

WRITING THE CAMINO:
FIRST-PERSON NARRATIVES OF THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO, 1985-2009

by

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To my Family

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Ultreya!

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Chapter I Introduction: Retracing El Camino de Santiago’s Literary History During its Revival, 1985-2009.....	1
Chapter II Standing in for the Present, Walking with the Past: Embedded Texts in Post-1980 Camino Narratives.....	23
Chapter III Dear Diary: Locating Community in Post-1980 Camino Narratives.....	69
Chapter IV Parallel Pilgrimages: Bicyclists and Walkers in First-Person Camino Narratives.....	101
Chapter V Conclusion: How Far Have We Gone and How Much Further until We’re There?....	144
Appendix.....	154
Bibliography.....	157

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION: RETRACING EL CAMINO DE SANTIAGO'S LITERARY
HISTORY DURING ITS REVIVAL, 1985-2009

*The road to Santiago is paved with
pages. -Thomas Swick*

How do you portray a revived 750-kilometer pilgrimage that millions of people have walked since the Middle Ages? How do you explain your unique perspective while trying to communicate the sensation of travelling with hundreds of other pilgrims every day for more than thirty days? How does literature contribute to the way these stories are told? These are some of the questions that guide this project. Examining the form and content of first-person Camino narratives reveals a pervasive tension between the singular and collective that permeates many levels of the protagonists' journey. In this dissertation, I explore the ways in which pilgrims negotiate the fine balance of positioning themselves as unique individuals, while they also frame their pilgrimage in terms of a collective experience through the use of embedded medieval texts, diary writing, and their chosen mode of transportation. In doing so, I draw attention to how the shared rhetorical conventions these authors use produce highly mediated narratives of this seemingly unmediated pilgrimage.

Since the early 1980s, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from around the world have walked, ridden their bicycles or horses along the revitalized Camino de Santiago in Spain. Although there are many paths to take to arrive to the cathedral in

Santiago, the Camino Francés is the canonical landscape most authors describe. The overwhelming majority of the post-1980 Camino narratives take place on the Camino Francés, a well-marked trail that nowadays offers only a few variations. Most guidebooks begin at St. Jean Pied de Port, France and it is the adventure along this route that most pilgrims write about.¹ While many pilgrims keep diaries along the way and sometimes talk about publishing their experience, only a few actually do so each year. Over time, however, these books (at least those written in English) have begun to add up and published Camino accounts now rival, and possibly even exceed, published accounts of other contemporary pilgrimages, like the Hajj, or long-distance trails, like the Appalachian Trail. And yet, while this body of literature continues to grow, these books have received little scholarly attention. Until now, what little consideration they have received comes primarily from the fields of cultural and anthropological studies as secondary sources. Literary scholars have possibly stayed away because the genre's perceived quality or value as "literature" has been questionable. But the unsettled artistic quality should not stop us from studying these stories. I hope to demonstrate that taking a literary lens to some of these published first-person narratives will highlight the significant role literature plays in both reproducing and creating meaning for pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago.

¹ A few exceptions to this exist. Australian Tony Kevin (*Walking the Camino: A Modern Pilgrimage to Santiago* (2007)) writes about his trip along the Via Mozarabe and Via de la Plata, starting in Granada, and Angelo Solera (*The Journey: "El Camino"* (2008)) tells his story of a Spaniard living in the United States, who walks the Via de la Plata starting in Salamanca. And mostly as curious side note, Spaniard Jorge Sanchez has written about his pilgrimage on three different routes, *El Camino del peregrino a Santiago* (2005), *El Camino Mozárabe a Santiago* (2008) and *El Camino Portugués a Santiago* (2010). He is planning to walk the Camino del Norte in 2010 and to write a subsequent book. (Personal correspondence, June 16, 2009).

Although I have examined all kinds of Camino media when researching this project—from guidebooks to movies to fictional accounts to blogs² in English and Spanish and translations from German—I have limited the scope of this dissertation to first-person narratives published from 1985 to 2009 by English speaking authors, with the exception of one German author.³ What constitutes a contemporary first-person Camino narrative is open for debate and, until now, has not been defined. My working definition is that, first and foremost, the person who wrote the narrative walked, biked or rode a horse more than 200 kilometers. All the authors I discuss in this project walked or bicycled the Camino, multiple times in some cases. Authenticity and authority on the Camino come primarily from having completed the trail by one's own effort. The main story is centered around the protagonist's lived experience, and that he or she shares the same name as the author. Lastly, mostly for the sake of creating some boundaries, the book has to be only about their trip(s) along the Camino, not a compilation of trips from other places.

I should add something about why I have included mostly texts in English about a pilgrimage in Spain. The short answer is because Spanish authors, until quite recently, have written very few Camino narratives. On the whole, it is Anglo writers, mostly Americans and British, who have published their experiences. This has much to do with the fact that adventure travel writing has become a popular genre in the United States, and that within Spanish borders the Camino simply isn't seen as such a

² A useful list of some online sites can be found at <http://www.caminolinks.co.uk/4733.html>.

³ See Appendix 1 for a detailed list of first-person Camino narratives written from 1985-2009 in English.

unique, exotic or life-altering experience as it is in countries outside of Spain.⁴

To understand the revived Camino better, a brief understanding of the medieval Camino will help situate the reader. Since the medieval history of the Camino has been written about extensively,⁵ I will only provide a quick summary. Pilgrims began walking the Camino in the early Middle Ages shortly after the purported bones of Saint James, who was beheaded in 42 AD, were discovered in the Galician countryside and taken to what is present day Santiago de Compostela. Much of what is known about the discovery of St. James's bones and the earliest pilgrims is a conjecture. By the eleventh century, the pilgrimage began gaining popularity and pilgrims from across Europe, many of whom were old and infirm, set out to touch the bones of St. James (Melczer 35, 50). It is the pilgrimage of the eleventh and twelfth century that the *Codex Calixtinus* (ca. 1140) captures (35). The *Codex Calixtinus*, also known as the *Liber Sancti Jacobi*, is comprised of five books and it is the fifth one, *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela (Liber Peregrinationis)*, part narrative, part guidebook, that tells the story of a pilgrim who overcomes thieves, bad wine, and unscrupulous innkeepers to arrive in Santiago. Contemporary pilgrims often report an affinity to this epoch, albeit often imagined and romanticized (Frey 41). And it is this medieval text (along with other medieval texts) that contemporary

⁴ In his book previous to *El Camino del Peregrino a Santiago* (2005), Camino author Jorge Sánchez includes a copy of an article from the Spanish national newspaper *El País*. The article notes that, in Spain, there isn't much recognition for this kind of individual in Spanish society: "Si Jorge Sánchez fuese inglés y se llamase Georges Wilson, sería una celebridad; pero como es de Hospitalet, es un desconocido en España" (*El Camino del viajero* 9). Sánchez himself admits that the sales of his books only provides enough to help cover basic household expenses, although they bring him great satisfaction. Sanchez, Jorge. jorge@jorgesanchez.org. "Re: camino de santiago." 16 June 2009. Personal e-mail. (16 June 2009).

⁵ William Melczer provides one of the most informative introductions to the Camino's medieval history in *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago* (1993).

authors often allude to or cite from in their contemporary narratives as a way to draw the medieval experience into their pilgrimage.

By the end of the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the pilgrimage's popularity declined (Melczer 35). Over the next five hundred years, as fewer pilgrims made their way to Santiago, the trail faded from the historical consciousness of local residents who lived and worked along the trail. The trail started regaining recognition in 1965, a Holy Year,⁶ when Spanish dictator Francisco Franco used the Camino as a tool to foster his political agenda. The Camino served as the ideal metaphor for his national program which wove the Catholic church's doctrine in his national policies:

“[S]uperado los años de la guerra civil, El Camino de Santiago se recuperó oficializado y reducido, esto es, *nacionalcatolizado*” (Reigosa 39). Completing the trail showed an outwardly devotion to God (more importantly the Catholic church) and state. Furthermore, the natural progression of the trail served as a symbolic string stitching the different regions together as a country. However, at this time, the continuous trail was more symbolic than real. Unlike the present Camino, driving was considered a perfectly legitimate means to complete the journey. Walking the trail during Franco's reign meant shorter, organized walks with local religious groups and *peñas*, rather than traversing the entire country individually. Autocratic laws imposed by Franco restricted travel and financial limitations due to his miscalculated national economic program (poverty was rampant) kept many from completing the entire trail. Ironically, during that time, the Camino was made as popular by Franco as it was limited by him.

⁶ When Saint James day, July 25th, falls on a Sunday it is considered a Holy Year.

Much less has been written about the history of the revived, post-1980 Camino and those responsible for its development. Camino scholars David Gitlitz and Linda Kay Davidson point to Elías Valiña Sampedro as one of the central promoters to restore the medieval trail and welcome pilgrims back. During the late 1960s and through the early 1980s, Valiña, a Spanish priest stationed in O Cebreiro, worked tirelessly remarking trails and writing about the pilgrimage (Gitlitz and Davidson 307). Valiña's work inspired others to find their calling to improve the forgotten trail. Over the course of the early 80s, volunteers remarked paths, religious organizations and entrepreneurs opened *albergues*, and progressively more and more pilgrims set out to complete the trail. In 1982, the Ministry of Tourism commissioned Valiña to write one of the most influential Camino guidebooks, *El Camino de Santiago: guía del peregrino*, which has been reprinted multiple times, to help pilgrims find the way their way to along the trail.⁷ Recognizing the influx of pilgrims arriving in Santiago de Compostela, the Archdiocese began documenting the number of pilgrims who asked for a *Compostela*.⁸ Their public records start in 1985 and indicate that 2,491 pilgrims received a *Compostela* over the next two years (1985 and 86).⁹ In 2004, a Holy Year (*año santo*), the records document 179,944 pilgrims.¹⁰ As the Camino has

⁷ <http://www.csj.org.uk/2000-years.htm>, <http://www.diocesisdelugo.org/ocebreiro/elias.html>.

⁸ A *Compostela* is a document written in Latin that attests that the individual completed at least 100 km of the trail on foot or 200 km by bicycle or horseback for religious or spiritual reasons. The Oficina de Acogida is solely responsible for distributing them. If pilgrims claim they walked for other reasons, cultural, sport, etc. they are given certificates of completion. The numbers the Archdiocese provide, then, give us a fair idea of how many people walked. However, cases exist of people completing the last 100km, but not asking for either certificate or walking all but the last 100km and not being eligible to receive one. To earn one, an individual must present his or her completed *credencial*, a pilgrim passport that shows the different places the individual stayed and the dates to the Catholic Church in Santiago de Compostela.

⁹ It wasn't until 1987 that the Archdiocese started measuring the number of pilgrims annually.

¹⁰ Complete public records end at 2009. 2010 is the next Holy Year and all signs point to an even higher turnout. <http://peregrinosantiago.es/esp/post-peregrinacion/estadisticas/>.

become more popular, literature about the pilgrimage has also grown. Nowadays, historical accounts, guidebooks and novels about the Camino abound, but it is the first-person narrative that is the most popular genre of this subject read by experienced and armchair pilgrims alike.

Many prominent American post-1980 Camino scholars and authors (those who wrote and published their first-person accounts) have an unusual and interrelated history that can be traced back to Walter Starkie, a professor at Trinity College, University of Madrid and various universities across the United States. Starkie, author of *The Road to Santiago* (1957), inspired David Gitlitz (retired) and Edward Stanton, both professors of Spanish in the United States, to walk the Camino and later write about it.¹¹ Starkie's book motivated David Gitlitz along with wife Linda Kay Davidson to walk to Santiago in 1974 (Gitlitz Davidson xi). They again walked in '79, '87, '93 and '96 (xi). Post-1980 Camino author (and publisher) Elyn Aviva calls Gitlitz and Davidson, along with herself, "old timers who were involved with the Camino before it became popular."¹² Although Gitlitz and Davidson have each published separate scholarly research on the Camino, their most important collaborative work is *The Pilgrimage Road To Santiago: The Complete Cultural Handbook* (2000). Following the trail lineally, the authors unearth the history, lore and geography of the trail. While not perhaps a book one can sit down with and read cover to cover, simply because of the overwhelming amount of information, *The Pilgrimage Road* covers the Camino in depth and breadth. A post-1980 Camino

¹¹ More indirectly, Starkie has influenced many pilgrim authors who refer to or cite him in their first-person narratives.

¹² Personal correspondence, December 6, 2005.

author, Conrad Rudolph, describes its usefulness in the “Suggested Reading” section of his narrative:

What can I say about this unusually useful book, one that includes information on the art, architecture, geology, history, folklore, saints; lives, and flora and fauna of the entire Spanish segment of the pilgrimage route, all in itinerant order? This is the book every pilgrim should have at hand to read every kilometer of the way—but any book, besides your guide, is too heavy to carry. So read it, take a page or two of notes on the most special of those things that appeal to you most, and carry these very brief notes with you. Maybe some day Gitlitz and Davidson will do for the LePuy to Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port route what they have done for Spain. (125-126)

On Gitlitz and Davidson’s 1993 trip, a doctoral student from University of California, Berkeley, Nancy Frey, accompanied them as part of her pre-dissertation fieldwork in cultural anthropology.¹³ She incorporated her findings from the trip into her dissertation, “Landscapes of Discovery: The Camino de Santiago and its Reanimation, Meanings, and Reincorporation” (1996). Two years later, the University of California Press published her work titled *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago, Journeys Along an Ancient Way in Modern Spain* in 1998. Whereas Gitlitz and Davidson’s book is a handbook for the Camino written for a general audience, Frey’s focuses on the Camino during the 1990s and is more theoretical, yet equally as readable. It studies the pilgrims on the trail, common pilgrim symbols and how pilgrims incorporate their experience once they return home. Although her publication would gain her tenure at most American universities, she knew early on in her graduate studies that she did not want to continue in academia.¹⁴ In 1999, she and her husband started their own travel company in Spain, On Foot In Spain: Walking &

¹³ Personal correspondence, July 20, 2009.

¹⁴ <http://www.onfootinspain.com/whoweare.php>.

Hiking Educational Adventures, which takes groups of travelers primarily on the Camino, but also to other destinations.¹⁵

As part of Frey's research, Elyn Avivia, who previously went by Ellen Feinburg, offered Frey her field notes and a copy of her dissertation. In 1982, some ten years before Frey's research, Aviva had walked the Camino as part of her fieldwork for her dissertation, "Strangers and Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago in Spain: the Perpetuation and Recreation of Meaningful Performance" (1985), in cultural anthropology at Princeton University. At a party, Aviva met the acquisitions editor from Iowa State University Press. He told Aviva the press wanted to expand the focus of their publications. After some editing, she turned the first chapter of her dissertation into a first-person narrative titled *Following the Milky Way: A Pilgrimage across Spain*, which Iowa State UP published in 1989. The book had little financial success, in part because, even though the press wanted to move in a new direction, they weren't sure how to sell a book such as this. When Iowa State UP showed no interest in a second edition, Aviva regained the rights and later published the second edition herself in 2001 at a publishing company she owned and ran with her husband.¹⁶ The press, Pilgrims Process (the same name as the penultimate chapter of Aviva's dissertation), has since gone on to publish several non-fictional accounts and fictional novels about the Camino.¹⁷ In late 2009, Aviva moved back to Spain, first

¹⁵ Personal correspondence, July 20, 2009.

¹⁶ Personal correspondence, February 7, 2007.

¹⁷ She has written and/or published the following: *The Journey: A Novel of Pilgrimage and Spiritual Quest* (2004) by Elyn Aviva; *Walking Through Cancer: A Pilgrimage of Gratitude on the Way of St. James* (2009) by Elyn Aviva and Kate López; *Dead End on the Camino: A Noa Webster Mystery* (2001) by Elyn Aviva; *Walking Home On the Camino de Santiago* (2005) by Linda L. Lasswell.

staying in Sahagún, Spain.¹⁸ Sahagún marks an important stop on the Camino and a meaningful place for Aviva since it was in that small, dusty town where she first learned about the pilgrimage (“Strangers and Pilgrims” 3).

In 2008, Aviva republished Georgiana Goddard King’s 1936 three-volume account, *The Way of Saint James*, which includes a forward by Kathy Gower. Aviva served as a reader of Gower’s 2002 dissertation, “Incorporating a Hero’s Journey: A Modern Day Pilgrimage and the Camino de Santiago.” In many ways, Gower’s work is an extension of Frey’s discussion of reincorporation once pilgrims complete the trail and return home. After her dissertation, in 2005, Gower co-founded American Pilgrims on the Camino, a community of individuals in the United States who are interested in the Camino de Santiago. The organization has an online presence (www.americanpilgrims.com) and hosts annual and regional gatherings. The group grew out of another organization, Friends of the Road, started by Gitlitz and Davidson. As Gitlitz and Davidson’s interests evolved, Gower, with their blessing, wrapped up Friends of the Camino along with the listserv from John Dagenais at UCLA.¹⁹ Gower continues volunteering with American Pilgrims in a variety of capacities, but less so than in the past. After completing their dissertations, these three graduate students, Frey, Aviva and Gower, were finished with academia, but not with the Camino: all continue to stay connected to the Camino, each in her own way.

¹⁸ Personal correspondence, July 17, 2009.

¹⁹ Personal correspondence, February 14, 2010.

In another group, we find seasoned academics who have published first-person narratives about the Camino, even though the trail is not their scholarly focus. Along with David Gitlitz, Edward Stanton is another author who credits Walker Starkie for inspiring him to walk the Camino. Stanton, a professor of Spanish at the University of Kentucky, was one of Starkie's former students (Stanton 24). Although Stanton's field of research is Spanish popular culture and literature, he saw the Camino less as a research project than a way to take stock of his life. The Camino attracted him during a time when he felt that the world around him was falling apart:

If you ask why I walked the Road, the Camino de Santiago, there is no simple answer. Try as I do, I cannot remember how the idea was born in my head. Like many of our most important decisions, this one was slow and deep in its working: all I know is that one day I had to walk to Compostela. My life was in a shambles, I felt exhausted by work, my marriage was foundering. When I finally had the time to make the journey, I prepared my backpack, found a walking staff, flew to Spain and took to the road. I knew what I was fleeing from, not what I was seeking. The Camino would teach me that and many other things. (1)

In addition to time to reflect on his life, the trail provided material for him to write *Road of Stars to Santiago* (1994), published by the University Press of Kentucky and translated ten years later into Spanish with the title, *Camino de las estrellas* (2004).²⁰

Another academic who has written a first-person Camino narrative is medieval art professor Conrad Rudolph, who walked the Camino in 1996, starting from LePuy France. Chicago University Press published his book, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World*, in 2004. Compared to most first-person Camino authors who write their stories chronologically, the organization of his book is unique. He writes about the

²⁰ http://www.as.uky.edu/academics/departments_programs/HispanicStudies/HispanicStudies/FacultyResearch/Faculty/Stanton/Pages/default.aspx.

pilgrimage in four separate sections: the Camino during the Middle Ages, his interior experience, exterior experience, and advice on how to do your own pilgrimage. As the author notes himself:

...[u]nlike most other accounts of the pilgrimage, the core of this book . . . is not a day-by-day description of the journey but a series of reflections on a number of different levels of what is, ultimately, the internal experience for many. (x)

The Camino presents many opportunities within Rudolph's field of study, but this book is clearly distinct from his other scholarly work,²¹ and has been received by a much wider audience beyond academia.

For two other authors, their Camino narratives were published after they left academia for distinct reasons; nonetheless, their narratives remain influenced by their academic training. Lee Hoinacki had already given up academia before walking the Camino in 1993.²² A personal friend, philosopher Ivan Illich – noted for his argument that education in its current form is dehumanizing and ineffective – influenced Hoinacki to rescind his tenure-track position, take up subsistence farming, walk the Camino, and ultimately publish his story (Hoinacki xi,ix,xii). Although Hoinacki rarely talks about Illich, specifically by name, in the narrative, his philosophical ideas of deschooling appear regularly, if indirectly, throughout Hoinacki's book, *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela*, published in 1996 by Penn State Press as part of a series on lived religious experiences and later translated into German

²¹ Rudolph's books include "*Things of Greater Importance*": *Bernard of Clairvaux's "Apologia" and the Medieval Attitude Toward Art* (1990) or *Violence and Daily Life: Reading, Art, and Polemics in the Cîteaux Moralia in Job* (1997).

²² He has taught at Sangamon State University, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, Penn State University, and, in Germany, at the University of Oldenburg and the University of Bremen. (<http://www.psupress.org/books/titles/0-271-01612-4.html>).

titled *El Camino: ein spirituelles Abenteuer* (1997).

The last author who came from academia only recently published his narrative in 2007 after he retired. John Pratt walked the trail as part of a sabbatical, but completed his book after retiring as an English instructor from Centralia College in Washington State. In his self-published narrative, *Walking the Camino in an Age of Anxiety: The Search for the Medieval Pilgrim* (2007), he cites several scholars, but most liberally from Gitlitz and Davison's *The Pilgrimage Road To Santiago: The Complete Cultural Handbook* and Frey's *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago, Journeys Along an Ancient Way in Modern Spain* to a lesser degree.

Approaching this exercise as a break from traditional scholarship, these last four scholars (Stanton, Rudolph, Hoinacki, and Pratt) wrote narratives more suited for a general audience than academia. It is important to note, however, that what connects these latter authors with the scholars discussed earlier is the way in which the discourses of narrative and scholarship often blur. For Aviva, her dissertation turned into a first-person narrative; Frey's dissertation (and subsequent book) incorporates first-person Camino narratives as primary sources; and others like Stanton and Rudolph wrote first-person narratives which were influenced by, yet also distinct from, their scholarship.

To be sure, many have written Camino narratives other than these hitherto mentioned authors. Within the genre of Camino first-person narratives, we find narratives that have been published by the entire spectrum of publishing houses from university presses to trade presses to independent presses to self-publishing. Among these different publishing options, Aviva presents an especially interesting case

because her narrative was published with a university press and then later through her own independent press, where it found more success.

The largest group of Camino authors consists of mostly unknown and/or previously unpublished individuals. The world of self-publishing and smaller presses has opened up a more egalitarian environment within the publishing world, permitting individuals to publish their own first-person narrative if they are willing to put in the time, effort and expense. Mary Victoria Wallis published *Among the Pilgrims: Journeys to Santiago de Compostela* (2003) at Trafford Publishing, and Jim and Eleanor Clem published their book, *Buen Camino: Hiking the Camino de Santiago* (2004), at PageFree Publishing. Furthermore, online stores like Amazon.com have created distribution channels that allow authors to reach a broader audience beyond their local independent bookstores. Many of the first-person narratives fall within this category, yet few have found much financial success.

The most widely read and financially successful books of the post-1980 Camino narratives come from the trade presses, like Simon and Schuster, which published Jack Hitt's *Off the Road: A Modern-Day Walk Down the Pilgrim's Route into Spain* (2005) and most recently, German Hape Kerkeling's *I'm off Then: Losing and Finding Myself on the Camino de Santiago* (originally published in German in 2006 and English in 2009). In Kerkeling's case, his book has been translated into more than eleven languages and sold more than three millions copies in Germany alone (Kerkeling back cover). Books from these publishing companies tend to draw attention to the more humorous side of the pilgrimage. Hitt, for example, cheekily describes Santiago, the apostle, in less than reverent language: "James, once a clumsy

yes-man, was now a poster boy who was always changing costumes to meet the needs of a changing medieval Catholic bureaucracy” (12). Yet, precisely because of their attempt to turn this pilgrimage, regarded as sacred by many (even among non-believers), into an ongoing farce, these accounts have unsettled some. Experienced pilgrims, in particular, have taken this group of authors to task for their flippant attitudes. Furthermore, there is also the sense that the Camino should not be profited from in such an irreverent manner.

All of these Camino authors draw from many of the rhetorical conventions and themes from travel writing, autobiography and previously written Camino literature. It is perceptible in post-1980 narratives that many of the authors had read other Camino literature (both old and new) before they wrote their own narratives. Inevitably, then, their own experience becomes filtered through the other pilgrim stories that preceded them – as I will discuss Chapter Two.

The filtering process takes place again for the readers of these published first-person Camino narratives written in the last twenty-five years: while it is impossible to determine exactly who reads these first-person narratives, by reading online reviews, it is clear that many individuals read these books before they set out on their own pilgrimage. Those who read these narratives before setting out on the trail do so to have an idea of what the trail will be like ahead of time.²³ Some read these first-person Camino narratives while they are on the trail. One reader commented that he used the books as something of a “guidebook” while he was on the trail in order to

²³ Joyce Rupp writes in her first-person narrative: “Tom and I read everything about the Camino we could find. . . . We read pilgrim accounts, learned crucial information, and ordered books to read such as *A Practical Guide for Pilgrims* (44).

know where to stay or whom to talk to.²⁴ Others read these narratives once they return and compare them to their own experience as a way to relive their own journey along with the protagonist's.²⁵ In all cases, these published first-person narratives become woven into the pilgrim-readers' own experience and ultimately participate in the way the Camino has come to be understood.

Hitherto, formal scholarship on the revived Camino has been limited primarily to studying the lived experience on the trail²⁶ or the medieval Camino.²⁷ This is less of a critique than an opportunity. It allows me to step in and call attention to the ways in which literature affects the way we think about this pilgrimage and, ultimately, read and write about it by studying how the contemporary pilgrimage is represented in literature, more specifically in published first-person narratives.

Theoretical concepts that frame this project include Victor Turner's *Communitas* and Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, two concepts that regularly feature in anthropological studies of pilgrimages. Victor Turner developed his ideas on *communitas* out of his Ndembu field work on rituals. He introduced this

²⁴ Thomas G. Waldman, an Amazon reviewer wrote about Lee Hoiacki's narrative, "I read this book while walking part of the pilgrimage route. It is a moving insightful book, really a meditation on what the pilgrimage route meant to him. It is not a guide book, but it was very meaningful to read and test my reactions against his. I highly recommend it." (http://www.amazon.com/El-Camino-Compostela-Religious-Experience/product-reviews/0271027959/ref=cm_cr_dp_all_helpful?ie=UTF8&coliid=&showViewpoints=1&colid=&sortBy=bySubmissionDateDescending)

²⁵ "Having just completed the Road to Santiago myself, reading Jack's book again was refreshing and helped me recollect a lot of what I saw. He does a great job describing the life and mind of a pilgrim and the history of the road. I would recommend this book for people interested in walking the ancient road and for those who have completed it. It captures Spanish culture and history and combines it with the humor and challenges that the Camino brings." (http://www.amazon.com/Off-Road-Modern-Day-Pilgrims-Route/product-reviews/0743261119/ref=dp_top_cm_cr_acr_txt?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1)

²⁶ Cf. Nancy Frey's anthropological study *Pilgrim Stories: On and Off the Road to Santiago* (1998) and Antón Alvarez Sousa's sociological study of the revived Camino: *Homo peregrinus* (1999).

²⁷ Cf. Javier Dominguez's *Memorias del futuro: ideología y ficción en el símbolo de Santiago apóstol* (2008) and William Melczer's *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (1993).

concept in his work *The Ritual Process* (1969) and continued developing it throughout later work such as *Dramas, fields, and metaphors: symbolic action in human society* (1974) and *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: Anthropological perspectives* (1978). Turner argues that when people occupy liminal spaces, such as pilgrimages, social rules change and that individuals from seemingly different backgrounds can find common ground. One of his most useful working definitions is “a spontaneously generated relationship between leveled and equal total and individuated human beings, stripped of structural attributes” (Turner *Drama* 202). In other words, a pilgrimage may lead pilgrims to develop intense friendship or *communitas* based only on the fact that they are completing the same journey, regardless of their social or economic status and, in the case of the Camino, their nationality.

Anderson’s concept is also relevant since so many elements on the Camino elicit a sense of imagined community. Many pilgrims walk the trail explicitly to experience it. Although Anderson developed the concept of imagined communities to describe the national boundaries for South Asian nations, the Camino’s design also has a tendency to create this sense of belonging. His definition includes three important points. The first is that the nation “is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (6). The second important point is that “the nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (7). Anderson’s last

definition of his term is that “it is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7). Anderson found the written word (he uses examples of novels and newspapers) to be central in creating an imagined community. In the context of the Camino, where the written word (especially diaries) has developed a special status (both as part of the pilgrim practice of diary writing, and in terms of the sheer number of first-person narratives that read much like diaries), it seems useful to look at some of the mechanisms of the Camino in these narratives which contribute to the imagined community of pilgrims.

