end, we can see a very fat frog on the road and an open grocery shop situated in the garage and a bar. The lady tells us that there is definitely no albergue here, but there is one in the next small town of Villatuerta (665.9 km from Santiago), 4 km away. We find some figs and then stride off enthusiastically along a new street towards the centre. We find a very good pleasant but quite dark albergue. The windows are full of posters and it looks as though it should normally be open, but there is nobody here. We ring the bell three times. We are thinking about what to do next when along comes a car and stops at one of the houses. Two young Spaniards with a baby get out of the car. We ask them if they know why the albergue is closed. The young man is surprised. He tries the bell again and even calls the number we have given*

*him. No answer. We say goodbye and are ready to go on. He offers us a lift to the next town where he assures us the albergue will be open. But we are walking pilgrims, and we cannot accept the offer.*

(Lenka's diary, originally in Czech)

Lenka and her husband Petr were walking in the rain as darkness fell. They needed place to sleep but found no *albergue* in the first village, and the one in the following village was closed. A combination of uncertainty about approaching unfamiliar landscapes in search of an *albergue*, movements such as "striding", "switching on the torch" and tactile sensations such as the taste of figs and the feel of the muddy path highlights the fact that they were literally groping around in the dark instead of systematically following the map. The act of walking forms each episode of the journey.

Her perspective, the opposite of a bird's-eye view, encompassed herself, Petr and the place, which demonstrates that pilgrims' views are not purely subjective. When Lenka and Petr were moving, their environment emerged as a product of their activity. They declined the offer of a lift because it would compromise their own self-discipline, and they kept walking, even though no one would have known that they had accepted the lift. Their activities of groping around are reminiscent of a quest, but they cannot be reduced to a sort of a "spiritual" quest in search of a meaning. As also seen in Gideon and his company's practices, their encounters with different things and people on the road are continually instigated and coloured by their practices.

#### *Day 2*

*We take a break, stare into the mist capping the Pyrenees in cold flocculent silence. I look a little wistfully at the other pilgrims sailing by, pilgrims who slept until noon, pilgrims with prosthetic limbs and debilitating hangovers. Tom knows what I am thinking. "This is not a race," he says. [...] We descend a dirt path along a rocky hill, high above a road in a ravine on our left. The sunlight splashes cool and messy between the conifers. The trail is easier today and I'm finding more of these moments of equanimity, but otherwise the walk does feel slightly overwhelming in its pointlessness.*

(Gideon's diary, 12 June 2009)

#### *Day 35*

*I turn to Tom and say, "I was thinking about Alina and Nora and they only started in Burgos, Martin only started in Roncesvalles and Karo took a bus from Sabagún to Sarria. May be we did start hundreds and hundreds of kilometres earlier, but I just realized that no matter where you started, right now, before you go into that square and stand in front of that Cathedral, you are feeling the same sense of awe and dread and the same anxiety about what this has meant and what comes next. It really doesn't matter where you started. You still did the Camino".*

*Tom gives me a hug, seems proud of me for this new generosity. He and I feel very close. He says "I know". Then, he asks, "Even the people who started in Sarria?"*

*"No, not them", I say.*

(Gideon's diary, 15 July 2009)

Sarria is the major departing point of the walking pilgrimage and is 100 km from Santiago de Compostela, which is essential to walk this distance to obtain the certificate from the Pilgrim Office, as mentioned above. On day 35, Tom and Gideon agreed that the distance, the amount of time, suffering and seriousness did not matter on the Camino. They felt that those who walk for the purpose of obtaining indulgences do not fully understand the Camino, and that experiencing pointlessness is essential to walk on the Camino. The value of incoherence could pertain to deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in the sense that movement in a continuously unaccustomed world is central for reshaping *perceptions* and *sensations*, not for maintaining or intensifying the conventional *idea* in their heads. Gideon thought about the pilgrims' competitive pace, which involves good-natured rivalry rather than apparent harmony and conflict. Lenka and her husband's encounters with people driving a car, and therefore using a different mode of travel, made them realise that they were walking and not using motorised transportation. Their influences facilitated putting one foot in front of the other. Otherwise, they might have been overwhelmed by "pointlessness" during their walking.

