

Review of: "Spirituality of Pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago: Existential Questions and the Meaning of Life"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

Overall, I very much enjoyed this article, which explores issues I find intriguing. The quotations are particularly powerful, and the writing is mostly clear and convincing. Below are some suggestions for even greater clarity.

The introductory material has many interesting insights, and there was a lot I resonated with. I have to admit that I did not fully understand it all, which may be due to my lack of familiarity with philosophical reasoning. Some points I struggled to follow are outlined below.

On p.2, I would like the 'I/thou' principle explained or replaced with something that clarifies what this means. Also on this page, I am not sure what the 'social structure' is that provides cognitive value on a pilgrimage; an example would help clarify this.

I am not sure what is meant by 'ontological awareness'. Is it the questions that are asked? Or the need to ask questions?

The question 'to be or not to be' seems to me one about whether or not to stay alive – is this a question most people ask, or is it good for them to ask? It seems to me a rather unusual and potentially unhealthy question in itself.

How does late modernity separate time and space? The example of gathering during the Covid pandemic is interesting, but very unusual. Mostly, we are still doing life with people in the same time zone as ourselves.

I agree that rituals are important; it would be good to further clarify why they provide 'essential psychological support' as suggested.

On p. 5, it seems a bit of a leap from an 'interpretive approach' to claiming a 'solid foundation for scientific conclusions'. To make this claim, it is important to define 'science' and show how this meets the definition. My advice would be not to claim it is 'science' – why does it need to be?

I don't have a full sense of how the categories for the data analysis were conducted, but this may be because I am not familiar with miner software and what it does.

There is a shift from 'I' to 'we' on p. 6; who else was involved?

The quotations are powerful, and the results are very interesting.

On p. 8, I suggest this could be pilgrims 'playing' with the notion of miracles and meaning in the alignment of their inner

reality and what is happening in the world, rather than them seeing these as actual ‘miracles’. I would also be careful with the connection to physicists; this could be expanded or deleted as it isn’t clear what it means exactly.

The conclusion captures well the ‘tone’ of the results. I suggest being careful about assuming the pilgrimage works in this way because of today’s ‘disenchanted society’. To claim that, you would really need to show that in previous times it worked differently. I also suggest clarifying in this section that you are referring to the pilgrim narratives you analysed, and probably only some of these narratives – that is, unless there were incidents of these experiences in every one of the narratives? The last sentence may also be a stretch – as it implies a perspective that remains after the pilgrimage is over and that hasn’t been illustrated earlier.

Thank you for this careful and interesting work.