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Framing the *Subject*



From the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela, Galicia, North-Western Spain, with the Main Altar and the statue of *Apostle Saint James the Greater* overlooking the cathedral. The bones of the apostle were allegedly found in 813 in Spain. This gave rise to a pilgrimage cult still conducted today serving several purposes and providing income to inhabitants of a region, as it did more than one thousand years ago.

“For it [dialectical philosophy], nothing is final, absolute, sacred. It reveals the transitory character of everything and in everything; nothing can endure before it except the uninterrupted process of becoming and of passing away, of endless ascendancy from the lower to the higher. And dialectical philosophy itself is nothing more than the mere reflection of this process in the thinking brain.”

Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy
Fredrick Engels (1886)

Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set the motivational, theoretical and methodological frame for a study into meaning-making in pilgrimage. The product of that study is a model presented in an article for the journal of *Integrative Psychological and Behavioral Science*¹ on *how personal culture is created in pilgrimage*. The general answer is by *affective semiosis* which is used explanatory and is explained.

The journey ahead is long and ambitious. It begins in attempting to understand *experiencing* in a practice; pilgrimage. As pilgrimage seems to facilitate creating personal culture using a collective meaning-system of a given social framework, it has also a *socializing* function. But this presupposes *a body and a consciousness*. The latter is here seen as operating by *signs*, under the influence of conditions of life, and available knowledge. *Affective semiosis* may be perceived as dynamic, semiotic process of the consciousness oriented towards something other than itself

Strategy and structure

The strategy of is to pave the way for a model of a complex psychological phenomenon by laying a theoretical foundation in defining key concepts and perspectives. Empirical knowledge of pilgrimage is intertwined with a scientific cultural psychological theory of human *being*. The *binding* element is theory of signs; *Peircean semiotics*, which is used as an analytical tool in the article, but presented here in this document. This document starts with a short presentation of applied cultural psychology. My personal motivation for studying pilgrimage is suggested, which leads to a presentation of the pilgrimage tradition with which I am personally acquainted from which came the interest into the subject matter. It then invites the reader to experience the subject matter in a mini-scale after which the applied Weberian perspective of religion is presented.

¹ IPBS: <http://www.springer.com/psychology/journal/12124>

Two sections follow. One that defines pilgrimage, and one on semiotic theory, followed then by a section on methodology which sets a frame for how to study the phenomenon. A conclusion ends this document, and draws up a broad answer as also provided under Purpose. The approach taken towards the phenomenon under study, is *intentionally dialectical* – also with regards to the concepts used explanatory, by which is meant that *oppositions* are brought forth revealing that *movement, change and interrelatedness* of matters makes up “reality”, and which, by relying on a common understanding, would not be brought forth – hence phenomena would not be understood. Thinking in *dialectically* is manner of style of this cultural psychological approach towards its subject matter which establishes itself *as a science of universality of culture* (Valsiner, 2014).

The applied cultural psychological theory

The dilemma of psychology as a natural science was pointed out by Boesch according to Cole (1996): Humans *create and use history* as they are *cultural beings*. The subject matter of natural sciences does not, and when certain methods and techniques are applied to study human beings, the latter are rarely perceived to do so. But studying pilgrimage in the framework of cultural psychology is studying the psyché and development of personal culture, in *a frame of humanistic science* that aims for generalization, as do the natural sciences. Cultural history is part of human *being and becoming human*. Already *Giambattista Vico (1668-1844)* suggested that we can understand ourselves by what we create as cultural practices and artifacts noted by Danesi (2017). These may be as various as mentioned by Valsiner (2014) below, pointing out the position of this cultural psychology;

“As a discipline that focuses on value-based phenomena, cultural psychology entails a radical break with psychology’s empirical traditions. Instead of looking at the lowest levels of the functioning of the psyche, cultural psychology purposefully begins at the highest levels. Hence notions of religion, ritualizations, life philosophies, literature, theatre, music, cinematography, and their uses by people in their everyday lives, constitute the phenomena from which psychology as a science begins.” (ibid., p. 256)

Vico said; “*It is through an investigation of all kinds of human ‘artifacts’ from myths to languages, that the nature of human thought will reveal itself.*” (Danesi, 2017, p.12). Understanding products of the human mind as reflecting *human consciousness* would be following Vico.

When confronted with the term *consciousness* the notion of “stream-of-consciousness” which William James (1890) wrote about, and authors have used as a narrative style, comes up. The perspective and metaphors (“stream”) is noteworthy for it applies well with to overall perspective on the psyché promoted here. However, it is not the streaming itself, nor the use of language to report on it, which is the focus here. Rather it is the attempt to *formalize a structure of how consciousness reaches an objective* which leads to creating personal culture.

The applied cultural psychology suggests that what gives content and form (personal culture) to the psyché is *culturally and materially grounded*, as is the practice of *pilgrimage*. Basically, the psyché appears in and out of a practice as pilgrimage, in a *back-and-forth* process, a *dialectical negotiation* of things in movement, going through change, and of becoming interconnected, yet full of opposites and seemingly contradictory synthesizing into unity.

The psyché cannot *materialize*. It has no properties. It therefore *cannot be an object for techniques* that originate in naïve empiricism mimicking methods of natural science that study phenomena which are not valued-based. This cultural psychology adapts its methods to what it studies. What the psyché “is” can be inferred from what it does, how and why. A place to start is in *music*.

Personal motivation

My interest in pilgrimage has morphed over the last five years. It has acquired new meanings, for I interpret pilgrimage with *tools* acquired recently. It has been a dialectical process of gradual destruction and construction, leading to a *different* perspective which puts distance to the particular experiences allowing for seeing *resemblance* to what occurs in other contexts. The interest originated in *personal experience with pilgrimage* and having previously written a psychology project on the topic. Three case

stories from pilgrimage are presented in the Appendix that reflect “deep” experiences. They trigger curiosity into how this is possible. The idea came up that *participation* in pilgrimage-conduct *is a frame for establishing personal culture as e.g. values and beliefs*. From this came the perspective that *experiencing* is *sensitive* to conditions of life, what is made available as tools practices and physical environments. This lead to a *need to understand experiencing*.

In the final psychology master’s lecture at AAU, students were given the opportunity to suggest what their master thesis topics would be to other master students in a lecture hall. As I got microphone, instead of answering briefly, I went into a reflection before reaching the point that before *suggesting new theory in psychology*, there needs to be a *common basis for understanding* what it means to *experience*. Without a basis, theories become fragmented and fluctuate with changes in demands for marketability and applicability. I had been reading cultural psychological texts, and critical theory of *The Frankfurt School*, but it was not until months late when reading Rosa (2007) that I realized others more qualified had said the same; “Psychology is the one science which cannot take experience for granted...[...]. Experience is itself a process to be explained” (ibid., p. 206). Whereas Rosa (2007) begins in *theory*, I begin in *practice* – by what millions of people do; *pilgrimage*.

I have tried to cover much complex ground. My aim has been to create a large picture to satisfy a *personal need*.

An unorthodox invitation to the subject matter



Fig. 1. Codex Buranus (Carmina Burana) with the Wheel of Fortune, circa 1230. By Anonymous, Public Domain

The aim of this subsection is to advocate for the view taken by Rosa (2007) that *meaning comes after sense*. The approach is unorthodox using *dialogue* mimicking how one would reach an answer in a stepwise, ascendancy towards synthesis.

Why begin with music? According to Valsiner (2014), music has the potential of penetrating deep into the meaning-system of a person, and it is often used in organizing action of social crowds. Add to this the environment where music is performed, and it is possible to realize that humans are *affectively regulatable* by more than discourse. *Affective re-*

lating starts in a *sensing*, hard to put into words, but decidedly present, as when sensing that one's body "informs" of the presence of "something" *in the body* (an *embodied sense*). Listening to music as the two and a half minutes Medieval poem *O, Fortuna* from Codex Burana² (fig.1), put to music by Carl Orff, will likely make one feel scared...excited... grandiose? *What of Kyrie Eleison? Are these feelings different from the former(s), more about the sublime perhaps?* It is hardly the meaning of the words that moves the modern ear, as the first is in Latin, and the latter is *two* words in Greek. Even when expressing what is felt, *words are not equivalent* to this. Symbols, sound and feelings are different domains. Something is needed to achieve *meaning* of feelings, sound and symbols. *How is this relationship established?* Imagine experiencing the music in a concert hall or a cathedral. *What difference would it make?* Even if music is experiencing beyond language, it is nearly impossible to detach from what one *knows* about *such* music, feelings and environments. *Imagine then the completely alien (if possible!)?* This is what happens in the recent sci-fi movie *Arrival* where,

² "*O Fortuna*" is a medieval Latin Goliardic poem written early in the 13th century, part of the collection known as the *Carmina Burana*. It is a complaint about Fortuna, the inexorable fate that rules both gods and men in Roman and Greek mythology." Ref. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Fortuna.

initially, a linguistics professor is given the task of interpreting intentions of aliens, hearing only sounds made by them on a recording. Of course, she cannot. Her strategy is to enter into a potentially meaningful relationship by being with the aliens *in the environment* where sounds are produced. Sound become *signs*. A *whole* of experiencing needs to be created which allows understanding the *alien*. This exemplifies the problem of empiricism in relying on detaching data from environment as an epistemology. Signs are *purposively* created and *contextually* bound for creating a *whole* of meaning. *When does the meaning of a piece of music appear?* The moment it serves its purpose; “Meaning is not something given; it is always in the making. Meaning is a result of sense once the goal has been achieved” (Rosa, 2007, p.207).

What does a cultural psychology provide?

This cultural psychology follows the strategy of understanding *humans*, by starting from the top of *wholes of experiencing* assuming humans to be *fundamentally goal-oriented*. It is necessary to provide a theoretical framework for analyzing how consciousness forms complex *wholes* in meaning-making. The place to start is *in what humans do*; in social practices where humans conduct themselves. But there is something prior which needs recognition. Emotional relating to what is in an environment starts from having a *body* and a *consciousness*. Those two are the basis of *affective semiosis* which is the subject matter of the article presenting a model thereof following these pages. That is not enough either. Feelings become organized as *meaningful* by means of *collective culture*. *Culture* is a polysemic term. Often understood as a *container*. Here it is a *process as is the psyché*. For collective *culture* (artifacts, practices and symbols) are needed to act *meaningfully* in the world in conduct with others as a human being under given conditions of life. The border between “culture” and “psyché” is highly permeable. The former is used to make the latter, but the latter also makes the former.



To understand why humans, make meaning *through* (not despite) feelings, it would be necessary to go back in historical time, to understand *who* we were. This would show *why* and *by what* humans have changed, developed language, and a unique ability to depict and interpret an image of an *idea*, across time as the Roman goddess Fortuna, and the Medieval Wheel of Fortune in fig.1, governing life. This ability provides *meaning* to what is experienced beginning with that something is *felt* in a broad sense as in *becoming aware*.

Fig. 2. [Fortuna](#) Fortuna in fig. 2 was the Roman Goddess in control of the destiny and fortune of humans. She is depicted by the ship's rudder in one hand, and the cornucopia (the horn of plenty) in the other hand, and an idea that became a guiding and explanatory concept for what seems to happen in life with regards to what one becomes aware of. She is depicted as a statue in Roman time, and worshipped as a deity. She was later found in paintings in Medieval and late Medieval time (fig.1).

Such transformations of ideas into material objects, and back again, are easily found. Tateo refers to this as the higher psychological function of *imagination* in (Tateo, 2016). Humans *use what is made available under various conditions of life to guide themselves*. By this, they mold themselves into human beings, to take part in activity and make sense of this activity. The ancient *and* contemporary practice of *pilgrimage* is a fruitful field for studying this. But, as the usual *frame of* pilgrimage, is *religion*, it is dealt with in the following section.

Feeling and emotion is a big topic in psychology, and too big to be considered here in detail. There is little agreement on the topic which seems to originate in which paradigm is applied. Holodyski & Friedlmeyer (2012) presents four competing and current paradigms, and suggests a developmental-historical approach in understanding psychological phenomena which aligns well with Valsiner's cultural psychology, for a common ground in Vygotsky, as outlined in Holodyski (2013). A common aspect lies in "emotional expressions as a culturally evolved sign system" (ibid.), and expressions of emotions as two-folded; serving *interpersonal* and *intrapersonal* regulation, and *socioculturally grounded for purposive action*.

Studying pilgrimage begins in religion

A Weberian perspective on religion combined with Peirce and Valsiner

Goal-orientation in psychology and religion

The German sociologist, Max Weber's perspective on religion is compatible with the applied cultural psychology of Valsiner (2007, 2014), for they both give position to *goal-orientation*. According to Boudon (2001), Weber refers to the Book of Deuteronomy³ in stating what religion achieves;

'we follow the precepts of religion "[t]hat it may go well with thee . . . and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth." The objectives of Deuteronomy's prescriptions are no different from those pursued, for example, by religious theories of a Chinese character.' (ibid., p. X).



Fig. 3a. A [prayer in the Catholic Camino tradition](#).

The *goal of religion* is that *things may turn out well* for a person. Religion is orientated towards also *this* life; and Weber suggested that “[t]o understand religious practice in any society, including the building of magnificent sacred spaces, we need to know something about people’s everyday lives, their ‘days upon the earth’” (Scott, 2011, p.211). This *basic purpose* of religion is expressed in the prayer in fig 3a. in the tradition of the Santiago de Compostela pilgrimage. The prayer is a tool useful creating as well as relying on - the idea of a *force* overseeing and care-taking, to which one may turn in times of trouble, or for achieving one’s goal as sustaining life, getting into Heaven etc. Pilgrimage becomes *socialization* to ways of understanding oneself and

³ Book of Deuteronomy: “The fifth book of the Torah (a section of the Hebrew Bible) and the Christian Old Testament.” Ref. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Deuteronomy

social others suggesting meanings to feelings, prescribing conduct, also outside of the pilgrimage environment.

Valsiner (2007) states that psychological functions are *goal-oriented*; They are

“...are historical, in the sense of being bound within the irreversibility of time. Their directionality can be described in terms of goal-orientedness. It is posited here that human lower psychological functions are goals-oriented (rather than goals-directed), as their directionality can be specified (but specific goals can not be, as these are constructions about some possible future). Similarly, signs are specifiable by their presentational orientedness. A use or invention of a word depicting something not only refers to the denoted referent, but presents that referent for some purpose or direction.” (ibid., p. 62-63).

In this perspective, *religion* is an expression of basic *human psychology* trying to establish a meaning-system which is coherent with *orientedness* under given conditions of life. This explains the purposefulness of understanding the human mind *through religion*! By this is meant that religious conducts and concepts must be understood *not by merely* by what they refer to, but as *giving orientation* to lower psychological functions. *Orientation-towards* starts by a *feeling-of-something* (ibid). This explains the unorthodox invitation of experiencing music and varying its possible meanings in altering the orientation to meaning *provided by* context to suggest interpreting the “*same*” *bodily feeling* (if this is at all possible) differently through different symbol use: In the concert hall: A symbol (a word) would signify a meaning of “*a wonderful experience of good performance*”, whereas, in the cathedral, in relation to a ritual, a symbol would be used to capture “*feeling the presence of the divine*”. In both cases, feelings are aroused, but is “held” by different symbols, and in both cases, may the feelings be the basis for further action (“*e-motion*”) towards a goal.

The Weberian perspective is *continuist* defined as “*adherence to any belief, religious or scientific as well as juridical, is explained by the fact that the subject has strong reasons to believe it, and that this belief makes sense to him*” (Boudon, 2001, p.IV).

Boudon suggests that it is up to the sociologist to reconstruct reasons for beliefs. Here, it is a cultural psychology which interprets “religious” beliefs as using *interpretants* in

a *meaning-making process*, which is anything *but* irrational. Incidentally, Peircean semiotics is quite logical. “Religious” versus “rational” thinking would be *Kulturbegriffe* per Weber hence (mis)constructions of the Enlightenment Period used explanatory by a dichotomy of *logic/non-logic* (ibid.) grounded on perceived applicability creating true or false knowledge. Descartes is an representative for a dichotomous way of “thinking on thinking”, as he wrote;

“...the capacity to judge correctly and to distinguish the true from the false, which is properly what one calls common sense or reason, is naturally equal in all men, and consequently that the diversity of our opinions does not spring from some of us being more able to reason than others, but only from our conducting our thoughts along different lines and not examining the same things. [A]s far as reason or good sense is concerned ... I am ready to believe that it is complete and entire in each one of us ... that there are degrees only between accidents and not between the forms or natures of the individuals of a given specie. (Descartes, 1968: 27–8)” (Awbrey, 2001, p. 273)

To exemplify further, Danish professor and theologian Johannes Sløk, sees “religious” thinking as about *values* which he puts *beyond* scientific inquiry, and as *instinctive* meaning-making *to be found* in “primitive understanding of nature” (Sløk, 1960). This signifies a *discontinuist* perspective which “regards religious beliefs as fundamentally distinct from other kinds of human thought” (Boudon, 2001, p. III). “Religious” versus “rational” thinking may have entered common language through a need for training specifically in natural sciences in education. The rationale for this would be *economic* growth and development of Western societies with its characteristics of social organization of work by *bureaucratization*, demands for increased specialization of work content (*technicalization*) serving mass-production of commodities based on *division of labor* that *separates conception from execution* for maximizing *profit and shareholder payback*.

Weber would relate a decline of the openly “religious” symbolism and practices in these societies, to the *disenchantment* following living and working under conditions with the beforementioned characteristics. Accordingly, changes to ways of “thinking of thinking” follow *material changes*, and changes to how production of what sustains life is *socially organized*. This creates a *normative* of a *moralistic* dichotomy of

good/bad which maps onto one of useless/useful, but fundamentally based upon *currently available means and conditions of living a life in a community at a given point in history*.

The role of religion in personal, collective culture - and society

Understanding the role of religion is an arduous task. But understanding the creation of *personal culture* using *collective culture* (terms in Valsiner, 2007, 2014) found typically in religious contexts, e.g. in pilgrimage, serves to exemplify *meaning-making* that takes a “semi-permanent” form suggesting *values* (affective dimensions) following experiences of personal importance which may be essential for future conduct within a social framework. Understanding this relationship is fundamental for understanding *conduct*, and for answering the questions raised in this document, and this insight may transgress the context where it was created.

Throughout this document, the terms *personal and collective culture* will be used. They may have blurry borders and many uses. Valsiner (2014) defines them in the same context, giving primacy to *personal culture*;

“The collective culture is person-anchored – it extends from the person to the social space in-between persons. It is not a “property” of social units, neither is it an isomorphic projection of the personal culture into the social world around the person”, and continues “The collective culture entails communally shared meanings, social norms, an everyday life practices, all united into a heterogenous complex – yet the anchor point in this sharing is the person” (ibid., p.214).

