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The Pilgrim's Identity in Liquid Modernity

ABSTRACT

The road, journey, wandering are topics known from works of various historical epochs that still appear in social sciences, philosophy and literature. According to Zygmunt Bauman, as humans, we have gone from the times of solid modernity, when we perceived ourselves as “pilgrims” characterized by the concept of identity, to the times of liquid modernity, when we are “tourists” looking for diverse but ephemeral experiences. In this article, I show that the idea of pilgrimage is still valid and allows us to strengthen our identity. I refer to the broad understanding of pilgrimage in the Christian tradition, to the currently observed increase in the popularity of pilgrimages and, above all, to the interpretation of my own experiences of making pilgrimages on the Spanish Camino de Santiago trails. Finally, I characterize the specificity of the pilgrim's role and the criteria for shaping his identity.

KEYWORDS: pilgrimage, identity, solid and liquid modernity, roads to Santiago de Compostela

STRESZCZENIE

Tożsamość pielgrzyma w warunkach płynnej nowoczesności

Droga, podróż, wędrówka to tematy znane z utworów różnych epok historycznych; nadal pojawiają w naukach społecznych, filozofii i literaturze. Zdaniem Zygmunta Baumana jako ludzie przeszliśmy z czasów solidnej nowoczesności, kiedy postrzegaliśmy siebie jako „pielgrzymów” charakteryzowanych pojęciem tożsamości, do czasów płynnej nowoczesności, kiedy jesteśmy „turystami” poszukującymi różnorodnych, ale ulotnych doświadczeń. W niniejszym artykule pokazuję, że idea pielgrzymowania jest nadal aktualna i umożliwia nam wzmocnienie własnej tożsamości. Odwołuję się do szerokiego rozumienia pielgrzymowania w tradycji chrześcijańskiej, do aktualnie obserwowanego wzrostu popularności pielgrzymowania oraz przede wszystkim do interpretacji własnych doświadczeń z odbycia pielgrzymek na

hiszpańskich szlakach Camino de Santiago. Na koniec charakteryzuję specyfikę roli pielgrzymy i kryteria kształtowania się jego tożsamości.

SŁOWA KLUCZE: pielgrzymowanie, tożsamość, twarda i płynna nowoczesność, szlaki do Santiago de Compostela

Introduction: Transition from solid to liquid modernity

Sociologist, essayist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman (1925–2017) uses the metaphor of “being a pilgrim” to describe human identity in the modern world. He writes:

Pilgrims had a stake in the solidity of the world they walked; in a kind of world in which one can tell life as a continuous story, a “sense-making” story, such a story as makes each event the effect of the event before and the cause of the event after, each age a station on the road pointing towards fulfilment. The world of pilgrims – of identity builders – must be orderly, determined, predictable, ensured; but above all, it must be a kind of world in which footprints are engraved for good, so that the trace and the record of past travels are kept and preserved. A world in which travelling may be indeed a pilgrimage (Bauman, 1996, p. 23).

Pilgrims sought to make the world permanent through creation is flexible so that identity can be built at will, but built systematically, the floor by floor and brick by brick. But, according to Bauman, the postmodern world is not hospitable to the pilgrims anymore. He proposes that the pilgrim’s metaphor was the most appropriate for a modern life strategy, absorbed in the difficult task of building a human identity. The pilgrim’s successors in the postmodern world are the stroller, the vagabond, the tourist and the player.

Let’s compare the difference between them and let’s think about what might result with pilgrims identity in a situation the constant ambivalence and uncertainty of Bauman’s “liquid modernity.” The concept of liquid modernity is a metaphor to describe the condition of constant mobility and change that Bauman sees in relationships, identities, and global economics within contemporary society. Instead of referring to modernity and postmodernity, Bauman visualized a transition from a solid modernity to a more liquid form of social life (i.e., “unable to keep any shape or any course for long...” and “...prone to change...” (Bauman, 2000, p. 2).

All four of the pilgrim’s successors are aspects that describe liquid form of social life and become strategies to prevent social commitments. The stroller for example, is holding on out of things and merely simulates

possibilities. It passes and it passes, inconsequential, episodic, superficial and that's it also easily by hand. The player knows about the liquid fickleness of the rules of the game and is therefore only superficially attuned to them without committing themselves. "The player's world is the world of risks, of intuition, of precaution-taking" (Bauman, 1996, p. 31).

