

Memories of a Pilgrim on the Way of St. James – El Camino de Santiago

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<p>The thesis in hand turned out to be a result of an author's personal profound interest in the concept of pilgrimage, and is based on the experience on and memories about her travel along the Way of St. James – El Camino de Santiago. This is a product-based thesis. The product of the thesis is the author's diary she kept writing on the way and narratives she wrote sometime after the episodes of the trip took place.</p> <p>The core concept of a current thesis is the concept of memory, which was considered mostly in the context of tourism and travelling. The main idea piercing through the whole work is the idea that memories are all what travellers have to get from their experiences. This assumption makes the entity of memory extremely valuable for tourism industry, since people tend to build their decisions about future destinations basing on their memories from the previous experiences or on the stories their friends and relatives share with them.</p> <p>However, as a review of literature reviled, memory is a vulnerable mechanism, which can be easily distorted. Moreover, in many cases memories about the experience do not correspond to the actual experience one lives through, and the perception of experience in retrospection, among other aspects, depends on the peak moments of the experience and the way it finishes.</p> <p>Also the author places an emphasis on the concept of narrative in her thesis. Basing on the literature review and her own vision, she believes that stories people share with each other reflect their identities and tell who they are. In addition to that, being an accumulation of some episodes of the experience, stories help to organize memories into a logical structure with exposition, development of the plot, culmination and dénouement. In general, a need to construct not only separate episodes happened, but also life in general, is natural for a human-being, since this way events obtain more meaning.</p> <p>In current thesis, the author considers her pilgrimage experience process within three main stages, borrowed and adapted mostly from the service literature: pre-experience, core experience and post-experience stages, with the most emphasis on the two latter. The author also describes a concept of transformation, where a changed individual is the product of transformation.</p> <p>By analysing her diary from the trip as well as narratives written as a memory about it, the author makes an attempt to find discrepancy between her actual experience on the way of St. James and memories she has after the journey. The author also looks for possible transformation happened to her during her pilgrimage experience and that was reflected in narratives.</p>	
Keywords Memories, Experience, Transformation, Narrative, Diary, Pilgrimage, Camino de Santiago	

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1 Introduction

What is travelling all about? For some it is about visiting places we have never been before; about meeting new people and encountering unknown cultures; about carelessly lying on the white soft sand; about escaping from everyday life with all its worries and routine; about searching for self and seeking for miracle. For the author of the thesis though travelling is all about creating stories and collecting memories, this kind of memories which never fade, never vanish, never disappear. As Daniel Kahneman (2005, 286; 2011, 381) puts it: “memories are what we get to keep from our experiences”.

The painful truth about memory though is that it is vulnerable and can be easily distorted (Braun-LaTour, Grinley & Loftus 2006). Moreover, memories about thousands of moments of our life simply disappear (Kahneman & Riis 2005). Another fact about memory is that the way we recall one or another episode happened to us is not always the way we experience it living through the episode at that particular moment, which means that memory can be wrong (Kahneman 2011). The reason for such discrepancy is the conflict between two selves: the experiencing self, which lives here and now, communicating our state and well-being at this particular moment; and the remembering self, which recalls the episode in retrospection, telling us the story of what has happened (Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011). And the truth is that our perception of life in general, as well as of separate episodes of it, is strongly influenced and ruled by the remembering self (Kahneman 2011). That is how powerful it is. And once again Kahneman (2011, 390) accurately describes it: “I am my remembering self, and the experiencing self, who does my living, is like a stranger to me.”

The thesis in question is a product-based thesis, outcome of which is a travel diary of the author she kept writing during her pilgrimage travel experience on the Way of St. James in Portugal and Spain. The trip took place in July, 2015 and lasted for 17 days in total. As Pine & Gilmore (1999) argue, the changed individual is a product of transformation. Thus, the pilgrimage experience of the author, which probably changed her inner self, is the final product of the thesis.

Another aspect represented in the current thesis is how such travel experiences as pilgrimage become the reason for self-change or even transformation of a person. Thus, Noy (2004) argues that self-change is an inevitable result of such experience, and a person comes back different in one way or another from the state he/she has left for the trip.

As any experience process, the process of author's travel experience consisted of three stages, such as the pre-experience stage with planning the trip, booking the flight tickets, approving the route, etc.; the core experience stage with walking the Portuguese way starting from Porto, Portugal and finishing in Finisterre, Spain; and the post-experience stage with returning back home, memories, self-reflection, retrospection of events, analyzing of diary data collected on the way, and writing narratives about the trip.

The concept of pilgrimage is also described in the thesis. The author puts emphasis on the transformation of the concept of pilgrimage within centuries, moving from viewing a pilgrimage as a strictly religious act in old times toward the secular approach to pilgrimage outside religious context with searching for meaning, self, and spirituality.

The concept of narratives has also become an important and significant element of the thesis. Thus, narratives, or stories people share with each other are recognized to be a reflection of people's identities (Noy 2004). A series of narratives were written by the author upon the arrival from the trip. These memory-based stories have become a part of the data and were used for analysis.

In her thesis the author tries to find the discrepancy between her actual experience on the Way of St. James and her memories about this experience by analyzing and comparing data from the diary and memory-based narratives.

It is worth mentioning that the author has special relationship with Camino de Santiago, since the travel case described in the current thesis has become her second pilgrimage trip along this famous way. The history, traditions, symbols, journey and community of the Way of St. James have become the objects of a profound personal interest of the author. As a result of this interest, the idea to write a thesis based on her pilgrimage experience appeared.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Key Concepts

For the purpose of better clearance of the thesis in question, all the key concepts used in this thesis will be explained next.

Experience. Gelter (2006) argues that it is crucial to have a clear understanding of the “experience” concept to be able to offer it on the market. However, he claims that most of the definitions of experience existing today are vague and misleading, including those of Pine & Gilmore (1999, 12) and Tarssanen (Tarssanen 2009).

Gelter (2006) refers to the lexical analysis of the word “experience”, showing that it has a dual conceptualization. Thus, in some languages, such as German, Swedish and Finnish, there are two different words for each of these conceptualizations, whereas in English there is just one word used in both of the meanings. One of the meanings is what Germans call *Erfahrung*: “skills, practices, understandings, familiarity, know-how, assimilated life knowledge and wisdom” (Gelter 2006, 33). Another conceptualization is the German word *Erlebnis*, used as a noun in the meaning of “an incident, encounter, event, happening” and as a verb meaning “a feeling or emotion what we come into contact with, face, go or live through, suffer, undergo, be subject to, come across”, etc. (Gelter 2006, 33)

Some experiences can become meaningful and significant, however only a person living through the experience is able to define its meaning (Gelter 2006). Two different people cannot have the same experience (Pine & Gilmore 1999). Therefore, for the producer it is only possible to make the settings for the experience, and then every person will live it through differently (Gelter 2006).

Gelber (2006) argues that different experiences cannot be considered as isolated events, but rather as a sequence of experiences (Gelber 2006). This stream will contain intensive and significant and therefore better remembered experiences, as well as regular every day experiences, memory of which will disappear immediately (Gelber 2006).

Memory.. In its broad and general meaning, memory is “the mental capacity to encode, store, and retrieve information” (American Psychological Association 2015). Service literature defines memory as the ability of the brain to “extract and store key elements from our and others’ experience” (Arnould, Price & Zinkhan 2004, 342). Kahneman (2005; 2011) states that “memories are what we get to keep from our experiences”. Braun-Latour et al. (2006) in turn conclude that memories are the most valuable consequence of the tourist’s experience, which, however, can be distorted. Moreover, Kahneman & Riis (2005) argue that our remembering self, meaning our memories, dominate over the actual

experiences we go through. It means that memories can be influenced by different factors, which will lead to a person recollecting something different compare to what actually happened, and false memories can be created (Braun-Latour et al. 2006; Grinley & Loftus 2006). According to the research of Braun-Latour et al. (2006), post-experience information, such as advertising or word-of-mouth stories can transform memories of the experience. Kahneman et al. (2005; 2010; 2011) single out such factor as a peak-end rule effect. It means that significant moments at their pick and endings are the ones to form our memories about the experience.

Transformation. Transformation, or transformational experience, is a change in “how consumers think and feel about themselves and the world around them” (Arnould et al. 2004).

One view on the mechanism of transformation illustrated in Figure 1 was presented by Gelter (2010). This mechanism is complex and consists of interactions between Erfahrung (life cumulative experience) and Erlebnis (a separate experience). The core idea of transformation is that we enter Erlebnis with a previous life experience (Erfahrung 1). In case Erlebnis can be related to our life experience (Erfahrung 1), meaning is created and Erlebnis is considered to be meaningful. That is where Pine & Gilmore (1999) claim that experiences can affect who we are and even change us. This creation of meaning leads to the new Erfahrung 2, which means that the person is transformed him/herself or his/her perceiving of the world is changed.

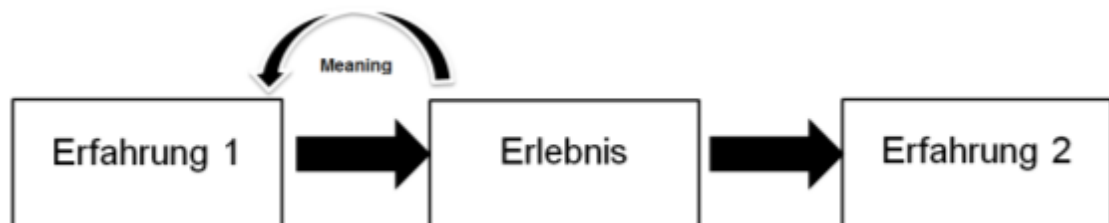


Figure 1. Mechanism of Transformation (Gelter, 2010)

The term of transformation in this meaning came from the Transformation Economy, formulated by Pine & Gilmor (1999).

As Pine & Gilmore (1999) argue, transformations should be sustainable through time, meaning that the change cannot be called a transformation if it is temporal; transformations are individual, thus should be performed by an individual; as a result, the changed individual is a final product of transformation.

Narrative. In the context of current thesis, “narrative” or “story” are used in the meaning of sequentially attached events of someone’s life, which show a trajectory from the past to

the present (Noy 2004). A significant attention has been paid by scientists to the stories people share with each other in everyday life, assuming that storytelling can construct people's identity and tell who they are. Freeman (1995) states that not only stories told orally, but also written texts like autobiography, as well as interviews and observation of human acts, can be considered. The combination of such stories forms "narrative identity" of a person, telling who he/she is (Noy 2004).

It was admitted that such travellers as backpackers and pilgrims form a special community of storytellers due to unique nature of backpacking and pilgrimage trip experience. The core characteristic of the stories backpackers and pilgrims share is the presence of description of personal transformation happened as a result of the trip. (Noy 2004)

Kahneman (2011) in turn talks about life as narrative, arguing that the urge to construct our lives according to the rules of narrative is in human nature, as it makes it more meaningful and profound.

Pilgrimage. Pilgrimage is traditionally defined as a physical journey undertaken to a distant sacred place or shrine (Barber 1991; Turner 2011; Devereux & Carnegie 2006). The concept of pilgrimage is considered through the prism of traditional (Barber 1991; Turner 2011) and contemporary scholars (Olsen & Timothy 2006; Collins-Kreiner 2009; Devereux & Carnegie 2006). The former research pilgrimage in the context of religion, while the latter place emphasis on the shift from the religious to secular pilgrimage, which demonstrates that the religious aspect becomes secondary, and more and more modern pilgrims undertake the journey in the need of finding meaning (Loader 2012).

An example of most well-known and discussed pilgrimages nowadays is Camino de Santiago pilgrimage in Spain. Being an important Catholic pilgrimage route in medieval times, Camino de Santiago underwent a significant growth in popularity over the last thirty years not only among religious pilgrims, but also and especially among modern secular pilgrims. (Loader 2012)

2.2 Pilgrimage

2.2.1 Transformation of Pilgrimage

In the following chapter the transformation of the concept of pilgrimage within centuries will be described.

After reviewing the substantial amount of literature, the author of the thesis has come to a conclusion that the pilgrimage as a phenomenon has undergone many transformations, from being a completely religious concept in old times to becoming a form of a spiritual journey, which symbolizes a life journey of the individual, and finally to a secular journey

undertaking in the search of meaning (Barber 1991; Turner 2011, Devereux & Carnegie 2006; Loader 2012)

Pilgrimage as a phenomenon has been known to the world since ancient times. It was an essential part of such religions as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Christianity (Turner 2011; Collins-Kreiner 2010). It was known in pre-Columbian America and even in pagan culture of Britain and Ireland (Turner 2011). In 13th century the tradition of pilgrimage was illustrated in literature by Geoffrey Chaucer in his “Canterbury Tales” (Turner 2011).

Barber (1991) argues that in ancient times, once a place was declared to be particularly holy, even a short journey to this place could be called a pilgrimage. Thus, Barber (1991) mentions about ancient pilgrimages undertaken for the purpose of sacrifice and worship in England, China and Egypt. Some pilgrimages were undertaken even as a form of punishment, which could be paid off, the price depending on the distance. (Barber 1991)

However, pilgrimage in its true form, as Barber (1991, 3) puts it, “a journey for purely religious reasons”, appeared in the 5th century BC in India. At the same time there is evidence of pilgrimages that can be defined as “a long journey undertaken in order to solve a material problem” (Barber 1991, 3), or pilgrimages made in hope of physical cure (Barber 1991).

Olsen & Timothy (2006) also claim that originally and historically concept of pilgrimage takes its roots from religion. They state that in old times pilgrimage was a form of a religious journey, where religion was the main motive to travel (Olsen & Timothy 2006). This type of religiously motivated travels increased dramatically within the 20th century, even despite the fact that “modern civilization (is) based on science, technology, and reason, rather than on magic, religion and irrationality” (Campo 1998, in Olsen & Timothy 2006, 3). Devereux & Carnegie (2006) argue that the reason for such a growth is in people of postmodern world seeking sense of their lives. As Olsen & Timothy (2006) state it, people were looking for the answers to such a basic question of human existence as “What is the meaning of my life?”