It is by creation of personal culture as a *negotiation* that it is possible to explain why all humans in a “given environment or social framework” are not all just the “same”. “Shared meanings” are never really uniform from one person to another, and never completely alien, for nothing enters the meaning-system of a person without becoming transformed and retransformed upon exit in conduct and speech. The consequence is that the “shared meanings” and norms make up a *heterogenous complex*, as Valsiner refers to it. It is in this mid-point that humans create their “*personally, idiosyncratic*

semiotic systems of symbols, practices, and their personal objects, all of which constitute the personal culture” by drawing on collective culture to conduct themselves meaningfully in practices with others (ibid.)



Fig. 3b. *Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī* (c. 870–950). Born in Farab (Kazakhstan), died in Damascus. Philosopher and musician. Ref. Germann (2016). Public Domain.

How is religion *collective culture* for living in a society?

Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (fig.3b) wrote: “*religion is suited to direct the members of society towards human perfection and thus to contribute simultaneously to the attainment of individual happiness and the well-being of the city*” (Germann, 2016). Al-Fārābī was called “The Second Master” after Aristotle. He preserved original Greek texts during the European Middle Ages per Germann. His answer aligns remarkably well with Weber, which is no surprise, as Islam is one of the Abrahamic religions;

“If the first ruler is excellent and his rulership truly excellent, then in what he prescribes he seeks only to obtain, for himself and for everyone under his rulership, the ultimate happiness that is truly happiness; and that religion will be the excellent religion. (Book of Religion 1: 93, slightly modified)” (ibid.).

To Al-Fārābī, religion prescribed opinions and actions for a community to follow, set down by its first ruler, based on his own actions, making religion not a goal in itself, but an instrument, also of rulership, and for the happiness of oneself. Pilgrimage – is following in the footsteps of others – as Beckstead (2012b) puts it, may be understood at two levels; as an *instrumental practice* performing the actions of the “first ruler” and all other of his followers, and an expression of *devotion* to a community in the form of a social framework;

“The tradition of pilgrimage is an act of personal-cultural devotion to a social framework. It is set up by the constraint system of the collective culture (Delaney, 1990), leading to the expectation that a believer in X undertakes weekly, monthly, yearly, or once in a lifetime – a journey to that ‘another place’ of special collectively shared meaning for the believers” (ibid., p.238).

Meaning-making as sign-mediated

This subsection argues for “religious” thinking as *sign-mediated meaning-making under conditions of life* following Peirce, and following Weber, as of *importance* to a person, and hence not as *degenerate thinking*. Valsiner would see “religious” thinking as value-based psychological phenomena, wherefore a cultural psychology is applicable for interpretation through analysis. Initially, some general understanding of meaning-making is necessary. I return later to a formal understanding by Peirce.

A general definition of meaning-making

The general understanding of *meaning-making* is as a complex socio-psychological phenomenon of making sense of what happens in the world, to oneself and others. Zittoun & Brinkmann (2012) defines it accordingly albeit in the context of *learning*; “*Meaning making*” *designates the process by which people interpret situations, events, objects, or discourses, in the light of their previous knowledge and experience*” (ibid., p.1).

Meaning-making is *culturally organized and mediated*, and provided to the pilgrim, as *tools for use* to form and express “knowledge and experience”, respectively. Pilgrimage are *socializing* practice performed in a particular environment for a social framework that lies beyond that environment, but where *ways of meaning-making* are useful (and needed). Pilgrimage is an *arena* for psychological *development*, which, in facilitating “the new” to take form in a person, hereby (likely) creates the linkage to what occurs in “*therapy*” as well as in “*learning*”.

On signs

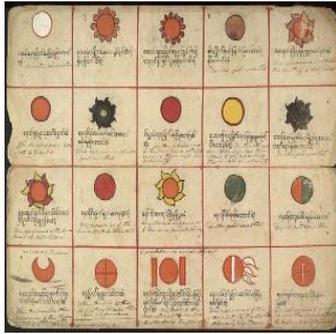


Fig. 4. A manuscript of the mid-nineteenth century from Burma, possibly of Sgau Karen origin, on how to interpret natural appearances in the sky, as omens. Wikicommon. Public Domain

Aurelius Augustinus Hipponensis (354-430), or Saint Augustin of Hippo, as he was also known later, is considered by Gramigna (2010) as a “..a founder of *semiotics* and a bright investigator of gestural signs.” (ibid, p.15), but not a semiotician. He suggested that signs are either of the natural or cultural realm, but both are under the general category of *signum* of linguistic or non-linguistic signs which goes across the boundary of natural and cultural signs. This was a “semiotic revolution”, an “Augustinian synthesis” and “...fusion of the theory of language with the theory

of the sign” (ibid.), and Sløk notes that for “primitive man”, there was no distinction between symbol and reality (Sløk, 1960). To exemplify, this means that e.g. a comet in the sky - was a *sign* for the worse; an *omen* as described by Gameson (1997) on the appearance of Comet Halley in 1066 depicted on the Bayeux Tapestry. But this was also a political tool that used a *common way* of meaning-making. Phenomena in nature were interpreted as *cultural signs* as exemplified in the manuscript on the left from Burma and on the Bayeux Tapestry. Sløk points out, the relation to nature was not only “magical”, for practical work had to be done to make a living. Boudou and Sløk both note, that there was no distinction between what would be called “magical, ritual” or “rational work”, today. Such distinction came later. A thing appears as an agent when interpreted as *intentional* (as a cultural sign). In the Bayeux Tapestry, the comet is more than a thing, for its appearance is *intentional*. It tells of an *unjust* king ready to fall. *Making* the king fall is an act of God’s will. This relies on the idea of *divine intervention* through *signs* in the sky, referred to as *omens*. This is what Sløk refers to as “primitive understanding of nature”. To “primitive man”, environment and things, created a meaningful mosaic, says Sløk, and refers to the tendency of humans to rely on a “religiously” informed manner of interpreting the world as-if controlled by hidden, but intervening and intentional forces. From this understanding follows that one



Fig. 5. “the comet sets a curse upon Harold.” (Gameson, 1997)

The appearance of Comet Halley, depicted on the Bayeux tapestry prior to the Norman invasion in 1066 in England. The comet is a bad

had to know how to read Nature for that was a way of reading *divine forces*, and to understand their goals and intentions. It was *beneficial to establish relation* to forces. To read the forces potentially meant acquiring power over others and over the future, which testifies to the power of ideas and interpretation of signs. The perceived relationship between signs and effects was *direct and causal*; e.g. the Plague in Medieval time in Europe followed from human sinfulness, and was God’s punishment. One needs to acknowledge that the idea of Nature as a *separate domain*, had been forgotten at this time, or had never existed in those regions as an *idea*. The *idea* may have disappeared from Medieval Europe with Greek antiquity, but ideas of Nature as *something to be studied*, were kept and used in parts of the Muslim world. Thus, conditions of life, is also about what form of knowledge one was at disposal in making sense of the world. However, the idea to see the Plague as God’s punishment, is meaning-making which infers from the *best available potential explanation*, hence a result of meaning-making which follows a “*rational*” i.e. *logically, describable scheme of abduction* using available knowledge. In the framework of cultural-semiotic theory, the term “knowledge“ would be *semiotic tool* and appear as *interpretants* in theory of *semiotics*, and as *result of meaning-making (semiosis)* as an *object* the endures across time becoming *personal culture*.

Interpretation of conduct



Fig. 6.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.

The three images above (fig. 6-8) show *ornamentation* and *conduct* found in pilgrimage. To interpret *meaningfulness* of conduct relies on including the *not-presented*. To exclude it, would be comparable to removing a no-entry sign-post from its position on the road, isolating it in a room, where it *does not refer to anything* wherefore it is *no longer* a sign, but a metal rod with a symbol at the end of it. It has lost its *purpose*, but it is still possible to analyze its *properties* (color and material), and by *quantitative measurement*, its *dimensions*

(length and weight), and *capacities* (strength). It is reduced to a *thing*. This is a *techne*, useful for putting humans in “little boxes”⁴. It is useless when seeing mental processes as *doings* that are *conversational* as per Brinkmann (2016). Sign-posts have no consciousness. Humans do. They reveal this all the time by constantly being oriented towards goals. It is – in principle - impossible to treat things unethically. Except *sacred* things. The following subsection reveals the function of *making the “sacred” and action on it*.

Signs in the making: Killing in the name of sacred.

“Monuments to perished war heroes or martyrs of any kind are semiotic markers of events of the loss of real life for the sake of non-existing objects” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 260).

The terrorist attack on the office of the newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* in Paris in 2015 was a tragedy. The event testified to the *usability* of referring to a (*sacred*) right of free speech as *infamous symbolism of images* to justify killing human beings. The relation becomes simple; *direct and causal*. Making *humans into things* is another capability of humans, and the epitome of *systems* in which humans can act unethically. ISIS is one example. The attack fostered *a new idea*, which many desired to identify with by declaring, “*Je suis Charlie*”. The initial attack was justified as a counter-attack on “a sacred”, but declaring “*Je suis Charlie*” was an act of *embodiment* of its *opposite* idea expressed by the terrorist attack. The terrorist-act created its own opposition (naturally) which established a new sign, its own anti-thesis, usable for expressing sympathy and identity, and to legitimize counter-attacks. A synthesis would suggest it as *collective meaning-making* creating objects and justifying actions.

⁴ Reference to American folk-singer Pete Seeger singing “Little Boxes”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-sQSp5jbSQ>.

Introduction to a study of meaning-making in pilgrimage

Pilgrimage as a frame

A pilgrimage may be about less (or more) than religious devotion or experiencing moments of religiosity. The Medieval tradition of *Camino de Santiago de Compostela* pilgrimage is promoted differently by different contemporary organizations challenging a precise definition of *this pilgrimage as a contemporary practice*. The entire range is present. From organized religion to the experience-tourist-industry. Some promote it especially to young people from around the world, to come together and experience *human fellowship* in an *international* context of *cultural heritage* mixing many nations and faiths⁵. A substantial advance considering history and current times.

Upon finishing the Camino, if one desires to get the *credential* (the *Compostela*), one has to make a decision on the motive for the pilgrimage. The *Compostela* is a diploma which one may acquire from presenting an *appropriately* stamped “pilgrim-passport”. This is a document acquired at the beginning of the pilgrimage with several places of blank spaces for stamping in hostels, hotels and bars on the journey, and used to gain entrance to hostels, and signify that one has made the journey the right way. It is metaphorical for how “good Christian” conduct in life is the *passage* into Heaven, making the *official* who signs it, an earthly “Saint Peter holding the keys”, as in passing an exam and getting the credential of an approved institution.

But humans and their motives are problematic to categorize. Both may belong to several categories used to create demarcations, and some don't care which. What makes a *cross-over* of categories possible is experiencing *fellowship* across demarcation lines. In categorization, it is easy to forget the ones who are unclear as to why they *walk*, but seem to find a reason that makes sense to them by *doing it*. *Significance* grows out of *doing*. This is a Weberian perspective which I advocate, as it aligns with the theory of

⁵ Ref. statistics from Oficina de Acogida al Peregrino, Spain; <https://oficinadelperegrino.com/en/statistics/>

meaning-making, too. Sadly, there is no tick-off box for such real-life complexity in questionnaires.

From walking 1.100 km on the Camina over eight weeks in 2012 and 2013, *human fellowship*, is one ideas I took home. It is an improvement over competing against, or slaying one another, in the mandatory services of capitalistic managers and feudal lords (resp.) who desire profit and power above all else. They rely on *creating* demarcation to *rule* by *cloaking devices*. In contrast, my experiences in Spain were also of *communality, helpfulness and respect* which *cross* lines of demarcation based on age, motivations, occupation, nationality and religious faith. This made it impossible for me to return to (what I perceive as) those *culturally* organized environments (capitalistic corporate organization or zones of “war”) that function by *distortion and exploitation* by triggering *fear for exclusion* in seeking to trigger *desire* towards objects in potential customers.

Apart from what Bruner (2004) says in referring to the French historian Georges Gusdorf; “*The man who takes the trouble to tell of himself knows that the present differs from the past and that it will not be repeated in the future*” (ibid., p.695), my perspective on pilgrimage is tainted by what I *experienced* before, during and after, making it hard for me to generalize from the experiences as if they contained a *stable* and *finite* meaning. Other than I was walking as much away as towards something. Rather, my suggestion on *communality, helpfulness and respect* make sense as an answer to another *boiled-down* attempt at *purposive construction* on something which has, potentially, infinite interpretations, too; my past. Any construction of what happened in the past, present or will happen, or of physical form, is an *object* and reveals a *telos*. Humans are *creators*.

“By the bones of Saint James the Greater”

This section presents the Medieval pilgrimage tradition of El Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain centered around Saint James the Greater, focusing on its many faces and uses as myth.

The Medieval European pilgrimage tradition *El Camino de Santiago de Compostela in Spain* has several “faces” and uses that refer to the apostle Saint James the Greater. The bones of the apostle were allegedly discovered there around the year 813. This myth has morphed over time to fit various purposes. There is not only one myth, but several, and many others to be found along the pilgrimage roads leading to Santiago. The common one justified the position of Santi-



Fig. 11. Saint James appearing as the Moor-slayer in a crucial battle. The cathedral of Burgos, Spain. The idea of divine intervention *through* a symbolic device: Fighting against the Muslims is portrayed as *doing* God’s work.

ago de Compostela in North-Western Spain among the three most important Christian pilgrimage sites; the others being Sct. Peters in Rome, and Jerusalem. One use of the myth around James The Greater, was as a *political-religious* function in “taking back” the Iberian Peninsula from what was portrayed as Muslim invaders (the dynasty of the Almohads), and *making* the Iberian Peninsula a *Christian* nation. Fig. 11 shows the apostle as a fighter on horse slaying what is portrayed as Muslim Moors. This statue is a *symbolic device* usable for representing an idea of history. By positioning the statue in a cathedral, the idea is *sacred* (an untouchable *mental object*). But historically, the struggle against the Muslims in Spain has been portrayed as one, long, determined war, directed against a single unified religiously *different* opponent. Historians claim this was rarely the case. O’Callaghan (2013) states that historians now question whether a reconquest is correct or a myth. The “taking back” allegedly began in the 8th century and was over in the 15th, when Muslims, and also Jews, were either converted by force, driven out or killed. It was later given the name *La Reconquista* which became *useful for political and nationalistic purposes* as in idea, and the apostle was intertwined into a *political project with a unified nation under one God*. Such ideas are useful in what

Carretero (2011) refers to as *affectivized, patriotic* education. The *(mis)use of history* occurred specifically in the period of Spanish nationalism in the 19th century, and later in the 20th century under Francisco Franco's fascist nationalistic-Catholic dictatorship in Spain per Davidson & Gitlitz (2002).



Fig. 10. Francisco Franco (1892-1975), on a 50-pesetas coin from 1957.

Fig. 10 shows a Spanish coin from 1957. It has an image of a Francisco Franco, but links this person's role to the sacred by the inscription; “*The Leader of Spain, by the G(race) of God*”. It is a device to justify Franco as untouchable, so it serves the same function as that of the statue in fig. 11. Regardless of which purpose the myths serve, a common aspect is to raise *affect* as a *rhetorical device*. Under Franco, as also in Medieval times, something was needed to rally around. At one time, it was the fight against what was perceived as “not-us”; Muslims *in Spain*. Rhetorical devices come in many forms to muster collective action, for going on a pilgrimage or crusade. Music serves this well, as it arouses feelings.

Thibaut de Champagne (1201-1253) was count of Champagne, and king of Navarre. He was known as the *Troubadour*. He wrote poems, and in 1239, a song (in Old French⁶), about the *moral obligation* of becoming a crusader in the Holy Land of Palestine. The song was typical for this time and region of Europe, where troubadours went from court to court to

”*Lords, know this. The one who now does not travel to the land where God was alive and lived, and does not go across the sea, will have trouble to get into Paradise.*

The one who has pity and remembrance for our Lord above, he shall seek his vengeance and free his land and country”

Thibaut de Champagne (1201- 1253).

sing. It was high fashion. Gradually “Christians” became the residents of Spain, and more land came under the rule of Christian lords under the auspices of anointed Spanish Kings per O'Callaghan. They were *divinized rulers* which Franco imitated. The establishment of a *sacred place* in Santiago, was a *political and religious act* as the crowning of Charles the Great (*Charlemagne*) by the Pope in Rome in 800, as holy

⁶ “Seigneurs, sachiez qui or ne s'en ira”. Translated with the help of a Polish-French engineer.

emperor of what was later called the *Holy Roman Empire*. The tomb in Spain laid the foundation for a new cult to attract pilgrims.

Today, ritualized conduct (cult) with the apostle at the center, is still endorsed and regulated. On the website of the Cathedral of Santiago, under the headline of “Rites of the Pilgrims”, is a description of the appropriate (ritualized) conduct in the cathedral (see fig. 13). After having entered the cathedral, perhaps on their knees, the pilgrims wait in line (fig. 14.), to either *ascend* and embrace the statue of the apostle from the behind (fig. 15), or *descend* (fig. 16) to the tomb to make a small prayer, in front of the silver sarcophagus holding relics (bones) (fig. 17).



Fig. 13.

“Embracing the Apostle

“Our visit takes us to the Main Altar, which we circle through the right side in order to climb up and embrace the image of the Apostle which presides the temple. Thank you my friend Saint James, brother Saint James, for helping me to get here! Thank you for your company, for your testimony and your legacy!”

<http://www.catedraldesantiago.es/en/node/486>



Fig. 14. Waiting in line.



Fig. 15. Embracing the Apostle



Fig. 16. Descending to the tomb



Fig. 17. The silver sarcophagos

Traditionally, the sacredness of Santiago de Compostela is due to the bones of the Apostle kept there in a silver sarcophagus. Today, the Camino still serves to satisfy spiritual yearning, and is probably of psychological therapeutic value, too, competing therefore with appropriated healing-disciplines of modern Western societies that lay claim to *psychological therapy*. Humans, very likely, have always *performed therapy* by using what was prescribed and made available as *acknowledged resources* for bettering oneself living in communities *of any time* under specific conditions.

The pilgrimage brought prosperity to the Catholic Church and the areas along the road-systems leading to the sacred place. Feudal lords and pilgrims made substantial donations to the Church per Duby (1981). The influx of residents and pilgrims meant business-opportunities of providing lodging and food apart from what the Church provided. On top of this, it also gave rise to the manufacture of pilgrim-related artifacts to bring home, which can be seen as an early tourist-*industry*. The period saw many new inhabitants in the regions where Christian rule now dominated. A *re-colonization* of Spain took place which used a specific way of granting land *first* to Christian feudal lords, and only then, gradually, to single peasants, *creating* not only sedentary life-forms, but now Christian peasants had to work on the large estates *owned by a single feudal lord*. This societal structure was present at the time of the Spanish Civil war in the twentieth century, and explains poverty and the resentment towards feudal lords *and* the Catholic Church noted in Bookchin (1986).