The tourist is everywhere at place but nowhere part of the place. He is looking for experiences, but the foreign should not touch him. The holiday world should obey his wishes, not resist, not bind him, but excite, amuse and entertain. The tourist world is aesthetic. The tourist pays for the trip; therefore, he expects his wishes to be fulfilled – comfort, access to services, positive attitude from other people he meets along the way. The vagabond is aimlessly on the move, because the world can no longer be overlooked. He, however, does not expect this and strives to make the comfort, service positive attitude he get. What a tourist perceives as norm, the vagrant accepts as a gift. Tourist could stay at home, but he sets out to meet the other, which is not a necessity in his case, as in the case of the vagabond, but is his personal choice.

It is obvious that in his article Bauman sympathizes with the vagabond (as a metaphor to describe liquid modernity) while criticizing the tourist. The figure of a vagabond evokes sympathy for hard fate, the figure of a tourist – for its limitations. The pursuit of consumption, egoistic processing and devouring the world by the tourist make him, it seems, a very superficial figure who is not taken seriously (Lashchuk, 2020, p. 238). Bauman's thesis is that liquid modernity has made the "pilgrim's" identity antiquated. We are now "tourists," people who skitter from place to place, consuming all the pleasures we can find there without becoming allocated to the place.

1. Pilgrimage as a metaphor of life – Christian tradition

The theme of pilgrimages is woven into many of the books Bible. Christians are encouraged to see themselves as "pilgrims and strangers on the earth," "temporary residents" whose true home is in heaven (1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 11:13; Bibles), the eschatological pilgrim existence (cf. Augustine, 2014, Book 19, Ch. 17.). The Christian life itself is thus seen as a journey towards that fatherland, as a journey in which the individual believer seeks to follow and obey Christ through an alien, frequently hostile world (Mark 8:34, John 14:6). Figures like faithful patriarch Abraham are presented as examples of faith to follow (Hebrews 11:1–16).

Bauman emphasizes that "The figure of the pilgrim was not a modern invention; it is as old as Christianity. But modernity gave it a new

prominence and a seminally novel twist” (Bauman, 1996, p. 19). Staying within the Christian horizon we see that none of the above listed four figures are, so Bauman, postmodern inventions – were, in such or other form, known long before the advent of liquid modernity times (Bauman, 1996, pp. 23–26). Bauman quoted St. Augustine (354–430): “We are pilgrims through time” and according to him this sentence was not an exhortation, but a statement of fact. We are pilgrims whatever we do, and there is little we can do about it even if we wished (Bauman, 1996, p. 20). According to Manuela Brito-Martins “In fact the *Confesiones* of Saint Augustin are, in this respect a good example of what we might call the ‘biography of pilgrimage’ or even of a pilgrim” (Brito-Martins, 2004, p. 88). In his *City of God peregrinatio* (pilgrimage) is directly connected with the theme of the celestial life. It still contains some of the central points of Augustine’s concept of terrestrial life: its holiness, its sociality and community, its searching for vision (in the case of Augustine – celestial), its goal orientation (albeit for the celestial goal), its happily end for those who are on the way of Christ. These aspects also define the identity of the believing Christian and “pilgrimage” was the most fitting metaphor for the life strategy preoccupied with the daunting task of identity-building.

Referring to the Christian tradition, we can point to an analogy between Bauman’s vagabonds and strollers on the one hand, and a kind of monks, whom abbot St. Benedict (480–547) in his *Rule* calls *gyrovagues*, on the other. They are monks of the worst kind: ones who walk from monastery to another monastery, guided only by their whimsies. This type cannot make any progress in the spiritual life and is a danger to those who want to. Benedict writes: “Fourth and finally, there are the monks called *gyrovagues*, who spend their entire lives drifting from region to region, staying as guests for three or four days in different monasteries. Always on the move, they never settle down, and are slaves to their own wills and gross appetites” (Hl. Benedict, 2018, Ch. 1). We can call them dabblers, or restless aesthetes.

The most common motives that prompted the majority of Middle Age Christians to go on a journey were fulfilling a vow or an imposed ecclesiastical penalty, obtaining an indulgence or a pilgrimage understood as thanksgiving or asking for the intercession of a given saint. These and other pilgrim’s motifs, and often also the characteristic clothes they wore, or should wore, gave the pilgrims their internal and visible identity. Certainly, such movements as Reformation and Enlightenment, challenged the religious aspect of pilgrimage with its identity, spirituality and theology (Bremer, 2011, pp. 165–173).

