



UNIVERSIDADE
CATÓLICA
PORTUGUESA

**THINKING *IN, ABOUT* AND *THROUGH* ATMOSPHERES: A
RESEARCH ON THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CAMINO DE
SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA**

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to
obtain a Master's Degree in Culture Studies (Management of the
Arts and Culture)

By

Emma Geert Hallemans

Faculty of Human Sciences

September 2024



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Abstract

In this dissertation, the Camino Primitivo de Santiago de Compostela is analysed through the concept of atmospheres. Atmospheres give our surroundings a certain tone and situate themselves in the *in between*. We are affected by their configurations as they unfold through time. Besides, atmospheres are ambiguous and as such, they form a connective element between multiple dualities. This makes them a flexible concept to think *through* as they take on both the role of research object and research medium.

The Camino Primitivo, my case study, is a pilgrimage in Northern Spain. There is something about this pilgrimage that is not entirely graspable, but which make thousands of pilgrims move through pain, discomfort, and solitude. The Camino is a cultural practice, concerning different cultural contexts. Moreover, the Camino embodies on a tacit level, a cultural context. This is exactly why I use atmospheres to understand my case study.

I apply Sumartojo and Pink's (2019) research methodology of researching *in*, *about* and *through* the atmosphere of the Camino. Researching *in* reflects an embodied perspective, researching *about* transforms this knowledge into a representation and researching *through* uses the concept of atmospheres as a route to arrive at new knowledge. More specifically, I tackle the following main question: "How can we think *in*, *about* and *through* the atmosphere of the Camino?" and sub-questions: "How can I, applying this methodology, uncover new knowledge about the atmosphere of the Camino?" and "What is this new knowledge about the atmosphere of the Camino?"

Following an extensive literature review, I establish an ethnographic-theoretical dialogue using fieldnotes and photographs that I took of the atmosphere of the Camino. In the end, researching *in*, *about* and *through* the atmosphere showed that the atmosphere of the Camino is animated. On the Camino pilgrims surrender to its atmosphere in the form of mystical participation which translate into affect, serendipities, and movement.

Keywords: Atmospheres, Pilgrimages, Cultural Geography, Anima, Aesthetics, Embodiment

Resumo

Nesta dissertação, o Caminho Primitivo de Santiago de Compostela é analisado através do conceito de atmosferas. As atmosferas dão um certo tom ao que nos rodeia e situam-se num espaço intermédio. Somos afetados pelas suas configurações à medida que se desenrolam no tempo. Para além disso, as atmosferas são ambíguas e, como tal, formam um elemento de ligação entre múltiplas dualidades. Isto torna-as num conceito flexível para pensar, uma vez que assumem tanto o papel de objeto de investigação como o de meio de investigação.

O Caminho Primitivo, o meu estudo de caso, é uma peregrinação no Norte de Espanha. Há algo nesta peregrinação que não é totalmente compreensível, mas que faz com que milhares de peregrinos se movam através da dor, do desconforto e da solidão. O Caminho é uma prática cultural, que diz respeito a diferentes contextos culturais. Além disso, o Caminho incorpora, a um nível tácito, um contexto cultural. É exatamente por isso que utilizo as atmosferas para compreender o meu estudo de caso.

Aplico a metodologia de investigação de Sumartojo e Pink (2019) para investigar *na, sobre e através* da atmosfera do Caminho. Investigar *em* reflete uma perspetiva corporificada, investigar *sobre* transforma este conhecimento numa representação e investigar *através* utiliza o conceito de atmosferas como uma rota para chegar a novos conhecimentos. Mais especificamente, abordo as seguintes questões principais: Como é que podemos pensar *na, sobre e através* da atmosfera do Caminho? e sub-perguntas: “Como é que eu posso, aplicando esta metodologia, descobrir novos conhecimentos sobre a atmosfera do Caminho?” e “Quais são esses novos conhecimentos sobre a atmosfera do Caminho?”

Após uma extensa revisão da literária, estabeleço um diálogo etnográfico-teórico utilizando notas de campo e fotografias que captei da atmosfera do Caminho. Finalmente, a investigação *na, sobre e através* da atmosfera levou-me a concluir que a atmosfera do Caminho é animada. Isto implica que os peregrinos se entreguem à sua atmosfera numa forma de participação mística que se traduziu em afetos, serendipidades e movimento.

Palavras-passa: Atmosferas, Peregrinações, Geografia Cultural, Anima, Estética, Corporalização

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Introduction

To make walking into an investigation, a ritual, a meditation, is a special subset of walking, physiologically like and philosophically unlike the way the mail carrier brings the mail and the office worker reaches the train.
- Rebecca Solnit (2002, 3)

Atmospheres and the Camino de Santiago de Compostela

I have travelled through many perspectives of walking. From practical transportation, a recreational stroll, a sportive hike in the mountains, to a spiritual pilgrim hike with school. One thing is sure: I am a walker and I believe there is something about walking. In this research, I will dive into the walk of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela.¹

Everywhere we go, we encounter and move through atmospheres. We might not always be attuned to them, but they are there, and we are often their co-creators. Atmospheres both e/affect us and are e/affected by us. They are hidden in other terms, such as ambience, *stimmung*, aura, vibe, and mood, each coming with their own etymology and specialized use, but all displaying a certain intangibility. We use the term in everyday life when describing how an environment/space/event feels like. For example, the atmosphere of a fado performance feels very intimate while, when talking about a big rock concert, its atmosphere is often described as energetic and chaotic. The difference between the use of the word ‘atmosphere’ in everyday life and its use in an academic context lies in the framing of the word: its use in the former is more casual, whereas its use in the latter is more conceptually relevant.

The concept of atmosphere is a travelling concept (Bal and Sherry, 2002). In the academic world, the term atmosphere was first used in natural sciences to describe the layers of gas around celestial bodies (Craig 2015). Later, it developed within the field of medical science as a word describing the corporeal effluvia that might exert an emotional state or a social character (Riedel 2019, 86-87). Following this evolution, the concept of atmospheres evolved into more spatially related theories introducing it into the field of humanities. The concept mostly gained its momentum in humanities with its description by the German architectural theorist Gernot Böhme (Riedel 2019, 88; Böhme 2016). He intends to

¹ Hereafter, referred to as Camino.

investigate the aesthetical components of a human environment aside from its natural components (Böhme 2016, 1). This environment should, according to him, not only be measured as an ecosystem consisting of climatic and biological parameters; rather, a human environment is embedded in a social, political, and cultural context. Atmospheres take into account how a certain space/environment/experience *feels*, rather than what it is constituted of naturally (Böhme 2014, 92). In this dissertation, Böhme's conceptual framework of atmospheres is the base of understanding atmospheres spatially. It is applied to understand a particular phenomenon characteristic of the Camino and how it is connected to its atmosphere.

Besides atmospheres being a spatially relevant perspective, they are also experienced throughout time, as something we encounter. A certain web of configurations unfolds that pulls and pushes us. It connects different things, people, and space-time relations with their surroundings. Sumartojo and Pink investigate how to research atmospheres in an experiential context. They believe that “[... understanding] atmospheres as emergent and continuously configured allows us to see not only what meanings they might carry and what work they might do in people's lives, but also what they make possible into the future and what they enable us to imagine and know in ways that were not possible before” (2019, 4). In this dissertation, I discuss their perspective under the term “experiential atmospheres” as a second lens into the concept atmospheres.

Understanding atmospheres involves a great amount of tacit knowledge, which complicates the process of describing their essence. Böhme captures it very well as “feelings that are suspended in the air” (2014, 93), an interface that you need to attune into, but at the same time which can disrupt the subject's mood (93). We situate the atmosphere between a subject and an object which also relates to Mikkel Bille's idea of “in betweenness” (2014, 32). Due to the atmospheres' almost intermediary role, their perception brings about an ambiguous subjectivity. Böhme calls atmospheres: “quasi-objective” (2016, 2). Atmospheres' perception situates itself on an individual level of perception of the reality around oneself. However, simultaneously it feels like a shared reality because the atmosphere situates itself not (only) inside the perceiver but in between the perceiver and the perceived.

Because of its intangible character and the fact that we (aesthetically) feel the atmosphere, it is inherently bodily perceived. As mentioned above, this bodily perception

can occur on the level of aesthetics as well as on the level of the experience. In both cases an embodied perception is at play, which means any knowledge we create about an atmosphere is inherently connected to our bodily perception. Moreover, the knowledge we create about the atmosphere is perceived through a living body, which is a concept I borrow from Caribbean phenomenology (Cyrille-Isaac 2023, 203). We perceive this atmosphere as a body that lives and “integrates the relationships to illness, to life, to death, to the ancestors, to the spirits, and to nature” (204). Not only perception through the senses is at play, but also feelings, history, expectations, and many other perceptual nuances are effective when perceiving atmospheres.

