

Word  
in the  
World

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE JOURNAL OF  
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES



PILGRIMAGE: SACRED  
JOURNEYS

VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1

# **PILGRIMAGE: SACRED JOURNEYS**

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# Word in the World

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# Pilgrimage: Sacred Journeys

*From the Camino to Cyber-Pilgrimage*

*A celebration of transformative journeys which  
move us into relationship with others and ourselves*

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*Presented in Conjunction with*

**Indigenizing Pilgrimage Conference (May 7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>)**

<http://tinyurl.com/indigenizing-pilgrimage>



*Student Conference Poster*

*Robin Stanford*

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## WORD FROM THE JOURNAL CHAIR

*Robin Stanford*

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*Word in the World* has a considerable history in Concordia University's Department of Theological Studies: the first issue was published in 2003. Over the last twelve years, it has given the opportunity to many graduate students to publish and share their unique perspective in a peer reviewed academic journal. Our charge from previous journal committees was to provide an arena for as many strong student voices as possible, to foster student life and to continue to pursue new possibilities while maintaining the high standards expected of this journal.

It is in this spirit of giving opportunities to students that this special edition, *Pilgrimage: Sacred Journeys*, was conceived. The current edition brings together the academic and creative work of undergraduates, graduates and Concordia alumni from various departments. All contributors presented their work on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2015, at Theological Studies Graduate Students Association's student conference, which was presented in association with *Indigenizing Pilgrimage*, an international conference convened at Concordia. Through this event, interdisciplinary dialogue was fostered and many bonds of both scholarship and friendship were formed which will last for years to come.

Due to the connections fostered through the creation of this edition, the journal committee has made a few modifications to our path going forward. First, the journal logo has benefited from an update. This is a change which has been years in the making. Our desire was to express how theology itself is a craft transmitted through good teaching and apprenticeship. Our thanks to Joanne Martel for new creative design which honors previous incarnations of *Word in the World*. Second, taking our lead from Concordia's green initiatives and previous journal committees, going forward the journal will only be publically available online. This will not only

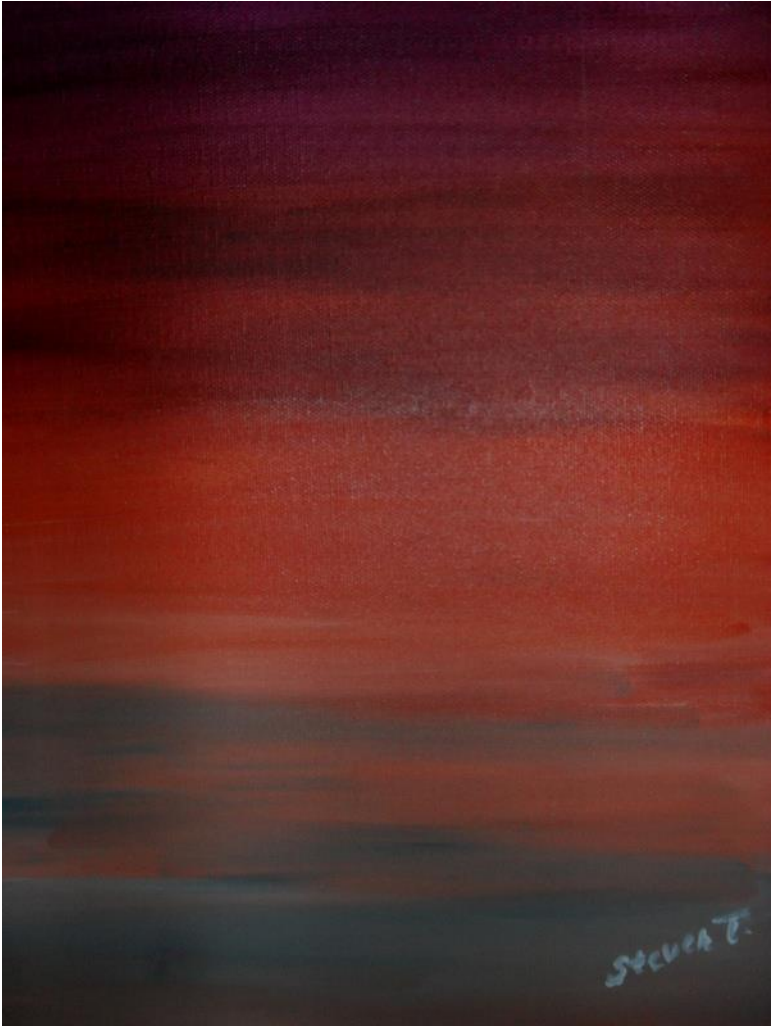
reduce our ecological footprint but will also allow more students to benefit from the journal, as it will be free access.

Thanks is due to the many people who helped to bring this journal to fruition. Dr. Lucian Turcescu, our Departmental Chair and Dr. Marie-France Dion, our interim Chair, who were always there with an open ear, new ideas, providing tremendous support for the growth of *Word in the World*. Sara Terreault, our academic advisor, took the time to review all articles and share her editing wisdom during a very busy time. The Theological Studies Graduate Students Association, gave our speakers the opportunity to present their work in the student conference. Diane Wood, activities coordinator TGSA, provided tireless support throughout the journal development process. The organizational team of *Indigenizing Pilgrimage*, Dr. Matthew Anderson, Dr. Christine Jamieson, Christina Plamadeala and Sara Terreault, provided support and guidance in the organization of the student conference. The former Chair and Vice-Chair of *Word in the World*, Joseph Vietri and Lynn Barwell, gave their time and advice throughout the production of the journal. Last, but not least, we want to thank Connie Di Fruscia, our department secretary, without whom this Journal would not be possible. She was a constant source of support to all those associated with the journal.

Finally, on behalf of the entire committee I would like to thank all of our contributors for sharing your research and creativity. Your work and spirit towards this project has been inspiring. Thanks as well to Véronique Rosa, whose efforts in the design, layout and production of the journal were invaluable. This journal would not be possible if not for the generous financial support of the Department of Theological Studies. The department's funding of this journal demonstrates their commitment to mentoring young academics.

Robin Stanford, Chair of *Word in the World*





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## Down With My Vessel

*Svens Télémaque*

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---

Intimidating...

This blank page and blinking cursor,  
What to write next and just how much further,  
How much to emphasize, I don't know what to say.  
But ships weren't meant for harbor, so this can't stay at bay.

Anchors hold you back. Sails take you with the wind.  
Skies display limitless potential,  
The seas, its bottomless end.  
See only with your eyes and you'll see the short run,  
But eyes can't have vision, without ima-gi-nation.

In the midst of the storm, would I abandon ship?  
Giving up all faith and hope because of turbulence,  
Would I look for a way, or settle for a way out?  
Convince myself to give in to cowardly doubts?

Would I reach for the helm, or make my way overboard?  
Perhaps I'd dive in and swim my way to shore,  
Battling treacherous winds and waves at first sight,  
Or prefer where I am today, and omit all thoughts of paradise.  
Perseverance...

Is one of the prerequisites to success.  
Who's to say I couldn't be Captain because I started by mopping the deck?  
Hopes that reach higher than the mast are the ones that see land first,  
The skeptics behind scopes find no safe berth.

Set aside your compass.

By logic, these seas can't be sailed.

The overconfident leave by ship and return in a lifeboat with two pails.

Disregard your map and all the knowledge of your travels.

The proud soon forget their grand departure when nature's fury unravels.

Take heed to that still, small voice

And keep your conscience in mind.

Consult your heart, my dear friend.

You will get there in due time.



*Los Caracolas*

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---

*Los Caracolas*

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In 2011, I was part of a group of Concordia professors and students that walked the Camino for three weeks in May. Four of us fell into a pattern of walking together every day. According to our guide Michel, our little sub-group was the most leisurely, photo-snapping, and introspection-resistant bunch of pilgrims that he had ever had to shepherd, earning us the nick-name Los Caracolas (the Snails). We, however, had discovered the joy of *communitas*, and formed a lasting bond that continues to endure.

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# Pilgrimage: A Collective Journey to a Personal Space

*Bernice Lamb-Sénéchal*

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A three-week trek along the Camino Frances in May 2011 provided a valuable experiential learning opportunity for me and my cohort of Concordia University pilgrimage students. The experience prompted us to reflect on the theoretical materials we had explored in the months leading up to the journey. More specifically, it encouraged us to examine theories posited by leading pilgrimage scholars and to relate them to our own undertaking. Two of the most influential concepts in pilgrimage theory are: (1) Victor and Edith Turner's notion of *communitas*<sup>1</sup> as shared existential anti-structure, and (2) John Eade and Michael Sallnow's ostensibly dissenting notion of the contested sacred.<sup>2</sup> Simon Coleman explains that "despite their apparent oppositions," these two approaches "display some interesting similarities."<sup>3</sup> For one, they "share ... an interest in power, group conflict, and systems of meaning"<sup>4</sup> and, for another, they share a "dominant theoretical metaphor ... ,"<sup>5</sup> namely the idea of the void. This paper looks at how these two pilgrimage paradigms played out during an actual pilgrimage and provides evidence to support Coleman's claim that they are not mutually exclusive phenomena. The following sections elaborate the main tenets of each concept, relate them to tangible events that occurred during our Camino experience and make the correlation between theory and practice.

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<sup>1</sup> Victor Turner, and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 34-38, 252.

<sup>2</sup> John Eade and Michael Sallnow, *Contesting the Sacred* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000), ix-xiv, 1-29.

<sup>3</sup> Simon Coleman, "Do you believe in pilgrimage?" *Anthropological Theory* 2, no. 3 (2002): 361.

<sup>4</sup> Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting*, xiv.

<sup>5</sup> Coleman, "Believe," 361.

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## The Collective Journey

In their anthropological studies of rites of passage within tribal societies, Edith and Victor Turner described the stage between childhood and adulthood as a liminal one; a virtual threshold between an individual's previous social state and their future social state. The Turners likened this liminal<sup>6</sup> phase to that experienced by Christian pilgrims when they remove themselves from their everyday milieu and undertake a journey towards to a sacred destination. In both scenarios the participants are temporarily stripped of their quotidian identities and effectively "liberated"<sup>7</sup> from the usual roles they occupy. These roles—invariably associated with categories such as gender, class and age, to name a few—come with a set of norms that provide a framework for how individuals are expected to interact with one another. It is when these "normative constraints" are suspended and the participants find themselves on an equal footing that they operate in a society that is without structure: what Victor Turner describes as "anti-structure." This condition creates a void wherein alternative group arrangements grow, such as, for example, *communitas*.

According to Turner, *communitas* is a "modality of human interrelatedness"<sup>8</sup> that entails a "deep ... personal interaction"<sup>9</sup> where nothing, especially social structure, interferes with or impedes direct interpersonal contact between individuals. By effectively eliminating the conditioned responses imposed by societal structures, this affords people the opportunity to connect with one other on a profound level. Turner gives a practical example of this concept when he describes those moments where "compatible people ... obtain a flash of lucid mutual understanding

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<sup>6</sup> Because a rite of passage is an obligatory tribal ritual, whereas a contemporary Christian pilgrimage is voluntary, the Turners referred to the latter as more of a *liminoid* experience rather than a fully liminal one.

<sup>7</sup> Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow and Ritual: an Essay in Comparative Symbology," *Rice University Studies* 60, no. 3 (1974): 75.

<sup>8</sup> Turner, "Liminal," 76.

<sup>9</sup> Turner, "Liminal," 79.

on the existential level ... [where they] place a high value on personal honesty, openness and lack of pretensions ... [and where they] feel all problems could be resolved if only the group could sustain its inter-subjective illumination.”<sup>10</sup> The last phrase in this quote points to an important feature of *communitas*: spontaneity. If we contrive to invoke *communitas* then we must necessarily impose constraints to achieve this goal and the anti-structure that is so conducive to *communitas* is eliminated. Similarly, if *communitas* occurs naturally and we subsequently attempt to sustain it for any length of time then we must again contrive to make this happen. For these reasons *communitas* is, by its very nature, a fleeting, unsustainable condition.