As a result, a concept of religion has shifted, and the word “religion” or “religious” started to be used in everyday life outside of the traditional meaning. Religion started to be seen as an isolated experience, and people began to separate “spirituality” from “religion”. (Olsen & Timothy 2006)

Therefore, people realized that they can have spiritual experiences without having religious believes. Thus, spiritual people do not necessarily have to be religious, and vice

versa (Olsen & Timothy 2006). Davie (1994) formulates it as “believing without belonging” (Devereux & Carnegie 2006)

Devereux and Carnegie (2006) single out three dimensions of spirituality, adapted from Von Balthasar (1967):

- Seeking truth and meaning of existence;
- Fulfillment of self through helping others;
- Acceptance of power beyond oneself.

Therefore, Devereux and Carnegie (2006) argue that spirituality is a holistic concept, which embraces all aspects of spiritual experience, such as psychological, bodily, aesthetic, intellectual, etc.

As a result of these changes in peoples’ perception of religion, the decline of church attendance was registered in Europe in 20th century. However, at the same time, amount of people going to pilgrimage increased significantly. Such tendency though does not say about the crisis of faith, but demonstrates its shift towards becoming personal and detached. (Devereux & Carnegie 2006; Olsen & Timothy 2006)

Nowadays, traditions of pilgrimage gain interest of people from all over the world. Its popularity is spread through guidebooks, blogs, internet sources; contemporary authors write novels about pilgrimage, the most famous of which is “The Pilgrimage” by Paulo Coelho, 1987 (Turner 2011). Every year millions of people travel to the ancient and modern pilgrimage sites all over the world (Olsen & Timothy 2006). It was estimated by Jackowski (2000, in Olsen & Timothy 2006) that approximately 240 million of pilgrims, mostly Christians, Muslims, and Hindus, travel yearly to the sacred sites. According to the estimations of Collins-Kreiner (2010), about 5 million Muslims make a Hajj, 5 million pilgrims visit Lourdes, France, and about 28 million of Hindu pilgrims go to the River Ganges, India. The Pilgrim’s Office in Santiago de Compostela gives the statistics for the year 2014, which is 237 886 pilgrims received Compostela (The Confraternity of Saint James 2015).

2.2.2 El Camino de Santiago

El Camino de Santiago is a pilgrimage route with the final destination at the Cathedral of St. James, which is located in the northwestern Spain, in the city of Santiago de Compostela.

According to the legend, Saint James, one of the twelve Jesus’s apostles, spent several years in Galicia preaching Gospels to its people (American Pilgrims on the Camino 2015).

However, when he returned to Jerusalem, he was beheaded by the King Herod Agrippa in 44 A.D. It was forbidden by the King to bury apostle's body, and two of his disciples stole the body and put it to the stone boat, which, led by angels, crossed Mediterranean and finally arrived to the shores of Galicia. There remains of Saint James were buried by his followers in the woods and forgotten for the next eight centuries, until an old hermit followed by the lights in the sky found a tomb. The chapel was built on the site of the tomb and the city of Santiago de Compostela grew around. Some believe that the name Compostela comes from the Latin "Campus Stellae", which means "field of stars". (Winkle-Bryan 2009; Camino de Santiago.The Way of St. James 2014)

The records about the first pilgrimages made to Santiago de Compostela date back to the 10th century (The Confraternity of Saint James 2015). Between 11th and 13th centuries the present Cathedral was build, which replaced the destroyed church (Winkle-Bryan 2009). In the early 12th century Santiago de Compostela became one of the three great pilgrimage destinations together with Rome and Jerusalem (The Confraternity of Saint James 2015).

Nowadays, the popularity of Camino de Santiago has grown significantly, especially within the last 30 years. Thousands of pilgrims make their way to Santiago de Compostela on foot, by bike, or even on the horse back. Just on the territory of Spain there are 19 different pilgrimage routs leading to Santiago, let alone those located all over the Europe. The most popular one is the Camino Frances, so called French Way, historical route, which traditionally starts in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port, in France, crossing the Pyrenees and going through the northern Spain. It is 778 km long. In 1993 the route was announced to be a UNESCO's World Heritage Site. (The Confraternity of Saint James 2015)

2.3 Transformation Economy

2.3.1 "I Am a Product"

The current thesis work is a product-based thesis, final product of which is a travel diary of the author written during and after her trip along the Way of St. James – el Camino de Santiago. Inspired by the examples of people depicted in famous modern books and movies, such as the book "The Pilgrim" by Paulo Coelho (1987), or movies "The Way" (2010), "Into the Wild" (2007), and "Wild" (2014), where all the characters come through the process of transformation on the way and as a result undergo an inner change, the author claims that her "new self" described in the diary is the final product of the thesis. This statement takes its roots from the Transformation Economy theory suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1999).

Pine & Gilmore (1999) provide an example of a person who pays good money to buy a membership to a fitness center, where he or she will experience physical pain; or a person who leaves a well-paid job in order to attend an expensive business school. The reason for such decisions is that these people want to be changed, become different (Pine & Gilmore 1999). Similarly, people decide to go through a pilgrimage experience or any other long distance walk experience, where they inevitably face physical exhaustion, lack of comfort and intimate space, instead of “all inclusive” beach vacation, because they want something more than just tanned skin and blurring memories afterwards – they want mental and physical transformation. Such transformation, as Pine & Gilmore (1999) argue, is more desirable and valuable than experience itself.

The same way as Experience Economy emerged from the Service Economy, the Transformation Economy will be the next coming after the Experience Economy (Pine & Gilmore 1999). The reason for that is the fact that even the most exciting experiences tend to commoditize: experiencing something for the first time is exciting and memorable, while during the second and third times emotions fade away (Pine & Gilmore 1999).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) provide some characteristics, which distinguish the Transformation Economy from the Experience Economy:

- Transformations are *effectual*. While memories from experience fade away with time, transformations give something more than memories, they make a change.
- Transformations are *sustained* through times. A change is not a transformation, if it brings only a temporal effect.
- Transformations are *individual*. Experiences, being personal, affect a person and create memories, thus two people cannot have the same experience. Transformation, in turn, changes a person, which means that the same transformation cannot happen to one person twice.

Thus, someone who chooses an all-inclusive travel package for their two weeks vacation will most likely enjoy their experience with the comfort of a hotel room, opportunity to sleep longer, great selection of tasty food and drinks, exciting guided tours and carefree lying on the beach. However, very soon the sun tan will vanish, tiredness and stress will come back with the first weeks at work, memories of a nice vacation experience will fade, and in the end, the person will get back to the normal life routine staying the same individual he/she used to be before the vacation.

On the contrary, life-transforming experiences such as pilgrimage, long distance walk, let alone risky and extreme experiences like trekking to the pole and across deserts, climbing

the mountains, crossing the ocean with a small boat, etc. affect a traveller the way he/she will inevitably change, become different (Laing & Crouch 2011).

Therefore, while services and experiences are the final products in the Service and Experience Economy, a changed individual or a company are the products of the Transformation Economy.

Thus, a person who joins the fitness center pays not for physical suffering he/she experiences there, but for a change in his/her lifestyle and physical well-being, these are the products customer desires and pays for; similarly, the changed individual becomes a “product” of the pilgrimage or a long-distance walking experience, just like an author of the thesis and her diary become a final “product” of the current work.

2.3.2 Transformation Process

For the purpose of better clearance of the thesis, the transformation process will be explained briefly in this chapter, even though the author concentrates more on the experiencing phase of her pilgrimage trip and the retrospective phase, where she analyses memories of her experience. Both of the phases will be described later in this work.

Pine & Gilmore (1999) single out three phases of a transformation process:

1. Diagnose aspirations
2. Stage experience
3. Follow through

During the first stage the aspirations, meaning goals and desires of a person, should be formulated: what a person want to change and where he/she is now relative to his/her goals and desires (Pine & Gilmore 1999)

Accordingly, many people going to pilgrimage have their goals they want to achieve. For someone it is more about physical side of the trip, people want to challenge their body and see to what extend they can push their limits; some simply want to lose weight or to get rid of unhealthy habits like smoking. For others it is a religious journey to a sacred place, to the Cathedral of St. James. However, the majority of pilgrims look for the spiritual effect of the Way, nothing to do with religious (Devereux & Carnegie 2006).

Speaking about the staging of experiences, Pine and Gilmore (1999) argue that transformation can be achieved through one of the four realms of experience: entertainment, educational, esthetic, or escapist. However, the most effective transformation will happen when all four realms are included (Pine & Gilmore 1999).

Author of the thesis believes that pilgrimage is an example of a life-transforming experience, where elements of all four realms are represented; escapism experiences put an individual to the conditions outside the comfort of their daily life; there are entertainment elements such as evenings within the pilgrimage community with cooking together and sharing dinner at one table; there are educational experiences when individual learns about local culture, the history of the Way, learns to interpret symbols and signs of Camino; esthetic experiences include visiting of historical sites frequently met along the way, admiring beautiful nature and landscapes changing day after day.

As far as the last phase of transformation is concerned, Pine & Gilmore (1999) state that this is the most difficult stage. Similarly as one cannot learn how to paint after one lesson, a pilgrim cannot be changed after three days of walk. It takes many days of physical and mental effort and challenge, communicating and getting close with people on the way, living through significant moments such as arriving to Santiago and then to Finisterre, etc. These kinds of experiences build the stage for further transformation of a person, which will be sustained through time (Pine & Gilmore 1999).

As far as transformation during the pilgrimage is concerned, for many people this trip takes place at some transitional period of their life: a rite-of-passage from youth to adulthood, a death of a close person, news about serious illness, divorce, losing job, etc. (Noy 2004). Therefore, the pilgrimage way helps to overcome disasters in life, or helps to lead a person to making a hard decision, and as a result, those returning from pilgrimage often speak about the fact that in the end of the journey they are not anymore the ones to leave home (The Confraternity of Saint James 2015).

2.4 Experience Process

In a previous subchapter the transformation process was described, the second phase of which depicts staging of the experience. This is exactly where an individual goes through the experience process, staged by the experience producer, which also includes several phases. In order to better understand the author's pilgrimage travel experience depicted in her diary, the experience process will be explained next.

Important aspects in understanding experience consumption process of an individual come from the service literature, as it emphasizes the importance of setting and process in determining customer satisfaction (Arnould et al 2004; Lovelock & Wirtz 2011). As Pine & Gilmore (1999) put it: "Experiences are at the heart of consumer behavior", while Lovelock & Wirtz (2011) claims that "understanding customer behavior lies at the heart of marketing".

There are several service/ experience consumption process models presented in service and marketing literature. Thus, Lovelock & Wirtz (2011) divides the consumption process into three principal stages:

1. Pre-purchase stage
2. Service encounter stage
3. Post-encounter stage

The pre-purchase stage is characterized with the need arousal, information search and evaluation of alternatives. During this stage a decision for or against buying a particular service/experience comes. This is also the stage where expectations are formed; service encounter stage is the core of the experience. Here the customer experiences series of contacts with the service provider, as well as already starts to evaluate the quality of the service/ experience and decide if the service corresponds to his/her expectations; in the post-encounter stage, customer evaluates the experience and concludes if the service left up to his/her expectations. At this stage customer's satisfaction, dissatisfaction, or delight are formed. (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011)

Arnould et al. (2004) in turn emphasize the temporal aspect of the service consumption experience. Thus, for example, a purchase of a chocolate bar can be quite quick, while consumption of some services or experiences, such as concerts or vocations, can be stretched out in time. Arnould et al. (2004) notice that compare to other experiences, transformational experiences, such as losing weight, or stopping smoking, not only are stretched over time, but should also be sustained through time.

Compare to Lovelock & Wirtz's model, Arnould et al. (2004) divide experience consumption process into four groups, breaking the service encounter stage into two separate:

1. Anticipated consumption: includes searching and planning for future purchases, anticipation and fantasizing future experience.
2. Purchase experiences: covers the moment of making a choice, payment and first service encounter.
3. Consumption experiences: includes sensation, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, flow, and transformation.
4. Remembered consumption and nostalgia: looking through the photos and memorabilia, sharing stories with others, daydreaming.

It is clear that Arnould et al. (2004) place greater emphasis on the role of the memory in consumption process, while Lovelock & Wirtz (2011) emphasizes customer's satisfaction with service experience and expectations in relation to reality.

Gelter (2006) in turn, similar to Lovelock & Wirtz (2011), argues about the importance of the pre- and post-experience management stages in the total experience of the offering. As far as experience consumption stage is concerned, Gelter (2006) has his own strong opinions: he, for example, argues against involving all senses into experience explaining his argument with the concern that it can dilute the whole experience (Gelter 2006). Instead he suggests the “dramaturgy of the senses”, where the consequent influence on each sense is carefully planned and performed. Similarly, Gelter (2006) warns producers against overproducing experiences, therefore all the settings, themes, actors, etc. should be carefully chosen and designed.

At the same time Gelter (2006) emphasizes the importance of reflection on the experience. Thus experiences should be expressed through the memorable photographs, diaries, reports, sharing stories, etc., as the post-experience expressions are considered to be an important aspect of experience; yet memorabilia such as souvenirs plays a significant role in the post-experience stage as it brings back the memories and make them more vivid (Gelter 2006).

One more important aspect of the experience process is “making sense” (Gelter 2006). In order for the experience to become significant it has to make sense for a consumer, meaning that all the happenings during the experience should be consequent and coherent (Gelter 2006). In general, the urge for “making sense” is in human’s nature, and it concerns not only the separate experiences, but the way people perceive life as a whole: we want it to be meaningful and with a good plot, just like in a good movie or a book (Kahneman 2011; Freeman 1995). Therefore the “making sense” parameter should be carefully designed and managed in the experience process (Gelter 2006)

However, not only service and marketing theories can provide models for the experience process. For instance, drama has been adapted as a model of consumer experience (Padgett & Allen 1997). Thus, the Freytag diagram is a diagram created by Gustav Freytag to be applied in theatre context, which with time was extended and became a useful tool in designing experience (Norton & Pine 2013).