Atmospheres are ephemeral, mystifying, and intangible but at the same time they are clearly e/affecting us. It is its consequential effect rather than its materialization that validates its presence. This is exactly one of the reasons why I use the concept of atmospheres as a tool to describe a phenomenon characteristic of the Camino. This intangible, aesthetic dimension is very present in the experience of hiking the Camino and therefore, describing its atmosphere does justice to the Camino’s tacit dimension. Without acknowledging its tacit dimension, I would do justice to the description of the Camino in itself.

The Camino Francés (starting at Saint-Jean-Pied-De-Port) has been a pilgrimage part of the UNESCO World Heritage list since 1993 as the Northern pilgrimages in Spain were added in 2015. Many tangible objects are mentioned as constructive and creative of the Camino heritage. Nevertheless, the description by UNESCO also suggests an intangible dimension beyond its materialization:

It was also an important commercial axis and conduit for the **dissemination of knowledge**, supporting economic and **social development** along its itineraries. **Constantly evolving**, [...] The Route of Santiago de Compostela played a crucial role in the **two-way exchange of cultural advances** between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe, especially during the Middle Ages, but also in subsequent centuries. (UNESCO n.d.; my emphasis)

They all had the same destination, Santiago de Compostela. They followed different routes, but without detracting from their cohesive factors. We believe that it would be correct to include these routes in the motto of “**unity in diversity**”. Indeed, in addition to their enriching parameters, these Chemins du Nord are **a bundle of human, cultural**

and religious itineraries unified by history, landscape and geography. (UNESCO 2015, 27; my translation)²

Through the atmosphere of the Camino, I can consider the intangible dimensions reaching beyond the narratives and the visual or biological factors of its environment. My hypothesis is that, during the hike, a bubble is created among the participants, whose transmission to outsiders is difficult. This transmission is partly so difficult because this shared bubble is connected to a shared bodily aesthetic experience of the Camino.

People within Europe have been walking the pilgrimage for more than 1200 years and its implementation has evolved a lot over time (González 2013, 8). The Camino is mainly about four things: hiking, eating, sleeping, and talking. Its goal is to walk from a certain location, mostly within Spain, to Santiago de Compostela: the one starting in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port (the Camino Frances) being the most popular and the one in Oviedo (the Camino Primitivo) the original one. Its simplicity is what gives the Camino room for a great intangible complex dimension. This intangible dimension becomes visible on the Camino through narratives, symbolism, rituals, a collective dimension, and spirituality/religion. Before, during and after the Camino many narratives are constructed around what happened on previous Caminos or what one expects from the next ones. For example, many people narrate the Camino Primitivo³ as the toughest one, where pilgrims suffer the most. This is because on the Primitivo you conquer one hill after the other. At the same time, pilgrims narrate that it is the greenest, most peaceful, and most solitary Camino. Many pilgrims also take with them stories from previous Camino's and narrate them along the way to other pilgrims. All these narratives show an intangible dimension in the sense that the things they narrate include a large experiential dimension. Being on the move also relates to this large intangible, bodily dimension in which time and space are moving along with the walking pilgrim. As Edensor Puts it:

[...] walking articulates a relationship between pedestrian and place, a relationship which is a complex imbrication of the material organization and shape of the landscape, its symbolic meaning, and the ongoing sensual perception and experience of moving through space. Thus besides (re)producing distinctive forms of embodied practices (and particular bodies) walking also (re)produces and (re)interprets space and place" (2000, 82)

² "Tous avaient la même destination, Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle. Ils suivaient des tracés différents, mais sans nuire à leurs facteurs de cohésion. Nous estimons qu'il serait correct de faire tenir ces chemins dans la devise « unité dans la diversité ». En effet, outre leurs paramètres enrichissants, ces Chemins du Nord sont un faisceau d'itinéraires humains, culturels et religieux unifiés par l'histoire, le paysage et la géographie."

³ Hereafter, referred to as Primitivo.

Besides, the Camino is full of symbols such as the well-known yellow arrows pointing out the way, the stamps you fill your pilgrim passport with, or the typical Scallop shell that everyone wears on their backpack. These symbols epitomize the engraved meaning of pilgrimages and connects pilgrims along the way. They lead to rituals and meanings that are not just materialistic. Examples of these rituals are waking up very early, and starting to walk until pilgrims encounter a first place to get coffee. Here, everyone naturally joins in and wakes up together as the sun rises. Another ritual is the collection of stamps that show you, afterwards, the places you have passed and serve as proof of the many kilometres you have walked. A third example is taking care of your feet upon arrival. Everyone sits down with a large sigh and starts taking off their tape and plasters to judge the damage done that day. These rituals can lead to a feeling of independent collectiveness, which adds to this intangible dimension present on the Camino: everyone is walking the same road, going through the same pain, and sharing the same goal while at the same time having very different intentions, different paces, and different ways of executing their pilgrimage. Snežana Brumec even claims that a sense of “*communitas*” is created, in which a social structure is present that does not submit to authority but rather creates a community guided by traditions (2023, 40). Finally, the Camino can act as a channel or interface for spiritual/religious aspects such as deep conversations often heavily loaded with emotions or churches and other Christian monuments that one passes by along the way (Sánchez y Sánchez 2015, 146). They augment the experience to something collective and ungraspable.

With the Camino as part of the UNESCO heritage list, this experience has been researched extensively from the perspective of the Camino as a cultural practice (Schrire 2006; Keith 2010; Murray 2014; Sánchez y Sánchez and Hesp 2015). The Camino is built by many routines and actions that translate cultural ideas into a practice. Which culture is put into practice is often debated, mostly shifting between a Spanish or European culture (Schrire 2006, 71-72; Gardner, Mentley, and Signori 2015, 59). On the one hand, the Camino experience involves a lot of Spanish history and culture through the monuments, food, landscapes, and language present along the hike. Besides, most Caminos are also embedded in the villages along the way, for example, through Spanish people showing pilgrims the way or through pilgrim menus in restaurants. All these things, together with the end destination situated in Spain, render the Camino part of the Spanish culture and, in particular the Galician culture. On the other hand, as Caminos expand beyond Spain and pilgrims come

from all over Europe and beyond, the culture of the Camino also carries a transnational dimension. It puts into practice ideas and concepts that are connected to the European or Western culture, such as English as the lingua franca or music shared among pilgrims. Apart from a Spanish, European and Western culture, some also speak of a Camino culture (Trotman 2021, 209; Smith 2019, 7). In fact, as opposed to Keith Egan, it is my contention that culture can be created in a one-month pilgrimage since the Camino is not only created during these 30 days (Egan 2010, 108). Stories from before and after, but also the relation between the Camino and the local villages, let the Camino extend beyond these 30 days pilgrimage. It is a spatial stationary connective practice which, over time, hosts many different pilgrims that cocreate the culture along the road. Besides, a month on the Camino feels much longer than a month living in your daily life routine.

As the Camino puts multiple cultures into practice, this dissertation tries to include multiple contexts pulled together by the concept of atmospheres. I intend to explore the atmosphere of the Camino rather than the cultural practice as such, precisely because of the ambiguous character of both the Camino and the concept of atmosphere. In this dissertation, the Camino is not just a walk, it is not just a cultural practice, it is an atmosphere. This work aims to understand how the cultural dimension can be researched bodily, considering the aesthetic aspects of the experience of hiking the Camino.

Relevance in culture studies

Everywhere we move, we are moving through atmospheres. However, somehow our attention towards them remains under the surface of a conscious experience – we often do not attune to them. Like a fish that does not know it has been born into water, it is easily overlooked that a cultural practice is immersed in an atmosphere. Therefore, it is important that, when we research cultural practices within culture studies, we also consider the atmosphere it is immersed in. A new understanding of the cultural practice is created through the description of the Camino's embodied, non-material, aesthetic dimension. This approach aligns with many reasons of why people start walking the Camino. It brings their focus back to the process and the experiential rather than output and efficient production. It is indeed so that, in contemporary days,⁴ life seems to accelerate and we focus on an outcome rather than on the developmental aspect of the process.

⁴ A time that is subject to the project of modernity and epistemologies of rationality (Quijano 2007, 169-172).