While our group quickly gelled into a ‘family’ unit and we took great care to look out for one another throughout the journey, one incident occurred during the Camino experience that best exemplified for me the Turners’ theories with regards to anti-structure and *communitas*. Our group, comprised of ten Canadians from Quebec and Ontario, had finished the first long day of walking and arrived in a small village that seemed to be inhabited only by pilgrims (*peregrinos*<sup>11</sup> in Spanish). They were everywhere, sitting on the stone steps in front of the little chapel, washing their clothes in the outdoor sink, and strolling along the narrow laneways. Four of us arrived last and consequently we missed the single seating at the local restaurant. Too disappointed, tired and hungry to be curious about our fellow sojourners we trundled off to the sole *tienda*—the local corner store—to stock up on bread, cheese and wine. However, once we had showered and sat down to supper in the communal *albergue* kitchen the grueling day faded away and we began to take notice of our fellow diners. We spotted a solitary German woman to whom we offered a glass of wine and who subsequently remained with us for the balance of the meal. Although she spoke as little English as we spoke German, we were

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<sup>10</sup> Turner, “Liminal,” 79.

<sup>11</sup> *Peregrinos* are pilgrims making the journey to Santiago de Compostela. Those going to Rome and Jerusalem are referred to as *Romeros* and *Palmeros* respectively.



able to discern that the impetus for her pilgrimage was the recent losses of her mother, husband and sister.<sup>12</sup> For reasons that we could not quite understand, in that brief moment of time, we felt our newfound comrade's pain acutely. In an attempt to ease her suffering we invited her to join an intimate ecumenical celebration slated for later that evening in the tiny church next to the *albergue*. When she arrived we squeezed her into our pew and gave her a quick hug. From the broad smile on her face it was evident that she was delighted to be in our company. Our friend struggled to follow the English service and then, just as the small congregation began singing the Latin hymn *Dona Nobis Pacem*, whose title translates to "Grant us Peace," tears began to slide down her cheeks. Our newfound companion recognized the song as one from her hometown choir's repertoire. We had finally overcome the last barrier to a "direct" and "unmediated interaction,"<sup>13</sup> we had found a common language in which to express our heartfelt wish that each of us would find peace.

This incident demonstrated many elements of the Turnerian model. To begin with, all participants were operating outside a typical social structure on many levels. The four stragglers from the Canadian group were no longer in the company of their countrymen: our national and provincial identities were irrelevant in this setting. Similarly, our German companion's national and local affiliations were immaterial as we were largely unfamiliar with her country's social and cultural landscape. The language barrier further facilitated anti-structure as it served to limit initial exchanges to only the most basic of questions. For example, our enquiries centered on such topics as sore feet, where we had started the Camino and the reasons why we were doing the Camino. Broaching the subject of social status, class or any other "structural niche"<sup>14</sup> simply seemed unfeasible and somehow inconsequential.

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<sup>12</sup> Losing a loved one, it would turn out, was a common motivation for undertaking the pilgrimage as we learned from many *peregrinos* over the succeeding weeks.

<sup>13</sup> Turner, "Liminal," 76-79.

<sup>14</sup> Turner, "Liminal," 79.

We were sharing in the experience of existential anti-structure and were rewarded with that elusive and ephemeral sense of “spontaneous *communitas*.”<sup>15</sup>

## Personal Space

We turn now to Eade and Sallnow’s study of sacred destinations: the end goal of classic Christian pilgrimages. In contrast to the Turners’ focus on harmonious relations amongst people journeying to a sacred locale, Eade and Sallnow emphasize the conflictual aspects of pilgrimage that arise when people assign disparate meanings to a holy site. In their view the shrine is a void into which any manner of meaning can be deposited by the people revering the site. They contend that pilgrimage provides an “arena for competing ... discourses ... religious meanings ... orthodoxies”<sup>16</sup> and that this diverse interpretation of the sacred is the essence of pilgrimage. Eade and Sallnow extended this concept to the very practice of pilgrimage itself, suggesting that “if one can no longer take for granted the meaning of pilgrimage for its participants, one can no longer take for granted a uniform definition of the phenomenon of ‘pilgrimage’ either.”<sup>17</sup>

In keeping with Eade and Sallnow’s theory of contestation, we encountered several instances of contrasting views amongst ourselves and our fellow *peregrinos* as to what exactly a pilgrimage is or is not; in other words, a range of opinions about the ‘right’ way ‘to do’ the Camino. For example, one young woman with severely blistered feet, limping along in flip flops, refused her companions’ offers to carry her backpack to the next village. She explained through tears of pain that giving up her backpack would jeopardize the legitimacy of her pilgrimage. After repeated attempts to dissuade her from continuing, we finally left her and her friends behind as we wondered how exactly they would manage the

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<sup>15</sup> Turner, “Liminal,” 79.

<sup>16</sup> Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting*, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Eade and Sallnow, *Contesting*, 3.

remaining 10 kilometers at that slow a pace. We attributed the girl's stubbornness to the folly of youth and/or a rigid understanding of what pilgrimage is.

Our reflections on the "limping girl's" pilgrimage regulations triggered a long-running debate about many aspects of our own pilgrimage practice. Was it cheating to use cell phones on the Camino? Did we have to walk a portion of the Camino by ourselves each day, out of earshot of others? Was suffering a requisite part of pilgrimage? At one point we realized that our concerns were quite likely informed by a romantic imagining of what we thought historical pilgrimage might be like. As our resident theologian explained, medieval *peregrinos* genuinely feared they might not survive the journey which is why they put their affairs in order before embarking on a pilgrimage and why they often used any transportational advancement proffered to reach Santiago de Compostela alive; including boats, ships and animal-drawn conveyance.

Our little company continuously debated the finer points of pilgrimage protocol; however, once we reached the Cathedral in Santiago there was no ambiguity as to how the custodians of Saint-James' relics expected the average pilgrim to approach the holy site itself: namely through a barred gate several feet away from the silver reliquary. I was surprised at how disappointed I felt that we were forced to maintain such distance between ourselves and the saint's remains. However, I rationalized away my frustration with the official overseers by envisioning what a tragedy it would be if the custodians did not control access and some security breach resulted in damage to the reliquary, loss of the relics, or even harm to the pilgrims themselves.<sup>18</sup> As we stood peering into the grotto, I tried to discern from the looks on my companions' faces what they

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<sup>18</sup> Coincidentally not long after our departure from Santiago a rare copy of the Codex Calixtinus was stolen from the Cathedral library. It caused us considerable distress as we had the privilege of viewing the manuscript during our visit.

might be thinking and feeling. Were they moved by the idea of being in the presence of the supposed remains of one of Jesus' apostles? Did the experience meet their expectations? I wondered what meaning the sacred site held for the non-Catholic *peregrinos* in our midst. More specifically, in what way might their understanding be influenced by the institutional interpretation of the third most popular pilgrimage site in the history of Christendom, and, how would that understanding change if an institution other than the Catholic Church was doing the interpreting?

## Conclusion

These along with many other observations made during the Camino pilgrimage lead me to conclude that it is possible for the Turnerian phenomena of anti-structure and *communitas* to operate in parallel with Eade and Sallnow's theory of contestation of the sacred. From my perspective, our group dynamics were only mildly and occasionally perturbed by conflicting views of pilgrimage, and harmony was quickly re-established as we made allowance for each member to hold their own personal interpretation of the sacred space. Perhaps openness to a multiplicity of interpretations varies with the character and expectations of individual pilgrims and their influence on one another. John Eade himself revised his and Sallnow's initial rejection of the Turnerian theory as a universal model for the practice of pilgrimage in the 2000 re-print of their seminal book *Contesting the Sacred*<sup>19</sup>. In the new introduction, Eade allows that their "approach may not have been as distant from the Turnerian... model...as it may have seemed at the time."<sup>20</sup> Echoing this sentiment, Simon Coleman and John Elsner, in *Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions*<sup>21</sup>, suggests that "the emphasis on the idea of pilgrimage sites being void of intrinsic meaning does tend to ignore the considerable structural similarities

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<sup>19</sup> Originally published in 1991.

<sup>20</sup> Eade, *Contesting*, xiv.

<sup>21</sup> Simon Coleman and John Elsner, *Pilgrimage: Past and Present in the World Religions* (London: British Museum Press, 1995).

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in pilgrimage practices within and between traditions.”<sup>22</sup> For my part, the more recent rapprochement between the two theories better reflects my Camino experience than the original verdict which held that these notions were mutually exclusive.

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<sup>20</sup> Coleman and Elsner, *Pilgrimage*, 202.

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# Where Love is So Real

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I keep walking towards  
the Great Silence

The Divine Stillness that Is  
at rest.

The Home from which I came

Where peace stretched beyond understanding in  
the awareness of  
the incomprehensible

Where deep calls out to  
the knowing beyond knowledge

Where Love is so real  
the day doesn't have to  
make sense.

And in that freedom of  
stillness  
that ecstasy  
of calm delight

Where Love is so real

Know  
I am  
Home.



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## My Sacred Journey: To Kahnawà:ke and Back

*Stephanie Frizzell*

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As a requirement in a theology course on sacred journeys, I participated in a pilgrimage with several classmates in the summer of 2014. I chose to take part in this journey from the Old Port in Montreal to Kahnawà:ke Mohawk Territory on the south shore because it resonated with my personal interests. I also wanted to get to know my fellow pilgrims. Usually, I enjoy exploring the world, learning more about other cultures and also about myself. I have always considered myself to be a tourist and I was not previously familiar with the term pilgrim. This journey was an opportunity for me to explore the differences and similarities between being a tourist and being a pilgrim, and to better understand what a pilgrimage is. It allowed me to apply my knowledge accumulated throughout our course to a real-life scenario where I would get to experience a sacred journey for myself, and thus be empowered to come to my own personal realizations.

Before starting off, our student-pilgrim group was looking forward to what we thought would be a nice, long, physically intense walk. However, I also expected to gain some awareness into the relationship—or lack thereof—between Kahnawà:ke and Montreal. I also hoped that I would learn more about myself through observing my interactions with other people. I hoped too, that as a group of non-indigenous people, our pilgrimage would possibly be a small step to reconciliation with the neighboring nation that had been made into the other by Western European history. Seminal theorists of pilgrimage, Victor and Edith Turner wrote about how pilgrimage can help build the relationships essential to human happiness.<sup>1</sup> Thus, I also wished to experience a feeling of *communitas*, to use the term coined by the Turners, which

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<sup>1</sup> Edith Turner "Pilgrimage: An Overview." *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion* (New York; London: Springer, 2005), 7146.

is the unity that develops among diverse pilgrims who travel together.

I planned to be attentive throughout the journey, observing myself and the group in an attempt to understand what a pilgrimage is. In observing my own behaviors, I aimed to uncover my own attitude and tendencies I might have had to classify indigenous people as other. Throughout our course, we discussed the human tendency to objectify others and I wanted to be able to counteract this by consciously meeting others as myself. I also wanted to be able to learn more about myself and my neighbors through interacting with my fellow-pilgrims as well as the people from Kahnawà:ke.

Psychology professor and pilgrimage scholar Zachary Beckstead talks about pilgrimage and how it becomes a movement of meaning. He says that, “Travel through public [foreign] space is essential to the formation of social identities, personal values, and reconstruction of private selves”.<sup>2</sup> I found this to be relevant to my search for more self-discovery throughout our journey. Becoming more aware of differences and similarities between myself and others helped me to realize more clearly who I am, and who I am not. For example, although I enjoy living close with nature, I realize that my family and their values differ greatly from my own. A lot of my traveling and exploring of different cultures have been the result of my longing to get in touch with my ancient human roots. I also see that the traditions of my personal background (English, Scottish, Russian, and Polish) differ from those of First Nations peoples. On the other hand, being aware that my nationality and culture have become so modernized, and distanced from contact with nature, gives a good reason to look to other cultures in attempt to counter this distance.

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<sup>2</sup> Zachary Beckstead, “Liminality in Acculturation and Pilgrimage: When Movement Becomes Meaningful.” *Culture & Psychology* 16, no. 3 (2010): 386.

In the course of my pilgrimage, I did not come to imagine myself a First Nations person, rather I now see myself more clearly as an Eastern European Canadian who has what I consider a natural human urge to live more harmoniously with nature. After witnessing first hand, if briefly, the traditions of one particular group of indigenous people, I am interested in further researching my own ancestry and its ancient traditions in order to discover who I am authentically.