In the Camino contexts, these two concepts, imagined communities and *communitas* are quite complementary. At the crux of both is a connection with other people. And although an imagined community isn’t predicated on *communitas*, one could see how repeated instantiations of *communitas* could contribute to a sense of belonging to a larger imagined community. In the case of the Camino narratives, particularly those written by foreigners (non-Spaniards), this belonging is part of the community of pilgrims, real, dead or imaginary. My goal is not to hold either of these ideas up or to dispel them, but rather, to show how at certain moments in these narratives these concepts manifest and their implications. As theoretical lenses, these concepts help illuminate the ongoing tensions that exist between the singular and collective found in various aspects of these stories.

Plan of the Dissertation

Although this project is not in strict chronological order, I begin with one of the earlier first-person Camino narratives (1989) and finish with a more recent one

(2007). The first post-1980, first-person Camino narrative I analyze is Elyn Aviva's *Following the Milky Way: A Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago* (1989). I start with her story, in part, because she captures a lost moment in time when the Camino was just starting to become reestablished. When Aviva completed the Camino, the path was not well marked, nor were there many *albergues*²⁸ to choose from, and because there were so few people using them, they lacked the spirit and flavor they have since gained. The narratives written after Aviva's journey which I discuss capture a Camino that is in full rebirth. Appropriately, the last narrative I analyze is John H. Pratt's *Walking the Camino in an Age of Anxiety* (2007). Pratt talks about explicitly choosing a time of the year to walk when fewer pilgrims will be present on the trail (2). For some, especially Anglo pilgrims, who highly value their personal space, the sheer number of pilgrims on the trail detracts from the *encanto* of the pilgrimage.

The second chapter looks at the work of embedded Camino texts, particularly medieval ones, and how they create a sense of community across time, space and texts. While embedded texts create a sense of transtemporal community, they also put the individual's uniqueness at stake. I show how many of the same medieval texts are repeatedly embedded in descriptions of the same geographical places, to such a degree that some post-1980 narratives become highly predictable. Then, I go on to look at two different narratives that employ embedded texts to draw on the community of past pilgrims with distinct outcomes. For Elyn Aviva (*Following the*

²⁸ *Albergues*, also sometimes called *refugios*, are like youth hostels for pilgrims. They are reserved only for pilgrim use and often feature common sleeping and eating quarters.

Milky Way: A Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago (1989)), who walks in a time before the Camino is fully developed, the protagonists of these medieval embedded texts provide infrastructure and pilgrims with whom to travel when she finds few actual companions on the trail. For Lee Hoinacki (*El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (1997)), these embedded texts provide the only pilgrims he appears interested in knowing, the illustrious pilgrims who walked centuries earlier.

Chapter Three examines the role of diaries in three first-person Camino narratives. I show how diaries, often thought of as a singular, private kind of writing, serve as vectors around which community can coalesce. In particular, in Kevin Codd's *To the Field of Stars* (2008), diary writing becomes a bonding activity in which he and his fellow pilgrims sit down to write together. In Hape Kerkeling's *I'm Off Then: Losing and Finding Myself on the Camino de Santiago* (2009), he reads excerpts of his diary out loud to other pilgrims, providing him with the community he seeks while also legitimizing the future book that comes out of his diary. Lastly, I look at John Pratt's *Walking The Camino in an Age of Anxiety: The Search for the Medieval Pilgrim* (2007). In Pratt's narrative, his wife's embedded diary can be read as a metaphorical story of their relationship together as a married couple, a subtext present when protagonists complete the pilgrimage with their life partners.

While the previous two chapters look primarily at walkers, Chapter Four compares narratives of walkers and cyclists. I examine the differences between how walkers describe bicyclists and how the cyclists describe themselves. In three first-person Camino narratives (Lee Hoinacki's *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (1997), Mary Victoria Wallis's *Among the Pilgrims: Journeys to*

Santiago de Compostela (2005) and Rob Neilland's *The Road to Compostela* (1985)), I compare these two sets of representations. I argue that the kind of transportation used effects a separation between these two groups, and that it would be best to understand the cyclists and walkers as participating in parallel pilgrimages. A look at the narratives of these pilgrims reveals that neither group overwhelmingly considers the other to be part of their imagined community. Walkers, in particular, tend to disavow cyclists and exclude them. Similarly, in cyclists' narratives, we see that they do not turn to walkers as a way to claim authenticity, but rather to other cyclists. Most compelling, however, are the rhetorical moves both sides use to stake out their legitimacy.

The last chapter serves as a conclusion, focusing on the darker side of community: who gets left out? In each inclusionary move, somebody remains left out. In Camino narratives, we'll see that community can be used as an effective way to exclude people, at times other pilgrims, cyclists, or even other Camino authors. After examining the stakes in these exclusionary acts, I finish with a short, somewhat rhetorical question – whether we need any more first-person Camino narratives. While my question isn't intended to deny individuals their own personal experience as pilgrims in this pilgrimage, it seems as if we are reaching the limits of what is left to say. I, and others familiar with this genre, agree that it is becoming a challenge to say something new.

Together, these chapters support my claim that examining the shared form and content of these narratives reveals a pervasive singular/collective tension. In this postmodern world, it is no longer the bones of St. James that pilgrims seek, but rather

the opportunity to imagine themselves as unique individuals, while searching for a sense of belonging.

CHAPTER II
STANDING IN FOR THE PRESENT, WALKING WITH THE PAST:
EMBEDDED TEXTS IN POST-1980 CAMINO NARRATIVES

*Nothing is its own author, nothing
exists of itself. -Lee Hoinacki*

This chapter examines the work of embedded texts (stories, history and text from other sources) in first-person Camino narratives from 1985-2009. My primary narratives are Elyn Aviva's *Following the Milky Way: A Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago* (1989) and Lee Hoinacki's *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (1996). In these narratives, embedded texts do more than just provide background information; they play an important role in conveying the protagonist's story. For Aviva, who walks in a time before the Camino has regained its popularity, embedded texts fill in the gaps of her contemporary pilgrimage. For Hoinacki, who wants to live in the past, they virtually allow him to complete a pilgrimage with the medieval pilgrims with whom he so desires. In both cases, embedded texts (other people's stories) help Camino authors tell their own story; both authors are highly invested in the narrative experience – the pilgrimage seems to be as textual as it is spatial or spiritual. As Aviva and Hoinacki move along the space of the trail, they move through texts. Medieval texts, in particular, play an important role in these modern pilgrims' constructed experience.

It can be argued that these intertextual moments are simply part of the travelogue genre, in which authors use bits of history or stories they have heard or read to help us, the readers, understand the cultural and historical context in which the authors find themselves.¹ But these embedded texts do more than just help readers situate themselves or help the authors to pay homage to the historical legacy of the trail. Examining the multiple ways these embedded texts participate in portraying an individual's pilgrimage reveals tensions between the individual and the communal, the authentic and the formulaic. Authors want a unique experience, but they rely on others as markers of authenticity. And paradoxically, the frequent use of textual embedding brings the authenticity of contemporary authors into question. While I do not want to suggest these stories are, in fact, "inauthentic," what does become apparent is that the repeated use of embedded texts can make the narratives sound formulaic and predictable at times. Before examining my two case studies, I will define my use of embedded texts and explain the usefulness of this term. Then I will explore the development of the form (the use of the embedded text) and content (the different types of material) of the embedded texts throughout the history of Camino literature.

I consider an embedded text such when there is a distinct and sustained shift in time, characters and sometimes place between the main narrative and the embedded text. In contemporary Camino narratives, the main narrative is the story

¹ Cf. Dunn, R.E. *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, A Muslim Traveler of the Fourteenth Century*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986.; Morsey, M. *La relation de Thomas Pellow, une lecture du Maroc au 18^{sième} Siècle*. Edition Recherche sur les civilisations. Paris: 1983; Abderrahmane El Moudden, "The ambivalence of *rihla*: community integration and self-definition in Moroccan travel." *Muslim Travel*. Ed. James Piscatori Dale F. Eickelman. 2nd ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. 69-84 (74).

of the protagonist (author/narrator) walking the contemporary trail. Interspersed within this narrative, the authors typically include brief interludes of other stories or excerpts of fiction and non-fiction (often historical information). Referring to these moments of textual interludes as a “story within a story” – what Beckson and Ganz define as a “narrative enclosed within another upon which equal or primary interest is centered” (265) – would be disingenuous because embedded texts are not always stories nor are they always complete. In the Camino narratives I examine, the embedded texts are sometimes pieced together from two or three different sources, sometimes cited, sometimes not. They usually mirror (either in correlation or opposition) the main protagonists’ location, feelings or experiences. For example, when Lee Hoinacki talks about the free food and drink he receives for being a pilgrim, he follows up with a slightly incongruous, opposing text about the dangers of drinking the wine for the medieval pilgrim:

Both the coffee and the cake are excellent. As soon as I finish, I go in search of the young woman, for she has disappeared. When I find her, I ask for my bill. ‘Oh no,’ she says, ‘there’s no charge.’ She has recognized me as a pilgrim, of course, and served this favor from the winery! So the sign outside, inviting pilgrims in for a glass of wine, was just that, an invitation, not an advertisement to sell wine. What an invigorating feeling—to walk through a country so full of such munificent people, such gracious experiences.

In the fifteenth century, after walking along here through El Bierzo, the German monk Hermann König von Vach notes, in his guidebook for other European pilgrims, that one should be very careful of the wine. Sometimes it can burn up the soul, he said, as if one had swallowed a burning candle. Each writer fills his *relato* with advice, some trivial, some more weighty. I’ve often wondered about the best mix of knowledge and ignorance that one should bring to the *camino*. (204-05)

In the main narrative, Hoinacki arrives at a restaurant in Cacabelos to enjoy some food and drink. Hoinacki presents a variation on the theme of the decay of human values with the passage of time, suggesting that the Camino continues to preserve those values. The embedded text is the story of Hermann König von Vach's misfortunes with bad wine. In addition to providing the readers with a better understanding of the historical legacy of the trail and its customs, the embedded text also situates Hoinacki's experience squarely within that legacy. His free food and drink is not coincidence: it comes from the tradition of a pilgrim's right to free provisions. A right (and rite), which Hoinacki suggests, that dates back to the Middle Ages. In addition to having experienced the trail first-hand, made evident primarily through the use of the first-person "I," Hoinacki, like many Camino authors, is also well-versed in its history. His second paragraph adds to the overall depth of the work; however, as the subordinate story, it could be removed completely without losing the essence of Hoinacki's epicurean encounter. These encounters prove that Hoinacki has entered into a different world where the modern social norms of mistrust do not apply. Unlike many older pilgrim narratives, like Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the embedded texts serve as the primary story, but this is not the case in these post-1980 Camino narratives. Here, primacy is given to the protagonists' adventures while the embedded texts are secondary.

In these narratives it might also be helpful to think of the autobiographical narrators as speaking in multiple voices, one as the active, main character, the others as the voices of past pilgrims. Hoinacki's voice speaks about his pleasant encounter with good food and drink in the café; König von Vach offers another voice that

briefly warns us about the dangers of wine along the Camino. These embedded texts rarely come from random people who only happened to walk on the trail previously; rather, they come from a handful of surviving texts from privileged, medieval pilgrims. The weaving of the singular within the plural histories adds richness and texture to the individual scene, and to the overall narrative. Analyzing similar instances of pilgrimage literature, Simon Coleman and John Elsner note that: “As such narratives shifts and move into each other, authorship can be shown to be complex and multivocal” (3). The sustained appearance of embedded texts, moreover, adds to the authors’ authority. In other words, the multiple voices provide a doubling of the author’s authority: first, for having experienced the trail first-hand, and second, through the historical knowledge transmitted through the embedded texts. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note a similar effect of the work of the embedded texts in autobiographies:

In his collaborative narrative *Black Elk Speaks* (1932), the Lakota shaman incorporates the voices of multiple others as he tells his story through the dreams, visions, and voices of other spiritual leaders. Doing so, Black Elk secures the authority of his own visions by situating himself in a genealogy of visionaries. (66-67)

In the case of the Camino authors, using the work (and words) of other respected pilgrims improves the authors’ own position among other authorial voices and among the readers.

Using Gérard Genette’s vocabulary, we can get a better idea of how these embedded texts have developed throughout the history of Camino literature, which dates back to the Middle Ages. Genette’s work helps us see how authors draw from the writing conventions of early 20th century Camino authors and include a shared

set of medieval texts. I find Genette's work in *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* useful because he attempts to clarify the often nebulous term of intertextuality by breaking it down into five subtypes: intertextuality, paratextuality, architextuality, metatextuality, and hypertextuality. Genette's concepts help explain how the different periods of Camino literature have influenced the use of embedded texts in post-1980 Camino narratives in distinct ways. Although Genette's work focuses on textual transformation on a formal level, in these first-person Camino narratives the changes at the formal level (by including embedded texts) participate with the lived experience.

Two of those five types, hypertextuality and intertextuality, are especially useful. Genette defines hypertext as "any text derived from a previous text either through simple transformation . . . or through indirect transformation, which I shall label imitation" (7). I understand Genette's thinking of hypertext as the relationship of one text to previous texts (Genette gives the example of *The Odyssey*'s influence on Paul Scarron's *Virgile travesti*). If we line up the Camino narratives chronologically, one can easily draw a hypertextual relationship between previous Camino narratives, but I am interested in focusing only on the relationship of the narratives in terms of embedded texts. By isolating only the *use* of the embedded texts, it becomes more apparent that post-1980s Camino narratives have a noteworthy hypertextual relationship with Camino narratives written between 1920-1960 (although hints of embedded texts appear as far back as the oldest and most important surviving Camino proto-narrative, the *Codex Calixtinus* (ca. 1140) – itself arguably an example of a book within a book).

Notable flourishes of embedded texts begin appearing in Georgiana Goddard King's 1920 *The Way of St. James*. King, a historian at Bryn Mawr College, wrote about the art history of the churches along the Camino, while her lived experience serves as the secondary story, the telling of her nearly three years wandering the trail and six years of preparation (King iii). She is arguably the first modern narrator of the secular Camino and the last traveler to make the trek to Santiago using medieval modes of transportation, hiring local carriages and even muleteers to take her from village to village. In an obituary in the journal *Parnassus*, Harold E. Wethey describes King's work as the crystallization of "her own personal genre, a combination of art criticism, literary criticism, travelogue, and adventure, written in her highly personal literary style, which is learned and compact, yet poetically woven and tinged with intentional archaism" (33). However, we should not confuse King's personal style of writing with a narrative that reveals the author's feelings and sensations. Reading her work, it seems as if the author spent an exorbitant amount of time erasing herself from the text through the use of passive and non-judgmental statements. Sentences that include "I" appear few and far between. Accordingly, as King was both a historian and woman writing in the 1920s, the narrative gives primacy to history rather than to King's own story.

Embedded texts start to become a regular feature within Camino narratives from this point forward. Sustained and conspicuous use of embedded texts becomes more apparent in Walter Starkie's 1957 narrative *The Road to Santiago*. As in King's work, the main narrative of the book continues to be about the history of the trail while the embedded text is about Starkie and his experiences. The thoroughness

of his historical reach and breadth is commendable, even going so far as including samples of Spanish literature, history, and bars of music. And, as one might expect, he also includes historical references to some of the standard texts that so many other future authors will include, such as the *Codex Calixtinus* and Domenico Laffi's *Viaggio in Ponente* (1681). Starkie seems much more present and lively in his narrative than King is in hers.² In Conrad Rudolph's 2004 Camino narrative, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World*, Rudolph aptly identifies Starkie as "a great raconteur" (127). Starkie's goal seems to be shared equally between getting to Santiago and telling good stories. Starkie's narrative differs from King's in that he takes himself much less seriously than she. He is more playful and interactive with his narrative and does not hold back from placing himself in the center of the action through the use of the first-person "I."

For both of these authors, the main narrative is developed out of the stories and histories of the Camino. This likely had to do as much with their professions as historians as it did with the Camino they found as they made their way west: both traversed a geographical space that was barely recognized at that time by those who lived and worked along the trail *as* the Camino de Santiago. If, in the years between 1920-1960 one wanted to write about the Camino, one had to rely heavily on historical texts and stories simply because so few pilgrims walked the trail during this period. Its infrastructure had vanished and the historical consciousness of the

² This was the last book Starkie wrote as a history professor and served as his grand farewell on the eve of his retirement: "My 1954 pilgrimage bore for me a deep significance, for it marked the time of my retirement from official life, and I wished to perform religiously all the rituals, in order to prepare myself for making my examination of conscience" (83). That he takes a pilgrimage to mark his retirement and then write about it seems very fitting for him.

Camino among the locals offered very little to write about. Many of the buildings, barring some of the more important churches and cathedrals, had been abandoned, carelessly quarried by the locals, or left to turn to rubble. Having either been repurposed or reclaimed by nature, the trail itself is rarely mentioned in these stories. King and Starkie do not fraternize with other pilgrims, nor do they stay at the *albergues* or even walk the entire way. Besides providing a sort of rediscovery of the Camino, waking the trail from its medieval slumber, King and Starkie provide a hypertextual pattern (the use of embedded texts) that many Camino authors will follow to tell about their own experiences.

In 1982, Elyn Aviva, an American Ph.D. student, sets out on a pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago. As she walks, however, she finds an intermittent trail, infrequent *albergues*, and only a few pilgrims. Aviva describes her arrival in Villafranca de Montes de Oca, a town once famous for welcoming pilgrims:

The late-fifteenth-century German pilgrim Hermann Kunig wrote that they provided good food in Villafranca at the Hospital de la Reina. And the seventeenth-century pilgrim Domenic Laffi agreed, saying that they gave fine charity and good food to pilgrims, and in particular at the Hospital. The Hospital was established in 1380; in the eighteenth century it still had 36 beds for pilgrims. Now, however, it was empty and provided nothing. So far, the hospitality in Villafranca had been most noticeable in its absence. (101)³

By embedding medieval material, Aviva uses a pattern found in many first-person Camino narratives: she compares her experience to the medieval one. This use of embedded text has gone mostly unnoticed by scholars. In their introduction to “Pilgrim Voices: Authoring Christian Pilgrimage,” a compilation of essays about

³ I use her second-edition book for citation purposes.

pilgrim narratives, Simon Coleman and John Elsner note that, as a whole, the intertextual quality within pilgrim narratives has been overlooked (4). This especially applies to the collection of recent Camino narratives.⁴ However, somewhat surprisingly, in their examination of the intertextual quality of pilgrim narratives, Coleman and Elsner themselves do not include any Camino narratives. Nor have any other scholars, literary or otherwise, paid attention to the embedded features within Camino narratives. In some respects, the oversight is understandable. One possible explanation is that, despite having distinct shifts in time, person and sometimes place, these embedded texts also have an “organic feel” to them in relation to the overall Camino experience and do not immediately stand out. To some degree, this organic feeling is immediately lost once one draws attention to it.

If the earlier quote from Aviva’s narrative is read as it appears within the book and not as a blocked-off citation, we might not notice the degree to which Aviva’s story is intertwined with (and, as I hope to show, improved by) those of Hermann König von Vach and Dominico Laffi. Readers, especially those who have first-hand experience of the pilgrimage, can make this jump back and forth between time and space easily because the place, the physical trail that serves as the setting for these stories, is often experienced as seeming not so much caught between times, but in both at once. As Elyn Aviva explicitly states in the preface of her narrative, “It [the trail] is both quintessentially contemporary and incredibly ancient” (xxvii).

⁴ Pilgrim narratives refer to narratives written about *any* pilgrimage; I am using the term Camino narratives to refer specifically to narratives about the Camino de Santiago.

Medieval texts embedded in contemporary pilgrimages replicate this multi-temporal sensation well.

In Aviva's description of Villafranca, the lack of hospitality is emblematic of the absence of the Camino culture along the trail in the early 1980s, as the trail began reemerging. Scenes like this appear regularly throughout Aviva's story – she is in many ways a pilgrim without a pilgrimage. The state of the Camino which she encounters presents a problem for her as an author of a travelogue, writing when the Camino revival was just starting: how do you create a compelling story about a pilgrimage when the medieval one has disappeared and the contemporary one has still not developed? One way Aviva resolves this is by including textual references drawn from the colorful Camino history, lore and literature. By contrasting her experience with others, Aviva draws them into her story.

In this way, Elyn Aviva's *Following the Milky Way: A Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago* marks a notable change in Camino writing vis-à-vis embedded texts. Predicated on previous Camino narratives and guided by contemporary adventure writers, a narrative shift occurs, the role of the author/protagonist is flipped: first her story, then history. The main thrust of Aviva's narrative is the protagonist's challenging journey along the way (also with more emphasis on the interior journey than previous narratives), thereby relegating the history and stories of the Camino to a secondary position. Subsequent authors will follow Aviva's lead in that the narrator's lived experience becomes the main story. This change in emphasis from the historical to the lived experience can be accounted for by several converging trends in the early 80s: the reemergence of the trail, the shift to walking

or biking the trail as the primary mode of transportation for Camino authors, and (particularly in the United States) a growing interest in adventure narratives and memoirs.⁵ As a result, in the Camino narratives that follow Aviva's, embedded texts, if they are included, play an important but secondary role.

This brings us to the next term provided by Genette, intertextuality, which he understands "as the presence of one text within another" (2). For Genette, this includes "quoting," "plagiarism" and "allusion" (2). I understand this to include the specific material (texts) and references the authors embed. Although medieval Camino texts contribute less hypertextually than the modern Camino narratives, they do contribute significantly in terms of intertextual work. In other words, whereas medieval Camino narratives have little to no influence on the *form* of embedded texts, they regularly provide the *content* embedded into post-1980 Camino narratives.

When examining the embedded material within post-1980 Camino narratives, it becomes apparent that much of the material comes from the *Codex Calixtinus*, surviving medieval Camino narratives, hagiography, Marian narratives, and medieval history. Although this is not an exhaustive taxonomy, it does encompass approximately eighty percent of the embedded material in first-person Camino narratives written in the last twenty years.

The *Codex Calixtinus*, and more specifically, its fifth book, *The Pilgrim's Guide to Santiago*, is the most influential book within Camino literature in terms of Genette's understanding of intertextual use. Almost every post-1980 Camino author

⁵ E.g., Jon Krakauer's *Into the Wild* (1996; 2007 movie with Emile Hirsch) and *Into Thin Air* (1997).

at least mentions it, even if they do not heavily cite it. In the case of our two authors presented in this chapter, they cite, paraphrase and allude to it regularly. Some factors that account for its popularity are that it is one of the most important surviving Camino texts, as well as one of the most accessible. What makes it accessible in a way other medieval texts are not is that it has been translated from Latin into Spanish and English by A. Moralejo, C. Torres, and J. Feo and William Melczer, respectively.

When trying to construct a taxonomy of intertextual material, one obstacle is that not all authors cite or attribute their sources, thereby making them difficult to determine at times. This is particularly true when embedded texts come from the next category of regularly included material – medieval documents (usually books, but sometimes *albergue* registers). Much of the embedded history often comes from these unidentified sources, as we shall see later when Elyn Aviva describes the town of Villalcázar de Sirga using uncited embedded historical information to liven up her narration. Literary references have the advantage in that post-1980 Camino authors usually include the name of the pilgrim-authors, making it easier to identify the source, even if none is explicitly cited. When authors do cite their sources, the citations serve as visual markers reminding the reader that the authors have spent an equal amount of time walking the trail and researching the trail's history. These embedded texts create a curious effect: readers feel as if the author's lived experience is a walk both along the trail and through history. This effect is even stronger when the authors don't cite their sources because there isn't the distraction of the bibliographical information. The historical and lived experience become

difficult to extrapolate to such a degree that the shifts in time become difficult to determine. In both cases (whether the authors cited sources or not), inevitably the authors reconfigure their experience on the trail to fit with their findings in the libraries (or gleaned from guidebooks).

After the *Codex Calixtinus* and surviving medieval documents, the next most commonly embedded texts are medieval Camino travelogues. The quantity of these, however, is quite limited and somewhat inaccessible both in terms of language and availability. In a rare 1978 first-person narrative about the Camino originally titled *Priez pour nous à Compostelle*, then translated into Spanish as *La aventura del Camino de Santiago*, Pierre Barret and Noel Gurgand note this paucity in their *Adviso al lector*:

De regreso en Francia, escudriñando bibliotecas y archivos, hemos descubierto con estupefacción que de los varios millones de peregrinos entre los siglos X y XVIII no más de una quincena han dejado testimonio escrito de su viaje, y, de éstos, solo cinco relatos escritos o traducidos en un francés accesible. (11)

The limited number of surviving texts and the lack of translated texts are not isolated problems only for these French authors. Anyone who attempts to find copies of these older texts, translated or not, will likely face this same frustration. The most accessible and commonly embedded texts come from only the handful of medieval pilgrims who wrote their own first-person account: those of Hermann König von Vach and Domenico Laffi appear most frequently. The earlier quotes from Aviva and Hoinacki, for instance, both include excerpts from König von Vach's narrative. Lesser-known medieval Camino authors whose stories are also embedded, yet even less accessible include Arnold von Harff (1499), Nicola Albani

(1743), Andrew Boorde (ca. 1544) and William Wey (1456).⁶ Many of these ancient Camino travelogues would likely have remained buried in archives and libraries if it weren't for contemporary authors' renewed interest in the Camino and its literature.

Following medieval Camino travelogues, hagiographic stories, stories about saints' lives and the miracles that promoted them to saintly status, comprise the next most popular category of embedded texts. After the obvious Santiago (Saint James), other popular saints include San Millán de la Cogolla, Santo Domingo de la Calzada, and his disciple San Juan de Ortega. Rarely do authors, when recounting their arrival to the town of Santo Domingo, resist including the story about the bridge-building abilities of the town's namesake (as we will see with Hoinacki later) or fail to mention the hermit who founded the cenobite at San Millán (even though the trail through the town is no longer considered part of the Camino Francés and pilgrims nowadays rarely walk through the town on their way to Santiago). The popularity of these stories exists, in part, because the Camino traverses many of these places where these miracles purportedly took place, like the town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. That is to say, within Camino narratives, embedded hagiographic stories tend to be geographically bound, appearing when the protagonist arrives at the site where the miracle happened or where the saint lived or died. Simon Coleman and John Elsner suggest that embedded "miracle stories can

⁶ Although Laffi and Albani's texts fall outside of the medieval period, they are worth including because they read more like the medieval texts than the early 20th-century ones.

be seen as the textual equivalents of votive offerings: the telling, like the physical offering at a shrine, acts as a gift, or performance of thanksgiving to the divine” (7).

Similar to but slightly different from hagiographic stories are Marian narratives, stories about the Virgin Mary who protects devout followers. Villalcázar de Sirga is a popular site for authors to include any of the seven miracle tales that Alfonso X situates there and that are related to the pilgrimage (*Cantigas* 217, 218, 253, 268, 278, 313 and 355). The Camino de Santiago and Marian narratives like these have a long intertwined history together, sharing a symbiotic relationship. Their rise and fall in popularity among the masses parallel the popularity of the Camino during the Middle Ages. Marian narratives kept pilgrims entertained as they told stories moving from one place to another, thereby distributing them orally across Western Europe (Gerli 23-24). As interest in the Camino waned at the end of the Middle Ages, so did the popularity of the Marian narratives. The recent reemergence of the trail and the subsequent literature have resurrected Marian narratives; however, now they are transmitted textually instead of their earlier oral tradition.

In addition to the Marian narratives, some of their medieval “authors” also appear in contemporary Camino narratives, with Gonzalo de Berceo and Alfonso X being the most popular.⁷ Like these authors who used vernacular languages to make their work more accessible, post-1980 Camino authors do something similar: by

⁷ Neither Berceo nor Alfonso X composed original Marian narratives, rather they adapted them from Latin sources and made them available in vernacular languages.

couching these Marian narratives in informal, first-person narratives, the medieval stories are made available to a new audience.

This is not an exhaustive list of the material used as embedded texts. Georgiana Goddard King and especially Walter Starkie make regular appearances in subsequent texts, and more recently, the latest authors are beginning to cite or at least mention other post-1980's Camino authors.⁸ However, texts from the medieval period reign in popularity, in part, because it is often the medieval pilgrimage that contemporary pilgrims want to replicate. In the textual medium that is the first-person narrative, embedded texts from the Middle Ages are ideal for evoking the feeling of “walking in the footsteps of past pilgrims” that so many pilgrim authors want to experience and express without having to repeatedly rely on this heavily used cliché.