There are seven stages in dramatic structure of the Freytag diagram (Norton & Pine 2013):

1. Exposition: introduction of the concept and situation, where experience happens; introduction of actors;
2. Inciting incident: drama begins;
3. Rising action: rise of intensity on the way to the goal, while meeting obstacles and resistances;

4. Crisis: great suspense, anticipation of the resolution of the crisis;
5. Climax: the top point of the experience, where actor do or do not achieve their goal;
6. Falling action: consequences of the climax;
7. Dénouement: returning to a new status which differs from when the experience started.

Engaging experiences of any kind will contain the components of the Freytag diagram. This kind of diagram can be applied to pilgrimage travel experience as well, where exposition is the planning stage; inciting incident is the day of departure; rising action and crisis are especially challenging days with sore body, blisters, bad weather, when desire to give up is strong; climax is arriving to the goal destination; falling action is the last day of the trip, and dénouement is the returning home.

To sum it up, experience process model adapted from the service management literature, as well as from drama theory includes at least three stages: pre-experience, core experience and post-experience. In the current thesis most emphasis will be placed on the two latter stages: the author's actual pilgrimage travel experience on Camino de Santiago and her memories and stories about the experience.

2.5 Experience vs. Memory

With the emergence of the Experience Economy it became clear that people are willing to consume more and more experiences (Gelter 2006). Experience Economy was formed as a result of post-modern society, especially in the developed countries, to have gained the self-actualization level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Gelter 2006). Phenomenon of the Experience Economy has been spread over many creative fields such as tourism, education, entertainment, architecture, film/photo, performance art, music, gastronomy, fashion, etc (Gelter 2006). It is not enough anymore for businesses to just provide commodities, goods and services as well as it is not enough for customers to just consume ones. We start looking for experiences everywhere: on vocations, in restaurants, in movie theaters, while shopping, while eating, and while staying for a night at the hotel room (Pine & Gilmore 1999; Gelter 2006). Gelter (2006) names these phenomena as "edutainment", "eatertainment", "shoppertainment", etc.

However, Pine and Gilmore argue that it is *memory* about the experience that makes the experience valuable and precious, and that a neutral service or event turns into experience and gain additional value when they evoke emotions and become memorable (Pine & Gilmore 1998). As Pine & Gilmore formulate it (1998, 98): "Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable"

As Kahneman puts it: “Experiences are fleeting, whereas memories are what we get to keep from our experience” (Kahneman & Riis 2005, 286). Kahneman (2011) also refers to memories as a goal of the experience.

In general, memories play a significant role in people’s lives. We make pictures and videos, buy souvenirs and postcards, write diaries, share the moments in social media and tell stories, all for the only reason – we want to keep memories of the events we experience, whether it is a trip, a wedding, a first date, a year spent abroad, a rock concert, a hockey championship, etc. Enormous amount of money counted in billions of dollars is spent on memorabilia every year (Pine & Gilmore 1998). The importance of memories can be shown by answering a simple question: if you had a choice to go for a vacation, after which all the memories would be erased from your head, would you still choose this vacation? (Kahneman, February 2010). The common negative answer to that question proves the fact that no experience is worth any value without memories that it produces. Thus, for instance, many people value their vacations basing not that much on the experience itself, but on the memories the trip creates (Kahneman 2011).

For example, the mountain climbers would hardly be willing to climb the mountain without remembering it afterwards, as well as long walk trekking experience would not be as precious without memories about it. This kind of vacations implies a lot of physical and mental effort and pain, which would be considered not completely reasonable without memories coloring them with meaning and value. (Kahneman 2011)

We recognize the importance of memories even despite the fact that our consumption of memories is much less significant compare to the duration of experience we undergo (Kahneman & Riis 2005). We can roughly estimate how long it would take for a person to actively “remember” the three weeks of vacation. Depending on a person, it would be about one hour to look through the pictures from the trip, half an hour to tell friends about the experience and 20 minutes to write a post in social media. It makes about 2 hour of remembering the experience compare to the three weeks of vacation spent (Kahneman, February 2010).

Braun-Latour et al. (2006) argue that memories about vacations are important for the tourism industry, because people base on them their future decisions; memories are the main source of information for the tourists planning to revisit/ not revisit some destination; such memories are also a reliable source for family and friends, who plan their own vacations.

All in all, memories are precious outcome of the touristic and other kinds of experiences (Braun-Latour et al. 2006; Kahneman 2011). However, as Braun-Latour et al. state it, are “not sacrosanct” and can be distorted.

2.5.1 Two Selves

For a long time there has been a significant confusion between experience and memories about the experience (Kahneman, February 2010). To illustrate this statement, Kahneman provides us with a real life example about a man who has been listening the symphony for half an hour enjoying the music before a terrible scratching sound ruins, as he says, his whole experience. Obviously, the experience itself is not possible to be ruined; there still was half an hour of pleasant music. It is the memories of the experience which are ruined (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

Researches demonstrate that people’s recollections about events often do not correspond to their emotions and well-being during those events (Mitchel & Thompson 1994). Thus, Mitchel et al. (1994) have conducted a study with participation of a group of cyclists who were going to a 3-week bicycle tour of California. Cyclists were surveyed before, during, and after the tour. Eventually, the study showed that despite the on-site reports about rain, unpleasant company, physical challenge and exhaustion, the final report with recollections about the tour turned out to be significantly more positive.

Thus, Kahneman suggests that we should think about ourselves in terms of two selves: experiencing self and remembering self, which in Kahneman’s opinion are two very different phenomena (Kahneman, February 2010)

Experiencing self lives continuously here and now, at this particular moment undergoing the actual experience. We talk about experiencing self when we ask questions like ‘how do you feel at the moment?’ or ‘where does it hurt now?’ (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011)

A life of a human can be described as a series of moments (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman & Riis 2005). According to estimations, a moment is counted to be roughly 3 seconds long, which means that we live through about 20 000 moments a day, 600 000 moments in a month, and 600 million moments throughout our life (Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman, February 2010). Therefore, experiencing self almost does not have time to exist, because what happens to all those moments is they disappear and get lost forever (Kahneman & Riis 2005). As Kahneman puts it (2011, 381), “experiencing self does not have a voice”.

On the contrary, **remembering self** is stable and permanent. It keeps the memories of the experience (Kahneman & Riis 2005). Remembering self answers such questions as 'how have you been lately?' or 'how was your vacation?' (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011) Remembering self is a story-teller, which tells us stories about the experience (Kahneman, February 2010).

Dominating over the experiencing self, remembering self is biased and often can be wrong (Kahneman 2011). Let us again return to an example about a man listening a symphony, where his remembering self is wrong about experience being ruined; similarly, a teenager will remember a romantic date which ended badly, as a horrible one, even though the first part of it was very nice and romantic (Kahneman 2011). These simple examples prove that the duality of self leads to the *cognitive illusion*, where experience is being confused with the memory about it, and where the whole episode of experience does not count, because remembering self put emphasis on something else, like scratching sound or disaster in the end of a romantic dinner (Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

Kahneman and Riis (2005) refer to the discrepancy between experience and memory as **the memory-experience gap**, and provide a full definition of it:

The memory-experience gap is defined as a discrepancy between the average of experienced emotions and the overall evaluation of the experience, which is usually more intense than the average emotions (Kahneman & Riis 2005, 885).

With this being said, there is a question coming: how do we measure the memory-experience gap? Will two weeks of a pleasant vacation be twice as good as one week of vacation of the same quality? Or will a person's suffering doubles in 10 minutes episode of pain compare to 5 minutes episode of pain? According to pure logic, answers to both of the questions should be positive. However, Kahneman argues the opposite (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

He claims that, being a story-teller, remembering self plays according to the rules of a story, where there should be development, significant moments and endings (Kahneman, February 2010). Kahneman calls this effect **peak-end rule effect** (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

At the same time, duration of episode of experience will hardly make any difference or add any value for remembering self. This phenomenon is called **duration neglect** (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

Both of the rules will be described more in detail next.

2.5.2 Duration Neglect and Peak-end Rule

Kahneman et al. (2005; 2011) carried out a study with the participation of two patients undergoing a painful procedure of colonoscopy. They were asked to report their pain every 60 seconds. For the patient A procedure lasted for less than 10 minutes, while patient B had to suffer for more than 20 minutes. Objectively, patient B suffers more from pain, because procedure in his case lasts longer. However, when researches looked into the patients' reports analysis, it showed completely different result. In fact, patient A suffered from pain much more than patient B. To be more precise, patient A *thought* he suffered more (Kahneman, February 2010). The reason for such discrepancy is the fact that even though colonoscopy procedure was shorter in case with patient A, it ended at the very peak of the pain. On the contrary, pain was reduced at the end for patient B, which made him *remember* the whole experience as less painful (Kahneman, February 2010; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Kahneman 2011).

Another experiment was designed by Kahneman et al. (2005; 2011) called the cold-hand situation. Participants were asked to put one of their hands to the cold water, which was quite painful, but still bearable. The procedure lasted 60 seconds with the temperature of water at 14°C. After that participants had to repeat the same procedure with their second hand. This time episode lasted 90 seconds. The difference with the second episode was that water temperature was increased by 1°C at the very end of procedure, which made the process slightly less painful. After both sessions participants were asked to repeat the experiment for the third time. However they could choose which episode to repeat. As a result, 80% of participants preferred the second episode, where procedure is 30 seconds longer, but less painful in the end (Kahneman 2011).

Therefore, according to described studies the following conclusions can be made:

- Our memories about events are enormously influenced by the peak and ending moment of the experience;
- Duration of experience is mostly ignored by our remembering self;
- In many cases our remembering self is wrong;
- The average amount of positive or negative emotions experienced during the event is not equal to the retrospective evaluation of emotions, since the retrospective evaluation puts more emphasis on the best and worst moments of experience as well as on the moment it ends (Kahneman & Riis 2005).

2.6 Narrative

2.6.1 Narrative Identity

There are different ways to collect and store our memories, like pictures, videos, souvenirs, to name a few. Another way to keep our memories alive is to put them into the form of a text or a story. Therefore, we write posts in social media, keep diaries and travel notes, tell stories about vocations to our friends and relatives. Freeman (1995) argues that not only literary texts should be taken into consideration, but also interviews and even observations of human acts, since the latter, just like texts, also need interpretation.

Freeman (1995) also states that texts tend to tell us about lives or separate experiences of their authors. Noy (2004) in turn defines “narrative” or “story” as sequentially attached events of someone’s life, which show a trajectory from the past to the present.

There is a challenge occurs that most of the texts refer not to immediate experiences, but to recollections of ones. Therefore, taking into consideration all the possible violations of memory, we have at hand not the truthful reflection of person’s life or experience, but rather a fiction, which is interesting to read or to listen to, but which does not completely reflect the reality (Freeman 1995). However, despite this argument, both Freeman (1995) and Noy (2004) assure that stories people tell about themselves is a way to depict who they are. By telling stories about themselves people draw a picture of who they are and construct experiences which form their identity (Freeman 1995; Noy 2004).

Research on tourism in general, and devoted to backpackers in particular, shows that tourists form a specific way and style of narrative about their travel experiences; these stories are not just a description of travel activities, rather in the core of these narratives there are selves and identities of the story tellers (Noy 2004).

The rich environment of interpersonal communication created on the pilgrimage or backpacking trip is conducive to telling stories to each other, as well as writing stories to the diary; in such environment travelling and undergoing extraordinary experiences and telling about those experiences are interrelated (Noy 2004). Noy (2004) states as well that such type of travellers as backpackers, who are close to pilgrims in the nature of travelling pattern, look for adventurous, risky and authentic experiences, so that they have an opportunity to share stories about these experience with others on return. Importantly, an integral part of such stories is telling about self-change or transformation of self, caused by the travel experience (Noy 2004).

2.6.2 Life as Narrative

However, literature analysis (Freeman 1995; Kahneman et al. 1995; Padgett & Allen 1997; Kahneman 2011; Arnould et al. 2004) demonstrates that the narration has many applications in different disciplines, and has much broader meaning in life of people in general.

There is a clear parallel between Kahneman's, Freeman's and Noy's theories of self. Each of them comes to a conclusion that people place great value on a story/narrative of their lives (Freeman 1995; Kahneman & Riis 2005; Noy 2004). They want it to be a meaningful plot with being heroes themselves (Freeman 1995). Freeman (1995) explains that people put the meanings of happened events together to form a narrative in order to make sense of their past. According to Freeman (1995), it is important for people to realize that all the events in life happen not randomly, moving from one direction to another, but there is a reason to everything happened to them.

Padgett & Allen (1997) conclude that people have a natural need to organize information around them in a story format. This theory applies as well to the way people perceive experiences, trying to organize separate events into a meaningful whole; their interpretations of experience people relate to others by telling stories (Padgett & Allen 1997).

Freeman compares (1995) thinking about our own lives with reading a book: we keep reading a book only if its episodes relate to each other, there is a plot development and there is a meaningful ending. Freeman assumes (1995) that we "write" our lives according to the pattern of *a narrative* in order to keep on living.

According to Kahneman (2011), life, just like a story, "is about significant events and memorable moments" (Kahneman 2011, 387) And just like in a story, duration of time is neglected, while the significant, memorable events and endings are the ones that really matter. He claims (2011) that this is exactly the way remembering self works: it creates stories. And people want these stories to be good ones (Kahneman 2011)

To illustrate this notion, Kahneman (2011) provides a sad example about a mother and her daughter, who did not communicate with each other for many years. When the daughter finds out that her mother is sick and will die soon, she comes to reconcile with her. They spend one happy hour together, and then mother dies.

From the point of view of experiencing self, one hour is a very short time compare to many years of estrangement, and according to logic, it does not have enough weight to make a

difference. However, for remembering self this one hour changes life stories for both mother and daughter, neglecting previous years (Kahneman 2011).

To sum it up, telling stories not only help people to make sense of events and actions in their lives, but also serve as an instrument to depict person's identity and reflect who they are. In the tourism field it is also the way to trace the inner change a person undergoes during some out-of-the-ordinary experiences, like pilgrimage or backpacking.