However, the basis for the myth surrounding the Apostle Sct. James is problematic from a historical perspective. For according to Sibley (2012), a man called Sct. Beatus was writing up a list of Christian apostles on where they had served, about 50 years before the bones of Sct. James were allegedly found. It seems a misspelling into *Hispaniam* (Spain) from *Hierosolyman* (Jerusalem) was copied over. This moved the burial site of the apostle *to Spain*. A myth explains that friends of the apostle sailed with his body in a boat *without rudder or sail*. They reached Spain, and buried the apostle (Ballato, 2010). Being guided is a theme in the myth. This becomes a usable belief for how one as pilgrims reaches the sacred tomb also, as a goal. By divine intervention. In a broader perspective, it is an analogy for religion.



Fig 18. Queen Sophia of Spain, and the statue of Saint James the Greater. In 2010. Scanpix.

Van Herwarden (2013) remarks that it made no difference if what is a legend of Sct. James created over centuries and became the basis for the cult, was true or not: “Definite proof that St James the Greater was not buried in Spain would not deter a single pilgrim.” (p.324).

Royal notabilities, as queen Sophia of Spain, hold positions, as do religious ones (e.g. the Pope) to publicly re-affectivize the *sacredness of certain* objects. This may be done to a statue (fig.18), serving also to uphold the cult around Saint James the Greater; and re-sanctifying pilgrimage - by a simple human act of *a kiss*, creating a center and a path for others to follow. The following small subsections deal with losing such center and path, which reveals its presence indirectly.

“Losing” *personal culture*

Realizing one journeyed far to kill “infidels”, or today, potential “terrorists”, pay worship to a strip of land, to secure access to resources (oil), or worship relics in a sacred building, based on what was *conjured up* in the interest of power, or gradually created as a myth over time, *must be difficult*, for it touches upon how one defines oneself within a social framework which appropriates *certain conducts*. The difficulty lies in disconnection from the values and goal-orientations of a framework, for this has become internalized and is of affective dimensions. Conduct is part of *collective culture* used to create *personal culture*. Loss of affective dimension leads to loss of being a *moral being* hence implies losing oneself. Most would avoid the pain of losing affective dimensions of life, and of being a moral person. I wrote an autoethnography to explain why I (perhaps) “*lost a social framework and its values*” centered around *wage-labor and a sense of duty* in the frame of capitalistic corporate companies. I use this as a basis for understanding a motive for my “pilgrimage”. Even if I am still bewildered by my distaste for wage-labor in corporates, and was taken by pilgrimage, I have chosen *not to make this question* the object of study here due to proximity of a “negative emotional” dimension.

One perspective on my own reasons would be that pilgrimage provided a different and comparable form of expressing a psychological need for a new object in *goal-orientation*, but instead provided a way of (re)entering a new form of social framework. One based on cooperation and fellowship. The narrative potentially captures aspects that can be formulated into research questions at a later stage. Their answers may be of general benefit to others on their path towards understanding their “sacred centers and paths” i.e. what and who “shaped” their *personal culture* within contemporary socie-

ties, and how to handle loss of that which once mattered, and to realize that what matters, often lies well beyond the *intentions* (or *grasp*) of those who claim to know the *Right Way*.

Studying pilgrimage in cultural psychology

Pilgrimage is an arena for human psychological phenomena. The environments are culturally organized. A study of meaning-making here, then becomes a way of perceiving *unity in diversity* by showing how pilgrimage, of different religions, share *universals*. This perspective is opened for by applying theory of *semiotics* by which the effort becomes a scientifically generalizing *and* humanistic effort.

Scientific cultural psychology is interdisciplinary

It may appear as a contradiction to the reader of psychological texts, but religious practices provide a field of study for psychology, as the Danish theologian and philosopher, professor Harald Höffding, wrote already in 1905, for religion and psychology are linked;

“In Religion men have made some of their deepest and most intensive mental experiences. If religion is genuine and original, all the elements of mental life are at work in it with an energy and interplay not to be found in any other domain. The study of religious life is therefore of great importance to general psychology.” (Höffding, 1905, p.77).

Considering Höffding was a mentor in philosophical training of Niels Bohr according to Faye (1991) and that the *Center for Cultural Psychology* at AAU bears the *Niels Bohr professorship*, it appears obvious to follow Höffding’s suggestion, if for no other reason, then “on good faith”, rather than abiding at Sløk’s position towards religion.

This document attempts a position *between* disciplines. Sløk (1960), however, for creating clear lines of demarcation between disciplines, also, stated that it was not the task of science to go beyond any mere *functional* interpretation of *what things are*, and what our relation to things are. He specifically writes that science should stick to finding “constancies”, “statistical reoccurrences” which are “calculable” (ibid., p.21). And he notes that science should not deal with *values*, but leave that to others. A cultural psychology would ignore Sløk’s point.

Any social science is value-based or -reinforcing, including psychology. By providing its services to politicians or organizations one justifies their values and goals. There is always the possibility of denial to cooperate, and accept the consequences.

Sløk (1960) points out that after the Medieval world withered away, and religion became homeless and doubtful, the natural sciences reduced the concept of reality to those phenomena what were *observable* or in some way *presented* themselves. This meant that the world of religion became distant and unreal. It is then no wonder if religion does not find a place in contemporary *psychological scientific research* considering its reliance on *empiricism*. It may be attributed to detachment from *philosophy* and *theoretical* psychology in the attempt to create an *identity* as “*real science*” with the natural sciences as role-model for epistemology. But religion is too big a topic to be ignored in psychology.

From this discussion comes the aim of understanding how humans conduct themselves in life, by which means and to what ends? The perspective is that living a life is *not* something that occurs, but is what humans *do* - not *in* - but *via* collectives of others as per Brinkmann;

“*a person’s life (in the biographical rather than biological sense) is something the person conducts. A life does not lead itself, but is an active process involving the person in collectives of others. We live our lives; it is an active process.*” (Brinkmann, 2016, pp.3-4).

Conduct is essentially the topic exemplified through pilgrimage. Conduct is related to values and meaning. To be conducted implies being guided. But how and by what? Pilgrimage are *acts* i.e. guided conduct relying on values which does not imply that pilgrims are internally or externally “controlled”. Rather guidance comes in the form of *self-guidance through participation* using what is external and visible *as well* as not-presented. This is tied to how sense of the world is made, of life and ourselves, which is captured by *meaning-making*.

The biological perspective on meaning-making

The psyché *creates and uses its cultural world*. It comes to expression here, by building and maintaining itself. Valsiner's cultural psychology on human meaning-making has a *biological perspective* taken from the study of complex organisms, as living cells. This idea is found in the concept of *Umwelt*;

“Umwelt is the world an organism creates, in which it lives. It is the meaningful world based on sign relations. A quite common definition states that the umwelt is the personal world of the organism, or a self-centered world, ‘the world as known or modelled’ “Cobley, 2010, p.34)” (Magnus & Kull, 2012, p.650)

Umwelt derives from von Jacob von Uexküll's theoretical biology, and is the “subjective phenomenal world that each organism inhabits and this is the only reality accessible to this organism” (Kharlamov, 2012, p.284). Von Uexküll explains; “Everything that falls under the spell of Umwelt (subjective universe) is altered and re-shaped until it has become a useful meaning-carrier; otherwise it is totally neglected” (ibid.). For human meaning-making this means that nothing enters or exits *as-is*, for there is always some alteration. The cell/meaning-system is *always* in *interaction* with an *environment*, and utilizes it to upkeep itself within the larger context (organism/community) that it needs to sustain itself in. The cell is an *open system* as the *human psyché*. If the meaning-system (or psyché) of the pilgrim is seen as a cell-system, then pilgrimage becomes a way for the cell to maintain itself within the larger organism (a social framework/community). This upkeeping, as in doing pilgrimage, would belong to what Aristotle refers to as *praxis*. Brinkmann illuminates the matter, by referring to a distinction made by Aristotle;

“Interestingly, the original Greek meaning of psyche was much closer to the biological sense (zoe) than the psychological one (bios), as it referred to the fundamental life principle of all living things (plants, animals, humans). Psyche was an animating power related to breath, to being alive in a fundamental sense, and Aristotle's On the Soul basically belongs to biology, whereas his psychology is primarily found in his Nicomachean Ethics that deals with life as praxis (Aristotle 1976; see also Robinson 1989).” (Brinkmann, 2016, p. 4)

Pilgrimage appears as a fusion of *zoe* and *bios*. For in order to be a participant in a social framework orientated towards activities of upkeeping physical life, or *zoe*, humans have to become *bios* or acquire “souls” to conduct themselves *psychologically* in *praxis*.

Beliefs as self-management. A semiotic-sociological perspective.

A researcher can fall victim to associating *Kulturbegriffe* with *material existence* hence associable with “inner things that act”, and usable in prediction of future “behavior”. James puts so; “Whenever we have made a word...to denote a certain group of phenomena, we are prone to suppose a substantive entity existing beyond the

phenomena, of which the word shall be the name” (James, 1890, p.195)’ (Barrett, 2016, p.53). To add further; Höffding, wrote; “*Our ways of understanding are not necessarily the ways nature follows in her production*” (Höffding, 1905, p. 67). Höffding’s point may be valid in various *epistemologies*. Choosing “*beliefs*”, involves a risk of making *entities*, and assuming they are *installed* in human beings. This can appear as a means of categorizing “developmental levels of” humans and civilization. But Höffding’s point is usable as *a call to the researcher* trying to comprehend a cultural phenomenon. The way to come around the problem is by considering belief as *meaning-makings* of *human* origin. They have history and uses that varies depending on context hence belief as meaning-making is *culturally organized* as per (Valsiner, 2014). A way to break down the “idea of ideas” as *fixed* entities in a persisting ideational sphere or superstructure across historical time, is in referring to Marx;

“*Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man’s ideas, views and conceptions, in one word, man’s consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life? What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes in proportion as material production has changed*” (Rigby, 1998, p.227).

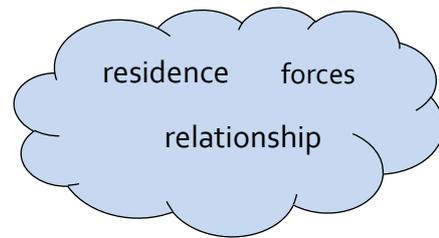


Fig. 19. Three fundamental beliefs in pilgrimages appearing universally in various semiospheres of traditions.

Marx' point implies a critique on *concepts* in science and in the everyday language.

Semiotic mediation in meaning-making

Mediated means *understood (or interpreted) via relationship*. In sign-mediated meaning-making something is never understood as-is, but through a relationship created as a *sign through which* something is understood, sensed, perceived or performed. A mental sign is, metaphorically, an act of *framing* which the consciousness continually creates to “take the next step” moving into an unknown future. *Kulturbegriffe* is here seen as arising from how life sustaining production is understood and organized. To create a distance from *Kulturbegriffe*, implies their *deconstruction* as a first step in research. It is a necessity in order to comprehend a phenomenon scientifically, especially in a dialectical approach, for language tends to create *entities of what is complex for achieving simplicity*. This is seen in Valsiner's general form of creating personal culture in meaning-making as semiotically mediated;

“The *person* constructs *meaning complex* ‘X’ ...

↓

...*objectifies* it by *fixing its form* (e.g. internal – internalized social norm, or external – monument, picture of deity, figurine)

↓

...and starts to act *as if* the objectified meaning complex X is an external agent that *controls the person*” (Valsiner, 2007, p. 61).

This form of meaning-making appears when expressing oneself as “I have [X]” where X is “faith in God” or “personality QWER” whereas these expressions could be considered as *ways of relating* to self, others and the world - under *certain* conditions of life, but made into *entities* usable for a purpose; e.g. *identity* – in making oneself *synonymous* with a “thing” transferring it *into* oneself, and so creating the possibility for the next statement; “I am [X]” to *explain* personal behavior, preferences and belonging to “this group” on par with how nations are created. “I want/don't want [X]” would then follow, as X is being made into an *ornament* or a *commodity* useable for worship, and for in- or exclusion of community. Humans commodify themselves to fit in. This

creates a market for *creating humans* as commodities by techniques which work on a self for creating (the idea of) *personality*.

The creation of “religious” belief as entities, is mimicked *by using* methods for de/selecting humans into communities called “corporate organizations” based on personality sometimes referred to as character traits. What used to be an external control in a “religious” context as a divine force, has been “taken down” in the modern context, and crossed the border “into” the person, becoming a *thing than controls* the person. The person now bears his *own* gods and demons. This move may in part be explained by historical changes and changes to ways of production, but is beyond the scope here.

Conclusively, neither concepts nor beliefs are things, but this does not rule out they are not used to achieve what “real” things do, in *their own sphere of usage*. This would be a way of comprehending both the purpose of pilgrimages, and why personality testing is so popular and mandatory. The latter is often used as an instrument to decide whether a person will “fit” into or “belongs” to a modern form of *cultural community* - a capitalistic corporation organized around a single “first ruler” who has delegated management to semi-rulers (*managers*), where the activities of production is organized around *wage-labor as praxis*, creating a *culturally organized* micro-society. Pilgrimage on the other hand shows the person the path *into* a simplistic generalization!), but the point is that it serves a comparable purpose. What the two different contexts share, is shown by Marx; “...society’s relations of production constitute the base not only for its political institutions, but also for its characteristic forms of thought and ideology: social being determines social consciousness” (Rigby, 1998, p.275). To understand the *position* of beliefs, in pilgrimage, is possible from considering how humans always acquire what they need to live, and *orientate towards that which is, or is perceived to be, in control*.

Defining pilgrimage

There are many ways to define pilgrimage depending on framework and purpose for definition. Three perspectives are summarily presented in the following, before going into definition which seeks to merge them in a synthesis.

In the *objective* or concrete sense, pilgrimage is the ancient, contemporary, temporary, large-scale practice, involving millions of human beings, moving within and across borders of nations. Taking this perspective makes it apparent that traditions have very different historical, mythological (religious) grounding, yet the idea to gather knowledge, as Davidson & Gitlitz (2002), gives a clue to the reasonable assumption of there being a unification possible. Something ties them together at a conceptual level.

For in a *symbolic* sense, pilgrimage is *moving* a body to *more* than a special, or sacred place, as it is a *symbolic* expression of *devotion to something or someone*. It refers to something else, hence it is a sign, and the pilgrim is a signifier of this as is the place or object which is the end-goal. Without such signification, the conduct would be *meaningless*.

A pilgrim from a Japanese and a Spanish tradition, are shown in fig.20a and 20b⁷ (resp.), set apart by thousands of kilometers and religious frameworks. Yet their clothes and artifacts appear strikingly similar, as do the setups. The pilgrims are choreographed for displaying devotion to ideas taken to be essential to a given social framework communicated by objects in the backgrounds; Fujiyama and Sct. James. Therefore, in the *abstract* sense, pilgrimages are unified by having *telos* (purpose) which is the *meaning* understood only when including the social framework that supports *this* pilgrimage tradition. The social frameworks extend beyond the tra-



Fig. 20a. A Japanese pilgrim, framing himself in front of a picture of Fujiyama. By Kusakabe Kimbei (1841-1934). Public domain.



Fig 20b. A Santiago Pilgrim, photographed in front of the statue of Sct. James the Greater in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, Spain, dressed traditionally. Very few look like this today.

⁷ Ref. <https://www.gonomad.com/1027-a-pilgrimage-begins-at-home-forrest-gump-quasi-modo-and-the-weary-wanderer>, downloaded 29-05-2017

ditions, in terms of time and place. In a *developmental, psychological sense*, pilgrimage is also making a potentially *personalizing* and *socializing* journey, which supports creating personal culture using collective culture for living in a social framework; developing (*becoming*) a member.

The question of defining pilgrimage is *which frame of reference or paradigm* is used for this provides the purpose of defining. Definition is here driven by modelling a phenomenon from selecting characteristics of importance to that which the model aims at describing. Beginning in etymology provides a first-hand understanding of *pilgrimage*⁸;

“pilgrim (n.) “c. 1200, *pilegrim*, from Old French *pelerin*, *peregrin* “pilgrim, crusader; foreigner, stranger” (11c., Modern French *pèlerin*), from Late Latin *pelegrinus*, dissimilated from Latin *peregrinus* “foreigner” (source of Italian *pellegrino*, Spanish *peregrino*), from *peregre* (adv.) “from abroad,” from *per-* “beyond” + *agri*, locative case of *ager* “country, land” (see *acre*).”

It may lead to assuming that all practices are *equivalent* to this tradition. That would be taking the perspective from just one of the large organized religions. On the other hand, the official view in Catholicism on pilgrimage even today is noteworthy for its *telos*; “The word “pilgrim,” derived from the Latin *peregrinum*, conveys the idea of wandering over a distance, but it is not just aimless wandering. It is a journey with a purpose, and that purpose is to honor God.” (Villarrubia, 2010, p.1). Historically, this is unsurprising considering the influence of Aristotle in Medieval Christian ethics, normally attributed to Thomas Aquinas according to Wogaman (2010), but made possible by Muslim scholars of Toledo in Spain, which once was the cultural capital of Europe, who were preservers and users of Aristotelian thinking.

Definition

Pilgrimage is not giving way to modern, secular life styles everywhere. Dubisch (2012) notes that pilgrimages “enjoy a continuing and even increasing popularity in the contemporary world, ranging from localized journeys to national and international ones” (ibid., p.992). In other words, this phenomenon is alive, and worth researching for

⁸ <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=pilgrim> (downloaded 29-05-2017)

here lies a potential for an understanding of the psyché as embedded and expressed through cultural context. Dubisch (2012) adds even that “[s]ome analysts have also challenged the category of pilgrimage itself, pointing out that in many languages, there is no exact equivalent to the English term...” (ibid., p.996), and that

“to refer to certain kinds of religious activities or certain kinds of travels as “pilgrimage” may obscure their connections to other kinds of ritual behavior, on the one hand, and may blur the significant differences between the various activities we term pilgrimage, on the other.” (ibid.).

