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Pilgrim or Tourist?

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Pilgrim or Tourist?

Modelling Two Types of Travel Bloggers

Tom van Nuenen & Suzanne van der Beek

Abstract

The typological distinction between pilgrims and tourists has often been drawn in tourism studies. This article aims at complementing this debate by applying computational techniques to analyse discourses in a corpus of blogs from the Dutch travel blog repository of *waarbenjij.nu*. The hypothesis is that pilgrims and tourists share notable similarities in their identity narratives. Several unsupervised computational methods are leveraged to analyse the corpora; they provide a cue for further interpretation, which relies on a directed close reading of indicated keywords. The analysis shows that pilgrims, instead of writing about sacred topics, focus on the same practical topics that tourists are invested in. Conversely, tourists show a notable sensibility to a range of highly valued, set apart experiences. The paper ends with the proposal for a new continuum to understand the distinction between pilgrims and tourists, based on the difference between condensed diversity and extended engagement.

Keywords

pilgrim, tourist, identity, computational methods, topic modelling

1 Introduction

The pilgrim and tourist constitute one of the most persistent dichotomies in tourism studies (cf. Walter & Reader 1992, Badone & Roseman 2004, Margry 2008). In its most polemical sense, the mass tourist is a mindless pleasure-seeking anti-hero, following the tight scripts and insured packages that mass tourism provides. Such a tourist is part of a flock, herd, or drove (Fussell 1979, 33; Boorstin 1987), and is sometimes connected to other colourful metaphors such as lemmings (Lodge 1991, 5), invasions (Palin 1992, 102), or barbarians (Mitford 1959). By contrast, pilgrims

are classified as religious soul-searchers, part of a liminal sociability (Turner and Turner 1978) whose travel scripts and scenarios are based upon the sacred.

From early on, the dichotomy has met with critique. It has been suggested that the ontological structure of pilgrimage is comparable to that of the modern-day tourist. Both MacCannell (1976) and Graburn (1977) outlined how both pilgrims and tourists seek knowledge and transformation of the self through an extraordinary journey.¹ Following the Turners' famous statement that 'a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist' (1987), many other writers have explored the similarities of these two types of travellers. (Walter and Reader 1993; Moore 1980; Pfaffenburger 1983; Lett 1983; Eade 1992; Post 2013; Collins-Kreiner 2009; Vukonic 2002; Rinschede 1992; Nolan and Nolan 1992; Bauman 1996; Santos 2002; Knox & Hamman 2014; Post & van der Beek 2016). Perhaps the most influential contribution was made by the volume *Intersecting Journeys* edited by Ellen Badone and Sharon R. Roseman, in which a collection of contributions explored the realisation that 'rigid dichotomies between pilgrimage and tourism, and pilgrims and tourists, no longer seem tenable in the shifting world of postmodern travel.'

In spite of these nuances, the dichotomy certainly has not collapsed. To an extent, the tourist/pilgrim dyad still serves as an important epistemological tool: offsetting pilgrims against tourists is often used to focus on the specificities of either group (Post 2013). Indeed, in recent years the twosome has again been deployed in order to argue that the overlapping elements of tourists and pilgrims should not result in undermining the difference between the two figures altogether. Dutch anthropologist Peter Jan Margry has objected to the vague usage of the term "pilgrimage", in particular when referring to journeys as "secular pilgrimages". He argues that the convergence of sacred and profane forms of travel does not result in a merging of the two (Margry 2008, 30). In response to a 'playful exploration' of the term by Knox and Hannam (2013), Margry argues that the term pilgrimage is in danger of becoming a non-specific, non-academic concept: 'Why call it pilgrimage if such behaviour cannot be accounted for as pilgrimage? Is it simply the lure of an intriguing word replete with expressive connotations, or is it an exercise in presenting superficial analogies, without demonstrating basic commonalities?' (Margry 2013, 243).

Before accepting that pilgrimage and tourism are theoretically conflated – or as Margry warns, inflated – we should consider the discourses of the travellers themselves. Both pilgrim and tourist discourses are produced in great numbers by amateur travel writers, increasingly in an online environment. These narratives may help us to better understand the distinctions and similarities between both forms of experience. According to BlogPulse and Technorati, the number of blogs in 2004 was 3 million and increased to 164 million in 2011. In 2008, the topic of travel was reported to

1 This idea of the journey as possibility for transformation has been critiqued by Edward Bruner, who argued that the transformative potential for travellers is highly limited, while the changes that tourism create at the destination site is often overlooked.

be the ninth most important one, representing 28% of all blogs (Bosangit, Dulnuan, and Mena 2012). These texts have a very real influence on the manner in which people understand and talk about travel.² Therefore, the present article proposes to introduce a new outlook on the debate about the pilgrim/tourist dichotomy (which has already spread across anthropology, religious studies, leisure studies, and philosophy) by adopting a macro-perspective to this multiplicity of online produced pilgrim and tourist narratives. By applying computational stylistic techniques, which are new to this debate, the paper discusses the differences in discourse practised by pilgrims to Santiago de Compostela and tourists in New York City, on the Dutch travel blog repository of waarbenjij.nu.

Methodologically, the paper provides a hybrid reading, combining macroanalysis with close reading, in order to 1) find patterns that can indicate genre distinction, and 2) analyse themes within the hypothesised genres. This is done by applying several methods (topic modelling, document-term matrices, POS-tagging) to the corpora of bloggers. Via this combined method of distant and close reading in analysing a large corpus of online generated travel narratives, a contribution is made to the understanding of the typological classification of pilgrims and tourists. The paper ends with the proposal of a new continuum based on textual elements, to classify pilgrim and tourist narratives.

2 Capturing pilgrim and tourist blogs

The computational gathering and analysis of large corpora of texts has been undertaken by corpus linguists for some time now (Baker 2007, 1). The practice temporarily de-emphasises individual occurrences of features or words in favour of a focus on the larger system or corpus and its aggregate patterns and trends. As Matthew Jockers (2013) has rightfully emphasised, this allows us to support or challenge existing theories and assumptions, while calling our attention to general patterns and missed trends in order to better understand the context in which individual texts, words, or features arise. In the process of distant reading, as opposed to close reading, the reality of the text undergoes a process of deliberate reduction and abstraction, and the distance in distant reading is considered not an obstacle but a specific form of knowledge (Moretti 2005, 1). Yet it remains important to remember, as Ramsay (2011) has noted, that the type of analysis that is prevalent in literary studies, i.e. literary-critical interpretation, is also an insistently subjective manner of engagement. Computational results can be used to provoke such a directed reading, and that is precisely what this paper aims to do.