3 Process

In the following chapter the process of the author's Camino de Santiago pilgrimage trip will be described. Stages of the process, as well as methods of reporting will be presented.

For the description of the Camino trip a three-stage model of the experience adapted from the Lovelock & Wirtz's (2011) service consumption model will be used, with the emphasis on the core and post-experience stages.

3.1 Pre-Experience Stage

This trip was planned by the author already one year prior to the departure. It was going to be the second Camino for her, since she had walked Camino del Norte in summer 2014. Originally, the author planned her trip alone, as she believed that pilgrimages were meant to be made alone. However, in December 2014 it became clear that she would walk with two other people: Valentina and Vladimir.

Valentina lives in Helsinki, she is 57, happy, energetic, adventurous, however, used to more conventional types of vocations, like beach vocations with a high level of comfort. Camino for her was going to be a way to challenge herself physically and emotionally, as well as prove to herself that she can accomplish things in life.

Vladimir is Valentina's close friend from Petrozavodsk. He is 63, very adventurous and energetic. Vladimir was very eager to join for the trip. However, despite all the instructions prior to departure, he did not have a complete understanding of the travel he was going to undertake. As a result, he faced a lot of difficulties on the way with his too big and heavy backpack and completely wrong shoes.

In blog accounts and posts in social media, many pilgrims share their fears and excitement of physical and mental challenge prior to the trip (Devereux & Carnegie 2006). Most common worries pilgrims talk of are the sore feet and blisters, how it feels to walk 30 km per day, bugs in albergues, steepness of the hills, what to do if there are no available places in albergue, safety issues, comfort, etc. (Arnould & Price 1993). In general, the limited expectations are typical for would-be pilgrims, as they can imagine the trip, but their life experience lacks the expertise to construct the image; that is why the common emotion for future pilgrims before the way is the thrill of the unknown (Arnould & Price 1993)

The author in turn was well prepared physically and equipment-wise. She knew what to expect from the trip and how to plan it. However, she felt worried about her fellow-travellers and the fact that they might underestimate the challenge of the way and overestimate their own level of preparedness.

3.2 Core Experience Stage

For her trip the author has chosen the Camino Portuguese Way, which goes right along the Atlantic coast from Portugal to Spain. The trip lasted 18 days, from the 1st till 18th of July 2015, with the starting point in Porto, Portugal and final destination in Finisterre, Spain. The way was close to 400 km long, which made 20-30 km of walking per day.

The trip included the following phases: Porto - Vila do Conde – Fao – Viana do Castelo – Caminha – Mougas – Ramalhosa – Redondela – Pontevedra - Caldas de Reis – Padron – Santiago – Negreira – Olveiroa – Finisterre.

Originally, it was decided that all three pilgrims would walk the whole way from Porto to Finisterre. However due to physical challenge of the way Vladimir had to make his way on the bus starting from Viana do Castelo, and Valentina finished her way in Santiago. The author continued walking alone three days from Santiago to Finisterre.

Traditionally, there are three components typical for every pilgrimage experience: firstly, journey and communion with nature; secondly, community; and thirdly, arrival/return and transformation/renewal of self, where return and realization of renewal/transformation of self belong to the post-experience stage (Arnould & Price 1993; Devereux & Carnegie 2006).

Journey and communion with nature. Typical day of a pilgrim is quite structured and similar for everyone. Pilgrims wake up early in the morning to get started their way latest at 7 am. It is important especially in summer time, when walking after noon is quite challenging because of the sun and heat. That is why pilgrims aim to arrive to the next albergue by 2 pm, which means every day one walks about 7-8 hours, including short breaks in between.

The sense of communion with nature is very common for all pilgrims (Arnould & Price 1993). The landscape of every Camino route differs from each other: Camino del Norte with its steep hills and wavy coastal line on the right is not the same as Camino Frances, with Pyrenees and endless green fields; the costal Portuguese way is dominated by the Atlantic ocean accompanying pilgrims during almost the whole trip. Medieval architecture, powerful nature and realization that this way was walked by thousands, if not millions of other pilgrims make the way both romantic and meaningful.

Pilgrims arrive to the next city or village after the day of walking where they stay in the albergue. Albergue is a traditional name for the hostel meant exclusively for pilgrims participating in Camino (Loader 2012). Rudolph (2004) argues that pilgrims should stay in albergues, and not in private hostels, for the purpose of authenticity of the journey. During

their trip, the author and her companions stayed only in albergues, some of which were private, but majority was municipal albergues.

Typically, almost every pilgrim faces such moments on the way, when they feel the journey would defeat them (Devereux & Carnegie 2006). Referring to the Freytag's diagram (Norton & Pine 2013), it would be the Crisis phase, where there is a risk not to overcome the obstacle and give up. Frustration can come especially during the first days of travel, when the whole body hurts, first and the worst blisters appear, and one becomes aware of the distance to walk per day; and during the last days of journey, when feet are swollen from the long walk and one feels physical exhaustion. The author and her fellow-travelers faced such moments several times during the trip.

On the arrival to albergue it is quite common for pilgrims to cook together in a communal kitchen or to go to local bars, where usually a special menu for pilgrims is offered. In the evenings pilgrims communicate a lot sharing stories from the trip and life in general.

Community. The conditions of the way with its liminal space, pilgrims sharing similar physical and emotional challenges and a common goal of reaching Santiago, inevitably form communities (Arnould & Price 1993; Devereux & Carnegie 2006). A feeling of belonging to the group is typical among pilgrims, even for those pilgrims travelling alone (Arnould & Price 1993).

It is very typical for pilgrims to distinguish themselves by putting on pilgrim symbols and attributes, like a *scallop shell* or a long wooden stick. Possessing a *credential*, or a passport of a pilgrim, also creates the sense of belonging to the community. Pilgrims should provide their passports in each albergue they stay in order to prove their status of a pilgrim and to get a stamp. In the end of the trip in the Santiago Pilgrims' Office, pilgrims demonstrate their passport as a proof that they have walked necessary distance. In return they get a *Compostela*, a certificate of completion.

Arnould & Price (1993) state that there are three essential features in pilgrimage: separation, transition and reintegration. Pilgrims leave their homes and ordinary lives (separation) and enter new unknown reality and community (transition). It is significant that during the transitional phase pilgrims shake off all the markers of rank and status, which makes everyone equal in their common humanity. As a result, pilgrims return home transformed, and they have to reintegrate into society again. (Arnould & Price 1993)

Pilgrims notice openness and generosity of complete strangers and how quickly the fellowship with those strangers is created. The reason for such behavior pilgrims see as

well in the simplicity of life on the way and constant meeting of the same people during the journey. (Devereux & Carnegie 2006)

Arrival. For most of pilgrims the journey finishes in Santiago de Compostela. It is a tradition among pilgrims to arrive to Plaza del Obradorio, the square in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela located in the very heart of the old town. Plenty of exhausted pilgrims covered with dust and sweat, though happy and smiling, meet at the square, hug, cry, dance, sing, take endless photos in front of the cathedral; some even make proposals to their future wives standing on one knee in the middle of the square surrounded with hundreds of other pilgrims and tourists.

However, for many the noise and bustle of touristic Santiago might come as a disappointment (Devereux & Carnegie 2006). Pilgrims report that in Santiago they have immediate desire to get back to the road; in Santiago comes an understanding that it is the journey, which matters, not the destination (Devereux & Carnegie 2006).

For the author of the thesis Santiago was not the final destination, even though it was a symbolic and significant moment for her to come back to the city, which felt very familiar and welcoming. After spending one night in Santiago she continued her way alone to Finisterre.

Camino Finisterre takes from three to five days of walking and ends on the Cape of Finisterre, in the North-West Atlantic coast of Galicia. In Latin Finisterre means “the end of the earth”. Such image of Finisterre makes the act of arriving there more symbolic and meaningful. Some believe that arriving to Finisterre feels more accomplishing compare to arriving to Santiago, because there is physically no way to continue the journey: the land ends and the ocean starts there. (Sánchez-Carretero 2015)

There are many rituals among pilgrims associated with arriving to the cape of Finisterre. Thus, pilgrims burn some items of their clothes they wore on the way; some just bind pieces of clothes to the radio masts. Another ritual is obtaining a *Fisterrana*, a certificate for those who accomplished Camino Finisterre. But the most romantic and symbolic ritual among pilgrims is observing the sunset over the ocean at the Cape of Finisterre. (Sánchez-Carretero 2015)

For the author of the thesis arriving to Finisterre turned out to be a very emotional and significant moment, which could be considered to be the climax of her journey according to the Freytag diagram (Norton & Pine 2013)

3.3 Post-Experience Stage

Post-experience stage of any pilgrimage is associated with the return back home, later recollections of experience, and self-reflection.

Pilgrimage journey is considered to be a self-changing, self-transforming experience (Noy 2004). For this reason many pilgrims setting off for this journey expect to face something that will change them and the way they see the world; for the same reason many get disappointed, because nothing obvious happens (Noy 2004). However, overall pilgrimage experience brings the sense of achievement and understanding of self, which in many cases reveals only after the journey (Devereux & Carnegie 2006). Noy (2004) argues that personal change is a natural result of a remarkable experience, and a pilgrim returns home in an advantageous position compare to the state he/she left.

Upon arrival, yesterday pilgrims quickly get hit with the routine, noise, hustle and other attributes of normal everyday life (Arnould & Price 1993). However, after the trip they notice that they start to appreciate simple things in life, which they took for granted, like comfortable bed, hot water in the shower, opportunity to have your private space; they become more generous in giving and more grateful in receiving; they realize that everything they need for normal living can fit to their backpack, and all the rest is extra weight; people learn to manage their body and realize to what extend they can push their limits (Arnould & Price 1993; Devereux & Carnegie 2006; Noy 2004).

Some experiences bring up real changes in life. There are stories that people find confidence after the trip to give up their jobs and become someone else, like a teacher instead of a commercial photographer, or a river guide instead of a business executive (Arnould & Price 1993; Devereux & Carnegie 2006).

Pilgrimage experience does not end with the returning home. Some pilgrims call it a “post-Camino syndrome”, when memories and habits from Camino follow you in a real life (Taylder 12 November 2012). Thus, for instance, Taylder (2012) describes her emotions after half a year she came back from Camino Frances:

“Did I go home, knuckle down and return to some semblance of normality?
Did I hell. I still haven’t stopped walking; still need my fix on a daily basis. My natural inclination, first thing in the morning, is to slip into my boots and rucksack, not a smart, chic outfit from my increasingly neglected wardrobe. ”

Or

“Since I responded to a tweet about the Camino last week I’ve been getting flashbacks.”

For the author of the thesis, for example, return to Helsinki was associated with the constant search of yellow arrows and frustration when she happened to find a yellow arrow pointing the opposite direction she had an intention to go.

Some people note strong and vivid memories living even years after such experience as pilgrimage (Arnould & Price 1993). However, as studies described earlier in the thesis demonstrate that memories are subject to transformation. Thus, despite a serious physical challenge, the lack of comfort, privacy and possibility to walk alone, a thick fog on the day of arrival to Finisterre, the overall memories and emotions of the author of the thesis are very positive; as a result, she considered this trip to be one of the best and most emotional experiences in her life.

3.4 Reporting Methods

During the whole process of travel experience, including core experience and post-experience stages, two methods of reporting was used: diary method and narratives.

During the actual pilgrimage trip, the author of the thesis used a traditional “pen and paper” diary method combined with elements of the day reconstruction method (DRM) (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli 2003; Kahneman & Riis 2005). The final version of the diary was designed in a way it corresponded to the goals of the thesis in question and, at the same time, so that it would be convenient to collect data during the trip.

On the post-experience stage narrative method was used. Narratives were written with an interval from several days to three months after some episodes of experience took place.

The main purpose of the diary is to reproduce as close as possible to reality day-to-day travel experience of the author and reflect her general well-being on every single day. The purpose of the narratives is to report author’s memories of the experience in retrospection.

The diary was written every evening describing consecutively episodes of experience happened during that day. Borrowed and adapted element from the DRM was used in the diary: the grading scale from -3 to +3, where -3 states for “frustration”, 0 is “neutral state”, and +3 is “happiness/joy”. The author should have graded her general well-being on that day according to this scale. The purpose of the grading scale is to visually illustrate the peaks of the experience and to trace how and if peaks and ending of the experience will influence the overall perception of the experience.

4 Analysis

Analysis illustrating the discrepancy between the author's actual pilgrimage experience and her memories, as well as analysis of the narratives demonstrating the possible self-change of the author will be presented next.

4.1 Diary Analysis

While analyzing the data collected during the trip, the author concentrated only on the core experience and post-experience phases, where diary was used for analyzing everyday experience and narratives for analyzing the retrospective, or post-experience phase.

Analysis of the author's diary shows that all the data can be classified into three clusters:

- Journey
- Community
- Nature and magic

Journey. Journey starts for the author on a day of departure from Helsinki, and according to the diary, it was quite a controversial beginning of the trip with disappointments, regrets, doubts and uncomfortable feelings:

"I'm excited and yet nervous."

"I have to pretend I'm happy, but in fact I'm not. I wish I traveled alone."

"I feel very uncomfortable due to many reasons."

"I'm quite nervous to arrive to Porto. I have no clue how to get to hostel which I booked for all of us."

The hardest for the author is the fact of limitation of her "freedom" controverting with her desire to enjoy solitude and peace of mind, and the feeling of responsibility for her companions:

"I don't know why, but I feel responsible for them to *like* the trip, and this fact irritates me... I feel like I'm lacking my freedom."

"Vladimir tells me that he wants to have all the maps and lead the way... I feel like someone is invading my freedom on my own trip."

Another concern that bothers the author is the fear that the trip will be too challenging for her companions, both physically and mentally. In the diary it shows that these worries follow the author almost during the whole trip:

“I feel they don’t completely realize what kind of adventure is ahead.”