Still, a single tradition may hold characteristics found in all instances of traditions, depending on *which* perspective is taken, and *what* is being generalized. Three characteristics and three beliefs from Dubisch (2012) and Davidson & Gitlitz (2002) make up *components* of a model. They are grounded in what *gets done in practice*, how meaning may be interpreted, and appear universally. This is central to the enterprise, and is therefore given space in the following;

Dubisch (2012) writes;

“The idea of journey is central to pilgrimage, even when the journey is only metaphorical (as in the idea of life as a pilgrimage). Leaving home and traveling to a different place is the heart of a pilgrimage journey. And while the site to which a pilgrim journeys is important, and generally the focus of ritual, the journey itself is often significant as well, ritually, psychologically, and socially...Pilgrimage is one way of entering into a relationship or connection with the spiritual world and spiritual beings. These beings are most often saints or deities who play a role within a particular religious tradition or to whom the pilgrim wishes to make a request or prayer. But pilgrimage may also be to sites of the dead, such as European war graves, or to sites where mass death or tragedy has occurred, such as the site of the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York City. Or it may be to a place where the body or relic of a holy person is entombed or that person's spirit is believed to reside.” (ibid., p.992)

And Davidson & Gitlitz (2002) state that;

“From long before the beginnings of recorded history, three fundamental beliefs have launched human beings onto the roads of pilgrimage. The first is the conviction that there are forces infinitely larger than ourselves—gods, superheroes, the tectonic plates of history—forces with the ability to influence our lives. The second is that each of us has the potential to initiate a meaningful relationship with those forces. The third is that there are certain special places where the remote, transcendental power of those forces seems close enough for us to touch. ...” (ibid., p. xvii).

Characteristics and *beliefs* are referred to as *components* without implying that the terms are comparable. They belong to different domains. *Characteristics* refer to the “positively present in the world”, whereas beliefs are broadly speaking, *ways of inference* (meaning-making process) whose “presence” may only be inferred. Valsiner (2014) makes a useful differentiation to explain this;

‘that of material objects differs from ideational objects, for example, material objects can be physically controlled by a person, an offered to others in exchange or temporary relinquishing of control. They can be socially presented as “gifts”, “loaned/borrowed objects”, “stolen property”, etc.... [...]...Sharing of immaterial entities – norms and meanings – entails the internalization/externalization process: two (or more) person can “share” meanings only via externalization of their personal sense into the communication process. ...’ (ibid., pp.214-215).

Based on Valsiner, *characteristics* would be properties of “material objects”, whereas *beliefs* are “immaterial entities” appearing in a *communication process* through *internalization/externalization*.

Journeying to establish relationship with a force

Humans perform temporary journeys to places of *significance*⁹ such as work, tourist sites, sport-events, entertainment, consumerism, political meetings, demonstrations, cathedrals, monasteries and even libraries. They also go into war, and journey to *sacred* places, which typically are referred to as *pilgrimage*. Whereas the former type destroys life, the latter seems concerned with preservation. That dichotomy will, however prove insufficient. A synthesis of the two practices would show that they share *sacrilization of area* which follows from the need, or the construed need, of securing *resources* and *maintaining oneself*.

⁹*Significance*: The *quality* of being, having or expressing a meaning; indicative; suggestive ref. <http://www.dictionnaire.com>

An attempt at defining *pilgrim* in a European historical context can be traced to *Dante* in *La Vita Nuova* around 1295;

“And I said ‘*peregrini*’ in the general sense of the word: since ‘*pilgrims*’ can be understood in two senses, in one case generalised, and in the other specific: in general to the extent that whoever travels from their country is a pilgrim (Dante, 1899/2012).

The general sense need not have anything to do with religion, but the specific sense Dante is also referring to, is of a *person* travelling to pay *worship* in foreign lands. The Medieval *Palästinalied* by Walther von der Vogelweide from the 13th Century, is an example of the *special sense* of pilgrim; a religious devotee who advocates being a crusader, too. At Dante’s time there were in Europe, three different terms to denote a religious devotee who traveled to pay homage at a sacred site, differentiated by their end-destination. The term *pilgrimage* nowadays is used for various *practices* that all have *journeying* across *distance* to a special *place* in common as per Dubisch (2012). Journeying can be about displaying *devotion* to nationhood, freedom, democracy or any other concept, or idea - that is not *physically* tangible object, but uses a *place*. What *justifies* journeying to a place within a given context, would then be ideas or beliefs that guide towards goals for sustaining order with a dimension of affect embedded in it. The ideational is manifested in special places which makes journeying to those places *meaningful moral conduct* and from the standpoint of the person, also *future-oriented* action, even if it commemorates *deceased persons* or *past events and miracles*.

Places where forces reside, infinitely larger than humans

What sets journeying to special places off was already realized by Dante. It is that “[p]ilgrimage is one way of entering into a relationship or connection with the spiritual world and spiritual beings” (ibid., p.992). This is the specific sense, and would associate pilgrimage with religion and experiencing the *transcendent*¹⁰. The common aspect here is that there is *something worth journeying to; a place*. That would include journeying to various places, as Elvis Presley’s Graceland, a Vietnam war-memorial, Mecca and St. Peter’s cathedral in Rome, as those who journey there would reckon

¹⁰“Beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience” (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/transcendent>)

these as *special places*. If all these count as sacred in the sense of religious, places, or for experiencing the transcendent, is another matter which opens up for *why journeys* are undertaken. Dubisch (2012) provides *several reasons for pilgrimage*; as a prescribed act of religious piety, a commemoration of significant event, to memorialize the dead, an expression of national or ethnic affiliation, acquiring the spiritual blessing of a holy figure (often deceased, but not necessarily) or holy place, fulfillment of a vow or for physical or spiritual healing.

Body

Movement of a body in making a journey is a fundamental characteristic of pilgrimage, per Davidson & Gitlitz (2002). This is a physical phenomenon, so pilgrimage in body seems to bind ideas and conduct through an affective dimension. The common aspect of Dubisch's various reasons lie in the *affective dimension* they all (potentially may) share. This affect is related to having a body. That is, by journeying to these places, experiencing affect, is often endorsed by different means. Experiencing the *transcendent* in the sense of that which lies beyond the limits of ordinary experience is a typical aspect, too. It may be caretaking of one's soul, or the souls of others, revering the grace of God, seeking benevolence, a need of redemption, or for reviving one's affect for someone. Reasons have a dimension of *affectivity* which justifies making the effort of a journey, but there is also a *moral aspect* which points to *devotion* to a social framework. Being at special place usually means participating in communal activities that *create* and *release* affect, and simultaneously acknowledges the transcendent, whereby one is also able to establish and express a *personal culture*. In simpler terms, the communal activities create a basis for constructing personal culture rooted in ideas and values that are themselves created out of activities performed by humans meant for a specific social framework.

Comparing special places

Pilgrimage is symbolic, physical and (can be) personally meaningful conduct. It may be understood as an act of *devotion* to a social framework's practices beliefs and ideas, and for *ensuring* life-conditions by the ritualized conduct of making a *hard* journey to a place of significance which symbolizes this in various ways. Sløk (1960) remarks that it was necessary to stand in good relationship with powers that make existence

possible. Following Sløk, humans turn to forces that ensure resources for living in a specific *place* under certain *conditions*. These forces became synonymous with sacred places. It was (is) necessary to stand in good relationship with powers which, in inexplicable ways, provide(d) the means of survival and who were (are) in control of conditions, and of life and death. This conduct then becomes *necessary* and *value-able*. It appears natural then that pilgrims were (are) granted passage and resources to uphold themselves because of their respectful undertaking in making a *journey of significance which potentially applies to all participants of the social framework*.

Pilgrimage is then an act directed at also *collective interests*. Care-taking interests may stretch beyond oneself, to one's present family, country or village, and into the *after-life* or *next-life*. To redeem oneself, make a transaction and present an offering to such forces appears as "*rational*" even if Sløk attributes it to the opposite when terming it *cultic-religious* with regards to the irrational in assuming the *actual* intervention of forces *due to* the "magic" of a ritual. The concept of *Axis Mundi* may to have grown out of this reasoning, for certain places perceived as where the sacred resides. It is no wonder that miracles were important in Medieval time, for this was seen as an expression of divine intervention which craved devotion, attention and respect, for humans could benefit from miracles. It made sense to travel to places where the forces resided or expressed themselves. In Catholicism, pilgrimage may be care-taking of living as well as deceased social others in the "beyond". It is a socially oriented practice, as also elsewhere. In Catholicism, it was typically seen as most *efficient* to journey to those places where the most highly regarded saints were buried. It was also regarded as the greatest expression of devotion. In Medieval time, deceased members of the framework were still part of a social framework, and could help the living, for the dead were perceived to be closer to the top of the hierarchy per Scott (2011) of the *divine modelled upon* the hierarchy of societal structures.

Sun-light is shining through one of the twelve apostles in the image of a glass-rosette in fig. 21, symbolizing the hierarchical structure around the central figure (here Virgin



Fig. 21. *The House of Light* or the *Pulchra Leonina*. A glass-rosette in the Gothic cathedral in Leon, Spain. Evocative art.

form” which “corresponds” to existing social relations (Rigby, 1998, p.180). A comparison may be made to fig. 22, where a Muslim mosque displays calligraphic inscriptions on the outside praising “*the Fourteen Immaculate Ones (i.e. Muhammad, Fatimah and The Twelve Imams)*”. Inside “*one is drowned by the endless waves of intricate arabesque in golden yellow and dark blue, which bless the spectator with a space of internal serenity.*”¹¹.

The Catholic cathedral, and the Muslim mosque both use art, albeit somewhat differently. They rely on *iconicity* and *symbolism* in meaning-making, but the former uses evocative images of sacred persons (forces), whereas the latter is using *artfully written language*, and more indirect evocating devices for “installing” a sense of the serenity of Heaven with the one felt by looking at the beautiful art itself. The former achieves the same. Both rely on the ability to “transfer” feeling to a “place beyond”. This is an example of how a feeling-of-something gets a symbol, a name; Heaven as in “this is what it is” by “how it feels”, and signifies a creation of the sacred through affectively based meaning-making.

Mary) while mimicking also structure of the Medieval society. Art is here in the service of faith, and the latter is in the service of justifying hierarchical structures (based on power). To interpret the art relied on *symbolic thinking* and perceiving an *idea*. This would be *meaning-making* based on *iconicity* (resemblance). The art exemplifies Marx’ notion of religion as

a “celes-
tialised



Fig. 22. Jaame' Abbasi Mosque, Isfahan, Iran. Also using evocative art.

¹¹ ref. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shah_Mosqu (downloaded 29-05-2017)

Valsiner's suggestion of the social framework may be expanded. The social framework includes the transcendent as it extends *back* and *forth* in historical time (temporally), and between *here* and *there* (spatially). Art assisted in communicating this; The image in fig. 21 supports *imagining* how Heaven and society is organized, to suggest one's own current and future position in it, *through symbolic thinking of the idea of this by iconicity* (resemblance) of a *structure*. Fig. 22 does not seem to show that idea of a hierarchical structure in Heaven and Earth.

Suggestion exist in sacred sites, in general, that endorse conduct (rituals) to influence life-conditions of oneself and others. These tools may be confession, prayer, sacrifice, transactions, and *pilgrimage* directed at divine forces. Pilgrimage shares with these tools, the *affective dimension*, highlighting pilgrimage as *affective meaning-making* hence the focus on *affective semiosis*.

The notion of 'another place' is noteworthy, for as Valsiner (2007) also explains, it is only among civilizations of sedentary life-form that pilgrimage arose. Nomadic peoples show no preference for *place* which makes sense if there is no differentiation between what is *home* and *not-home*, making the notion of *nation* irrelevant, too. "Home" for nomadic peoples could be where a temporary settlement was established, for *here* meant where *resources* existed; normally animals that migrated due to yearly changes of weather in regions beyond the equatorial zone of Earth.

With the rise of agriculture as the primary practice for securing resources for survival, came the need for permanent housing, then villages, and finally nations. And gradually *large organized pilgrimages* developed. Pilgrimage is thus related to ensuring *life-conditions* in a *particular place*. The creation of a *sacred* house (temple, cathedral) mimics the creation *of a permanent house for oneself*. This suggests the interrelationship between the ideational following material life-conditions and the need for survival, and for making meaning out of what life-conditions are established. "Religious" thinking becomes then an *adaptation* that follows from conditions of life, rather than an *instinct* as per Sløk (1960), but depending on which knowledge (semiotic tools) are available. The manner of making *inference* in "religious" thinking mimicks "non-religious".

But pilgrimage was and is also performed to *non-constructed, undecorated sacred places*, as the Ganges in India and Mt. Fuji in Japan. This calls for expansion of the former analysis. The two shares being *material*, but it is the dichotomy of the *construed* versus the *constructed* that needs to be abandoned. This has methodological implications for a study into pilgrimage, for it must go beyond the *material*.

Symbols and feelings get linked using special place

There must be a way for how symbols (words and dates) and feelings are linked. This section attempts to exemplify by showing it takes place in *contemporary societies* that are not typically perceived as religious contexts using *special places* also. This overall point is to suggest that what occurs in pilgrimage with regards to establishing *personal culture* is on par with creating *nation*.

Pilgrimages are undertaken on specific dates according to Davidson and Gitlitz (2002), as in many other religious practices, where travelling to a sacred place, e.g. a temple, on specific dates is a mandatory practice. Ritual journeys (pilgrimages) are also controlled by time-keeping devices (calendars). Experiencing feelings regarding particular dates (symbols) is quite common, too. One needs only think of birthdays, the 24th/25th and 1st of January, at least in those particular parts of the world where these dates are for celebration. But history shows that a pilgrimage can turn to a crusade making it hard to differentiate between the two, for they are two expressions of what are apparently opposites hand per Valsiner (2007), but are unified by their use of non-existing objects; “signs that regulate our ongoing lives in dramatic ways that sometimes lead to their end” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 260).

Journeying to the coast of Normandy commemorating the significant past event *Operation Overlord* (“D-day”) on the specific date of 6th of June that in 1944 altered the cause of the Second World War in Europe, is also a *pilgrimage* because of its affective and ideational dimensions. *Paying respect* to deceased ones (a reason for a pilgrimage per Dubisch) in visiting *material sites* as military cemeteries where the flags of the nations of Allied forces are on display close to crosses, rely on *ideas* of *collective sac-*

rifice. Beckstead, Twose, Levesque-Gottlieb, Rizzo (2011) shows that in war-cemeteries, persons are regulated by design of the physical environment to experience *specific feelings*. And that they experience *specific feelings* when touching dirt from places (symbolic reference) associated with feelings as part of *collective remembering*. A design of an environment may seek to associate commemoration of the Allied forces who fought against Fascist and Nazi *tyranny*, with ideas of *freedom* and *democracy* in Europe through *self-sacrifice*.

Making a pilgrimage has its *own sphere* of meanings. In Denmark, celebration of *nation* and *democracy* happens on a specific date, commemorating a set of parliamentary laws given on the 5th of June (1849) (“Grundlov”). On this date, special places are temporarily set up in Denmark where politicians give speeches. The Danish flag is everywhere to be found. The date enters as *collective culture* through repetitious commemorations over the years and across generations via participation. The date *equates* an idea, and becomes “*sacred*” in understanding *nation* as *special*, from what happened on a date in 1849, and is afterwards expressed by this date. This signifies the creation of a *collective sign* pointing to an idea having gained “reality” within borders. Borders are created of what was before and after the date, and what is beyond the borders. The material land is *affectivized* with ideas of e.g. *democracy* and *freedom* and feelings, to the extent that whatever happens within *these* borders, it will remain so and untouchable. The term “holy” is used by pilgrims journeying to Palestine which in the meantime became the state of Israel. It is the *idea* what a place *means* that guides them there on par with what guides Danes to meetings on the 5th of June. Similarly, on the 31st of December, the Danish queen re-affectivizes the nation by the ritualized ending of “*God bless Denmark*”¹².

Commemorating the “collectively special and shared” has affective dimensions. Celebrations on a specific date, can turn to an arena for establishing a dichotomy of “us”/“not-us”. The now deceased member of the Danish People’s Party, Mogens Camre, used the 5th of June celebration in 2014, as a stage to *define* who is Danish and who is not; “One is Danish, if one speaks Danish and thinks Danish and fights for the

¹² In Danish: “GUD BEVARE DANMARK”. Capital letters are used in TV-subtitles.

democratic Danish society...”¹³. The affective dimension one may have had for this date, the flag and the nation was linked to *fighting* for it, whereas previously, rejoicing and having half a day off from work, was enough. The affective dimension is immediately *inversed*, by relating *this date* to *actions* to preserve it through creating what is “not-us” (bad) which establishes a *new* meaning or *feelings-of-something* suggesting the need for action (fighting) to keep it away. That speech functioned as a *rhetorical device* on par with the Medieval Crusader song by Thibaut de Champagne, in appealing to *feelings, morality* and *necessary action*. The symbolic meaning of the Danish flag in that context was created to hold these ideas.

An example of a symbol holding the *inverse sacred* or *infamous*, is the date “11th of September 2001” due to the attack on the Twin Towers in New York, and other buildings in the USA. The function of that date is equivalent to the 7th of December 1941 which was the date of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii (USA). “A date which will live in infamy” as President Franklin D. Roosevelt dubbed it. Ex-President Bush promoted *The War on Terrorism* as a counter-attack following terrorist-attacks against “our special and shared”. “9/11” was an expression of symbolic action, and the date on which almost three thousand innocent human beings were killed. The idea of “collectively special and shared” are set against and ideas – e.g. *fundamentalism* and *totalitarianism*. As Iraq was portrayed as having weapons of mass destruction, the usefulness of this idea was in making that nation inverse sacred (but *still affectivized*) which may have justified ruining its infrastructure and killing a large part of its inhabitants. Likely it contributed to paving the way for more extreme terrorism.

Dates and flags of nations become *affectivized symbols* making them useable for internalizing and externalizing values, testifying to the powerful effect of linking *symbols* (e.g. *dates and flags*) with *materiality, and feelings to guide conduct*. This linkage is established by active self-participation creating personal culture where feelings take “body” and becomes a “sacred” acting back on the person. It is a semiotic tool. How this is possible, is explained as *semiosis* in the following section.

¹³ Ref. <http://nyheder.tv2.dk/2014-10-26-tag-camre-testen-er-du-dansk-nok>.

Applied semiotics

In this section, I present semiotics as a *conceptual system* with *key terms* to be used primarily in article. Semiotics provides analytical tools to interpret signification-bearing (incl. value-based) phenomena and processes across different contexts. As an *approach* to human consciousness, it provides a conceptual system by Peirce to psychology and reestablishes a link with philosophy. Rosa, Innis and Valsiner are the primary references to this theoretical basis. Valsiner positions the use of signs as an axiom, as they “...mediate between the past and the future and provide stability in an inherently ambiguous world” (Beckstead, 2012a, p. 716).