2 According to a 2013 Technorati report, blogs are the third most influential digital resource when making overall purchases, behind retail websites and brand websites. (Technorati Media. 2013. "Digital Influence Report." Accessed August 14 2014. See <http://technorati.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/tm2013DIR3.pdf>.)

The texts discussed in the present study are taken from the popular Dutch travelogue “waarbenjij.nu”. Founded in 2003, this blog now offers over 2.9 million travel stories (the vast majority of which are in Dutch). The corpus was built by scraping the website from the front end, i.e. entering a word in the search bar as the main filter. Texts featuring the term “pelgrim” (“pilgrim”) were selected to comprise the corpus of pilgrim narratives. As the Camino to Santiago de Compostela is the predominantly popular pilgrimage for Dutch travellers, this method proved to offer a fairly clean corpus of Camino narratives.³ There are, of course, other types of pilgrims than Camino pilgrims, but the Camino is not only the most popular pilgrimage, it has also reinvented itself over the last twenty to thirty years as a typical product of its time. It is the preeminent pilgrimage that allows for, and encourages, (religious) diversity and a focus on self-exploration. (Oviedo, De Courcier, and Farias; Harman, 128-45; Van Uden and Pieper, 205-19) ‘Every pilgrim creates their own Camino’, is its slogan for a reason.

The corpus of tourist narratives was assembled out of texts featuring the phrase “New York”.⁴ This search resulted in a very diverse corpus of tourist narratives, some of them written by people who only came over for two or three days, others travellers who journeyed through the whole of North America, again others young people who spend a couple of weeks or even months in New York City as exchange students or interns. Of course, tourism as a whole includes many different kinds of travellers; the backgrounds of the people taking pictures on the Brooklyn Bridge or in Central Park are wildly varying. This diversity of New York City tourists mirrors the diversity in pilgrims found on the Camino, who travel to Santiago with a variety of backgrounds, expectations, modes of transportation, and amount of time to spend. Further, instead of choosing a form of tourism that resembles pilgrimage strongly (e.g. backpacking through Southeast Asia), the search term “New York” was chosen to ensure that the corpora would consist of texts about journeys that are structurally dissimilar. The goal was to capture an important difference between pilgrims and tourists in the conception of one’s destination: while the pilgrim focuses attention on the journey, the tourist sees this physical trek to the place of interest primarily as a necessity, and starts her/his experience only when s/he has arrived. The experience of New York City starts when one arrives at the destination, while the pilgrimage ends at that point. This insight will here be highlighted, rather than played down.

A first realisation that came from this first explorative stage is that pilgrims are much more comfortable with their role as pilgrim than tourists are with their role as tourist. By using the word “pilgrim” as a search term, we have arguably not missed out on a great deal of narratives, as

3 In the Netherlands, modern pilgrimage is often understood within the demarcations of the popular Camino. The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela has seen numbers of official Dutch pilgrims rise from 690 pilgrims in 1985 to 3.501 (total: 262.459) in 2015.

4 The term “New York” was entered instead of “New York City”, as tourists usually use the first to refer to the second (to the extent that the search term “New York City” resulted in significantly fewer search results).

pilgrims repeatedly overuse the term: it is often used where it is not necessary. For example, pilgrims will write ‘I met two other pilgrims who...’ (when they might write ‘I met two people/women/Germans who...’), constantly underlining their identity as pilgrims. By contrast, a search for the term “tourist” produced a set of narratives that consisted of diverse writings by people who commented on ‘playing the tourist for a day’ or commenting upon the behaviour of other travellers. One would be hard-pressed to find tourists writing that they ‘met two other tourists today’. Tourists are much less eager to identify themselves as such than pilgrims are.⁵

The next step of the macroanalysis involved topic modelling.⁶ Topic modelling tools automatically extract topics from texts, taking a single text or corpus and searching for patterns in the use of words, attempting to inject semantic meaning into vocabulary. A topic, to the program, is a list of words that occur in statistically meaningful ways. Topic modelling is unsupervised--that is, the program running the analysis does not know anything about the meaning of the words in a text. Instead, it is assumed that any piece of text is composed by an author by selecting words from possible baskets of words (the number of which is determined by the user) where each basket corresponds to a topic or discourse.⁷ From this assumption it follows that one could mathematically decompose a text into the probable baskets from whence the words came. The tool goes through this process over and over again until it settles on the most likely distribution of words into baskets, resulting in the titular topics. There are many different topic modelling programs available; in this paper we use the well-known package of MALLET (McCallum 2002). The topic models it produces provide us with probabilistic data sortations, which we argue are indicative of certain discursive gravitational points and latent structures behind our collection of texts. We can then contextualize these structures with theories from tourism and pilgrimage studies.⁸

5 It has been argued before that tourists are bothered by the presence of other tourists, while pilgrims welcome the presence with other pilgrims (Coleman and Cran 2004; Urry 2011; Redfoot 1984; Week 2012). Furthermore, pilgrims are traditionally understood as highly reflexive travellers because of the religious significance, deep histories, and routinized itineraries (Badone and Roseman 2004, 11).

6 Several theorists have written accounts of topic modelling for humanities scholars without a mathematical background. See for example Jockers, Matthew L. 2011. “The LDA Buffet is Now Open; or, Latent Dirichlet Allocation for English Majors.” September 29. <http://www.matthewjockers.net/2011/09/29/the-lda-buffet-is-now-open-or-latent-dirichlet-allocation-for-english-majors/> or Underwood, Ted. 2012. “Topic Modeling made Just Simple Enough.” April 7. <http://tedunderwood.com/2012/04/07/topic-modeling-made-just-simple-enough/>.

7 As Ted Underwood notes, “the notion that documents are produced by discourses rather than authors is alien to common sense, but not alien to literary theory.” Underwood, Ted. 2012. “Topic Modeling Made Just Simple Enough.” April 7. <http://tedunderwood.com/2012/04/07/topic-modeling-made-just-simple-enough/>.