“...I’m still a bit concerned about tomorrow’s trip, which is over 30 km. I really don’t know if my companions can manage.”

“I cannot really enjoy the way, because I know it is going to be very long for guys, and I know they don’t realize it.”

“I’m tired, but it feels like I’m more tired mentally by worrying about my companions.”

It is important for the author that she and her companions have common goals and anticipations of the journey, as well as similar pace of walking and habits on the way. However, it turns out already during the first days of the trip that the goals and perception of the way are very much different. Thus, for example, the episode of getting the credentials in the Porto Cathedral demonstrates discrepancy between author’s and her companions’ anticipations:

“We go to Porto Cathedral to get credentials. I’m very excited about this moment, because with the credential and the first stamp Camino becomes official and more real. However I can sense Valentina and Vladimir are not taking it as deep and serious as I do. I feel upset and disappointed about this fact.”

Another example is the arrival to Santiago:

“I get really emotional and sentimental when I see the peaks of the cathedral from far away. Valentina is tired, she just wants to eat, take a shower and have a good sleep. I feel extremely sad that I cannot share my emotions with anyone.”

“I just don’t understand how she can think about food in such a moment.”

Or the discrepancy in everyday habits:

“I do everything fast: go to shower, pack my backpack. Guys take their time... After breakfast Valentina and I still have to wait for Vladimir downstairs.”

The pace of walking is different too:

“For me it is more comfortable to walk faster, and for Valentina it is a bit too fast, and she goes behind.”

“We make stops and spend, as it seems to me, too much time at every stop. Guys walk slower as well, I have to wait for them.”

“I feel that if I walk in my own pace, I get much less tired. So I go ahead and at some point I stop to wait for Valentina.”

Journey predictably turns out to be physically challenging for everyone, but especially for the author’s companions. One of the participants, Vladimir, at some point had to continue the trip moving from one destination to another by bus due to serious blisters, too big and heavy backpack and unsuitable shoes. For Valentina the trip was physically hard too, and she finished the way in Santiago, even though originally it was planned to walk until Finisterre. For the author of the thesis the physical side of the way was quite predictable and she was ready for challenge. But even for her there were moments when she was very much frustrated and exhausted:

“It is hot, and I see they [Valentina and Vladimir] are getting more and more tired. I’m getting tired too.”

“By the time we reach Azurara I’m already in despair...”

“Last kilometers before Viana do Castelo seem very long and hard; I’m very tired and seriously worry about Vladimir.”

“I like the challenge of climbing up, but Valentina complains that it is too hard for her.”

“He [Vladimir]... confesses that he has very bad blisters because of wrong and uncomfortable shoes and his backpack is way too heavy.”

“The way to Santiago turns out to be one of the most difficult days, especially for Valentina. It goes up the hill the last seven kilometers.”

In the diary there are also episodes of frustration on the way described, such as, for example, the episode of Vladimir losing his camera:

“At some point Vladimir finds out that he has lost his precious photo camera. He is very sad, because of the pictures he lost. He decides to come back to look for it.”

Or the episode of getting lost and walking a completely wrong direction:

“I check the map and I don’t want to believe it – we are 12 km east from the ocean coast, in the city of Rates. I get very much frustrated.”

Or episode in the café in the end of a difficult day:

“I try to speak English to a person working there and explain that I want something small to eat, but she does not understand me. I get very frustrated and just buy a cup of coffee. Somehow I feel very sad and lonely.”

And other episodes:

“When we come back to albergue after walk around the town I feel very lonely and sad. I realize that it turned out to be not the trip I imagined and looked forward to. I lie in my bed in albergue and cry.”

However, together with the most frustrating moments on the way, there were, of course, the moments of happiness, satisfaction, joy and feeling of accomplishment. Thus, for example, the episode of visiting the Foz do Douro lighthouse is very significant:

“I feel very happy and excited when we come closer to Atlantic Ocean and I can see the lighthouse from far away. Ocean is very beautiful and very powerful; lighthouse is as picturesque as I imagined it to be. I’m happy here...”

Or the last evening in Porto before the trip:

“...when we come to the quay I feel happy. Atmosphere is nice and weather is beautiful. Terraces are full of people, music playing. I like to observe happy people; ...I think it is a perfect ending of the day.”

Or the evening in Mougas:

“We eat very tasty Spanish tortilla outside of the small and homey restaurant. There I also write my diary. It has been a good day.”

Arrival to Santiago became very emotional and significant for the author:

“When we arrive to the old town I start recognizing places and narrow streets. From this point on I know exactly the way to the cathedral. I am overwhelmed with emotions and I feel like crying.”

“I am very happy to know that this is not the end and that I have three more days to Finisterre ahead.”

The climax of the trip and the brightest episode for the author has become arrival to Finisterre and observation of the sunset at the “End of the Earth”:

“I am overwhelmed with emotions and cry from happiness.”

Community. In her diary, the author often refers to community, meaning other pilgrims she met on the way, as well as locals who provided service and just gave a helping hand,

and describes how they influenced her own experience. The first significant episode happened already in the airport:

“A guy comes to our table and asks what part of Camino we are going to walk. He noticed a shell attached to my backpack. I feel proud and excited to meet first pilgrims on the trip. We talk nicely with him and his wife. I enjoy conversation with a person who knows about Camino not just by hearing about it. ... For a moment I feel happy and closer to adventure I was looking forward.”

Another memorable episode happened during the first day of walk, with a woman who worked in a Pilgrims' Office:

“A woman in the office is concerned that we are going to walk until Vila do Conde, she says it is still 20 km and the temperature will rise up to 27C... When we leave the pilgrim's office and make several steps, the woman calls us and I come back to her to ask what is the matter. She asks... to remember her name, Fernanda, and pray for her, when we reach Santiago. I feel touched.”

The author describes pilgrims she encountered on the way:

“There are more and more pilgrims who we know already, because we all end up in the same albergues. There is a Czech young couple, who are really fast, and I always know they are the first one to arrive and enter albergue; there is another Czech couple, romantic young people who walk holding hands; there is a Mexican family: mother, several girls of different age and a smallest pilgrim I have seen on the way – a seven-year-old boy with a shock of long extremely curly hair. He is an object of admiration of everyone passing by on the way, including me; ... there are two young blond girls from the United States, they stand out from everyone else with their not typical outfit and equipment for Camino pilgrims and because of their blond hair; there is an old, but very energetic Danish couple who have been walking for more than a month already – I find them slightly arrogant, maybe because they call Vladimir “a chicken”, when we say that he is following us with the bus; there are many other people who we meet on the way.”

And locals who she met:

“While we are sitting on the bench in the park and talk, there is a mother and a grandmother playing with a little girl not even one year old. A girl pays attention to me and comes to play. I am amazed how easily she goes to my lap without being scared or shy at all, as well as her mum being open and letting me hold her daughter for a while. I remember the moment how women and the girl are leaving, but suddenly mother turns back, comes to me and gives me a girl for us to take a picture. I keep thinking that in Finland it wouldn't be possible.”

Some of pilgrims who become friends:

“I get acquainted with a young Spanish guy Salva. He tells me that this is his dream to see sunset in Finisterre. I realize that this is my dream as well.”

“In the evening I meet Salva and we decide to walk the last three kilometers to the Cape of Finisterre together.”

Nature and Magic. The themes of power of nature and the feeling of magic happening around can often be found on the pages of the diary, and these two themes are closely interrelated for the author.

“It’s quite chilly and windy outside. It is also still dark, and the ocean, which is just several meters away from the albergue, looks especially powerful and picturesque.”

“...the way... is amazingly beautiful and the ocean with its huge waves breaking down the coastal rocks has not seemed as powerful so far.”

“After I walk about 5 km from Santiago, I find myself on the hill with the view to the city, and I can see the small peaks of the cathedral, it is still very early morning and sun is just about to rise. I stop for a moment and just watch.”

“The way to Olveiroa is very beautiful. It was cold at night that is why now there is a fog all around. Sun rises coloring everything orange. It looks absolutely magic. This day is one of the most beautiful during the trip.”

“But then another magic thing happens: one small spot between clouds opens and sun shines through the open hole, coloring ocean not orange, but silver. It looks stunning.”

4.2 Well-Being Diagram Analysis

As it was stated already above, the grading scale from -3 to +3 was used to define the well-being of the author on the everyday basis; -3 states for “frustration”, 0 is “neutral state”, and +3 is “happiness/joy”.

As a result, a diagram shown in Figure 2 was formed, and it demonstrates how the well-being of the author has been changing within 16 days of the trip:

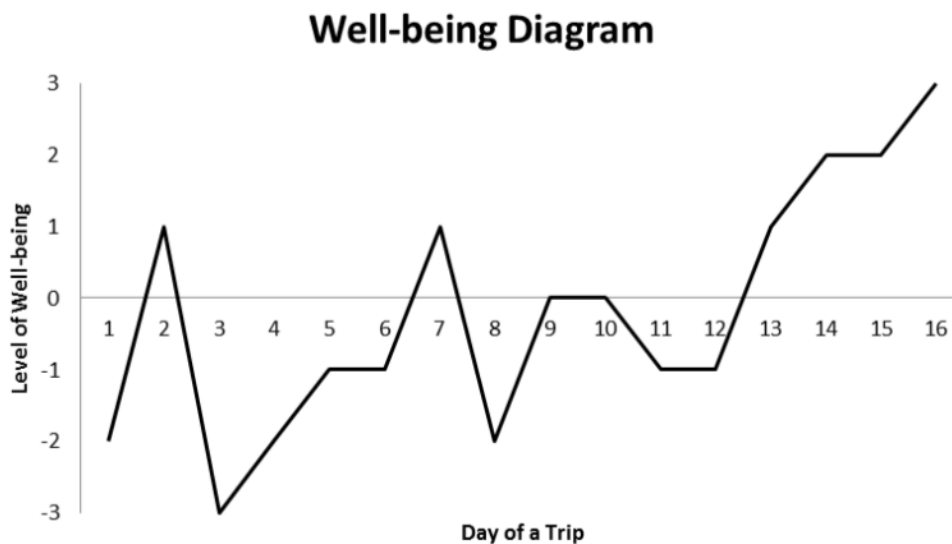


Figure 2. Well-being Diagram

According to diagram, well-being of most of the days on the trip lies below the 0 point. During the first week, there were only two days with the +1 point: the second day of the trip spent in Porto, where the author and her companions got the credentials, visited the Foz do Douro lighthouse and spent a nice evening outside on the terrace; and the 7th day of the trip, which was one of the most beautiful and picturesque with the arrival to albergue in Mougas located right at the Ocean shore.

The negative peaks, or the toughest and most frustrating days were the day of departure from Helsinki and the first day of the trip from Porto to Vila do Conde, with almost 10 hours of walking under the burning sun.

The positive peaks lying above the 0 point appear during the last three days of the way, when the author was walking alone from Santiago to Finisterre. The trip ends for her with the +3 point, the last day spent in Finisterre.

According to simple logic rules, looking through the analysis of the well-being diagram one can make a conclusion that the overall travel experience should be closer to negative due to prevailing amount of days with the negative points. However, as Kahneman (1995) states, remembering self violates logic. For the author of the thesis three last days of the trip played a crucial role in her evaluation of the overall travel experience. That is where peak-end rule can be applied: for the author's remembering self, in retrospection, the overall experience is scored by the ending moments and the most intensive and significant ones, like arrival to Santiago, meeting Salva, arrival to the Cape of Finisterre and observing the sunset, which was magical, despite the weather conditions.

4.3 Analysis of Narratives

The narratives based only on the author's memories about the experience are written in a completely different way, more emotional and with a clear dramatic structure or a structure of a story, with exposition, inciting incident, rising action, crisis, climax, and dénouement.

Exposition:

““This is crazy!” – says Vladimir to me. We see each other for the first time, and the next two and a half weeks Vladimir, Valentina and I will spend together on Camino.”

“We got our credentials in the Porto Cathedral. There we also saw our very first yellow arrow. In the morning we set out on our journey.”

“It is the first time for Valentina and Vladimir to be on Camino. Maybe that is why they don't take very seriously my lectures about thirty kilometers per day, hurting feet and a back.”

Inciting incident:

“This day we hardly make it to albergue. The last kilometers would be extremely hard. Valentina falls asleep immediately. No dancing for us this evening.”

“On the way from Fao we had to leave Vladimir. He lost his camera, which is very old, but, as it turned out, is also very precious to Vladimir. Every photo is very precious to him. It might be so that he ventured upon this whole adventure simply to gain those pictures. Vladimir courageously lets us continue the way and goes to look for his loss.”

Rising action:

“There are seven days of walk behind. With leaving Caminha and getting to another shore of the river we leave Portugal, kind, friendly, colorful, with its either stone or sandy shores, fairy-like Porto, touching Viana do Castelo, which was so hard for us to reach; where we were entering the city walking along the long green bridge, and a passing by motor-cyclist sounded his horn and threw his thumb up, as if saying to us “Great job! You are almost there!” And I am so exhausted, and I left Vladimir on the way. I burst out crying, without even knowing why.”

Crisis:

“Here it feels like Porto happened ages ago... And I desperately tried to make time for everything, live and feel every minute, with eyes wide open, breathing deeper, listening with more attention, memorizing the moment, forming it into words, and trying to understand. And then thirteen days pass, and you look back and realize: you didn't see enough, you didn't breathe enough, you didn't hear enough, a lot of moments disappeared, so many words are lost, and in the end you still don't understand a thing.”

“Had I come one day earlier, I would have seen the sunset. But I have come today. I realized that the ocean was somewhere close just from the sound of waves breaking against the coast; there was only thick fog around. I was walking and crying: there would be no sunset.”

Climax:

“We sit on the rock; there is an endless height under our feet. And all of a sudden, as if just for us, a piece of sky opens and the last evening sun goes through. “This is the end” – says Salva, - “Actually, no. This is the beginning”.”

Dénouement:

“In the morning a bus takes us back to Santiago.”

“What can I say, that was an amazing walk.”