In post-modern times, however, we can see that people are more inclined towards looking for the experience rather than a materialized object: “In the case especially of Slow Travel, the tourist intentionally journeys through locations in a less rushed and hurried fashion [...] allowing for, it could be argued, more meaningful experience and a greater sense of self-authenticity” (Osbaldiston 2013, 13). This trend seems to be a countermovement against everything getting more efficient, and our accelerating pace in society. It makes us seek out activities such as walking the Camino counteracting the fast pace of modernity. As explained by Osbaldiston: “social life has become increasingly more complex and accelerated” and “people are beginning to disentangle themselves from a speed culture by embracing slowness” (2). We are expected to know more, do more and do things better in a shorter time span. Describing the phenomenon of an experience that includes slowing down time might make the reader aware of the fact that this acceleration is still happening. As John Tomlinson also claims, “acceleration rather than deceleration has been the constant leitmotiv of cultural modernity” (2007, 1). The Camino de Santiago de Compostela is a good example of how people in current times go and look for an experience that pauses their daily fast-paced routine: “As a slow travel route, this itinerary has a meaningful content which, in part, is rooted in the religious, cultural and educative value of the pilgrimage practice (Fullagar et al., 2012) while also providing deep contact with a high-quality environment” (Clancy 2018, 191). In this light, it is interesting to approach such an activity through an experience-oriented tool – atmospheres. Thinking about the atmosphere of the Camino could lead us to draw parallels between other atmospheres and compare or question their pace.

The atmosphere itself is the context in which a cultural practice is embedded. Since in culture studies it is very important to contextualize our cultural objects, thinking about atmospheres is a very relevant perspective to consider: “Culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly-that is, thickly-described” (Geertz 1973, 14). Rather than researching the social or political context of the Camino, this dissertation investigates its cultural context. The Camino is a cultural practice that bears both a lot of history as well as contemporary importance. Being part of the cultural heritage list UNESCO also reflects its relevance to European culture. Describing the phenomenon from the perspective of culture studies makes us understand which (intangible) culture is present

at the Camino and it reveals new ways in which this practice is linked to that culture. It also can make us understand what we lack outside the Camino and what it is that we search on the Camino instead of finding it in our everyday lives. Moreover, we can understand how we might implement the things we lack if we consider how they are brought about by the particular Camino-atmosphere.

As mentioned before, the intangible dimension of the Camino is very present and is for example visible in the struggle to capture it into words. It is therefore easier to start by researching the atmosphere of the Camino in particular, to facilitate the attunement to those cultural practices where its atmosphere is less present. Besides, the Camino has not yet been researched through the concept of atmospheres. It has mostly been approached as an object that needs to be described rather than a medium (its atmosphere) through which phenomena manifest themselves. As Schroer and Schmitt mention in their research on atmospheres: “Its contributions analyse the relational and transformational processes through which humans and other living beings perceive, experience and live together in a moving atmospheric world” (2018, 1).

To be able to attune better to atmospheres in our environment and our cultural context, atmospheres should be approached from a more empirical angle. So far, a lot of research has been done on the level of the existence of an atmosphere and its conceptualization (Böhme 2016; Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014; Riedel 2019; Anderson 2009); however, the dialogue between theory and empirical research needs to be enforced. We need to be able to use atmospheres while understanding their effects, politics and implications in contextualizing a cultural practice:

Yet they are difficult to grasp and hold onto, making it a challenge to describe, research and analyse them. This has meant that in much existing research, atmospheres are either only discussed theoretically or discussed as given elements of our experience but only partially theorised (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 15)

There is a need to put the research about atmospheres into practice to understand how to appropriately investigate and apply them. In the light of this necessity, this dissertation applies the research methodology of Sumartojo and Pink and can be considered as an addition to the case studies in which they have already explored its potential for the creation of new knowledge (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 55-118). I introduce this methodology in the next section.

Researching *in*, *about* and *through* an atmosphere

As mentioned above, this dissertation applies the research methodology of researching *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres as described in the book *Atmospheres and the Experiential World* (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 35-53). By taking on these three modes of researching, I consider respectively “the empirical and experiential, the representational and definitional and the theoretical and the abstract” (35). The structure of this dissertation follows the order of researching *in* then *about* and finally *through* atmospheres. However, while performing the actual research, these modes of researching inevitably get intertwined and influence each other through a non-linear research process.

Researching *in* an atmosphere includes one’s immersion into an atmosphere as a participant of that atmosphere. This way, the embodied knowledge which is gained while hiking the Camino gets integrated. Applying this mode of researching, I researched *in* the atmosphere of the Camino while hiking the Camino Primitivo (from Oviedo to Compostela) both in April 2023, September 2023 and April 2024. The three pilgrimages provided me each with a tacit knowledge that I could not have considered when only researching *about* the Camino. I hiked the first two Caminos without the knowledge that I would research its atmosphere. These experiences, consequently, provided me with knowledge that is not influenced by any research intentions. During the Camino in 2024, I collected data more intentionally and I consciously tuned into its atmosphere. My approach to ethnographically collecting this data was informed by the book *Exploring Atmospheres Ethnographically* (Schroer and Schmitt 2018). While researching *in* the atmosphere, I collected both structured and unstructured observations as well as photographs taken with an analogue camera. The structured observations were collected through a self-drawn form in which I answered questions about the atmosphere of the Camino. Later, as I was researching *about* the atmosphere, I used the observations and photographs of my Camino (2024) to corroborate or challenge the ideas I gained from the previous Caminos.

I chose the Camino Primitivo as my case study because this specific Camino has retained a certain authenticity. Many people told me that the Primitivo is the Camino that feels the most like “a Camino-experience”. It has not been as influenced by tourism and commercialization processes as other Caminos. The Camino Primitivo crosses the north of Spain going through the mountainous landscapes of Asturias, along many small trails, forest paths or stony roads. Because of the Primitivo’s physically heavy stages, this Camino is less

overwhelmed with pilgrims and pilgrims stay more together. Moreover, because of the rural landscapes it crosses, the pilgrims walk the same stages and stop in the same small villages to end their day together. As there is less infrastructure available along the way, it is harder to build facilities that would commercialize this specific Camino. Besides, the pilgrim's connection to nature is reinforced because of the many landscapes that the Primitivo passes through. This connection with nature drives the pilgrims to look more inward, while tourists-pilgrims direct their attention outward to consume the things they encounter (Malis, Masilka, and Janeckova 2023, 587). Finally, the locals are also much more involved in this Camino since there are not many places on the way to find resources. They know very well where the nearest restaurant, fountain or yellow arrow is situated. This interaction creates an awareness for the pilgrims that is not situated on the level of observation of the local culture but rather participation in their culture.

Researching *in* atmospheres also asks for a change in the mode of attention. Immersing oneself in the atmosphere, it is essential to tune into the atmosphere of one's surroundings/experience/space (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 40). On the Camino, one can commit to the atmosphere thoroughly, as pilgrims are walking for hours and often disconnect from home or other distractions. On the Camino, pilgrims take their time (Anthony 2018, 6-7). Immersing oneself into the atmosphere also includes embodying the act of walking in the case of the Camino and knowing the atmosphere through movement: "We tend to forget that the body itself is grounded in movement. Walking is not just what a body does; it is what a body is" (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 2). Researching *in* the atmosphere of the Camino means attending with our body, as it walks through the landscapes.

Integrating this embodied knowledge, researching *in* atmospheres can occur simultaneously with researching *about* atmospheres. One takes a picture on the Camino while being immersed in its atmosphere but at the same time the process of taking the picture already comes with thinking *about* the atmosphere: what do I want to capture? Why do I think this is an important image for my travel? While researching *in* and *about* (and *through*) an atmosphere, a reflexive attitude is needed to stay true to the individually different experiences of that atmosphere. My reflexivity during the process of researching *in* atmospheres is visible in my structured observations. I added a section in which I could reflect on my influence on and personal bias towards the atmosphere: "being reflexive and creating an awareness of how we as researchers create meaning should be at the basis on the

ways that we understand any knowledge that we purport to have produced” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 38). Researching *about* atmospheres includes defining them, understanding representations, and mostly takes up a retrospective character. This can be done through archives or visual material that one analyses and discusses with participants during or after the immersion in the atmosphere (43). While researching *about* the atmosphere, I tried to contest my personal bias by opposing my ideas against other pilgrims’ words, perspectives, and acts.

While researching *about* atmospheres, it is important to focus on what these notes and photographs tell me about the atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo. They are objects that represent an atmosphere from the past. Although it is important to bodily understand the atmosphere, these representations give a partial look into what it is that remains of the atmosphere of the Camino after leaving it. As I research *about* the atmosphere, I represent the atmosphere through a discussion of my structured and unstructured fieldnotes accompanied by the photographs I took. The analogue photographs are integrated into this discussion as a form of visual ethnography (Pink 2013, 38). Researching *about* the atmosphere of the Camino means to take the reader, so to say, on a mental walk through its atmosphere.