Camino authors draw both hypertextually and intertextually from preexisting Camino literature, but importantly, different epochs of writing have different effects. While the texts written after the 1900s have heavily influenced the *form* of subsequent narratives, medieval texts have provided much of the embedded *content*. There is no better way to call attention to the hypertextual and intertextual quality of these embedded texts than to examine a common moment that occurs in many of the post-1980 Camino narratives. In each narrative, the pilgrim-author mentions the same location on the trail, a bridge between Chiriqui and Estella. In this scene, each protagonist crosses el Río Salado, nowadays a small, murky stream. Most stop and

⁸ For example, in *Spanish Pilgrimage: A Canter to St. James*, published in 2004, Robin Hanbury-Tennison mentions Laurie Dennett's 1986 book, *A Hug for the Apostle* (112-13), and Rob Neillands' 1985 book *The Road to Compostela*.

taste the water, others simply note its stench caused by heavy contamination. But even more interestingly, many Camino authors follow the same hypertextual form of embedding a text and draw from the same intertext, the *Codex Calixtinus (CC)*.⁹ In the passage below, when the protagonist recounts his dreadful encounter with Navarrese, hyperbole and politics seem to be more at play than a truthful account of the situation (Melczer 143). Nonetheless, present-day pilgrims regularly compare their own uneventful experience to the treacherous one written about in the *CC*, which states:

In a place called Lorca, towards the east, runs a river called Río Salado. Beware from drinking its waters or from watering your horse in its stream, for this river is deadly. While we were proceeding towards Santiago, we found two Navarrese seated on its banks and sharpening their knives: they make a habit of skinning the mounts of the pilgrims that drink from that water and die. To our questions they answered with a lie saying that the water was indeed healthy and drinkable. Accordingly, we watered our horses in the stream, and had no sooner done so, than two of them died: these the men skinned on the spot. (trans. Melczer 88-89)

Compare this passage with the following four post-1980 Camino narratives. Elyn Aviva writes (1989):

We crossed a medieval stone bridge over the Río Salado. Aymery Picaud, in the ‘Pilgrim’s Guide’ in the *Codex*, advised twelfth-century travelers neither to drink the water of the Río Salado nor let their horses drink it, for the river is poisonous. He also warned that the Navarrese waited with sharpened knives to skin the dead beasts of the pilgrims. I tasted the water; it was salty, but not deadly. (59)

Edward Stanton writes (1994):

After getting lost in a field crossed by lines of rushes, I reach the second famous bridge on the Camino de Santiago, over the Río

⁹ I am using William Melczer’s English translation of the *The Pilgrim’s Guide to Santiago de Compostela* (1993).

Salado. Not majestic like the Puente de la Reina, it looks quaint with its two uneven arches, dwarfed by a modern aqueduct. Even armchair pilgrims know that this river and bridge are the scene of the most notorious passage in the Book of St. James. The probable author of that manuscript, the French priest Aymery Picaud tells how he and his companions on the pilgrimage asked two Navarrese, who were seated on the shore sharpening their knives, if the water was fit to drink. When the two men said yes, the French watered their mounts in the Salty River whose name should have put them on guard; the horses died almost at once and were quickly skinned by the Navarrese, who must have sold the meat and hide for a profit. . . . Today the trickle in the Rio Salado –it can be called a river only by an act of the imagination—doesn't carry enough volume to kill a horse, even if the water were poisoned. Walter Starkie and several modern pilgrims have tasted the supposedly brackish water without keeling over dead. A doubting Thomas, I decided to confirm their reports, walking to the middle of the almost dry-riverbed, sticking one finger in the warm, gentle flow: not even a salty taste to justify the name. (51-52)

Lee Hoinacki writes (1996):

After some time, I cross the Río Salado, near the place where Aymeric Picaud claims his two horses died from drinking the water. The river's name, Salado, means 'salty'—the same name Picaud gives—a condition that has not changed since the twelfth century. Other authors have disputed Picaud's claim; they think the water could not have killed the horses. It's salty, and does not taste good; but it's not poisonous. (47)

Mary Victoria Wallis writes (2003):

In another of his anti-Navarrese fits, Aimery tells his own story of evil doings on the bank of the Rio Salado, just west of Ciraque near Lorca. Arriving at the river, he and his companions meet two Navarrese rogues. The men assure the new arrivals (while sharpening their knives) that the waters are completely safe for men and animals. Two of the horses are allowed to drink; both fall dead and are skinned at once by the evil Navarrenses.

One May morning some eight hundred years later on the way from Puente de la Reina to Estella, Scott and I took our bicycles onto the double-arched, stone bridge at the Rio Salado. We stopped part way across for a photo. Through the lens, I could almost see those gagging horses and Aimery's wretched fury. And whether they were or not, the waters flowing sluggishly under the bridge, strewn with bits of garbage and leaving slimy white rivulets by the mangy bank, really did look insalubrious enough to kill a horse. (188)

At this geographical location, all four authors follow the same pattern of embedding the same episode from the *CC*, thereby giving meaning to this otherwise uneventful place. This pattern is not limited to our four authors. Other contemporary authors, like Conrad Rudolph (2004), and Spanish authors Víctor Luengo (2004), Manuel Mandianes (1993), and Carlos López (2000), have also embedded the same story. These authors are doing something akin to a literary reenactment by writing about the same spot and embedding the same story. This hypertextual instantiation (the form) can be traced back to Walter Starkie's narrative. He is the first author I find who embeds this story at this geographical space:

Soon I reached the River Salado and crossed by a picturesque bridge with two uneven arches. Here Aymery Picaud warns pilgrims not to drink the water or allow their horses near it (*quia flumen letiferum est*). He describes how when he reached the bridge he saw two Navarrenses sharpening their knives in readiness for skinning the pilgrim mules or horses who would drop dead when they had drunk the water. And when Aymery asked them whether the water was fit to drink they replied in the affirmative. ““And so””, he continues, ““we watered our horses, and two of them straightway died, and the two men skinned them.”” I tasted the brackish water without any sinister results. (180)

Furthermore, it appears that these authors are interested in more than just re-telling the story; they all make reference to a specific person with some variations on the spelling – Aymery, Aymeric, Aimery – an individual whose exact relation to the medieval manuscript is uncertain. William Melczer reminds us that the “traces we have of Aimery's presence in the work are of indicative value only. All told, nothing firm may be said at this point of him or of anybody else as the author of the compilation” (32). In these narratives, Aimery's identity is no more settled in that the authors sometimes talk about him as the protagonist, sometimes as the

storyteller, and none seem too concerned with his true relationship to the *CC*. The authors seem to be as interested in connecting their story to the ancient text as with connecting themselves to this medieval figure. The use of the embedded text here as a rhetorical ploy seems as much about making a personal connection with Aimery (regardless of whether he even existed as a real person or not) by means of a shared experience, as with giving meaning to the space through which our pilgrims are traversing.

By lining up these passages, we see another kind of reenactment occurring: all except Wallis (although she makes specific reference to it), drink the water for themselves. For them, reenactment is not limited to walking the trail, but also citing the passage and drinking the water. Since they have no horses to water, they are enacting the pilgrim part as best they can by sampling it themselves. In addition to citing the passage from Aimery, the authors make an even deeper connection with Aimery by drinking the water at the same spot where his horse drank. Conversely, one could argue that it is not the medieval pilgrims contemporary authors are emulating, but rather Starkie, the first author I have found who actually tries the water for himself much to the same effect. By tasting the water, each individual becomes a member of the group of Camino authors by means of a brackish baptism. This episode has practically become a rite of passage: when crossing the Río Salado, a Camino author is expected to include the story from the *CC*, then taste the water for him or herself. On an individual level, each author might make a claim of authenticity because of the connection through the shared water. Collectively,

however, the repeated use of the *Codex Calixtinus* and the authors' perfunctory tasting of the water can also serve to diminish these claims to authenticity.

Together, these passages reveal how these four post-1980 first-person Camino narratives are highly mediated through previously written Camino texts. Had none of these authors read about this episode in the *Codex Calixtinus*, where the graphic scene of poisoned horses first appeared, it is doubtful that they would have even noticed or written about the seemingly insignificant stream. The repeated use of this story has created an etiological myth for an otherwise unremarkable place, a trope that has become a stand-in for an uneventful bridge crossing. Stopping, tasting and then writing about the water has become ritualized within Camino narratives. The point is not that an unimportant creek is mentioned, or that the same scene from the *CC* is reused, but rather that recycled moments – both in form (hypertextually) and content (intertextually) from other Camino texts – permeate these contemporary narratives. For recent Camino authors, this example highlights a dilemma authors face when writing about their Spanish pilgrimage: drawing from previous pilgrim raconteurs risks being derivative, yet not including them might weaken contemporary authors' claims to a common literary and experiential heritage, and rupture the air of seamless continuity they work so hard to construct.

* * *

Elyn Aviva wrote about what she observed and experienced on the Camino in 1982: “Nothing now remained except ruins The route was hard to find, the ancient Camino obliterated. . . . [T]he palace was abandoned” (49). Aviva finds herself in an odd position: the Camino she encounters is neither the medieval

Camino nor a fully regenerated one. Pilgrim infrastructure or historical consciousness among the people who live along the trail barely exists. This poses a representational problem: how do you write about a practically nonexistent pilgrimage? One way this dilemma is resolved is by embedding other pilgrim stories and texts. At the narrative level, Aviva does not let her encounters of absence and destruction lessen her pilgrimage. Instead, she uses embedded texts from the past to complete the gaps. While she draws from the past, it does not seem like she is trying to remember how things were. She does not have a case of nostalgia so much as she uses the past to stand in for in the present. I argue that the embedded texts in her narrative are doing more than just historizing or contextualizing her experience. I will present textual evidence that suggests that the embedded texts constitute and construct her journey *as* a pilgrimage: this rhetorical format stands in for the absent pilgrim camaraderie, *albergues*, trail, and pilgrim tourism, precisely at those moments when she otherwise encounters none. In other words, the many stories and history of the previous pilgrims help Aviva tell her own story.

In 2004 nearly 180,000 pilgrims asked for a Compostela.¹⁰ In 1982 when Aviva walked, only 3,500 did so, according to the author in her prologue (Aviva xxiii). The low number is significant because solidarity with other pilgrims is what makes this pilgrimage so meaningful for many people. Camino anthropologist Nancy Frey writes:

It is commonly said that many people start alone but always end accompanied by others. The formation of friendships and groups of walking and cycling companions that cut across normal divisions such

¹⁰ http://www.elcaminosantiago.com/PDF/Distribution_Of_Pilgrims.pdf.

as gender, age, class, nationality, and marital status is an important aspect of becoming a pilgrim and feeling part of a larger community. (91)

Aviva does not let the absence of other pilgrims lessen her pilgrimage, though. She makes up for their scarcity by recalling earlier pilgrim stories, thereby establishing their presence. Early in her narrative, Aviva describes the moment when she peeks over the Pyrenees and looks down onto Roncesvalles, a hamlet whose main purpose has been to serve travelers since the early Middle Ages. If one starts in St. Jean Pied de Port, as Aviva does, the first day is up and over the Pyrenees. It is one of the longest and hardest sections of the trail, as Aviva finds out:

For a thousand years, pilgrims have hiked out of the mountains, walked wearily down from the high mountain passes, in need of shelter, food, and care; for 800 years, they have received it all generously at Roncesvalles.... In winter, travelers needed guidance through the snow, and in the sixteenth century a bell rang during the day to guide pilgrims and *caminantes*—travelers, a Spanish word formed from the same root as *camino*— to safety there.

I, like millions of medieval travelers, greeted Roncesvalles with relief. It had taken us four days to travel what we had thought would take an afternoon to walk. (25)

Not only does the embedded text within this passage provide fellow pilgrims with whom Aviva can travel, it also gives her pilgrims with whom to share her pain and victory upon arriving. The syntax she uses, by placing the clause “like millions of medieval travelers” between “I” and “greeted” within the sentence breaks what is normally an impenetrable boundary between the diegetic story (the narration of the present) and the hypodiegetic story (the embedded text of the past). In the next sentence, although the “us” likely refers to Aviva and her walking companion and then boyfriend, Bill, it can easily be interpreted as Aviva and the medieval travelers.

Even though she is walking with Bill, at this point, their relationship (both as walking companions and as a couple) has already shown signs of stress. After only a few days together, they have argued over how far they should walk each day and at what speed. Moreover, she blames him for the danger to which she feels she has been exposed. At an earlier point in the narrative, she naively notes, “he assured me he could take care of me no matter what” (4). With that untenable promise basically broken by the first day, she does not feel like she can or should share this victorious moment only with him. Thus, the embedded text provides her with other pilgrims to celebrate her safe arrival to Roncesvalles. Earlier, when describing the Río Salado episode in which Aymeric is referenced, I discussed the importance of providing specific names within the embedded texts. What is important in the passage from Aviva is not exactly who crossed, but the multitudes of people. There is no one person with whom she wants to connect, but rather, she seeks membership in the larger community that Frey mentions.

Embedded texts in Aviva’s narrative follow a regular pattern: first, a longer paragraph about the illustrious past, then a sentence or two about the current state of the pilgrimage, which usually contradicts the previous paragraph of the past. In this instance, however, there is no contradiction: Aviva likens her own suffering to that of the medieval pilgrims. Although it might seem like hyperbole to compare her journey to that of the medieval pilgrims who walked in winter, Aviva’s pain is real and genuine. Slowed by health problems, exhaustion and inexperience in the mountains, traversing the Pyrenees – what usually takes pilgrims one day – takes Aviva four. Aviva, who had been stricken with mild polio as a child and had

considered “driving to the corner grocery store” a workout (xxxv), finds this to be the most challenging physical endeavor of her life. Pain and pilgrimage often go hand in hand: the suffering one endures on the trail brings one closer to God (Frey 107). However, Aviva is a spiritual but not religious person, so instead of God, her suffering allows her to become closer to the past pilgrims. Later in her narrative, Aviva talks about the connection between suffering and belonging: “The psychological explanation would be, at least in part, that it is like an initiation ritual: the more you suffer to join something, the more valuable it is to be a member of the group” (106). Her connection with the medieval pilgrims, then, comes not only from crossing the same mountain pass successfully, but also from experiencing the pain in doing so and overcoming it.

Embedded texts in Aviva’s narrative do more than just connect the protagonist with past pilgrims, they also replace the pilgrim infrastructure that no longer exists, thereby enhancing their journey as pilgrimage. As Aviva and Bill make their way down the mountain into Spain, they arrive at one of the most emblematic sites of the Camino, Roncesvalles, little more than a monastery with a few dependencies. Aviva offers a preview of what the lodging might be like for pilgrims with the help of a thirteenth-century poem titled *La Preciosa*, originally written in Latin at Roncesvalles by an unknown author. Aviva writes:

In the twelfth century, according to “La Preciosa,” at Roncesvalles they washed pilgrims’ feet, cut their hair, and repaired their shoes. Someone stood at the door giving bread to all who passed. There were separate hospices for women and men, and those who fell ill were housed separately and nursed by beautiful, virtuous women. There they rested on soft, clean beds and were given baths if they

requested them. If they died, they were buried in a special chapel which was, supposedly, visited by the legions of angels. (28)

The spa-like description creates an element of suspense and the reader shares Aviva's eagerness to arrive. For many readers who do not have knowledge of the lodging available along the Camino, like Aviva at this moment, the *albergue* system is unfamiliar in the beginning and a depiction such as this sets expectations quite high. Yet the embedded text sets us up for disappointment, for Aviva discovers that the existing *albergue* shares little in common with the medieval one, apart from their shared location. Aviva's expectations (and the readers') might have been less lofty had she not paraphrased the same medieval poem found in William Starkie's narrative when he, too, recalls his arrival at Roncesvalles (165).¹¹ The historic *albergue*, depicted as a flurry of washing feet, cutting hair and receiving food, fails to materialize. Aviva and her companion find only an empty building where pilgrims throw down their sleeping bags on the cold cement floor. The description of the *albergue* as lacking warmth and people is typical of the few *albergues* where Aviva and her companion do stay, like those in Hornillos and Fromista. Searching for any semblance of the past ("There were separate hospices for women and men"), Aviva asks the local priest if men and women sleep in different rooms, to which she is told they do not. With that response, she quickly surmises that this is not the kind of *albergue* she wants to stay at. This empty space does not match her expectations, so she and Bill continue to the next town and find an inexpensive hotel. In fact, they

¹¹ Aviva cites the same source Starkie does: Vázquez de Parga, Luis, José María Lacarra, and Juan Uría Riu. *Las peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela*. 1949. 3 vols. Madrid: C.S.I.C, 1949. pp. 66-68. Edward Stanton, a former student of Walker Starkie, also uses the poem as an epigram to begin his second chapter (12).

stay in many hotels throughout their journey. It would be another eight years until a rudimentary system of *albergues* would reemerge (Frey 94). By including the poem, Aviva seems to suggest that the *albergue* she finds (a cold, empty room) has little in common with the *albergues* of the past (active, social spaces) and, thus, staying there would not improve her pilgrim “experience.” For now, a medieval description of the *albergue* during a period when the Camino was vibrant and teeming with pilgrims has to suffice.

Although Roncesvalles did have a working, albeit disappointing, *albergue*, many other places no longer did at the time Aviva walked. As a result, finding a place to sleep each night proves challenging for her and Bill. In Pamplona, they have a particularly difficult time finding lodging. Unbeknownst to them, they arrive at the end of San Fermín, the local patronal festival with the legendary Running of the Bulls, and they cannot find a room anywhere. In the following passage, she juxtaposes their difficulty in finding a hotel or hostel with a paraphrased story from the *Codex Calixtinus* and some uncited historical material, suggesting that there were plenty of places to stay in Pamplona for pilgrims during the Middle Ages:

By the twelfth century there were a number of private hospices in Pamplona, and the *Codex Calixtinus* warns travelers to be wary: it was not unheard of for dishonest landlords to take unfair advantage of unsuspecting pilgrims. There were also other *hospitales* and hospices for pilgrims, run not by the Church but by lay brotherhoods. The Cofradía de Santa Catalina supported two different hospices, once for Spanish pilgrims, the other for foreign pilgrims. From 1535 to 1680 this latter hospice took in a number of Belgian, French, and German pilgrims, some of whom died there. The *hospitalero* who ran it was required to give pilgrims a bed, light, fire, and dinner for three nights.

Today, the *hospitales* and the cathedral kitchen are closed. In their place are a number of hotels and hostels of variable quality, and

a number of restaurants, bars, and cafes. But none of them provides charity. (45)

Aviva's frustration at finding neither an *albergue* nor even an economical hotel in Pamplona is intensified by the embedded text relating the apparent availability of hospitaes and hospices for medieval pilgrims. Reiterating the trope of the unscrupulous innkeeper, Bill thinks that the hotel owners do not like pilgrims and that the owners are lying when they say that no rooms are available. In this instance, however, the inability to find a place to stay is not a case of the landlords being dishonest, but rather of the hotels being full of tourists in town to celebrate one of the largest national festivals in Spain. Aviva notes that hotels and hostels have replaced the old hospitals and hospices, but the new accommodations lack hospitality—which is exactly what she and her companion need at this moment, somebody who will give them a place to stay, a bit of charity. Again, she follows her pattern of a longer paragraph about the past juxtaposed with a shorter one about the present: there were hospitals and hospices, now there are none. She does the same when she complains that in Puente de la Reina the *albergues* have been replaced with privately run hostels (56). However, because of the depth and consistency of her embedded texts, together with the emptiness of her current situation, we hardly notice the absence of pilgrim accommodations as she walks. We simply take in the past as if it were the present.

In a 2002 first-person Camino narrative about her journey with her 12-year-old daughter, Kathryn Harrison writes about the condition of the trail: “The road is so well marked that a child, pre-literate, could follow the yellow arrows and red

stripes across all of Spain. . .” (12). Unfortunately for Aviva, that is not the case when she walks. She repeatedly mentions the poor state of the trail she encounters: “The route was hard to find, the ancient Camino obliterated” (49). A few days later, she writes:

Roman stone pavements, medieval cobblestones. Built to last. The modern asphalt and concrete highways were already crumbling at the edges, split at seams, pock-marked in the middle. . . . Still following Navarro’s map, we walked on more Roman pavement. But then we lost the route. (59)

Even when the trail seems to be well marked with the *flechas amarillas*, the yellow arrows, a modern symbol to indicate the way, Aviva and Bill still find it difficult to continue: “We followed the yellow arrows and got lost” (70). What makes the Camino so challenging for Aviva is that the remarkable condition of the trail that Harrison mentions do not yet exist. Moreover the absence of pilgrim signs and symbols, like yellow arrows and *albergues*, which reassure pilgrims they are going in the right direction, make it difficult to determine if she and Bill are on the right path or simply on a countryside road headed in the wrong direction:

At last we picked up the road again, twenty meters from where we had turned left instead of right, and followed it to the river, passing close to Itero del Castillo, with its ruined medieval tower. The tower had been built by 934 to guard the frontier between the Moors and the kingdom of León. We crossed over the Río Pisuerga on a stone bridge raised by Alfonso VI. The bridge is the Pons Fitera mentioned in the *Codex*; 800 years later, pilgrims can still walk over its eleven arches to cross from the provinces of Burgos to the provinces of Palencia. In the Middle Ages, there was a hospice and a monastery next to the bridge to shelter pilgrims. Today there was not even a road sign. (126)

Even when Aviva does not see emblematic symbols of the Camino, her narrative is improved when she incorporates texts that describe them. By including the history

of the tower, bridge, hospice and monastery, the embedded text participates in making the walk along a quiet road feel more like a pilgrimage. Without the help of the historians and pilgrims who wrote about these places previously, Aviva would find herself with very little pilgrimage to write about or arguably to experience. In this example, the embedded text infuses a sense of pilgrimage where otherwise none exists. Without intertextual help, her journey would feel more like two Americans lost on a Spanish back road than the pilgrimage it is meant to be.

Throughout Aviva's pilgrimage, she finds many of the small towns along the trail in a state of decay due to the many waves of emigrants who abandoned the Spanish countryside, headed to major cities such as Madrid and Barcelona in search of better opportunities. By the time Aviva passes through in 1982, she witnesses the destructive effects the mass migration has had on these towns: slow economic growth causing social and infrastructure erosion. Rather than portraying such dismal and depressing places, Aviva uses embedded texts to liven them up. She describes her arrival in Villalcázar de Sirga in the following manner:

Although the town was now poor and faded, at one time it had been rich and famous. It had been under the control of the Order of the Templars, and there had been a pilgrimage hospital here, as well, run by the Order of the Knights of Santiago. Most famous of all was the church of Santa María la Blanca, a Virgin whose fame was widespread in the thirteenth century and who was commemorated in the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X, el Sabio. (131)

Without talking about the history of this town, Villalcázar de Sirga appears to offer little for a visitor ("the town was now poor and faded"). In contrast to her regular pattern of first describing the past, then the present, here she reverses the order (but not the effect). First, she talks about the current dilapidated state of the village, and

then, its plentiful past. Aviva follows the same pattern when she describes Cizur Menor, Guendulain, Fromista and other beleaguered and sometimes abandoned villages she traverses. This passage reads much like a travel guide with its straightforward prose and simplified history. Aviva's two sentences conflate interrelated history (the reign of the Templar knights), architecture (the pilgrimage hospital), and literature (the *Cantigas* of la Virgen Blanca), with no explanation of their relationship or importance. It is not really meant to inform; that would require months of research and readers would likely find such a historical detour too tedious anyway. Rather, the embedded fragments describing the local history, architecture and legends give life to these dying towns and return them to their medieval grandeur.

Although the word "tourist" is anathema to pilgrims, an element of tourism exists in any pilgrimage. On a pilgrimage, tourist sites are often shared spaces with sacred sites (Badone and Roseman 2).¹² In 1982, however, many of these sites were little more than ruins. About halfway through the pilgrimage, before arriving in Castrojeriz, Aviva and her companion come upon the place where the convent of San Antón once stood. Of the formerly vibrant convent only a pile of rubble remains:

There was a cluster of ruins in front of us, and the road passed through the middle of a beige stone Gothic arch. Jorge stopped the truck so that we could see the ruins of the once-great Convent of San Antón. Most of the buildings were from the fourteenth century, but it was founded by Alfonso VII in 1146 under the rule of the Order of the Antonians, an order which was suppressed in 1791. The priests of San Antón were supposed to have the power to cure

¹² cf. Timothy J. Dallen and Daniel H. Olsen. *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

the ‘sacred fire’ or ‘San Antón’s fire’, an illness that appeared in the tenth century in Europe. Now all that remained were scattered stones, pieces of walls, walls without ceilings, doorways without doors, and an archway through which a highway passed. (121)

Much like the earlier episode at the Río Pisuerga, the embedded texts provide historical information that helps to make these remains meaningful. Here, history replaces and reclaims the legacy of the vacant building. In effect, the convent’s past stands in for the destroyed building. Its history of knights and priests fills in for the missing walls, ceilings and doors, with the finer points providing detail for the nonexistent building. Connecting the convent to Alfonso VII evokes images of glory and power, and references to the priests’ curative powers provide the reader with a depiction of the convent as a hub of piousness and activity healing the sick. In short, the embedded text allows Aviva to make her visit more substantive: she is able to experience what was once a grandiose, vigorous monastery, even though all that remains is rubble and ruins.

Moreover, the post-1980 Camino narratives function like a guidebook by providing interpretations of these abandoned places for future pilgrims. Eric J. Leed, a prominent travel historian, notes:

The site continues, so long as it is sacred, to generate a literature, texts, guidebooks, testimonies, miracles, and travel accounts that perpetuate its now famed and contained power. This literature generates an audience to consume the site in and through travel to encounter the actuality implicit in its reproductions and representations. (143-44)

The history of sites along the trail, like San Antón’s, have been perpetuated in part by the many Camino narratives that include their past. When they write about the historic places and events, Aviva and other Camino authors collectively create a

sacred Camino topography by embedding these places and the events that took place therein throughout their narratives. A certain reflexivity exists here: the past is reiterated, remembered and potentially altered by new Camino narratives. Because the history of the trail has not been as well controlled by the Catholic church, as, for example, the Mormons' highly centralized writing of history (Mitchell 135), the authors of these Camino narratives have considerable influence when deciding what Camino history will be remembered, forgotten or changed through their words and choices of embedded texts.¹³

After forty-four days of walking, Aviva and Bill arrive in Santiago. As they make their way through the streets toward the cathedral, she recalls the Flemish song that medieval pilgrims sang when they arrived:

Herru Sanctiagu
Grot Sanctiagu,
E ultreja e sus eja!
Desu adjuva nos

(Lord Santiago
Great Santiago,
Onwards and upwards,
God help us!)

We arrived silently. (257)

Again, the embedded text, in this case a song that Starkie also mentions much earlier on in his pilgrimage (75)¹⁴ and that King uses to begin her narrative (2), contrasts Aviva's own experience, which is relayed in a short, staccato sentence at the end:

¹³ This becomes particularly noticeable in the Camino electronic listservs, when people ask about avoiding problems they have read about in Camino narratives.

¹⁴ In Starkie's narrative, he notes that this was typically sung at the gates of the Cathedral in Santiago. However, "by 1897, the tradition had disappeared and only one old lady could be found who remembered any of the old songs" (76).

“We arrived silently.” Ethnomusicologist Philip V. Bohlman writes, “Song has historically provided one of the most powerful ways of inscribing pilgrimage” (376). Singing together marks a communal boundary delineated by those who sing and those who do not, yet Aviva and Bill are not singing together and there are no other pilgrims with whom to sing. The arrival disappoints Aviva, much as it does for many other contemporary pilgrims (Frey 154). Instead of celebrating, her silence foreshadows her overall disappointment of the end of the pilgrimage, when she arrives at the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. At the same time, by recycling the song that William Starkie and Georgiana Goddard King include, she situates herself among them: she becomes part of the community of acclaimed Camino authors.

Over the course of her journey, Aviva encounters an incomplete trail in that few pilgrims walked and much of the pilgrimage infrastructure was in disrepair or had disappeared altogether. New *albergues*, trails, and buildings had not yet been repaired or rebuilt. Nonetheless, the embedded texts render her pilgrimage fuller and more complete. In doing so, however, her trip is repeatedly mediated through other texts, especially intertextually, using the *Codex Calixtinus* as the embedded text, and hypertextually, following William Starkie’s form, that is to say, the use of embedded texts. The payoff for the reader is that our protagonist is able to have a pilgrimage filled with places to visit and people with whom to share the adventure. With all the pageantry and excitement created by the embedded texts, we barely notice the emptiness of it all.