On the applicability of semiotics

Semiotics has been applied to biology, advertisement and religion, and Innis states that “[s]emiotics is the study of signification in the most general sense of that term” (ibid., 2012, p.255). Pilgrimage is commonly understood as related to *organized religion*, and Jensen (2012) notes that religion is a “...*semiotic phenomenon par excellence. Without signs and signification processes there could not ever have been any religion, and so semiotics should play a prominent role in the investigation of religion(s).*” (Jensen, 2012, p. 1). Yelle (2013) describes semiotics as “...the systematic study of signs, symbols and communication; it overlaps in its method and subject most directly with linguistics and rhetoric” (ibid., p.1). Yelle raises a concern if an attempt is made at sign-use in religion from a “purely semiotic perspective relying on a general, cross-cultural valid theory of semiosis”, and adds; “It is impossible to account for semiotic systems without incorporating also the dimensions of consciousness and of poesis or meaning-making” (ibid., p.3). It may be possible to overcome Yelle’s concern through Peirce in this respect also, being an approach to understand consciousness construction of meaning, as Peirce “...proposes a *semiotic* approach to consciousness and cognitional structure that has as its focal point its essential dimensionality” (Innis, 2012, p.257) made up by differentiation of signs into *icon*, *index*, and *symbol* reflecting consciousness as a process of creating complex signs of *all* sign modes.

Semiosis

Semiosis is a *continuous process of becoming* without beginning or end, making it impossible to experience anything more than once considering that psychological phenomena always occur in irreversible time (an axiom per Valsiner). “It”, or rather, when consciousness is referred to as “psyché”, in this perspective, it is not an entity with a fixed form and specific properties. Metaphorically, it is the *movement* of the water in the stream of a river, into which one can never step twice per Heraclitus. What *makes* the stream (of consciousness) move forward, is the constant de/construction of signs in meaning-making. *Meaning-making* is the *combination* of categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness as basic forms of *awareness of anything*, per Rosa (2007) which when taking together, is *semiosis*. They will be described later, but semiosis is *dynamic, cyclic and sign-mediated action* as a cooperation of signs forming a “continuous process of interpretation”, a *dynamism of action upon action*.

Peirce suggested categories of consciousness; *Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness* in a *phenomenological outlook* on how meaning on something is preceded by sense, and how any experience comes to consciousness. Rosa (2007) explains by referring to these categories, how from feeling-of-something and an object is created (ibid., pp. 212-215). This is a basis for understanding how personal culture is created as by the creation of “mental“ objects that endure.

Rosa presents a schematic illustration of Peirce concepts which will be explained.

		Ontological or Material Categories			
Function	Phenomenological or Formal Categories		Firstness	Secondness	Thirdness
PRESENTATION	<i>Firstness</i>	A sign is:	"A mere quality" QUALISIGN	An "actual existent" SINSIGN	A "general law" LEGISIGN
REPRESENTATION	<i>Secondness</i>	A sign relates with its object having:	"Some character in itself" ICON	"Some existential relation to that object" INDEX	"Some relation to the interpretant" SYMBOL
INTERPRETATION	<i>Thirdness</i>	A sign's interpretant represents it (sign) as a sign of:	"A Possibility" RHEMA	"A fact" DICENT	"A reason" ARGUMENT

Function added from Valsiner (2014, p.90)

"Table 20.2: Peirce's *Tricotomies* relate phenomenological or formal categories with ontological or material categories" (Rosa, 2007, p.213)

At the level of **Presentation** and Firstness as a phenomenological category, is *feeling*; "the consciousness which can be included with an instant of time, passive consciousness of quality without recognition or analysis". Rosa (ibid.) sees *qualities* as a result of "feelings that appear in our consciousness, but they could be either sensed or imagined". To elaborate from Rosa; *Firstness* has no relation. It is unique, like a tone of music, a vague taste of something, or a color. It is a feeling of *something*, hard to put into words. Music (sound) *may* have Firstness. Rosa refers to a *feeling* of brightness as Firstness. As a sign of "*brightness itself*" it is a Qualisign, which in effect refers to something really there; *brightness is present* - hence as a Sinsign - something that stands in opposition to oneself. This allows for using brightness to form a general law, a Legisign as "outside it is bright", which serves to "stabilize" the world per Rosa.

Proceeding to the level of **Representation**, at Secondness, it is “consciousness of interruption into the field of consciousness, sense of resistance of an external fact, or another something”. Rosa explains that for feelings to achieve “factuality” by which is meant a sense of reality by being “related to something that has a radical otherness to oneself, there must be a resistance to our efforts, a sense of polarity or reaction, of two sides of an instant” (ibid.). Elaborating further, *Secondness* is a “brute fact” which arises *from a relation*. As when trying to close a door, and one discovers that this is not possible, for *something* is blocking the door. Suddenly the world of artifacts appears to oneself in the form of a *breakdown of intention*. Now, one discovers what is blocking the door: The relation between a shoe stuck in the opening and the *not-closing* the door. The following point is central; “It is the resistance that things offer to our efforts that make their qualities to appear in consciousness, and with the regularities of their appearances, objects come into being in consciousness.” (ibid.). By that sentence, Rosa provides a useful frame for understanding pilgrimage, use of the body and of (“sacred”) objects. This is taken up later in the article. In Secondness, there are three sign-modes in which something is represented. These are the well-known Icon, Index and Symbol which are explained later, as they are central to meaning-making in “religious” contexts. Briefly, *iconicity* is “making *resemblance* to”, *indexicality* is “perceived as *attached* to” and *symbolism* is a relation to what is referred to as *per law or habit*. Many things may be used to show brightness per property as e.g. “silver plate”. This is resemblance. Indexicality “shares an existential relation to its object” says Rosa, e.g. “daylight” is existentially related to brightness”. Symbolism depends on a previously “constituted real relationship” as when “brightness is a sign of daylight”. Symbols follow regularities, and always points towards what has previously been agreed upon. This is how a *fact* can become a *sign* for something else.

At the level of **Interpretation**, there are also three sign modes. These are Rhema, Dicient and Argument. Rhema is a sign-mode where the *possibility* of something being the case is invoked, akin to hypothesis and signaling abduction. The Dicient sign is that something which is suggesting a real presence. It is an object that resists one’s action per Rosa, and it has properties to do so. The Argument addresses a “lawful systematic connection with other signs” (ibid). The Argument assembles Dicient signs into a system, or a comprehensive interpretation. At this point the Object is created. So, some

“compression” takes place in semiosis leading not only to “something real is” happening, but also condensing the experience into a form. This is the level of Thirdness; “synthetic consciousness, binding time together, sense of learning, thought” (ibid., p.210). *Thirdness* is crucial to Peirce, for this is the realm of general laws, and the mental element. *A Third (general law) brings a First into relation with a Second.* These categories constitute the basics of *experiencing*.

Icon, Index and Symbol

As mentioned, these three are the most commonly referred to sign modes, but the general point is that Peirce links *all* sign modes to *instantiations in consciousness* i.e. *semiotics to meaning-making* (Innis, 2012). The following makes this clearer.

The iconic mode/sign

The *iconic sign* “represents its object ‘mainly by its similarity’, but need not be visual.” (Chandler, 2002, p.39). Is it the *form* that suggest its meaning, as do “diagrams, images and metaphor” (Innis, 2012, p. 257), but when understood as a dimensionality of the consciousness, it is a mode of *resemblance*. Iconic signifiers “can be highly evocative. When we ‘see’ the object in an iconic sign, we often feel ‘closer’ to the truth than if we had seen an index or a symbol....” (Chandler, 2002, p. 40). An example is Augustin’s metaphor of “Christian Life as a Pilgrimage”. It works by invoking an *iconic sign* by using a *symbolic mode* (understanding written or spoken *words*). It is the understanding created *in-between* which is a mode of *resemblance*. Metaphors are meaning-*transferring* tools that function by the dimensionality of consciousness of *comparing* quality to achieve *resemblance* hence for achieving meaning of one and the other *through a sign*.

The indexical mode/sign



Fig 26.
19th C. Painting of 'Our Lady with the Immaculate Heart'.
wikicommon.

To Peirce, the indexical mode has a "...genuine relation' between the 'sign' and the *object* which does not depend purely on the 'interpreting' mind" (Chandler, 2002, p.41). Innis notes that indexicality as semiotic mode, is exemplified by all species of signs that point, be it fingers, direction of eyes, sign posts, tracks in the snow, symptoms of disease..." (Innis, 2012, p.257). Chandler notes that indexical signs are when we are "startled", and that they direct our attention to the "object by blind compulsion", and that "[p]sychologically, the action of indices depends upon association by contiguity, and not association by resemblance or upon intellectual operations..." (ibid., pp.41-42). The *object* is *necessarily* existing by *indexical* reference to it. This, makes an object (e.g. an idea) *possible* to *worship*. It is *experienceable* by guided effort in worship of e.g. Virgin Mary. Without the object (the Immaculate Heart, see fig. 26.), the pointing gesture would be *pointless*. Notice that one hand points to the heart, and the other both is raised as if to *catch attention* and is pointing *upwards*, creating an additional sign. This act is referring to the "inner heart" and God, *sacralizing* and *explaining* this "feeling", by suggesting a sign with which to understand per a Dicent sign that which is "the presence of something that has some real properties" as Rosa explains.

The symbolic mode/sign

Finally, the *symbol*; "a sign which refers to the object that it denotes by law, usually an association of general ideas, which operates to cause the symbol to be interpreted as referring to that object." (Chandler, 2002, p.38). Symbols are typically understood as "words, sentences and books and other conventional signs" (ibid.). Peirce sees symbols as *not* restricted to words, but having no similarity or analogy with their object. *Symbols* are thus interpreted *per rule*; as the interpretation of a no-entry traffic sign put up in contiguity of where there is no entry, relies on the *indexical dimensionality* of consciousness in interpreting and using *symbols*.

Commentary



Fig 28.
13th C.
Coat of Arms
of Thibaut of
Navarra.
wikicommon.

Over time *iconization* occurs as in stylized depicting of Virgin Mary (Scheer, 2013), or by *transforming* the Christian cross, originally a Roman torture and killing instrument, into an stylized *emblem*, and later into a *flag* to signify *nation* (fig. 29). The use of emblems is an act of *communication*. The reference to feelings per symbol is useful for many purposes; e.g. to signify belonging to a family or feudal tribe, as fig. 28 (a coat of arms). Emblems and flags *catch attention*, can be objects of *worship*, and tools for *signifying belonging*. A founding member of the Danish People's Party, and the Chairman of Danish Parliament, in 2016, introduced the Danish flag to be hung up in Parliament¹⁴ (fig. 29). It created a debate on who has the right to use the Danish flag (as a symbol for whose "tribe" or politics), and for *which* purposes, signifying the *use* of a flag, or an emblem, in *certain contexts*, as *value-based communication*. In effect, it expresses *Secondness* as *Gegenstand*¹⁵ using a physical artifact. The meaning of the use of the flag at birthdays in Denmark is (still) different from its use in Parliament or on the shoulders of Danish soldiers, for its lack of direct relation to *nation*. The *meaning* of the use of a flag or an emblem, varies with *historical* time, *context* and *conditions*, but is *value-based*. *Interpretation* taking *preceding events* and *purpose* into account is necessary, but by semiotics, it is possible to conceptualize how *feelings* come to *signify objects* per Rosa (2007), through which both the use as a *demarcation* and *communication* of *nation*, and for *celebration* of *birthday*, is meaningful, but refers to affective objects of *different* meanings. The flag is the tool that acts back. The border of "sacred" and "secular" is blurred, and conflicts of *tradition* and *modernity* show up in contemporary settings revealing the importance of symbols.



Fig 29.
21st C.
Pia Kjaersgaard,
Chairman of
Danish Parlia-
ment.

¹⁴ Ref. <https://www.dr.dk/nyheder/politik/dannebrog-faar-permanent-plads-i-folketingssalen> (downloaded 29-05-2017)

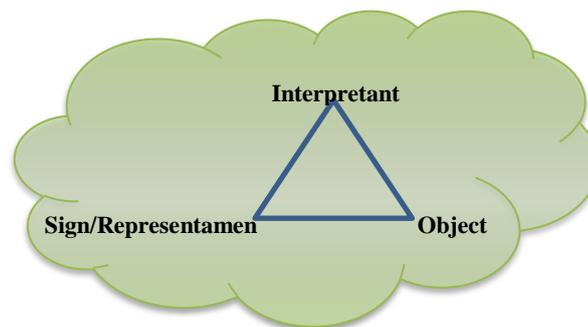
¹⁵ Originally a term from the Brothers Grimm known for their folk-tales https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gegenstand#cite_note-1 (downloaded 29-05-2017)

Ground, Object and Interpretant

Peirce introduced a triadic relationship between sign and object by referring also to feeling and process of an individual who *establishes relation in consciousness*. This makes Peirce especially relevant for the study of affect in pilgrimage as related to sign-construction.

“A sign or representamen is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the interpretant of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its object. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the ground of the representamen [CP 2.228]” (Rosa, 2007, p.211)

Chandler (2002) explains Sign/Representamen as “the form which the sign takes” (not necessarily material), Interpretant as “not an interpreter but rather the sense made of the sign”, and Object “to which the sign refers” (ibid., p.32).



Grey cloud: Ground

Fig. 23

Ground is the *aspect* in which something can be a sign for something else. Peirce uses *black* as an example for how it may refer to a stove, but the use of black is based on a previous extraction from experience (Rosa, 2007) for this to be possible. This means that ground is an abstract category that provides for referring to *something as something* (else), essentially a relationship. Object of a sign, on the other hand, may be anything. From an idea to a human being, or a thing. The point is that the sign is able to represent it, which makes it possible to *refer* to it (this is the *immediate object* of the sign, per Peirce). However, resistance is needed for an object to achieve factuality, it has to offer “resistance” (to be a *dynamic object* useful for something). The stove may therefore have several ways of being-referred-to with regards for being-useful-for, as

“hardness, heaviness, hotness” (Rosa, 2007) (notice the common aspect of *sensing-as via a bodily relating* to the object). This is *grounding*.

The Interpretant “appears when a representamen denotes an object and so makes possible the understanding that the sign is referring to the object.” (ibid., p.212). The Interpretant then becomes a *sign of the object* whereby its capability of “acting as a sign of the object” is established. It is from this mental action of the consciousness that *recursive dynamic semiosis* arises.

Dynamism, the engine in meaning-making; the sign generating a new sign.

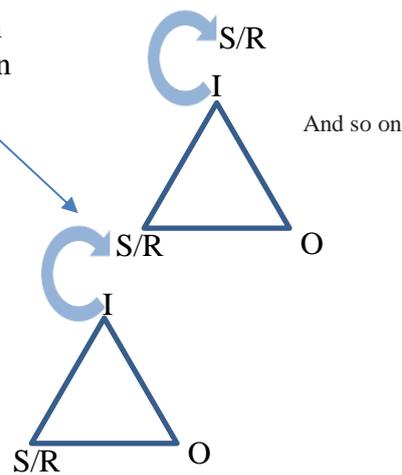


Fig. 24

TIME... psychological phenomena unfold in irreversible time (Valsiner).

Explanation of the graphic in fig. 24

Crucial to the theory of semiotics, Peirce suggested *dynamism*. The Interpretant which is the result of a sign, is a further sign, as it is a “sign in the mind”. Therefore, the Interpretant plays a key role. The Interpretant turns into a new Sign/Representamen which places it in relationship to a further Object that in turn entails an Interpretant which again is transformed into a Sign/Representamen which is in relationship to another Object and so on... effectively *unlimited semiosis*. The chain of associations thus ends up *distancing* the original Sign/Representamen from the initial sign. Different types of signs are combined into *sign complexes* per Valsiner (2014), reflecting how consciousness works *through complex wholes* of triadic relations.

Methodological considerations

In this section I present methodological considerations concerning studying the phenomenon. Initially, I present the empirical basis for suggesting that there is a phenomenon worth understanding better, after which I enter a discussion of a theoretical basis which involves ontology and epistemology. I end this section by presenting a framework applicable for studying. One way of approaching is applying a model to understand how which is the overall aim

Empirical basis

To separate fictional worlds and emotions, from supposedly real worlds and emotions, or “religious” from “rational” thought does not bring us closer to how immersion into a landscape, a piece of music, a sacred place, a deity, a ritual performance, another person - or a sacred vision is possible, and takes on *meaningfulness*.

Case stories.

Summary

Two case short stories below are examples of particularly powerful experiences *that overflow the person*. The first is perceived as how “sacred conduct” arises out of social norm guided by a sign of “sacred blessing”, and the second is a creation of “sacredness of nature” after prayer and seeing a beautiful bird. All cases have an *affective relating* in common. Because this affective relating can take on a symbol per semiotic mediation, it may be passed on to others in writing and practices. What is not included in the analysis here, are the personal stories which the interviewees also expressed, to provide the background for the pilgrimages, making it more understandable why these sign-constructions were created. What they share is that they happened in pilgrimages and had an enduring impact. This should be taken into consideration in understanding *why* these experiences are chosen by the interviewees, for it refers to possible motives for the pilgrimages emphasizing that what occurs “now” is under influence of what was perceived as occurring in the “past”, and is essentially about orientation for the “future”, therefore in line with the ideas proposed of the cultural-semiotic theory here.

Sacred social norm

The following segment is part of a larger transcription of a semi-structured interview for a psychology student project on pilgrimage focusing on values as outcomes of doing pilgrimage. The interviewee was asked to select experiences that felt important to them. This excerpt is from a female pilgrim having experienced something special on the Camino de Santiago. The pilgrim first tells of having had a hard journey, being wet, cold, confused, hungry and sad. She then finds a hostel, which was hard to get to, and is welcomed by a husband and a wife who run the hostel. She is provided food and a bed (IP: Interviewee/pilgrim, I: Interviewer)

“...well, you'll just have some more soup here [they told her] and be really welcome, to and be inside in the heat, it was damn good, it was great, ... so the feeling to climb into bed in some nice bed they had found me and such, and then the next day, so I asked them to send me off with a blessing, it said so over a door [on a sign] that they would do so if you asked them about it, so I asked for it (yes) and they had not met me before, so they did not know what to do with this [IP laughs] [I laugh] and then we went upstairs where we could stand in a room for ourselves, and so they embraced me (okay), two people, husband and wife there, and then they asked, what do you need to get the blessing (for), and what is the reason that you ask, but I have lost a friend, and I go here and am miserable and so on, right, and so they prayed for me, to have a good pilgrimage, and that I should get comfort in the grief I felt, it was very strong [-4]” (Kristensen, unpub.)