This is also the way remembering self works: it creates stories (Kahneman 2011). And thinking of a travel experience as a story, one wishes it to end well. Analysis of narrations demonstrates that the ending of the author’s experience, meaning the last three days of walk and especially the day spent in the Cape of Finisterre, defined her whole story: “... that was an amazing walk”. Be it a different ending, for example, without the opportunity to see the sunset, or be the author alone there watching it, memory of the trip in general would be different.

One of the most significant characteristics of the narratives is that they demonstrate inner changes of the author as a result of the trip. However, it is quite hard to recognize an inner change *during* the trip, being on the way at this particular moment; but it most likely opens up and becomes more obvious *after*.

“Last year, when there was just one day left to Santiago, we met a Spanish man, the owner of albergue we stayed in. He said that he had talked to plenty pilgrims in his life, and there is one delusion common to all of them: they try to find miracle on the way, while everything just starts happening when you come back home.”

Thus, personal changes of the author cannot be seen from the beginning in the narratives and can hardly be noticed in the diary at all. But the description of the self-change can be recognized in the end. That is how the author puts it:

“What Camino can teach us? It can teach, for example, that the secret of simply everything is to never stop – just be strongly devoted to something and never give up; it can teach that your best friend and the closest person looks at you from the mirror reflection; your worst enemy and the reason for all the disaster looks from there too; it teaches that all the doors, walls and locks are just in your head; that it doesn’t really matter what God you pray to, it is only important that you know how to do it the way He can hear you. And the last one I heard

from Valentina: there are two things in life you shouldn't look for – Death and Love – it will be them who find you. I was walking and thinking: I only hope that Love will be faster.”

Upon the author's arrival from the trip, the last excerpt of the narrative was placed to the closed page of a Russian pilgrimage community in a social network. According to the amount of comments from the members of the community and their content, it has become clear that many pilgrims experience very similar emotions upon the arrival. As well as the author herself, pilgrims indicate going through the personal change by acquiring inner confidence (“...the secret of simply everything is to never stop – just be strongly devoted to something and never give up...”) and better understanding of self (“...it can teach that your best friend and the closest person looks at you from the mirror reflection...”).

In retrospect, the author notices changes not only in herself, but also in one of her companions:

“...she [Valentina] walks joyful and proud of herself, admires the nature and says that this kind of travelling is more meaningful – you look at yourself from a completely different side.”

All in all, analysis of the narratives revealed the discrepancy between the on-site authors travel experience and her memories about it, since the recalled experience described in narratives turned out to be more positive, where negative episodes sound more heroic rather than frustrating. Integral part of the narratives, even though not very obvious one, is the depicting of self-change of the author as a result of the trip.

5 Conclusion

Memories are what we get to keep from our experiences – this is a key idea that pierces through the thesis at hand. And that would be fair enough, if not the fact that what we experience during the episode and what we remember about this experience afterwards are two completely different phenomena. (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman & Riis 2005)

Literature analysis and author's personal observations revealed that memory can be wrong. The reason for mistakes is the conflict between experiencing self and remembering self: memory tends to neglect duration of the episodes and put emphasis on peaks and ends, which distorts the actual experience. It also seems absurd to judge separate episodes of our life, as well as the whole life in general, by their peaks and ends, but that is how our memory acts. (Kahneman 2011; Kahneman & Riis 2005)

The final product of the current thesis is the travel diary, which the author kept writing while walking the famous pilgrimage route – the Way of St. James in Portugal and Spain. The main objective the author set was to apply the theoretical knowledge about the discrepancy between memory and experience in practice and to see, if her own experience of the way will be distorted in retrospection.

Analysis of the diary revealed that the author's memories about her pilgrimage experience turned out to be more positive compare to the actual experience described in the diary. The well-being diagram reflecting the author's well-being on the way demonstrates that in reality there were more days with the negative points, which, basing on pure logic should mean that the experience in general should be evaluated as negative as well. However, analysis of the author's memories described in narratives proved otherwise. The reason for the gap between the actual experience and memories is the ending of the way: the last three days of the pilgrimage were evaluated by the author as very happy and positive.

The author has made an attempt to trace the process of personal transformation during her travel experience. It turned out that this kind of search is typical for many pilgrims. Some call it search for meaning, self, or spirituality; others call it a quest for miracle or divine (Arnould & Price 1993; Devereux & Carnegie 2006; Noy 2004). The author in turn has come to a conclusion that an inner change is an inevitable part of a pilgrimage, and a person coming back from such pilgrimage trip is not the same as a person before the trip. However, the change is not as obvious as some expect it to be, and becomes more distinct sometime after the trip, and not on the way (Devereux & Carnegie 2006).

Current thesis has become a result of author's personal interest in the concept of pilgrimage. She got to know the concept during her last year of studies in Haaga-Helia UAS. After that she went on a pilgrimage three times: once along the path of St. Henry in

Southwest of Finland, and two times along the Way of St. James in Spain and Portugal. Both, the theoretical part of the thesis, as well as a diary and narratives can be useful and interesting for those who have already walked the pilgrimage routes and for those who are planning to undertake one.

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7 Appendices

Appendix 1. Diary of a Pilgrim from the Way of St. James

1.7. Helsinki-Madrid-Porto

Morning at home: I'm excited and yet nervous, because I don't know how and if I get along with my companions. I don't know Valentina very well and I haven't met Vladimir at all. There is too big age gap and different anticipations from the trip. I wish I traveled alone.

Meeting at Valentina's place: I feel very uncomfortable due to many reasons. Vladimir is too loud and talks too much. I feel they don't completely realize what kind of adventure is ahead. Vladimir's backpack is way too big! I'm afraid that he won't be allowed to the aircraft with this big hand luggage. I have to pretend I'm happy, but in fact I'm not. I wish I traveled alone.

On the way to airport: We still have to drive to Valentina's office to print our plane tickets. That makes me feel nervous. I don't like the fact that she didn't do it in advance. We are looking for parking for too long. Finally, we park in a place not allowed for parking in a city center. We walk to the office and my legs hurt terribly because of previous unplanned work out. I can hardly make a step without whining. On our way to airport it is way too hot in the car and it is hard to breathe. I feel sick.

Airport: Vladimir talks too much, and I want to stay quiet being just with my thoughts. I feel uncomfortable, I'm upset with the fact that I can't influence really this situation and I have to adjust. I'm sad that I cannot enjoy fully the atmosphere of the airport and upcoming adventure. I leave guys in a café and go walking a bit by myself. I wish I traveled alone.

Airplane: in the airplane I want to be just quiet, and guys are talking too much and too loud. I pretend sleeping for a while and then I actually fall asleep.

Madrid Airport: we are eating in the airport café. Valentina complains about the food, which I don't like – I realize again she doesn't quite know what kind of trip it's going to be. I don't like my food either, but I'm quiet. A guy comes to our table and asks what part of Camino we are going to walk. He noticed a shell attached to my backpack. I feel proud and excited to meet first pilgrims on the trip. We talk nicely with him and his wife. I enjoy conversation with a person who knows about Camino not just by hearing about it. I notice that Valentina is not following that much and not that much excited. For a moment I feel happy and closer to adventure I was looking forward. Our flight is one hour late, I'm nervous about Vladimir's backpack. I keep thinking if he and Valentina are really going to make it. And what I do, if they actually not. Finally we are in the plane heading to Porto.

Arrival to Porto: I'm quite nervous to arrive to Porto. I have no clue how to get to hostel which I booked for all of us. I feel responsible for guys, even though they are grown-ups themselves and much older than I am. I don't know why, but I feel responsibility for them to *like* the trip, and this fact irritates me. I just want to be by myself. I feel like I'm lacking my freedom.

Evening: We find hostel easier than I thought it would be. Concierges are very nice and helpful Portuguese guys, and I feel embarrassed for Vladimir talking half English, half Russian to them. My companions like the place. In general I'm satisfied about arrival to Porto. We go to eat to the restaurant. Here I can finally relax and enjoy a warm and beautiful evening. For the first time during the day I feel comfortable in a company of Valentina and Vladimir. I feel like taking care and helping. I feel a hope that I finally get used to my companions and their presence will not ruin my trip.

Overall well-being: -2

2.7 Porto

Morning: I sleep very well and wake up in a good mood. Our plans for today is to get credentials, to visit Foz do Douro Lighthouse and see the city. Guys also want to buy pilgrim shells for their backpacks. For a while we cannot find a place for breakfast, which everyone likes. I feel a bit annoyed about this fact. Vladimir is taking a lot of pictures with his old digital camera. He makes me and Valentina to pose for the picture every five meters of our way. I feel quite irritated about it. Finally we find the place, which I wouldn't choose, if I was by myself. I try not to think about it, but I'm still a bit disappointed. We go to Porto Cathedral to get credentials. I'm very excited about this moment, because with the credential and the first stamp Camino becomes official and more real. However I can sense Valentina and Vladimir are not taking it as deep and serious as I do. I feel upset and disappointed about this fact. I'm happy to find our first yellow arrow next to the Cathedral. It brings back good memories from the last year trip and I cannot wait to start walking the next morning.

Foz do Douro Lighthouse: I knew half a year prior to the trip that I want to visit Foz do Douro Lighthouse while in Porto. It locates 5km distance one way from the hostel, which is quite a long way to walk, especially in this heat. Valentina is more interested to see the city, she is a bit skeptical about lighthouse trip. I say I go there anyway and suggest that I go alone, and she and Vladimir can explore the city meanwhile. They decide to accompany me anyway. I'm disappointed, because I would prefer to stay alone for a while. I feel very happy and excited when we come closer to Atlantic Ocean and I can see the lighthouse from far away. Ocean is very beautiful and very powerful; lighthouse is as picturesque as I imagined it to be. I'm happy here, but still feeling like staying alone.

Evening alone: after the lighthouse trip Valentina and Vladimir go to explore the city and look for shells and I stay in hostel. I enjoy being alone, with no talking, no loud conversations and arguing. I lie on a bed and write my diary, then I fall asleep. After I wake up I realize that guys are still not back. I feel weird, and controversially I want them to be back.

Evening at the quay: Valentina and Vladimir come in a very joyful mood, telling stories about them searching for shells and not being able to find them, and how finally they met a Polish guy who lives in Porto and sells different kinds of shells, and how they go to his place and he makes holes in the shells and put leather strings specially for them, and how they think that it was not a coincidence and how it must be a sign from above. I feel glad that guys are finally back and also a bit jealous and upset that I missed something. We decide to go to the quay and have some coffee and port wine. First I'm a bit concerned about this idea, because it is already quite late and we have to wake up very early next morning to start our way. But when we come to the quay I feel happy. Atmosphere is nice and weather is beautiful. Terraces are full of people, music playing. I like to observe happy people; I find them very different and very interesting. I think it is a perfect ending of the day. But I'm still a bit concerned about tomorrow's trip, which is over 30 km. I really don't know if my companions can manage.

Overall well-being: +1

3.7. Porto - Vila do Conde

Morning: We wake up at 5.30 in the morning. I aim to leave hostel at sharp 7. From my previous experience I know that it is important to start walking early, because it is much harder to walk under the burning sun after midday. I know that leaving at 7 is already quite late for pilgrims, but I don't want to stress my companions too much on the first morning. I do everything fast: go to shower, pack my backpack. Guys take their time. Vladimir starts preparing breakfast and making coffee, I feel that it takes too much time. After breakfast Valentina and I still have to wait Vladimir downstairs. Finally we leave at 7.15. I'm in a bad mood.

On the way: Guys are active and talkative at the beginning of the way. They follow my pace, take a lot of pictures, and laugh. I feel like we are losing too much time on stopping and taking pictures. Vladimir is very keen on it. We walk right along the ocean and the view is amazing. It is still morning and the sun is not so hot yet. I'm very worried about Vladimir's backpack, I start noticing that it is quite heavy for him. I cannot really enjoy the way, because I know it is going to be very long for guys, and I know they don't realize it. At 11am we reach the first pilgrim tourism office, where we make a small stop and get the stamp. By this time the air is already hot and guys look tired, even though they don't complain. A woman in the office is concerned that we are going to walk until Vila do Conde, she says it is still 20 km

and the temperature will rise up to 27C. I know I can make it, but I'm worried about the guys. They insist we continue walking as planned. When we leave the pilgrim's office and make several steps, the woman calls us and I come back to her to ask what is the matter. She asks where we are from and also asks to remember her name, Fernanda, and pray for her, when we reach Santiago. I feel touched. Then I notice Valentina crying.

Azurara: the way along the ocean is very beautiful, I truly enjoy the view, but I also cannot stop worrying about my companions. It is hot, and I see they are getting more and more tired. I'm getting tired too. We make stops and spend, as it seems to me, too much time at every stop. Guys walk slower as well, I have to wait for them. By the time we reach Azurara I'm already in despair: Valentina gets sun lotion to her eye and it swallows, she cannot see very well, water doesn't help. She is also very tired. I hope to find some place to sleep in Azurara, even if it is a hotel, but people on the street say that we have to walk 3 more km to Vila do Conde. It is already 5 o'clock, when we finally make it to the city. We still have to ask people where Albergue is and only then we find it. I'm tired, but it feels like I'm more tired mentally by worrying about my companions.

Vila do Conde Albergue: We are relieved to finally find ourselves in albergue. We get a room just for 3 of us. I think a private room with a separate toilet and shower is not an authentic experience, but at this moment it doesn't matter that much. Valentina falls asleep for an hour. I feel frustrated and try to figure out how we should proceed tomorrow. I ask Portuguese hosts about the bus possibilities. It looks like we still have to walk around 5 km to the closest bus station. After a nap Valentina feels much better. They even go for a walk around the city with Vladimir. We agree that we walk together until the bus station and then we see according to Valentina's state, if we proceed walking or Valentina goes by bus.