Lee Hoinacki's story takes place in 1994, twelve years after Aviva's (1982). In his narrative we see that drastic changes have taken place along the Camino since Aviva's pilgrimage: regular *albergues* now exist, volunteers have marked the trail, and pilgrims abound. Nonetheless, many of the improvements are of little use to Hoinacki since the pilgrimage he is looking for has little to do with the state of the Camino he encounters. As an individual with a deep sense of religion and a desire to return to an earlier time, he feels that the trail should be walked solo. At the same time, though, he does not consider himself entirely alone. Reflecting on his recently completed pilgrimage at the end of his trip, he writes:

Just beyond the Obradoiro, I find a small, charming plaza with 'dwarf' trees to match it, and sit on a park bench to rest. It's true that I'm here, in Compostela, after thirty-one days of tough, painful hiking across all kinds of terrain, through sharp, biting variations in weather. In some sense, I've joined those who came here before me. And I have a clear, undeniable feeling that they brought me here. If they had not come, there would be no *camino*. If they had not sanctified the path with their faith, their courage, and their very lives—the records show that many died and were buried along the way—I would never have heard of this fantastic journey in a sacred space. If they had not accompanied me, I would never have been able to endure the pain and exhaustion, as I learned on the very first day. (272)

Note that Hoinacki does not acknowledge his fellow pilgrims for helping him as most pilgrims do; rather, he thanks past pilgrims. Nancy Frey offers an explanation:

Pilgrims commonly experience themselves with pilgrims of the past as they walk, rest, take shelter, drink at a fountain, cross a bridge, pray in church. Many pilgrims in previous centuries died on the way to Santiago, and some modern pilgrims feel their presence strongly. (82)

Frey's language sounds like an academic version of this very quote from Hoinacki, whose narrative she includes as part of her material. Perhaps no other pilgrim has felt this historical presence as much as Hoinacki, who makes no secret of his interest

to walk only with these ancient pilgrims: “What must one do to walk with the dead?” he asks early on in his narrative (4). Hoinacki’s sustained search for an answer to this question makes his narrative unique. Hoinacki’s goal, membership in a community of past pilgrims, is achieved through the help of embedded texts. Rather than creating a sense of community with the fellow pilgrims who walk at the same time as he (a sense of community most pilgrims seek to create), Hoinacki repeatedly searches for and finds his community in a series of texts (narratives, brochures, plaques). Although the pilgrims he feels most connected to are dead, perhaps it is their longevity through the surviving texts that appeals to Hoinacki over the ephemeral friendships that quickly develop, but also rapidly disappear among contemporary pilgrims on the Camino. The written word allows him to return to past pilgrims for camaraderie, which, as we will see, he often does. However, his choice of community sometimes comes at the cost of excluding the actual pilgrims who walk the contemporary trail with him.

To understand Hoinacki’s story better, it would help to know more about him. Hoinacki’s narrative encompasses primarily the time he spends on the Camino, so we are left largely ignorant of his life before the Camino – but what little he does tell us about his previous professions is compelling. Raised Catholic, Hoinacki became a priest sometime after college (63). Following the frustration of a social experiment gone awry in South America and a desire to get married, he gave up the collar and took up academia (114). Sometime afterward, he renounced his tenure-track position after he deemed it to be an “impoverishing imprisonment” and became a subsistence farmer (198, 147). As we can see, a certain amount of

continuity between his professions exists: an overarching interest in the way life was in the past (or was perceived to be) and a desire to attempt to recover it. His multiple professions do not offer explanations for his Camino experience, yet they do offer a context for understanding it.

Hoinacki's desire to connect with the past, however, presents a problem. It would seem he is caught in a temporal paradox: how does a living person make a pilgrimage with dead pilgrims? He works his way around this problem on a rhetorical level through the use of embedded texts, creating an interplay between him and a pre-existing community of pilgrims. Embedded texts are instrumental for Hoinacki because he needs them to complete the type of pilgrimage he desires. Even though the pilgrims with whom he longs to connect are no longer alive, he is able to get to know them by reading and, ultimately, writing about them.

In an episode early on in his pilgrimage when Hoinacki is still getting his pilgrim bearings, he meets an unnamed pilgrim who shows him his medical kit full of homeopathic remedies in the *albergue* (16). The pilgrim seems to be attempting to engage Hoinacki in conversation using home remedies as a conversational gambit – aches, pains and their treatment being a common topic among pilgrims. Instead of talking to the fellow pilgrim, as we might expect, however, Hoinacki introduces us to Nicola Albani, one of his favorite older pilgrim-authors, who will accompany him on and off throughout his journey. Hoinacki lists six pieces of advice he learns from Albani's 1743 text, which are prudent but somewhat unrelated to the twentieth century trail:

First, no one should undertake such a long journey without *un buen compañero*, one who is true in heart and soul, who shares your outlook. Second, never set out in time of plague or war. . . . Third, no one should go who does not enjoy good health and a strong constitution. . . . Fourth, you need strong legs, and you had better not be overly meticulous about what you eat. . . . Fifth, never walk at night, nor with someone of whose character you have any reason to doubt. . . . Sixth, those especially who wear (the distinctive) pilgrim dress, and who hope to receive blessings in the holy shrines, must walk with the fear of God; otherwise, it's all a loss. (17)

None of these warnings are likely to prevent shin splints, blisters or heat stroke, the most serious problems facing contemporary pilgrims. But it seems that Hoinacki includes this embedded text, less for the advice it provides than as a way to allow Albani a means to join him for the rest of the Camino. Furthermore, if Hoinacki is sincere in following Albani's advice, it appears that his decision of walking alone suggests that he could find nobody, in his judgment, who is true in heart and soul or who shared his outlook. By quoting Albani's work, Hoinacki seems to be implying that other contemporary pilgrims do not share his understanding of what it means to be a pilgrim, but Albani does and, thus, Hoinacki chooses to "walk" with him. This modern traveler establishes a pattern that continues throughout his narrative: contemporary pilgrims are regularly rebuffed in favor of seizing the opportunity to "socialize" with his preferred group, past pilgrims.

Hoinacki recognizes the complicated proposition of walking with a group of dead pilgrims with whom he can connect only through their texts. His solution is not what one might expect: he does not try to spend more time with contemporary pilgrims, instead he ponders how to get closer to past pilgrims, given the separation of time and text:

My world seems totally other. In a few moments, I shall walk a couple of meters to take a hot shower. Is the time distance from Picaud and Albani an indication of my spiritual distance from them? Can I ever hope to step into their world? But what is their world? . . . Almost every document, when examined closely, seems to raise questions rather than provide answers. The precise point of my interest must be, I think, these people. I must get beyond the written evidence to their hearts, to *them*. (author's emphasis 18)

Hoinacki's way of getting "beyond the written evidence," of suppressing the separation of time and text, is to embed past pilgrims' writing so exhaustively that they begin to feel like real, living people.

Almost ten days after his encounter with the homeopathic pilgrim, Hoinacki, finds himself in light conversation with other pilgrims sitting around the dining table at an *albergue* in Santo Domingo de la Calzada. An American from Monterey, who speaks no Spanish, attempts to engage him by asking, "Are people of Spain offended to see this American walking through their country?" (80). Without answering her question, he responds that he had never thought about that. His response seems directed more toward the reader or himself than toward the woman (much like the way he dealt with the homeopathic pilgrim). This type of open question might, normally, begin a long conversation leading to a friendship between the two pilgrims; however, the fact that the American is never even given a name reaffirms what little interest Hoinacki has in knowing her, or any other pilgrims present, for that matter. Using a rhetorical sleight of hand, Hoinacki uses the opportunity to situate himself closer to the pilgrims of the past once again. Instead of continuing the conversation with the woman, he leaves the *albergue* to "try to bring some coherence out of these confused thoughts . . ." (81). In this instance, these thoughts send Hoinacki figuratively into the past, forgetting the present. The

American is not mentioned again until the end of his trip in only the vaguest sort of way.¹⁵ Perhaps more surprising, though, is that he never returns to the question that he seemed so intent on exploring once on the street.

This might be because he is diverted by the “old friends” he comes across while walking. The different sites he visits in the town call up a panoply of past pilgrims and their associated history. In a *Parador Nacional*,¹⁶ he “meets up” with Santo Domingo, a Spanish saint from the tenth century. He asks a woman tending the front desk about brochures covering the history of the hotel and he is directed towards a table. Importantly, he does not ask for information from the clerk directly, but seeks a brochure, a text. After reading it, he notes:

I learn that this magnificent palace-like building is presented as the historical continuation of the work begun by Santo Domingo, who established a shelter for pilgrims here. If this is the site of his *hospital*, then it is also the site of his hermitage in the forest. The soil of this place has certainly been transformed over the centuries! (81)

Just as the American woman cannot provide the kind of communal experience he seeks, neither can the receptionist: Hoinacki’s community is imagined through the written word.

Of course, Hoinacki does not literally talk with these dead people. But the manner in which he includes them in his narrative puts him in dialogue with these ancient pilgrims, just as pilgrims might talk to one another sitting around the *albergue* dining table (as the modern-day pilgrims were doing earlier before he left).

¹⁵ Outside the Oficina de Peregrinos, after receiving his Compostela, he runs into a fellow pilgrim who reminds him of the American: “It’s the French physician I met on the first day, just before reaching Valcarlos on the road to Roncesvalles! . . . I’m as surprised as I would be if I met the young American woman, another person who walks alone” (274).

¹⁶ A chain of luxury hotels run by the Spanish government that are usually converted medieval buildings.

At the church next door to the Parador, he finds two live chickens in a cage. They serve as living reminders for visitors of a Camino legend. Hoinacki tells us that there is “a huge literature on the subject” of these chickens (82). He chooses the version by Domenico Laffi, another “old friend” who has appeared many times already in Hoinacki’s narrative. Using indirect speech, Hoinacki draws from Laffi’s 1670 *Viaggio in Ponente à S. Giacomo di Galitia e Finisterrae* to explain the history of chickens in the church:

Laffi says that when he entered the church, dressed in his pilgrim gown, the chickens, noting his clothing, began to “sing with joy”—which they did whenever they saw a pilgrim enter. He asked the sacristan for a couple of their feathers, which he planned to take home out of devotion (*por devoción*). It is recorded by others that these feathers have miraculous powers. Laffi says that the chickens only eat what the pilgrims throw into their cage. This must be the bread that was obtained through someone’s charity (toward the pilgrims), *not* purchased, for the chickens will not eat bought bread—and they can tell the difference. (author’s emphasis 82)

This embedded text serves two purposes. In addition to informing the reader that these chickens are not new to the church and that they have had a long relationship with the Camino, it also allows Hoinacki to reunite with Laffi. Hoinacki’s way of talking *with* the dead is to talk *about* them, by re-telling their stories.

As readers, we now know that chickens have resided in the church since the Middle Ages. But we still don’t know why the chickens are in the church in the first place. This gives Hoinacki another opportunity to introduce more friends. Just as the crossing of the Río Salado prompts authors to retell the story of bad water from the *Codex Calixtinus*, this church in Santo Domingo often elicits the telling of the legend of the chickens. However, unlike the episode at Río Salado, where all

authors draw from the same intertext (the *Codex*), there are many different intertexts or variations of this chicken story. For example, in Alfonso X's "Cantiga 175," the event takes place in Toulouse, not Santo Domingo, the family is German and it is the Virgin who saves the Pilgrim. In Book II of the *Codex Calixtinus*, the miracle is also situated in Toulouse with a German family, but it is Santiago who saves the pilgrim. Following Starkie's hypertext (embedding a story about the chickens) but not his intertext (Hoinacki embeds a different version than Starkie, who uses the *Codex Calixtinus* version), Hoinacki includes a variation of a popular medieval story about chickens that come to life as proof of a young pilgrim's innocence.¹⁷ Hoinacki himself does not tell the story in his own words; instead, he paraphrases Laffi's version:

As Laffi and his companion leave the town, they pass a small chapel that has a plaque on the inside, on which is inscribed a story of the chickens. In 1099, Greeks from Thessalonica, a man and his wife with their son were on their way to Compostela. (82)

In these two sentences an important shift occurs. Hoinacki stops telling Laffi's experience and now continues paraphrasing the chicken story supposedly written on the plaque in Laffi's story.¹⁸ When we examine this passage closely, we see an example of a story within a story within a story (*una caja china*). Something akin to

¹⁷ Although locations and nationalities vary in the different versions, the basic story remains the same: A lusty waitress falsely accuses a young pilgrim of stealing after he refuses her sexual advances. As punishment, the mayor declares that the pilgrim should be hung for his deeds. After returning from Santiago, the saddened parents return to the town. Much to their surprise, they see their son still alive in the noose. Seeking out the town mayor (judge), who was getting ready to eat two freshly roasted chickens, they explain what they just witnessed, that their son was still alive. Upon hearing the parents' story, the mayor declares that the young pilgrim is as alive as the two chickens on his plate, when suddenly the two chickens hop up and begin flapping around, a sign, understood by all, of the boy's innocence.

¹⁸ A bit of embellishment likely takes place here either on the part of Laffi or Hoinacki since the story written on the plaque covers an entire page in Hoinacki's narrative. I don't think medieval chiselers had that much energy.

social networking is taking place: this episode reconnects Hoinacki with Laffi by means of a shared story. In the next diegetic level, the story written on the plaque, with Laffi functioning as a facilitator, introduces Hoinacki to the Greek pilgrim family mentioned in the story.

After the story of Laffi and the medieval pilgrims, Hoinacki goes on to quote a stanza of Robert Southey's poem about the chickens (1829) and then briefly mentions that Henri Ghéon (1920) also has a variation of the story.¹⁹ These multiple references within Hoinacki's narrative create something akin to a dialogue between the four authors – or rather, a dialogue primarily between the narrator and Laffi, with Southey and Ghéon occasionally chiming in. As Hoinacki walks through the streets literally alone, he is figuratively carrying on a conversation with fellow pilgrims. His inclusion of the past is more than a pastiche of Camino folklore, it is a constitutive part of his lived experience.

At the end of his walk in the town of Santo Domingo, Hoinacki returns to the *albergue*: “Returning to the *refugio*, I find the streets filling up with joyful people. But I have no idea how to participate in their celebration. . . .” (85). The American mentioned earlier does not reappear; instead, he encounters a couple of Spanish pilgrims who convince him to go downstairs and celebrate a street party taking place. But rather than enjoying the pilgrims' company, the local festival and some free food and wine, he feels cheated: “I would not have gone out if I had known they would cost an hour's standing in line” (85). The author never claims that the

¹⁹ Hoinacki likely found this in the book *Las Peregrinaciones a Santiago de Compostela* (1949) that includes Southey's poem, “El Peregrino de Compostela” translated into Spanish. The translation comes from Southey's book, *Poetical Works* (Paris, 1829), pp. 752-56.

celebration is for the town's patron saint, Santo Domingo de la Calzada. The Saint's day, however, falls on the 12th of May and Hoinacki dates this entry on the 13th of May, 1993. This seems somewhat ironic: what could be seen as an ideal opportunity to connect with the same saint he "visited" with in the *Parador* earlier is not recognized as such by Hoinacki. The earlier examples of Hoinacki and his interaction with past pilgrims suggest that two important elements are missing in this party: it is set squarely in the present and there is no text (no brochure, no plaque) from which he can draw. His lack of interest in the street party and the other contemporary pilgrims reiterates his desire to interact only with the dead through texts, not by talking with other pilgrims or clerks, nor even by participating in parties held in their honor. His closing sentences at the end of the day, which also end the chapter, reaffirm this desire for the past: "Returning back upstairs, I get into the sleeping bag, hearing music and singing in the distance. But it is too far away to disturb my sleep" (85). The literal party does not interest him, and what the figurative party represents (the present) seem so far away from him that it does not contribute to his desired pilgrimage.

In the final words of his book, after arriving in Santiago de Compostela, Hoinacki summarizes his time on the trail and explains the important role previous Camino authors have had on him and his pilgrimage.

I have learned something in these thirty-one days of solitude and silence: that I'm not alone, that I don't even exist as some kind of self-conscious individual, that I am not an autonomous self with some potential to realize. Rather, I exist only to the extent that I participate in the innumerable practices that collectively establish the living tradition that is my heritage, which my parents and the pilgrims have given me. All the 'inner'

experiences of these four weeks only occurred insofar as they had real links with the experiences of the dead who accompanied me. (278)

Hoinacki, himself, appears aware of the mediated nature of his experience on the trail through others' writings and how they make his experience more meaningful to him. He also highlights well a main point that I am trying to get at between these contemporary first-person narratives of the Camino and the foundation laid by the previous Camino authors: it is the recursive words and work of others which make these present-day first-person narratives meaningful.

Individually and collectively, embedded texts in these contemporary first-person Camino narratives repeatedly create a trans-temporal sense of community that pays little attention to the boundary between the lived and written experience. In these narratives, intertextuality provides vectors for community. Examples such as Aviva's and Hoinacki's narratives make clear that their unique stories are rendered more complete through the use of previously written Camino texts, and that their use of embedded medieval texts is not merely illustrative or supplementary, but, indeed, constitutive of their pilgrimage.

CHAPTER III
DEAR DIARY: LOCATING COMMUNITY IN DIARIES IN POST-1980 CAMINO
NARRATIVES

Diaries are typically considered highly personal; however, in this chapter I will show how Camino diaries can be understood as a part of larger communal acts by studying three first-person Camino narratives and different social aspects of diary writing which emerge through them. The first section explores Kevin A. Codd's *To the Field of Stars: A Pilgrim's Journey to Santiago de Compostela* (2008).¹ In Codd's narratives, diary writing serves as a shared activity that contributes to the friendships he develops with other pilgrims as he journals with them. In the second section, I examine Hape Kerkeling's *I'm Off Then: Losing and Finding Myself on the Camino de Santiago* (2009). In this narrative, Kereking repeatedly reads out loud from his diary in both private and public moments that solidify his friendship with other pilgrims who, in turn, also legitimize his intentions of publishing a book. The last narrative I examine is *Walking the Camino in an Age of Anxiety* (2007) by John H. Pratt. Citing his wife's diary, Pratt reinforces the shared pilgrimage he experiences with his wife. At the same time, the embedded diary entries participate in a subtext of Pratt's story of his and his wife's life together as a couple. Within all three of these

¹ In the Camino context, the word *journal* is used interchangeably with the word *diary*. For example, Camino author Elyn Aviva uses the word "diary," while Kevin A. Codd uses "journal." Yet, they are all referring to the same item, a physical book that describes authors' notable experiences, observations and feelings and which is written as the authors completed their pilgrimage. For the sake of clarity in this chapter, I use the word diary while understanding that these words to refer to the same physical object or kind of writing.

narratives, I argue that diaries, normally considered a private kind of writing, serve as an important vector of communion, and they provide yet another example of the complex relationship between the singular and the collective which emerges on the Camino.

As shown in the previous chapter, many authors also include what appear to be diaries from the Middle Ages. At first glance, it might appear that the practice of diary writing on the Camino has a long history. However, it is only during the post-1980 revival that diary writing has shifted from an activity reserved only for the privileged, to one practiced regularly by most pilgrims. Although evidence exists of pilgrims maintaining diaries dating back to the Middle Ages, these were limited to only a small number of privileged people. It is important to remember that the majority of the pilgrims during those times could neither read nor write, and writing instruments and materials were expensive and bulky. Many pilgrims (and readers) likely assume this practice was just as prevalent during the Middle Ages as it is now, due to a small number of highly celebrated medieval texts, such as the fifth book of the *Codex Calixtinus* (ca. 1140) or Hermann König's *The Pilgrimage and Path to Santiago* (1495), which are repeatedly treated as if they were diaries. Yet, these surviving medieval texts are exceptional rather than representative. The idea that *all* pilgrims should maintain a diary on the Camino is quite modern and has developed along with the Camino's revival.

Of course, while keeping a diary is an important aspect of the contemporary pilgrimage, it is not unique to the Camino. Diary writing has become a constitutive part of certain kinds of travel—long-distance and/or long-duration travel, in

particular. As travel anthropologist Chaim Noy suggests, these contexts set individuals up to participate in (and predispose them to have) transformative experiences (94). Two such kinds of travel are backpacking through Europe and walking the Appalachian Trail – both of which are considered once-in-a-lifetime adventures. Walking or biking the Camino de Santiago also certainly qualifies as this kind of travel. At the end of a long day walking, pilgrims pull out their moleskin books and jot down their day’s adventures.

Diaries contribute extensively to first-person Camino narratives. First and foremost, they serve as a guiding principle for the corpus of literature: most Camino literature emulates a diary in form and tone. Even though no author suggests that his or her narrative is a copy of his or her entire diary, the books read and sound like well-polished diaries. The language is descriptive and quotidian, evoking a sense of intimacy and familiarity with the authors and their journey. Chapters tend to be divided into days, starting with the moment the pilgrim wakes up and ending with the moment they go to sleep.

Besides influencing the form of these first-person narratives, representations of diary-writing itself feature within post-1980’s narratives as an important part of the Camino pilgrim practice. Although a few Camino authors make no mention of this practice at all within their narratives,² many do include scenes of diary writing.³

Within these narratives, descriptions of these events appear in two noteworthy ways: 1) protagonists describe themselves or other people sitting down to write, or 2)

² Cf. Jack Hitt, Tim Moore, Edward Stanton and Wayne Chimenti.

³ Cf. Arthur Boers, Lee Hoinacki, Hape Kerkeling and Kevin Codd.

excerpts from diaries – the authors’ own or those of others – are embedded in the narrative (similar to the medieval texts discussed in Chapter Two). In other words, examples of diary writing appear in Camino narratives either through description or literal inclusion.

Before I move on to the analysis of my three selected texts, I want to unpack more what I mean by “scenes of diary writing.” Modern Camino narratives often include scenes of diary writing appearing in these narratives through descriptive language that includes other people writing in the background. For instance, as she arrives in Santo Domingo de la Calzada, Mary Wallis (*Among the Pilgrims* (2003)) notes that a “few pilgrims were reading guidebooks or writing in their diaries in the meagre shade of a couple of bushes” (174). As Arthur Paul Boers notes in *The Way is Made by Walking* (2007), diary writing as a lived experience is inescapable on the Camino: “Never before have I run into such an abundance of journalers!” (124). Other Camino narratives include scenes of the protagonists writing in their own diaries. In Bob Tuggle’s Camino narrative, for example, he describes writing in his diary at the end of the day: “There was only a Spanish couple, probably in their thirties, staying in the refuge with Hugo, George and me. . . . They were sitting at the kitchen table along with me as I updated my journal” (125). By offering descriptions of their own or others’ journaling, they contribute to the authors/protagonists’ authenticity by means of “objective” observation.

In the examples I look at in this chapter, the authors cite themselves or their companions. For example, Elyn Aviva sits down in Pamplona and shares with the readers what she writes in her diary:

While Bill slept, . . . I caught up with my journal.

‘Deciding to walk this 500-mile pilgrimage road wasn’t brave—it was naïve! I didn’t realize there was anything to be afraid of. And now I’m finding out just how much I am afraid of—of getting lost, of sleeping in an empty building, of hitchhiking in Spain’ (41)

By citing from one’s own diary, another contemporary pilgrim or a medieval text (as I argued in Chapter Two), authors are trying to get at a kernel of authenticity. In the cases of the use of embedded medieval text, authenticity comes through historical mastery. Using embedded diaries, by quoting themselves or others, authors project themselves as "objective" by becoming (supposedly) detached recorders of their or other contemporary pilgrims’ thoughts and actions. They create an informal anthropological effect that projects themselves as an object of study and analysis.

In this chapter, I will show how these different manifestations of diaries participate in *communitas* and contribute to the imagined community of pilgrims within these narratives. Nancy Frey notes that one way in which *communitas* is formed along the Camino is through the practice of reading and writing in testimonial books (98).⁴ I want to argue that in these Camino narratives, diaries similarly contribute to *communitas* as well as participate in the imagined community of pilgrims, despite their seemingly solitary character. I will now turn to some specific ways they do so.

In the Introduction of *To the Field of Stars* (2008), Kevin Codd writes, “Santiago, I’ve got this seminary here that needs more than I can give it” (xvi).

⁴ Each albergue has its own book of blank pages where visitors are free to write or draw whatever they want. The entries range from banal rants to poetic thought, from doodling to intricate artwork.

Everyone has his or her own reasons for walking the Camino and these are usually laid out in the introduction or beginning of the authors' narratives. Among other reasons, Codd cites his age (he recently turned 50), his desire to get closer to Jesus, and, perhaps most important, the completion of his tenure at an American seminary in Leuven, Belgium – a tenure that had been more arduous than he had anticipated (xv-xvi). Exhausted by work, Codd finds in the Camino and its bucolic landscapes the mental and physical escape he needs to recover. In Codd's narrative, I argue that diary writing functions as a social activity that helps him cultivate friendships with other pilgrims, more specifically, it contributes to the sense of *communitas* Codd experiences as a pilgrim on the trail.

From the very first time Codd writes in his diary, a pattern emerges: when the protagonist sits down to write, he is situated in evocative settings that include other people. The first instance of him writing in his diary takes place at an important transitional moment for pilgrims. As Codd sits on the train heading for St. Jean Pied de Port, France, a common starting point for many foreign pilgrims, he describes pulling out his diary and not only writing about his trip up to that point, but also anticipating the journey to come. The train, an emblematic symbol of modernism (Schivelbusch xiii) and a frequent setting in travel narratives,⁵ represents a certain kind of life and travel that Codd will be leaving behind:

At about seven in the morning we rolled into Bordeaux where my three couchette mates disembarked, leaving me happily alone in the cabin for the final hour or two for the ride to Bayonne. I took time to write in my new journal about the previous day. . . . It occurred to me that this manner of

⁵ Cf. Theroux, Paul. *The Great Railway Bazaar*. New York: Penguin books, 1975.

transportation would soon be something very foreign to me. (8)

This moment is pivotal: Codd is about to leave the motorized world of modernity and enter into the unknown world of his own physical limits. This decision to leave the train and other effortless forms of transportation, to rely instead solely on one's legs for thirty days is, for most people, unimaginable. The setting of the train itself is also highly symbolic of this moment of transition. Bound up in this setting is a double meaning, it represents a shift from everyday space into the tourist space and as Codd is left alone in the cabin, it can also be read as a transition from the tourist space into the pilgrim space. Set outside of the imaginary Camino boundaries, Codd leaves everyday and tourist space, in preparation to enter the pilgrimage space (*albergues* and the trail). Emotionally, Codd is ready to begin his pilgrimage, even if he is not yet there literally. Scenes of diary writing taking place at this first transformative moment are not uncommon in first-person Camino narratives. Similar scenes appear in Bob Tuggle's and Hape Kerkeling's narratives, as we will see later, and in all these cases, the act of writing serves to mark the authors' point of entry into the community of pilgrims.

The departure of the other passengers – and Codd's reaction – is notable because later in his journey, Codd makes writing a highly social activity that he eagerly shares with others. In this moment, however, Codd is happy to see the other train passengers leave because they mark the separation from “normal” society that a pilgrimage both enables and requires. What makes this early scene different from Codd's later occasions of journaling is that the people with whom he shares the

compartment do not understand or share the pilgrimage he is about to embark on, and thus his interaction with them is limited.

Early in the trip, Codd decides that while he can socialize in the evenings in the *albergues*, he must walk alone during the days (202) – that is, until he meets Toni, a fellow pilgrim from Galicia, and he changes his mind. In the town of Camponaraya, Codd reminds readers about his four steps of meeting other pilgrims: First, you notice others, then meet them, you get to know them, then become friends for life (201). With that foreshadowing, Codd introduces the readers to Toni whom he sees at a fountain and recognizes from earlier. From that point on, he walks with Toni for much of the pilgrimage. Previously, Codd had resisted walking with other pilgrims, but Toni's willingness to slow down to Codd's pace and their shared religious beliefs changes Codd's mind and, indeed, makes Toni an ideal partner for him. The two walk from Villafranca to Ruitlán together. Once they arrive and get cleaned up they go out to relax and write in their diaries. Codd describes the scene:

Ruitlán is surrounded by green fields of hay alternating with stands of oak and chestnut. Best of all, there is a cool creek running through the town. After cleaning up, Toni and I walk down to a grassy clearing along the far bank of the creek with our journals in hand and with the intention of doing our day's writing. We find a shady spot where we can easily drop our feet into the rushing water. (209)

Codd's description of this bucolic site includes all of the prime ingredients of *locus amoenus*. In 1953, E. R. Curtius, first defined this literary trope as

a beautiful shaded natural site. Its minimum ingredients comprise a tree (or several trees), a meadow, and a spring or brook. Birdsong and flowers may be added. The most elaborate examples also add a breeze. (195)

Codd's description creates a sensation of beauty based on a familiar yet distant image.