Affective relating to nature

The following segment is from the same project as above. This male interviewee tells of an experience after praying, on a pilgrimage almost 20 years prior to the interview. The experience demonstrates a “new meaning” given to nature termed “numinous” by the interviewee. The segment exemplifies an instance of perceiving nature as sacred, through an external object (a bird), following a long pilgrimage and prayer. The two pilgrims referred to, had walked together several hundred kilometers through Europe before this occurred. The interviewee refers to Francis of Assisi who is a Catholic Saint well-known for prayers for animals, but the interviewee refers here to a use of the Lord's Prayer by Saint Francis;

“...so there was so to say some very powerful ones [experiences] in the beginning down through [country] one is that nature it opens up in a strange and wondrous way on the way down there and the great experience I think about was one early morning we were walking on a trail and we had gone completely naive out on that trip, there was not anyone who had dealt with pilgrimage in '98 so we had said yes but as it is a pilgrimage then we'll do something so we prayed the Lord's prayer [laughs] and had a Francis of Assisi prayer with which we returned to [unclear]. And so one morning when we were out to pray the Lord's

Prayer together aloud, [-1] X [wife] was always in front of me, I walked behind, so there in front of us a [-] a gold pheasant was walking [-2] five meters in front of us for half a kilometer or more and that the golden pheasant appeared in connection with that we had related to [-1] to the divine [-2] it was at least MAGIC for us. It was [-1] so we experienced it was as if it was a relationship, nature was given a greater value BECAUSE we had prayed the Lord's Prayer [-2] okay and that it then appeared in such as a spring aspect namely in a gold pheasant which showed the way. A golden pheasant's is also a bit strange and maybe had chicks what do I know but it was COMFORTABLE with us” (Kristensen, unpub.)

Theoretical basis

“Models are of central importance in many scientific contexts”

(Frigg & Hartman, 2012).

The following section discusses use of models in science particular to the applied cultural psychological approach. A model can be *a tool* in epistemology when grasping at understanding a *complex phenomenon*. E.g. one which *cannot* be studied *directly*, for it has no *visible* form, and may exist for a brief moment. The model provides a language to understand this. This does not mean that knowledge is not *empirically* based, but it is a synthesis of axioms, knowledge and theory. Hence *scientific knowledge* on the subject matter is *made* through a *constructivist epistemology* in the perspective of *anti-realism*, as the model is a *tool for the mind* to *assemble* a vast amount of “data”, as per Faye (2000). In this perspective, a model is *not* an object for verification or falsification, as in a realist perspective. It does not serve *generation* of hypothesis to be tested, in the field by interviewing pilgrims, or experimentally for prediction of behavior with some certainty.

Using the formal science of semiotics is aiming for *scientific generalization*. A model appears out of *intentional thought and theory* on par with how Shweder (1991) argues that humans create, and live in intentional worlds populated with *intentional products* of *our own designs* which structure and organize meaning, activity and psyché, or as Bruner (2004) suggesting that “...world making" is the principal function of mind, whether in the sciences or in the arts” (ibid., p. 692). The model is the result of *research as an activity* that produces a theoretical re-presentation, or in semiotic terms, a *Secondness*.

Ontological considerations on human beings as meaning-makers in semiotic webs

Valsiner (2017) emphasizes starting from assumptions about the object of study. Human beings are *semiotic animals*. This is an axiom of the *cultural-semiotic* approach for understanding human meaning-making in a dynamical perspective; “...human beings, while relating with their environment (acting upon it) create signs that regulate that very process of acting in irreversible time” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 116).

Human beings are perceived as *meaning-makers* who use and produce linguistic and non-linguistic signs. Umberto Eco wrote “signification encompasses the whole of cultural life, even at the lower threshold of semiotics...” (Innis, 2012, p.256). This lower threshold is what Innis calls the “actional-affective-perceptual” field, and cultural life is an “upper threshold”, grounded and located in the former. What Innis is suggesting here, may be that all cultural life is necessarily intertwined with actions, emotions, and perceptions of how and what we see, and feel, in the world, and in ourselves.

The human mind is never just that which is under the skin of the individual person, but the person is always, as an organism, completely in a “...semiotic web, a network of signs and sign relations that are the support of its mental existence. Its mind is no more inner than outer. It is both...” (Innis, 2012, p. 256), and that the way our thoughts “come to us”, and “we come to our thoughts”, depends upon which available semiotic tools we have (ibid.). What this means for epistemology is taken up next.

Epistemological considerations on the relationships of methods and knowledge

This section discusses *how* to study *affective semiosis* (meaning-making) within pilgrimage. A method must conform to *what* is studied, thus propose explicit and specific assumptions of human meaning-making, which are guidelines of the research. A method may be created along with creating a model, and only exist in that context. That one does not use a *specific* method or technique is not equivalent to *not* doing scientific research. Not all scientific products can or should be validated as accepted if their methods are explicitly stated in order for results to be “reproduced”. Galileo

would never have discovered the moons of Jupiter for the telescope hardly counted as an acknowledged method the first time it was used. It was controversial and experimental, as is the idea of trying to create a generalizing model of pilgrimage by fusing empirical, encyclopedic knowledge of pilgrimage with cultural-semiotic theory applying various *Geisteswissenschaften*, and elements from *Naturwissenschaft*. “Religious” and “secular” belief and conduct may be captured and understood, for it is *semiosis* which makes either possible, but the view here is that the religious *arises* activity in this World, thus in line with Karl Marx’ who wrote

“In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here we ascend from earth to heaven. That is to say, we do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises” (Marx, 1845).

to which should be added Vico’s idea of how humans create meaning in *anthropomorphic thinking* which appears *universally* per Danesi (2016) and Tateo (2015). However, in understanding pilgrimage as meaningful conduct, it is *necessary* to include beliefs in e.g. the divine as gods, forces or angels (or “phantoms” per Marx).

Sløk attributes “religious” thinking to a “religious instinct”, to set it apart from “rational mind”, whereas Vico refers to the “poetic mind”. Danesi (2016) explains that Vico saw human mind as *poetic* in expressing itself in metaphor and myth, and Tateo (2015) refers to the *imagination* based on *bodily experiencing*, as the basis from which generalized ideas are created using images “shaped and encoded”. It is with this that civilizations are organized, but that the psychological foundation is universal, as it appears in all civilizations;

“ A central point in Vico’s theory of universals is that these forms are common to different civilizations because they are founded on the basic psychological processes of imaginative thought. All the primitive civilizations had to explain, he claims, natural phenomena, e.g. thunder. His explanation was based on the creation of anthropomorphic and powerful universal figures, like Zeus, that we can find in every culture.” (Tateo, 2015, p. 56)

Assumptions are embedded in methods and techniques

Methods have implicit assumptions about their subject matter which guide the creation of knowledge.

Science starts from good questions. Good answers are always tentative. They are scientific so far as a science can formulate assumptions of its subject matter, justify them theoretically, and by stating objectives and reliance or dependency on interests. One always knows *something* about a subject matter, and it is necessary to make this explicit. Assumptions must be related to what one is looking for. Using *techniques* for “extraction” is not automatically being scientific just because “data” is created in the form of numbers being attached to different words and processed in ANOVA analysis.

It is common sense that questionnaires cannot *create scientific data* on stars! Yet surveys and questionnaires are frequently used to extract data out of human beings. In astronomy, a *survey* is a *technique* using *instruments* for *capturing* light which is turned into quantitative data. This is explicitly stated, and as physics describes the nature of light, methods are adapted for studying it accordingly. In the social sciences, a survey is a *method* involving procedures based on *assumptions* of the subjects of study. The data produced in psychology is, however, used in statistics to produce *scientific* knowledge of their subjects. This is done *as-if* humans are like stars “emitting light” in giving answers in tick-off-boxes and on Likert scales. Answers from humans are perceived as photons varying in energy levels. This technique is used *as-if* it were *instrumental probing and extraction*. It relies on the premise that the laws of the psyché can not only be detected mathematically, but functions thus. This is an assumption, but a logical one considering psychology’s keenness on empiricism.

It appears that because humans have *language* this leads to relying on language *only*. It is perceived as a King’s Way into the *inner sanctum* of the machinery that controls humans, typically referred to as opinions, preferences, attitudes, feelings and traits. Such *common language* concepts are *imaginary* objects nonetheless, made for the purpose of predicting *behavior* in disregard of *contextual sensitivity*. The assumption is

that language-based instruments produce (scientific) data. This is irrespective of language, which, from a discursive psychological perspective, is a co-constructive, constructive process that is *dialogical, purposive-driven and action-oriented*.

Referring to Brinkmann (2016), humans, as language-users, are doing something. One is never just referential or descriptive. Using language is creating. In other words, *humans use language as action meant for other human communicators in situations*. Therefore, and firstly, the questionnaire fails by being *unidirectional*. Human communications is *bidirectional*. Secondly, the use of a questionnaire is grounded in the assumption that “the respondent has complete access to the facts and is willing and able to reveal them when questioned” (Valsiner, Bibace, LaPushin, 2005, p. 276). It is shown by example, that this assumption is problematic (*ibid.*). When an interview is conducted as unidirectional communication, problems occur. Even when the interview is more “open-ended” and bidirectional, it is still a language-based communication practice which is embedded in, and thus sensitive to, contextual influence. The interviewer easily becomes also an author co-writing the manuscript and an actor playing a part. This is another way of saying that the interview typically is used as part of a *constructive epistemology* which does reflect everyday use of language, to a certain extent. For it reflects that *type* of everyday “discourse” which may be familiar to those accustomed to self-expressing *in language*. This is a *social practice*; an emblem of “*bourgeois schooling*” and “*interview culturalization*”. Historically, this practice is established in Europe with e.g. Augustin’s “*Confession*” and later, in the Reformation in Europe which “also added fuel to the passion for written self-revelation” (Bruner, 2004, p. 695).

The limits of language limit the range of methods

Innis (2012) remarks that even if language is a *semiotic system*, almost universally admitted as such, it does not “function as the prime model for semiosis” (*ibid.*, p. 256). This has methodological implications for research into semiosis. Because humans are perceived as creators and users of *non-linguistic signs*, too, this theoretical framework for the model, sees language only *capturing a range* of human semiosis of level of “specific emotion terms” and “generalized categories of feeling” accessible to language (Valsiner, 2014, p.126). Hence, relying on language can limit understanding

complex psychological phenomena of semiosis that lie beyond these levels. This may seem a contradiction in the context of psychology.

Generally, to master a language may lead to assuming that *because* something is *nameable* it therefore *exists*, and that *anything* which *exists* is uniquely *nameable*, and that which is *not* nameable does *not* exist or cannot be made a part of an interpretation. A *scientific* cultural psychology *should seek* to stretch beyond these limits. Actors in social practices may themselves provide too limited a source of understanding meaning-making. They provide for *visible conduct*, *accounts* of how experiences feel, and what they mean *to the themselves*. A language-based approach using imaging, interviews, questionnaires and surveys *may* limit understanding a complex phenomenon as *affective semiosis*, but these techniques may be supportive and provide case material.

Application of the individual-socioecological reference frame in research

The following approach to research is based on Valsiner (2017). The *individual-socioecological reference frame* is applied for studying how personal culture in pilgrimage is created as affective semiosis. The individual-socioecological reference frame is an extension of reference-frames typical in psychological research, but now the perspective is on *how to create methods* considering *guidance* from the *environment* and *social*



others. This is a necessity considering the human psychological system – or psyché – as of an *open nature* (axiom). This means that the psyché is always and already interacting with the environment when establishing any meaning of self and the world.

To understand the nature of this interaction, and how it influences the psyché, it is necessary to understand what an environment affords a person, for persons are perceived as goal-oriented (axiom).

However, environments are not passive, they are typically culturally (intentionally) organized, which means that they offer suggestion for persons to “pick up”. In the construction of the model, attention is therefore given to points stated by Valsiner to guide research within the *individual-socioecological reference frame*, to understand how *personal culture* is created: By specifying the nature of the “system” (the pilgrim) and how ties with environment are established, the nature of environment (pilgrimage), and what it affords the person to establish relations with it, how “social others” orient the pilgrim to the system<>environment relations, and what the goal-orientations of the pilgrim are, and, finally, the structure of the environment and social guidance. Social guidance may occur immediate as verbal directions, or mediated as when attending to particular objects in an environment suggesting ways of understanding what they mean. Prayer is a discursive tool which mediates meaning, to be used by the person, guiding the self. The person has a degree of freedom in selecting which objects and meanings it attends to, and as these are internalized, then also personalized, and in this form inaccessible to others.

This is the frame used in the article for showing how personal culture is created in pilgrimage per *affective semiosis* under guidance from others and self.

Conclusion

Conclusively, firstly, pilgrimages are a key part of cultural historical traditions of civilizations serving several purposes. One is facilitating *personal culture*. But it starts from having a body and a consciousness, operating by *signs* under the influence of conditions of life and available knowledge in the form of *semiotic tools*. Secondly, pilgrimage is also serving a social framework that can extend temporally and spatially beyond what is present by ordinary perception, for it is orientated “upwards” into the sphere of forces of the divine, and from there meanings seem to extend “downwards” to be used in shaping personal culture and in the everyday of living a life. Thirdly, I have tried to follow up on my intuition that experience must be understood before going into psychological theorizing on particular phenomena. Peircean semiotics embedded into a cultural psychology proves a fruitful coupling, and lays down the foundation for further theorizing and research.

...the next step is

Fourthly, the next step is to present a model, and explain why *affective semiosis* is a useful concept. The idea of suggesting a model is comparable to presenting how by dynamic forces, a star upholds itself. This cannot be seen directly, either. But a *suggested best potential explanation* including a visual image may facilitate understanding. The model will tie empirical elements to theory based on Peirce and Valsiner. An approach rooted in positivism will not suffice to understand the subject matter at hand here, for even if stars are very interesting and beautiful, they will die and their matter may create new stars, but they are not *value based phenomena* and do *not* create *cultural history*.

A marginal commentary



Fig. 28. A Medieval monk lamenting
“Now I’ve written the
whole thing: for
Christ’s sake give me
a drink.”

Commentaries in the margins as in fig. 28 were sometimes found on manuscripts written by Medieval Christian monks remarks Dickey (2012). I tried to advocate for not seeing neither pilgrimage nor “medieval culture exclusively in terms of binary oppositions—sacred/profane, for example, or spiritual/worldly” (ibid.). My inquiry extended beyond pilgrimage in Medieval times, into other pilgrimage traditions and religious frameworks. In the future, it may extend into contemporary ways of organizing life, to render how, under *capitalism, patriotism and growing nationalism, practices (collective culture)* change, but creation of *personal culture* remains.

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Introduction

How is sacred a human psychological phenomenon? This article suggests it is *created* in the practice of pilgrimage, by presenting a *model* focusing on creation of *personal culture* by affective semiosis. Innis (2016) states that *affective semiosis* is “a concept that remains to be defined in a satisfactory way” (ibid., p.91). By *using* it, in trying to understand an ancient and contemporary practice, this may contribute to definition.

The article first presents concepts, a theoretical perspective, methodological considerations, and performs then an analysis on the interrelated components to fit them into a model in relation to affective semiosis.

The model is kept to six interrelated components; *journey, place and body* and beliefs in *forces* infinitely larger than humans, the possibility of establishing *relationship* to forces, and they have *residence* in places. The components are analyzed using cultural-semiotic theory on how the *consciousness* establishes meaning while giving primacy to *affective relating*. For journey, the following points are made: Journeying originated in sustaining life which became a basis for *sacred*, and journeying alters receptiveness towards *sacred* via *collective culture* invoking ways of meaning-making. Place guides attention, and provides material basis for meaning-making. An analysis of a single case shows how *sacred* is constructed upon prayer. Finally, the body is understood as *tool*, and pilgrimage as *ritual theater* making the body a signifier. Conclusively, a summary of the model is presented and a graphical illustration provided.

Pilgrimage in a Weberian perspective with cultural psychology

There are many pilgrimage traditions and suggestions for interpretation. Individual traditions have multiple layers of meanings created over time. Some of the largest pilgrimages involve millions of people; *Arba'een* to Karbala in Iraq, *Hajj* pilgrimage to Mecca, and *Kumb Mela* in India. The border between religious pilgrimage and religious festival is blurred when pilgrimages occur on specific times of the year. Already Saint Augustin suggested a purpose for pilgrimage in a *Christian* tradition which creates a working template. It was to *resemble* Christ, in his pursuits and sufferings by following in the “emotional footsteps” as per Beckstead (2012b). *Resemblance* is achieved in proximity to a sacred place and performing a ritualized journey to a special place; a tomb, or where miracles happened, or where any object is deemed as expressing and encapsulating “sacred” and of the transcendent. Dubisch (2012) presents several reasons that blur the line between *religious* purpose, devotion to notabilities, or serving *national, ethnic* or *political* ends. Davidson & Gitlitz (2002) describe backgrounds for pilgrimage traditions, and, generally, pilgrimage facilitates “coming nearer in *body*” to forces and values as part of collective culture of a social framework. Pilgrimages involve ways of expressing the body, and interpreting experiences, for when entering a semiosphere of potential meanings, much is *already* available to use; discursive and non-discursive practices are part of semiosphere. The pre-defined character of pilgrimages facilitates *personalized* meanings, to develop a sense of self and become a full “member” of a social framework. Pilgrimage expresses *devotion* to a social framework per Valsiner (2007). Person-*as-pilgrim* exists in a *liminal* phase per Turner (1978) before person-*as-member*. A pilgrimage tradition is a *tool* and an *arena* for internalizing and externalizing value-based collective meaning-making of a social framework under conditions of life.

The article is informed by a Weberian perspective on religion while seeking a generalized understanding of meaning-making by applying Valsiner’s cultural psychological theory and Peircean semiotics. A Weberian perspective on religion is *continuist* defined as “*adherence to any belief, religious or scientific as well as juridical, is explained by the fact that the subject has strong reasons to believe it, and that this belief*

makes sense to him” (Boudon, 2001, p. iv). “Religious” versus “rational” thought would be cultural concepts (*Kulturbegriffe* per Weber). To be informed by Weber means here specifically that “religious” or “rational” thinking is a dichotomy grounded in a certain way of “thinking of thinking” created due to forces of historical change, and are *not* explanatory themselves. Both ways of *thinking* are instances of *sign-mediated meaning-making under certain conditions of life using available tools* which aligns with Valsiner (2007) suggesting “[a]ll human thinking is culturally organized.” (ibid., p.264).

Conceptual tools for analysis

Personal and collective culture

These terms are used in Valsiner (2007, 2014), and the former is “...*personally, idiosyncratic semiotic systems of symbols, practices, and their personal objects, all of which constitute the personal culture*” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 214), whereas collective culture “*entails communally shared meanings, social norms, an everyday life practices, all united into a heterogenous complex – yet the anchor point in this sharing is the person*” (ibid.). The *model of internalization and externalization* in Valsiner (2014, p.70) explains how messages are (de)coded in communication by a person. On conducting oneself, “coding” is performed, and a *laminal model* of double transformation suggests how one does not “succumb to overflow” from messages and suggestions of an environment. Elimination of messages, and negotiation occurs constantly when crossing one layer to another. At each crossing, meaning-making takes place as *sign-mediated process*. The laminal model shows the *double transformation* of messages being transformed in either direction. Messages that enter *all layers* is the topic here.