The life and works of St. Ignatius of Loyola SJ (1491–1556) falls on the period of the Reformation. He made not only a pilgrimage to the Holy

Land but, according to his autobiography, throughout his life he identified himself as a pilgrim. His autobiography *Pilgrim's memories, spans very important years of this saint's 65-year life* (Barton, 2020). In his *Spiritual Exercises*, used in the formation of many Catholic clergy and lay people, he recommends: "To praise relics of the Saints, giving veneration to them and praying to the Saints; and to praise Stations, pilgrimages, indulgences, pardons, Cruzadas, and candles lighted in the churches" (St. Ignatius, 2019, Rule 6, p. 74). "Praise relics," "praying to the Saints," "pilgrimages" have served for centuries as elements of a strong identification to be a Catholic in direct opposition to be Protestant.

Bauman points out that the Protestants invented a way to go on a pilgrimage without leaving home and of leaving home without becoming homeless (Bauman, 1996, p. 21). The rejection of physical pilgrimages by the Reformation does not mean that the pilgrimage metaphor was not present in the work of the Reformers. One of these examples is the Puritan author John Bunyan (1629–1688) who wrote one of the most famous books, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, which is a classic spiritual allegory on Christian journey from the City of Destruction (representing earth) to the Celestial City (representing heaven) (Parry, 2019, pp. 19–27; Bremer, 2018b, pp. 529–544). As we walk (in spiritual way) according to Bunyan, we could begin to identify today's many religious pitfalls.

Bauman describes the transition from stable modernity to liquid modernity as a progressive movement: from "pilgrim to tourist." The pilgrim follows a lifelong path, making sacrifices along the way, foregoing pleasure, ignoring byways and short-term rewards in order to reach his ultimate goal. In liquid modernity, the pilgrim is replaced by a tourist with a diffused identity, as a systematic seeker of diversity, pleasure and novelty. The reasons for this transition may be different. Philosopher and cultural theorist Byung-Chul Han (born 1959) underlines one of them: "The more often one changes one's identity, the more production is dynamized. Industrial disciplinary society relied on unchanging identity, whereas postindustrial achievement society requires a flexible person to heighten production" (Han, 217, p. 44). It should be added that the liquid identity diffusion is increasingly perceived as a threat by many people. They are affected by its fragmentarity and are looking for at least a core of an identity, not wanting to be overwhelmed by something foreign.

Bauman leaves no space for religion in liquid modernity, except, ironically, for fundamentalism. According to his concept, the fundamentalist option frees individuals from the torment of choice. An alternative to religion, it is to be limited to socially insignificant aesthetics, such as religious holidays (Bauman, 1997, pp. 173, 180, 184). In my opinion, simple religious faith, which motivates and provides a larger life perspective, no

longer plays such an important role. Christian pilgrimage patterns formed over the centuries are still present in pilgrimages made in liquid modernity. This does not mean, however, that the characteristics of the contemporary pilgrim – which I discuss below – do not testify to his identity.

2. Pilgrimage – some general remarks

Starting from the postmodernist discontinuity and fragmentations of time, of human relations, of the person's life (Bauman, 1996, pp. 26, 34–35), I will present various elements of pilgrimage in order to explore what they currently contribute to the process of identity creation, such as taking on the role of a pilgrim, exploring the world through walking, being homeless, experiencing one's own body, and the presence of other pilgrims. However, there are fundamental difficulties in doing so, of which I will mention only three.

Firstly, because these elements are closely related, it is difficult to use them to describe the contribution of pilgrimage to identity formation. Insofar as pilgrimage represents a complex structure in which exactly the relevance of the individual elements can hardly be distinguished from one another.

Secondly, pilgrimages are found in almost all religions of the world. This brings with it the diversity of pilgrimage forms and rituals present in pilgrimages. Does it happen alone or in a group, on a given or spontaneously developed path, as a local or long-distance pilgrimage, more ascetically or with conveniences, is it path or goal oriented, with or without explicitly religious alignment, is it a cyber-pilgrimage or a part of Christian tourism? (Hill-Smith, 2011, pp. 236–246; Petroman et al. 2015, pp. 203–206). The Christian tradition described above does not play such a role for many of today's pilgrims as it used to be historically, although many Christian motifs and symbols are still present on the routes to Santiago de Compostela. These routes will serve us as an example for further analysis.

Thirdly, there is no generally accepted definition of what constitutes a pilgrimage, and there is constant debate as to whether what is more legitimate or if more contemporary forms do exist. Pilgrimage resists reduction to a simple, general definition. At the 2017 Symposium on Pilgrimage Studies at William & Mary, a panel of distinguished scholars confronted the question of what pilgrimage is from distinct, independent vantage points (Nickerson, 2017, pp. 1–6). The authors of these studies cite various quasi-definitions of “pilgrimage” as quotations. All in all, terms such as “religious journey” and “spiritual journey” are repeated in them, although phrases such as “modern secular journey” are also indicated. It is thus noted that the definition of “pilgrimage” requires reassessment.