His use of *locus amoenus* is interesting because, traditionally, these sites serve as a

location for forbidden love, and have been described by some as “morally ambiguous” spaces (Evetts 507). Similarly, Elias Rivers notes how Greek and Latin poets used this trope as a site for pastoral love with nymphs and shepherds; in Renaissance poetry, it served as the setting for “plaintive lovers” (134). For Codd, a devout Roman Catholic priest, the setting provides a less salacious and more communal site encouraging repose, writing, and social interaction. What makes these sites so agreeable, in part, is the feeling of camaraderie they engender in Codd towards his fellow travelers and diary-writers. When Codd walks down to the creek, the voice shifts from first-person singular to third-person plural – “with our journals in hand and with the intention of doing our day’s writing” – thereby accentuating the social nature of diary writing on the Camino with actual scenes of nature. By describing the two of them writing together, Codd’s narrative reinforces the image of diary writing as a personal endeavor made more meaningful through its collective practice.

The image of the two relative strangers writing together brings to mind a very intimate relationship quickly developed on trust. As Codd and Toni spend time together writing in their respective diaries, their friendship deepens. Although they are not likely sharing the contents of their writing, this image of pilgrims sharing what is typically an intimate and individual affair serves as a metaphor for the Camino pilgrimage itself: a very personal experience nested in a highly collective one. As noted above, within literature, these kinds of settings have traditionally served to free people from social mores. For Codd, instead of providing opportunity for illicit promiscuity, these peaceful settings serve rather as intense social sites that allow him

to deepen friendships quicker than one might outside of the Camino. Shortly thereafter, he writes “I am no longer alone on this strange road across Iberia; we are in this together, to the end” (209). One senses that Codd’s “we” encompasses him and Toni and, to a lesser degree, the other pilgrims who join Codd at various points as he walks and writes.

On the next occasion when Codd sits down to write, he notes a parallel between the setting of his diary writing and biblical imagery. It is quite unsurprising that Codd observes the similarities, given his profession:

There is a particular moment described in the Christian Gospels when the crowds who have been listening to the teaching of Jesus grow hungry. The disciples are asked to seat them, and with that a few small loaves and fish are multiplied many times over to feed the thousands of men, women, and children. These people are described as sitting in the grass in small groups as the miracle takes place. Such is exactly my impression of this oak grove now as I watch it slowly fill up with pilgrims. These folks are settling in under tress or on soft spots of grass. Some are alone, stretched out, napping. Others are writing in their journals. Still others sit in small circles talking quietly among themselves, sharing a bottle of wine, breaking bread, nibbling on olives or almonds. For quite a while, I am myself in the middle of this Gospel scene, under a tree, writing in my own journal. (230-231)

The passage reconnects the Camino, which has become highly secularized in modern times, with its religious roots by recalling the trail’s sacred nature (a pilgrimage to see/touch the bones/coffin of St. James, a disciple of Jesus). Again, this description shares the same characteristics of the literary trope of *locus amoenus*, a pleasant place, but also ties in biblical connotations not unlike that of Eden.

But Codd’s description of the setting captures something that Eden (and typically *locus amoenus*) does not: the commotion and activity going on around him. Besides describing his own and Toni’s scenes of writing in these natural sites, Codd

also notes that diary writing is a collective practice shared even with other pilgrims who aren't part of his immediate circle. In other words, the practice of diary writing is not just limited to Codd and his friends, but is something shared across the greater community of pilgrims – a horizontal imagined community. This image of many pilgrims sitting down in the evening at the same *albergue*, to write about their individual experiences, connects the pilgrims to one another by the shared practice. The shared activity also connects those who are writing at the same time at different geographical points along the Camino, much like people sitting down at the same time to read a newspaper, so famously discussed by Benedict Anderson (33). As Anderson saw it, it was individuals reading the same newspaper written in a shared language that helped to form the nation-state by means of an “extraordinary mass ceremony” (35). In this case, however, instead of many people reading the same set of stories, pilgrims are writing multiple stories about the same event, his or her pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago: communal cohesion takes place precisely because each individual's story is honored and folded into the greater Camino tradition.

In the next example, Codd situates diary writing alongside other activities that are generally understood to be highly social. This time other friends he has met on the Camino, Marisa and José, join Codd and Toni: “We nap, write in our journals, go to the bar for another round of beer, play a little foosball, talk, have another beer, sing another round of *ai-la-le-lo's*” (218). Their friendship feels like it has developed to the level of old friends, which is striking considering he has met these people only a

few days earlier. Situating diary writing among activities such as drinking and playing foosball heightens its collective dimensions and portrays it as a deeply social activity.

On the trail, Codd is able to engage in activities for which he does not usually have time: rest, personal writing, friendship, all of which ultimately make it to the pages of his book, a kind of writing that is personal and enjoyable to him. In short, Codd finds his trip in Spain meeting all his needs wrapped in the pleasantness of these spaces that are firmly rooted in literary tropes and biblical history and filled with people from different parts of the world who come together to share the same journey. This return to a simple, unburdened life constitutes an authentic experience for Codd. The contrast between Codd's writing on the train and his writing on the trail neatly symbolizes his changed state of being. He arrives at the Camino in a frazzled state due to the demands of his job – demands which are quickly forgotten as he walks further and further on the trail. Almost half way through his trip, he declares: "The world I left behind in Belgium now pertains so deeply to the past that it is difficult to believe that only twelve days have passed since I left Leuven to take my first steps into this world apart" (91). This idea that the Camino belongs to a different world becomes particularly apparent when he sits down to write with his newfound friends.

Hape Kerkeling's first-person Camino narrative, *I'm Off Then: Losing and Finding Myself on the Camino de Santiago* (2009), tells the story of Kerkeling's pilgrimage in 2001.⁶ Kerkeling, a well-known comedian in Germany, would seem at

⁶ This book was recently translated into English from German *Ich bin dann mal weg: Meine Reise auf dem Jakobsweg* (2006).

first glance to share little in common with Codd, but like him, Kerkeling turns to the Camino as a source of respite and recovery. Kerkeling finds himself in a state of exhaustion after working too hard. Recovering from sudden hearing loss and a gallbladder surgery, Kerkeling is in desperate need of a break from the self-imposed demands of his profession (3). Out of shape, he makes the ambitious decision to walk the Camino. The title of his book, *I'm Off Then*, captures Kerkeling's impetuous decision, much to the surprise of his family and friends.

How readers understand and subsequently enjoy Kerkeling's story has much to do with how they interpret the tone of his narrative. This tone is hard to determine because Kerkeling's profession makes his sincerity difficult to gauge. It is often unclear whether he is being playful, ironic, or sincere, or some combination of the three. One repeatedly wonders: is this a case of false modesty or true sincerity? Unlike *Travels with my Donkey* (2005), the satirical account of a Brit, Tim Moore, who walks the Camino along with a donkey and never attempts to get sentimental or serious, Kerkeling wavers between being intensely serious (addressing his homosexuality and religious beliefs) and comical (making the pilgrimage into a drawn out, comical satire). Adding to the confessional element of his story, Kerkeling assures us that this is the first time he's had these kinds of experiences, and that the reader can trust him as a reliable source because he is writing everything down exhaustively (2). Trust plays an important role in Kerkeling's work, both at the textual level—issues of trust come up regularly around his diary writing—and with his readers. The level of sincerity readers attribute to him is important because without it, he will lose his legitimacy, as I discuss further below.

Kerkeling is one of the few walking Camino authors who makes a point of *not* staying in the *albergues*.⁷ Whereas Codd, and many other pilgrims find the *albergues* an important aspect of the pilgrimage precisely because these sites are where friendships occur, Kerkeling sees these accommodations as disease-infected hovels because of their crowded conditions and dirtiness. When faced with sleeping in the *albergues* in Roncesvalles, one of the most iconic *albergues* of the entire Camino, Kerkeling writes: “I wouldn’t sleep in this monastery if my life depended on it. I am enduring the hike of my life, and I can’t add insult to injury by sleeping in this *refugio*” (19). Instead, he stays at hotels along the way – a choice which he does not view as conflicting with his status as a pilgrim, though it may well have been questioned by others. Nonetheless, Kerkeling, who initially enjoyed his solitude, begins to miss the communal experience at about the halfway mark in León:

On the hotel terrace I indulge in a breakfast fit for a king but long for the simple art of conversation. How do the other pilgrims take this isolation? If I don’t meet a pilgrim soon, I’ll get fed up and call the whole thing off. Never in my life have I been alone for such a long time, and the very things I liked about being alone just a few days ago are starting to get on my nerves. This diary is no longer enough. (192)

Unlike Mary Victoria Wallis, another Camino author who bikes then walks the Camino, recognizes that staying in hotels kept her from the community of pilgrims she sought out (101), Kerkeling doesn’t identify the hotel as the cause for his loneliness. It is curious how he notes that his “diary is no longer enough,” implying that until now his diary *has* been meeting his social needs. At this point, he attempts

⁷ Few other walking Camino authors don’t stay in *albergues*. Others who don’t, for example, are Jim and Eleanor Clem. However, the majority of Camino authors do use the *albergues* and it is seen as an important element of the Camino pilgrimage (Frey 94).

to improve his lonely situation not by staying in *albergues*, as Wallis does in her second pilgrimage, but rather by turning his diary writing into more of a collective experience. Once he declares his intentions to meet other people, his diary takes on an expanded social role. In Kerkeling's narratives, his diary participates in the social interaction that normally set in the *albergues* in other Camino narratives. Both Codd and Kerkeling intentionally set out alone, but inevitably find themselves drawn into groups of pilgrims and their diary serves as a conduit of these connections with other people: Codd writes with his fellow pilgrims, Kerkeling reads to them from his diary.

In the Camino world, a certain unspoken tension exists between keeping a diary and knowingly assembling material for a book. Keeping a good diary is seen as an integral part of the pilgrimage (if Camino authors include a packing list, they inevitably include a diary on the list), but if done with the intention of writing a future book, the task can be perceived as inauthentic and vain. This is best exemplified in a scene in Wallis's narrative, in which a fellow pilgrim approaches the protagonist and declares:

I hear you're writing a book.' . . . 'Tell me,' he said with a cagey wink and a tone of mock exasperation, 'why does everybody on the Camino want to write a book about it? (177)

Writing a diary for the purpose of publishing can come across as disingenuous and pretentious to other pilgrims and subsequent readers alike. In other words, intentionality diminishes legitimacy. This is not lost on Kerkeling, who downplays his intentionality through a series of rhetorical moves. For example, he carefully emphasizes that he has an engaged audience comprised of fellow pilgrims who *want* to hear what he has written. It isn't just Kerkeling writing for himself. When

mentioning diary writing, he includes social interaction with others and anecdotes of others encouraging him to write a book – as if the idea was, at least in part, an external one as I will show. In this way, Kerkeling frames his diary writing as a collective act, thereby mitigating the potential negative effects of the impending book, and guarding against the perception that he is just out to profit from his well-documented pilgrimage.

In addition to explaining their reasons for walking, many authors feel the need to explain what motivated them to write a book (cf. Hoinacki, Wallis and Rupp). These explanations seem driven as much by the authors' desire to explain the reasoning behind the book as by the readers' desire to know what drove them to do this. Many authors emphasize that they only wrote a book after much prompting by others. For Lee Hoinacki, it was his friend the philosopher Ivan Illich (xiii); for Wallis, it was her husband (cite); and for Joyce Rupp, it was the members of her church. Rupp writes in *Walking in a Relaxed Manner: Life Lessons from the Camino* (2005):

Little did I know that each email I sent to the leader of my religious community was forwarded to all the members. When I learned this on returning, I did not change my plans for keeping the journey to myself. If anything, I increased this resolve. Yet, almost everyone who knew about the amazing journey asked me if I was going to write about it. Even though I kept a journal on the Camino and wrote in it daily, I easily responded: 'No, this one is *just for me*' (author's emphasis 20).

Rupp explains how people continually ask her to talk and write about her experience, which she initially refuses. However, after reading an article about mythic heroes, she begins to understand that God was sending her a message:

Finally I understood and accepted that the Camino journey was not just for me. I was the one returning from ‘*an extraordinary experience*’ meant to be shared. My hope-filled intention would be to do so in order ‘*to deeply benefit the community*’ (author’s emphasis 21).

Along with the explanation of their reasons for walking, these narratives of authors’ decisions to write a book usually appear in the Preface or Introduction. Less often, they appear in the body of narrative. Besides Wallis and Rupp, Kerkeling is one of the few authors who deals with this question openly in the story. In fact, he does so repeatedly as if he is in an ongoing conversation about the issue. This continues on to such a degree that his repeated denials become suspicious.

Midway through the story, Kerkeling hints that he realizes a book will come out of his diary writing (176), and throughout his narrative, the perceived problem of keeping a diary with the intention of publishing is present, but Kerkeling never explicitly acknowledges it. Instead, he downplays the issue by offering a variety of vague explanations, variously suggesting that it is for himself or it is because of a larger, transformative force, usually his fellow pilgrims. It is helpful to pause here and consider the issue of agency. One significant thing to remember about pilgrim narratives is the way in which these stories, whether constructed on the trail or after the fact, afford their authors a sense of agency that is often lacking during the pilgrimage itself. Although pilgrims may not be in total control of the adventure that awaits them and, indeed, they are often unsure of how to start or exactly when or where the pilgrimage starts, they do have control of the story they tell. Importantly, however, this is a sense of agency that is not entirely individual; it is, rather, an

interesting sort of *collective* agency, rooted in their membership in a Camino community.

For those who do not regularly keep a diary in their daily lives, the notebook serves as a material reminder that they are now entering into a new, noteworthy time of their lives. Pilgrims' first notation in their diaries is symbolic as both an end and a beginning: it marks an escape from the mundane and the beginning of a pilgrimage, the start of a new stage of life and, for many, the first time their life-story is worth telling. They can imagine that others would *want* to read their life story; in other words, they're suddenly part of a social community that gives their life new meaning. Ironically, pilgrims' have to leave their familiar circle of family and friends to reassert their sense of self. The blank pages of the notebook represent the ideal *tabula rasa*, offering individuals the opportunity to exert their subjectivity onto the empty pages. The following passage from Kerkeling perfectly illustrates this dual empowerment of an author through the Camino experience, paired with an effort to downplay the agency involved in writing the narrative. Early in his pilgrimage, Kerkeling notes the transformative power long-distance travel has on his need to write:

On the rickety bistro table lies my nearly blank diary, which seems to have as hearty an appetite as I. I've never felt the need to capture my life in words before—but since this morning I've had the urge to record every detail of my unfolding adventure in my little orange notebook. (1-2)

Downplaying his individual agency, Kerkeling implies he is writing not because he wants to, but because he feels inexplicably compelled to do so. He also implies that subjectivity is shared between him and his diary, with both of them driven by some force larger than either of them.

In a later episode when he sits down to write, Kerkeling examines his reasons for writing by posing a series of rhetorical questions and musing about his newfound compulsion to record every detail of his journey:

Then I unpack my diary and take notes. I wonder why I'm writing all these things down. For myself? Might someone else read these notes someday?

Maybe this is conceited of me, but I can't help feeling that I'm writing a book that feverishly awaits publication, although I've never had any ambition to write books. Even so, I'm meticulous about noting down everything, as though I absolutely have to, and my entries are getting more and more exhaustive. If people were to expect any book from me at all, it'd be a very different kind of book. (176-177)

Kerkeling tries to figure out what this unseen force is that makes him write so much.

Is it for himself that he writes? Is this how he learns more about himself, or is this all

for somebody else? Through the rhetorical questions, he cautiously slides from

arguing that he is writing for himself to writing for a future book. It's rare that a

Camino author speaks so openly about a future book and its audience. A strange twist

of agency takes place in the last sentence. Not that *he* is going to write a different kind

of book, but somehow that an already preconceived audience would expect him to

write a different kind of book. Kerkeling has imagined a literal audience even when

the book is still only in its conceptual stage.

In the meantime, it also becomes apparent that Kerkeling has a more

immediate audience: his fellow pilgrims on the trail to whom he reads excerpts from

his written diary either to them individually or as a group. Like Codd, Kerkeling

starts his trip alone, but meets a number of pilgrims along the way. Some become

good friends, others become characters in his diary and background characters in his

story. A German couple whom he nicknames Beaky and Gern walk with him

occasionally. He does not particularly enjoy their company, but they serve as comic relief to him and his fellow pilgrims when he later reads aloud stories about them from his diary. Kerkeling tells the story about his encounters with Beaky and Gern to Evi and José, two other pilgrims with whom he does like to walk. Evi asks if Kerkeling has been documenting his interactions with her and José as well. When she asks Kerkeling about this, the spectre of writing for the intention of publishing a book emerges once again.

“Are you writing that down as well?” Evi wants to know. She seems pleased when I reply that I make daily entries in my diary, and she presses me to tell her why. “I have no idea! Just for the heck of it!” is my honest reaction. “You’ll figure out whom you’re writing for,” Evi replies, flashing me a big smile. (201)

Although previously he had admitted he might use his diary for a future book (176), here Kerkeling now claims he doesn’t know why he is writing. Evi’s smile is open to multiple interpretations: either she is truly suggesting that he should just continue writing for whomever, or she clearly understands that Kerkeling is going to convert his notebook into a manuscript. It could be for himself or for others, likely the truth is somewhere in the middle. Over the course of the pilgrimage, Evi, a spiritual person, emerges as Kerkeling’s muse and external force, encouraging him to write more and more, speaking in double or opaque meaning. She also serves as stand-in for the future reader of his book, and her approval serves to legitimize his note-taking and the future book, regardless of his intentionality.

Shortly after his declaration of loneliness and decision to change his situation, Kerkeling decides that he must become more social. That evening, he goes out to party with Evi. Over drinks, Evi tells Kerkeling some private details about her life

that she doesn't want to become general knowledge. She negotiates with Kerkeling what he should or should not include in his diary because it is clear to her that the diary will become a book:

Evi confides several additional things to me, but my lips are sealed. I promised her I wouldn't record them in my diary. She is utterly convinced that my pilgrimage will turn into a book. I ask her how she got that idea. Evi smiles—actually, there's always a smile on her face—and whispers in my ear, 'You can't see it, but I can!' (203)

Evi clearly understands that Kerkeling is going to convert his notebook into a manuscript, and apparently Kerkeling does too, judging by his decision to leave Evi's details out. By not recording Evi's secrets in his diary, Kerkeling (however inadvertently) again implies that a published book is something of a *fait accompli*. After all, what is the purpose of a personal diary, if not for noting private details? At the same time, Kerkeling includes just enough information to intrigue the reader (what could have been so salacious that it couldn't be written down?), while also omitting enough details to remain loyal to his friend.

In another private moment, Anne, one of his favorite walking companions, asks that Kerkeling read out loud what he has written about her. He tells her honestly that, at first, he didn't like her. Anne feels frustrated, explaining that she's had this effect on other people, yet she respects his honesty. By revealing what he has truthfully written, Kerkeling brings the two of them even closer together. Kerkeling's report followed by Anne's reaction lets the reader know that Kerkeling pulls no punches, he's going to tell it like it is no matter how brutally honest it might be (yet still maintaining his loyalty to his companions like Evi who asked him not to write about certain things).

The interaction allows her to open up and reveal that she, too, wants to publish a book about her pilgrimage: “She wants to write a book too, but she thinks she wouldn’t be able to see it through to the end” (235). Kerkeling encourages her to write a book as well, thereby diverting attention to her publishing ambitions, rather than his own. This actually serves two purposes: not only does it downplay his own plans, but also, it marks upon the reader the impressiveness of anyone who *does* “see it through to the end.”

The social aspect of Kerkeling’s diary is most explicit when the diary becomes the center of attention. While sitting at a café, Kerkeling offers a public reading of stories from his diary to fellow pilgrims. Pilgrims he has met over the course of the trip circle around him when Evi asks him to read an excerpt aloud. Even Kerkeling, a famous German TV personality, feels out of place. In this example, he reads from his diary as if it were a book:

Evi is dying of curiosity, and asks me politely whether I might be willing to read something aloud from my diary. Performance as such doesn’t faze me—that is my profession—but reciting this type of content takes some getting used to, even for me. Regardless, I gamely whip out my creased orange notebook and translate the ‘My Shadow Beaky’ passage into English. Both women listen in amusement, and don’t say a word about what they have just heard. Then Evi grows serious and tells me, “The craziest things will happen to you along the way. Be confident and have faith in yourself! But listen to your inner voice. Not everything will be good, or right. You are now primed for all kinds of weird experiences.” (205-206)

What makes the story he reads aloud so appealing to the fellow pilgrims is that they already know the protagonists Beaky and Gerd, they too have met them. Their friendship intensifies by collectively making fun of the two other pilgrims that he reads about. After his reading, Kerkeling’s fellow pilgrims tell him that he must

continue writing throughout the journey, again offering their tacit approval that the material is worthy of a future book, that indeed, he has something substantial, funny and new to bring to the table. This event, reminiscent of a public reading one might attend at a bookstore, prefigures future public readings that do, in fact, take place around the world when Kerkeling's book is published. At this point in the story, the diary has practically become the book and is treated as such and is done so in a way that has gained his stand-in audience's approval. All that is left for Kerkeling to do is return home, type up the manuscript and send it to the publishers.

The last narrative I examine in this chapter is John H. Pratt's *Walking the Camino in an Age of Anxiety: The Search for the Medieval Pilgrim* (2007). This self-published narrative is about Pratt's 2001 pilgrimage with his wife Sonya. Whereas Codd writes about his own writing and observing others writing and Kerkeling writes about reading his diary to others, Pratt's narrative goes one step further and he actually intertwines a fellow pilgrim's diary with his narrative – specifically, the diary of his wife, Sonya. In this last section, then, I examine Pratt's work as yet another instance of an author using embedded texts. But unlike the embedded medieval texts discussed in Chapter Two, in this case, it is the very personal and intimate nature of the embedded diaries, and the authors' relationship to the diarist that gives the entries their significance.

A teacher at Centralia College in Washington state, Pratt received a sabbatical so that he and his wife could walk the trail in early fall of 2001. While on the trail, Pratt's experience is typical of the revived Camino – pilgrims and *albergues* are

abundant, and one senses a vibrant Camino culture and community. In fact, the trail is so crowded with other pilgrims that Pratt and his wife decide to go during a month when there will be fewer pilgrims (2). It seems quite fitting to include this author because he purposefully sets his departure date to walk during months when fewer pilgrims will be on the trail because the abundance of pilgrims on the trail has created difficulty for people to find beds at night. The Camino has literally become too crowded and the number of pilgrims continues climbing annually. This overabundance of pilgrims jockeying for a place in the *albergues* at night is perceived as an annoyance rather than as an “authentic” experience. The timing of their trip inadvertently captures a historic, if deeply unsettling, moment: shortly before the Pratts are scheduled to leave for Spain, the 9/11 attacks take place. These events provide the backdrop for the ensuing narrative, as well as the anxiety referenced in the book’s title. The desire to escape the ennui and anxiety of modernity (this desire to escape is not only felt by him but obviously by the many other pilgrims who have decided to walk the trail as well) for a lost (imagined) time pervades Pratt’s story. Yet these two situations, 9/11 and the large number of pilgrims on the trail, create something of an absurdity: he’s trying to escape from the other people who appear to be trying to flee from the same thing he is.

As discussed in Chapter Two, embedded texts, especially medieval ones, are a common feature in first-person Camino narratives. The embedding of contemporary diaries written during the Camino revival (1985-2009) is a less common strategy, but one which does similar communal work, only on a more intimate level. Within the corpus of the first-person Camino narratives, these post-1980 citations include

excerpts from the authors' own diaries, their companions' diaries and/or other pilgrims' diaries. I should note that when authors cite diary entries within their narratives, I am taking the authors at their word that these embedded texts are reprinted as they found them. Nonetheless, for the purposes of my analysis, the accuracy of the excerpts is less significant than the effect that they have within the broader narrative. Even if they have been cleaned up or slightly altered, that would have little impact on the role such excerpts serve within the broader story or the narrative effect they create.

Within Pratt's narrative, his wife's diary supplements his own observations in those moments when his description might otherwise be taken as hyperbolic and lacking detail. Pratt includes his wife's words when his own words fail to fully describe the situation. Consider, for example, the following passage, describing a particularly desolate part of the trail:

We would view nothing, however, for four kilometers. As Sonya put it that evening in her journal, 'The fog looked as if it ate the trail ahead. The maw of the trail seemed to have a white tongue, and our steps were just out of the grasp of the fog monster.' (187)

Sonya's diary entry functions as an independent witness, corroborating Pratt's own description. Her passage also does so using a kind of poetic imagery that might have invited skepticism had Pratt used it himself. There is, in a sense, a gendered division of narrative labor going on: Pratt uses precise measurements with little detail, whereas Sonya offers vivid description with little attention to distance. In her book, *The Voice of the Mother* (2000), Jo Malin, a scholar on women's autobiographies, talks about collaborative writing in terms of the mother telling stories to the daughter, who

transcribes the stories and/or weaves them into her own (71). Here, a different kind of collaborative writing is going on. The metaphorical language of Sonya complements the stark factual writing of Pratt to produce an image that is both specific and descriptive, producing a hybrid of what could be considered masculine and feminine writing.

Another effect of embedding a fellow traveler's diary of a fellow is that it renders a seemingly individual experience into a more collective one.⁸ When Pratt references or includes excerpts from his wife's diary, he makes clear that this was not just his journey or his wife's, but their experience together. Pratt is not the first Camino author to travel with his partner. In all of the Camino narratives written by authors traveling with sentimental partners, it is clear that a secondary story takes place.⁹ The Camino becomes a lived metaphor of their lives together. For example, after one particularly challenging day, Susan Alcorn, author of *Camino Chronicle: Walking to Santiago* (2006), who walked with her husband Ralph, writes, "Ralph called this day 'a true relationship test'" (92). Pratt and Sonya share a similar set of reflections:

I still want to examine that question, but the big one, the question that will continue to require thoughtful discussion for the rest of my life is 'What did it mean for us?'

⁸ A similar example of this is *My Father, My Daughter* by Donald and Maria Schell, a father and daughter who walked the Camino together. The story is told with alternating points of view. While this provides an excellent example of the collective story I'm talking about in this section, I do not include further analysis of it here only because the points of view aren't separated by what appear to be embedded diaries but rather explicit changes in person in narrative.

⁹ Other notable Camino authors who walked with their spouses include Roger and Nancy Rhoades in *Santiago de Compostela: Journal of Our Camino* (2005) and *Buen Camino: Hiking the Camino de Santiago* (2004) by Jim and Eleanor Clem, Susan Alcorn in *Camino Chronicle: Walking to Santiago* (2006) who walks with her husband Ralph, and Robin Hanbury-Tenison who rides a horse to Santiago with his wife Louella in *Spanish Pilgrimage: A Canter to St. James* (1990, 2004).

For Sonya, walking the Camino is a metaphor for life itself. In her journal she would write the following:

‘Each day has its challenges and its rewards. . . . But above all, each journey is made with one step at a time. Just begin with one’

She was right of course (288).

The quote reads almost as if a conversation between the two is taking place because of the constructed social interaction through the re-telling. The intertwining of Pratt’s thoughts with those of his wife effects a doubling of voices, and makes Pratt’s contemplation of “the big question” a collective endeavor. Pratt uses these doubled voices to examine their relationship as a singular unit, revealing another story line within the narrative, a subtext reinforced by the embedded text. Malin work on relationships between mothers and daughters in women’s autobiographies provides us a framework for understanding this better. Malin writes:

[T]o go one step further, the daughter/writer who embeds her mother's biography, rather than publishing it separately, places her mother's narrative in a textual relationship next to or overlapping her own autobiographical text, which can be described as a ‘dialogue’ or ‘conversation’ between the texts as ‘intertexts’ and between the subjects as ‘intersubjects.’ Because both texts rest within the same space formed by an autobiographical pact with the reader, an equal measure of referentiality is assumed for the biography and the autobiography. In these narratives, the biographical protagonist, the mother, has a clear and insistent voice and an identity that joins the voice and the identity of the autobiographical protagonist, the daughter, in dialogue. These daughters are not simply telling their mothers' stories. They are engaged in conversation. (6)

A similar subtext or “conversation,” as Malin puts it, is included with Camino protagonists who walk with their life partners. As Sonya noted, the Camino serves as a wonderful (albeit somewhat overused) metaphor for life. Her answer, or the fact that Pratt can draw on her answer as if it were his own, suggests that the Camino has brought them even closer together. The repeated use of plural pronouns in Pratt’s

narrative creates a sense of a shared, singular experience. But by including Sonya's diary excerpts, he also makes clear how much he cherishes her participation, that this was "their" pilgrimage as much as it was "his." Indeed, the whole experience (and its re-telling) serves to heighten Pratt's feelings for his wife.