8 MALLET has proven useful in other research too. The *Mining the Dispatch* project of the University of Richmond, for instance, uses MALLET to explore ‘the dramatic and often traumatic changes as well as the sometimes surprising continuities in the social and political life of Civil War Richmond.’ See: Nelson, Robert K. “Mining the Dispatch” Accessed July 8 2015. <http://dsl.richmond.edu/dispatch/pages/intro>. Another example can be found in the work of historian Cameron Blevins, who uses MALLET to ‘recognize and conceptualize the recurrent themes’ in Martha Ballard’s diary. See: Blevins, Cameron. 2010. “Topic Modeling Martha Ballard’s Diary.” April 1. <http://www.cameronblevins.org/posts/topic-modeling-martha-ballards-diary/>.

A vital part of any type of computational corpus linguistics is formed by preprocessing, as this determines which documents and words are taken into account in the analysis.⁹ Topic modelling can be put to use in this regard, allowing insight into prevalent noise in the corpus. Notable topics in the first topic model for both corpora indicated noise in the corpus, with words such as “the”, “and”, “to”, “for”, “this”, “it”, which obviously pertains to English narratives, and a topic with words such as “park”, “auto”, “bus”, “dieren” (“park”, “car”, “bus”, “animals”), indicating that the corpus was contaminated by Dutch travellers to other holy sites (mainly Buddhist temples in Malaysia) and visits to South Africa’s “Pilgrim’s Rest”. After clean-up, the corpus contained 2.674.051 words in the pilgrim travel blogs and 2.535.353 words in the tourist travel blogs, distributed over 6.943 blogs.

3 Analysing topic models of travelogues

Structurally, we can immediately note some differences between the subcorpora. Firstly, the number of unique words in the tourist corpus is 74.068, which is 80% of the variety in the pilgrim corpus (91.767 words). Pilgrim blogs tend to be longer as well: the average number of words per blog post in the pilgrim corpus is 1.256, while the average of the tourist blogs is 501 words. These differences hint at discursive differences in the corpora: pilgrims deal with their journeys in a more elaborate manner.

Further, the topic model we created consisted largely of words that had no great meaning outside of their context, e.g. “een”, “te”, “je”, “als” (“an”, “too”, “you”, “if”). The texts can be more purposefully analysed when not all types of words are incorporated in the analysis. In order to discard the words that attribute little to an understanding of the thematic difference between the corpora, we chose to categorize the words in our texts on the basis of their grammatical function. This allowed us to iterate over specific word categories in order to see if the differences are persistent.¹⁰ Such grammatical filtering can be done by using a Part-of-Speech (POS) tagger, which determines the grammatical function of all words in the corpus. For the present paper we used *TreeTagger*, a probabilistic tagging method that is about 95% accurate in tagging grammatical functions (Schmid 1994), and is widely used by researchers due to its easy availability (Alegria, Leturia & Sharoff 2009, 29). *TreeTagger* contains a POS tagging script for Dutch words, which was

9 .Jockers, Matthew L. 2013. ““Secret” Recipe for Topic Modeling Themes.” April 12. <http://www.matthewjockers.net/2013/04/12/secret-recipe-for-topic-modeling-themes/>.

10 Another popular solution for this problem is the introduction of a stop list: a manually composed list of words that should not be incorporated in the analysis. On this list, one could include any kind of words that is deemed irrelevant for the query. This stop list would therefore be at the same time highly subjective and radically incomplete. We decided that it would not suit the needs for the present analyses.

used to tag our corpus. By applying this technique, we were able to analyse the corpora based only on one specific part of speech. We analysed our corpora based upon the usage of nouns, which are argued to be especially suitable for capturing thematic trends (Jockers 2013, 131).

Next, split the corpora in small chunks of (about) 500 words each. This allows us to preserve context that would otherwise be discarded: we allow the model to discover themes that occur only in specific places within blogs and not just across entire blogs. Using the original text files, varying greatly in size, would mean that the small amount of themes introduced in short texts would be granted the same amount of significance as the much larger amount of themes logically introduced in longer texts (after all, our topic model weighs the prevalent topics in each document against the others). To ensure that themes are valued more equally, the notion of personal authorship thus had to be neglected, in order to maintain the variety of narrative themes. Of course, this overemphasizes the themes of certain authors over those of others, but the size of the corpus was deemed large enough to answer for this shortcoming. Jockers has argued that 500-1000 word chunks are most helpful when modelling novels¹¹, and we have chosen to stay on the low end of the spectrum, using chunks of 500 words each for most data processing purposes. The topic model that we created from this information was visualized in a stacked bar chart.¹²

#	weight	emphasis	top 30 words per topic (cleaned)
0	1.15857	both	dag mensen uur tijd dagen s keer goed boetje stad jaar weg huis moment avond auto bus nacht week nederland hotel man aantal soort zon kamer was avonds weken foto
1	0.11581	pilgrim	santiago pelgrim weg tocht camino pelgrims johan route leven compostela kathedraal kerk reis km n pelgrimstocht god april spanje jacobus loop st rugzak maar rome plaats t doel compostella jaar
2	0.16716	pilgrim	km camino pelgrims santiago pelgrim uur herberg refugio dag route albergo weg spanje la kathedraal tocht del stad bed san n burgos dorp koffie meter foto dorpie leon kerk fiets
3	0.40301	pilgrim	uur kilometer weg koffie kerk pad loop bed water zon dorp rugzak man route kamer staat km ontbijt brood hotel vrouw wijn tafel pelgrims n eten schoenen stuk caf voeten
4	0.25886	tourist	new york park central uur dag times manhattan s hotel stad metro building uitzicht state empire city hostel museum island the bus zero vrijheidsbeeld bridge street brooklyn tijd mensen th
5	0.12156	tourist	to the you for and vegas that are all with it las will have but do canyon this as hotel up see like not make can your strip very what
6	0.14008	pilgrim	km camping route dag st uur mei pelgrim la gite weg fiets tent tocht kilometer pelgrims jani gr jacques d frans frankrijk etappe kilim ko stempel franse koffie santiago stad
7	0.07304	pilgrim	kilometer luc dorp jaar refugio nacht fiets jaren k ron december oktober november geld prijs bar ezels portugal afrika land dorpie zuid porto hoofdstad vader stadje thee schapen tent restaurant
8	0.18338	tourist	new york uur week vliegtuig vlucht boetje tijd fotos ff goed camp nederland t berichtje weken amerika vliegveld echt schiphol koffers bed school dagen zin kamer meiden site weekend huis
9	0.17011	tourist	week school weekend new weken kerst huis nederland les vrijdag werk sneeuw stage thanksgiving familie campus december donderdag zaterdag vrienden feestje film studenten wedstrijd maand zondag club lessen januari jaar