The understanding of pilgrimage that I assumed in the following considerations can therefore not claim general validity. This understanding is based on two assumptions:

1. A general description:

(P) Pilgrimage is a practice found in each of the world's major religions. It typically involves a physical journey to a site of significance to a person's beliefs in order to connect with the power of the place or to follow in the footsteps of ancient traditions. The aim usually constitutes spiritual renewal, emotional enrichment, renunciation of the past, guidance for the future, performing a rite of passage or seeking physical and spiritual healing (Nouch/Bradley, 2019, p. 7).

The above description contains the elements that I am going to discuss: journey, tradition, goal pursuit, renunciation, and emotional enrichment. I am supplementing this list with the decision to embark on a pilgrimage. Such a supplement is important when during the pilgrimage, "renunciation of the past, guidance for the future" should be worked out.

2. To this description I will add my own observation a reflection that I made as an individual pilgrim on the Spanish Ways of St. James and as somebody who meets a group of pilgrims at the Franconian sanctuary of Vierzehnheiligen (Germany). At the turn of September and October 2022, I made a walking pilgrimage from Seville to Santiago Compostela, the so-called Camino Via de la Plata. In 2006 I walked from Pamplona to Santiago, the so-called Camino Frances. Unlike the Camino-Frances route, the Via de la Plata is characterized by, on the one hand, longer stages where access to water is scarce, so you have to carry everything, and on the other hand, there are fewer pilgrims on it than on the Camino Frances. Longer stages encourage both self-reflection, and more frequent conversations with the same pilgrims on the way and at the *albergues*. Many of the pilgrims I met had already been on various Spanish or Portuguese Caminos several times and it was not important for them to obtain the so-called Compostela, i.e., the official confirmation of the pilgrimage. There are also fewer towns with historical buildings on the route – except for cities such as Sevilla, Merida, Carceres, Salamanca, Zamora, where you can see well-preserved fragments of Roman architecture. In addition, especially in the south of Spain, it is very hot during the day and autumn rain appear near Santiago. For over 20 years, I have been regularly spending my holidays in Vierzehnheiligen – a sanctuary where in the years before the covid epidemic approx. 180 organized, various-sized walking pilgrimage groups would arrive annually. Some of these groups would have walked for three, while others for one day. Currently (2022) the individual and group pilgrimage movement is slowly returning to its previous state (Bremer, 2007; Bremer, 2018a, p. 59). Some

of the participants have made such annual pilgrimages more than 30 times, which allows them to identify themselves as pilgrims.

1987 Camino Frances was proclaimed the first European Cultural Itinerary by the Council of Europe. Since the nineteen-eighties, the annual number of pilgrims has risen from less than 3,000 to over 347,000 in 2019 (Pilgrim's Reception Office 2020). The coronavirus epidemic has had a negative impact on the number of pilgrims, throughout the year 2021, a total of absolute number was 178,912 pilgrims. The Camino Pilgrims Office at the Cathedral of Santiago recognizes pilgrims on foot who present the so-called "pilgrim's passport". It is a document stating that they have walked at least 100 km before Santiago. St. Jacob pilgrims carry their backpacks and sleep in shelters (*albergues*).

In further parts of this article, I will question my own experience and the above-mentioned factors of long-way pilgrimage (description (P)), as to what they contribute to this process of finding one's identity. Important elements are: borderline experiences, encounters with others, the opening goal orientation, self-empowerment and world assurance, walking and physicality. This list of items does not claim to be complete.

3. Taking on the role of a pilgrim

According to Bauman, human identity has even become a playful phenomenon. He argues that in a liquid culture, play is no longer confined to childhood but has become a lifelong attitude: "The mark of postmodern adulthood is the willingness to embrace the game whole-heartedly, as children do" (Bauman, 1995, p. 99). The life in liquid culture stays in complex connections between play a role, technologies and different kind of media.

The pilgrim can slip into a culturally traditional role and as well to imitate further development of the potential stored in it. This happens especially on traditional pilgrimage routes, as the routes to Santiago de Compostela. The traditions that make up the semantics of the stories of these routes provide strong roles. Ignatius will call them "giving veneration to them and praying to the Saints." They are present in old pilgrims' reports, in old legends and in contemporary stories – told in person in *albergues*, streamed live over the internet or written down on websites (Bremer, 2012, pp. 93–108). In the Middle Ages, the exchange of such stories was more intense, as pilgrims returning from Santiago met in refuges with those on their way there. Today's pilgrims usually return from Santiago by other means of transport. The traditions are also present in the material objects of sacred art: churches, cathedrals, or crosses encountered on the road. The semantics of traditional, sacred stories on top of the material, architectural context in which these

stories are incorporated reach to contemporary pilgrims. The local inhabitants perceive the wanderers as pilgrims and very often greet them saying *Buen Camino, peregrino!* which supports their own identity.