Overall well-being: -3

4.7. Vila do Conde – Fao

Wrong direction: The morning is quite smooth, but still a bit too slow in my opinion. We have to wait for Vladimir again. When we start walking we realize that arrows lead us from the albergue to the side opposite from the ocean. We trust the arrow too much, that's why we decide to walk a bit further from the ocean. At the beginning of the way we still can see the ocean on our left, but the further we walk following arrows, the less we can see it. At some point it disappears from our view. Guys seem to be in a good mood. Valentina says she feels fine and she wants to continue walking. I'm worried about the fact that we cannot see the ocean for quite a long time already. It is hard to follow the map, because most of the villages and small towns are not marked with the signs. After 3-4 hour of walking we find ourselves in the first bigger town. According to the level of tiredness and time, we

should have made most of the distance. I try to look for the town on the map, but don't really see anything big enough on the way. Finally arrows lead us to albergue, where the name of the town is written. I check the map and I don't want to believe it – we are 12 km east from the ocean coast, in the city of Rates. I get very much frustrated. The Portuguese hosts in albergue are very nice, helpful and supportive. They suggest that we stay here for the night and continue the way next morning. I really don't want to do that, because our schedule is very tight, and if we do so, we will be late to Santiago eventually. Hosts say we should still walk close to 20 km to make it back to our original route. And again I'm worried about Valentina and Vladimir. I suggest they should stay for the night and I will continue walking alone, then we catch up at some point. They decide to walk with me.

Rates-Fao: On the way back to the coastal route I make up my mind that it is going to be as long and difficult day as yesterday. I feel stupid to lose the ocean as our indicator. I feel angry and frustrated, because I cannot enjoy the walk and I have to worry about guys. However the way turns out to be easy and pleasant. The sky is cloudy and the heat doesn't bother too much. We make several stops on the way, I can see guys are tired, but in a good mood. Finally, it looks like we approach to a bigger city. According to time it shouldn't be Fao yet. We ask a woman on the way how long the way to Fao is. She doesn't speak English, but she shows with her fingers 1,5 km. We are very happy to hear that. After a short while we find our albergue right on the way.

Fao albergue: Albergue is nice and big and almost empty. We go to the store to buy some food, and then just rest.

Overall well-being: -2

5.7. Fao – Viana do Castelo

Morning: at the very beginning of our way in the morning Vladimir tells me that he wants to have all the maps and lead the way. At the moment I am the one with the maps leading. He says that he doesn't trust arrows anymore and he wants to walk strictly along the ocean in order to avoid yesterday's situation. I feel very frustrated. I feel like someone is invading my freedom on my own trip. I don't want to have arguments with anyone, and I politely refuse to give the maps. Plus I know that walking all the time along the coast is not always possible. Vladimir is very stubborn and I don't like it.

The loss: The views are extremely beautiful while walking along the ocean, but as I expected some parts of wild beaches are hard to walk. We make several detours because of that and I feel that we are losing time and energy. At some point Vladimir finds out that he has lost his precious photo camera. He is very sad, because of the pictures he lost. He decides to come back to look for it. We agree to

meet in albergue in the evening and Valentina and I continue the way without Vladimir. We return to the road with arrows. Last kilometers before Viana do Castelo seem very long and hard. I'm very tired and seriously worry about Vladimir.

Viana do Castelo Albergue: Viana do Castelo is a very beautiful city. Albergue locates on the territory of the church and an old school. Valentina and I have some rest and sleep and then go to look for a place to eat something. I keep worrying about Vladimir. Finally we find a nice sea food restaurant. They bring us a huge portion of sea food risotto for two, which looks more like 4-portion dish, and wine. I call Vladimir and finally can reach him on the phone. He says that he is in albergue already and he has found his camera, which makes me feel extremely happy. Now I can really enjoy good food and wine and stop worrying for a while.

Overall well-being: -1

6.7. Viana do Castelo – Caminha

Morning: Our morning starts nicely. We talk and make pictures with a Polish couple, who we met on the way couple of days ago and now met them again in albergue of Viana do Castelo. On the way we again slightly argue with Vladimir, if we should walk right along the coast or we should follow the arrows. Finally Vladimir confesses that he prefers to walk alone, because our pace is too fast for him. Earlier he hasn't complained about that and I realize that he has got quite tired during last days. He turns to the direction of the ocean, and Valentina and I continue the way by following arrows. The way is very beautiful. We walk through the parks and eucalyptus forest. Today there are quite a few hills on the way. I like the challenge of climbing up, but Valentina complains that it is too hard for her. We have to slow down and make stops more often.

Albergue: Because of the hills the way turns out to be very tiring for Valentina. When we finally come to Caminha, she is a bit grumpy and looks tired. Physically I feel fine, but also irritated. Vladimir is already waiting for us in albergue. He tells us that the second part of the way he hasn't walked, he has taken a bus. He also confesses that he has very bad blisters because of wrong and uncomfortable shoes and his backpack is way too heavy. We agree that the next day he will continue his trip by bus and Valentina and I will walk two of us. Albergue is very dirty and there is no hot water in the shower. All of a sudden I feel very sad, because of Vladimir's bad state, dirty and unfriendly albergue and the fact that I don't feel completely free and independent on my own trip.

Overall well-being: -1

7.7. Caminha – Mougas

Morning: Caminha is the last city in Portugal on our way. Today morning we have to take the boat in order to get to another shore and by crossing the river to appear in Spain. It takes only 15 minutes by boat and 4km of walk, and we are in A Guarda. There we find a bus station and leave Vladimir to wait for the bus. I still have not a very pleasant feeling of sadness and dissatisfaction from yesterday. I want to be quiet and I'm craving for a cup of coffee.

The way to Mougas: the view on the way to Mougas is absolutely stunning. The weather is cloudy and cool, which makes walking easy and pleasant. I walk faster than Valentina. I feel that if I walk in my own pace, I get much less tired. So I go ahead and at some point I stop to wait for Valentina. This way I also can stay just by myself one to one with my thoughts and beautiful views. I really enjoy the way, maybe that's why it seems also short to me.

Mougas albergue: Mougas is small and empty. We find albergue right at the ocean coast. It is very neat and clean, with a friendly host and a restaurant just next door. Vladimir has already arrived; we find his backpack and other things on one of the beds. There is no one else at this place, just the three of us. We eat very tasty Spanish tortilla outside of the small and homey restaurant. There I also write my diary. It has been a good day.

Overall well-being: +1

8.7. Mougas – Ramalhosa

Morning: Morning starts very nice. We wake up early and Vladimir traditionally makes coffee and sandwiches for us. It's quite chilly and windy outside. It is also still dark, and the ocean, which is just several meters away from the albergue, looks especially powerful and picturesque. It also becomes a tradition showing the next destination city and albergue to Vladimir. I notice that he likes to study the map and discuss a plan for the following day. After we are ready, Valentina and I leave and Vladimir stays waiting for the bus.

The way to Ramalhosa: it is quite chilly to walk, the wind from the ocean is cold and the morning sun is hiding behind the hill on the right. The view is stunning. We choose to walk along the highway, because following arrows and turning to the east would mean quite steep hills, which Valentina wants to avoid. I don't really mind, because the way, even though close to many cars passing by, is amazingly beautiful and the ocean with its huge waves breaking down the coastal rocks has not seemed as powerful so far. Valentina gets tired quite fast and starts complaining, talking about break and coffee. I get upset and even annoyed, that's not something I want to listen to. Finally, we stop at some café and have coffee.

Looking for Albergue: It turns out it is not easy to find an albergue in Ramalhosa, even though we get the city map from the tourist office. We follow the arrows, but

accidentally pass by the place where albergue locates. Only 15 minutes later after we ask some people on the street we realize we have walked too far. Valentina is too tired at that moment already and I'm very angry because of complains. When we are completely tired and hungry we finally find the place.

Ramalhosa Albergue: Actually we passed by the albergue, because we could not think it was the one. It looks too pompous, like a castle. It is very beautiful inside, with terraces and a nice garden behind. We get a separate room for two. Vladimir comes couple of hours later. In albergue we meet a nice group of Polish people: two women and three men; they are approximately Valentina's age. Polish guys are very sociable and funny. We spend half an hour talking in the lobby of albergue. I go to look for a place to eat and end up at some café. I try to speak English to a person working there and explain that I want something small to eat, but she does not understand me. I get very frustrated and just buy a cup of coffee. Somehow I feel very sad and lonely.

Overall well-being: -2

9.7. Ramalhosa – Redondela

Morning: In the morning Vladimir traditionally prepares breakfast for us, we discuss the plan for today and final destination. After that Valentina and I leave the albergue. The weather forecast promises a very hot day. Distance for today is 30 km, but part of the way goes through Vigo, big and crowded city. We decide that due to such heat it is dangerous to walk through the city the whole way, plus one Portuguese girl in Vila do Conde advised us to take a bus through the city. I don't feel like we are cheating by taking a bus, even if it is only a small part of the way, but I realize as well that it will be too much for Valentina, especially in such a hot day.

Vigo: We arrive to Vigo already quite tired because of the heat. I feel lost and don't understand where we should go. A policeman helps us to find a bus station. Vigo is very big and crowded compare to other towns we met on the way. I feel amazed to find a yellow arrow in the middle of city jungle, it feels like magic, and that someone is looking after us not letting us getting lost. In the bust station magic happens again – we meet Vladimir who is also waiting for the bus to Redondela. I am sincerely happy to see him.

Redondela: We arrive to Redondela and find albergue immediately. We are lucky to get the last three beds there. I really like this albergue: it is big and clean with beautiful stone walls and high ceilings. There are a lot of pilgrims inside. I think that this is just the proper albergue for an authentic experience. Vladimir on the contrary doesn't like it at all because of the crowd and the fact that albergue is closed after 10 in the evening. I explain that it is done for the comfort of those

pilgrims who want to rest and not being disturbed at night by those coming late. During the night I almost don't sleep because of a kid sleeping next to me. He is very restless, and tossing and turning in bed, which make the bed shake every time he moves. I can see that Vladimir also doesn't sleep.

Overall well-being: 0

10.7. Redondela – Pontevedra

Morning: I expect that the way to Pontevedra should be rather easy, since it is a bit more than 20 km long. This time we leave albergue all three of us together, Vladimir joins us for the beginning of the way. He would prefer to stay a bit longer and then take a bus, but there is a rule in this albergue that all pilgrims should leave before 8. Vladimir wants to take a risk and walk. He says his feet are better now. We walk three of us for a while before the point where the pilgrimage path and a highway separate. Valentina and I take the path and Vladimir continues his way along the highway, because according to the map it is slightly shorter and terrain is not that undulating.

On the Way: On the way I realize that it was a good idea for Vladimir not to continue with us, because there are quite many hills on the way, even though they are not too steep. Valentina gets tired fast and we have to make more stops than usually. There are more and more pilgrims walking ahead and behind us compare to the beginning of the trip, when there were moments when we didn't meet anyone on the way. There are more and more pilgrims who we know already, because we all end up in the same albergues. There is a Czech young couple, who are really fast, and I always know they are the first one to arrive and enter albergue; there is another Czech couple, romantic young people who walk holding hands; there is a Mexican family: mother, several girls of different age and a smallest pilgrim I have seen on the way – a seven-year-old boy with a shock of long extremely curly hair. He is an object of admiration of everyone passing by on the way, including me; there is a company of three Sicilians: two guys and one girl – they are very talkative and look like they have travelled a lot; there are two young blond girls from the United States, they stand out from everyone else with their not typical outfit and equipment for Camino pilgrims and because of their blond hair; there is an old, but very energetic Danish couple who have been walking for more than a month already – I find them slightly arrogant, maybe because they call Vladimir “a chicken”, when we say that he is following us with the bus; there are many other people who we meet on the way.

Pontevedra: We arrive to albergue quite early. It is still closed and there is a queue of those pilgrims arrived earlier. Some of them are sitting on the ground along the fence; some are sleeping with their heads on the backpack; some are sitting on the parapet. Valentina and I sit on the parapet too. I feel very sleepy. Finally albergue is

open. We register, take a shower and I fall asleep. The rest of the day I spend alone walking around the city, drinking coffee in the café and observing other pilgrims hanging around in the albergue lobby and garden.

This time Vladimir didn't arrive to the same albergue in Pontevedra, as he wanted to stay at a small village on the way. Instead we agreed to meet at Caldas de Reis on 11th of July.

Overall well-being: 0

11.7. Pontevedra – Caldas de Reis

It has become normal for me and Valentina to walk in a different pace. For me it is more comfortable to walk faster, and for Valentina it is a bit too fast, and she goes behind. This way I also can walk by myself. We talk only during short stops. After one of such stops, already close to Caldas de Reis, Valentina wants to stay and have rest a bit longer. I decide to continue the way. Entering Caldas de Reis, I realize that I don't see Valentina behind me anymore. I get a bit worried, because I know that she is not very attentive with the arrows and there were some tricky turns behind. I decide to find albergue first, leave my backpack and go look for Valentina. The weather is very hot, especially inside the city. I find albergue. There are already quite many pilgrims queuing. I am happy to see that the fast Czech couple is first in the queue. I leave my backpack and go to look for Valentina. I walk quite a long way back, but I don't see her. I suspect that she went to the wrong path, because she shouldn't be that far away. I start worrying a lot. I meet the Danish couple who say she was just behind. I try to call, but my battery dies. I go back to albergue to charge my phone. At this point I feel very tired and frustrated. In addition to that I cannot reach Valentina, because her phone is off. I decide that I don't leave her alone anymore.

Eventually she comes to the same albergue a bit later. It turned out that she actually went the wrong way and ended up in some other private albergue. Owners told her how to get to municipal one. I was angry and worried, but happy to see her finally.

Later in the evening, after Vladimir didn't show up, we go to look for him to the same private albergue. We find him there. We go for a walk three of us. While we are sitting on the bench in the park and talk, there is a mother and a grandmother playing with a little girl not even one year old. A girl pays attention to me and comes to play. I am amazed how easily she goes to my lap without being scary or shy at all, as well as her mum being open and letting me hold her daughter for a while. I remember the moment how women and the girl are leaving, but suddenly mother turns back, comes to me and gives me a girl for us to take a picture. I keep thinking that in Finland it wouldn't be possible.