Beckstead explores an argument made by media and tourism scholar André Jansson, that tourists take on a “ritual attitude”, whereby “photo-taking, buying souvenirs, avoiding other tourists—is essential to remaining firmly in realm of the other-worldly”.<sup>3</sup> In observing myself, I observed when I was tempted to objectify my experience and the people with whom I shared that experience. I took many pictures during the trip and I bought a handmade drum as a souvenir, which still reminds me of the journey. I did not avoid other tourists, because there weren’t really any. I was consciously aware that I was a pilgrim, touring an unfamiliar place, yet as religion researcher Thomas S. Bremer writes, “Pilgrims often engage in touristic activities”.<sup>4</sup> Although I felt like a tourist and a pilgrim at the same time, I made a conscious effort to make my pilgrimage a natural movement that wasn’t so “other-worldly”.

I benefited greatly from exploring this other culture, both from an educational and spiritual standpoint, and possibly reconciled my own ideas of otherness and identity, by cultivating a less touristic attitude. In other words, in order to consciously and more meaningfully understand the difference between tourism and pilgrimage, and between self and other, I focused on myself, my attitudes and my actions, in effect taking on an inner pilgrimage.

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<sup>3</sup> Beckstead, “Liminality.” 387-388.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas S. Bremer, Thomas S. “Tourism and Religion.” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 9261.

Our theology course class was called, “Pilgrim Bodies, Sacred Journeys”. One of the expectations I had for this journey was to more deeply understand the meaning of a pilgrimage. In our course, we looked at one of the main pilgrimage theories pioneered by the Turners and reinterpreted by David A. Leeming, which is that of the three stages of pilgrimage. It begins with a separation from one’s familiar surroundings, proceeds with a liminal stage that often involves encountering the sacred, and ends with a reaggregation of experiences with one’s familiar home life.<sup>5</sup> Photos I took clearly document the three stages of my journey: first, of leaving the familiar Old Port of Montreal, followed by a more mysterious, personal, spiritually empowered walking experience, encountering the sacred at certain religious sites, and finishing with a return home.

On the morning our pilgrimage began, I left my familiar home with some belongings and I met the pilgrim group at the (also familiar) Old Port. As we set off walking, each step took me farther and farther from home. Attachments to my familiar life were slowly released; there was a sense of freedom from my regular social structures and, indeed, a feeling of *communitas*, of being linked to my fellow-pilgrims, formed. Although the pilgrimage was only three days in length, I had a sense throughout that I was not looking forward to its end. I focused on the here and now as much as I could, in order to have the spiritual experience that is supposed to unfold throughout a sacred journey. There was a period of rest upon coming home where I slowly integrated the results of my journey into my daily life. A couple days of rest allowed for my personal realizations, physical weariness and educational understandings to effectively sink in. I have since found that my pilgrimage experience has been somewhat integrated into my life today.

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<sup>5</sup> David A. Leeming, 2010. “Pilgrimage.” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (New York; London: Springer, 2010), 7145.

The Turners talked about a freedom from social structure and a sense of *communitas* that is experienced when a group of people journey together. “Pilgrims, tourists, and mystics are, all three, freed for a time from the nets of social structure”.<sup>6</sup> This was true amongst our group; professors and students alike, regardless of their usual social relationships, all became more noticeably equal. Judgment based on statuses was abandoned. It gave a good feeling of what this world would, and should look like if social ranking was not our standard measurement of our fellow humans.

People within our group temporarily shared an experience of unity based on a common goal: to explore and journey First Nations history, territory and sacred sites. We became vulnerable to each other. When the most of us had sore feet and/or legs; we took comfort in knowing that we weren’t alone in our pain. If someone needed sun screen, for example, someone else had it for them. I was able to turn this into a metaphor; our journey called life is much more difficult when we are alone, but it becomes easier once we realize that we are all together and that we could overcome bumps on our paths with each others’ help. Our group submitted to each other by traveling on unfamiliar territory together while both my sense of connection to others and my sense of individuality were strengthened. I realized that I have needs that are not the same as others’, yet others can respond to them and vice-versa. Time alone was also just as important as together time.

In their pilgrimage encyclopedia, Linda Kay Davidson and David M. Gitlitz talk about motives for going on a pilgrimage. In some cases, it is required by a faith tradition, and becomes a socially and religiously-structured rite-of-passage. An example is the requirement in Islam to journey to Mecca.<sup>7</sup> Our trip was also, in a

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<sup>6</sup> Turner “Pilgrimage: An Overview.” 7146.

<sup>7</sup> Linda K. Davidson and David M. Gitlitz, “Motives.” *Pilgrimage: from the Ganges to Graceland: an Encyclopedia*. (California:Santa Barbara, 2002), 406.

sense, a requirement: it was part of our course work. It was a “rite-of-grade-passage” for this course, which I genuinely enjoyed. Our shared experience allowed for fun on the journey, which manifested the ludic dimension of pilgrimage, while also being spiritually and educationally valuable.

The whole pilgrimage experience from home, to the Old Port of Montreal, to Kahnawà:ke Mohawk territory and home again, ended up being a memorable experience. Through theoretical course preparation, personal contemplation, and a collective journey in a *communitas*, I now have a deeper understanding of what a pilgrimage is. More importantly, I had a spiritual experience that I hope was shared amongst other group members. I learned about our neighboring indigenous community, a little bit about their issues with our communities, and more so about sacred journeys in a diversity of traditions. I look forward to possibly embarking on more pilgrimages in the future.

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## Saints Brigit and Bob: Localizing Pilgrimage

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As I left for Jamaica on January 30<sup>th</sup> 2015, in a cold snowstorm, my husband and I recalled fondly how exactly three years earlier, we were traipsing around Kildare, Ireland, researching the life of St. Brigit of Kildare. Little did I realize, that while I looked forward to fun in the sun with my family, my pilgrimage to Kildare would be very present in my mind when I visited another local pilgrimage site: Nine Mile Jamaica, which is the birthplace and resting place of reggae legend Bob Marley. The experience I had at Nine Mile made me reflect deeply on how, though separated by centuries and geographic location, the legacies of Bob Marley and Brigit are remarkably similar. In this paper, I will outline the events and experiences I had at each Kildare and Nine Mile, and then draw comparisons and contrasts between the two.

Some introductory comments about both Brigit and Bob Marley are needed. Brigit is a 5<sup>th</sup> century saint (c.454-525) who set up a monastery in the county of Kildare.<sup>1</sup> There are very few historical facts about her since she never wrote anything down herself and her hagiographies, her spiritual biographies, were all written centuries after she died.<sup>2</sup> Many of the stories of her life are deeply rooted in Irish folklore. This combined with her sharing a name with the pre-Christian Celtic goddess, leads many to believe that Saint Brigit is just a Christian appropriation of the goddess Brigit. To suggest this weakens not only the study of Brigit of Kildare but it also weakens Brigit herself and the legacy which she left.

Robert Nesta Marley, otherwise known as Bob Marley, was born on February 6, 1945 to Cedella Malcom and Norval Marley.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Farmer, "Brigid of Kildare." *Oxford Dictionary of Saint* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 78.

<sup>2</sup> Farmer, "Brigid of Kildare", 78.

<sup>3</sup> "Biography: Remembering A Legend." *Bob Marley*, last modified March 9 2015.  
<http://www.bobmarley.com/history/>.

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He was born at and spent the first part of his childhood in Nine Mile, and was raised primarily by his mother. He eventually moved to Kingston with his mother, to an extremely poor neighborhood named Trench Town.<sup>4</sup> The experiences he had living in both Nine Mile and Trench Town greatly impacted his music and his adult life.

For chronological reasons, I will start by relating my time in Kildare Ireland. I went to Kildare as a Master's student to get firsthand experience for my thesis by celebrating Brigit's feast day—*Felie Bride*. My husband and I arrived on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2012, in time for the first day of festivities, including a historical walk around Kildare and a Brigit cross-weaving<sup>5</sup> workshop. What first struck me about the town was how it was geographically centered around Brigit. In the town square stands the *Eternal Flame* representing Brigit's flame that was said to be perpetually cared for by the Brigidine sisters; there is also a statue of Brigit herself. Both are located in front of the cross adorned Heritage Center, next to *Solas Bhríde*, the spiritual and pilgrimage center under the care of the Brigidine sisters. On one corner of the square sits St. Brigit's Cathedral, a 13<sup>th</sup> century building that is said to occupy the same space as Brigit's original 5<sup>th</sup> century abbey. As you drive into Kildare, you are immediately greeted by the sight of the Cathedral, looming over the square, with its distinctive round tower. In other words, Brigit's presence greets you as you arrive.

It is interesting to note that the Saint's presence is intensely mediated through symbols; the meaning of those symbols must be known if the presence is to be communicated. There is little signage located in town or around any of the buildings or monuments to explain what they are. You have to be standing at the gates to the Cathedral to know that it is St-Brigit's, and even at that, there is

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<sup>4</sup> "Biography: Remembering A Legend."

<sup>5</sup> The cross weaving workshop is a modern take on the tradition of weaving new Brigit crosses every year for Felie Bride. The workshop entailed being instructed on how to weave a Brigit's cross using fresh reeds that were gathered locally. They taught us how to weave the traditional four section Brigit's cross as well as another lesser known version that only has three sections. We kept the crosses as souvenirs.

little explanation of who Brigit was. I felt Brigit's presence because I was tuned in to the meaning and symbolism of each of the four markers I described above. If you were to just drive through Kildare, on your way to somewhere else, you would see these things, notice them and perhaps wonder about their meaning. However, for the uninformed and uninquisitive, these markers might be easily passed over as local curiosities of no particular interest to anyone else. In other words, though Brigit and her presence may be felt, it is in a modest fashion that invites rather than commands. This modesty is something that stands in direct opposition to Marley's Nine Mile.

The theme of modest veneration was carried through to the first event my husband and I took part in, in Kildare: which was the cross weaving workshop. Though this was one of the high points of the *Felie Bride* activities, it took place in a unassuming community center, not in Brigit's church, nor in what was then the *Solas Brhíde* headquarters. The community center was tucked around a corner, there was very little formal signage to guide you to the center, and then there was only a small notice on the door announcing that this was indeed the site of the workshop. My husband and I were the only visitors; the fifty or so other participants were clearly all locals, and were mostly women. This included a young girl who was preparing for her confirmation and was taking Brigit as her confirmation name. We were greeted by members of the Brigidine Sisters, but the workshop was led by the lay group, the *Cairde Bhríde*, who oversee with the sisters the *Solas Brhíde* center.

The involvement of lay people in all aspects of the veneration of St. Brigit was clear, including in the candlelit walk to Brigit's well on the eve of her February 1<sup>st</sup> feast day. The walk to the well was a striking highlight in the week of festivities for the *Felie Bride*. It started just outside town, from a car park dramatically lit by torches and candlelight. By the time the celebration started, there were about 200 people in attendance. Once again, most of the participants

were local, and if not local, certainly Irish. While there were few ‘outsiders’, there was a wide range among the ‘insiders’: women and men, young and old.

To begin the celebration, participants formed a circle around a hearth that had been constructed. A word of welcome from the Brigidine sisters opened the ceremony and was followed by instructions to the group in chants to be sung on the walk; this was led by a member of the *Cairde Bhríde*. Next, another member brought water from Brigit’s healing well; this was ceremoniously poured into a “well” that had been set up next to the hearth. The water was used to perform a blessing on the participants. This was followed by a ceremonial weaving of a Brigit’s cross in the middle of the circle next to the hearth. The newly-woven cross was used in another blessing, inviting the group to turn toward each of the four cardinal points. We then followed the cross and a torch bearing fire from Brigit’s flame<sup>6</sup> through a labyrinth, singing the chants we had been taught. Once everyone from the group arrived at the enclosure outside the well, we were led in group song before proceeding into the well area for the final blessing of the evening.