Especially on the Ways of St. James, which have always stood for autonomous and individual forms walking and piety, there are certain reservations about taking on a given pilgrim role. This may have made sense in the past, in the times of consolidated religious identities. Today, however, there is a strong need to first develop one's own identity. Therefore, in the context of Bauman's classification, there is much to be argued for the not shelving the figure of the pilgrim as a purely historical fact, but in favor of making it accessible through historical information, and motivating individuals to take on a pilgrim-role. The strength of pilgrimage is certainly also in that it does not have to be enforced, but its performance can generate itself without a set of clearly defined roles. "Pilgrimage is a game" (Lienau, 2009, p. 69). Careful consideration should be given to whether the assumption of roles should be very deep and engaging, or is it more dependent on the threshold, wherein one steps out of a role in a reflective manner. Different degrees of authenticity are possible here: from the "recreational" type (similar to a player or tourist) who keeps a safe distance from the role of a pilgrim, to the "experimental" type that is temporary, whereby a person tried on the role of a pilgrim as a different way of life. If the pilgrimage remains only casual in the sense of taking a break from the demands of everyday life without the possibility of questioning this everyday life as such, then it will have no consequences after the pilgrimage. Experimental and serious testing of this latter form of existence, on the other hand, may enable with a shift in everyday life. There are two important forms of role-playing in the pilgrim's game:

1. Routines: On the one hand, pilgrimages are associated with being free, while on the other hand, they are journeys with a ritual structure, during which people physically leave everyday life and set off to places that are important to them (see def. (P)). Against the propagated appearance of autonomy, however, there are certain conventionalities, especially on well-trodden paths: a traditional route currently makes the question of how and where to go superfluous. There is also an established daily rhythm: long-term repetitive activities, such as daily walking, packing the backpack in the morning and leaving the *albergue*, arriving at the next *albergue*, unpacking the backpack in the evening, quick laundry, meals, etc., repeating the same activities every day. Life on the Camino is also about routine patching of blisters and restless sleep, personal meetings and prayer. On the Via de la Plata I carried all my possessions on my back. While it was a beautiful experience, I was sometimes frustrated to always be packing up my things and moving to someplace new.

Pilgrims departing from the *albergue* simultaneously silently invite others to follow. Such an influence on the part of other people helps in moments of apathy and fatigue. This kind of routines and behaviors is very helpful in creating one's own identity, by entrusting ourselves to the dynamics of a common context, by freeing ourselves from a momentary mood.

2. Pilgrimage as the experience of *communitas* implies a close identification that develops with the fellow pilgrims (Turner, 1969, pp. 94–130): the fewer pilgrims and *albergues* on the route – as in the case of the Via de la Plata – the stronger this community can be. I stayed on the Camino for ca. six weeks where everything was shared: bedrooms, kitchens, the fridge, food, first aid supplies, cups of tea or coffee, conversations and friendships. It was not a time for looking forward to returning to a society of separation and hostility.

The same outside context of experience creates a kind of intimacy with each other. Everyone comes from the same direction, follows the same route and has a similar goal in mind: for someone, the goal is the road, for someone the cathedral in Santiago, but we are on the way together. While in the differentiated everyday life of a plural, liquid society the difference is often overwhelming and prevents identification, the pilgrim meets people who understand him because they can identify with what he himself has experienced. Another moment that strengthens solidarity is the unusual closeness to each other. Distance from other people, known to the pilgrim from his own home, cannot be maintained in the communal and parochial *albergues*. The privacy is significantly reduced. In the confines of an *albergue*, one is dependent on one another, even with one's weaknesses and peculiarities. Especially the pilgrim's sides that are usually hidden – such as impatience or intolerance, – and therefore not integrated into his identity, are thematised here on an equal footing – even if this is not actively sought.

The essential role of *communitas* in strengthening the identity of group pilgrims is played by walking the road together, and then, when the group – in the same or similar composition – made annual pilgrimages to the same sanctuary. Unlike the pilgrims on the Via de la Plata it is usually a group of people who know each other and share similar motivations (Bremer, 2018a, pp. 59–60).