Mary Victoria Wallis, too, makes a similar move when she includes her husband's diary in her second trip, thereby bringing him into her present trip, even though he is thousands of miles back in Canada. In *Among the Pilgrims*, Wallis includes an excerpt from the diary that she wrote on her previous pilgrimage – a cycling trip undertaken with her husband a year earlier. When she revisits the Iglesia Santa María la Real, Wallis recalls her previous, disappointing visit there:

The church had been locked when Scott and I came by in 1997. I had written in my diary: 'Church closed unfortunately; skinny little streets to get there, and a pause by the doors to rest and get our bearings before moving on.' (154)

Unlike other Camino authors who embed their own or their companion's diaries, Wallis does little to re-package her diary entry – it remains unpolished, incomplete sentences and thoughts that prove of little interest to the reader, but it is the doubled or layered sense of time that it provides which makes it so powerful. It imbues the same place with multiple journeys and brings her companion, Scott into her present pilgrimage. This chronological effect is much like the one created by embedded medieval texts, but the sense of time does not stretch back to the medieval past. Embedded diaries such as these bring to light how texts participate in the cultural formation of the Camino, both on an individual and collective level. For Wallis, reading her diary influences the way she experiences the trail the second time. By quoting from the previous trip, it allows her to recall her husband Scott who

accompanied her the first time but was not able to join her for the second trip walking, and whom she clearly misses. Recalling Scott through the use of her diary entry is just one of many ways his presence is felt on the second trip and he is able to “accompany” her on her second pilgrimage.

In many of the Camino narratives by authors who walked or in one case, rode their horses, generally, one partner is presented as reported speech or wrapped up into the authors’ experience through the use of “we.” The use of Sonya’s own words brings the other partner more present in the story than other Camino narratives with couples than relying on a solely on a change of subject: the embedded diary provides another tool to replicate the collective endeavor besides simply alternating between I, he (or she) and we. The embedded dairy also provides the partner a deeper sense of subjectivity and participation in the collective story being told. Malin talks about women’s autobiographies in terms of “collaborative writing” by means of a storyteller and writer: the mother tells the stories and the daughter writes them down (71-72). In Pratt’s case, he captures his wife’s story by including her diary in his narrative: he uses Sonya’s own words, honoring her experiences rather than reporting them.

If we read their Camino narrative as a metaphor for life or their relationship, Pratt’s description of Sonya’s pain reveals a certain suffering that she has undergone, but that in the end has paid off:

She became an icon herself at that moment, a live painting I can never forget. She had hit the wall, but was too tired to communicate the fatigue. Everything ached in her body, she would later write in her journal—her neck, shoulders, lower back, and especially her ankles and feet. Her left heel felt like it had a bone bruise, and her toes felt like some instrument of torture had pinched and stretched them, they hurt so much. But here on the river Iso Sonya had reached her haven, like a true pilgrim at the end of a tiring day. (260)

Tied up in this quote there is an appreciation and love for his wife that emerges. He pays his respects to her by portraying Sonya as a strong yet weary pilgrim enthralled by the experience. This metaphor speaks not only to her experience as a pilgrim, but as their time together as a couple. Before setting out to walk the Camino, Pratt endured heart surgery and she made sure he received the care he needed. Sonya comes across in this narrative as a woman whom Pratt admires and loves on and off the trail.

Pratt's strategy here is not unique. Other authors have embedded others' diaries within their own narratives to similar effect when walking with life partners. Embedded diaries from the author or their walking partners reveal a subtext about the individuals and their relationship together. The same compassion comes across in Wallis's narrative as well. Aviva's narrative that I cited earlier in the chapter also provides a fantastic counter example—where the embedded diary offers a subtext of a failing relationship. She includes an excerpt of her own diary while her then boyfriend sleeps. In Pamplona, after several strenuous days and what she perceived as a life-threatening experience, While Bill sleeps, Aviva jots down in her diary how afraid she is (41). The embedded diary entry serves to accentuate the difficulty Aviva has felt. The image of Bill sleeping while she furtively writes in her diary provides access to Aviva that Bill does not seem to “get,” and something that is only between Aviva, her diary, and the reader. As the reader, we gain a certain empathy for Aviva that we carry throughout the story; we feel that Bill just never quite understands the physical and emotional effort it has taken Aviva to make it this far. This lack of

understanding on Bill's part doesn't seem to be just about their walk so far, but about their relationship as a whole. This entry foreshadows their doomed relationship together. By embedding her diary, Aviva makes what is already an intimate story becomes even more so. As the readers become even more connected to the protagonist, it seems that Aviva and Bill move farther apart.

Both Pratt's wife, Sonya, and Aviva write about the physical pain of their walk. In Aviva's case, her partner "responds" to her exhaustion and pain by taking a nap, leaving us to wonder about the future of their relationship; whereas, Pratt's awareness of his wife's suffering not only portrays her as a stoic heroine, but also as a committed partner under even the most challenging conditions. The couples' narratives include embedded diary entries that reveal as much about their relationships with their walking partners, as it does about the authors' respective journeys. The embedded diaries in these cases speak of a connection between two people, which extends beyond the trail.

At a very basic level, these descriptions of diary writing demonstrate the authors' knowledge of and participation in Camino practices. In these cases, diary writing serves as more than mere background activity; it serves as a way to connect pilgrims with one another and to embed themselves and others within a temporally-layered community. In each of these three stories, diaries are revealed to have multiple communal dimensions. For Codd, diary writing serves as a social experience that facilitates friendship, creating moments of *communitas*, and tying him into a larger Camino community by participating in the practice of diary writing. For Kerkeling, the social dimension is both literal – he deepens friendships by reading to

individual pilgrims from his diary and fellow pilgrims congregate around him as he recites from his journal—and symbolic – his audience legitimizes his writing and, ultimately, its publication. His diary ties him both to the participants in his journey while assuring readers of the legitimacy of his book. Lastly, Pratt draws upon his wife’s diary to merge their two pilgrimages into one, demonstrating the socially binding force of the trail, not only for them as pilgrims, but also as a couple. Besides demonstrating the authors’ understanding and mastery of Camino practices, diary writing in these first-person Camino narratives enables pilgrims to connect with one another both in a very localized manner and more broadly reaching out to the imagined community of pilgrims at other *albergues* and back through time. Completing the Camino isn’t just walking or biking it, but also writing about it.

CHAPTER IV
PARALLEL PILGRIMAGES: BICYCLISTS AND WALKERS IN
FIRST-PERSON CAMINO NARRATIVES

When people converge in pilgrimage, meanings collide. . . . Invariably, a particular discourse will receive for the time being the stamp of approval and orthodoxy from the cult of officialdom, while others might be marginalized, disdained, or even suppressed. . . .
-Micheal J. Sallnow

In Chapter Two, I discussed the ways in which community is conveyed in first-person Camino narratives through the use of embedded medieval texts. In Chapter Three, I looked at how diaries serve as a vector for community. In this chapter, I look at how cyclists and walkers exist in parallel communities. Like many contemporary pilgrims who walk, Lee Hoinacki effects a distance or separation between walkers and cyclists in his narrative:

When we return to the shelter we see a number of bicycles parked inside the door in the wide front hall. They all seem to be mountain bikes, for me a new kind of bicycle, on which I have never ridden. People making the pilgrimage on bikes are allowed to stay in the shelters if there are enough beds. Those walking or riding a horse, though, have priority. (68)

At first glance, it appears that Hoinacki's encounter with the parked bicycles is unproblematic: he describes the bicycles, comments about them, and tells us about the rules in the *albergues*. However, as I hope to argue, Hoinacki is also making a claim about authenticity and privilege. Moreover, what is striking is that Hoinacki does not

mention the cyclists themselves; instead, their bicycles serve as symbolic substitutes – not only in this passage, but repeatedly throughout his narrative. Cyclists are presented not as extensions or evidence of other pilgrims, but rather as disembodied, threatening machines given the lowest priority. Cyclists and their equipment regularly appear as narrative foils in Hoinacki’s story, obstacles preventing him from doing something that is necessary, such as eating or resting, to complete the pilgrimage. In this case, although the bicycles are not physically blocking him, Hoinacki finds even their mere presence disruptive. Furthermore, his reference to the bicycles as things “which I’ve never ridden” reveals not so much his curiosity, as an implicit value judgment against them. This chapter examines the rhetorical ways in which walkers exclude cyclists and how cyclists claim their belonging using much of the same language that walkers do. Many Camino authors who walk, like Hoinacki, construct scenes of exclusion that delegitimize cyclists, thereby legitimizing their own efforts of having walked.

Many pilgrims who walk feel that those who bicycle lack authenticity or legitimacy because bicycles are seen as too modern and not how pilgrims “originally” completed the trail. During the Middle Ages, most pilgrims walked to Santiago de Compostela. The possibility of other modes of transport, by horseback and less often by carriage, depended heavily on one’s social position (Melczer 37). High-ranking court and church members sometimes went by carriage or horseback; the artesian, by horseback or on foot; the peasants, who made up the majority of the pilgrims, walked (37). In other words, pilgrims went to Santiago on foot not because they wanted to walk, but because that was all they could afford. Although not all pilgrims in the

Middle Ages walked, a feeling endures among post-1980 pilgrims that because walking was the primary means of travel during the Middle Ages, it remains the most “authentic” way to complete the pilgrimage today, even if they can afford to go by more comfortable means. Consequently, throughout the post-1980 Camino narratives as a whole, walking pilgrims repeatedly represent themselves as having the privileged discourse because by walking, as they see it, they are most closely reenacting the medieval pilgrim. This line of thought is implied in the title of John Pratt’s 2007 Camino narrative of his 2001 pilgrimage, *Walking The Camino in an Age of Anxiety: The Search for the Medieval Pilgrim*. The implication being that the medieval pilgrim can only be “found” if one walks.

The revival of the Camino in the early 1980s reemphasized the medieval tradition of walking, while the efficiency of traveling by horseback and carriage has largely been replaced by travelling by bicycle.¹ The percentage of medieval pilgrims who went by horseback is unknown, yet today, less than one percent of pilgrims who ask for a Compostela go by horseback, whereas those who bicycle make up approximately twenty percent according to the records kept by the Archdiocese in Santiago.² Besides the fact that few people currently own horses, this shift, from horses to bicycles, has also occurred partially because it is no longer tenable to travel by horseback through the paved cities that the Camino traverses (such as Burgos or Pamplona); likewise, the infrastructure to take care of horses along the trail has long

¹ According to the diocese in Santiago, in 1989, of the 5,760 pilgrims who asked for a Compostela, 4,145 walked, 829 went by bike and 22 by horseback.

<http://www.archicompostela.org/Peregrinos/Estadisticas/peregestageneral.htm>

² <http://www.archicompostela.org/Peregrinos/Estadisticas/peregestageneral.htm>.

since disappeared. The few narratives of those who complete the trail with donkeys or horses attest to these problems.³

Many cyclists realize that their chosen mode of transportation brings their legitimacy into question, in both their own minds and in the minds of others.

Although there are few biking narratives to choose from, at least one illustrates this ambivalence on the part of both cyclists and walkers. Mary Victoria Wallis, author of *Among the Pilgrims: Journeys to Santiago de Compostela*, writes midway through her journey on a bicycle:

There were times, especially when our bikes were bumping over long ropes of rough dirt track, when I told myself I would never, ever walk this route. It would be too slow, I thought, too tedious, too distracting talking to other people all the time. I was slightly offended one day on the meseta when I stopped to chat with a foot pilgrim from Ireland. He asked me darkly if, while on my bicycle, I had been able to hear the meadowlarks. It [sic] felt my spiritual credibility was being called into question. I loved the meseta and everything on it. But I had never heard a meadowlark in my life, and I had definitely hadn't heard one there. (100)

Wallis interprets the walking pilgrim's question as a challenge to her authenticity as a pilgrim, disparaging her choice to bicycle. Besides offending her, the question's lingering effect encourages her to return the next year to walk instead of ride. The Irishman's comments attest to Wallis's concern, and to one that exists on the Camino at large: that biking as a means of pilgrimage is potentially problematic. Hinting at some of the tension that exists between the walkers and cyclists, this walker's

³ Cf. Moore, Tim. *Travels with my Donkey: One Man and his Ass on a Pilgrimage to Santiago*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2005; Phillips, Mefo. *Horseshoes and Holy Water*. London: Virgin Books, 2005.; Hanbury-Tenison, Robin. *Spanish Pilgrimage: A Canter to St. James*. 1990. The Longriders' Guild Press, 2004.

comments imply that cyclists are somehow not full-fledged pilgrims (as he sees, presumably, himself), a belief common to those who walk: “Some Spanish walkers call cyclists *peregrinos descafeinados* (decaffeinated pilgrims), meaning they are a watered-down version of the real thing” (Frey 129).

This chapter examines the differences between how walkers represent cyclists and how cyclists represent themselves in three Camino narratives, the first by a walker, *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (1996) by Lee Hoinacki; the second, *Among the Pilgrims: Journeys to Santiago de Compostela* (2003) by Mary Victoria Wallis, a woman who first cycled and then walked the Camino; and the last, *The Road to Compostela* (1985), by English travel writer Robin Neillands who cycled. The latter’s narrative provides an example of a cyclist who sees his pilgrimage as legitimate precisely because he is biking. What these three narratives share (besides the pilgrims’ desire to participate in the pilgrimage) is their protagonists’ explicit desire to feel that they constitute a part of the pilgrim community on the Camino de Santiago. The three cases suggest that a cyclist’s sense of belonging depends more on his or her individual perception, rather than how other members perceive him or her. That is to say, the cyclists’ sense of belonging hinges more on his or her own feelings than what walkers do or say.

When reading post-1980 Camino narratives as a whole, cyclists are notably absent. They suffer something of a literary ostracism in two different ways. First, biking pilgrims rarely write Camino narratives. Since approximately twenty percent of those who ask for a Compostela at the completion of their pilgrimage have cycled the Camino during its recent revival, we might expect a similar number to write about

their peregrination, but that is not the case. Of the post-1980 published first-person Camino narratives written in English, cyclists wrote only three, two which are included here.⁴ That means cyclists have written less than ten percent of the Camino narratives, and none of their accounts has received much acclaim. The very fact that so few cyclists have written about their experience suggests that many are aware that writing about their pilgrimage as cyclists can be taken as disingenuous, or that they themselves did not find the experience as revelatory as walkers. This leaves readers to learn about cyclists through the master or dominant narratives written by the authors who walked, such as Lee Hoinacki, Conrad Rudolph or Jack Hitt.

Second, walkers rarely mention cyclists in their narratives. Since they constitute approximately twenty percent of the pilgrims on the trail, one might expect them at least to appear as background characters in the walkers' narratives. However, that is seldom the case. In his introduction, Bob Tuggle (*On the Road to Santiago* (2000)) offers insight as to why author who walked rarely include those who bike:

About 20 years ago the indulgences were even extended to those who complete the journey by bicycle. There is a definite class distinction among those who make the journey. Neither the walkers, nor the refuge managers, consider the bicyclists as genuine pilgrims" (viii).

⁴ Another one is Bettina Selby's *Pilgrim's Road: A Journey to Santiago de Compostela* (1994). A fourth one might be Canadian Alex Owen's *El Camino de Santiago: Bicycling the Way of St. James* (2008). However, it is quite obscure; I've never actually seen this book myself and it is rarely mentioned in Camino literary circles. Another book about biking the Camino exists by Anne Mustoe, *Amber, Furs and Cockleshells: Bike Rides with Pilgrims and Merchants*, (2005). Although I refer to her narrative, since it is part of a collection of other journeys she makes on bike, I don't consider it part of the collection of post-1980 first-person Camino narratives because I have decided, for the sake of clarity, that only those narratives that deal exclusively about the Camino are included. However, I do take her work into consideration when thinking about the ways cyclists represent themselves. In Spanish, they are equally as rare. Perhaps the most well-known narrative written by a biker is by Spaniard Fray Juan Antonio Torres Prieto, *Tu solus peregrinus: viaje interior por el Camino de Santiago* (1996). Like Wallis, he both walked and biked; however, it is rarely clear in Torres's narrative when he is talking about his trip by bike or by foot. In fact, there is little sense that he biked it at all. Nonetheless, Wallis finds inspiration from his story and includes bits of his journey in the form of epigrams in her narrative.

Kathryn Harrison makes three trips on the Camino but notes only rare appearances by cyclists in her book, *On the Road to Santiago* (2003) (120, 147),⁵ and Jane Christmas's *What the Psychic Told the Pilgrim* (2007) never mentions them. This disproportionate absence has much to do with the perceived separation between cyclists and walkers.

When walkers do, however, write about cyclists, their writing resonates with a discourse of belittlement or absence of the other. The cyclists' absence reiterates the implicit, and sometimes explicit, understanding among many walkers that cyclists do not hold the same status on the Camino as those who walk, at least in the walkers' eyes. Suggesting that walkers do not like bikers is hardly revelatory. The sentiment is pervasive on the trail and in the research. What I want to draw attention to are the literary tools authors draw upon to convey their feelings towards bikers. The marginalization of cyclists achieved by various narrative means effectively excludes them from the walkers' community. Furthermore, not writing about the cyclists' presence on the trail allows walking pilgrims to claim the Camino as their own. Also, writing a narrative free of cyclists allows walkers to participate in the kind of pilgrimage they desire, not necessarily the one they experienced (one in which cyclists accounted for approximately twenty percent of the pilgrims on the trail).

The early '80s brought saw the introduction of the mountain bike (Beto 11). This kind of bike, with a reinforced frame and wider tires, was ideal for the rough conditions many cyclists found on the Camino, especially if they tried to stay on the

⁵ pp.120, 147.

trails. At the same time that the Camino began its rebirth, an interest in bike touring as an alternate mode for tourism also grew. Nancy Frey writes:

A sharp transition occurred in the 1980s and 1990s when participants began to reject the car in favor of walking and then cycling the route. In Spain, during the 1980s a new type of tourism began to develop which moved away from a focus on 'quantity' and toward one on 'quality,' at least superficially, in what one research calls 'ecological-cultural' tourism. . . . In the early 1980s the desire to make the Camino under one's own power (walking and cycling in the 'traditional way' began to increase with greater force, especially among non-Spanish participants. (244)

For many, the appeal of the bicycle is that it allows individuals to complete the pilgrimage in two weeks instead of the four it takes to walk, thereby giving those with limited vacation time the opportunity to complete the entire trail if they so desire. Of course, some also simply prefer riding over walking. But if the appeal of walking the Camino recalls the medieval pilgrimage, it would seem that the bike shatters that idyllic image: there's very little medieval or primitive about a technical mountain bike. Walkers on the trail often see cyclists as anachronistic and, therefore, unwelcome; as products (or symbols) of the modern world the walkers seek to flee. In short, cyclists disrupt the medieval experience so many pilgrims pursue. This privileged position of the walker and subjugation of the cyclist appears as a recurring theme in the post-1980 narratives written by those who walked. It is conveyed explicitly in the negative attitude of walkers towards cyclists, and implicitly in the more general absence of cyclists from the narratives written by walkers. And given the comparatively small number of Camino narratives written and published by cyclists, one wonders whether this perception is shared by the cyclists themselves.

In *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978), Victor Turner argues

that pilgrimages are central sites where “*communitas*” or “commonness of feeling” emerge. *Communitas* crosses social, economic and familiar boundaries (13).

According to Turner’s concept of *communitas*, then, all pilgrims would feel like part of the same brotherhood. That would mean on the Camino that cyclists and walkers going to Santiago should consider one another equals. But as travel anthropologists John Eade, Michael Sallnow and Simon Coleman argue, *communitas* is perhaps better understood as a theoretical concept and romantic ideal, than an observable practice or experience that all pilgrims share.⁶ This certainly seems to be true for cyclists and walkers on the Camino trail. In this discussion, I draw upon but also modify Turner’s notion of *communitas*. Instead of understanding the relationship between walkers and cyclists merely in terms of *communitas* or lack thereof, I would like to suggest understanding the relationship between walkers and cyclists differently. Collectively these post-1980 first-person narratives suggest that the relationship between these two groups in these narratives is one of a *parallel pilgrimage*, wherein walkers and cyclists, two separate groups of pilgrims, share the same trail, *albergues* and destination, yet rarely interact. This concept of parallel pilgrimage, drawn from the work of John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow, is not unique to the Camino; it has been observed on other pilgrimages. For example, Jews, Christians and Muslims all claim Jerusalem as a sacred destination, yet have limited interaction with each other when visiting their respective pilgrimages.⁷ The necessitating factors of parallel

⁶ c.f. Simon Coleman. “Do you believe in pilgrimage?: *Communitas*, contestation and beyond.” *Anthropological Theory* 2 (2002): 355-68.

⁷ John Eade, and Michael J. Sallnow, eds. *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. Illinois UP, 2000.

pilgrimages are usually described in terms of religion, race, or even ritual. Some lesser-known pilgrimage destinations include "Yugoslavia and Albania where, for example, where Muslims and Christians are drawn to the same sites" (Eade "Introduction to the Illinois paperback" xxi). Eade also notes anthropologist Ger Duijzings's work that finds pilgrim divisions existing along political and ideological lines at these sites (xxi). Another example concerns the urban and peasant pilgrims on pilgrimages in the Andes, a group which divides along *mestizo* and indigenous lines (Sallnow 137-153).

On the Camino, the divisions which emerge among pilgrims often have little to do with religion, race or even nationality, but largely result from the chosen mode of transportation: cyclists tend to interact primarily with other cyclists and walkers with other walkers. Among pilgrimages, this kind of division, by mode of transportation, is exceptional. Walkers' opposition towards cyclists goes beyond mere frustration with the bikes as unwanted objects on the trail; it involves a deeper evaluation and critique of the cyclists themselves, for *choosing* to bike rather than walk. In other words, because walking is seen as the most "authentic" way to complete the journey, walkers see cyclists as actually taking decisive steps *not* to follow in the footsteps of the past pilgrims. Far from being seen as fellow or competing pilgrims, cyclists are perceived as actively *rejecting* the very authentic essence of pilgrimage, in the eyes of the walkers.

The term parallel pilgrimage, however, is an imperfect one that I want to clarify from the beginning. I do not mean parallel in the most literal, mathematical way. Parallelism requires that two lines never intersect, yet cyclists and pilgrims do

interact, especially in *albergues* and sometimes along the trails, usually as the cyclists bike past the walkers. In the Camino narratives, when cyclists and walkers interact – moments when *communitas* should take place – their meetings are often contentious, especially as described in the narratives by walkers, less so in narratives by cyclists. Also, a parallel pilgrimage implies that both groups, cyclists and walkers, consider themselves equal to the other, which is not always the case. Still, the term helps to characterize the kind of social interaction that takes place between cyclists and walkers. This image of a parallel pilgrimage between the two might not be immediately obvious within Camino literature since one group does not write much about the other; only when we contrast three representative narratives does this phenomenon become more apparent.

In contrast to the images presented by walkers, the narratives written by cyclists provide an alternative interpretation of their legitimacy. With mixed results, the narratives of cyclists themselves challenge their often negative or simply absent characterization by walkers. As a cyclist, Wallis demonstrates a sensibility that walkers fail to appreciate in cyclists, although she, too, is skeptical of some cyclists. In the second case, we will see how Neillands' image of himself as a biking pilgrim fails to conform with the walkers' images of cyclists. Moreover, he does so by drawing from the same images and references that walkers do, like images of shared food and pain and his connection to the past. Yet, while the language and narrative techniques of walkers and cyclists are often shared, the narratives themselves suggest that their journeys are not.

In this section, I establish some of the common (and sometimes arguably excessively critical) images of cyclists presented by walking pilgrims through a reading of one of the more popular first-person Camino narratives – Lee Hoinacki’s narrative, *El Camino: Walking to Santiago de Compostela* (1997). I have chosen this narrative not to vilify or marginalize Hoinacki, but rather because he characterizes cyclists in a way that prefigures how other authors represent cyclists: they are rarely mentioned and when they are, it is with an attitude of antagonism and disembodied language. The passage discussed at the beginning of this chapter, in which Hoinacki substitutes the cyclists with metonymic descriptions of their bikes, exemplifies this use of disembodied language. Hoinacki is by no means the only author (or even priest) who feels this way. Kevin Codd, a Catholic priest, refers to a biker as an “idiot” (46-47). Conrad Rudolf, for example, addresses the issue only once in his narrative and then never speaks of it again: “[T]he pilgrimage must be done on foot, never on bicycle. . . .” (34). With so few words, clearly he sides with Hoinacki on the issue of biking the Camino. This sentiment is replicated in other narratives by simply ignoring cyclists or including short, fleeting comments like Rudolph’s or Codd’s. In Hoinacki’s narrative, he privileges the walkers while casting the cyclists as outsiders through antagonistic images of the cyclists as bodiless, voiceless, and inconsiderate figures that add narrative tension to his story.

Hoinacki is drawn to the Camino because of his desire to experience what can be understood as a utopian nostalgia for the past, a longing for a non-existent time prior to machines and technological advances that allegedly provide an improved life. For Hoinacki, cyclists depend unnecessarily on their bikes. Since he equates bikes,

and by extension cyclists, with all things modern, it is unsurprising then that Hoinacki finds the bikes and their riders offensive and a challenge to the kind of pilgrimage he wants to maintain. The image of bikes as highly technological machinery (and thus anachronistic and antagonistic) regularly appears in Hoinacki's examination of cyclists.

At one point, early on in the pilgrimage, Hoinacki explains the rules of the *albergues* in terms of who has priority. "People making the pilgrimage on bikes are allowed to stay in the shelters if there are enough beds. Those walking or riding a horse, though, have priority" (68). His brief statement that cyclists get a bed only if enough remain available establishes a hierarchy in which cyclists are relegated to the lowest position. While many *albergue* owners regularly follow this rule, it represents a logic that Hoinacki fails to explain. The convention actually has more to do with basic civility. In many *albergues*, workers and volunteers ask cyclists to wait to see if beds are still available until sometime in the late afternoon when most walkers have finished walking for the day. This is because it is physically easier for a cyclist to continue on to the next *albergue* than a walker. A five-mile ride passes more quickly and with less effort than a five-mile walk. This lack of explanation on Hoinacki's part is important because its omission makes the cyclists appear unwelcome and inferior without identifying the reasoning behind this policy. Hoinacki takes an inclusionary act of trying to accommodate as many people as possible and turns it on its head by excluding certain information. At the same time, Hoinacki's hierarchy reflects the image of the cyclist in the eyes of many walking pilgrims: the lowly position is the "natural" one for cyclists within the Camino community.

In another instance in Hoinacki's narrative, the cyclists manifest as disembodied voices. This scene begins like a horror film or mystery novel. In the same *albergue* where Hoinacki previously saw the bikes lined up (but never the cyclists), he now hears only the cyclists' voices, but cannot see them in the dark. The setting, a dark, strange room, is important because, once again, it renders the cyclists invisible, this time through darkness. Hoinacki writes in a harsh, unapologetic tone:

Last night, sometime after falling asleep, I was awakened by the sharp piercing voice of a woman. She seemed to be at some distance from me in the dormitory, but she had a voice that would penetrate thick walls. On and on she rattled, relating the day's adventures on her bicycle to fellow bike riders. Lying there, rapidly passing from a feeling of annoyance to a passion of anger, I asked myself, What should I do about this? There is a large room at the end of the building where people can gather to talk. This room is the dormitory—for sleeping. And it's late. How can she and the other bike riders be so inconsiderate? (69)

Her "sharp piercing voice" suggests an animal, not a fellow pilgrim and the woman's "rattle" suggests a prosaic banter, rather than a reflective examination of her experience. Hoinacki's choice of words implies a qualitative judgment about her pilgrimage as a cyclist: while his journey is worthy of being published, the telling of her cyclists' story constitutes only banal rattling. Moreover, in this moment, cyclists' voices contrast with the unspoken rules of silence. The cyclists lack pilgrim etiquette and spoil Hoinacki's (and, arguably, other walkers') rest. Just as the bikes in Logroño threatened to keep him from entering the *albergue*, here they keep him from falling asleep, creating yet another obstacle that he must overcome. As antagonists, the cyclists clearly cannot share the pilgrimage with Hoinacki, rather, they pose a challenge to its enjoyment. What Hoinacki had earlier claimed was the nicest *albergue* he had stayed at up to that point, he now sees as his "worst night yet in a

shelter” (69). The connection is clear, even though Hoinacki never states it directly: the cyclists have ruined for him what should have been an otherwise perfect night. Frey notes that because cyclists enter last, they also tend to go to bed later and leave later in the mornings. So, while the rules of allowing cyclists in last favors walkers, subsequent problems (as seen by walkers) can emerge because the cyclists tend to go to bed later and wake up later (99-100). In an ironic twist, the rules designed to help walkers also create unintended consequences. In their stories, walking pilgrims frequently complain about the loud cyclists. Since Hoinacki was unable to keep them from ruining his evening, he retaliates in his representation of them.