The events that transpired on Brigit’s Eve are interesting for several reasons. First, they highlight how the Brigidine sisters are reconnecting with the ancient Celtic past, while at the same time attempting to reclaim Brigit and bring her into the new millennium. By observing the ceremony outside, the sisters are reconnecting with her famous love of nature. They are also literally distancing themselves from the institutional Church liturgies in order emphasize the importance of nature and are literally writing their

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<sup>6</sup> As explained on the *Solas Bhríde* website, the Brigidine sisters returned to Kildare in 1992 and in 1993 co-hosted an International Conference in Kildare with Afri (Justice, Peace and Human Rights NGO) to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Afri’s St. Brigid’s Peace Cross Campaign. It was at this conference entitled, *Brigid: Prophetess, Earthwoman, Peacemaker*, the sister relit the Flame of Brigid, which is now housed at *Solas Bhríde* and tended by the sisters. The history of a flame burning in Kildare dates back to pre-Christian times and the goddess Brigid and was strongly associated with St-Brigit, who also is said to have kept a flame burning at Kildare. “The Perpetual Flame.” *Solas Bhríde: Centre and Hermitages*, last modified March 10 2015. <http://solasbhríde.ie/the-perpetual-flame/>

own liturgy. Throughout the entire evening, there were no traditional prayers offered. Prayers and praise to Brigit were performed, but there were no formal markers of the institutional Church. The chants we sang were also interesting. Some were traditional and some were clearly written in recent years. Since this was a celebration of a Catholic saint organized by an order of Catholic nuns, I was expecting to experience a traditional Catholic liturgy. Instead, what I encountered was a liturgy specific to the understanding of Brigit in a particular place and time, by a specific group of people, shaped by an idiosyncratic blending of mainstream Catholicism and New Age influences. The specificity of the liturgy, as highlighted by the events of the evening, is an example of how the pilgrimage to Brigit's shrines is localized to Kildare.

The localized Kildare liturgy isn't without its moments of modern commercialization. For example, the Heritage Center besides offering historical information also sells a range of Brigit themed merchandise. One such item is a 10 minute video ostensibly narrated by her 7<sup>th</sup> c. hagiographer, Cogitosus. A visitor may also take a tour of the local areas of interest.

I now leave Kildare in order to discuss the Nine Mile pilgrimage in Jamaica. Its location is modest but its liturgy—that is, the public celebration and veneration that takes place there—is certainly not. The drive to Nine Mile took us high up into the mountains, onto curving single-track roads with no guardrails to protect from sometimes 100 foot drop. During the ascent, the villages seemed increasingly impoverished. The only indication that Nine Mile and its associated link to Bob Marley are near is the school we passed that is named after Marley's mother, Cedella Marley. The site itself sits behind a large stone wall, where a gate and guards greeted us as we entered. To get to the start of the tour, we had to walk through the gift shop selling wares that range from Marley shot glasses to ladies' bathing suit—side cut outs included—with Marley's face on

it. This was the first indication that the veneration at this pilgrimage site is of a whole other, intensely vibrant sort!

The tour/pilgrimage itself started on the porch, next to the main bar (the second one we had seen to this point) and the restaurant. The bartender greeted us by proclaiming, at the top of his lungs, “You can smoke, you can drink, you can do whatever man! Light ‘em up if you have them. Smoke man, smoke!” Most of the other pilgrims were already partaking in the local herb and conveniently the bartender was a willing sponsor and salesman of such local produce. Despite his proclamations that smoking ganja, or marijuana, was acceptable, he did embrace a certain level of discretion when he passed the contraband, across the bar. This unabashed and—from a traditional Christian point of view, unorthodox—celebratory attitude was maintained throughout the tour by our guide, who had without a doubt already helped himself to some herb. The same spirit was fostered by remixes of Marley’s music in common areas and in bars on the way to his mausoleum.

Taking all of this into account, my first perception of the Nine Mile experience was that, in comparison to the Kildare, it was wholly tourist geared. It is important to note that the lines between tourist and pilgrim, always have been and continue to be blurred. Pilgrims often find themselves partaking in activities that are usually deemed touristic, such as buying souvenirs and taking photos.<sup>7</sup> So even though it was almost a prerequisite of the tour to have the guide take your photo in the bedroom of Marley’s childhood home, it is just another aspect of the form of liturgy that is specific to Nine Mile, for tourist and pilgrim alike.

What is interesting to note here in regards to the partaking of ganja while touring Nine Mile is the way in which it represents the sacramental. In the Christian tradition, there are many sacramental

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<sup>7</sup> Lindsay Jones, ed. “Tourism and Religion.” *Encyclopedia of Religion* (Farmington MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9261.

objects which are used to stimulate spiritual experiences, such as rosaries, statues, images and music. In Kildare, Brigit's cross, flame and the chants function sacramentally during the candlelit vigil. It could be argued that the ganja smoked serves a similar sacramental purpose in the Nine Mile liturgy. Even the songs played, throughout the Nine Mile tour, may be viewed as a sacramental part of its liturgy.

The Nine Mile liturgy is not without a level of reverence and sacred space. These feelings were cultivated by the efforts of Mama B. Cedella Malcom Marley Booker, otherwise known as Mama B: Bob Marley's mother. It was she who built and maintained the Nine Mile site till her death in 2008. She is buried there in her own mausoleum, next to her son's. Though she is not the main attraction, given the level of notoriety and fame that Marley achieved, when the guides speak of her, there is a sense of veneration to their voice. The only places smoking and drinking are prohibited are in the mausoleums. It is Mama B's mausoleum that to me felt the most hallowed. Though Marley's mausoleum did feel blessed; it did not for me have the sanctified aura that his mother's did. Marley's resting place seemed most clearly touristic, rather than liturgical. In spite of this, there was one overt sign of his being considered saintly. When the guide referred to him, it was mostly in present tense, invoking very much Marley's continuing presence. When it came to Mama B, it was very clear that we were standing in her legacy but she was no longer a presence to be felt in the same way that Marley is.

This contrast is intriguing because of the way it relates to saint worship in Christianity. All throughout our visit to Kildare, my husband and I were told that "Brigit welcomes us" and other similar sentences, highlighting the way in which the saints are always a presence in the lives of the people who venerate them. This is particularly true when discussing the veneration of saints and their tombs. According to historian Peter Brown, the veneration of saints

had many implications in the world of early Christianity.<sup>8</sup> He contends that at that time, generally Heaven and Earth were contrasted and opposed, not brought together.<sup>9</sup> However, the tombs of saints were, as Brown writes: “privileged places, where the contrasted poles of Heaven and Earth met.”<sup>10</sup> It was believed that the saint, who was in heaven, was also “present” at their tomb on earth.<sup>11</sup> The saints were serving as a bridge for those who were still alive,<sup>12</sup> in order to access the divine. This idea of being present can also be carried over to many of the places associated with the saints’ lives, such as Kildare. Though Brigit is not buried at Kildare, she did live there and centered her monastic city there. Thus it is justifiable to believe that she would be present at Kildare. In regards to Nine Mile, since Marley is buried there, and visitors do pay their respects to his tomb, Brown’s observations can help to explain why the guides at Nine Mile referred to Marley in the present tense. For them, Marley is always present, overseeing his legacy.

What is it about these two very different sites that make them indigenous pilgrimages? The indigeneity of these very different pilgrimages lie in the radical uniqueness and locality of persona and place. There are certain pilgrimage sites which one could transport anywhere else in the world and the experience would be the same. Consider St-Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal. It is a beautiful monument built by and housing the relics of the beloved Brother Andre, a lay brother of the Roman Catholic Congregation of the Holy Cross, who is credited with healing powers. Arrival at the Oratory may be experienced as sacred, serene and perhaps transformative as pilgrimage ideally is. Arguably this expression may be seen in other Catholic pilgrimage sites. On the other hand, what the pilgrim experiences at Kildare and Nine Mile—the sights, the sounds, the atmosphere—are all exclusive to those respective

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Brown, “The Holy and the Grave.” *The Cult of the Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 123.

<sup>9</sup> Brown, “The Holy and the Grave,” 125.

<sup>10</sup> Brown, “The Holy and the Grave,” 126.

<sup>11</sup> Brown, “The Holy and the Grave,” 127.

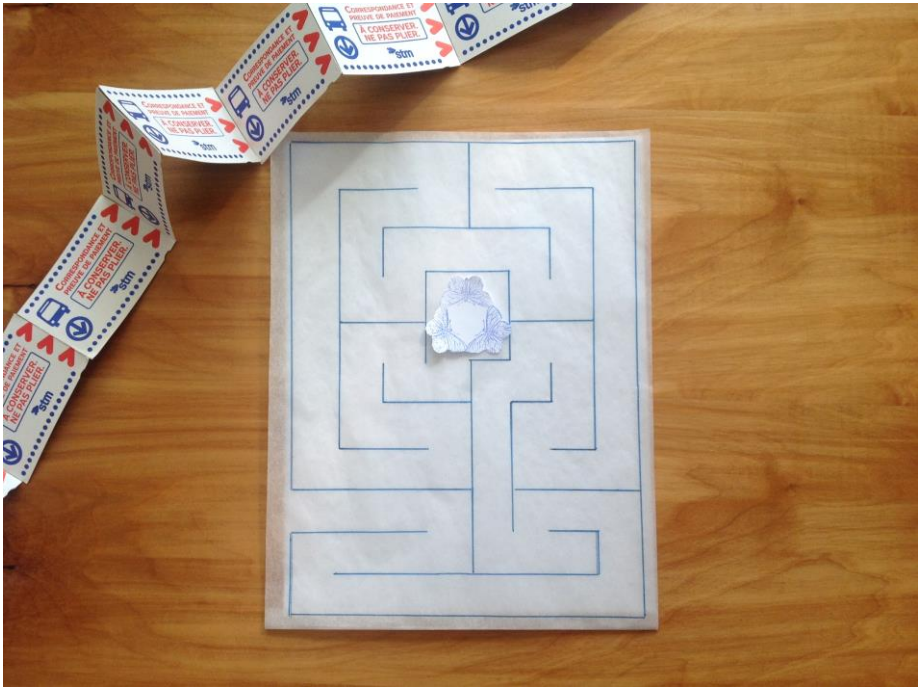
<sup>12</sup> Brown, “The Holy and the Grave,” 128.



sites. Though at first glance, and even upon my first reflection of these experiences, I considered Kildare and Nine Mile off as two very different approaches to local pilgrimage. Upon further reflection however, and the writing of this paper, I have come to realize that they are in many ways similar. Both Kildare and Nine Mile have created and performed their own liturgy and they have both embraced the tourist trappings of pilgrimage. They have both sought out ways to bring their respective saints into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, thus maintaining their legacy for generations to come. These sites provide the pilgrim with a unique set of experiences with a distinctive localized twist.

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*Pèlerinage: Opus à Conserver*

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Someone described the process of walking as a shift from thinking of ourselves as “human beings on a spiritual path” to thinking of ourselves as “spiritual beings on a human path.”

Labyrinth walking can be a form of prayer. It can be a symbol of the rhythm of spiritual life: Ignatian spirituality suggests that we are “contemplatives in action.” In the labyrinth walk, we move toward the center, letting go, seeking, journeying to God. At the center, we rest for a moment, listening, receiving, being restored, remembering who we are in God. Then, we move back out into our lives. The journey to the center can be seen as contemplation, and the journey outward as action.

In walking the labyrinth, one can let go of anxieties; seek discernment; experience healing from grief; celebrate inner joy, or seek hope. Walking the labyrinth is simple: the paths are clearly marked. It’s not so much a puzzle to solve, as a winding path, leading you inward, then, back out again.

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## Restored

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Work-wearied, my mud-encrusted self  
Exhaustedly reached out to the distant echo of the idea of God.  
Not writing, not praying, not giving, not living  
Too long repeating tired motions of teaching without being filled.  
Empty, yet seeking.

A January Saturday's snowing blowing  
Whiteness, called me to come outdoors and  
Be my true child self. *Purify me with hyssop.*  
Strapped on snowshoes, wrapping self-absorption in  
Layers of knit and wool.  
*Wash me, Went out to play, and I shall be whiter than snow.*

The usual route to the forest trails is  
Blocked as my mind has been of late.  
Last summer's loggers leaving mountains of brush and upturned roots,  
Darkly destroying my passage...and the memory of the  
Black bear lurking there.  
*Forgive us our trespasses...*

Cut across the neighbor's field, covered in deep-dense, this wet  
White weighing down the paddle shoes.  
Effort-warmed, panting, remove coat; tie once around waist.  
Mittens stuffed in pockets, keep on. Keep on.  
Cool soothing now, breathing, breath.  
Snowfall stops. Sun breaks in. Clouds dissolve.  
Sky's watercolor oval, the essence of blue awaiting the dipped  
Dripping brush.

