

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

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The meaning of life is an important subject to write about in our tumultuous world. The article was easy to read, with a useful introduction to some of the issues that have emerged over time to elucidate the question that human beings pose about their existence. The article by Schnell & Pali (2013) - *Pilgrimage Today: The Meaning Making Potential of Ritual. Mental Health, Religion in Culture*, produces similar findings from 10 years ago, although this submission has more sources but does not reflect on research on pilgrimages.

The theoretical model for investigating the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage is not fully discussed. For example, what is "basic trust"? Why has this broken down in today's world? Thus, it does not appear as if much new knowledge has been exposed. The author does not really explain the reasons for pilgrimage. The discussion of why people feel lost is vital. Why do not more people go on pilgrimages? 350,000 pilgrims are small in relation to the overall population. The author needs to go into more detail and broaden the discussion. Much international research is not mentioned.

The Camino pilgrimage is one ritual that allows contemporary Westerners to experience the world as having meaning beyond the present existence. The author analyses published accounts of pilgrims to show how their sense of time, space, and human existence has been deepened by their experience. Is it a religious experience? Does it open up another world? Is it a break from the mundane existence to provide another way of being? These questions could be fully explored to better understand the pilgrimage process. Western people seek meaning by appropriating traditional modes to understand existence. What are these acts realising for their seekers? How are the rituals transforming them?

Greece, Portugal, Spain, and the Camino de Santiago are presented as the illustrative cases. These regions are often approached by European academics as places for reflection on problems but may overlook/dismiss local people in understanding the issues under investigation. This work shows such tendencies. Thus, it would be useful to approach the subject in a broader way to provide a fresh look at the subject of our existence.

I enjoyed the article, and it was easy to read, but I was left with many questions that need answering to provide a fuller approach to the subject of pilgrimages enhancing the meaning of life.