Hoinacki’s bout of anger has subsided by the next time he encounters cyclists. In San Juan de la Ortega, he finds himself sitting next to a biking couple from Holland in the *albergue*’s kitchen. Instead of the frustration he demonstrated earlier toward cyclists, now he appears surprisingly sympathetic towards them: “My companion at the table is from Holland. He and his wife are on a two-person bicycle. They must be taking the highway, for they never could have gotten over that mountain path today” (104). Even though Hoinacki seems more favorable towards these cyclists, suggesting they took the highway also implies they did not stay on the trail. Leaving the trail can be understood as not remaining faithful to the pilgrimage: to him, the cyclists may be nice people, but they are not full-fledged pilgrims. Unlike the earlier examples in which he speaks more harshly of the cyclists, Hoinacki appears more open toward the Dutch couple. The question then becomes what makes him behave more favorably toward these cyclists than the others? The outcome of this situation differs in part because he is able to talk to them face to face: they have

become voiced and embodied, thereby allowing him to relate to them as people, although not really as pilgrims.

It is also possible that Hoinacki likes them more because they are older. A claim that Hoinacki does not care for younger people might seem excessive; however, notice how in the next instance he specifically references the cyclists' age and his subsequent disapproval. In Castrojeriz he writes,

Late yesterday, a few more pilgrims arrived at the *refugio*, including the two young Canadians still walking this part of the *camino*. But most of the late arrivals were on bicycles. Whenever there are walkers and bikers in a shelter, I've noticed a consistent division: Most of the people on foot are nearly my age. These two Canadians are the unusual exception. Most on bicycle—almost all of whom are Spaniards—are very much younger. I have met only one or two young Spanish men who are walking. This might have something to do with school vacations. The younger people may arrive only next month. But those on bicycles—and I have the impression that they are as numerous as the walkers—are young people, however, a bit older than students. I wonder if this indicates some historical break, like ox to tractor? The older people are still on their feet; the younger ones, on their machines. The older generation still enjoys the independence, the freedoms of its feet. I wonder. . .has the younger generation, now dependent on more and more technological props and distractions, lost the use of its feet?

All the bikers seem to have the latest equipment in bikes, clothes, and outdoor gear—all high-tech. Expensive caparisoned, they contrast sharply with the older people, who, like me seem to be wearing their 'everyday' or work clothing. I can't help thinking that the young men, from the way they look and move, remind me of the stereotype, the yuppie. But I've never yet talked to them, except for the Dutchman in San Juan de Ortega, and he appeared to be quite different from the Spanish riders. (129-130)

Hoinacki notes the historical, generational and behavioral break he witnesses on the Camino. Hoinacki is correct, statistically: cyclists tend to be younger Spaniards, and during the time of the year he is walking (May), many younger people are likely still in school. But that does not stop Hoinacki from implying that an age and class war is taking place on the trail: he sees the younger, rich "yuppie" cyclists terrorizing the

older, poorer, walking pilgrims like himself. His dislike for the cyclists seems to extend not only to their use of bikes, but to their age, their clothes, their way of living.⁸ He sees them lacking the necessary respect to the dress code that he himself has invented. Without ever saying cyclists are not pilgrims, he instead criticizes everything about them until the reader is left with nothing to find admirable about them and no way to regard them as fellow pilgrims.

Several days later in the town of Carrión de los Condes, Hoinacki meets a fellow *peregrino* walking out of the *albergue* early in the morning. Surprised, since he hadn't seen him during the night, Hoinacki asked where the traveler had stayed, to which he replies he found a quiet place upstairs claiming it was impossible to sleep in the room where the others stayed.

He spoke bitterly of the behavior of some of who arrived late. Although I put up with the noise, I did not sleep well. A number of bicyclists came in during the evening, making the small dormitory crowded. With their loud talking until far into the night, they also made the place distinctly hostile to sleep. These young men fell exactly into the pattern that I have come to see: They are always inconsiderate, uncivil, noisy. But I never saw such traits among these who are walking. Why this great difference? Is it something much more than age. . . (145)

In this episode, playing both lawyer and judge, Hoinacki lays out an argument against cyclists and then he judges them to be deficient pilgrims because they lack what he considers pilgrim qualities: they are neither considerate, nor civil, nor quiet. Whether he intends to or not, Hoinacki presents the reader with an impression of deep division

⁸ Anne Mustoe, a cyclist who writes about her travels on the Santa Fe trail, the Danube and the Camino, notes how her clothes and biking gear put her authenticity as a pilgrim into question: "I pride myself on traveling light, but the ample contents of my two panniers would have shocked my predecessors along the way, as would my cool and comfortable cotton trousers, baggy shirt and baseball cap. My only claim to authenticity, when I boarded the European Bike Bus to Lyon, was the scallop-shell on my handlebar bag" (169).

between cyclists and walkers, and an implicit final verdict is made: we (walkers) are different than they (cyclists). He is, in effect, reiterating the claim that only walkers qualify as pilgrims and that the cyclists' apparent lack of any pilgrim-like characteristics excludes them from his community of pilgrims.

In this last example, Hoinacki's antagonistic rhetoric against cyclists reaches a crescendo. In *O Cebreiro*, a collection of bike packs stand in for the cyclists, blocking him from a fireplace to warm himself. After a hard hike up one of the highest hills along the pilgrimage, he goes into a restaurant for a warm lunch after a rainy, cold walk. After eating, he decides to go stand in front of the fireplace to recover:

It has stopped raining, but I decide to warm myself at the fire before going out in the sun—the air will be chilly out there at this altitude. When I get near the fireplace, I stop in shock, seeing the unbelievable before my eyes: Some cyclists, who have come up on the highway and entered while I was eating, have surrounded the fire with their bicycle packs! I can't get anywhere close. Although I have never met the same cyclist twice—they travel much faster than I—they all behave in the exact same way. I am tempted to believe that they have some secret conspiracy of brutishness worked out among themselves. (216)

By repeatedly substituting objects for people (first bikes, now packs), Hoinacki strips cyclists of their subjectivity. At the same time, the bags seem to adopt an agency of their own, as if they have somehow planned to keep Hoinacki from the fireplace. In this instance, he provides the voiceless packs with an uncomplimentary one. By imposing his ideas on how cyclists conspire against the walkers, he presents his ideas as theirs, thereby occluding their actual feelings and beliefs.

Although talking about why fellow pilgrims are making the pilgrimage is a common question along the trail, here, and in his other encounters with cyclists, there is a persistent narrative resistance to understand the cyclists or what drives them to

complete the pilgrimage. Instead of trying to learn more about the cyclists and what brings them to the Camino, Hoinacki puts words and ideas into their mouths, leaving them vulnerable to his interpretation of them. Since he only briefly socializes with cyclists (mainly the Dutch couple), they are never given the chance to redeem themselves by presenting an alternate perspective, instead they are represented negatively through Hoinacki's perturbed pen. Writing cyclists out of the narratives allows Hoinacki to have the kind of pilgrimage he wants.

What makes Hoinacki's narrative so troubling vis-à-vis the representation of cyclists is that Hoinacki's overall narrative makes the author out to be what Gianna Moscardo considers a "mindful visitor." This concept comes from research in social cognition and the idea that people are either mindful or unmindful. Citing E.J. Langer and A. Piper, Moscardo writes, "Mindful people actively process information and question what is going on in a setting. Mindfulness allows individuals maximum control over their own behavior and the situations they find themselves in" (381-382). According to Moscardo's definition, Hoinacki appears to be a mindful visitor because he takes great care to "actively process information and question what is going on in a setting" by providing detailed and thorough information about his experience. Moreover, in addition to Hoinacki's observations and analysis, his professions (as an ex-priest and ex-professor) give him a high degree of credibility that we might not concede to some of the other Camino authors. Given his position of moral and scholarly authority, his critical representation of cyclists is troubling. If we read Hoinacki as mindful, we are subsequently predisposed to invest a high truth value in his claims about cyclists. Unlike Jack Hitt or Tim Moore, who construct their

narratives as somewhat tongue in cheek and laden with wry humor, Hoinacki seems stark and serious. His tone pushes the readers to take Hoinacki's representation of cyclists as an accurate representation of what they must "really" be like.

Within Hoinacki's narrative, his negative representation of cyclists effects a separation between cyclists and walkers to the point of exclusion, exemplifying walkers' general disapproval and refusal to engage them. By the end of his story, Hoinacki has depicted two separate identities on the trail, those of walking pilgrims and those of cyclists. And because cyclists are regularly cast as bodiless, voiceless and inconsiderate, Hoinacki effectively situates them outside the community of pilgrims. In effect, Hoinacki's negative portrayal of cyclists suggests a strong desire to exclude them from the Camino altogether. However, as we read our next two authors, we can see that cyclists do not necessarily share this same understanding of themselves.

In 1997 Mary Wallis set out to bike the trail with her husband Scott and later returned to walk the trail alone in 1998. She relates both pilgrimages in her self-published book, *Among the Pilgrims: Journeys to Santiago de Compostela* (2003).⁹ She is one of only two authors who has both biked and walked the trail, and then written about both kinds of pilgrimage.¹⁰ Her narrative bridges the distinct perspectives of walkers and cyclists and provides a unique opportunity to read how

⁹ In her one book there are two separate stories, that of her first trip as a cyclist, which I refer to as her first story and that of her second trip as a walker, which I refer to as her second story.

¹⁰ There is another book, *Tu Solus Peregrinus* by Fray Juan Antonio Torres, where the author both walked and rode a bike. However, when talking about his pilgrimage, he does not differentiate between the two trips, they are collapsed into one narrative providing a singular perspective that combines both experiences. Mary Wallis refers to this book in her narrative and cites the book regularly as epigraphs.

the same person writes about the cyclists from the perspective of one who bicycles first and later walks. With this insight, she provides a body and voice to cyclists, in contrast to Hoinacki's antagonistic depiction of absent and voiceless nuisances. At the same time, however, she also reiterates some of Hoinacki's representations of cyclists as not fully integrated members of the pilgrim community. Early in the narrative, Wallis reveals that she is aware of the dubious reception that walkers, readers and even other authors have of her pilgrimage on bike: "I detected a tug of war between purists and innovators. In the eyes of some Camino writers, even going by bike instead of walking to Santiago made us suspect" (23).¹¹ With that said, we expect her to dispel this suspicion, but she makes little effort to do so and, arguably, her two stories do more to uphold than dismantle it. In her first story as a cyclist, we see that although the bike offers an efficient means of transportation, it sometimes functions as a barrier to her inclusion on the Camino de Santiago. In her second story as a walker, she describes two kinds of cyclists on the trail that exist, only one of which she considers pilgrims. In reading the two stories against one another, a shift in narrative strategy emerges. As a cyclist, Wallis seems to question her legitimacy as a pilgrim, but later, as a walker, she attempts to authenticate this prior experience by suggesting a new category of "legitimate" pilgrim cyclists and situating her earlier experience within it.

The brevity of her first story mirrors the uncertainty of her pilgrimage as a cyclist. Her journey as a cyclist comprises eighty-seven pages, and only about forty-four of those refer to her actual trip, since she relies heavily on embedded texts that

¹¹ It is interesting that she is concerned about other writers' perception of her biking rather than readers.

deal with the history of the towns she passes through. This relatively brief story becomes striking when compared with the entire book's four hundred and nineteen pages in length. Conversely, her story as a walker extends for three hundred and thirty-two pages and she relies much less on embedded texts. On the face of it, her story as a walker proves more convincing.

In her first story, Wallis bikes with her husband, Scott. Wallis, the character, presents a conflicted figure. As a cyclist, she has difficulty reconciling her expectations of what a pilgrimage should be like with the actual pilgrimage she experiences. In these moments, the bicycle prohibits her from fully engaging in important spatial, ritual and social aspects of the pilgrimage which she hopes to experience. After their first full day biking the Camino, she and Scott arrive in Puente la Reina and stay in what she describes as an "art-hotel," a curious blend of art gallery and hotel. After they check in, they go to a "private dining room" for some appetizers and drinks. As they sip sherry and eat escargot, she intuits that something is amiss and anxiously asks, "What kind of a pilgrimage is this anyway?" (61). She never explicitly attempts to answer her rhetorical question. But the spectacle of eating escargot and sipping sherry in a private dining room suggests a vacation more than a pilgrimage. Nancy Frey discusses four implicit rules of pilgrimage that pilgrims develop, one of which is to behave in a "simple, low-key yet appreciative, frugal" manner (51). The hotel, sherry and escargot violate that rule by any measure. Furthermore, Wallis is also physically detached from the pilgrimage because the hotel and its private dining room have separated her and Scott from the rest of the pilgrims. She mentioned these issues again in the second part of her book, when she reminisces

about her bike trip: “sometimes we stayed in hotels, which made us self-indulgent and kept us apart from the pilgrim community” (101). The bike meant to take them on a pilgrimage has taken them instead to a tourist destination.

In an attempt to remediate her questionable pilgrimage, Wallis and Scott stay at an *albergue* in Viana the next night, knowing that the albergues function as important part of the pilgrim experience and regularly serve as the setting where pilgrims get to know one another. In these dense living quarters, pilgrims meet one another, tend to their sore bodies and catch up on their diaries. Ideally, the albergues should allow Wallis to integrate in the Camino environment and with other pilgrims. As she enters the sleeping quarters, she describes what she observes:

Only a few people were staying the night. We walked through room after room of neatly lined-up triple bunks, feeling as if we had arrived at a party on the wrong night. Here and there, a pilgrim lay dozing on top of a sleeping bag, her blistered bare feet splayed out on a pile of clothes (67).

Her words are more accusative than sympathetic. The language of having “arrived at a party on the wrong night” immediately presents a divisive image. Interestingly, in her research, Frey used a similar metaphor to describe the relationship between walkers and cyclist in *albergues*: “When the cyclists arrive in the refuge they are like the last at the party” (Frey 100). For many of the walkers, this likely marked their sixth or seventh day on the trail. The novelty of the pilgrimage has worn off days ago, and the cumulative fatigue starts to set in the form of blisters and exhaustion. Long, recuperative naps become essential, but this behavior is new to Wallis since it is her first night staying in an *albergue*. Because she has had a difficult time immersing herself in the pilgrimage until now, when it finally presents itself, she

cannot understand it: the daily rituals of afternoon rest and repair are strange and unfamiliar to her. Furthermore, since she is on a bike, the effort that it has taken her to get to Viana is less than that of the walkers, thus she has difficulty sympathizing or even empathizing with their exhaustion. With the spare energy biking affords her, she feels out of place; everybody has fallen asleep without any apparent reason that she can appreciate.

Moreover, Wallis's own lack of pain predicts her misapprehension of the *albergues* and the walkers and, by extension, her integration in the pilgrimage. At this point, even when she is at the *albergue* along with the other pilgrims, this cannot make her feel like she belongs, since she remains at a "social disadvantage" (Frey 100). Simply *being* with other pilgrims does not necessarily give her a sense of belonging. This image of a confused and excluded cyclist differs from the image of indifference Hoinacki offers. Yet at the same time, Wallis does not exactly offer a highly positive counter image: she seems just as excluded as the cyclists in the *albergues* in Hoinacki's narrative, simply absent the malice he projects on them. In both cases (in the hotel and in the *albergue*), the bicycle effects a separation between Wallis and the status of pilgrim that she desires.

The next morning, she and Scott talk to a woman walking the trail: "We had met a friendly young woman from New Zealand in the evening and the next morning in the communal kitchen, we chatted while Scott washed some dishes left on the counter" (67). This scene recalls the earlier episode in Hoinacki's narrative when he sits down to talk with the Dutch couple on bike and finds them quite likeable, but this time, the scene is presented from the cyclist's perspective (and with an attempt to find

out more about the walkers). We do not find out much about this woman except that Wallis seems to want to know more about the walker, so she tries to find her the next day on the trail to talk to her at greater length:

Heading from Viana toward Logroño, we avoided the pilgrim paths and kept to the highway to make up time we had lost at the start of our trip. When the highway and the Camino happened to converge, we often stopped to chat with foot pilgrims. I hoped we might have met the New Zealander again, as she had left Viana before us, but she never appeared. (67)

Although her bike efficiently delivers her to Santiago, in terms of creating connections with others on the trail – especially with those walking – it fails miserably. Even though she wants to engage in the pilgrimage by meeting other pilgrims, the bike prohibits the ongoing engagement she seeks. Wallis seems hungry to make new friends, but a sense of resignation emerges when she does not find the woman from New Zealand, in part because this friendship would have made her feel like she, too, was part of a community: As Camino author Conrad Rudolf succinctly states in his narrative, “it is the people that made the journey” (27). In the context of the Camino, the friendship would provide Wallis a critical validation of her belonging; however, a short social interaction over dinner and abbreviated chats with the walking pilgrims she meets while she looks for the New Zealander must suffice. Wallis’s image of a friendly, curious cyclist searching the trail for camaraderie broadens and adds depth to Hoinacki’s shallow conception of the cyclists. But the problem for Wallis is that maintaining contact with walkers is nearly impossible because of the difference in speed of transit. A cyclist can complete the Camino in approximately half the time it takes a walker, fifteen days versus thirty. If cyclists are to develop a strong sense of community, they must do so with other people who travel

at the same speed, which is exactly what Wallis eventually does.

The next day Wallis and Scott meet Heinrich and Else, two German cyclists they encounter when checking into a hotel in Logroño. Shortly after meeting them, Wallis declares, “We became friends immediately” (70). This language of friendship and moment of *communitas* helps situate her within the community of pilgrims, even if only in her own assessment, and even if the hotel they are staying at is situated off the Camino. The couples meet for a long, leisurely dinner and discuss religion and Spanish history. The couples are from different countries and practice different religions; however, as biking pilgrims on the Camino, they find common ground. Their dinner and conversation cover four pages of Wallis’s otherwise brief narrative as a cyclist. This marks the greatest amount she writes about any single event in her first story, reiterating how much the social aspect of the pilgrimage means to her. Until meeting this couple, Wallis and her husband have found it challenging to make acquaintances and sustained appearances by other pilgrims, especially walkers, do not materialize in the first narrative: only fleeting hellos and goodbyes. In a move to downplay the lack of people she meets in her first story, in the second story, Wallis suggests that she was fine with the limited circle of pilgrims she encountered on the first trip (409). But given how much attention she gives to the New Zealander and Germans and extensively elaborating on the friends she makes in her second story, Wallis may not be being completely honest with herself or her readers. Still, it is evident that she is more eager to meet people than Hoinacki recognizes. Wallis makes it apparent that cyclists need not be as nefarious as Hoinacki suggests; however, at the same time, her narrative, like Hoinacki’s, highlights how the bicycle

forms a physical barrier between the two groups of pilgrims. In the end, it is the relationship she develops with Else and Heinrich that must suffice.

In addition to its brevity, Wallis's narrative is also incomplete. Her ending runs counter to most Camino narratives in that she does not conclude with her arrival to Santiago (even though we know she does arrive). The last town she writes about is Santo Domingo de la Calzada, less than a third of the way (approx. 263km) to their destination, Santiago de Compostela, still over 600 km away. In the closing lines of the first pilgrimage, Wallis notes, "That night we slept in an expensive *parador* in the town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada. We were, we had realized after Navarette, carrying too much gear" (87). Carrying too much gear here is both a literal and metaphorical assessment. While Wallis and Scott leave some of their extra clothes and equipment at the expensive hotel, it can also be understood that the bikes themselves are superfluous. Ending her story in Santo Domingo de la Calzada with such a short text in a relatively unfinished manner proves unfulfilling for the reader. The seemingly abortive element of their completed journey contradicts our expectations of a finished story.

The following year, Wallis returns to walk the trail. The very fact that she returns so quickly to walk again indicates that biking the Camino did not completely satisfy her. From her walker's point of view, fellow walkers Bernardo, Boyero, Anaya, Errol, and Evy, become important characters in her second story. Cyclists, on the other hand, fade to the background, as they do so often in walkers' Camino narratives. As a walker, Wallis, much like Hoinacki, finds a certain amount of frustration with the cyclists. In order to reconcile her negative attitude regarding the

cyclists of whom she was once a member, she creates a hierarchy of cyclist types. When cyclists appear, she categorizes them into two groups: “friendly” or “speed” cyclists. Even though these words are not commonly associated as opposites, their meanings are understood: friendly (slow) cyclists are “good” while speed cyclists are “bad.” Wallis, unsurprisingly, considers herself to have been of the friendly kind. This rhetorical move allows her to preserve the validity of her first pilgrimage on bike, while still providing space to discredit other cyclists and claim her new identity as a walking pilgrim.

Although she never identifies these groups as fully distinct, she contrasts the two kinds of cyclists: “Occasionally a cyclist or two crunched discretely by, greeting me with a slow direct smile that said: “Please, I am friendly, I am not a speed cyclist” (265). For Wallis, friendly cyclists and fast cyclists are complete opposites. With the comparison she sets up here, she implies that friendly cyclists are slow and polite; it is understood, by implicit comparison, that speed cyclists are fast and rude. Throughout her story, cyclists fall into one of these two artificial categories and the price for being a speed cyclist is that of exclusion.

As in Hoinacki’s narrative, the walking Wallis rarely meets other cyclists face to face. She only talks with Kjell from Finland, who is also writing about his experience (176). It is clear that Kjell is the paragon of the friendly cyclists, both generous to Wallis and a slow cyclist, taking much more time than most cyclists do because he does not want to arrive in Santiago too quickly (176). If Wallis were to denounce all cyclists, besides excluding herself, she would also be excluding him. But by describing him as slow and friendly, she legitimizes both Kjell and his status

as a fellow pilgrim. In addition to being read as a friendly cyclist, Kjell can also be read as a unique figure within Camino narratives since he switches between walking and biking, depending on who he travels with. When he and Wallis are together, he regularly gets off his bike to walk with her (274, 370, 374). By getting off his bike and pushing it, he arguably becomes a *de facto* walker. The two can only remain together if he gets off his bike and walks with Wallis. If we interpret Kjell, thus, not as a cyclist but as a walking pilgrim, it strengthens the argument of understanding the Camino as one of parallel pilgrimages.

The other group of cyclists is another case entirely. Wallis calls them “speed pilgrims” and, like Hoinacki, she deems them completely unsuitable for a pilgrimage. She finds their speed, technical equipment and lack of etiquette disturbing to her experience. Both Wallis and Hoinacki’s critiques reemphasize that, for many pilgrims, anything too “modern” has no place on the Camino – although what each author considers too modern varies. Similar to Hoinacki, the division runs between walkers and cyclists; and similarly, for both there is a finer distinction between faster and slower bikes (although Hoinacki’s position is stronger than Wallis’s). Midway through her second story, Wallis explains what she means by speed cyclists after encountering four Spanish cyclists arguing with a French walker who had asked the cyclists to be more quiet (262). Wallis indicts the cyclists “wearing tight, black shorts and shirts with flaming logos” for their loud behavior and explains why they should be kicked out of the *albergue*: “We felt the cyclists should not have been there in the first place. It was clear they were not pilgrims; their racing bikes were fit only for paved roads and they had no racks for gear” (262). Portraying them as a somewhat

annoying, but ultimately harmless gang, Wallis explains how she understands the differences between the two kinds of cyclists in her exposition of them and their traits:

They [speed cyclists] sometimes streaked by us on N120, preened and wraithlike on their high-performance bikes. Their custom was to go on two- or three-day outings along the paved country road of Castile. Some nights, they snuck into the hostels for a free bed. Ignoring Camino etiquette, they would lurk insolently by the door eyeing the female pilgrims. They hogged the kitchen facilities, smoked sullenly under the No Smoking signs, joked and guffawed in their bunks until late at night. They were harmless if you ignored them. But they took advantage in a proprietary, humourless way and gave nothing in return. What was worse, they gave the rest of us cyclists, grinding along dirt trails on bikes loaded with gear and good intentions, a very bad name. By 1998, the authorities had come down hard on them, and in their punitive clean-up took aim at even innocent bike pilgrims; no cyclists of any kind could get into the hostels before 8p.m., and only then if there were enough beds. (263)

Wallis's harsh words strongly reiterate the nefariousness of the speed cyclists, while upholding the honor of the friendly ones who, by contrast, are hard-working, "grinding along," and filled with "good intentions." Like Hoinacki, Wallis takes the rather innocuous *albergue* rules for cyclists and uses them as "proof" that certain kinds of cyclists are troublesome. However, the justification for requiring bikes to enter last is not necessarily what Wallis explains here. Neither Wallis nor Hoinacki explain that it takes a walker an hour to cover three or four kilometers whereas it takes a cyclist around fifteen minutes. Thus, asking a cyclist to continue on to the next *albergue* is not nearly as taxing as it would be for a walker. Wallis's interpretation of the rules lets her discredit certain cyclists by suggesting that they were misbehaving so badly that *albergue* owners needed to implement strict rules to control and, if necessary, expel them. Both Wallis and Hoinacki draw on this rule to

bring cyclists into disrepute.

Wallis has several encounters with cyclists in the *albergues* where she reiterates her negative feelings about speed cyclists. In Villafranca del Bierzo, she goes to sleep and hears some “banging of dishes from the kitchen where a few Spanish speed cyclists were having supper. An English voice beside me said, ‘Spaniards are so goddamn loud.’” (220). Wallis says nothing in return. Her silence implies, at the very least, a tacit agreement, without offending the people of the host country. Her description of them follows Hoinacki’s in that the cyclists are voiceless and bodiless, they are just “banging dishes,” and they are never seen, just heard. In another similar scenario, in Calzadilla de la Cueva, Wallis complains again about cyclists’ rude behavior. This time, their uncontrollable gas forces other pilgrims to abandon their beds in the room to go sleep in the stairwell (287). Like Hoinacki, Wallis uses language that evokes disgust and frustration. The contrast she constructs between the kind of cyclist she sees in herself and Kjell, and the kind of cyclist represented by the speed cyclists, is animated by Wallis’s own underlying desire to belong. If membership can come only at the cost of excluding others, Wallis does not seem reluctant to pay.

When she complains about the cyclists, Wallis fails to notice the inconsistencies of her critique in light of her own experiences. In other words, at specific moments she criticizes “speed cyclists” for doing the same things she did as a cyclist. In her second story, in a flashback to her time as a cyclist, she writes about an encounter she and Scott had with some German cyclists who fall under the category of “speed cyclists” (“The Germans’ sole interest was to ride as fast as they could to

Santiago”) and she declares “Pilgrimage seemed not to have occurred to either of them” (395). Wallis fails to note that in her first story she, herself, mentioned a preference for the quickness of the smooth roads over the bumpy trails. At one point, she writes, “Heading from Viana toward Logroño, we avoided the pilgrim paths and kept to the highway to make up the time we had lost at the start of our trip” (67).¹²

Inconsistencies also appear when she passes judgment on the German cyclists based on their lodging choices. When they tell her that they are staying at the iconic Reyes Católicos hotel in Santiago de Compostela, instead of seeing their experience as highly authentic (it is the original site of the medieval *hospital* in Santiago), she alludes to their tourist-like behavior for spending so much money now that it has been converted to a *parador*. Even when the Germans show some historical sensitivity when they tell her that they know it was financed by Isabella in 1492, her judgment of them does not waver when she asks:

‘Where will you stay tonight? I mean, which hotel?’ I asked. ‘Reyes Católicos,’ said the blond, munching hot sausage and bread. Scott lifted his eyebrows over his wineglass. ‘That’s very posh, I hear.’ ‘It was ze hostel built by Isabella in 1492. Ja, it’s chic.’ He pronounced it ‘cheek.’ ‘What are the rates like?’ ‘In ze sky.’ (395)

Ironically, Wallis does not acknowledge that this is the same kind of hotel run by the national government as the hotel where she and Scott stayed at in their first trip: “That night we slept in an expensive *parador* in the town of Santo Domingo de la Calzada” (87).

Toward the end of her second story, Wallis and a fellow walker, Luis, discuss the “practice of pilgrimage.” Wallis mentions how she has read in other books about

¹² See also pages 74 and 177.

the negative attitudes toward certain people on the trail:

I thought of the pilgrims who had sneered at Ken [who went by motorbike], the books I had read by pilgrims who ranted about shallow tourist and sports cyclists. People with fixed ideas trying to define their pilgrimage beforehand, and to exclude what didn't fit their point of view. (369)

Just as she places friendly and speed cyclists in opposition, here sport cyclists are understood as her “speed cyclists” which she associates with “shallow tourist.” By grouping sport cyclists together with shallow tourists; however, she herself is being judgmental, the very behavior she seems to criticize. Because of the impossibility of an agreed upon definition of who is or is not a pilgrim, divisions fall along liquid lines, ultimately defined by each individual to serve their own purposes at any given moment. When Wallis is biking, she interacts with other cyclists. When she walks, it is primarily other walkers who participate in her narrative. In neither case does she present a particularly convincing argument that the two groups, cyclists and walkers, are part of the same.