At last, woods' edge: I step into hemlock chapels, quiet inner spaces,  
Green lace, white-tipped, dappled light, banks of white,  
All sounds mute but occasional whish,  
Glitter and drip of scattered diamonds from above as breeze whispers  
Over snow-coated swags.  
*You are standing on Holy Ground.*

Oaks' bare columns raise my gaze upward  
Where limbs join impossibly;  
Pine and spruce hold hands in snow bridge arches.  
Nature's gothic, tracery vaults lit by sunlight and snow reflection.  
Here, no burning bush, but blazing branches,  
Scintillating sprinkled jewels refract rainbow flashes into air  
Fresh as crushed wintergreen leaves.

He sees me here, I know. Being still. Letting go.  
Praying my delight, my wish for wholeness.  
*Restore a right spirit within me.*  
Continuing, being present with Him.  
The frozen lake ahead to cross, the clearing--  
Now each step a joy, a thanksgiving for energy  
To lift my knees, rejoicing in the soft impact.  
Snow mattresses, child's play, snow marshmallow-soft, rabbit's fur-  
gentle.  
The mystery is too much for me:  
Creator of such majesty—yet playful—knowing All,  
*Loving me.*



*The Everyday Pilgrimage*

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The relationship between the self and society is very complex. Pilgrimage is defined as a journey, sometimes a long one, made to a sacred place as an act of religious devotion. The quest that one takes on a pilgrimage is a journey of the mind, body and spirit in direct relation with the physical place and spiritual place. In pilgrimage theory there needs to be a detachment of the physical self from mainstream society. This detachment of both mind and body from its normal setting is in the votive of gaining an understanding oneself in relation to their spirit.

I ask the question of how does one gain an understanding of themselves that speaks to the sacred journey of pilgrimage when one does not have the opportunity to physically remove themselves from society? Is one able to be as mindful of themselves in their society and grow? How does one stay within their current space and gain an understanding of themselves in relation to the power dynamics of space? What are the feelings that arise from the struggles of the structures that have been placed upon us? Most importantly, are we able to grow into authentic beings without going on a pilgrimage?

The answers to these questions are found in the everyday pilgrimage: the everyday struggle. This conscious cultivation of attention to ones feelings and thoughts in their present space bring a sacred experience to the everyday quest of understanding oneself.



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## Bloomsday: Interpreting James Joyce's *Ulysses* Through Literary Pilgrimage

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On the June 16<sup>th</sup>, 1954, a group of men set out in horse-drawn buggies along the coast of Dublin Bay, towards the Martello Tower. The group included Irish novelist Brian O’Nolan, Irish poet Patrick Kavanagh, a dentist by the name of Tom Joyce, a young critic named Anthony Cronin, the registrar of Trinity College Dublin A.J. Leventhal, and the owner and editor of the literary magazine *Envoy* John Ryan.<sup>1</sup> That day, the men planned to travel from the Martello Tower through Dublin’s city center. Their aim was to visit the places made famous by one of the most notable texts of the twentieth century: James Joyce’s *Ulysses*. Forsaking their own identities, the group took on the personalities of characters in Joyce’s novel: Cronin was Stephen Dedalus, O’Nolan became Simon Dedalus, John Ryan took on Martin Cunningham and A.J. Leventhal became Leopold Bloom. From Sandycove onwards, the men stopped into local pubs and consumed large amounts of alcohol. By the time they made it to Sandymount Strand, a few of the men relieved themselves on the beach—much like Stephen Dedalus did in the “Proteus” episode of *Ulysses*. Once they reached Dublin’s city center, their Joycean tour ended at the Bailey, a literary pub on Duke Street. Together, the group spent the rest of June 16<sup>th</sup> taking in more drink, leaving their Joycean excursion unfinished.<sup>2</sup>

This is the first account of Bloomsday, a literary event still celebrated in Dublin today. Receiving its name from Joyce’s publisher, Sylvia Beach, Bloomsday is a day when Joyce admirers like O’Nolan and his men retrace the footsteps of Leopold Bloom

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of celebrating Bloomsday’s fiftieth anniversary that year had been Ryan’s, who wished to dedicate a special issue of *Envoy* to Joyce, of which O’Nolan was the guest editor. Peter Costello and Peter Van de Kamp, *Flann O’Brien: An Illustrated Biography*, (London: Bloomsbury, 1987), 15.

<sup>2</sup> John Banville, “Bloomsday Bloody Bloomsday,” *New York Times Book Review* (2004), 15-21; Footage of the first Bloomsday celebration can be seen in the documentary film *Flann O’Brien: The Lives of Brian*. Dir. Maurice Sweeney, (Mint Productions, 2006).

through the city streets of Dublin. However, unlike the Bloomsday celebrated in previous years, recent celebrations have become much more elaborate and international. Since 1954, hundreds of people from all corners of the world gather together on June 16<sup>th</sup> to observe, experience and re-create the episodes from Joyce's novel. Participants dress up in Edwardian costumes and take part in a week-long festival that include plays, musicals, dramatic readings, exhibitions, re-enactments, dinners, breakfasts, bike rides and walking tours. As the Irish-American teacher and writer Frank McCourt states, "*Ulysses* is more than a book. It's an event."<sup>3</sup>

Still, observers have suggested that Bloomsday can be labelled other than a festival or celebration. In a number of reported accounts of 1954's excursion, correspondents often identified O'Nolan's Bloomsday celebration as a *pilgrimage*. Reporters such as Robert Nicholson in his article "Bloomsday: A Short History" and Peter Costello and Peter Van de Kamp's recount of the group's outing in *Flann O'Brien: An Illustrated Biography*, use the word pilgrimage to define the daylong expedition.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, recent accounts of Bloomsday have not labelled the day as such, but describe the event as a theatrical display or cultural gathering.

Although Bloomsday embodies elements of culture, theater and festivities in honour of *Ulysses*, June 16<sup>th</sup> can be viewed as an annual secular pilgrimage for participants to engage with the text through direct experience. Embarking on a literary pilgrimage on Bloomsday allows the reader to receive first-hand experience of *Ulysses* that influences a different understanding of the text—an experience that lies beyond the words presented on the page. Using Edith and Victor Turner's definition of kinetic ritual in pilgrimage from *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* in a comparative manner, the following essay will discuss: how a pilgrimage enables

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<sup>3</sup> Nolla Tully, *Yes I said yes I Will Yes: A Celebration of James Joyce, Ulysses and 100 Years of Bloomsday*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), xii.

<sup>4</sup> Banville, "Bloomsday Bloody Bloomsday," 34-5; Costello and Van de Kamp, *Flann O'Brien*, 15-21.

the human body to actively engage with Joyce's text through the act of walking; and the interrelation between text, space and reader through the participant's sensory experience that cultivates new meaning for Joyce's novel.

A pilgrimage is a type of journey that travels towards a sacred destination or shrine. Edith and Victor Turner state that a pilgrimage is a type of "kinetic ritual" that often involves physical movement such as walking, crawling and even dancing. Every step one takes throughout the religious journey has meaning; new insights are given and a deeper understanding is attained.<sup>5</sup> However, it can be argued that a pilgrimage is not solely religious.

A pilgrimage can also be conceived in non-religious terms, while retaining many characteristics of explicitly religious journey. With reference to the Turners' definition, aspects comparable to religious pilgrimage are present in a particular kind of secular journey known as a literary pilgrimage. A literary pilgrimage is usually text-informed and author-focused; it is deeply influenced by a sense of literary heritage or nostalgia. The journey usually involves visiting a place linked to a writer or featured within a novel. In addition, a literary pilgrimage is an example of homage that pays tribute to works of fiction and poetry and, often, to writers who have lived in or near famous landscapes and settings. Furthermore, the journey can be understood as a quest for the material and the authentic that is represented within a work of fiction or the author's biography.<sup>6</sup> In relation to Bloomsday, the festival is certainly text-informed and author-focused and is an example of paying homage in the sites where *Ulysses* takes place. Indeed, while Bloomsday as a literary pilgrimage may not be considered religious per se, a participant's visit to Dublin on June 16<sup>th</sup> has become an annual gathering incorporating the Turners' description of kinetic ritual. Further, the

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<sup>5</sup> Victor and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 1-40.

<sup>6</sup> Barbara Schaff, "»In the Footsteps of ...«: The Semiotics of Literary Tourism." *KulturePoetic* 11, no. 2 (2011), 166-68.

kinetic ritual that is part of the Bloomsday celebration is an imitation of the bodily actions portrayed throughout the novel.

The human body is an important motif throughout *Ulysses* as the novel is heavily centered on the body itself. For instance, the episodes presented in the Stuart Gilbert schemata located in the beginning of the text does not produce the body beautiful<sup>7</sup>, but correspond with actual limbs, bones, and organs.<sup>8</sup> The narrative is thus a celebration of the body as the text includes the functions and actions performed throughout the day. Relative to Bloomsday, participants engage in these bodily actions that allow them to discover new meaning in the novel through the channel of their *own* bodies. That is, a deeper understanding is attained through the mimicry of the text's main character: Leopold Bloom.<sup>9</sup>

Bloom is presented as someone who is comfortable with his body and, to a degree, represents *the* body in *Ulysses*. For example, the introduction of the protagonist in the "Calypso" episode is of a markedly corporeal being in touch with his appetite:

Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencod's roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> In *Ulysses and Us*, Declan Kiberd explains that Joyce focused on the flaws, limbs, organs and bones to construct the image of the body throughout his book. The Irish author never showcased an unflawed version of the body that was considered to be perfect according to twentieth century standards. Please see Kiberd's chapter on "Ogling" in *Ulysses and Us: The Art of Everyday Living*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 193-206.

<sup>8</sup> Kiberd, *Ulysses and Us*, 88.

<sup>9</sup> Hence the day's title: Bloom's Day.

<sup>10</sup> James Joyce, *Ulysses*, (London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000), 65.

What is notable in this passage is how Bloom consumes the “inner organs” of the body, such as the “heart”, “liver” and “kidney.” In contrast, Bloom’s character is not described physically. That is, the reader is unaware of what the protagonist looks like until he is described later on in the text. The blankness of his description throughout “Calypso” is replaced by actions, such as preparing food, eating, walking and even defecating. Therefore, Bloom’s actions beyond the “Calypso” episode become the very rituals of June 16<sup>th</sup>. Imitations of Bloom’s corporeal actions have become kinetic ritual. In this practice, participants replace the void of Bloom’s missing description in “Calypso” with their own bodies and experience the novel for themselves. In the end, the participant’s bodily experiences break the barrier between the reader and the subject of the novel and create meaning through the process of direct experience—particularly through the act of walking, which connects the reader’s body to the space represented in the text.

The notion of walking in the footsteps of Leopold Bloom on a literary pilgrimage enables the reader to interact and connect with the setting of Joyce’s novel. That is, the act of walking permits a different mode of experience and a potentially further, deeper understanding of the text—particularly in terms of the novel’s space. Walking dominates the pages of *Ulysses* and is an essential part of the kinetic ritual that takes place in Dublin on Bloomsday. Nevertheless, the interaction between participant and the literary space of Dublin administered through walking can be compared to the connection between pilgrim and holy site in religious pilgrimages.

According to Edith and Victor Turner, the holy site or location of importance is the centre of a pilgrimage; provinces, districts and shrines all have their focal devotions. When embarking on a pilgrimage, it is often to reach a site of religious importance in search of a connection with the space as presented in scripture or saintly history. As a result, the pilgrim attains spiritual fulfilment

between herself/himself and the sacred space. In addition, spiritual fulfilment is complete by the interrelation of the pilgrim's senses and the destination. Sensory experiences, such as the touching of a saint's shrine or witnessing the Holy Land, can function to confirm the individual's faith.