Meaning-making

Davidson & Gitlitz (2002) describe pilgrimage traditions of the world. The introduction states; “[p]laces where and pieces of link here below with there above.” How such “linkage” is established and what it may serve, is answered by reformulating the question to *how is personal culture created in pilgrimage?* The short answer is by *affective semiosis* and from realizing that humans have *bodies* that orientate and resonate with *environment*.

Belief

A belief is *inference to the best potential explanation* (abduction per Peirce) explained as “*The surprising fact, C, is observed. But if A were true, C would be a matter of course. Hence, there is reason to suspect that A is true.*” (Valsiner, 2007, p. 275). This form of meaning-making is used in the everyday, also.

Semiotic mediation

Creation of personal culture is a *semiotic mediated act* that allows for distancing from the immediate, creating an *object*. Valsiner (2007) explains its general form;

‘The *person* constructs *meaning complex* “X”...

...*objectifies* it by *fixing its form* (e.g. internal – internalized social norm, or external – monument, picture of deity, figurine)

.....and starts to act *as if* the objectified meaning complex X is an external agent that *controls* the *person*’ (ibid., p.61).

Valsiner’s point is that human thinking is culturally organized. Semiotic mediation suggests that pilgrims are guided by suggested ways of creating meaning, by which is meant that a best potential explanation is not *handed over*, but is *invoked* and follows socio-cultural-historical tradition grounded in conditions of life. Invocation of *ways of making inference* turn sacred in *ritual* when emotions are invoked, and become *belief* (*religious faith*). This notion lines up with a Weberian perspective on religion, of “getting well on in life”, when a form of *inference* becomes a way to manage oneself.

Semiotics

Peirce positioned *semiotics*, per Rosa (2007), as the “science of the general necessary laws of signs” (ibid, p.209.) concerned with how phenomena relate to truth, and Peirce defined a sign accordingly;

“A *sign* or *representamen* is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*. It stands for that object, not in all respects, but in reference to a sort of idea, which I have sometimes called the *ground of the representamen* [CP 2.228]” (Rosa, 2007, p. 211)

Semiotics is also a *normative* science to “persuade and reach consensus and truth” (ibid.). It provides tools to *analyze* phenomena. Rosa (2007) argues with Peircean semiotics that feelings can come to signify objects, and Innis that

‘...there is an important consequence of Peirce’s theory of quality that bears upon the theme of “affective semiosis” ...[...]...By putting the iconic element “first” in his analysis of semiosis, Peirce in effect foregrounded feeling or the affective dimension as the original core element of our grasp of complex wholes, what pulls us toward, or repels us from the, object...’ (Innis, 2016, pp. 91-92).

A place to start for linking affective semiosis with personal culture is to look for purpose-driven, constructed, *ideational objects* (“mental ornaments”) that act back on the person. These may be referred to as “*values*” and used explanatory, for identification and navigation in social frameworks in goal-oriented activity. Accordingly, these objects are of sociocultural origin and arise *in* and *for* activity and belongingness.

Semiosis

Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness

Function	Phenomenological or Formal Categories		Ontological or Material Categories		
			Firstness	Secondness	Thirdness
<i>PRESENTATION</i>	<i>Firstness</i>	A sign is:	”A mere quality” QUALISIGN	An ”actual existent” SINSIGN	A ”general law” LEGISIGN
<i>REPRESENTATION</i>	<i>Secondness</i>	A sign relates with its object having:	”Some character in itself” ICON	”Some existential relation to that object” INDEX	”Some relation to the interpretant” SYMBOL
<i>INTERPRETATION</i>	<i>Thirdness</i>	A sign’s interpretant represents it (sign) as a sign of:	”A Possibility” RHEMA	”A fact” DICENT	”A reason” ARGUMENT

Function added from Valsiner (2014, p.90)

“Table 20.2: Peirce’s *Tricotomies* relate phenomenological or formal categories with ontological or material categories” (Rosa, 2007, p.213)

As the focus of this article is objects that endure, it is noteworthy that Rosa (2007) argues with Peirce, for how an *object* appears for consciousness, and states “objects are an assortment of feelings and qualities that come regularly together” (ibid., p.214). Proceeding from Presentation, Representation, to Interpretation, Rosa argues that an object takes form through phenomenological categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness, passing through nine interrelated sign modes shown above (Rosa 2007, pp. 212-215). It suffices here to say here that Rosa sums it up so;

“An object, then is formed by a set of dicent signs (an argument, 9) which make possible that feelings and sensorial qualities (already shaped as abstract categories) could act as symbols for this object, once this is already constituted as something different to the agent’s subjective experiences, but that can only be taken as existing as a result of the combination of these experiences in (enactive) arguments” (ibid.).

The concepts will be used in the analysis. The perspective on the psyché in this article is bound to Peirce’s *semiosis*. Innis refers to semiosis as the cooperation of signs in a dynamic and “continuous process of interpretation” which is *action*, for Peirce states “A sign stands for something to the idea it produces, or modifies’ (CP. 1.339)” and Rosa that “[m]eaning is a result of semiosis, which is no other thing than a process carried out by an agent for something different than the sign, the object, or the agent itself; and this something different is what usually is called an objective, a purpose, a telos.” (Rosa, 2007, p.218).

Semiosphere

Lotman said “cultures share a structure which is analogous to the individual human minds in several of its fundamental features” (Magnus & Kull, 2012, p.649) presenting semiosphere as “common semiotic space”. Humans live in such *spheres* where they interpret, construct and destroy signs, which allows them to *cross boundaries of time and place* move forward to the *next moment*. For psychological phenomena are *future-oriented* (axiom). In this perspective, both a “culture and an individual world are fields of sign processes” (ibid.).

Human beings live in semiospheres *already in place*. From crossing thresholds of place and time, semiosphere gets known to us by its *affective dimensions*. Christmas

is a semiosphere in calendar time. On entering a church, we are guided by semiosphere, and in ritual receiving an oblate, or dancing around a tree at Christmas; “ritual carries with it obsessive focus on repetition and following of norms” (ibid). But semiosphere exists in supermarkets and on the beach, too. In crossing material and temporal thresholds, semiosphere guides us. We interact with others, and ourselves, in environments mediated by semiosphere.

Methodological considerations

The aim is generalization created using metatheory, theory and cases, guided by axioms on the general subject matter of *human psychological being*, to provide a *best potential explanation*. This subsection explains how. The method as following; *empirical material* is literature on, and images of, pilgrimage practices without deliberate strategy on selection other than illustrating the points. Literature and research on pilgrimage is used and publicly available images or ones taken by the author.

This article seeks generalization with some empirical basis, but as Valsiner (2007) states that “[h]uman thought processes are usually hidden from others; thinking is a private and hidden affair.” (ibid., p. 264) it seems unlikely that one may ever “know” how *what* another person thinks and feels. The model only suggests a general outline, and acknowledges Tateo’s point that “an abstract model of agent is nothing but an epistemological tool to describe a process, and there can be different theoretical model that can describe it in a different way.” (Tateo, 2017, p.3). The model aims for understanding the interrelationship of components and their relations to *affective semiosis* in a generalized manner. Three characteristics and three beliefs are selected from Dubisch (2012, p. 992) and Davidson & Gitlitz (2002 p. xvii) as *components* due to appearing universally: Journeying to establish relationship with forces, place where forces reside, infinitely larger than humans, and the use of the human body. *Characteristics* and *beliefs* are referred to as *components* without implying equal ontological status. Characteristics refer to the “positively present in the world”, whereas beliefs are *ways of inference* whose presence can only be inferred. Subjective meanings and values are at the core of personal culture per Valsiner. In the construction of the model,

attention is given to points stated by Valsiner (2017) to guide research within the *individual-socioecological reference frame*, to understand how *personal culture* is created: By specifying the nature of the “system” (the pilgrim) in how ties with environment are established, the nature of environment (pilgrimage), and what it affords the person to establish relations with it, how “social others” orient the pilgrim to the system$\langle \rangle$environment relations, and what the goal-orientations of the pilgrim are, and finally, the structure of the environment and suggestions of social guidance.

Analysis

Journey

The meaning of *journey* in pilgrimage, may be understood in several ways. Firstly, to understand the use of roads for journeying in pilgrimages, one needs to realize why travelling originated. Paths leading to the sacred *became sacred*. Secondly, the journey is *a sign*, for it stands for something to someone. It is metaphoric. Journeying along a pilgrimage road is metaphorically taking the *right path* towards a *place*, made significant per an ideational sphere established around it over historical time as semiosphere. Journeying in pilgrimage is *semiosis* for the journey entails *meaning-making* using linguistic and non-linguistic signs, for creating “inner” signs to comprehend experiencing. Thirdly, journeying in an environment potentially opens receptiveness of the pilgrim, to “take in” meanings, hence journeying is a basis for (re)creation of *personal culture* which includes conducts, beliefs, the environment – adding to social others who provide guidance, intentionally or by presence.

Needs of sustaining life as basis for creating sacred

Cultural history provides myths and metaphors for what *a journey in a pilgrimage tradition* means. Journeys were made on merchant and army-roads that *became* pilgrimage routes, as El Camino de Santiago de Compostela and Via Francigena towards Rome. Many of the roads in Europe were part of the infrastructure created in Roman time to uphold the empire, and provided efficient transport of officials, armies and merchants. Some deteriorated and others remained. In China, the Hua Shan route pilgrimage to one of China's Five Sacred Taoist Mountains, may have been an important road to transport the herbs that grew there. The Nile and the Ganges, both perceived as sacred, provided water for irrigation of fields, hence for growing crops and drinking-water. Necessities for sustaining life got imbued with affect, hence became objects for devoted worship in ritual thus worthwhile journeying to. Differentiation between “rational” versus “religious” thought and conduct, is of relatively recent origin in a historical perspective. Past others and their acts on the environment, become resources, as Beckstead (2012b) notes; “[t]he material objects (footprints) and movement toward the symbolic place promotes affective guidance that feeds forward and sets up a feeling

toward the symbolic place and values, images, ideas embodied, and there expressed” (ibid., p.109). “Footpaths” become organized into *collective culture* over time, symbolizing how to “proceed well” in life. Pilgrimage becomes synonymous with sustaining life.

Altering receptiveness

This subsection testifies to the *openness* of the human psychological meaning-system which is axiomatic to Valsiner’s cultural psychology theory. Pilgrims may *engage* with an environment in journeying. But the understanding of what journey in pilgrimage *does* with regards to receptiveness, starts from Innis’ idea of *movement-to-distance*, and uses cultural-semiotic theory to explain how *meaning* of journey arises.

Innis (2015), in referring to Peirce, Goethe and Carse, suggests that *movement* through new surroundings as in fig.1, creates a *felt distance* suggesting that when moving through the “outer world”, we *experience differences* that correspond to differences in the “inner world”. Simmel, referred to seeking “heightened existence” in travelling, as a unifying aspect of being tourist and/or pilgrim per Beckstead (2012a), and Innis (2015) explains that in how one meets the “outer world”, the “mind” must *facilitate experiencing*, and what is met, has to be “engaged and in some way interpreted in order for one to truly travel. Mere passing through does not suffice...” (ibid., p.42). Movement has different meanings and purposes. When merely *walking* a path (fig.1) one almost automatically *looks around* without realizing it, but is frequently “walking inside” also. Here walking means “walking with the psyché” while moving the body. Fig. 2 illustrates a practice in pilgrimage for this; *meditation* performed in *circumambulating* a sacred mountain.



Fig.1. The pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela, in Spain.



Fig. 2. Pilgrims on the Kawa Karpo Kora circuit, Tibet, reaching 4,800 meters. Wikicommon. (CC BY-SA 3.0).

To understand “taking in”, Innis refers to Goethe, who wrote “nothing, above all, is comparable to the new life that a reflective person experiences when he observes a new country...” (ibid., p. 42). All cultural life is necessarily intertwined with actions, emotions, and perceptions of how and what we see, and feel, in the world, and in ourselves. The human mind is never just that which is under the skin of the individual person, but the person is always, as an organism, completely in a “...semiotic web, a network of signs and sign relations that are the support of its mental existence. Its mind is no more inner than outer. It is both...” (Innis, 2012, p. 256), and that the way our thoughts “come to us”, and “we come to our thoughts”, depends upon on “objectively available semiotic tools” (ibid.). Valsiner (2007) explains that “[m]ovement leads to transformation of the environment, and of one’s own self. The minimal act of movement is that of taking a step: what is just one step for a person may be a huge step for his or her personal culture” (ibid., pp.241-242). *Movement* is a central theme in Beckstead (2012a), as a means of *transformation*, noting that pilgrims bring back “...also a less tangible yet significant insight or feeling that modifies their relationship with the world” (ibid., p.713). The person-world relationship is changed through experiencing the suggestions in the immediate environment.



Fig. 3. A pilgrim procession in Carinthia, Austria, by Johann Jaritz. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

To achieve change, the pilgrim must *experience* suggestions, often in the company of *others* as in fig.3. This does not mean that all experience the same. Primarily due to the lack of isomorphy between collective and personal culture explained through the laminal model, and explained by Beckstead (2012a) so; “*people actively interpret (constructively internalize) these social messages and suggestions and can resist (or ignore), modify, and offer alternative interpretations and understandings*” (ibid., p.716). Pilgrims are affectively *moved* (yet differently and individually) by performing a journey, and Valsiner (2007) draws an outline of stages of the journey. Initially, there is a “subjective mood of penitence. Many secular miles are ahead” followed by a period where; “[t]he sacred symbols begin to invest the route”, leading to *experiencing the route more intensely*; “the route itself becomes

sacred, sometimes mythical journey...ultimately every step is condensed...arousing much affect and desire" (ibid., p.207). Conclusively, pilgrims are *sensitized* through self-participation or the metaphor of *pilgrimage-as-tool* working on the "body & psyché", in an in-between-space, meant for re-orientation per Beckstead by changing receptiveness. But even if receptiveness is altered by experiencing "the new" in making a journey in an unfamiliar environment, from this does not follow that any "new" is internalized and externalized, as per the laminal model of double transformation in Valsiner (2014). The message must be of importance for *this* person.

Semiosphere and making-meaning



Fig. 4. Muslim Hajj-pilgrims stoning the Devil. Author: Amellie from Brisbane, Australia. (CC-BY-2.0)

Ancient rituals of (re)birth through death for upkeep- ing the forces which governed and moved life may be at the cores of some very old pilgrimage traditions. Rituals are part of pilgrimages, and may have canon- ized meaning (*explicit*) as that of the Muslim Hajj-pil- grims stoning the Devil at Mecca in fig. 4, which is sign-mediated meaning-making, where "X" (the Devil) needs to be kept at a distance for not getting control whereby that which one does not desire to be

in control, presupposes or gets established as an object by the act. Or a ritual appears to offer open-ended meanings (fig. 5.1) in leaving tokens (fig. 5.2). Performing either ritual serves for establishing a *personalized meaning of the act* creating a personalized sign (object) acting back on the person per semiotic mediation.

It is impossible to say what leaving something means specifically. Only that it facilitates creation of mean- ing which stands in a relation to the pilgrimage. The act is *a sign*, part of semiosphere being a conduct which is "followed". Both "rituals" *are* ex- pressions of *semiosis*. Rituals may "grow up" over time, when humans start using what others have done. The Hajj ritual



Fig. 5.1. A banister around a stone cross on the Camino used for attaching tokens.



Fig. 5.2. Tokens

in fig. 4. may have morphed from rituals as when leaving tokens over time, but got a canonized meaning. The ritual is recommended for anyone of a social framework, as a way of signifying something is shared. This could be reason for the use of banister in fig. 5.1, too.

Beliefs in a divine force may follow a scheme of; “*If there were a [divine force], then [this] perceived or felt phenomenon would make sense*” gradually becoming “*There is a divine force which controls all (incl. me)*” as explained by Valsiner’s semiotic mediation of *creating objects to control oneself*. This inference is not uncommon in the everyday. It is *sensible* to establish relations with such force. There are other reasons for establishing a force as an object, but this is beyond the article.

Myths are part of the semiosphere of pilgrimages and sacred places. they are used in semiotic mediation, but Valsiner (2014) notes that “*[s]emiosphere is not equal to the environment, but the latter is the support system for the semiosphere, which is a result of human meaning-making effort*” (ibid., p.45), so semiosphere *through* environment, is potentially constraining and suggesting semiotic tools which enter by self-participation, and may lead to experiencing spiritual “highs”, or sensations of “heightened existence” per Simmel, used in (re)creating personal culture. To *initiate* receptiveness, pilgrims have to perform actions that facilitates this by working the body, creating experiences of Firstness.

Place

Dubisch explains that sacred places are of different origins, and Davidson & Gitlitz notes the lack of their singular form. The notes show several places. This subsection argues for place as component in the model, by suggesting two levels of how. The first level is in guiding consciousness towards attention, and the second level, is as object for semiotic mediation (Gegenstand). A journey needs an end-place to be more than a wandering. Not just any place will do. Rather it is per *sensed quality* and *semiosphere*. This feeds into meaning-making, making place *significant*, as going to the beach to have a “look at the ocean”. One hardly goes to check if it is still there. Going means *something*. The ocean calls for attention, and constrains it.

Place guides attention



Fig. 6.1. *Iglesia de Santa Maria* cathedral in Los Arcos, Spain, on the pilgrimage route, known as the French Way (Camino).

Sacred places *afford Einfühlung*¹⁶ as possibility for experiencing immersion into their “atmospheres”; how they “come” to us. The experience of an *overflowing* sensation signifies a *hyper-generalized sign* per Valsiner (2014) as when seeing a beautiful landscape or hearing musical performance. One feels *moved* beyond words. It can – in the context of religious pilgrimage - suggest experiencing the *transcendent*. But *place* has blurry borders as does a waterline. It may be a building, a mountain or a river. Fig. 6.1. shows the inside of a cathedral. A bewildering scene of beauty, or extravaganza, creating a *spectacle*. There is an *abundancy of objects* for fixing attention at situated. *In a temple, any object*

will not do! Attention is guided, by *intentional* design as in fig. 6.2 towards a figurine of *Virgin Mary*. But, as when walking, what enters the perceptive field “stands out”. It makes a difference. Following Innis, it must then be “taken in”. This applies to looking at an *unintentionally* magnificent mountain like Mt. Fuji in Japan, or the Milky Way, as to the *intentionally* made figurine. It is a *basis* in *affective semiosis*. What stands out has a *quality*, is *sensed and felt*, on par with bodily sensation also *stand out* to consciousness and are sensed. This is a possible link between “inner feelings” and “outer perception”. Semiosphere suggests meanings for *what stands out*, and they are *sought for*. Following this line of thought, with *place* comes *meaning*, but from *body*. So, *attention* towards a place or object, occurs by constraining *conduct*, *working the consciousness* in an infinite moment of interpretation, and would not be experienced as a sequence of “events”. One already has some knowledge of what is seen, but is also constrained by the environment and semiosphere. It lies beyond the scope here how *wholes* of meaning are constructed. But sacred place mimics experi-



Fig. 6.2. Attention is drawn towards the little figurine of *Virgin Mary*

¹⁶ Lippe

encing “real” place by drawing attention establishing contact with the pilgrim for facilitating Firstness. Valsiner (2014) refers to the term *Gegenstand* (ibid., pp.164-166) as how place and objects offer experiencing *Secondness*. Firm artifacts resist our actions which facilitates *factuality*. In the sacred context, this is for *establishing meanings* and entering *relationship with the divine*. *Enhancing* and *enchanted* objects catches attention and facilitates Firstness as feeling-into, followed by non-discursive tools (ritual, offerings) and discursive tools (song, prayer). The firm artifact may be a river, a desert, the sky, or a mountain. In pilgrimage, these are presupposed “sacred” per Symbolism as prior construction.