Overall well-being: -1

12.7. Caldas de Reis – Padron

The way to Padron feels much easier. I feel sad realizing that Padron is the last city before Santiago. I feel like I wasted my trip on worrying and stressing about others.

When we arrive to Padron, we see that locals celebrate the feast of Saints Peter and Paul; there is a huge market in the middle of the town with a lot of people. We go through this crowd and buy some fruits on the way.

We find albergue, which is located on the hill right next to the beautiful medieval church. After the shower and some rest I go to walk around the town with its markets, decorated streets, and dressed in costumes locals. Tomorrow is Santiago. Valentina says that she will finish her way there, because she has already proved to herself that she can do it. When we come back to albergue after walk around the town I feel very lonely and sad. I realize that it turned out to be not the trip I imagined and looked forward. I lie in my bed in albergue and cry.

Overall well-being: -1

13.7. Padron – Santiago

We wake up very early in the morning; all pilgrims are awake too packing their backpacks. It is still dark outside. I notice that everyone look joyful and happy, everyone anticipates soon arrival to Santiago. I have mixed feelings, but I am exited too.

The way to Santiago turns out to be one of the most difficult days, especially for Valentina. It goes up the hill the last seven kilometers. I get really emotional and sentimental when I see the peaks of the cathedral from far away. Valentina is tired, she just wants to eat, take a shower and have a good sleep. I feel extremely sad that I cannot share my emotions with anyone.

Four kilometers before entering Santiago we meet the young romantic Czech couple hugging and holding hands; they look very happy, she is almost crying. I don't know for sure, but it looks like he has just proposed to her – powerful scene.

Vladimir should wait us on the square in front of the cathedral. When we arrive to the old town I start recognizing places and narrow streets. From this point on I know exactly the way to the cathedral. I am overwhelmed with emotions and I feel like crying. I get upset only when Valentina comments something on the seafood restaurant she wants to visit. I just don't understand how she can think about food in such a moment. Finally, we enter the square. There are a lot of pilgrims and tourists. It looks exactly the way I remembered it from the last visit. We sit on the ground in the middle of the square. I cry. We almost don't talk. Very soon I see Vladimir in the crowd.

I am very happy to know that this is not the end and that I have three more days to Finisterre ahead. I see yellow arrows leading further from the square and I know I will follow them tomorrow.

Overall well-being: +1

14.7. Santiago – Negreira

I leave albergue earlier than usually, when Valentina and Vladimir are still sleeping. I feel very happy and excited, actually, I feel free. I stop only once for a short break during the way, the rest time I just keep walking. After I walk about 5 km from Santiago, I find myself on the hill with the view to the city, and I can see the small peaks of the cathedral, it is still very early morning and sun is just about to rise. I stop for a moment and just watch.

The way to Negreira is going to be long, over 30 km. plus it is quite challenging, with rather steep hills and paths going through the woods. At some point I get to the place I remember from the last year trip to Finistere. However then we went there with the bus and made a stop at this beautiful bridge. I feel very proud to have walked here this time.

When I enter Negreira I feel already very tired. The weather is very hot. It is siesta time and streets are quite empty. I decide not to look for the municipal albergue and stay this time in a private one. However, when I come inside the owners say it is still closed and will be open only in an hour. Meanwhile I have rest outside on the bench. The last moment I decide to still continue couple of kilometers and look for the municipal albergue. I finally find it at the very end of the city. I am very glad I made a decision to walk here, because this place is really nice and clean. Other pilgrims also start arriving, most of them I haven't met on the way, they are coming from different other routs: Camino Frances, Camino del Norte, Camino Englese, Camino Plato. I get acquainted with a young Spanish guy Salva. Salva studies medicine at the university. He tells me that this is his dream to see sunset in Finisterre. I realize that this is my dream as well. We talk a lot and he shows me the terrain profile maps for the rest of the way. My plan is to make it in three days in total to Finisterre. He says it will be too difficult, because the way is not easy. I get a bit worried, but decide to make it anyway.

Overall well-being: +2

15.7. Negreira – Olveiroa

I wake up early and start my way when it is still dark. I notice that Salva leaves earlier than me. I have my breakfast and leave too. I walk alone in a complete darkness shining my way with the flashlight. It fills a bit uncomfortable. At some point I reach Salva and some other Spanish men walking with him. We talk for a

while, and I leave them behind. I like their company, but, first of all, my pace is slightly faster; second, I feel like walking alone.

The way to Olveiroa is very beautiful. It was cold at night that is why now there is a fog all around. Sun rises coloring everything orange. It looks absolutely magic. This day is one of the most beautiful during the trip. I feel completely free. I really enjoy my solitude, but appreciate having nice and friendly people around.

After a day of walk all the pilgrims I met in Negreira come to stay overnight in the same albergue in Olveiroa.

Overall well-being: +2

16.7. Olveiroa – Finisterre

This morning I start walking together with Salva and his friends. They call me “fast Russian girl”. We walk again in complete darkness, but this time I am not afraid. We walk 4 km together until the first café on the way, and guys stay there to have their breakfast; I continue walking alone. We agree with Salva that we meet in the municipal albergue in Fisterra, the closest village to the Cape of Finisterre.

I walk fast and stop only twice: after 10 km and then after another ten. There is thick fog all around, and it is not possible to see long ahead. Plus, it is really cloudy. I start worrying: what if there will be clouds and fog in Finisterre; it will mean I won't see the sunset. Everything looks very mysterious and beautiful covered with fog. At some point I approach the asphalt road; I cannot see anything ahead of me, but I realize I can hear the waves breaking over the shore; there is an *ocean* right in front of me and I cannot see it at all. I get really frustrated. I realize that I will not see the sunset; I might hardly even see the ocean. I start crying. I walk and cry.

I arrive to Fisterra village tired after 34 km of walking and very emotional. In albergue there are already some pilgrims waiting for the opening. Meanwhile, they get their Fisterratas. I get mine too. There is also an Italian man who I get to know during these three days of walk from Santiago; he doesn't speak much English, but I understand when he asks me if I am going to continue to Muxia. I shake my head “no”. “Finisterre finish” – he says and puts one arm over another making a cross. And at this moment I realize that this is actually the end of my journey. I smile to him, turn around and start crying.

In the evening I meet Salva and we decide to walk the last three kilometers to the Cape of Finisterre together. There is no fog anymore, and we can see the ocean, but the sky is cloudy. We walk to meet the sunset anyway. It gets quite cold and windy, but there are still people standing on the rocks staring into the distance of the ocean, waiting for sunset, which objectively should not happen today. But then another magic thing happens: one small spot between clouds opens and sun shines through

the open hole coloring ocean not orange, but silver. It looks stunning. I am overwhelmed with emotions and cry from happiness. Salva smiles quietly.

Overall well-being: +3

Appendix 2. Narratives of a Pilgrim

“This is crazy!” – says Vladimir to me. We see each other for the first time, and the next two and a half weeks Vladimir, Valentina and I will spend together on Camino. Vladimir’s backpack is extremely huge, and I assume that they will not let him on board with the hand luggage like that. We are in Madrid airport. A Norwegian couple in their sixties came to us and asked which part of Camino we were going to walk. It turned out that they noticed a pilgrim shell attached to my backpack. They have just finished walking Camino del Norte, the route I walked exactly a year ago. We excitedly discuss the moment, when a quiet motionless del Norte merges with the overcrowded Camino Frances in the city of Arsua; how unexpectedly there are five hundred more loud pilgrims walking next to you; how you are trying to find those who have become your friends on the way and how you triumph when you finally find them. Our flight is delayed for one hour, but our luggage is on board and we are heading to Porto. In Porto we have two missions to accomplish: to get credentials and to see a Foz do Douro picturesque light house on the Atlantic coast. We got our credentials in the Porto Cathedral. There we also saw our very first yellow arrow. In the morning we set out on our journey. And the lighthouse... The lighthouse has become mine.

It is the first time for Valentina and Vladimir to be on Camino. Maybe that is why they don’t take very seriously my lectures about thirty kilometers per day, hurting feet and a back. Valentina jokes: “You will see, we will go dancing in the evenings”. And I recall the last year, my poor heavy feet, blisters, bruises on shoulders and heaps from the lubberly tightened straps of the backpack... I recall, look at Valentina and Vladimir who walk carelessly around Porto, and realize that the journey is going to be interesting. Our aim for today is Vila da Conde, which is 27 km from Porto. However, it is 27 km according to the map, but in fact, with detours and errors in the route, there are more than thirty. Thirty kilometers is a very serious distance even for me, especially in such a heat. That is why I am twice as worried for my companions. We walk right along the ocean coast. I imagine like I am Dorothy walking toward the Emerald City, but instead of the yellow brick road we have either beach sand, or kilometers long wooden path, or dusty roads of the fishing villages under our feet. Vladimir says I am Assol from Scarlet Sails. He is closer to the truth, I assume. Pilgrims in Portugal are in favour. People wave us from the passing by cars, greet us on the streets and say Buen Camino. This day we hardly make it to albergue. The last kilometers would be extremely hard. Valentina falls asleep immediately. No dancing for us this evening.

We walk. Porto - Vila do Conde – Fao – Viana do Castelo – Caminha – Mougas. Within five days no one is behind and no one has given up. Even though they could have been. On the way from Fao we had to leave Vladimir. He lost his camera, which is very old, but, as it turned out, is also very precious to Vladimir. Every photo is very precious to him. It might be so that he ventured upon this whole adventure in order to gain those pictures. Vladimir courageously lets us continue the way and goes to look for his loss. We agree to meet in Viana do Castelo albergue. From this moment on Valentina and I walk just two of us. Valentina starts adjusting to the way, find her bearings on the ground, estimate her strength and the distance; she starts noticing yellow arrows and points busily at every single one of them. She confessed that after the first day of the trip she started to doubt about the whole thing and to think why on earth she needs that. But already today she walks joyful and proud of herself, admires the nature and says that this kind of travelling is more meaningful, you look at yourself from a completely different side. I didn't tell her about this "side effect" of Camino, she figured it out herself. Vladimir arrived three hours later. Luckily, he found his camera. In Caminha it turned out that Vladimir will not walk with us the next day due to his bad blisters. Vladimir is 63 and he is very brave. It is just that his back pack is way too big and his shoes are completely not suitable.

There are seven days of walk behind. With leaving Caminha and getting to another shore of the river, we leave Portugal, kind, friendly, colorful, with its either stone or sandy shores, fairy-like Porto, touching Viana do Castelo, which was so hard for us to reach; where we were entering the city walking along the long green bridge, and a passing by motor-cyclist sounded his horn and threw his thumb up, as if saying to us "Great job! You are almost there!" And I am so exhausted, and I left Vladimir on the way. I burst out crying, without even knowing why. Vladimir doesn't lose his optimism, makes jokes, and doesn't want to show his blisters, which might be very bad, I assume. Every morning he say good bye to me and Valentina and then he follows us with the bus. We are in Redondela. The air is very thick here because of the heat. We were lucky to get the last three beds in albergue. And we still have four more days till Santiago.

It is so weird: here are Santiago, Cathedral, and the square. Everything is so familiar that it seems there was no year in between. All the roads lead to Santiago, and the moment when you enter the old city, when you can see the peaks of the Cathedral so close, when the square, you know, will open up right around the corner – just for those moments it is worth it to arrive here again and again. Valentina and I enter the square, take off our back packs and sit to the ground right in its center. Other

pilgrims come, laughing, crying, hugging. The way finishes here for many of them. It finishes here for Valentina as well. As for me, I continue walking three more days alone to Finisterre. Here it feels like Porto happened ages ago. And at the same time, two weeks passed amazingly fast. If not my notes, calculations in my note pad, photos and maps, everything would turn into one endless flow with cities, dates, albergue, faces, kilometers, many kilometers of walk. And I desperately tried to make time for everything, live and feel every minute, with eyes wide open, breathing deeper, listening with more attention, memorizing the moment, forming it into words, and trying to understand. And then thirteen days pass, and you look back and realize: you didn't see enough, you didn't breathe enough, you didn't hear enough, a lot of moments disappeared, so many words are lost, and in the end you still don't understand a thing.

Last year, when there was just one day left to Santiago, we met a Spanish man, the owner of albergue we stayed in. He said that he had talked to plenty pilgrims in his life, and there is one delusion common to all of them: they try to find miracle *on the way*, while everything just starts happening when you come back home. I have been waiting for this day for the whole year. I have been dreaming to come to the kilometer zero, to the End of the World, to see the sun hiding behind the horizon coloring the ocean in orange. Like those pilgrims Spanish man told us about I was looking for miracle. Had I come one day earlier, I would have seen the sunset. But I have come today. I realized that the ocean was somewhere close just from the sound of waves breaking against the coast; there was only thick fog around. I was walking and crying: there would be no sunset. On the way from Santiago I met Salva, a 23-year-old Spanish guy, who seemed way too wise for his age. We were talking a lot, woke up at the same time in the mornings without preliminary agreement and met each other in the evenings in the next albergue. That was Salva's dream too to see the sunset in Finisterre. He had been waiting for this day for three years. There are 3 km from the village we stayed till the lighthouse and the End of the World. We walk there together with Salva. "Last three kilometers," – he says, – "however, the hardest Camino just starts here. It's real life that starts here." We sit on the rock; there is an endless height under our feet. And all of a sudden, as if just for us, a piece of sky opens and the last evening sun looks through. "This is the end" – says Salva, – "Actually, no. This is the beginning". In the morning a bus takes us back to Santiago. What Camino can teach us? It can teach, for example, that the secret of simply everything is to never stop – just be strongly devoted to something and never give up; it can teach that your best friend and the closest person looks at you from the mirror reflection; your worst enemy and the reason for all the disaster looks from there too; it teaches that all the doors, walls and locks are just in your head; that it doesn't really matter what God you pray to, it is only important that you know how to do it the way He can hear you. And the last I heard from Valentina:

there are two things in life you shouldn't look for – Death and Love – it will be them who find you. I was walking and thinking: I only hope that Love will be faster. Well, that is it, I guess. What can I say, that was an amazing walk.

Appendix 3. Map of the Route