In relation to Bloomsday, Dublin becomes the focal point of celebration, or rather, the "omphalos"<sup>11</sup> of the week-long event.<sup>12</sup> Joyce himself made sure that Dublin was the center of the novel as the author would state: "I want to give a picture of Dublin so complete that if the city one day suddenly disappeared from the earth it could be reconstructed out of my book."<sup>13</sup> Detailed paths across Dublin, as portrayed in *Ulysses*, become literary trails<sup>14</sup> for Bloomsday participants to pursue in actuality. Today, opportunities to walk in the footsteps of Leopold Bloom on such trails are available in the form of walking tours open for those who wish to seek the authentic scenes from the novel. For instance, a walking tour inspired by the "Lestrygonians" episode is offered by the James Joyce Center in Dublin and allows one to retrace Bloom's steps down O'Connell and Westmoreland streets. Along the tour, pavement plaques are placed in front of significant buildings or landmarks; these are marked with a direct quote from "Lestrygonians". In effect, these plaques provide the participant a physical connection to a space described in the novel while administering an additional level of understanding to the text.<sup>15</sup> With the example of walking tours in mind, it is important to note how the act of walking allows the participant's body to physically

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<sup>11</sup> Joyce, *Ulysses*, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Omphalos is the Greek word for center or navel and is used throughout *Ulysses* to define the Martello Tower as Stephen Dedalus and Buck Mulligan's home. In relation to Bloomsday, it can be argued that Dublin becomes the center of the week-long festival.

<sup>13</sup> Tully, *Yes I said yes I will Yes*, 62.

<sup>14</sup> A literary trail is a spatial manifestation inspired by scenes within literature and the domestic location of the author. In relation to the literary trail, Robinson states: "the boundaries between history and heritage are characteristically blurred as "facts" surrounding the authors' lives and works. Their locations of work and play, their inspirations and affections are captured." Mike Robinson, *Literature and Tourism*, (London: Continuum, 2002), 22.

<sup>15</sup> The "Lestrygonians" walking tour usually involves readings from the chapter as the tourists stand and witness the setting described before them.

connect to Dublin's literary landscape. In fact, walking through the setting of *Ulysses* is almost like reading the text with our feet.

The act of walking allows the pilgrim to read the setting of *Ulysses* with their feet and develop a close relationship between actual space and text. In regards to walking, British anthropologist Tim Ingold states that: "nothing, however, better illustrates the value placed upon a sedentary perception of the world, mediated by the allegedly superior senses of vision and hearing, and unimpeded by an haptic or kinaesthetic sensation through the feet."<sup>16</sup> As Ingold points out, walking affects all parts of the human being through the body's sensory perception. For such a bodily oriented novel, retracing *Ulysses* on foot enables our senses to be in direct contact with the sights, smells, tastes, textures and sounds as portrayed in the text. For example, one can see the Martello Tower that opens the beginning chapter of the novel, smell "the snotgreen sea" surrounding it, feel the cold of the "scrotumtightening sea" at the Forty Foot, and listen to the "crush, crack, crick, crick" of the rocks, shells and sand while walking on Sandycove Beach.<sup>17</sup> Walking allows all five senses of the body to be affected while retracing the episodes of *Ulysses*. As a result, the participants' bodies are in contact with the character's direct experience from the novel; experience gained through immediate sense perception that allows for a different interpretation and understanding of *Ulysses*. One's sensory perception heightens the experience of place that is translated from Joyce's literature into something concrete, which results in a renewed connection and perspective of the novel itself.

With regards to one's sensory experience of the novel, the effect is a different approach towards the meaning of the text communicated through the body. The interpretation of space,

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<sup>16</sup>Tim Ingold, "Culture on the Ground: The World Perceived Through Feet," *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 39.

<sup>17</sup>Joyce, *Ulysses*, 3; 45.

landmark and icon is dependent on the body's sensory response to the literary destination. Walking *Ulysses* enables a physical reconstruction of the novel conducted by one's direct experience. As a result, the Bloomsday participant is able to interpret the hermeneutic space represented in the text.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the observation of the hermeneutic space that is Dublin becomes a device for creating meaning to Joyce's novel. Therefore, the distinction between walking, observing and reading dissolves as retracing *Ulysses* on Bloomsday becomes a new means for reading the landscape represented in the text. In addition, re-walking the scenes of *Ulysses* is an example of paying tribute to Joyce and the landscape made famous by his novel.

Consistent with the Turners' study of pilgrimages, at least in the Christian context, the act of paying homage is what brings the devotee closer to the divine object. Objects of worship—such as statues, images, or paintings—are articles of symbolic expression. Nonetheless, it is important to note that such objects are subject to the pilgrim's interpretation. As a result, the pilgrim's communication with the object through worship is what gives meaning to their spiritual experience.<sup>19</sup> Like a religious pilgrimage, a participant engaged in a secular pilgrimage towards a literary destination is also paying homage to the writer or place connected to her/his work. Paying homage to a literary site is what brings the reader's body closer to the author and text, and deepens for her/him the text's meaning.

In relation to Bloomsday, Dublin can be considered as a place of literary devotion, for it is the site of origin of *Ulysses*. Throughout the city center, Joyce and his work are immortalized by different icons exhibited and admired. One example of a venerated symbol would be the life-size bronze statue of Joyce located on Earl Street

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<sup>18</sup> Schaff discusses how the literary locations in the works of literature are semiotically complex.

Hermeneutic spaces are textual locales that cannot simply be objectified but regarded as "a symbolic instruments for making the text meaningful." Schaff, "The Semiotics of Literary Tourism," 169.

<sup>19</sup> Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage*, 11.



that faces the Dublin Spire. The statue attracts pedestrians and Joyce admirers to appreciate the piece and often have their photographs taken with it. Some tourists even touch the statue with the hope that some of the author's literary talent would rub off on them.<sup>20</sup> The pilgrim's connection with Joyce's statue through the sense of touch gives meaning to their literary experience and empowers a tangible relationship to Joyce, his work and his talent. Indeed, Dublin is full of articles that one can approach and marvel at in memory of Joyce and his literature. The exchange between admirer and object that represents Joyce and his literature gives meaning to the pilgrim's actions. Moreover, the participant develops an added layer of textual interpretation as she/he celebrates Joyce and his novel on Bloomsday.

Bloomsday is an annual secular pilgrimage that allows the participant to engage directly with James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Participating in a literary pilgrimage on Bloomsday allows the reader to receive direct experience of the novel that fosters different perspectives on the text. As *Ulysses* is a text radically associated with the human body, the bodily rituals of Leopold Bloom shape the events on Bloomsday. The example of walking tours allows the pilgrim to experience the setting of *Ulysses* with their feet, while their bodies build a relationship between themselves, text, and space. Sensory experience plays a central role in the connection between the body and space represented outside the pages of the novel, in the actual city of Dublin. The tangible relationship between the pilgrim and the landmarks, symbols and icons that represent Joyce and his literature contribute to the expression of homage to Joyce on Bloomsday. Thus, the pilgrim's interpretation of the Joycean symbols and icons helps expand their understanding of *Ulysses*. Through the kinetic rituals of Bloomsday, the participant is able to re-discover the text through first-hand experience, rather

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<sup>20</sup> This is based on my own encounter of the statue where I overheard a tourist wish for a better hand in their writing after touching Joyce's statue

than merely reading about the subject in a textbook or learning about it in a classroom. Of course, interpretation varies from person to person as it is based on her or his particular experience with *Ulysses* and Bloomsday. However, by encountering Dublin in the pages of Joyce's novel, how could one not be enticed to wander and explore the connections between the meaning of *Ulysses* and the experience of the Bloomsday pilgrimage? Surely, the reading process of *Ulysses* may be difficult, but the walking is a ready way to access the story through personal experience—"Just you try it on."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Joyce, *Ulysses*, 561..

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*Passage*

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## *Journey: Cyber Peregrinatio* Considered

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A year ago, a few weeks before the session was to begin, I received an email from a student. She was registered for a class on pilgrimage, and was writing to advise that she was physically unable to perform a course requirement: walking a pilgrimage of at least 20 km. This student raised an important question: how can one engage in the transformative act of pilgrimage without physically leaving his/her environment?

Since that time I have come across a video game which evokes such a possibility. *Journey*, by Thatgamecompany<sup>1</sup>, invites players to embark on a specific form of pilgrimage, known as *peregrinatio*. The character that the player controls is not gendered and has no characteristic traits to identify them. He/she is molded after a dervish, (a Sufi mystic and ascetic). The goal of *Journey* is to walk across various environments—ranging from deserts, to caves, to mountaintops—in order to reach a distant, heavenly star. There is no talking, indeed no sound at all, aside from the atmospheric music. Most notably the character travels through a remote environment, with only the occasional fellow traveler for company. Travelers are unable to communicate with each other, aside from the occasional short musical burst. All of these factors create an atmospheric, immersive experience about traveling toward the end goal.

In order to consider the video game *Journey* as a *peregrinatio* the term must first be explained. This will lay the groundwork for the paper and reveal the specific characteristics necessary for a voyage to be identified as *peregrinatio*. Efforts will be made to minimize any possible game spoilers, unless necessary to this discussion. If *Journey* is indeed a *peregrinatio*, this would suggest that the

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<sup>1</sup>Published on March 15<sup>th</sup> for the Play Station 3 gaming console exclusively.

possibility of a type of cyber-pilgrimage<sup>2</sup> which unfolds without the pilgrim physically leaving their environment.

### ***Peregrinatio*: In the Celtic Context**

*Peregrinatio* is the Latin word for pilgrimage. In contemporary pilgrimage scholarship, the Latin term is retained to denote a specific type of journey most popular in the Celtic Isles during the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century C.E. The origin of the *peregrinatio* and the form it took grounds itself both within Biblical narrative, and Church tradition. The story of Abraham is the earliest biblical model for *peregrinatio*. “Now the Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your country ... to the land that I will show you’”.<sup>3</sup> He is told to leave his homeland, never to return, in search of a land which God would show him. Those who engage in this form of pilgrimage, *peregrinus/peregrina*, understood this call to travel to unknown lands in conjunction with Jesus’ saying that “the son of man [Jesus] has nowhere to lay his head”<sup>4</sup>. In leaving his/her homeland on a wandering journey, the *peregrinus/peregrina* emulates both Abram and Jesus.

*Peregrinatio* in the Celtic context is not the first form of asceticism to emulate this biblical pattern. Embracing the same scriptural passages, Egyptian monastics left their homes to travel and live in the desert. This form of radical asceticism, as found in the writings of and about St. Anthony of Alexandria, inspired Celtic Christians to engage in a similar renunciation of their homeland for the love of God.

Among contemporary pilgrims, the motivations to engage in travel are numerous. The reasons for going on pilgrimage include, but are not limited to: a wish to be blessed, a promise to the divine,

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<sup>2</sup> For a full discussion of cyber-pilgrimage see: Connie Hill-Smith, “Cyber pilgrimage: The (virtual) reality of online pilgrimage experience,” *Religion Compass* 5, no.6 (2011):236-246.

<sup>3</sup> Gen 12:1 NRSV

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 8:20

reorientation of one's life goals, religious duty, relationship with the earthly and/or divine other, or even physical fitness.<sup>5</sup> Any of these may occur alone, or in combination. The pilgrim's reason for travel may develop and change through the course of the pilgrimage. Regardless of the reason for setting out, the end goal is usually associated with a specific place. This location may be the birthplace or home of an important figure, a place where divine apparitions have occurred, or where blessings have been bestowed.<sup>6</sup> A modern example could be a Muslim who travels to Mecca. In this case the journey itself, known as the Hajj, is required to be performed one by all able bodied Muslims. Mecca is the birthplace of the prophet Muhammad and very close location of his first revelation of the Quran. What starts as religious duty may be deepened, as relationship and revelation occur.

In the case of the Celtic Christian *peregrinus/peregrina*, the motivation for travel is to leave their homeland "for the sake of God from everything they love"<sup>7</sup>. The reasons for leaving include: service to God, reorientation from focus on earthly attachment towards a transcendental goal, and for the love of God. Thus the *peregrinus/peregrina* is thrust into a ministry of wandering. For example, one of the earliest Celtic *peregrini* is Columbanus of Bobbio, who traveled in the 7<sup>th</sup> century C.E. His *periginatio* took him from Ireland through the European Continent to Bobbio in Northern Italy. Along his journey, he founded a number of monasteries. According to his hagiographer, Jonas of Bobbio, the reason Columbanus left home was that "he longed to go into strange lands, in obedience to the command which the Lord gave Abraham: 'Go out from your country, and from your kin, and from your

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<sup>5</sup> For full list see Linda Kay Davidson and David M. Gitlitz, "Motives," *Pilgrimage: from the Ganges to Graceland: an Encyclopedia*, (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2002), 404-407.