Lenka and her husband, and Gideon and his company, sometimes quarrelled over trivial matters, mainly because they were in physical pain, but they walked together most of the time. Relationships among pilgrims and their environments contain various emotional impressions and expressions, and they are not always amicable. Lenka, Petr, Tom and Gideon are similar in that pilgrims from different social backgrounds live in flux and have almost the opposite of a bird's-eye view of the ground. They keep walking in dialogue with various influences on their environmental conditions, dismissing given comfortable solutions.

### **Influences beyond accord and discord**

As discussed above, pilgrims go beyond to encompass the unaccustomed. The acts can produce uncomfortable feelings. These different feelings are evoked by encounters with various things including a fat frog, rain and people whom they meet on the road. These events may precipitate pilgrims' behaviours and subsequent life. The existence of *albergues* makes it possible for pilgrims to travel on a low budget; *albergues* have bunk beds in shared mixed sex dormitories with little privacy. It is not unusual for pilgrims to develop intimate relationships on the way, and have children and raise them together; many are even named after Santiago (i.e. Jacob or Yago). Technology, such as traffic lights and mobile phones, also directs pilgrims' lives. As an example of developing intimate relationships, my close friend from university, Rika, who was less concerned with the language barrier, is living in Szolnok with her husband Gábor, from Hungary, whom she met on the Camino. She walked the Camino in 2009, and they met

while she was waiting for the traffic lights to change in León (308 km from Santiago). They walked together from that point onwards. This practice on the Camino does not necessarily fit with the self-renouncement of Stoicism or the religious concept of self-sacrifice in the interest of a life beyond this life. Their asceticism enables them to embark on to encompass something indeterminate on the road, rejecting the comforts of a bird's-eye view.

The sequence of these pilgrims' interactions could also be explained as what Foucault termed *The ethic of care for the self as a practice of freedom* (1987 [1984]). It is "ascetic" in their exercise of freedom in choosing a leisure time pursuit (i.e., doing the Camino), and is "not in the sense of abnegation but that of an exercise of self upon self by which one tries to work out, to transform one's self and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, 1984, p. 113). Most pilgrims, if not all, choose the disciplinary endeavour, putting one foot in front of the other. Simultaneously, their practices is to develop the capacity to engage with the unaccustomed environment, which emerges around them as they walk, and to overcome the boundary of "self" and enter into another state of being. This project entails deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation under the relationship of the self with itself and complex interactions among different people and places.

Pilgrims are sometimes guided by previous walkers' footprints. Difference in rhythms of walking partners may cause quarrels but adjusting the rhythm of walking to match that of fellow pilgrims may cause tendonitis in the feet. The walking pace of some pilgrims may also be influenced by the competition for beds. Gábor's walking pace and the traffic system in León may have influenced Rika's change in her life after the Camino. These diverse repertoires of engagement are not limited to human interaction, such as experiencing a sense of oneness as suggested by the *communitas* theory (Turner & Turner, 1978) or experiencing contesting discourses (Eade & Sallnow, 1991); instead, it is the similar experiences of direct interactions with foreign environments that is important.

In summary, in the process of the pilgrimage, the body and the environmental conditions influence each other, although the influence can evoke uncomfortable sensations at the same time. The pilgrims' desire to go beyond to encompass something indeterminate does not simply rely on self control but is influenced by other people and places. This series of walks results in self-formation as well as in making the Camino a place. This conclusion agrees with the terms deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in that pilgrims have a connection to the land and to develop themselves and experience a new place.

The rich bodily experiences of the pilgrims are connected to the different events that they encounter while on the road, which may lead to unfulfillment on arrival at the final destination. Of course, the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela is still a magnetic place for walking pilgrims. In the next section, I examine the pilgrims' ambivalent feelings and their relationships with things and events.