4. Walking and exploring the world

At least since the time of the peripatetic Greek philosophers, many thinkers have discovered a profound, intuitive coherence between walking, thinking, and writing. Walking is one powerful way to experience the world intensely. When we go for a walk, the heart beats faster, more blood and

oxygen circulate in the muscles and in all organs – including our brain. According to Rebecca Solnit,

Pilgrimage walks a delicate line between the spiritual and the material in its emphasis on the story and its setting ... it reconciles the spiritual and the material, for to go on pilgrimage is to make the body and its actions express the desires and beliefs of the soul. Pilgrimage unites belief with action, thinking with doing, and it makes sense that this harmony is achieved when the sacred has material presence and location (Solnit, 2001, p. 50).

Pilgrimage in a first sense of the definition (P) means one thing above all: walking. Everyday life is shaped by the juxtaposition and confusion of a wide variety of tasks. Pilgrimages are dominated by one single act: to be on the go. In day-to-day life, physical exercise is usually reduced and at the same time, the growing psychological burden is felt. The separation between low body activity and intense mental work induces stress. Moving not only sharpens the multiplicity of overlapping sensory impressions and demands. First of all, longer, daily walking can lead to an improvement in the pilgrim's overall health. A holistic view of the human person recognizes the interaction of somatic and psychological events. Walking reveals new possibilities, helps to establish contacts and enables the acquisition of new knowledge (MacPherson, 2016, pp. 425–432).

Pilgrimage is literally going-out, which means that the movement goes beyond reaching a different geographical point. The pilgrim's movement opens the world for him. During the pilgrimage, the desire for better awareness in relation to one's own "body" is revealed as a bridge to promote the relationship between man and nature and the implementation of a special kind of "world-disclosure through elementary movement experience" (Hildebrandt-Stramann, 2010). One wants greater awareness in relation to one's own "body" as a bridge to promote the relationship between man and nature and to realize a special kind of this world-disclosure.

Through movement, one comes into contact with things, which changes his perspective on them. Movement is not only a means of perception, but also of expression. This expressive dimension describes how we not only open up space through movement, but also how we shape it. Pilgrims' walking means to create a physical space for themselves, and a space for the direct communication with others.

In everyday life, world exploration is almost exclusively mediated by different devices. Many processes involve interpersonal communication and negotiation. On the one hand, public transport, airplanes and cars increase the radius of our activity, but at the same time they make it more difficult to adopt and absorb the content of this radius. The self-activity

of walking, on the other hand, makes an alien space his own. Pilgrimage seems to open up direct access to the real world beyond different mediators. Things appear different when they are not conveyed in a communicative manner and cannot be deciphered first, but appear to be being simply perceived (Lienau, 2009, p. 76).

As we stride, it enables an unrestricted enlargement of our self and thus strengthens our freedom. Above all, walking gets the pilgrim also internally in motion. The bodily movement opens corresponding association spaces. Thoughts of departure, letting go, being on the move, having a goal and arriving at it immediately become clear. Instead of being satisfied with the tourist-status of what has been achieved, the pilgrim seeks and expects change.

5. Becoming a body

The human being learns through embodiment, which can be even more elementary than from stories and taking on roles. In daily life, we usually confront our body in a dualistic way, as an instrument and an object distinct from ourselves. Walking, moving creates a synchronicity of the conscious mind and the body that leads to one's experience of their own body: to paraphrase Descartes: "I think therefore I am" we acquire "I walk therefore I am" (Bremer, 2014b, pp. 16–17). Linguistically speaking, embodiment happens as a unity of that what we express through indexicals such as "I," "here," "now," "this" and "that" (Bremer, 2014a, pp. 261–270). One is immersed in the immediate fulfillment of current moments of life. The "in himself feeling," "becoming a body" given absolute locality leads to a certainty about himself. Because that awareness returns from things to oneself, it descends into one's own body: one is walking in emotional participation in the world, in feeling the acting out itself and in the joy of existence as such. The identifying certainty of being oneself imposes itself overwhelmingly, undeniably and even precisely in the simple and direct perceptions of one's own body, about which the pilgrim has nothing to doubt.

But the same is true of the disturbing aspects of the body that come to light in pilgrimage efforts, such as indolence, impulsiveness, or breakdowns. Mention should also be made of such serious bodily problems that lead to visits in the emergency room or interruption of the pilgrimage. M.B. Harris focuses on describing the Camino in terms of the challenges it poses to the pilgrim's body, in terms of how the pilgrim's body adapts to this challenge, and how physiological challenges and adaptations can influence the Camino experience (Harris, 2019). In the affective way, through pain or exhaustion, for example, the body is experienced as resisting and becomes present as such. If we consider that no sense of action arises only through conscious

interpretation, then it becomes clear that situations of intense bodily intentionality are particularly convincing in identifying particular experiences.