<sup>6</sup> Edith Turner, "Pilgrimage: An Overview," *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 7146.

<sup>7</sup> Oliver Davies and Thomas O'Loughlin, "Cambrai Homily," *Celtic Spirituality*, (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 2002), 369-370.



father's house, into a land that I will show you"<sup>8</sup>

Another difference between *peregrinatio* and the more common understanding of pilgrimage can be seen in the stages through which the journeyer supposedly progresses. In Victor and Edith Turner's classic pilgrimage theory, the pilgrimage experience is understood as consisting of three phases: separation, liminality, and re-aggregation.<sup>9</sup> First, the pilgrim separates himself/herself from his/her everyday life. Implicit is the need to physically leave one's home, or habitual environment.<sup>10</sup> This is the first step outside of one's door and the reorientation of focus towards the journey itself. Second, upon leaving the everyday world the pilgrim experiences a breakdown of social structures. It is in this phase that the Turner's state *communitas* occurs among fellow travelers who are free of everyday social hierarchies. Pilgrims are free to connect with each other on a profound level.<sup>11</sup> Paradoxically, along with the social dimension of pilgrimage, the traveler also experiences the opportunity for solitary introspection.<sup>12</sup> It is perhaps the tension between these ways of being which leads to the pilgrim's overall sense of liminality: being neither in their original environment nor yet at his/her destination. It is at this end moment that "they are likely to experience a transformational moment that is prepared [for] by all their striving".<sup>13</sup> Once they have reached their goal, and perhaps been transformed, the pilgrim returns home, bringing with them the changed self.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Jonas of Bobbio, "Life of St. Columban," *Translation and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History*, 2, no.7 (University of Pennsylvania Press). Accessed at: <https://archive.org/details/lifeofstcolumban0207jona>.

<sup>9</sup> Edith Turner, "Pilgrimage" p. 7145; David A. Leeming, "Pilgrimage," *Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*. (New York; London: Springer, 2010), 681-682.

<sup>10</sup> Davidson, "Motives," 258.

<sup>11</sup> Turner, "Pilgrimage," 7126. In practice this spirit of 'comunitas' may be a little idealistic, as noted by John Eade and Micheal Sallnow. *Contesting the Sacred*. (Urbana; Chicago: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Davidson, "Motives," 258.

<sup>13</sup> Davidson, "Motives," 258.

<sup>14</sup> Turner, "Pilgrimage," 7146.

On the other hand in the case of *peregrinatio*, the *peregrinus/peregrina* does not return to their homeland, or everyday life. What they set out to find is the “place of their resurrection”<sup>15</sup>, that is place of their death and entry into eternal life. Instead of a cyclical movement to a place and back, *peregrini* seek to travel towards a transcendental, and eschatological, reality. Arguably their earthly journey ends at the ultimate transformative moment, death.<sup>16</sup>

Aside from these differences, it should be noted that although the experience of *peregrinatio* may be understood as a process of ongoing interior transformation, the actual journey was often undertaken in groups. For example, an account recorded in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle of 891 describes a group of three *peregrini* who appeared before King Alfred. “And three Scots [Irishmen]<sup>17</sup> came to King Alfred in a boat without oars from Ireland; whence they stole away, because they would live in a state of pilgrimage [*elðēodignes*, meaning foreign travel or exile]<sup>18</sup>, for the love of God, they recked not where”.<sup>19</sup> Presumably, these *peregrini* would have experienced the fellow-feeling that Turner terms *communitas*.

To recap, there are four main defining characteristics of *peregrinatio*. First, the reasons for setting out is a response to a divine call into exile. Second, presumably the *peregrinus/peregrina* experiences a sense of liminality evidenced in the many miraculous occurrences recorded in hagiographical accounts of *peregrinatio*. This is the psychic “space” in between where the individual started and where they are going. Third, *peregrinatio* includes the paradox of a journey’s individual and social dimensions. Although the transformation is individual, the relational *communitas* acts as the medium through which aspects of this transformation occur. Finally,

<sup>15</sup> Phyllis G. Justice, “Peregrinatio,” *Encyclopedia of Irish Spirituality*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2000), 277.

<sup>16</sup> Sara Terreault, Professor of Spirituality, Concordia Theology Department, email message to author, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> In early medieval writing the term Scots was used to refer to individuals living in Ireland.

<sup>18</sup> This old English term is the equivalent of the term *peregrinatio*.

<sup>19</sup> James Ingram, (trans.). *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*. (University College, 1921), Accessed at: [http://archive.org/stream/Anglo-saxonChronicles/anglo\\_saxon\\_chronicle\\_djvu.txt](http://archive.org/stream/Anglo-saxonChronicles/anglo_saxon_chronicle_djvu.txt)

this journey is linear, vectored towards ultimate transcendental reality.

### ***Journey* Considered**

In order to regard a video game as a *peregrinatio*, it should fulfill all four of the above characteristics that I have linked to *peregrinatio*. During one play-through (completing the story of a video game), *Journey* manages to convey every aspect of this type of experience.

First, the character experiences a sense of calling and connection to the divine. After a short introduction, where the player is introduced to ways to move the character and otherwise interact with the game world, a vision occurs. The main character is seen kneeling before a large figure clothed in white. Although no verbal communication is used, from the reverence given to this being by the player's character, it is clear that this is an interaction with the divine. This 'person in white' indicates that the player is to go to a star in the distance. In this way the character is given a duty to travel to this location.

Second, *Journey* portrays the experience of liminality in two ways: through visible character changes, and through his/her reception of further visions. Throughout the game, the look of the character changes subtly. At the time of the first vision, they are given a short scarf. Throughout the game, the player collects divine symbols which cause the scarf to grow. This item becomes a representation of the player's experience in the game's world. As it is constantly growing, it indicates—that they are neither in their original, unexperienced state, nor do they have complete knowledge and experience, as the scarf's growth does not seem to have an end. In addition to the character's visible transformation, the nature of their relationship with the divine likewise changes throughout the game. When the divine figure first appears, it is physically distant

from the player's character and does not seem to convey much to him/her. Through the game, in subsequent visions, the physical space between the divine and the character becomes smaller and more is revealed. These revelations come in the form of tapestry images of the character's people. Again in this instance, liminality is felt as the character is neither distanced from the divine, nor in perfect relationship with it.

Third, although primarily an individual experience, the social element of *communitas* is present throughout the game. In *Journey* it is possible for one other player to join the game. This person is not known to the player, nor identified in any way. During my play through, an individual traveled with me from the beginning of the game until the end. As mentioned previously, players cannot communicate with each other, aside from using single music tones. The lack of communication between players makes something very interesting happen. On the one hand, it allowed me to be fully aware of my surroundings in the game. I was not being distracted by text appearing on the screen, or by a human voice. On the other hand, I was very aware of going through an experience with someone else. I found myself sometimes looking for my companion. At one point, we paused in our travels and began jumping around each other, and spinning into the air while making musical tones. This is very similar to the physical experience within pilgrimages of *communitas*, specifically the act of merry making. Although these were images on a screen, I engaged in a relationship with the individual I was traveling with.

Finally, the *peregrinatio* ends with final transcendence. Without spoiling the end of the game, you do reach final enlightenment and a definitive end point. The character experiences transcendence and enters into full relationship with the divine. In essence, they find their place of resurrection. This description does not give credit to the awe experienced in *Journey*. The game must be played—that is, the virtual journey must be undertaken—to experience this late

game moment of transcendence.

According to the definition I have provided, *Journey* is a form of *perigrinatio*. It should be noted that if the game is replayed, it then follows the pattern of a modern pilgrimage. Instead of a *peregrinatio* which terminates with the end of the game, the player is invited to go back to their place of origin, the beginning, to lead another individual to the point of transcendence. This allows for the experience of traveling to a significant place and back, of which the Turners spoke. It should be noted that most individuals will only engage in such an experience once, which is why the video game has been described as a *peregrinatio*.

### Conclusion

The student's email, with which I began this investigation, brought to light a pressing issue in the modern scholarly conception of pilgrimage. How can those who are physically unable to go on pilgrimages still engage in this experience? Video games such as *Journey* may eventually provide a viable alternative to the experience of self-determined journey for those unable to physically journey for any number of reasons. Hopefully this will not be the only such instance of the possibility of a cyber-pilgrimage.

Technology is advancing to a point that fully immersive player experiences are just around the corner. For example, Google street view allows for an individual to see city streets on their computer in the same way they would if physically standing there. The Oculus rift headset, currently in development by Oculus VR, will give the user the experience of complete immersion into a video, seemingly surrounding him/her with the images and sound. Also the announced Google glasses will allow for you to see a video superimposed on your everyday world.

Will this replace traditional forms of pilgrimage? No. A virtual experience of, say, the Camino de Santiago will never fully compare with physically walking the pilgrimage trail. What it would allow for is participation by those who cannot physically journey for various reasons in this transformational act.

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*Night Before Settlement*

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*Night Before Settlement*

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I listen to our great ancestors  
speak wisely and passionately about  
the history of the land,  
the glory of pilgrimage  
into sacred lands,

The wonder of settlement  
and the state of suspension  
the sky detonates,  
like the dreaming reality  
of the mythic.

I'm awakening from the dream to a place where  
I belong yet never knew

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# Pilgrimage and the Stranger

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The experience of foreignness is an essential catalyst for the transformation found at the heart of pilgrimage. The pilgrim is often a foreigner at a national level, wandering in a country not one's own. The pilgrim is also a foreigner at the social level in moments of transient and transcendent *communitas* with other foreigners. Many contemporary pilgrims are on a quest to "find themselves" at the psychic level in which the experience of exile—ultimately an experience of self-othering—is posited as foundational for identity.<sup>1</sup> And while many contemporary pilgrims<sup>2</sup> no longer have an overtly religious motivation, for those with the inner motivation of faith, there is the potential to experience God as the ultimate Other. Beyond the personal benefit of the pilgrimage experience for the pilgrim, the understanding and appropriation of the foreignness at the heart of contemporary popular walking pilgrimage has positive implications for dealing with current global issues of foreignness, exile, xenophobia and racism.<sup>3</sup>

The etymology of the word "pilgrim" underscores its original identification with foreignness, deriving from the Latin *peregrinus* which means: "stranger, foreigner, wanderer and exile".<sup>4</sup> The traditional definition of pilgrimage as "journey to a holy place"<sup>5</sup> has emphasized the destination as the central focus. Contrary to this understanding, early Celtic *peregrinatio* was a form of pilgrimage

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991).

<sup>2</sup> When referring to pilgrimage, this paper will be focussing on that quintessential contemporary pilgrimage, the Camino de Santiago de Compostela. The Camino has attracted growing numbers of first-time, contemporary pilgrims who bring a multitude of motivations and attitudes, sometimes conflicting, to the arena of pilgrimage.

<sup>3</sup> Christine Jamieson, "Racism and Xenophobia: Insights from Julia Kristeva", *Conflict Resolution Symposium*, (Ottawa: Carleton University Mediation Centre, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> "Pilgrim," *Online Etymology Dictionary*, last modified April 13 2015, <http://etymonline.com/index.php?term=pilgrim>.

<sup>5</sup> "Pilgrim," *Merriam Webster Dictionary Online*, last modified April 13 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pilgrimage>.

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that entailed wandering without a specific geographic goal, undertaken as self-exile for the love of Christ (often referred to in primary sources as *peregrinatio pro Christo*). The *peregrini*'s models included Abraham's journeying and the forty-year wandering of the Israelites in the desert. Ultimately, they journeyed in imitation of Jesus, who had "no place to rest his head" (Matt 8:20). Certain contemporary expressions of pilgrimage (two popular examples being the Camino de Santiago and thru-hiking on the Appalachian Trail<sup>6</sup>) have been shifting the emphasis of pilgrimage from 'sacred place' to 'sacred journey'. For many pilgrims, the route itself has become the 'holy place'; the 'axis mundi'; the goal as well as the place of transformation, signalling a return to an original appropriation of pilgrimage as an exalted wandering.<sup>7</sup> This new shift reflects a focus towards the inner, psychic dimension of the pilgrimage experience which parallels the outer physical journey.