Figure 1: Topic model

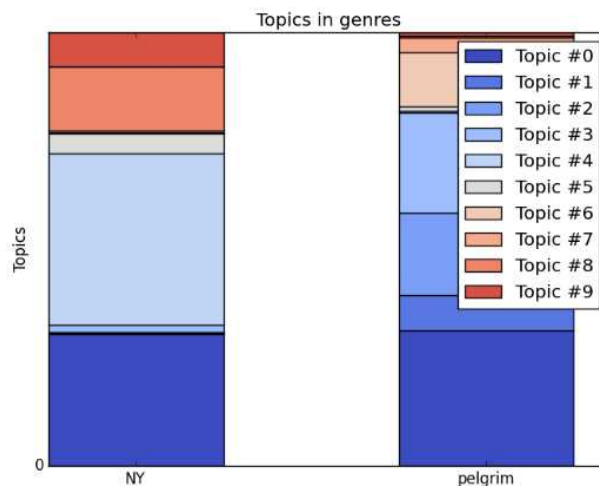


Figure 2: Topic weights

- 11 Jockers, Matthew L. 2013. “‘Secret’ Recipe for Topic Modeling Themes.” April 12. <http://www.matthewjockers.net/2013/04/12/secret-recipe-for-topic-modeling-themes/>.
- 12 The idea underlying the stacked bar chart is that each text has some proportion of its words associated with each topic. Because the model assumes that every word is associated with some topic, these proportions must add up to one. For example, in a three topic model, text number 1 might have 50% of its words associated with topic 1, 25% with topic 2, and 25% with topic 3. The stacked bar chart represents each document as a bar broken into colored segments matching the associated proportions of each topic.

The topic model produced 10 topics, alongside the relative importance or “weight” of each topic, represented by the Dirichlet parameter. These topics can mostly be labelled as pertaining to either the pilgrim or the tourist discourse (see the “emphasis” column in Figure 2). In order to get a thorough view of the two types of travellers under discussion here, these topics and the words in them can be made sense of via two different ways: by exploring their differences and by exploring their similarities. Topics 2 and 4 can be clearly identified as pertaining to respectively the pilgrim and the tourist discourse, as they incorporate some notably different but parallel words that refer to both types of travellers. These two topics represent the two most significant group of themes and include some interesting parallel terms that lend themselves very well for a more contextualized reading. Then, there is one topic that includes the terms found in both corpora, topic 0. After we explore the different terms used in topic 2 and 4, we will focus on the words found in topic 0, in order to understand the terms that are prevalent in both corpora. It is reasonable to argue that these words, while concurrent, are employed differently by our two traveller types. The second step in our analysis will therefore be a close reading of these similarities found in topic 0.

Before we continue with our analysis, it seems important to address an elephant in the room. One interesting theme conspicuous by its absence in the list of topics generated, pertains to the traditional difference in the degree of (religious) spirituality in both corpora. We might have expected pilgrims to use a significant amount of their words on the themes that traditionally characterize a serious pilgrim: reflection on God, the meaning of spirituality, or the exploration of the self. However, these themes are largely absent. Nouns referring to the more spiritual dimension of a pilgrim’s journey are close to marginal: Santiago (3.112x), “camino” (2.911x), “kerk” (“church”, 2.160x) kathedraal (“cathedral”, 1.391x). Words like God (298x), Jacobus (346x), religie (“religion”, 26x) or spiritualiteit (“spirituality”, 26x) seem similarly minor. This theme, which is traditionally seen as one of the main points of distinction between the two traveller types, does not seem to play an important role in the typology. (Munster & Niesten 2013; Collins-Kreiner 2010; Cohen 1979; Margry 2008)

third church that has stood sometimes towering over the lake' or 'Along the way we drove under the remnants of a collapsed church'. In these instances, they are a part of the overall impressions of the Camino, a dot on the horizon as the pilgrim continues on the way. For pilgrims, the landscape can be an important element of the journey (Frey 1998, 87-136), and it has since long been the object of study in the field of human geography. (Bajc, Coleman, and Eade 2007; Stoddard and Morinis 1997; Collins-Kreiner 2010) These studies have pointed out that pilgrims become 'highly mindful of themselves and the surrounding environment'. (Scriven 2012, 256) As they slowly walk along the road, the scenery is their constant companion and plays an important role in their daily experience. ('It was a beautiful walk, another sunny day along a canal and nature reserve'.) A beautiful environment can lift a pilgrim's spirits like nothing else can.

We find a similar framing of other words in the topic, like "stad" or "kathedraal" ('The arrival in Le Puy was very beautiful, you looked over the city and you saw the cathedral high on a mountain', or: 'Again, a stamp just as in epine just before Chalons, where suddenly a special cathedral appeared on the horizon.'), or even "Santiago":

This is a suburb of Santiago de Compostela. On the border between the two places we stopped at the sign of Santiago de Compostela to take pictures. And then we went onward. Now we're in Santiago de Compostela. After some kilometres we reached a hill and we saw the Cathedral in the distance.

A presence of churches in the scenery almost always contributes to a favourable conception of the landscape, while a lack of churches is usually combined with landscapes involving industrial or other urban surroundings. Landscape on the Camino is not seen as a distraction, but rather as contribution to the sacred pilgrim experience.

Another way in which churches are framed in pilgrim narratives is to pay attention to the religious tradition of the buildings, to understand them as architectural manifestations of the sacred nature of the Camino. In many of these instances, churches simultaneously become places of action; spatial invitations for sacred contemplation or rituals. Pilgrims do not merely look at them or pass by them, but also appropriate these churches by performing rituals within their walls. ('In Los Arcos we visited a beautiful church, Mary and I have been saying prayers with a group of Austrian elderly people', or: 'I understood that God for him implied a homecoming, every time when he entered a church. He then could move forward in two directions in his life, but in the church he learned what the right direction was'.)