Finally, Sumartojo and Pink’s methodology integrates the research of *in* and *about* the atmosphere as they research *through* atmospheres (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 44). Researching *through* atmospheres shifts the research from attuning to the atmosphere towards using it as a holding concept to understand and arrive at new knowledge. It is nonetheless necessary to formerly tune into the atmosphere by researching *in* and *about* it, so that the atmosphere can be used as a tool to reach new knowledge. Thinking *through* atmospheres means researching and approaching the atmosphere from an atmospheric lens/route. This lens includes a focus on aesthetic components and how an experience feels as mentioned above.

As I research *through* the atmosphere of the Camino, I arrive at the idea of the atmosphere as animated. I start by answering two questions that at the same time allow me to contextualize the concept of “animated” as well as show how I am thinking *through* the atmosphere. The questions I answer are the following: Question I considers how my conception of atmospheres is appropriate to have revealed the idea of animated atmosphere;

Question II questions how the concept of animated might reveal that certain atmospheres themselves *can* be animated.

Finally, I integrate the knowledge of researching *in* and *about* the atmosphere in a discussion that links the idea of animated atmospheres to the observations and representation of the atmosphere of the Camino de Santiago. Researching *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres are no separate methodologies: “These three ways of approaching atmospheres [...] are not necessarily separated out in any research process and they are not linear or sequential. Instead, they exist in dialogue with each other” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 35). Their research processes are intertwined and, logically so, influence each other.

Outline of the dissertation

In this dissertation, I discuss the following main research question: How can we think *in*, *about* and *through* the atmosphere of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela? This question is then followed by a sub-questions: How can I, applying this methodology, uncover new knowledge about the atmosphere of the Camino? What is this new knowledge about the atmosphere of the Camino? The dissertation is organized around the methodology explained in the previous section. It starts with a contextualization of the methodology and case study, which is then researched *in*, *about* and *through* its atmosphere.

In chapter 1, I provide a theoretical framework for the concept of atmospheres. Starting with the description of atmosphere as a travelling concept, I discuss its contextualization within natural sciences, its use in everyday life and its application in the humanities. Subsequently, I situate atmospheres into aesthetics (Böhme 2016) as spatial atmospheres. These atmospheres are perceived as a present element in the space rather than something unfolding through time. I explore how Böhme’s aesthetics, aesthetical modes of attention and affect can shape the discussion around spatial atmospheres. Aside from spatial atmospheres, I explore atmospheres’ experiential dimension (Anderson 2009; Sumartojo and Pink 2019). Here, I go deeper into the perception of atmospheres through time and how we bodily know through them as we experience them. I use both the idea of “leib” or “the felt body” – a surfaceless body interacting with the space and “kò” or “the living body” – a holistic perspective on the body in which atmospheres fold into (Schmitz, 2018; Cyrille-Isaac 2023). Furthermore, I discuss the way the atmosphere as a concept in the humanities can take on multiple forms of subjectivity. This, as already touched upon above, concerns

subjectivity, objectivity, and intersubjectivity (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014; Böhme 2016, 17). This multimodal approach to the subjectivity of atmospheres also brings me to discuss ambiguities that I encountered when researching atmospheres. In this regard, I discuss the (in)definite status of atmospheres, the reciprocal effect on the mood of the person and the atmosphere, its absent/present character, its capacity of enveloping and being enveloped and finally its temporal ambiguity of a static/dynamic atmosphere in both past, present and future perception of the atmosphere. Finally, I explain why I think the atmosphere is a useful tool for analysing a cultural practice, and in this particular research, for analysing the Camino Primitivo.

After exploring the concept of atmospheres, I introduce the Camino as my case study in chapter 2. Starting with the history, emergence and development of the pilgrimage over several decades, the rest of the chapter focuses on the contemporary experience of hiking the Camino. This mostly concerns the experience of hiking the Camino in the years after COVID-19. In recent years, the online platforms, tourism, COVID-19 itself, and other globalization processes have had a large influence on pilgrimages (Sánchez and Hesp 2015; Roszak and Huzarek 2022). Moreover, I sketch out how the main reasons for hiking the Camino have also evolved over the years, pushing the religious aspects to the background and bringing forward a search for spirituality or an escape from everyday life (Malis, Masilka and Janeckova 2023; Kim, Yilmaz; Ahn, 2019).

As I am writing this dissertation from the angle of culture studies, I also introduce the Camino as a cultural practice. Here, I present the debate around which culture is put into practice (Spanish, European, religious and a Camino culture). Besides, I discuss the way locals have an influence and are influenced as well as how processes of globalization impact the Camino and the places through which it passes. I end the discussion about the Camino as a cultural practice with the idea of the Camino as singular or plural. Subsequently, I explore the dimension of the Camino beyond a cultural practice and develop the idea of the Camino as a “channel”, “interface” and “matrix” (Sánchez y Sánchez 2015, 146). I explore its religious/spiritual dimension (Costen 1993; Slavin 2003) as well as its role as an interface between the material and immaterial (Sánchez y Sánchez 2015, 152). This brings the body into focus and how the act of movement can bring forward peculiar time-space configurations. I discuss how its temporality is intertwined with the past and future, as well as how space seems to be ephemeral. I relate the way space transforms on the Camino to the

idea of a (non-)place (Tuan 1979; Augé 1995), or even liminal space (Turner 1974). Finally, I end the chapter with a discussion of the narratives present on the Camino, since they are a very constitutive part of the Camino (Rasch 2015). Here, I make two distinctions to structure my discussion; I separate the instructive narratives from those that are more experiential, in which I include guides and artist works as examples. In the second distinction I make a division between institutional (religious, economic, national and European) narratives and personal (collective, expectative, short stories) narratives.

Chapter 3 builds on a link between the theoretical and conceptual reflection presented in the first two chapters and my empirical data. Here, I build on a link between the theory and my empirical data. I apply Sumartojo and Pink's methodology of researching *in* and *about* atmospheres (2019). I start by discussing the way Sumartojo and Pink developed the idea of thinking *in* atmospheres and discuss its relevance in relation to my conceptual framework written out in chapter 1. This discussion concerns its intangible and bodily dimension that goes beyond the five senses, its unfolding over time, the need for presence as well as a reflexive attitude towards being *in* the atmosphere. Furthermore, I describe how I researched *in* the atmosphere of the Camino through ethnographical notes and photographs.

Relating the idea of researching *in* the atmosphere with my case study, I dedicate a subchapter to the importance of walking when researching *in* the atmosphere. Here, I develop Erling Kagge's (2019, 16) idea of a highly bodily relationship with the landscape, the idea of a different time perception upon walking informed by Brandt (2004, 112) and a way of knowing through movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2011; Dimitra 2017) as important aspects of researching *in* the atmosphere. Bridging researching *in* the atmosphere with researching *about* them, I discuss how visual ethnography and photographing through the eyes of Sarah Pink (2013) informed my researching *in* and *about* the atmosphere. Following this, I develop the researching *about* atmospheres analogous to my discussion of researching *in* atmospheres. First, discussing Sumartojo and Pink's account (2019), then connecting it to my personal conceptual framework and finally discussing how *I* researched *about* atmospheres for this dissertation.

In the second part of chapter 3, I put the researching *about* the atmosphere into practice and describe a representation of the atmosphere of the Camino informed by fieldnotes and pictures of my Camino in 2024. I discuss both the spatial and experiential atmosphere as an ethnographic-theoretical dialogue between my first two chapters and the ethnographical data

I collected. The main phenomena related to spatial atmospheres that I discuss are the interconnectedness (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014), time-perception, aesthetic feelings (Böhme 2016) connected to their meaning, modes of attention and the sensation of the space. Related to the experiential atmosphere, I focus more on the temporality (Sumartojo and Pink 2019), delineation, movement in terms of rhythm (Stewart 2011) and walking (Ingold and Vergunst 2008), and the mystical/spiritual dimension of the atmosphere of the Camino (Beeck 2017).