The figure of the cyclist is generally represented as one of an outsider, a *forestero*. Earlier, I examined how Hoinacki sees only walkers as pilgrims, casting cyclists as the invisible other by presenting them as disembodied, voiceless, and inconsiderate. Wallis, unsure about the validity of her first pilgrimage as a cyclist, creates categories that allow her to exclude certain kinds of cyclists in a way that still maintains her own sense of belonging. This section highlights how, even though cyclists can be portrayed as outsiders, they can also imagine themselves as perfectly integrated into the pilgrimage. Even when other people on the trail may not see

cyclists as constitutive members, that does not stop them from seeing themselves as such. The next Camino narrative I examine is *The Road to Compostela* (1985) by Rob Neillands. His narrative tells the story of his pilgrimage on bike from LePuy to Santiago in 1982. Neillands depicts the Camino as a pilgrimage of cyclists who all see themselves as legitimate pilgrims. When we read Neillands' narrative against the many Camino narratives written by walkers, what becomes apparent is that he gives voice and body to the cyclists who so rarely emerge in walkers' Camino narratives. Curiously, it is not the cyclists' turpitude or hesitation that emerges, but rather the similarity between his descriptions of cyclists and the manner in which walkers describe themselves. Similar rhetorical strategies and themes emerge: a connection to the past, the experience of pain, and the development of friendships, as well as participation in pilgrim rituals. Nonetheless, while he represents cyclists in a way similar to how walkers represent themselves, in the narrative we see that his characters are primarily other cyclists. Walkers rarely appear, reiterating the idea of parallel pilgrimages.

In Camino narratives, pilgrim identity is repeatedly reconstructed to fit each individual's needs. Neillands takes time out in his narrative to provide a description of what he thinks constitutes a pilgrim and why he fits into that category. Using emphatic terms, he insists that cyclists, along with walkers, are the only "true" pilgrims on the trail:

After all, those who go by cycle or on foot are 'true pilgrims'; they experience the heat, the dust, even the danger of the pilgrimage, they share the full experience and enjoy the fellowship of other pilgrims on the Road" (9).

The concern with “true” and “false” pilgrims dates back to the Middle Ages. During the Middle Ages, false pilgrims included the beggars and thieves who dressed up like pilgrims to take advantage of the protection and benefits bestowed upon pilgrims (Melczer 49-50). The idea of “false” pilgrims differs now. Nowadays, false pilgrims, as Neillands understands it, are those who do not complete the entire trail by their own means; for example, they drive or take a bus from one town to another using the albergues (9). This idea of “true” and “false” pilgrims resonates with Hoinacki’s division of walker/cyclist and Wallis’s friendly/fast cyclists: regardless of the names of the divisions, individuals either are or are not pilgrims, either included or excluded. None of these artificial divisions, however, coincides with the Catholic Church’s own perspective, which considers anybody who goes to Santiago by any means (even bus or car) a pilgrim as long as he or she is a devout believer. And like Hoinacki and Wallis, Neillands situates himself within the group of pilgrims; nobody ever seems to exclude him or herself as a pilgrim.

Many pilgrims compare themselves to medieval pilgrims. An important way this connection is made is through the shared mode of transportation. For Hoinacki, and most other walkers, the bike itself disrupts this connection. But, it is specifically (and uniquely) *through* the bike that connects Neillands to the past. Although Neillands does not walk, this does not preclude him from feeling connected to the past in other ways. Early on, he states that he chose to bike because of its affinities with the Middle Ages, suggesting that biking best replicates the medieval pilgrim experience of going by horseback: “A bicycle, a ‘push-bike’, is as close as I could get

to the horse . . .” (21) The horse/bike correlation is never elaborated at greater length and he fails to make the obvious iron-horse metaphor, but surely it would strike many walkers, like Hoinacki, as irreverent. Neillands, nonetheless, never offers any hints that others on the trail might take offence to his bike.

While Neillands does see his bike as a connection, he does not make many of the other connections to the past through rhetorical devices (like metaphors or embedded texts) that other authors do. For example, he does not include any of the many variations of the nearly clichéd “walking in the footsteps of the past.” Jack Hitt offers a persuasive explanation as to why Neillands may not have : “Metaphor is a powerful literary device, but only if it is grounded to a literal meaning” (7). Walkers describe this association to the past through the physical connection they have with the ground, the feeling of the dirt giving way under each step and their awareness of the contours of the hardened mud as the rhythmic beats of walking strike a primitive cord in pilgrims’ bodies. Neillands fails to experience these sensations, his wheels are too pneumatic to discern the nuances of the ground.

In St. Jean Pied de Port, an unofficial but common starting point of the Camino, Neillands seeks out Madame Debril, a well-known figure on the trail, who has since passed away. As she has done for years, in no official capacity, she provides him with his *credencial*, often translated as a “pilgrim’s passport” in English:

I set out to see the sights and began by entering the old town through the Porte St Jacques, and searching for Madame Debril, one of the great characters of the Road, well known to passing pilgrims. I finally bumped into her standing in the rain outside a shop. Madame Debril is the chronicler of the true pilgrims who pass through St Jean. She will supply them with a small passport, declaring their status as a *Peregrino del Camino de Santiago*, and makes the first entry, recording their arrival at St Jean. (81)

In Neillands' narrative, Madame Debril does not take issue with his biking and claiming himself as a pilgrim. This iconic woman embodies several figures at once: gate-keeper, living Camino legend and expert. Debril appears in many Camino narratives (c.f. Hitt, Moore, and Aviva) and her inclusion in the narrative can be read as Neillands' effort to claim his own status as a pilgrim by means of authorial approval. Broadly, her inclusion and Neillands' interaction with her suggest a normalization of cyclists as pilgrims. Her slow, methodical pace of working recalls the Spanish or French *funcionario* or *funcionaire*. The scene of him and Debril appears as much as an encounter with a famous figure as an image of a border crossing guard when Neillands is taken to a back room and interrogated with a long inspection that gives way to verbal approval. She is strict, yet harmless. Although Debril has no official title, her notoriety among pilgrims makes her important: her consent represents the seal of approval. Frey also uses the term gate-keeper to describe an unnamed French person in St. Jean Pied de Port who hands out *credenciales* (69). She writes that "These experiences [receiving the *credencial*] often play an important part in the emergence of the pilgrimage's meaning" (68). And it seems quite fitting that as a pseudo-*funcionario*, Debril provides a figurative approval and literal stamp (in addition to the *credencial* itself). This encounter represents both verbal and symbolic confirmation of Neilland's legitimacy as a pilgrim. With his stamped *credencial* in hand, he sets off to cross the Pyrenees.

This scene becomes more interesting when read against Camino author Jack Hitt's (*Off the Road: A Modern-Day Walk Down the Pilgrim's Route into Spain*

(2005)) meeting with Debril. Some years later, Hitt stops in at Debril's house to obtain his *credencial* before he starts walking. At first, she refuses to give it to him because he does not look enough like a pilgrim (he had mistakenly washed up and put on clean clothes before seeing her). But after some convincing, she cedes and presents him with his *credencial*. Hitt then goes on to explain Debril's take on the question of pilgrim authenticity, at which point the distinction between true and false pilgrims reemerges:

She rants that the road is being debauched by false pilgrims. True pilgrims, she explains, are those on foot or on horseback. Those others on bikes, or in cars, or in taxis simply don't count (31).

In this case, according to Madame Debril, Neillands would be considered a false pilgrim. The discrepancy with Debril can be interpreted in several ways. Either Debril's opinion has changed from the time between Neillands' visit and Hitt's (after so many cyclists over the years, perhaps she has grown tired of them); or it may be that, despite her seemingly tough exterior, Debril cannot be directly critical of cyclists when she is talking to Neillands; or perhaps Neillands and/or Hitt has reconstructed her words to fit their needs. The important point, for the purposes of my discussion, is that both men sought out this woman for her validation of their belonging as "authentic" or "true" pilgrims, an attempt to align themselves with the larger community of pilgrims.

Many walkers on the trail feel that pain is an integral part of the pilgrimage and cannot conceive of a pilgrimage free of it. For Neillands, pain works at the individual and collective level, it reaffirms his own identity as a pilgrim and it connects him to other pilgrims. In his prologue, he explains how he equates pain with

pilgrim identity.

Certainly it [the trip] made me sweat, but sweat makes the true pilgrims, something far more than a mere tourist, a far cry from those unlucky souls who swept past me in their air-conditioned coaches, or landed directly at Lavacola by jet, missing all that the true pilgrims find on this glorious journey down the old Road. (21)

Just as pilgrim identity is individually constructed, so is the suffering that serves as part of the pilgrimage. Like pilgrim identity, pain is self-determined.

Pain and friendship often participate together on the Camino. The former often leads to the latter, and the two experiences are common interrelated themes in Camino narratives. I want to look at two cases of pain and friendship that appear in Neillands' narrative. In the first case, Neillands' *own* suffering allows him to meet other pilgrims. After pushing his bike up the steepest sections of the Pyrenees and suffering from an attack of horseflies, he stops to rest (88). Exhausted, he meets Jacques Viallard, another biking pilgrim, on the side of the road. Jacques offers Neillands some wine and biscuits to recover while they chat. He then goes on to tell him about the places Neillands will see and about the experience as whole: "Rob, you must see Cebrero; but most of all, you will enjoy the fellowship of the Road" (91). At that moment, little does Neillands (nor probably Jacques) realize that it is *their* friendship that Neillands will come to treasure. After Neillands has recovered, he pushes onward, this time with Jacques's three grandsons, also on bikes. Once Neillands arrives at the pass over the Pyrenees, Jacques presents him with "a small pilgrim medal" (91). Intended to identify him as a pilgrim (92) (which is unnecessary), the medal also symbolically seals their newfound friendship.

In the second case of pain and friendship, it is *others'* suffering which helps to

connect Neillands to new friends. Neillands' narrative, like Wallis's, breaks the image of cyclists as antagonistic, especially with walkers. At one point in Wallis's narrative, Kjell, the Finish cyclist, helps carry Wallis's backpack on the back of his bike (274). In Neilland's narrative, the protagonist encounters Miguel and Santiago, two walking pilgrims from Madrid, taking shelter from the rain in the church doorway. Neillands reports that he found Santiago's feet in terrible condition. In a selfless act, Neillands returns to his hotel to fetch his first-aid kit and some bandages (104). This initial kindness he shows towards the walkers foreshadows their next encounter. The next day, as Neillands leaves from the town of Los Arcos, he passes Santiago and Miguel early in the morning. Just short of his destination for the day, he is struck by the fact that the two walkers remain on the trail in the heat and decides to return to check on them.

The fellowship of the Road that Jacques Viallard had talked about now had me in its grip. Somewhere back there, Miguel and Santi would still be coming on across the hills, thirsty, exhausted. I rode back and met them a few miles down the road, Miguel a good mile ahead of the staggering Santi. I circled round, removed the bottle from the carrier and waited for him to come up. 'I've brought you some water,' I said, holding it out and pressing it into his hand. . . I stayed with them throughout the rest of the afternoon, ferrying water to and fro from Viana. . . Eventually the sun gave up the struggle, letting us stumble at last into Logroño. (108)

This is Logroño, the same town where Hoinacki encounters the albergue entryway full of bikes in and where the cyclists later disrupt his sleep. But here Neillands offers a more sympathetic image of cyclists. Miguel, Santi and Neillands enter town together in a strikingly different manner than Hoinacki's showdown-like description of cyclists in Logroño. This compassionate scene of *communitas* bridges the separation that exists between cyclists and walkers, but this contact lasts only briefly.

After this encounter, Neillands and the walkers each continue on their own separate pilgrimages until they run into each other again in Santiago (168). On the one hand, this connection between the cyclists and walkers is unique in its portrayal of cyclists helping walkers. On the other hand, it is like so many other encounters between the cyclists and walkers: short and staccato in duration.

While this moment of a cyclist helping walkers is somewhat unconventional in Camino narratives, the relationship Neillands develops with other cyclists resembles the relationship walkers develop with one another. Throughout the journey Neillands ride the journey on and off with the Villands but their relationship seems to come to an important juncture once they are ready to enter into Galicia, the last region that pilgrims enter before arriving in Santiago. At the bottom of a long hill leading up to the town of O Cebreiro, Neillands again comes across Jacques' grandchildren, who urge him to continue up to the iconic town where they all spend the night together in a hostel sharing wine and each other's company. Although this is not likely what Jacques meant, his earlier statement back on the Pyrenees is confirmed: "Rob, you must see Cebrero; but most of all, you will enjoy the fellowship of the Road" (91). It is here, precisely in O Cebreiro that Neillands agrees to travel the rest of the way to Santiago de Compostela with Jacques, his family and another cyclist, Eve. Neillands description of them arriving to the city of Santiago de Compostela sounds so much like a walker's narrative that you might not realize they were on bikes if you didn't already know:

Pilgrims would race up here from the Road, vying with each other for that first glimpse of the spires of Compostela, the winner shouting '*Montjoie*' at the sight. Whoever won the race to the top was declared the 'king' of that

confraternity and thereafter named Le Roy. It did not seem right to compete when we had come all this way together, so we walked up, cresting the little hill together, and there it was before us, after a thousand miles across France and Spain. The spires of the Cathedral Church of Santiago de Compostela rose gleaming in the afternoon sun, marking the end of our journey. *Montjoie!* (154)

Once in Santiago, Neillands proceeds to complete many of the pilgrims' rituals, both old and new. He touches the central pillar in the cathedral, touched so often over hundreds of years that the fingertips have slowly drilled five holes into the marble. Neillands stops in the Pilgrim Office to claim his Compostela and is told by the priest on duty that he can tell that he is a true pilgrim because the members of his group have a "look" about them. Neillands and his companions then pass through the Puerta Santa, one of the cathedral doors only open during a Holy Year. Later that day, he eats at Suso's, a restaurant known for its inexpensive pilgrim meals (*menú de peregrino*). He appears to enjoy these pilgrim rituals as much if not more than the many pilgrims who walk to Santiago. Neillands never doubts his own legitimacy as a constitutive member of the pilgrim community even though he portrays it as comprised primarily of other bikers.

Concern for "false" pilgrims dates back to the Middle Ages; however, Hoinacki, Wallis and Neillands's narratives suggest that a concern continues. Nowadays, though, the concern with false pilgrims has more to do with those who do not complete the Camino in ways that the individuals deem "authentic." The image of the cyclist as a whole is cast as a negative figure in Camino literature by authors who walk. Hoinacki, whose narrative is representative of walkers, portrays cyclists as antagonistic and inevitably outside the community of pilgrims. As a cyclist, Wallis

presents a more nuanced image of cyclists, yet once she becomes a walker, she presents them as a dyad, either as pilgrims or not. Although Wallis's story portrays cyclists as less antagonistic than Hoinacki, a certain ambiguity about their position within the pilgrimage persists. Nonetheless, her representation at least of friendly cyclists as innocuous outsiders defuses their threat to walkers. Neillands offers readers the image of the cyclist as an affable character by using the same language that walkers use to describe themselves. He never suggests that others might find his bike or choice to bike offensive. Collectively, all three stories reiterate that even though bikes and riders share some of the language of pilgrimage and have similar kinds of experiences, they do not share them. In no Camino narrative does *sustained* interaction between the two groups exist, suggesting strongly that trail can best be understood as parallel pilgrimages.

CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION: HOW FAR HAVE WE GONE AND HOW MUCH FURTHER
UNTIL WE'RE THERE?

*'I hear you're writing a book.' . . .
'Tell me,' he said with a cagey
wink and a tone of mock
exasperation, 'why does everybody
on the Camino want to write a book
about it? –Mary Victoria Wallis*

Unlike the majority of the scholarly work on the Camino, this dissertation considers the importance of first-person Camino narratives as literature, and the role this literature plays within the construction of Camino culture. The corpus of these Camino narratives contains much more than simply the pilgrims' journey to Santiago de Compostela. Collectively, these books tell the vexed story of protagonists searching out a unique self-affirming experience within a community of pilgrims. The readings in this dissertation, however, are not concerned solely with identifying manifestations of community or lack thereof. They draw attention to the subtle ways in which the form and content of narration contribute to make the rather intangible concepts of community feel quite tangible. They also show the opposite: how community can be leveraged to exclude people in the process of defining *peregrino*.

This dissertation reads these books as literature rather than as unmediated texts, and it reads them as interactive, not simply passive coordinators. For example, Nancy Frey, writing in the Camino context, treats these narratives as records of lived experiences rather than as the highly scripted literary representations I've shown them

to be. This becomes noticeable in two different ways. First, there is a literal writing out of certain people and experiences in ways that render them implicitly at odds with the “authentic” Camino experience. This happens, for example, when walkers write about bikers in a way that depicts them as alien or disruptive to the Camino. Second, first-person narratives use narrative frameworks common to the travel-writing genre, and follow patterns found repeatedly within the Camino corpus, such as the embedding of historical information or stories. How one writes about travel and what one writes about has become circumscribed. This makes writing a new Camino narrative a complicated proposition. Writing an “original” story based on others’ work is problematic. A contradiction exists in that the ostensibly unique pilgrimage we read about in these first-person narratives is heavily modeled by pre-existing first-person Camino narratives and travel literature. Scholarly studies of community by anthropologists and political scientists have provided important theoretical signposts for this project, but I have also sought to navigate beyond them. Anthropologists have treated these first-person narratives as sources that directly record lived experience. This dissertation attends to these first-person narratives as literature, rather than as informants.

Critics of Turner’s *communitas* include John Eade, Michael J. Sallnow and Simon Coleman. These scholars have repeatedly shown the ways in which Turner’s concept does not work in “real life” and fails to capture the actual lived experience of pilgrims on pilgrimages. As Coleman writes, “The Turners have been seen as confusing sociological reality with theological idealism . . .” (356).¹ In general terms,

¹ Coleman here is talking about a book written by Turner and his wife, thus the “Turners.”

I believe this critique to be correct. *Communitas* does not occur with every fellow pilgrim one encounters. An exemplary instance of Coleman's critique of *communitas* can be seen in Hoinacki's narrative as he passes over fellow walkers in favor of cultivating his "friendships" with pilgrims from the distant past. Nonetheless, it is also clear that manifestations of *communitas* can and do develop out of many shared moments. We see this in Kevin Codd's narrative and his descriptions of the friendships that developed while he was writing in his diary. We all saw moments of *communitas* between Wallis and Elsie, the German biker, and between Neillands and the Villard family. So, while I do not believe that *communitas* takes place spontaneously at every turn, I do think it is useful to look for some patterns of how, where and when it does appear, rather than wholly discounting the concept. I argue that it is more useful to examine the limits of *communitas* and/or what places or events facilitate its emergence, which is the analysis I have attempted here.

In these first-person Camino narratives, I also have shown how imagined communities are plural within the Camino. Broadly, the imagined community experienced by walkers differs from that of the cyclists. This sense of parallel pilgrimage is particularly evident in the exclusion of bikers in the walkers' narratives. In Hoinacki's case, he seeks out and finds a community of dead pilgrims, quite literally, a wholly *imagined* community that exclude the living pilgrims Hoinacki encounters on the trail.

At the heart of the Camino culture lies the diary. It serves as part of the Camino practice and the published Camino narratives feel and read like highly-edited diaries. This, in part, has much to do with the genre of travel literature. Within these

shared narratives, the same form and content has become heavily repeated. Both on the actual Camino and in the representations of the Camino found in these narratives, diaries figure as a shared activity that serves to connect individuals to one another. Benedict Anderson sees the collective reading of newspapers by passive individuals as a conduit that contributes to an imagined community. Diaries provide the reading material that fellow pilgrims read both on and off the Camino. In these narratives, a connection is established through the active writing of pilgrims in their diaries that is spread across time and space as pilgrims sit down to write every night at different locations along the trail. At the same time, the first-person narratives that read like diaries connect the readers to the community of pilgrims as well, either by living through the narrator's experience or by comparing their own Camino pilgrimage to the narrator's.

Even though within first-person Camino narratives few authors actually describe themselves reading other twentieth-century first-person Camino narratives beforehand or as they walk, implicit and explicit evidence exists that such preparatory reading takes place. For example, Jim Clem, author of *Buen Camino: Hiking the Camino de Santiago* (2004), notes that he read Bob Tuggle's *On the Road to Santiago* before he and his wife set out (12). This reliance on other people's journeys for a model is, of course, understandable, yet it poses a problem in terms of authenticity. There is, in a sense, a paradox: post-1980 first-person Camino narratives tend to tell the story of authors' deeply personal journeys, and yet, at the same time, these stories draw heavily, even if only implicitly, on the narratives of other people's journeys. These stories follow the same form and much of the content becomes repeated.

For example, I've shown how scripted patterns emerge, which are similar to earlier Camino texts. Part of the scripted patterns includes the use of embedded texts, especially older Camino texts. As I noted in Chapter Two, authors draw heavily from handful of surviving medieval texts. The use of this pattern both creates and challenges authenticity. It contributes to the medieval concept of authenticity, in that the use of embedded texts presents the author as an expert in terms of knowledge of the Camino's history. However, the repeated use of the same passages at the same geographical points becomes repetitive and formulaic placing the pilgrim's authenticity at stake (and here I'm speaking in general terms, not suggesting that any individuals have anything less than their own unique experience). The repeated scenes of the crossing of the Río Salado and the subsequent reference to the *Codex* or retelling of the chicken story when arriving at Santo Domingo are wonderful examples of that. In short, authors face a dilemma: including these medieval texts can align them with past pilgrims and pilgrim scholars, but only at the risk of sounding repetitive. Not including these past texts, however, potentially compromises the authors' story, as readers may see these authors as lacking expert knowledge.

Another important point that I want to draw attention to is the dark side of these Camino narratives: who gets left out and how these shared writing strategies leverage this exclusion. For example, many Camino authors cite medieval texts or, to a lesser degree, Camino scholars, but then shy away from including or mentioning the many other contemporary Camino authors who have also written post-1980 first-person Camino narratives. The earlier mention of the Clems having read and acknowledging that they read Bob Tuggle's narrative beforehand is exceptional rather

than typical. In other words, there is a general disavowal of other contemporary authors. This omission is prevalent among all other Camino authors who have written from 1985-2009. Camino authors repeatedly fail to mention the other many first-person narratives that have already been written during this time, much less cite them. While that is understandable for those written in the '80s and even in the early '90s – when few were available and access was limited (before the prevalence of Amazon.com), by the 2000s, Camino narratives were widely available both in terms of number and ease of distribution. It is unlikely that any Camino author, especially anyone who wrote after 2000, would not have read any of the earlier, post-1980 Camino narratives. Yet, authors do not want to be associated with this community of writers because it threatens their own uniqueness. A more complex example is John Pratt, who draws from medieval texts, medieval scholar William Melczer, and contemporary scholars such as Gitlitz and Davidson and Nancy Frey, yet fails to mention any of the other many first-person Camino narratives in print. The inclusion of these former texts gives the appearance of authority. However, any gained authority that might come from his research is arguably lost by excluding or failing to acknowledge the many other existing first-person Camino narratives. Although I am drawing on Pratt as an example, he is not the only Camino author who does this. This careful exclusion of other post-1980 Camino authors within these first-person Camino narratives is prevalent. A pattern emerges as authors disassociate themselves from other contemporary Camino authors in order to stand out.

In the rare cases when Camino narratives do include recent Camino literature, their choices are both interesting and telling: they tend to draw, disparagingly, from

books generally considered unauthentic, questionable, and/or fictitious. Examples of such “tainted” texts include Paulo Coelho’s *The Pilgrimage* (1995), a story about a protagonist named Paulo who sets out on the Camino to find a secret sword as part of a ritual for a mysterious religious order called Regnus Agnus Mundi (RAM), a sect that only seems to exist in Coelho’s book and website, or Shirley MacLaine’s *The Camino: A Journey of the Spirit* (2001), in which she has sex with a phantasmagoric lover. The inclusion of these texts can be seen as another strategic move on the part of authors. As I see it, including books like those of MacLaine or Coelho in one’s own narrative, especially when the books’ validity has already been called into question, serves to legitimize the protagonist’s journey by implicit comparison. At one point in *What the Psychic told the Pilgrim: A Midlife Misadventure on the Camino de Santiago* (2007), author Jane Christmas writes, “In her account of the Camino, Shirley MacLaine wrote about the masses of wild, ferocious dogs prowling for pilgrims, yet every dog I came across could barely muster a bark or a growl” (235). Read against these semi-fictitious stories, the protagonists’ stories become more authentic against a backdrop of questionable embellishment or the cited authors’ incomplete trips. At the risk of undermining the authors’ authenticity by including these less credible stories, they potentially add to the authors’ own credibility.

I argue that literature’s role in the (mis)construction of Camino culture is most prevalent in the representation of cyclists. To my mind, here is where one of the biggest disjunctures between lived and written experience emerges. Whereas cyclists make up nearly twenty percent of the pilgrims on the trail, they barely appear within Camino first-person narratives. Narratives by walking pilgrims include rhetorical

tactics to remove cyclists from the journey by either ignoring them all together or implicitly excluding them from the very category of pilgrims. For better or worse, this attests to the impressive power that writing can leverage. Walkers have managed to delegitimize cyclists on the trail, and cyclists have not had much success in reclaiming their lost subjectivity. The accuracy of the representations does not really concern me; rather, I am interested in examining the mechanisms authors employ to frame the various participants in the Camino experience.

Taking all of this together, an ongoing tension between the individual and collective exists. I'm not suggesting that any of the authors would necessarily identify these "tensions" within their texts or that they were even consciously worried about them *per se*. I'm simply drawing attention to them and looking at the subtle ways that literature contributes to making these tensions palpable to the reader. Who gets left out is a question rarely examined when we think of community; however, as we see in these Camino narratives, under the seemingly inclusive guise of community, it is easy to exclude people.

Although the first-person narrative might seem like the ideal medium and travel writing, the ideal genre, for this pilgrimage, some, especially those familiar with the trail, believe that we have enough Camino narratives already. In a newspaper article titled "Pilgrims' Progress: Another Trek to Santiago?" which appeared in the *British Standard Weekly* in 2008, Thomas Swink, questions if there is need for more books about the Camino:

But do we need all these reactions to the same undertaking? Publishing's addiction to the sure bet is as strong as Hollywood's, but it's more troubling

because of an inherent mission that goes beyond entertainment. How much of value is being ignored because of this tiresome pursuit of the proven? Even Hollywood stops after one remake.

Many experienced pilgrims have also voiced this same sentiment. A regular contributor to the Camino listerv who goes by camino.pilgrim wrote:

As much as I love reading camino stories, and am passionate about the camino, some of the books are becoming exceedingly boring! After reviewing 4 new camino books in 8 months, I'd like to suggest that potential writers find a new approach or a different focus to writing their story to avoid the formulaic, almost write-by-numbers style of camino story. You know the kind I mean – “I felt called to walk the camino; I climbed over a mountain and got blisters/shin splints/tendonitis; slept in a room with 100 snoring strangers; got up early; packed, walked, arrived, washed, ate, slept - ditto, ditto, ditto, blah, blah, blah—Amen—met amazing people; arrived in Santiago, cried in the mass and now I am a changed person—Amen. The End.” Remember, everyone walks the same landscape, through the same towns, faces similar challenges, learns similar lessons and many have an urge to hit the keyboard and turn their journal into a book. Not everyone can walk with a donkey, or lead a blind person, or walk in the dead of winter, but there has to be new, fresh slant to a camino story for the book to have any appeal....The market is becoming saturated and unless you self-publish, you might need to have an original slant to persuade a publisher to add your book to the many hundreds out there.²

Although I have not found “many hundreds” of such books, her point is clear: ennui is setting in for readers of Camino narratives, particularly those who are familiar with the trail already. On a trail that guides travelers to the same geographic places again and again, with so little variation, the stories become redundant and limited. Finding new stories and noteworthy sites becomes challenging.

Even with these sentiments from experienced pilgrims and those who keep up on these narratives, I doubt that the number of Camino narratives published over the

² Nilsen, Silvia. “Writing a book on your camino?” 5 April 2010. Online Posting. Santiagobis. Available E-mail: silvia_nilsen@yahoo.com (5 April 2010). Discussion.

next few years will lower significantly. The Camino's appeal, its ability to provide a sense of self while participating as a constitutive member of a community, real or imagined, makes it too attractive as a lived and written endeavor to resist.

Appendix
Published first-person Camino narratives from 1985-2009 in English

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