In these examples, we can see how churches are not so much interesting for their architectural or historical value, but rather appreciated as opportunities to explore and *engage* with

the sacred potentialities of the pilgrimage.¹⁵ Entering a church is not the same as entering other buildings. This notion of the centrality of space in the direction of a sacred gaze is one that has gained dominance in the debate in religious studies during the last twenty to thirty years, known as the ‘spatial turn’. (Knott 2010) Famous in this debate is Jonathan Z. Smith’s statement that ‘[s]acrality is, above all, a category of emplacement.’ (1992, 104) Smith argues that a sacred site such as a temple ‘serves as a focusing lens, establishing the possibility of significance by directing attention, by requiring the perception of difference. Within the temple, the ordinary (which to any outside eye or ear remains wholly ordinary) becomes significant, becomes “sacred,” simply by being there.’ (Smith 1992, 104) Many pilgrims describe the encounter with churches in terms of this spatial shift in evaluation. It is especially noticeable in relation to social aspects, describing a sense of comradeship or even love within their walls:

I also went to the pilgrim mass there. Afterwards all pilgrims were called to the front and the priest raised his arms and a pilgrim prayer was called for. The church was filled with all sorts of pilgrims of all ages and nationalities. It moves you, when your group receives this kind of attention. A beautiful moment.

These experiences are also mentioned with regard to other words that occur in topic 2, for example “kathedraal”: ‘Then I went to the cathedral to stabbing the candle with the light I was carrying symbolically from Lourdes’.

Museums, like churches, have the potential to inspire a sense of awe and even spiritual reverence, due to their insistence upon cultural and historical depth and the celebration of aesthetic contemplation. John Falk pointed out that ‘[t]he museum can offer something akin to a reverential experience and a place of “peace and fantasy” where the visitor can escape the mundane, work-a-day world.’ (Falk 2013, 46) In his work on the contemporary museum visitor, Falk argues that visitors cherish museums as places where physical and intellectual treasures are publicly accessible:

Upon entering a museum, the visitor, in large part because of the expectation that great and important things are contained there, finds it awe-inspiring. [...] Museums are places where people can see and learn about things outside of their everyday lives - precious and unusual things; things of great historical, cultural or scientific import; things that inspire reverence. (Falk 2013, 189-90)

15 It is somewhat surprising that pilgrims hardly ever remark upon the particular historical or cultural significance of these churches. Much has been written about the special architectural style that characterizes the churches along the Camino as a result of the specific political and cultural dynamics that has formed the North of Spain (Priego & Azcárate; Fernie; Mullins).

Yet, in the tourist narratives in our corpus, we have found very few expressions of these kinds of sentiments regarding museums. Mostly, museums are spoken of as almost mandatory stops for visitors of New York City. They are often talked about as one of the many familiar items on the to-do-list of tourists. ('The agreement went as follows: ascending the Empire State Building, visiting the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), Times Square at night, a dinner and then to the hotel,' or: 'Soon we will go to the Guggenheim museum. Yesterday and the day before we went to the Empire State building, the Brooklyn Bridge last, the Museum of Natural History seen (so BIG!!!!), Macy's (big disappointment) and saw Central Park and much more,' or: 'The next few days the program is filled with the Guggenheim Museum, the Empire State Building, a stand-up comedy show, maybe a musical, a few districts and possibly some shopping.')

Hardly ever do tourists spend a lot of words on their museum visits. There are no explanations concerning what they have seen there, nor how they experienced it, the other visitors they met, or the knowledge they gained. These museums serve as classical "truth markers", which function to cement the bond of tourist and attraction 'by elevating the information possessed by the tourist to privileged status' (MacCannell 1976, 138). They attest to the validity of the New York City trip, and are such well-known semiotic markers that there is no need to further elaborate on them. In other words, they seem primarily part of the tourist's desire to authenticate such sights and inscribe themselves in the semiotic field of New York City. Through this inscription they become part of the field, which in its ubiquity within Western culture is not something that can be "consumed" in the classic sense. The tourist disposition, in this sense, is a more modest one than theories of commodification usually allow for.

As one might deduce from the citations given above, other words that occur in topic 4 ("park", "central", "times", "state", "empire", "bridge") are used similarly. Occasionally, visitors will give a short glimpse of their appreciation of the place and their experience there, such as: 'Then a bit of culture (well done right, Bear) in the Museum Of Modern Art (MOMA)', or: 'The Metropolitan and the Museum of Modern Art are highly recommended.' Other geographical words that we find in topic 4 can also fulfil this function:

We went to Columbia University, Harlem, Central Park, Staten Island, and actually too many places to mention. We also went to CBGB's, the temple of the hardcore music according to Joep . . . Actually, the walk across the Brooklyn Bridge at dusk was my favourite part. All the lights of the skyscrapers, and the red sky behind it, really great.

In these instances, tourists emphasize the cultural significance of the museums they have visited, which might be understood as a sign of a genuine impression that the experience has had on them, and/or as a way to consolidate the social capital of travel towards the people reading the blog. This

last position is reinforced by the stance of expertise that they take after visiting a sight (as in the last example), in which sites are recommended to others without explaining why. This discourse mirrors the rapid succession of impressions (and inscriptions) inherent to tourism.

At this point, a first comparison between pilgrim and tourist narratives springs clearly to mind. In the writings of both types of travellers, the interaction with significant places and opportunities for cultural and historic sightseeing is key. Pilgrims use these as landmarks in a potentially meaningful environment or opportunities for lingering experiences, while tourists value them as non-specific cultural highlights to be encountered during a visit to the city. We can thus see a significant difference in the understanding of sights and sites in pilgrim and tourist discourses. While pilgrims are appropriating the sights they see by incorporating them into their own, personal story, tourists do not have to explain visiting the archetypical NYC sites. The reasons for doing so are constructed externally; the role of the tourist is not so much one of appropriation but one of inscription into the experiential “package deal” of New York City.

Several other pointers in the topics underscore this difference between tourists and pilgrims: the latter, for instance, usually talks of the experience in light of the teleological journey, while the tourist insists upon the cultural and experiential extravagance of the isolated experience itself. Throughout the pilgrim blogs, “Santiago” is used as a teleological point of reference that exists in the future tense (‘Later in Santiago’, ‘Two weeks until Santiago’, etc.). “New York”, by contrast, is often framed as a unique place of excitement that is being experienced in the present time (‘Here in New York’, ‘I’m taking part in the nightlife of New York’, ‘Walking through NEW YORK, too weird’, ‘Jesus, New York is so big!!!! It’s crazy!!!’). There is a strong sense of awe in these tourists’ exclamations, a near disbelief of their ability to inscribe themselves into the city of New York, the mediatized city *par excellence* which they have known through imagery for so long. The high amount of lexical units such as capitalised words and exclamation marks further underscore this fervour. Such signifiers, which Crystal (2006, 255) has called Netspeak, exist in between spoken and written language. Pilgrims, conversely, seem less prone to use such exclamatory signifiers.