Place guides meaning-making

Affective relating to nature in sensing the *sacred* upon prayer.



Fig.7. Male Golden Pheasant by Dick Daniels (<http://carolinabirds.org/>).
CC BY-SA 3.0. wikicommon

The following sample shows *prayer* for controlling oneself. The sample exemplifies nature as *sacred* fixing on an external object (a multicolored bird). The interviewee tells of an experience on a pilgrimage 20 years prior, demonstrating experiencing nature as “numinous”. The two pilgrims referred to, had walked together several hundred kilometers through Europe before this. The interviewee refers to Saint Francis of Assisi known for prayers for animals, but the pilgrim

refers to the Lord's Prayer which is more common;

"...so there was so to say some very powerful ones [experiences] in the beginning down through [country] one is that nature it opens up in a strange and wondrous way on the way down there and the great experience I think about was one early morning we were walking on a trail and we had gone completely naive out on that trip, there was not anyone who had dealt with pilgrimage in '98 so we had said yes but as it is a pilgrimage then we'll do something so we prayed the Lord's prayer [laughs] and had a Francis of Assisi prayer with which we returned to [unclear]. And so one morning when we were out to pray the Lord's Prayer together aloud, [-1] X [wife] was always in front of me, I walked behind, so there in front of us a [-] a gold pheasant was walking [-2] five meters in front of us for half a kilometer or more and that the golden pheasant appeared in connection with that we had related to [-1] to the divine [-2] it was at least MAGIC for us. It was [-1] so we experienced it was as if it was a relationship, nature was given a greater value BECAUSE we had prayed the Lord's Prayer [-2] okay and that it then appeared in such as a spring aspect namely in a gold pheasant which showed the way. A golden pheasant's is also a bit strange

and maybe had chicks what do I know but it was COMFORTABLE with us” (Kristensen, unpub.)

In the following the sample is analyzed by Peircean semiotics of how the object of the experience is created as “Nature is magical, numinous →sacred”. This *may* enter as personal culture, as *may* guidance by prayer. Both are *collective culture*. A Qualisign is created which *leads to a Sinsign and a Legisign*. The Legisign is “general law” capturing *pilgrimage*: “*The way towards sacred is sacred*”. Here the felt quality flows outwards; the environment becomes *beautiful* (a Qualisign), but this is likely brief, and attention then is fixed on the golden pheasant, it is rare and beautiful, “indicating an existing power” (ibid.). An abstraction follows turning the Qualisign into a general law of “Nature as beauty” and experiencing the “numinous” establishing Nature per se as work of the divine hence *as divine*. In the pilgrim’s own words, the prayer established a *relationship* in which Nature “opened up” hence the bird is interpreted per *indexicality*. The magic of the appearance of the bird is *because of relating to the divine*. Not any bird would do. This was a rare, beautiful multicolored bird that stood out (fig.7).

The sample may be interpreted per semiotic mediation as a general form of creating personal culture. The appearance of the bird is “sacred” but *for controlling* the pilgrim. The *pilgrim* constructs a *meaning complex X* “of Nature as beautiful” equating this with *numinous*; a sign of the divine, “*objectifies* it by *fixing its form*” on a rare, beautiful bird and starts to act *as if* the objectified” meaning complex X is an external agent that *controls* the *person* by which is meant that a relationship to the forces is created through prayer. One may affect nature. It is animistic and inference based meaning-making. It is animistic, for nature is perceived as intentional, expressing and controlled by a *transcendent*. At the level of meaning-making, a place or an object in a place, by being material, makes it possible to establish *relationship* to the divine, hence to connect to the *transcendent* per Gegenstand. Beckstead (2012a) refers guidance in *differentiating* between sacred and ordinary, for which discursive and non-discursive signs and devices are used, and this experience indicates a result of guided meaning-making towards sacred.

Valsiner's general form of creating personal culture, per *semiotic mediation* in meaning-making, ties the "instant nature" of consciousness closer to meaning-making per *place*, as in how it *affords* the pilgrim establishing relation with a divine force. Valsiner (2014) notes with reference to Lotman, that there is "...a significant change in the accepted norms of behaviors when moving from boundary to the centre", (ibid., p. 45), and Beckstead, Twose, Levesque-Gottlieb, Rizzo (2011) refers to moments of *heightened sensations of affect* when moving in war memorial sites. A sacred center may be a *felt sacredness* which Ramtohol (2012) describes as "giving religious meaning and identity to communities and individuals...[and]... concretize a religion, giving it a material and earthbound feature." (ibid., p. 1).



Fig. 8. The Black Stone. By: omar_chatriwala - (CC BY 2.0.) wikicommon.

Pilgrims attune to the conceived of force via *relationship* established *through material objects and conduct*, for creating a sign to understand ritualized conduct as *meaningful* and imbued in emotionality. Hajj-pilgrims, circumambulating the Kaaba, attempt to touch the Black Stone of the Kaaba (fig.8). It is perceived as sacred or *acheiropoieta*, as "not made by human hands" per Scheer (2013) by *indexicality*. The *physical* object makes worship of a *semiotic object* possible. It stands out from the box-like Kaaba, as does the figurine of Virgin Mary. They are Gegenstands for Secondness. It is often impossible due to crowds to touch, so pilgrims *point* with the arm towards the Kaaba on their ways around. They *signify* through *indexicality*. Recognizing that many others have the same conduct, creates a sign for interpreting this as *proper* conduct, imbued in emotion, and manifesting the social framework through *collective* conduct in pointing out a *common* center. The ritualized conduct is a *value-based socio-cultural phenomenon* creating *social consciousness*. Whether pilgrims are circumambulating a sacred place or walking towards it, matters less, for most religions include *Axis Mundi*, where Heaven and Earth meet. That place is "linkage" per *semiotic mediation* hence a psychological phenomenon, for creating unity of semiosphere and environment in a dialectical relationship.

The Black Stone acquired its use and suggested meaning, as the legend of the apostle Saint James in Spain, over time. These meanings become *Interpretants* to create a *mental* object for which the *physical* object, as *Sign/Representamen*, stands. The Black Stone emerges out of a semiotic mediation as *more* than a black stone. It has a *new quality*.

Sometimes this use needs a “recharging”. When a notability, such as a royal person, e.g. kisses the statue of Saint James the Greater in the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, then the *act of creating* a mental object of worship *per a material*, is appropriated for a larger social framework, and for signifying membership. The act signified – as Hajj-pilgrims do – reproduction, expression and appropriation of collective culture. A distinction between *material* and *mental* is abstract but necessary. It is *not how experiencing “feels”*. But when understood as *meaning-making*, the sacred is *created* to “stabilize” (Rosa, 2007) and “control” the world, others and oneself, in construction of a meaning-complex, and objectified per semiotic mediation.

Meaning-making needs human experiencing of body and world, but consciousness seeks *meaning* for sustaining life. Making *inference* towards meaning, is a device to “serve one well” that turns *sacred*, for meaning-making is *context-sensitive* given the open nature of human psychology, using what is available including place and artifacts to sustain itself.

Body

This subsection focuses on the use and role of the body. It is useful to refer to *Gegenstand*, for the body serves a function comparable to material place and object for facilitating *Secondness*. All resists actions, but by working on them, a basis for personal culture arises grounded in “feelings” (as *Firstness*). The body is the wearer of clothes and ornamentation (as sacred place). Understood per semiotic mediation, it is *one aspect*; “Human meaning-making is constructive, and the body is the arena” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 63). Paraphrasing Cole (1996) is useful for the metaphor for body as tool and signifier; when digging a hole in the ground, one uses a shovel, and if one takes a break, and returns to digging, the shovel is still standing in the place where one stopped digging.

Body as tool

Pilgrimage is *performative* exercise giving rise to different emotions. Maybe *wonderful*, or *strenuous* eagerness (fig. 7), or in fig. 8 likely pain and fatigue. There are two



Fig. 8. A Tibetan woman performing full prostrations while circumambulating (Kora) Mt. Kailash. User: Doug Elton (CC BY-SA 3.0). wikicommon

ways to understand this. As expressing devotion to a social framework, and for “working on” the meaning-system. Both are uses collective culture, but the latter presupposes the former. That bodily experiencing of feelings can become *signifier* and *tool* for achieving a *different status*, is noted by DUBY (1981) on Medieval Christian pilgrimage. *Physical strain* was for purifying “*individuals who publicly confessed to exceptional misdeeds.*” (ibid., p.50), and Dubisch explains that

“*[h]ardship plays a role in creating such psychological and spiritual receptivity, and a hallmark of many pilgrimages is that some degree of difficulty is involved.* (Dubisch, 2012, p.2). When reaching the goal, joy may be imminent.

Ritual theater

”The theatrical analogy emphasizes the role of theater in wider ways in human lives than occasional visit to a building called ‘theater’” states Valsiner (2014, p.47). In a Weberian perspective, religion is for supporting “things turn out well”, and pilgrimage is a way to *achieve* it as a *tool* provided in collective culture, acting on a *spiritual dimension* and displaying it. This creates an *arena through* others which (re)affirms belongingness and (re)builds *personal culture* for a *social framework*, but gets its validity outside the frame, as collective culture is a canopy over both. Pilgrimage is then *real-life-theater* performing re/confirmations. It is closer to Greek theater in antiquity mixing theater *with* religious ritual to *live the myth*, for pilgrimage may date back before writing, to what was used to *create social frameworks very early in history*.

Working minds

Dubisch notes that hardship in pilgrimage serves to create *spiritual receptivity*. Hardship, as the pilgrim may experience in fig.8, signifies devotion. “Internalizing” hardship is “externalized” expression, for the coding of the message occurs at both ends. Valsiner (2007) sees hardship as “meaningful for the personal-cultural construction of

the ‘journey away’ from the regular place of living” (ibid., p.239). This may be fasting and disciplining, noting that the challenge ahead of making the long journey, is a test to the pilgrim’s piety, which has an intra-psychological function on the mind “sacralizing” the route. A relationship exists between *feelings in the body* and the *physical path* mediated by semiosphere. Semiosphere provides the Interpretant which, from a Sign/Representamen, creates an Object of the act as e.g. cleansing. The Object is central, it is what is sought, but the Interpretant provides the link to make sense, and so acts are *appropriated*. The strain on the body and mind of a journey may be released at the destination, as a highly affective experience. Hardship metaphorically works to *establish relationship*. Borders are crossed by this, as they are *permeable*, but goes *through* the body, so it begins in Firstness, but is worked further upon, for one cannot just enter a sacred without attunement. Ritual is a *complex sign* that Peirce explains as an “‘indexical icon’ that signals or points to some thing or event in its context” (Yelle, 2013, p.26). It *creates a border* between sacred and non-sacred, and makes *semiosis affective*, for displaying devotion to forces, also.

Body as signifier



Fig. 9. Hindu sadhus at Kumb Mela religious festival in India. Credit Luca Galuzzi (www.galuzzi.it). no-copyright, wikicommon

Humans are semioticians dwelling in spheres of meanings. The body is a *signifier* of meanings to the pilgrim, to other pilgrims, to the social framework of others which the pilgrim returns to, and to *forces*. The use (or no-use) of clothes and body ornamentation as in fig. 9 are “messages”. Humans are *practicing semioticians* ornamenting their houses, sacred place and bodies; “[t]he most profound aspect of humans uses of objects in relation to their body is that we are wearing clothes” (Valsiner, 2014, p.170). In pilgrimage, spheres of meaning appear established by e.g. clothes, artifacts and colors. Even if clothes and ornamentations vary in traditions as noted in Davidson & Gitlitz, they are *cultural devices* with as equally affective dimensions as “everyday” clothes. In opposition to direct realism, Valsiner states; “[o]ur world is not what we immediately perceive, but what we instantly interpret” (Valsiner, 2014, p. 87). We don’t *perceive* human skin, for it is typically acceptable, too little or too much, revealing moralistic judgements in meaning-making. What is worn can be understood

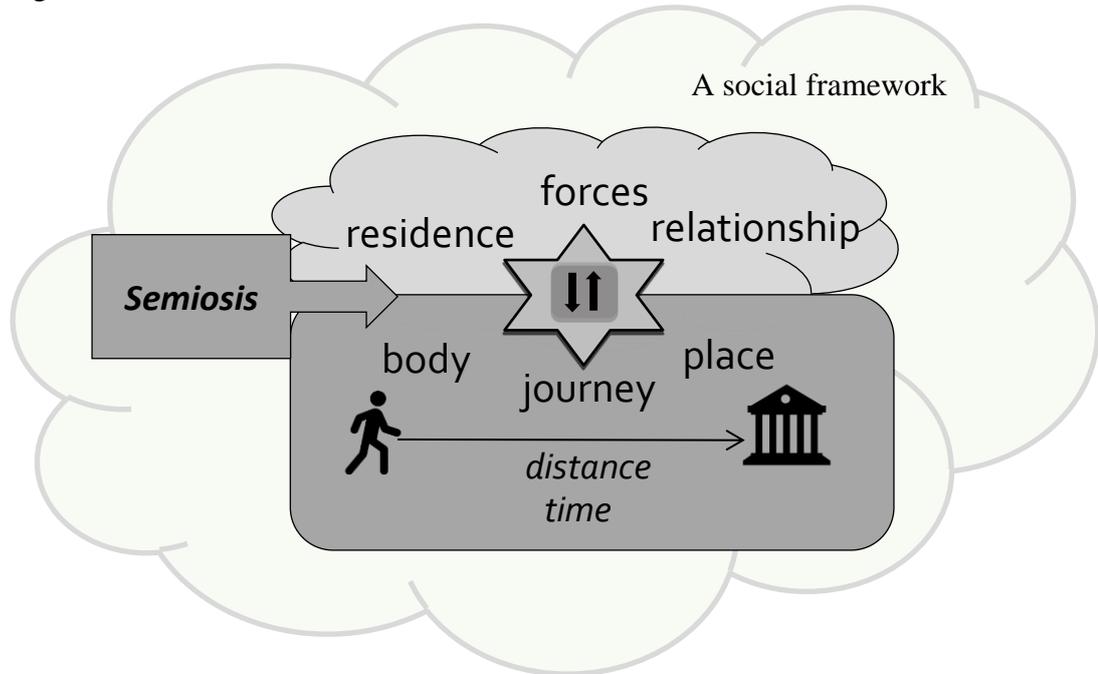
against gender, fashion, politics on symbols and climate, but clothing makes the wearer a *bearer* of meaning.

The classical Santiago pilgrim is *transformed* from a Medieval wayfarer into *pilgrim-clothing* of religious meaning. Clothes of the pilgrim had protective purposes, typical for a wayfarer of the time, except for the scallop used in this tradition. This marked the traveler off from other groups, but included him in one also. The *emblem* was a sign of the “inside”, too, in material form by *symbolism*. Valsiner (2014) explains, by referring to the beggar in the street, who once represented as “beggar”, “emerges now as a person of new quality” (ibid., p.89). This is per *change of Interpretant* (ibid.). The scallop attached to the pilgrims is an agreed-upon symbol of cultural-historical origin whose function it is to *change the Interpretant*. Ornamentation and clothes point to *something else hence they are signs*. The interpretation of clothes of the classical Santiago pilgrim, *points* to one *achieving a spiritual* goal significant for a social framework of reaching a *sacred destination* by moving a *body in hardship*. Clothing and ornamentation are cultural, value-based devices, worn in pilgrimage and elsewhere.

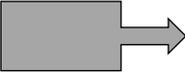
Model of pilgrimage

Letters in parenthesis refer to elements in the illustration in fig.10. The model seeks to visualize that personal culture takes the form of “mental objects” using the semiosphere (d) in meeting the world in *activity* (e), and that the phenomenological categories in semiotics (a/b) explain how and why. In **Firstness** – in journeying, movement of the body is facilitated. The relative slowness of pilgrimage (e) supports experiences of Firstness, creating a *lower* basis of feelings and sensing qualities. **Secondness** – is achieved by “working on the body” (e), on objects in, and towards sacred places. This use of *body and physical objects* is as *Gegenstand* for creating Secondness providing for Thirdness as a final act of *creating objects*. **Thirdness** – is “coming together” in objects that may endure. In Thirdness, “objects can come to exist in consciousness, since they are assortments of feelings and qualities that come regularly together” writes Rosa (2007, p.214). The creation process of objects reflects and supports social framework (f). Pilgrimage is then ritualized action facilitating objects for *personal culture*, reflecting the use of “outer objects” (e) referred to also as part of *collective culture* making the distinction of semiosphere (d) and physical environment (f) into an abstraction in semiosis.

Fig. 10



Nomenclature and explanation of the six elements of the Model

-  (a). Peircean semiotics and semiotic mediation is the core of model, symbolized by six triangles forming a grey six-point star simultaneously indicating the six components of the model.
-  (b). The meaningful interrelation of components and elements occurs is *semiosis* (the dark grey box with a broad arrow).
-  (c). Superimposed on A star is a small double arrowed symbol indicating the dialectical relationship between
-  (d). the semiosphere (or superstructure, incl. beliefs) for creating *personal culture*, and
-  (e). the physical (pilgrimage) environment, material places, objects and the *pilgrim(s)*, journeying towards the goal of the pilgrimage, performing rituals, covering physical distance and time.
-  (f.) A social framework which the pilgrimage must be *interpreted against* as how it is a social practice and *meaningful for a person*. Material conditions of life and activities for survival are here.

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Notes

Appearances of sacred places



From top left Kumbh Mela at Haridwar [Dirk Hartung \(CC BY-SA 2.0\)](#), Croagh Patrick chapel, Ireland, (CC BY-SA 3.0), Harmandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) in Amritsar (Sikh religion), (CC BY-SA 3.0), St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City (CC BY-SA 3.0), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem. (CC BY-SA 3.0), The Kaaba at al-Haram Mosque during the start of Hajj (CC BY-SA 2.0)