I close my dissertation with an integrative chapter about thinking *through* atmospheres. Here, I also start with an account of what it means to research *through* atmospheres according to Sumartojo and Pink (2019). As a concept, atmospheres can pull everything together and create new knowledge. Throughout the chapter, atmospheres continue to act both as a medium and an object. As I am researching *through* atmospheres I arrive at the idea of the Camino as animated. In doing so, I answer two questions as already mentioned in my methodology. I answer both questions as I consider the concept of animated through the account of Nurit Bird-David (1999), Christopher Braddock (2017) and Adrian Harris (2014). In the first account I find analogies between animated atmospheres through the idea of relatedness, engagement/affordances and a blurring of subject and object roles. In the second account, Braddock discusses the animated atmospheres in terms of a passive form of participation and associates it to a field of affect. Here, I also make a connection between the subject-object duality that blurs in this field of affective participations. Finally, I discuss Adrian Harris's notion of the "genus loci" or "spirits of place" in terms of enacted cognition. Sinking into deeper layers of cognition, he describes animated places as those that make you move and enact on an unconscious level. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to the integration of my research *in* and *about* the atmosphere of my case study with the idea of an animated atmosphere. Hereby, I research *through* the atmosphere of the Camino. I describe its animated atmosphere through phenomena such as the "undergoing" (Heidegger 1971, 57) of and being invited by the atmosphere, its dynamic character where the anima can get lost, the participating effluvia that are both the atmosphere itself as well as the people part of the atmosphere, the blurring of subject/object duality into an affective field of anonymity, the physical and metaphorical movement by the atmosphere and finally its mystical participation in coincidences and serendipities.

1. The Concept of Atmospheres

There are two main interesting ways of approaching atmospheres within the context of this dissertation. The first approach describes atmosphere as a spatial phenomenon, that require presence and an aesthetical mode of attention. This account of atmospheres exists in relation to an aesthetical perception and is relevant to the Camino's atmosphere since I want to approach it from an aesthetical point of view: "What is it that makes us perceive the Camino like a Camino?". Besides, this aesthetical mode of attention is also very much nurtured on the Camino where presence, commitment and space are central elements. The second approach to atmospheres is more focused on the atmospheres that make up an experience, a mood. Atmospheres can envelop a certain spatial or temporary frame and immerse it into a certain feeling. It is these atmospheres that also stand closer to the ones we refer to in everyday life. Think about the atmosphere of a candle-light dinner or a study-room in the library. Experiential atmospheres concern fundamental ideas inherent to the Camino such as tacit knowledge, narratives/representations and the embodiment knowledge. Furthermore, this chapter explores atmospheres more deeply on two other levels. I discuss the quasi-objective character of atmospheres and how this shapes our perspective on them. Besides, I explore its dualities and the capacity to bridge these dualities. We can learn a lot about how atmospheres are shaped, situated and interacted with by exploring how they seem to be a connective tissue between certain dualities. Finally, I discuss what it is that makes atmospheres a useful, relevant tool to perform a holistic type of research within culture studies. I cover the focus on the aesthetical aspects of an object of study, its proximity to the object of study and the flexibility of the concept within research methodologies.

1.1. Atmospheres as a Travelling Concept

As I use the concept of atmospheres throughout this dissertation, it is appropriate to start my discussion on how the concept has travelled interdisciplinary, over time and over space. "[...T]he meaning and operational value of concepts for the study of culture differ between diverse disciplines, national cultures and historical periods [...] they are dynamic and changeable as they travel back and forth between diverse academic contexts" (Neumann and Nünning 2012, 3). Atmospheres is a travelling concept (Bal 2002), originating from the discipline of natural sciences. "Although the use of concepts in the natural sciences differs

from their use in the humanities, we can still learn something from their travels in and among the sciences.” (Bal 2002, 29). I believe the way the concept of atmospheres has been approached within natural science can inform my account of atmospheres as a concept in culture studies. Besides, it might shed light on how approaches within natural sciences can be questioned from a cultural studies’ point of view and reversed.

According to the online etymology dictionary the term “atmosphere” originated from Greek as “ατμόςφαιρα” or “atmosphaira” which stands for “vapor” or “steam” (atmos) and “ball” or “the globe” (sphaira). However, it was not before the 17th century that the term was first used in different languages – starting from Latin to be translated into other European languages (Craig 2015, 44). The concept of atmospheres was initially only employed in the natural sciences. However, later its meaning took on a more emotional dimension within and beyond natural sciences as people’s emotions were included as an influence on atmospheres. Finally, upon its introduction into the humanities, the concept transformed and gained a tacit character. Therefore, I will refer in the next sections to an account of the concept both within the natural sciences (Craig 2015) and within the human sciences (Riedel 2019).

Starting in the 17th century, the atmosphere was seen as a certain aerial layer above the earth’s surface (Craig 2015, 45). In science, the term was first coined by Snellius as a compound that represented the height of aerial vapours above the earth’s surface. However, throughout history, understandings of the cosmos along with its concepts altered significantly. For example, with tensions between the views of Aristotle and Pierre Gassendi, the concept of atmospheres was debated over. Aristotle’s followers supported the idea of atmospheres as three regions of air surrounding the world. While, later, Gassendi argued for a more mathematical approach where an atmosphere is a layer of denser air above a planet that was covered with a layer of ether (48). Afterwards, scientists Gustavus Parker, Isaac Newton and Robert Boyle broadened the investigation of “what is an atmosphere?” to conceptions such as effluvia coming from corpuscles or emanations being exerted by bodies (51-52). This conception already leans more towards the spatial atmospheres as I discuss them below. It is interesting to observe how in culture studies, the current conceptions of atmospheres still intertwine with the ideas of natural scientists of the 17th century. Finally, by the end of the 17th century, the definition of “atmosphere” was extended to a phenomenon also occurring on other planets as well as connected to solid bodies such as animals or plants (52).

Still situating the discussion of atmospheres exclusively in scientific⁵ theories, its conceptualization started to cover, more fields from the 18th century in French and German research. One example spans across the medical field, where the atmosphere was linked to this idea of effluvia, as already had been done before, but this time in relation to the corporeal (Riedel 2019, 86). Effluvia was characterized both as actual chemicals such as perspiration and smell but also more abstract and social qualities such as humour or passion. Atmospheres were then seen as social and emotional indicators since the effluvia was supposedly connected to people's human conditions such as social status, gender, habitat, and diet. It seems that atmospheres were considered a connective "something" in the air, connecting bodies and that what they emitted into the air. In the 19th century, however, this concept disappeared again from the field of medicine because of very little evidence.

In the 20th century, the concept of atmosphere became more prevalent in the poetic and philosophical domains. Simmel introduced atmospheres into the field of sociology, shifting the focus from the biological to the social. He claimed that besides just biological bodies exerting atmospheres, cities could also possess atmospheres (Riedel 2019, 87)⁶. Focussing on the spatial aspect of atmospheres, it became clear how interconnective atmospheres appeared to be. Two other very important figures from the 20th century were William Stern and Hermann Schmitz. They introduced the concept of atmosphere, under the name "Stimmung", into the field of phenomenology. Stern based himself on Heidegger's conception of "Stimmung" while Schmitz referred to situational thinking (87)⁶. The latter saw atmospheres as "spatial bearers of moods" (Böhme 2016, 16)⁶ that are introjected and translated into moods (17). This brings me to the end of the 20th century where Gernot Böhme rethinks Schmitz's concept of atmospheres into the field of aesthetics. Böhme claims that Schmitz's conception "rules out the possibility that they [atmospheres] could be produced by qualities of things" (18). Böhme focuses a lot on the quasi-objective character of atmospheres, situating them also between the object and the subject. Finally, psychiatrist Hubertus Tellenbach reintroduces atmospheres into the medical field by naming atmospheres "a pre-reflective and pre-verbal elemental contact" (1981, 227). The idea that we would communicate through atmospheres is also embedded any many of the previously

⁵ "[...] 'scientific' is what obeys the rules of scientific procedure. [...] Concepts [within science] are legitimate as long as they avoid the status of 'mere metaphor' or ideology, and as long as they follow the rules of scientificity in terms of demarcation of and application to an object domain. Here the epistemology is normative. (Bal 2002, 29-30)"

⁶ Original source not available in translation.

discussed accounts. Already chronologically jumping ahead, this would further be reinforced in the 21st century by the discovery of pheromones which would explain the transmission of atmosphere and its spatial-biological connection (Brennan 2004, 9).