Other pointers found in topics 2 and 4 pertain to the notion of transportation. Both tourists and pilgrims combine the topic of significant sites with words relating to the process of getting there; for pilgrims these include: “km,” “route,” “weg” (“road”), “meter,” and for tourists: “metro,” “bus.” When pilgrims use these words, they are often framed by ideas of continuity: every kilometre travelled is a contribution towards the overall project of walking to the pilgrim’s destination. (‘By now I’ve arrived 38 km from Leon, so tomorrow I pass the 600 km mark from Lourdes.’) Tourists, however, seem to look upon travel as a necessary evil (‘Around 22:30, we are totally fed up and we look for a subway that brings us back to our hotel around 23:30.’), although some tourists describe a (small) sense of excitement in using such a ‘New York-type’ of

transportation as the metro ('We toured around with the metro and stuff, in the metro (underground) there was a group of 10 people that started breakdancing!, they were crazy good :D').

The framing of the accommodation elucidates the same discrepancy between the ongoingness of the pilgrim's travel narrative and the tourist's discontinuous succession of experiences. Pilgrims, for instance, frame "herberg" ("hostel") as continuations of the Camino experience. They form the decor for a whole set of pilgrim adventures:

It's festive, cosy and homely. Along with a handful of pilgrims we sit in the kitchen, talk, drink wine, while cooking and eating. It's delicious. I enjoy with my hands, feet, my head and everything else I have. When I lay my weary head on the kitchen table, I'm being massaged. It is miraculous. A bed with sheets, blankets, towels and much more in a hotel can't match a bare albergue jammed with wet and happy pilgrims.

Tourists, on the other hand, understand "hotel" as the end of an adventure ('After that we walked around and arrived at our hotel again', 'We have walked around for a bit, drank a beer, and went back to the hotel'). Nothing happens at a hotel, except for a good night's rest that ensures the tourist will be ready for the next day of sightseeing. In contrast to "herberg," the word has a similar connotation in pilgrim narratives: those pilgrims that prefer the hotel over the albergue praise the cleanliness, solitude and opportunities for intense rest ('I'm having a day off in a hotel, two lovely nights in a bed and washing some stuff'). Furthermore, pilgrims often comment upon hotels as places for 'so-called pilgrims', pilgrims who do not dare to completely commit to the Camino and seek to enjoy the luxuries they know from their daily lives, rather than experience the whole Camino by sharing a table and a sleeping hall with other pilgrims. (Frey 1998, 94-100)

By exploring the different approaches to parallel themes in their narratives, we have come to understand pilgrims as travellers that experience their journey as an ongoing flow towards a dot on the horizon, while tourists appreciate theirs as a series of extraordinary, discontinuous highlights.

5 Exploring differences in a compiled topic

One of the topics introduced above stands out by befitting both corpora in approximately the same degree. In topic 0 we find a set of words that play a large role in both the pilgrim and the tourist corpus; "dag" [day], "mensen" [people], "uur" [hour], etc. are all words that we have found on the top of the most used words in both type of traveller blogs. The word cloud of this topic looks as follows:



Figure 5. Word cloud of topic 0

The words gathered in topic 0 occur in both the tourist and the pilgrim corpus. In this topic we find many words that refer to the practical side of traveling. A quick look at the total word counts shows that these are by far the most frequent words in both corpora. In pilgrim narratives, the most used nouns are “dag” [“day”] (7.517x), “uur” [“hour”] (7.380x), “km” (6.020x), followed by “weg” [“road”] (4.712x) and “route” (3.533x). Not only do these results point towards the pilgrim’s tendency to focus upon practicalities in their narratives, the denotations of distance, such as “km”, “meter”, and “route” are all indexical of a reflexive attitude when it comes to the temporal and physical linearity of their trek. Tourists, too, use mostly words that refer to the practical aspects of their journey. After “New” (17.752x) and “York” (16.380x)--by far the most frequently used words for obvious reasons--, the nouns most used in tourist narratives are “uur” (“hour”, 7.157x), “dag” (“day”, 6.952x), “mensen” (“people”, 4.576x), and “tijd” (“time”, 4.537x). Most notably, the words “uur” and “dag” appear both in the joined topic 0 and in both the distinctive topics 2 and 4. When we consider these words within their original context, we might, again, get a clearer understanding of the meaning pilgrims and tourists attribute to these frequently used words.

The word “dag” (“day”) is used in different ways by travellers. Both pilgrims and tourists often use the word in a diary-style fashion: when the day is at a close they reflect upon the way they have spent it. The following quotations might, for that matter, have been taken from either pilgrim or a tourist narratives: ‘Today began as a sunny day again (tourist narrative)’, ‘In the local hotel I can stay overnight, it was a beautiful walk, another sunny day besides a canal and nature reservation (pilgrim narrative)’, ‘It was a super energizing but also very tiring day (tourist narrative)’.

There are, however, also some significant differences between the framing of “dag” in both corpora. Pilgrims tend to connect the word to a definite experience of repetitiveness: ‘een dag uit het leven van een pelgrim’ (‘a day out of the life of a pilgrim’ Frey 1998, 226). They often remark that it might not be interesting to relate the day in too much detail, as such exposition would result in exactly the same story as the day before, and the day before that, and the day before that.¹⁶ (‘Yet

16 Pilgrims are also fond of numbering the day described, perhaps as way to not lose count amongst the monotony of the pilgrim life, or as a way to underline the teleological nature of their journey (‘only 12 more days to go’).

another day with only asphalt,' or: 'Beautiful sunny weather, all day long'.) This points to a tension between the contents of pilgrim blogging and the blog format itself; waarbenjij.nu is set up to accommodate repeated entries.¹⁷ Many bloggers on the platform, it turns out, write daily about their journey, and the hesitance explicated by pilgrims to share their daily routines is related to this necessity endemic to the blogging format to regularly create content. Yet the repetition, boring as it might appear to write or read about, also points towards one of the most valued attributes of the pilgrimage to Santiago. It forces the pilgrim into a state of stress-free, uncomplicated, non-hasty surrender.