Mental idiosyncrasies come to light more unchecked. The pilgrim experiences himself more clearly through his body. He may live out his experience, observe his emotional outbursts and is thus confronted with himself. Added comes being physically overwhelmed, especially in the case of people who usually do not reach their bodily limits. Long-time and long-distance walking leads to understanding that body awareness is inseparable from the pilgrim's experience of his own identity and have an impact on his psycho-psychical condition as an individual.

Such pilgrimage, which goes to one's own limits, becomes a form of asceticism. During this kind of pilgrimage, it is not the immediate well-being that counts, not even the pragmatic. The pilgrim deliberately exposes himself to the burden of circumstances, exercises his self-control, overcomes external and internal obstacles and, in this way, experiences himself as a doer in his pilgrimage role. This shows the pilgrim's freedom of the will and its power, in contrast to the stroller or tourist, who may not consider the physical limits of their body. Successful self-overcoming has a highly motivating effect. The pilgrim does not experience himself as being driven by circumstances, but as the driving force. In this way, pilgrims become aware of their own responsibility and can take control of their lives, even in the face of obstacles. Pilgrimage as a continual beginning, as living the strange and disorienting liminality of one's existence without seeking a final resolution does not come without joy, liberation, and even healing (Jamieson, 2019). At the same time, it shows the limits of self-control and thus helps one to realistically assess their own possibilities. This is also experienced physically: the physical, bodily tension strengthens and integrates one's body and thus shows one's own boundaries.

But just being a pilgrim on his long, lonely roads can be a mental borderline experience. On the route of the pilgrimage, he may ask himself questions about the sense of the road, the purpose of the road, or about the size of the load that should be taken in the backpack. These questions, however, often go beyond the current situation of the pilgrim and begin to concern his or her everyday life. Because, as a consequence, they affect broader areas of meaning in life and activate coping strategies.

6. To be homeless

As "temporary residents," pilgrim moves away from their usual surroundings. Along the way, he meets tourists and inhabitants of cities and villages. For him, they are strangers, who have no experience of being a pilgrim.

These people approach pilgrims from outside the usual patterns and roles assigned to them. Such an approach is alienating and irritating, and at the same time, it is an opportunity to break out of the pilgrim routine, from the pilgrim patterns. Simultaneously, what is irritating and disturbing can, thanks to the pilgrims' closeness to each other, give them a more developed sense of their own identity.

On my Santiago pilgrimage I did not have a home and I found myself sometimes wanting to spend two nights in the same home. In the broadest sense, the pilgrim loses his home. He is homeless, but again and again he may find hosts – for a chat along the way, for overnight stays and for blisters care. He experiences it more strongly than alone at home. He lives it out as someone dependent at such moments, forced to receive help from others, as someone who is not in control of the situation. Unlike the everyday life of the pilgrim, filled with norms and safeguards, now he has to ask for a favor or thing. He has to learn to trust, to be open for what is coming. He experiences the “reality of the possibles,” which, if fulfilled, strengthens his expectations step by step.

His detachment is however ambivalent. It is a loss and a gain at the same time, because tempting new possibilities are opposed in favor of abandoning familiar circumstances. According to the Prospect Theory, a loss of something is more severe than an acquisition of new, equally important things. Avoiding the pain of change is valued more than the benefits of change (Kahneman, Tversky, 1982). That makes people afraid. Setting out on the road – abroad or in own homeland – means giving up some security. A lot the real is replaced with the possible. This opens up a wide space of possibilities that is both frightening and rewarding. In many cases the pilgrim moves around a foreign country, meets strangers, is confronted with foreign customs and life plans, and experiences himself within an unfamiliar activity. A few years ago, language could have been a big barrier, but today using, e.g., the Google Translator, this barrier is much smaller. But this does not mean that all of the cultural barriers between the pilgrim and the local population are automatically crossed (Bremer, 2017).

In the case of pilgrims, the postmodern diffusion of identity can be pushed to the extreme. So, it would become a means of self-loss, seeking alienation from oneself. The encounter with strangers is then not used to make their role one's own, but above all to confirm one another's foreignness, namely in a mode of distance that is not overcome, but staged with downright relish. Non-agreement – neither with oneself nor with the stranger – would be the imperative of this stranger encounter. This can develop the productive potential of self-development as well as lead to the crisis of self-loss.