## Anticlimactic movement

As discussed above, a series of routine walks every day is apparently not considered productive for pilgrims. Nonetheless, such a seemingly tedious routine is not dismissed as merely a mechanical and meaningless repetition of steps. The knowledge perceived is directly learnt through repetition (Seamon, 1979). Thus, for many pilgrims, if not all, the anticlimactic ending of the arrival at the previously valued destination implies that located attractions are somewhat undermined by the accumulation of experience gained directly by the body on the move. Ann told me about the moment of her arrival in Santiago:

*My arrival in Santiago did not feel especially fulfilling. I was in the Cathedral at the pilgrims' Mass, which started just as I reached "the end". Since the cathedral was full, I tried to sit against a column but I couldn't find a comfortable position. Once I noted to myself that, "I am not Catholic and don't speak Spanish", I gave myself permission to leave the Mass.*

Although presumably many mediaeval pilgrims used to walk back home, today's message to pilgrims at the Cathedral in Santiago, a major religious and tourist destination, is quite clear: "This is where your journey ends". It attempts to end the physical movement to which the pilgrims have become so accustomed. However, this walking routine does not necessarily appear to be a choreographed behaviour, unlike *habitus*, which is an embodied disposition structured and structuring a particular socio-cultural group (Bourdieu, 1977). Indeed, some pilgrims are amazed when they stood in front of the Cathedral. In the Spanish magazine *Peregrino*, to which Camino fans subscribe, the town of Santiago de Compostela was voted the most important place on the Camino (2009, p. 32). A sports gear salesman from Zaragoza, who walked the Camino twice and cycled to the place thrice, told me his complex emotions when he arrived in the old town of Santiago de Compostela:

*I don't know, when I walked up the slope of the stone-flagged street [in Santiago de Compostela], I found tears rolling down my eyes (putting his fingers to his cheeks). It was a really strange feeling. I did not want other pilgrims to see my tears. It was not my first time to the Cathedral, but I saw (mimicking looking up and crying) the Cathedral with a tearful face. I am Catholic, so people may say it was personal witnessing of faith, but I don't think it was like that.*

Some pilgrims leave the Camino without ever arriving at Santiago de Compostela or make Santiago de Compostela simply a passing point to reach Finisterre. Other pilgrims feel disappointed when they arrive at the Cathedral. However, most pilgrims end their Camino with Santiago de Compostela. Despite the fact that I have heard many pilgrims say that "it is just a piece of paper" on receiving their *Compostela*, my informants nevertheless took their certificates home and hung them on their walls or stored them carefully in drawers with their scallop shells that they wore on their backpacks. The pilgrims have rich bodily experiences on the road, which is more important than the final destination. Despite this, the stone-paved slope in Santiago de Compostela, the Cathedral and *Compostela* remain important, sharply defined images of the product of activity.

Here, Eade and Sallnow's (1991) arguments that pilgrimage centres dispense a political power, which to some extent fetishise pilgrims' goals, may be helpful in understanding this ambivalence. Employing their notion, the anthropologist Coleman also claims that "shrines are invested with a certain kind of authoritative animation, a sense that they can both reflect and affect aspects of people's lives" (2002, p. 360).

In discussing the power of materiality of the shrine, we should be careful not to overrate the dominance of "sacred" and political sites and relics, based on the Marxist notion that people misapprehend the true nature of the value of things or on the notion that "primitive" people mistakenly worship objects and idols (de Brosses, 1760). As several anthropologists of material culture claim, pre-existent social systems are not always *embedded* or *hidden* within objects, but things can sometimes *appear* as personal practices regardless of the intentions of "producers" (see Miller, 1998).

Although this paper does not mean to deny the importance of pilgrimage centres as a repository of various authoritative powers, emphasising the coercive power might reduce the pilgrims' rich experiences of self-formation and forming a place on the road. The things, such as the stone-paved slope in Santiago de Compostela, the Cathedral and the *Compostela* certificate, finally *appear* before the pilgrims' very eyes long after the Camino. Some pilgrims who feel "pointless" on the road become entangled in transitive relationships with environments, such as entering and leaving different pilgrims, walking in changing weather, and staying in different accommodations every day. For those pilgrims who want to understand what they have experienced more clearly, stationary objects such as the Cathedral and the certificate are perceivable when they stop walking. On the other hand, there are pilgrims, like Ann, who cannot "find a comfortable position" at the Cathedral. Ann's feelings consist of a complex combination of her body as a thing and sensory organ, the column surrounding environmental conditions.