Tourists, on the other hand, seem much less passive in the shaping of their days, nor do they value repetition or an uncomplicated day spent quietly. Rather, tourist narratives, as one might expect, are filled with plans and reports of all the opportunities that have been taken advantage of:

The day afterwards we walked the park route; in the evening we were in bed around 22:00 ... The next day we walked the skyscraper route and looked at the Chrysler building and the day after we have seen the skyline from the Empire State Building (=highest building of NY). Besides that we have spent 1 day shopping in Jersey Garden, we have visited the zoo, the botanic garden of Brooklyn and have been to the cinema twice (Bewitched and Mr. and Ms. Smith)

Tourists see every day they spend in New York City as precious, representing a set of possibilities that is, sadly, limited. Consequently, every day must be used and appreciated to the fullest. ('Next day we had to get up early, because everything had to be seen in one day of course!', 'In New York there're too few days'.) There are clear expressions of urgency in these vignettes, signified by the enumeration of experiences and the repeated metrified use of time. The excerpt above answers to the stereotypical image of the tourist as a hastily operating creature, but especially if we compare it to the pilgrim narrative, we can recognise an active and pointed disposition with regards to how time, which might be spent in many ways in such a large city, is chosen to be spent.

As we can see, the pilgrim's use of "dag" points towards the way in which a pilgrim looks upon that concept: as a cycle to be repeated after a measured amount of time. Within that time span, certain tasks need to be fulfilled: walk, eat, sleep, repeat, until the pilgrimage is completed. For the tourist, the notion of "day" functions almost as a threat, as the regrettable promise that at one point, the excitement must end. This functional difference of temporality can also be distinguished in other time-related words that appear in both corpora, "tijd" ("time") and "uur" ("hour"). Especially that first term is put to use very differently by our two traveller types. Pilgrims often mention taking

17 We might partly attribute this to structural procedural components on the waarbenjij.nu platform, too: for instance, the website includes a window with "recent travel stories" in the sidebar of all blog entries, including the dates of these stories. The platform thereby emphasises a form of chronology in which regular content creation is visually emphasised.

their time to wander. ('We're taking the time for this Spanish country,' 'When you walk alone (which I usually do), you think a lot--there's plenty of time for self-reflection,' 'Had a lot of time to think... was walking alone again for the whole day'.) This temporal experience is often cited as an important motivation for undertaking the pilgrimage to Santiago. The Australian cultural analyst Paul Genoni showed that 'it is the desire to live more intensely in the present, the now' (2011, 10) that can constitute one of the main objectives of pilgrims. Yet in their elongated and repetitive experiences of time, what constitutes Genoni's "now" becomes somewhat hard to answer. The series of punctual present moments as tourists explain it surely seems just as "intense". Living intensely in the present surely does not seem a feat of the pilgrim narrative alone. Further, beyond the "now", pilgrims apply the notion of time in a historical sense, thinking of and envisioning earlier times as they pass by certain areas. ('You can imagine how it must have been in those days with carts and people', or 'The villages and cities are often real gems where time has stood still.')

This interest in the past is an effect of the ritual framing of the journey, which places the modern pilgrim into a historical tradition and connects contemporary pilgrims with their predecessors. It has been argued that this nostalgic linking of the past and the contemporary pilgrim constitutes an important difference between the pilgrim and the tourist.¹⁸

Finally, pilgrims talk about time as part of their daily itinerary, having to arrive at a certain gite or albergue. ('We were nicely on time in Bercianos del Real Camino.')

Tourists, in the meantime, seem to be rapidly going about their day, experiencing time primarily as a pressure: they often indicate having little time at the places they visit, and even to write their stories. ('Today we are going to a museum (National History museum) and we also want to walk across Brooklyn Bridge but I don't think we still have time for that because must leave at 4 from the hostel to the airport. Ah well we shall see.' 'Damn, time is going fast.' 'We still have 3 weeks to go, but it seems we don't have enough time.' 'But hey, I'm not going to waste my time behind the internet, pictures and other stories you'll get to hear when I'm back home!')

Tourists have limited time at their disposal and show a highly reflexive attitude towards that notion, which results in a high commitment during the days at their disposal. This awareness of the passing of time (cf. Dann 1999; Van Nuenen 2015) is a recurrent theme in tourist writings. What is important to add in this context is that, due to the limited time to spend in New York City, the journey gains a level of significance that determines the extraordinary nature of it a large degree.

In the discussion on the dichotomy between these two types, we often find that this difference is interpreted as a difference in commitment and therefore depth: the tourist only skims the city,

18 Genoni illustrates this argument with a citation from pilgrim writer Conrad Rudolph: 'It is the deep and sustained integration of this dynamic of past and present along the pilgrimage routes that accounts for why the pilgrimage is not a vacation or tour but a journey, not a succession or postcard-worthy sites but a progression of time and space in which both the implicit denial and the embracing of time and space inherent in the acceptance of history operate' (Conrad Rudolph, cited in Genoni 2011,166).

while the pilgrim takes time and effort to engage deeply with the environment. However, from the analysis above, it becomes clear that tourists are impressed and moved by their experiences. Their intentions, emically speaking, are not so much shallow, but rather *condensed*: they wish to experience as much as possible in a very limited amount of time, and position themselves to be impressed by the multitude of possibilities the city offers. While the Camino offers pilgrims in-depth engagement with the journey through repetitiveness, New York City offers tourists a myriad of different highlights. Rather than understanding this difference between pilgrims and tourists in terms of depth or in religious terminology, we might try to understand the character of the relation to the trip.

6 Conclusion

In the analysis we noted a shared interest with regards to sightseeing opportunities by both pilgrim and tourist. The differences in which these opportunities are approached and integrated in the narrative of the journey indicate differences between the traveller types.

For pilgrims, itinerant encounters are for a large part explicated as spontaneous, like a church that appears on the horizon or a city discerned on the top of a mountain. Pilgrims explain these encounters as part of the overall landscape, appearing within the specific context of their personal journey. Yet, while this element of surprise is key, the experience as it is uttered is also a sustained one: pilgrims might walk an entire afternoon towards a church that they see looming from the top of a nearby hill. Their forms of engagement with their surroundings, in other words, are *embedded* in the larger conceptual scheme that they draw up about their personal story and the goal at hand. Conversely, the places visited by tourists are less embedded and their experience of these places is more discontinuous. A tourist chooses to visit several sites a day and hastens from one to the other. At the same time, these tourist experiences are more actively planned and few things are left to coincidence. When one goes to NYC as a tourist, one knows what to expect – and that is precisely why the trip is valuable.