Alienation is experienced as a fundamental crisis of orientation in which one does not know who one is, observes himself and strangers, becoming homeless within itself (Hamblet, 2003, pp. 133–142). We may encounter the pilgrim's claim to be completely exposed to the alien without assimilating the alien through identifying integration. In this case, self-alienation leads to the loss of the pilgrim's ego. The loss of ego does not threaten the healthily distanced pilgrim, but precisely the one who is fully committed to his pilgrimage. He becomes a super pilgrim but he cannot integrate this being super within himself. If he wants to avoid such non-integrable experiences, it makes sense to go on a pilgrimage in his own cultural area, because this offers points of contact to his existing knowledge and experiences.

7. Conclusion: Pilgrimage as a way to identity

The starting point of our considerations were Bauman's considerations about the weakening sense of identity when moving from solid to fluid modernity. The religious identity that historically characterized Christian pilgrims is difficult to transfer to the characteristics of a pilgrim in liquid modernity. The ongoing pilgrimage boom in the secularizing Western countries and being a pilgrim can be considered as a reaction to the loss of identity. The identity-less player moves from game to game, the stroller moves from shop to shop, the aesthetic tourist from place to place, and the vagabond drifts on the liquid waves.

The pilgrim in the stable modernity had his own identity and, most importantly, he can maintain it in a space of confrontation with liquid modernity. This identity is primarily based on the characteristics of being a pilgrim. To be a pilgrim today may have elements of a vagabond, a tourist or a player, but they do not blur his own identity. Because of this, he or she is still a legitimate figure in liquid modernity. Instead of stumbling over dispersed identities – under the guise of his own project – the pilgrim finds identity by recognizing himself as already present in the role of a pilgrim and in telling others about it.

After that, pilgrimage may be considered as a role-playing game. Its playing field can be formed through religious practices, routines, and communitization, among other things. The pilgrim becomes confronted more emotionally with himself, and he can expand his limits by overcoming himself and empower himself by giving meaning to what he does (Lienau, 2009, pp. 81–83).

Not only the relation to oneself, but also to the other belongs to identity and is developed during pilgrimages in confrontation with the stranger. Pilgrimage helps to deal confidently with differences, by having positive

experiences with uncertainty, practices transcending what is there through goal orientation and enables one to move in a space in which one is not yet fixed.

By walking, the pilgrim gets in motion holistically – with body and mind – and he is able to look at the world in an active, balanced way. Access to the surrounding world is thereby given a high level of certainty and clarity. The pilgrim also achieves this through incorporation of his body to himself. This in turn is supported by the synchronicity of Self- and external-experience, by sensuality and meaning.

There was some motivation behind his journey: whether it was religious or simply a motivation to go on one of the well-known pilgrimage routes. His being on the road involves strong experiences of limitations and openness. He distances himself from everyday life and from the roles and expectations associated with it. At the same time, he does not enter a completely uncharted space. On the way he can be inspired by fellow pilgrims or previously read travelogues. Pilgrims are both encouraged and irritated, which causes strong moments of self-assurance: he experiences his physical self-evidence.

As a pilgrim he stands in the moment and in a perspective towards a goal (def. (P)) – reaching, as in our example, the Cathedral in Santiago de Compostela. Thus, it must not be only the road itself that is his or her goal. The pilgrim has a destination with the end point of the pilgrimage – a point described much more clearly than it can be done in everyday life. This goal orientation can be reinforced by an eschatological orientation that goes beyond the concrete pilgrim goal. The varied experiences on the way are much more intense than in usual life: physical exhaustion, happiness about encounters and feeling atmospheres are so strong and immediate that they clearly fixate the mind on the moment.

The opposite poles of pilgrimage – limitation and expanse, being in the moment and focusing on a goal, identity and alienation – bring about a pilgrim's self-interpretations in a special way. They do not cancel each other out for the pilgrim or confuse him. Instead of relativizing and weakening each other, they form an expansion of the experienced symbol repertoire. The pairs of opposites are similar in that they describe different aspects of the opposites of reinforcing-reassuring and irritating-alien. One of the strengths of pilgrimage is that both irritation and encouragement occur at the same time. The irritation reflects in the opposite of the foreign and motivates to name one's own in relation to it. It encourages interpretations in which one becomes aware of oneself. Firstly, the certainty of oneself gives one the confidence to open up and relate interpretations to oneself. Therefore, the opposite poles of pilgrimage – limitation and expanse, being in the moment and focusing on a goal, identity and alienation – bring about the pilgrim's self-interpretations in a special way.

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