Besides, in the 21st century, atmospheres cover many more fields while new research keeps reinventing the concept (Schmitz 2023). Aside from Böhme, Tonino Griffero (2014) also introduces the concept into the field of aesthetics, focussing mostly on their emotional dimension perceived through embodied perception. Phenomenology lies at the base of his methodology to approach atmospheres. Among others, Mikkel Bille (2014) and Ben Anderson (2009) focus more on the spatial aspect of atmospheres and on the link between affect and atmospheres. Their account is very relevant in the next sections. Shanti Sumartojo and Sarah Pink (2019) try to operationalize the concept into more empirical-based research. Their research focuses more on experiential atmospheres, which is also very relevant for my dissertation. This research method has been picked up by Sara Asu Schroer and Susanne B. Schmitt (2018) who wrote a book on the research of atmosphere in a more practical-based setting of ethnography. Besides this, many more authors discuss atmospheres, also using different terms such as Stimmung, mood, aura, and ambience, but the discussion of all current accounts of the atmospheres goes beyond the scope of this dissertation.

1.2. Spatial Atmospheres

In this section, I introduce the account of atmosphere as a spatial phenomenon that puts objects, subjects and spaces with each other in conversation. I take on a lens that approaches the concept from a spatial perspective, which makes Gernot Böhme's account of atmospheres central to this subchapter. Böhme connects the concept with 'a new aesthetics' in his book *The Aesthetics of Atmospheres*. It is called 'a new aesthetics' because he approaches it from a different path than the traditional academics such as Kant (1987) Adorno (2018) and Lyotard (1990 and Böhme 2016, 12). Böhme's new aesthetics focuses on the relationship between environmental qualities and human states and it is precisely this relationship which I identify in this dissertation as atmospheres. Therefore, Böhme's new aesthetics deals with ideas and provides a vocabulary that help me to conceptualize the intangible concept of atmospheres. Besides, atmospheres are an – if not the – object of his aesthetical research: what is it that something makes me feel how I feel. His new aesthetics

thus provides me with a specific framework within which I can theorize about atmospheres from a spatial perspective.

In the following sections, I discuss multiple aspects that fit into this approach of atmospheres as the mediator between things, people, environments and moods within Böhme's new aesthetics. The following aspects are part of my discussion: the dimension of presence, its in-between and quasi-objective character, its focus on spatiality and the staging of atmospheres. Firstly, this conception of atmospheres puts an attitude of presence and awareness of the environment in the foreground. Atmospheres in the context of aesthetics situate themselves in the present and this shifts the focus from a mental experience to a sensuous one. Traditionally, in aesthetics, a work was approached as a sign, a representation that directs the perceiver to what the work represents (Böhme 2016, 13). But in this new aesthetics, the focus shifts towards the presence of the work itself, which naturally includes its representational character. Here, its character is more corporeal than semantic and it is this present dimension of a work, these environmental qualities on which we focus in this new aesthetics, what Böhme calls atmosphere (13). It is our focus on atmospheres, among other things, that turns an experience into an aesthetical one (13). This is also very visible in the Camino, where presence is one of the key elements while hiking. Many people turn off their phones and just walk for hours without thinking, often being put into an aesthetical mode of attention.

A second aspect relevant to atmospheres within Böhme's new aesthetics concerns its situation 'in between'. The atmosphere is that what mediates the interaction between a subject and an object. This 'in-betweenness' can be better understood through Böhme's reception aesthetics and production aesthetics (Böhme 2016, 29-30). In the former, the focus lies on atmospheres being *received* by a subject. The subject is affected by the environmental qualities where s/he is *being put*, by the atmosphere, in a particular human state. Reception aesthetics assumes that a receiver – a subject – is needed for the atmosphere to exist. In production aesthetics, atmospheres are produced by an object and *might* be perceived by a subject. The object(s) provide certain conditions for a particular atmosphere to arise. These are environmental qualities that can, through the atmosphere, induce a certain human state. But the atmosphere will be produced by the object(s) independently from the manifestation of that human state. As Böhme poetically calls them: "the production of particular receptions" (25). This in-betweenness makes visible the interconnective character of an

atmosphere, as it is always situated in between many elements. On the Camino, this ‘in-between’ status of atmosphere also presents itself as the state of being between departure and arrival. The Camino revolves around the process of hiking rather than the arrival or the departure. It searches for that in between rather than a beginning or an ending.

The focus on atmospheres as something in-between, relates to Böhme’s discussion of atmospheres as quasi-objective (2016, 2). There seems to be something that is not just individually assessed, but rather something shared, and therefore, potentially objective about an atmosphere. However, at the same time, there is a feeling of (inter)subjectivity when experiencing an atmosphere.⁷

When discussing atmospheres as a spatial phenomenon, I must discuss their spatiality. In Böhme’s new aesthetics, he shifts the focus to the present perception of space. Nevertheless, as mentioned above, also in the early conception of atmosphere within Physics, it was introduced as a concept to name the spatial environment around us. This does not mean, however, that temporality does not play a role⁸ (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 22-25). Nevertheless, in this case, it is the *space* rather than the objects in it that are highlighted. Our attention is directed towards the environment around us and towards being present in the space. Besides, atmospheres are perceived through our body, which is present and in contact with this space. “the space that is conditioned by the fact of my being in it, the space of which I am the centre, the space that answers my moods and intentions.” (Tuan 1979, 388) We can attune into an atmosphere and focus on its spatial influence on our body, in order to grasp it better. “Body implicates space; space coexists with the sentient body” (389). It is needless to say that the body on the Camino is taking in a large spatial dimension. Our body literally feels the space that we bridge while walking every step of the way. With a spatial dimension so present, we are inclined to interact with it naturally and we tune into the atmosphere more easily.

When we perceive the atmospheres surrounding us in the space, performativity becomes a very important factor. Performances, in and outside the arts, shift people’s focus from their minds towards their senses and the perception of what is happening in the space (Böhme 2016, 26). It makes people aware that something is being performed, something following a script to create a certain atmosphere. For example, when visiting a church,

⁷ I will come back to this ambiguous status of atmospheres in subchapter 1.5

⁸ Which will be developed in subchapter 1.3.

people take on a certain role with a silent, respectful attitude and seem to collectively perform the religious atmosphere. This performance and role they (unconsciously) slip into directs the attention to the atmosphere at present, if only, by the way their body behaves and therefore attends to the atmosphere in a certain way. The aspect of performativity hints already towards how atmospheres can be manipulated and staged, which is the final aspect I discuss in relation to Böhme's aesthetics.

Staging can have many forms spanning from the way a space/experience is filled with objects to the way symbols are used or the way narratives can stage atmospheres. The atmospheres in relation to aesthetics are about presence and bodily perception which makes the change in surroundings through elements such as objects, temperature, colours, and composition, an evident way of staging an atmosphere. However, meaning and representation can draw someone into an aesthetical mode of attention, which makes them subsequently attuned to the atmosphere of his/her surroundings. For example, attending the mass in the cathedral in Santiago de Compostela is a representation of the Camino. It is this representation that draws the pilgrims to go and feel the atmosphere of the cathedral to then subsequently add it to their general notion of the atmosphere of the Camino. Representations and signs can make you perceive things differently or attune to a space differently. The fact that we take on this silent attitude when entering a church is partly because the church's representations⁹ that direct us to a feeling of respect. It is this attitude that then makes us focus and tune into the atmosphere at present.

Staging atmospheres implies a direction of attention towards the space in which they are staged. This involves a mode of attention that is directed towards atmospheres and since the object of this new aesthetics is atmospheres, in the next sections I discuss an aesthetical mode of attention. I want to emphasise once again that this is one way of approaching atmospheres. I believe there are atmospheres you can attune to without taking on an aesthetical mode of attention.

Firstly, I discuss what we direct our attention to, in an aesthetical mode of attention, and in doing so, I explore if there is any direction at all. In the light of atmospheres, aesthetical attention is directed to "presence" – or to the "in between". That said, since these

⁹ These representations are visual, but also beyond the visual. For example, the rituals that we embody when participating in a mass, in which the respect for the body of Jesus is represented in eating the communion bread. Besides, for example the spatial relativity in relation to the height of the church represents the respect for God, who is high above us.

are such intangible concepts, our attention appears undirected. It seems as if we wander aimlessly and passively with our attention towards nothing. I believe, however, that there is still a difference between attending to nothing and attending to presence. As opposed to what Yves Citton claims in his chapter about joint attention, “in every case of this kind, we suspect our attention to be the object of the attention of a more or less determinate other.” (Citton 2017, 84). Instead, when attending aesthetically, we are attending to the “in-between” and I believe that this is not something which “a less determinate other” can direct us towards. When taking on a mode of aesthetical attention, we transcend the dichotomy of active and passive attention. Aesthetical attention is a passive activity, situating itself somewhere *in between* both. Think for example about the moment where you are gazing at a beautiful landscape at sunset time. This gazing seems to go beyond just the visual aspect. It is your whole body that seems to be gazing at the atmosphere around you, attending to nothing more than to the presence in your environment. You are not there for any other reason but the aesthetical feeling that the view gives you. Atmospheres are that ‘presence’, that ‘in between’ which we attend to when taking on an aesthetical mode of attention. “Atmospheres are the articulation of the presence of the environment, sensed bodily” (Grant 2013, 20). Our attention can be directed towards these atmospheres in two ways: internally and externally. You can tune into an atmosphere, attending actively to it yourself, or be overwhelmed by it. In the latter, your attention is externally directed towards the atmosphere.