Interestingly, both pilgrims and tourists adopt a receiving attitude during their journey. Pilgrim narratives can be characterised by a sense of *Gelassenheit*, an existential sensibility to happenstance that has previously been connected to traveling instead of touring.¹⁹ This attitude

19 This sense of freedom from the behest of time has often been connected to the discourse of adventure as opposed to that of tourism (cf. Simmel 1971; Redfoot 1984; Week 2012). Art critic László Földényi has written about the writings of famous Dutch travel author (and pilgrim) Cees Nooteboom: “the man who allows things that happen to him without wanting to intervene prematurely, is truly set free ... becoming aware of the deeper cohesion that binds people.” (1997, 113).

should not be confused for passivity: the significant places pilgrims happen upon are seen as opportunities for action and engagement. Pilgrims do not only look upon churches or cathedrals or walk past them, but often also stress their own personal experiences and ideas related to these places--thereby discursively appropriating the place, claiming it for themselves. For pilgrims, this form of spatial appropriation is often connected to the historical tradition of the places they encounter, the realisation that many predecessors have stood there, and now becoming part of that tradition. This should not be seen as (only) a humble or lowly attitude, though: pilgrims are continually connecting places to their personal worlds.

In tourist narratives, the notion of surrender is much less peaceful; it stems from the realisation that with a limited amount of time to spend in New York City, not every opportunity of the city can be seized. Therefore, the tourist typically gratifies her/himself by visiting only the most important or iconic places. Unlike pilgrims, tourists do not seek for a personal appropriation of the places they visit; they do not claim their own space within the walls of the MoMa, or between the lights of Time Square. Rather, they seek to inscribe themselves in the semiotic field of New York City, to trace and consume the images they already know – but not to make them their own.²⁰

A focus on both time and space is reminiscent of what Jerome Bruner (1986) has called the narrative understanding of thoughts and experiences, which concerns itself with storied wants, needs, and intentions, and seeks to locate these stories in time and space. Pilgrims share a focus on prolonged, continuous movement, which entails daily repetition while *exploring* both the environment and its sacred dimensions. This is related to the other dominant feat of the pilgrim: a position of *engagement* as an active, creative disposition, involving personal self-deployment and the appropriation of visited places and histories. By contrast, tourists show a high awareness of temporariness; their movement through time is one of immediacy and *instancy*. Their sightseeing can be characterized as a highly organized, fragmented, disconnected series of highlights. Meanwhile, they are *inscribing* themselves in culturally framed, iconic places.

As the idea of a strict dichotomy between tourists and pilgrims has not proven very useful over the years, the debate on the tourist and the pilgrim seems to have specialised itself in creating continuums in order to understand the relation between the two types of travellers (cf. Mulder 1995; Münsters & Niesten 2013; Collins-Kreiner 2010; MacCannel 1973; Morinis 1992; Cohen 1979; LeSueur 2015). While such essentialist frameworks cannot fully accommodate the breadth of both the discursive outings of pilgrims and tourists (especially in an age of superdiversity in which

20 “Capturing” a sight with a photograph, in that sense, is not the sense of appropriation we are referring to; taking a photo may result in owning the commoditized sight, but it lacks the connection to the personal narrative that the pilgrim tends to make. A good example might be the photo taken by pilgrims when they reach the cathedral in Santiago, which seems to fulfil the same role as a typical tourist picture but has significantly more personal baggage connected to it (it is not just proof of having been there, but of the entire challenging journey towards it).

translocal flows of people have resulted in unprecedentedly complex and ‘unscriptable’ social formations; see e.g. Vertovec 2007; Blommaert 2013), a continuum of characteristics arguably can help in reorienting to the pilgrim/tourist distinction, while elucidating the ‘scripts’ of identity²¹ as they function in the procedures and narratives on these blogging platforms. Therefore, we propose the following diagram based on our conclusions – a bottom-up derived heuristic tool that can be put to use for future analysis of pilgrim and tourist travel blogs:

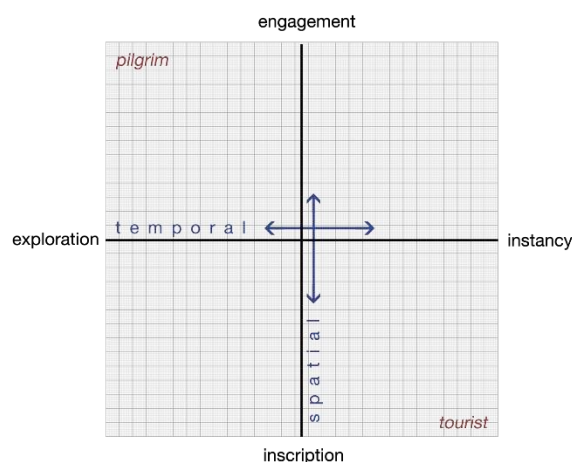


Figure 6. Characteristics of pilgrim and tourist narratives

As the diagram shows, the overarching, resonating components of pilgrim and tourist narratives might be distinguished by two experiential axes. Horizontally, the differentiation is facilitated by a temporal line – in that the distinction between the two types is based on an uttered experience of time. Vertically, the contrast has to do with the kinds of discursive appropriation of travelled space. This is a perspective of difference between tourists and pilgrims not in terms of their emic goals but in terms of their uttered discourse on an online travel writing platform, and it shows that the vectors of engagement that appear within those ecologies do not necessarily answer to the understanding of these traveller types within more conventional forms of travel writing. Further, both types of narratives need to be contextualised as responses to a computational ecology within which they are written and read.

By going beyond the recognition of detailed, superficial manifestations of both types of travellers, we have attempted to explore the distinction on the basis of two fundamental experiential categories: those of space and time. These two categories are not new to the debate, and have been

21 With ‘scripts’ we mean to imply both the human-computational assembly of procedures and discourses as they come to rise online (waarbenjij.nu has a specific layout, for instance) that co-produce social patterns, as well as a histrionic, Goffmanian dimension: the internet allows people to ‘play’ as tourists and pilgrims as much as fully relating to or internalising these roles.

applied to both the pilgrim and the tourist experience before (cf. Dann 1999, Rickly-Boyd 2009). What this diagram contributes to the debate is a suggested relation between them and an opportunity for applying them in the recognition of the pilgrim and tourist identity.

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