Various feelings, such as being satisfied with the arrival, or unfulfilled at the Cathedral, are different *composed forms*. However, they are similar *component forces* in terms of the manner in which they create a relationship with things. For some, each step-by-step movement allows them to feel materiality. For others, transitive relationships with things remain elusive until they stop moving. Pilgrims on the Camino experience the repetition of deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation in different geographical locations and rhythmical spectra. Thus, the location of reterritorialisation varies among individuals as they do not have the *same* relationships with their environments.

## Conclusions

By considering the pilgrims' physical experiences and their encounters with various things, I have discussed similar *transformative forces* that form different attitudes, highlighting fractal-like deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation. From the pilgrims' viewpoint, it could be said that the accumulation of one step after another transforms space into place, which always remains open-ended and vague. Thus, pilgrims sometimes "arrange" or "territorialise" their experiences according to their own timing.

For Gideon and Lenka, keeping a diary every evening is their way of reterritorialising their progressive journeys. For Rika, starting a new life with Gábor in Szolnok is her way of reterritorialising.

However, reterritorialisation is not infallible. Miriam from Madrid, who lost her husband, left familiar territory behind and embarked on a different type of relationship on the Camino, but to complicate matters, her memories and photographs of the Camino were still so profoundly emotionally charged that she could not look at her Camino photographs for several months. This type of reluctance to retrospect the Camino is not unusual in pilgrims whom I have met. Many of my informants told me of their willingness to reflect on their Camino experiences, but few of them actually read their diaries or prepared slide shows or albums to "arrange" or "reterritorialise" their experiences because they could not reach a point of closure for their journeys.

For some pilgrims on foot, stepping onto emerging ground is far from trivial when compared to the search for spiritual meanings in space as an abstract socio-symbolic overlay. As the historian of religion, Smith pointed out, religious studies have a tendency towards being what he termed a "Protestant exercise" (1987, p. 98). This means that religious studies established in the nineteenth century were somewhat biased towards denying materiality and emphasising spirituality and text, a bias which reflected the Protestant thought dominant at that time and even to the present day. However, the pilgrims' feelings through direct contact with concrete images and things may have possibility of overwhelming conflicting representations. Images and things in this paper include moisture, temperature, sound, light, smell, the pilgrims' bodies and the texture of the ground surface. We, regardless of our social status, are materialistic by nature, and by using materials, we construct diverse fruitful entities such as ecosystems. Humans cannot perceive abstract ideologies alone as there is a need for tangible things such as trails and papers. What we share are not interpretations of the *forms* already made, but transformative *forces* affecting our different selves and relating to emerging socio-cultural forms.

Finally, I would like to emphasise in this paper that I, as a walker with other walking pilgrims, would not be able to identify the line between "in-group" and "out-group". Therefore, it is impossible for fieldworkers to generalise the diversity of all pilgrims. From the instant we attempt to select representatives of a certain social group, we insidiously eliminate the rest.

Under these circumstances, further research will aid an understanding of the organic systems of "the closer" and "the further" from the viewpoint of gradation of forces/influences that impact certain actors regardless of "in-group" or "out-group". Following perspectivism in visual arts, for example, as an ordinary object gets further from the eye, the vision becomes blurred due to the limit of our visual field, the pilgrims' vague sphere of the planet might be explored.

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## Afterword

As I was finalizing this paper for publication at home in Tokyo, our home was hit by a magnitude 9 earthquake. Lives were uprooted and changed, and no one could get an overall picture of the damage or profiles of those who suffered the disaster. Social science has generally treated humans as agents; however, I realised that we exist in dialog with things in the environment, and researchers could have more humble views on discussing human life. Although undertaking the Camino is certainly voluntary — an act of agency, so to speak — we are engaged in and with places that largely shape both fruitful and dreadful experiences beyond the control of human power.

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Submitted: 01/14/2011

Accepted: 08/22/2011