When directing your attention (internally or externally) towards an atmosphere, you need to give it a certain amount of commitment (Schmetkamp 2022, 59). The experience of an atmosphere or the period you are in an aesthetical mode of attention needs time to arrive, develop and end. You cannot put yourself into an aesthetical mode of attention if you are already distracted by the next thing that passes by. The attunement often needs to be of a certain duration for it to settle in the body and for it to have an effect on the human state. Aesthetical atmospheres relate in this sense also to a temporary dimension besides a spatial one. It is as if your mind and body transform during the experience and then unify with the atmosphere around you, but for this to be possible, you need to take time to attend to it.

Besides presence and commitment, an aesthetical mode of attention towards atmospheres calls for a certain attitude that is highly connected with Kant’s disinterestedness (Kant 1987, xi). When you immerse yourself into an atmosphere, you need to show some disinterest in the object, i.e., not attending to its practical purposes. Schmetkamp made use

of James Gibson's concept of affordances (Gibson 2015) when talking about an aesthetical mode of attention and I think it could also be useful to apply her interpretation here as well: " 'Affordances' (Gibson 2015) traditionally are the more or less objective features of objects in our (human and non-human animals') world and their opportunities for action" (Schmetkamp 2022, 54). One can therefore say for example that the sun affords humans its light and warmth. However, when aesthetically attending to atmospheres, you are not in front of the sun because it is warm or because it shines light on your book. Instead, using the example from above, you might sit in front of the sunset, to let it afford you 'presence'. This is what I call an aesthetical affordance. The sun affords you in that case nothing but an aesthetical mode of attention, with that attention directed towards the atmosphere. Here, an atmosphere is approached as emanating from an object but without it being the object's practical affordance. This acknowledges the object as an autonomous body whose existence does not only depend on its practical affordances. Instead, the object's presence is acknowledged and appreciated while its atmosphere takes on a mediative role. This loops back to the earlier mentioned theory of aesthetical production rather than aesthetical reception. The object and its atmosphere are not dependent on the subject's perception. Böhme introduces the idea of ecstasies in his new aesthetics to discuss this phenomenon: "[...] an artist is not concerned with giving a thing – whether a block of marble or a canvas – certain qualities, formed, or coloured in such and such a fashion, but in allowing it to go forth from itself in a certain fashion and thereby make the presence of something perceptible" (Böhme 2016, 19). When aesthetically attending to an object, you perceive its presence through (attending to) its atmosphere. Interestingly, without Böhme discussing the etymological evolution of the concept of atmosphere, these ecstasies connect very well to the above-mentioned effluvia of bodies (here objects) that scientists called atmospheres.

Thirdly, aesthetical attention is about directing your perception somewhere, and this perception is highly bodily. Non-Western communities have lived much closer to conceptions that include the body and bodily attention. The Western communities have been taking on a mentality of rationalism as our thinking is fragmented into categorization, and our connection to the bodily and emotional has lost its ecosystemic character. Therefore, I consider here the concept of "Seselelāme", a concept inherent to the West African culture and history that Kathryn Linn Geurts and Sefakor Komabu-Pomeyie (2023) describe as "bodily ways of knowing". As the authors argue: "With Anglo-Americans and other Global

North populations fervidly trying to weave or knit together entities that have been epistemologically separated for centuries (such as mind, body, spirit; individual, community, globe; human, animal, planet), Seselelāme seems to appeal to some as a potential (if small) panacea” (Geurts and Komabu-Pomeyie 2023, 66). Taking its history and cultural feeling into account, Seselelāme is not equal to the perception of atmospheres, nor do I culturally relate to Seselelāme. Instead, I think the concept could be useful to understand what it means to bodily attend to atmospheres. Seselelāme goes beyond the five senses and takes emotions, intuition, passion or inspiration into account when talking about the experience of your surroundings (Geurts 2002, 41). These are intangible dimensions that are also part of the perception of atmospheres and they situate themselves in the body – where the body in relation to Seselelāme is not dichotomously situated across from the mind. Geurts took Thomas Csordas’s conception of “somatic modes of attention” as an interesting reference for understanding Seselelāme and I believe it is very relevant here as well: “Somatic modes of attention are culturally elaborated ways of **attending to** and **with one's body in surroundings** that include the embodied presence of others. [...] culturally elaborated attention to and with the body in the immediacy of an intersubjective milieu” (Csordas 1993, 138-139; my emphasis). This bodily aspect is also very present in the Camino by the fact that the only instrument you have to reach your destination is your body. However, this has changed with the commercialization of the Camino and nowadays some people use taxi services or buses for certain transport. Still, the narrative stays the same: the pilgrimage is about walking towards Compostela. With this heavy physical activity, the body becomes a subject of the pilgrimage. Pilgrims become much more aware of the way they need to take care of their body, the way they interact with their environment (for example, the weather) and the way they situate themselves in the space (for example solitary walks versus crossing a crowded city).

Finally, when attending to an atmosphere, one listens to the feelings or the mood of a space. This can happen again in an active or passive way, as described above, with the attention being directed internally or externally. Our body tries to *feel* its surroundings, or the space makes our body feel it and this generates an exchange between one’s internal feelings and the external feelings. I use the concept of Seselelāme again for informing my notion of “feeling with the body”. Seselelāme takes into account internal feelings and reads the environment in terms of these feelings. At the same time, Seselelāme takes into account

the feelings in the air that influence how the body is feeling (Nanay 2019, 41). There is a perceptual symbiosis between the body and the environment, always using one another to perceive the other. Feelings, moods and other bodily phenomena are in connection and conversation with the outside world and reversed. Therefore, we *know* the atmosphere with our body and our knowledge is through the atmosphere entirely embodied. Considering this perspective, I found the following example very interesting:

[...] a very good friend of mine who went to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art after every first date and sat down in front of a very big Mark Rothko painting to figure out how she felt about the new potential romantic partner. It was not just an environment to think about someone, it was her reaction to the painting that was coloured by the previous encounter. The emotions this large abstract painting evoked on these occasions, I was told, were very different. If aesthetic experience of one painting can lead to such diverse emotions, how could all aesthetic engagement be brought under the umbrella of just one kind of special ‘aesthetic emotion’? (Nanay 2019, 32)

When going to a museum, you are much more easily put in an aesthetical mode of attention. The presence of its atmosphere is clearer and an extended commitment is embedded in the architecture of and expectations towards the institution. Going into an aesthetical mode of attention, you mirror your emotions to the mood of the atmosphere which makes you more aware of your own emotions. It makes you read your body in terms of your surroundings. This exchange cocreates that feeling of unity I have mentioned before, between you, the feelings and the space. Atmospheres therefore also convey a certain mood or emotions that can interact with a human state and merge into one state. The atmosphere acts as the intermediary between things and people, between environments and moods, and between human experiences and events.

Before an atmosphere influences emotions and moods, it has already an impact in the form of affect. Atmospheres are present in the surroundings and can interact with a body already before it is cognitively aware of it. Teresa Brennan calls affect “[...] the environment [that] literally gets into the individual” (2004, 1), which is by its very nature a contradictory expression. As the etymology of the word speaks for itself, the environment is “The area surrounding a place or thing; the environs, surroundings, or physical context”¹⁰. The environment is what surrounds us and is everything but us. Affect therefore bridges this

¹⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “environment (n.), sense 1,” July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3272395963>.

dichotomy of the in and outside of the body, like how atmospheres bridge the separation of object and subject.

Basing myself on Derek P. McCormack's distinction between affect, feeling and emotion, affect is the first reaction of a body immersing itself into an atmosphere: "affect (as a pre-personal field of intensity), feeling (as that intensity registered in a sensing body), and emotion (as that felt intensity expressed in a socio-culturally recognizable form)" (2008, 414). Affect is that flow of intensity that travels through the body before it has been consciously registered. As a pre-personal phenomenon connecting an inner and outer environment, affect both physically and conceptually situates itself very close to atmospheres. Both concepts arose in the struggle of narrating an experience and its spatial situation. Besides, both atmospheres and affect situate themselves on the level of a perceptual relation between something and someone, although affect seems to be more connected to the interior dimension of that subject. Since both (atmospheres partly) are pre-cognitively arriving at a body, both phenomena show a character of objectivity. Anderson describes atmospheres as "collective affects" (Anderson 2009, 78), referring to the aspect that gives atmospheres their shared objectivity. The interrelation of the concept is also visible in its often-mutual use when discussing atmospheres: "Atmospheres in an affective sense [... are] a quality of environmental immersion that registers in and through sensing bodies while also remaining diffuse, in the air, ethereal" (McCormack 2008, 413).