The metaphor of pilgrimage has often been used to locate the Christian believer in relation to the world, as a foreigner that is "passing through" (Hebrews 11:8-9); "in the world but not of the world" (John 15:19). While the metaphor of pilgrimage is useful and insightful, its efficacy is conferred by the physical and psychic dynamics of actual pilgrimage, which continues to be a deeply meaningful, relevant and creative human endeavour. The core experience of exile and foreignness, necessary to construct the liminal<sup>8</sup> and extraordinary world of pilgrimage, grants pilgrims insights into many contemporary issues involving identity, difference and the other. The greater liminal world is the place occupied by the foreigner, the migrant, the immigrant and other liminal beings, thus placing the pilgrim in transient solidarity with these often more persistent and painful conditions.

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<sup>6</sup> A thru-hiker undertakes to complete the entire 2,180-mile Appalachian Trail, a protected hiking trail along the ridge of the Appalachian Mountains that extends from Georgia to Maine. Traditionally it is done in one season, but it may also be accomplished in stages, over several years.

<sup>7</sup> Kip Redick, "Wilderness as *Axis Mundi*: Spiritual Journeys on the Appalachian Trail," *Symbolic Landscapes*, (Springer Netherlands, 2009), 65-90.

<sup>8</sup> Liminality is the transitional experience of "betweenness" in the passage between two states or conditions.

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## The Turnerian Paradigm –Rite of Passage, Liminality and *Communitas*

The cultural anthropologists Victor and Edith Turner were pioneers in modern pilgrimage studies. Their ground-breaking study, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*,<sup>9</sup> continues to exert a dialectical influence on current pilgrimage studies, whether the Turnerian paradigm is embraced, contested, rejected or re-affirmed. The Turners posited pilgrimage as a three-stage rite of passage involving separation, transition and reincorporation. The transition, or liminal phase, the journeying itself, is seen as a catalytic passage, a borderland state of being neither here nor there, where identity is in flux. It is the domain of the stranger, the foreigner and the alien as well as the pilgrim. By definition extraordinary, the liminal stage is literally outside of ordinary experience.<sup>10</sup> Liminality can be stressful, disorienting and alienating, but in controlled measures such as those experienced in contemporary walking pilgrimage, it can create a state of heightened vulnerability and so openness that is amenable to radical transformation. Victor Turner describes it as “an instant of pure potentiality when everything trembles in the balance”.<sup>11</sup> For the Turners, the liminality inherent in pilgrimage is also conducive to the social phenomenon of *communitas*—a transcendent experience of mutuality and unity forged through shared ordeal on the pilgrim road—a spontaneous, non-hierarchical, and egalitarian social grouping that promotes human flourishing.<sup>12</sup>

The potential for deep and rewarding, though transient, relationships with other pilgrims who were previously strangers to each other before their shared journey is one of the compelling

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<sup>9</sup> Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).

<sup>10</sup> Deborah Ross, “Introduction,” *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* by Victor Turner and Edith Turner, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), xxx.

<sup>11</sup> Victor Turner, “Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology”, *Rice University Studies* 60, No. 3 (1974), 75.

<sup>12</sup> Victor Turner and Edith Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, 249.

aspects of contemporary pilgrimage. This ideal has been popularized in movies and books based on the Camino, such as *St-Jean La Mecque* (2005, Serreau) in which three alienated adult siblings, two young Muslims and several other dysfunctional strangers cohere into a transformative *communitas* as they undergo shared hardships together. Emilio Estevez' movie *The Way* (2011) features Martin Sheen as an emotionally isolated and bereaved father searching for closure on the Camino. His initial resistance to human contact is eventually overcome and healed by a small group of fellow pilgrims, previously strangers, who are also psychologically damaged in their own ways. These popular filmic idealizations resonate with the Turnerian notion of *communitas*. In certain ways, they echo the original model of the early church: the Pauline *ecclesia*, a radical community of foreigners who found "their cohesion at last... in the universality of the people beyond peoples".<sup>13</sup> In the *ecclesia*, as in *communitas*, "the alienation of the foreigner ceases within the universality of the love for the other"<sup>14</sup>; in the recognition of the stranger as neighbour, brother and sister.

According to linguist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva, Paul's *ecclesia* was a "community of those who were different, of foreigners who transcended nationalities by means of a faith in the Body of the Risen Christ ... a marginal people, women, and foreigners who remained bound to their native culture, [who] nevertheless created among themselves bonds of solidarity".<sup>15</sup> It is through identification with Christ that foreigners are brought together in a new creation and become members of a new family.<sup>16</sup> Paul's genius lay in his ability to speak to the psychic distress of the foreigner<sup>17</sup> who was sundered between two worlds, a division that Paul intuited was less about physical and political status and more about "two psychic domains within [the foreigner's] own impossible unity".<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 80.

<sup>14</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 77-79.

<sup>16</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 85.

<sup>17</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 81.

<sup>18</sup> Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, 82.

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Ironically, although the Camino route originated as a traditional Catholic pilgrimage, Christian faith is not the glue that binds many contemporary pilgrims who walk that path. The Camino has become an ecumenical, interfaith and extra-faith adventure in which the shared journey itself brings strangers together and makes of them a temporary family in an experience of *communitas*.

### The Pilgrim as Seeker of the Self

Pilgrimage has also found resonances in the contemporary spiritual quest for the “Self”. Paradoxically, pilgrims purposely lose themselves in the pilgrimage experience in order to find themselves again in a quest for identity, meaning and belonging.<sup>19</sup> Beyond relationship with God, a broadening understanding of contemporary spirituality also includes notions of personal self-development, self-integration and self-transcendence, and the self’s relationship with others, the world and the universe.<sup>20</sup>

Austrian pilgrimage scholar Helmut Eberhart explains changing pilgrim motivations on the Camino.<sup>21</sup> “Whereas before the mid-twentieth century the cathedral of Santiago was the pilgrimage destination in the classical sense, it is now largely the other way around: the pilgrimage in the sense of a spiritual journey has become the rationale ... For many walkers, the journey along the *Camino*; the ‘transit’; ... has become an individual rite of passage or ‘a pilgrimage to one’s self’”.<sup>22</sup> This change in focus is also visible in contemporary wilderness pilgrimages, such as Cheryl Strayed’s autobiographical novel *Wild* (2012), in which she wrestles personal

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<sup>19</sup> Brent Plate, “Introduction: The Varieties of Contemporary Pilgrimage,” *Crosscurrents* 59, no. 3, (2009): 263.

<sup>20</sup> Sara Terreault, Professor of Spirituality, Concordia Theology Department, email message to author, August 14, 2013.

<sup>21</sup> Although the Camino de Santiago is not necessarily a typical pilgrimage, it is a highly visible and popular variant of the contemporary journey pilgrimage. The number of pilgrims claiming *compostelas* (certificates of completion) as reported by the Official Pilgrim Office in Santiago has been increasing steadily as Westerners have appropriated, reanimated and recreated the Camino.

<sup>22</sup> Helmut Eberhart, “Pilgrimage as an Example for the Past in the Present.” *The Past in the Present: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. (Catania: Edlt Press, 2006), 160.

demons on a harrowing three-month journey on the Pacific Crest Trail. Though Strayed never specifically identifies her journey as a pilgrimage, it can be understood as such; as a transformative rite of passage and an exteriorized journey that mirrors an interior transit.

As contemporary pilgrims embark on their first pilgrimage, many have conscious and unconscious hopes and expectations based on popular books, movies, websites and other pilgrims' accounts. Competing ideas on the "right way" to be a pilgrim can cause conflict and disappointment. One such issue is the dynamic between doing a pilgrimage "alone versus together". As pilgrimage scholar Nancy Frey states, "Pilgrimage provides numerous opportunities to experience solitude or solidarity. In both encounters pilgrims find and test different parts of themselves".<sup>23</sup> However, as Jan Margry contends, "To an increasing extent [pilgrimage] is a personal journey ... If individualization is a sign of the times, then this is also reflected in pilgrimage".<sup>24</sup> Ultimately, whether a pilgrim is seeking a psychic connection to the stranger within, or is seeking meaningful connections with other strangers through experiences of *communitas*,<sup>25</sup> both modalities can lead to transformation, transcendence, wholeness and healing.

### **The Pilgrim and the Search for the Transcendent Other**

While pilgrimage (particularly the Camino) attracts a gamut of pilgrims—from the non-religious, to "spiritual" seekers of many persuasions, to the traditionally religious—for those with faith, pilgrimage provides the opportunity to connect on a deep level with the ultimate Other. Theologian William Cavanaugh defines a traditional Christian pilgrim (one who practices pilgrimage as a "journey to a sacred place") as moving toward a center which will

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<sup>23</sup> Nancy Frey, *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 117.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Jan Margry, ed., *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred* (Amsterdam: University Press, 2008), 22-23.

<sup>25</sup> Some pilgrims choose to go with friends, which, while mitigating the anxiety of being a foreigner alone in a strange country, can have the negative consequence of limiting encounters with other pilgrims.



lead him to communion with God, and who “sees all as potential brothers and sisters on a common journey to God. If God, the Wholly Other, is at the center ... then there can be room for genuine otherness among human beings”.<sup>26</sup> This radical reorientation of attitude, based on confrontation with the centrality of the otherness of God, potentially gives devout pilgrims the ability to creatively and compassionately accept the foreignness of others, a subversive attitude in a world in which xenophobia and racism are in danger of becoming the norm. By definition, the pilgrim identity confounds and transcends nationality; “Our psychic identity as pilgrims makes clear that our primary identity is not defined for us by national borders. The pilgrim seeks to transgress all artificial borders that impede the quest for communion with God and with other people”.<sup>27</sup>

### Conclusion

The potential power and meaningfulness of pilgrimage emerge from a willingness to endure foreignness in both self and other; to set aside one’s constructed and comfortable identities and normative experiences of the world and to open oneself to an unsettling world of new possibilities and new identities. Pilgrimage is a catalytic arena for experiencing foreignness at national, societal, psychic and spiritual levels. It provides an extended yet temporary immersion in a liminal world, with opportunity to experience the pangs of foreignness as well as counter-exilic moments of *communitas*. The nature of pilgrimage lends itself to reflection on themes of nationalism, foreignness, identity and difference, and in so doing, potentially births solidarity and compassion for the ‘other’ marooned in the outside world. Pilgrimage experiences can lead to changes of perspective and self-identity, for “only in facing that

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<sup>26</sup> William T. Cavanaugh, “Migrant, Tourist, Pilgrim, Monk: Mobility and Identity in a Global Age”, *Theological Studies* 69, no. 2 (2008), 352.

<sup>27</sup> Cavanaugh, “Migrant,” 351.<sup>20</sup> Sara Terreault, Professor of Spirituality, Concordia Theology Department, email message to author, August 14, 2013.

‘other’ and accepting that ‘other’ within ourselves will we have the psychic space and inner freedom to welcome that ‘other’ outside ourselves”.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Christine Jamieson, “Racism and Xenophobia”.

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*Pèlerinage: Opus à Conserver*

*Diane Lorraine Wood  
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*'Pèlerinage: opus à conserver'* represents my pilgrimages to Québec from the States over a period of fifteen years.

My collection of Montréal STM tickets was the inspiration to create an interactive art project with a labyrinth. Each ticket holds a memory to keep, 'to conserve.'

Rose windows have been a central metaphor in my life, ever since traveling in France.

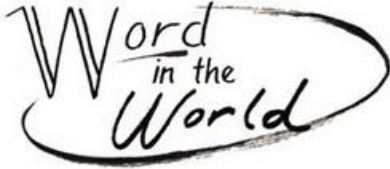
I like combining butterflies with maps and labyrinths, because they symbolize both transformation and migration, as well as the ability to cross boundary lines. In the process of creating, I noticed in butterfly wings the tracery of rose windows, their veins like rivers and roads on maps—and shimmery 'northern light' effects.

I became aware that I was standing on holy ground.

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## Word in the World

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