Affect also concerns the interrelation of objects and perceivers where the objects can create a certain field of power that will affect a perceiver. As Peta Tait mentioned in her keynote speech at CARPA4: "Bennett's wonderful illuminating exploration of 'vibrant matter' as self-organising systems and 'thing-power' opens out the horizons of human experience and how a **field of affect** might operate across environments, things and humans, because matter itself is vibrant, alive" (Peta Tait 2015, Bennett 2010; my emphasis). This also relates to Böhme's ecstasies of objects that I mentioned earlier. This autonomy and aliveness of surroundings and objects is inherent to the perspective of atmospheres. Atmospheres can have an e/affect on us, thereby implying an autonomous dimension.

An important difference between affect and atmospheres discussed by Mikkel Bille is the fluidity and the relationality of atmospheres that is not necessarily inherent to a field affect. Atmospheres' fluidity allows them to span affect, emotion and mood at the same time (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014, 35). Because of their vagueness, they arch many

categories and become interestingly vague. As Schmitz calls them “atmospheric phenomena [which] are philosophically interesting, not despite their vagueness but precisely because of it” (Schmitz 2023, 12). As Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen claim, atmospheres should not be as a proxy for (collective) affects (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014, 35). They are not semantically interchangeable. Affective intensities have the character of being a force of power that is exerted by something and accepted by something else. Atmospheres, on the other hand, do not have a direction. Their configuration in the space goes beyond geometry, as they immerse and interconnect a body rather than move towards it.

In conclusion, exploring the new aesthetics, aesthetical attention and affect creates a gateway for exploring atmospheres from a spatial perspective. Attention and affect both can be aesthetical, and when they are, their importance in relation to atmospheres becomes visible. What connects these four concepts is a specific focus on the interaction of a body with its surrounding space. The concept of atmospheres in this case shows a more environmental, present dimension rather than a temporal one. I believe that atmospheres are affective and that they are an object of aesthetics. This makes the understanding of atmospheres therefore easier through the aesthetical perception of them. Even though they might exist unrelated to our perception of them, they are better understood in relation to our aesthetical perception of them. This aesthetical aspect translates itself into our mind and body which are getting transformed when attending long enough to the atmosphere. At last the body merges with the atmosphere itself through a symbiotic perceptual relation between the body and the atmosphere. At this point, we forget time and situate ourselves in an aesthetical mode of attention. We get affected by atmospheres and ultimately engage with them emotionally. The Camino is not an obvious aesthetic work, since it is an event, something continuing over time, with a temporary dimension that is at least as evident as the spatial one. However, the Camino is also embedded in an aesthetical atmosphere. In doing so the atmosphere of the Camino cultivates an aesthetical mode of attention and it affects the body even before realizing that we perceived it. Through a focus on presence, space and its simplicity, there is room for us to immerse ourselves into the aesthetical atmosphere of the Camino. This will become clear in chapter 3, where I discuss spatial atmospheres in relation to my fieldnotes of the Camino.

1.3. Experiential Atmospheres

In the previous section, I investigated the concept of spatial atmospheres, informed by the field of aesthetics, because of the close relationship between an aesthetic experience and hiking the Camino. In the following pages, I want to explore in greater depth the experiential dimension of an atmosphere, which is naturally related to the field of aesthetics. However, here I try to stay closer to the atmospheres we encounter in everyday life, rather than the ones only observed in an aesthetical mode of attention. Moreover, I want to explore the embodied perception of an atmosphere and how this influences the experience of a certain event/surrounding/object. This section will therefore approach atmospheres, rather than through aesthetical moments of perception, through the way atmospheres interact with our experiences. Think for example of a festival and how its atmosphere influences how your experience of that event. There is a clear difference between what surrounds you in the atmosphere of a festival and what surrounds you while walking in the street of a city. This subchapter considers how the atmospheres present themselves to us everywhere we go. They are not constrained to only an aesthetical mode of attention, instead, they are ongoingly present and continuously changing (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 4).

Atmospheres' capacity for moving is often taken for granted, assuming they are always connected to a physical space (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 77). However, often it is not just its spatial situation which constructs them. Instead, it might just be the change – upon movement in a certain environment, which unfolds or constructs an atmosphere. The Camino is a very good example of this. While hiking the Camino, the first days can feel disorienting, uncomfortable, and overwhelming. You meet people every day, the bunk beds you sleep in surrounded by snoring people render your nights sleepless and you probably walk wrongly because you need to create the habit of noticing the arrows along the way. However, after a couple of days, one gets used to the atmosphere on the Camino and these uncomfortable elements move to the background. Its uncomfortable aspects unite the pilgrims and there is a slow but steady attunement to a certain dynamic that leads you towards the atmosphere of the Camino. So, even though many different things are happening during the hike, things that you might assign to different atmospheres (for example, hiking alone versus cooking together versus sleeping in bunk beds), they all add up to an overall atmosphere that unfolds after a certain amount of time submerging yourself in it.

This relates also to the psychological gestalt theory where an experience and/or its atmosphere cannot be broken down into its individual elements. Instead, it is something we perceive and immerse ourselves in tacitly. “We can undoubtedly think of atmospheric perception also as the (extraintellectual, of course) comprehension of the expression of our ‘surroundings’, including the directed tensions that are inherent to the perceived and *Gestaltically* extended also to ‘inanimate objects, [...]” (Griffero 2014, 18). We perceive atmospheres through a (tacit) knowledge that is too proximal (Polanyi 2009, 10) to us to be able to identify what it is exactly that we perceive. Even though we cannot observe the atmosphere per se, we seem to be able to describe it (e.g., the atmosphere of this candlelight dinner felt so romantic). The tangible knowledge that we create about atmospheres is constructed around the feelings we have about them. Hence, we cannot identify the actual atmosphere, but we can deal with the meaning that is connected to the experience of that atmosphere. This meaning is, unlike the atmosphere itself, a knowledge that situates itself distantly enough from the subject to be identified by it (10).

As in aesthetical modes of attention, experiential atmospheres also take on a large presential dimension related to sensing what surrounds you and how it affects your experience. For example, the warm and soft light of candles at a dinner will render your experience of the dinner more intimate, as it renders everything but the objects surrounding the light less visible. While walking in a noisy street, hearing many honks of cars and people working on construction sites might render your experience more agitated and your attention overloaded. Nevertheless, apart from its present sensorial influence, experiential atmospheres are also influenced by past and future elements (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 22-25). Approaching atmospheres as continuous and ongoingly present, it becomes clear how different atmospheres blend into one another. Therefore, our immersion into an atmosphere will be cocreated by our remnant mood of other atmospheres which previously settled in our body and mind. Besides, the expectations that are created about a certain event/space/object through, for example, its narratives also cocreate the shape of its atmosphere. Since I already discussed the influence of moods and emotions in relation to the aesthetic perception of atmospheres, I will focus here on how representation and narratives shape the reception of an atmosphere.

An object representing something else, invites its referent to the space. This is how the referent will be able to influence the perceiver who is observing the object and the

atmosphere around it. Therefore, the way the subject receives the atmosphere of an object representing something else, might be influenced by the object's referent. For example, the many churches along the Camino are representations of the religious roots that the pilgrimage is grounded in. This brings to the atmosphere of the Camino a spiritual dimension that nurtures deep conversations and a feeling of ethereality. Besides representations, narratives are also often a powerful tool in shaping the reception of the atmosphere. This is also the case for the atmosphere of the Camino, where before, during and after the pilgrimage narratives co-constitute its experience. Narratives are a powerful tool influencing how we go through our world (Nünning 2010, 191). They co-constitute the way we make up the world in our mind and that mental dimension gets integrated in our body as tacit knowledge or behaviour towards our environment. As Goodman describes it, “[t]he alternative descriptions of motion [...] provide only a minor and rather pallid example of the diversity in accounts of the world.” (1978, 3). Many narratives and representations can direct our attention towards details that than suddenly become relevant in our worldview. This worldview and the tacit knowledge that comes along with it in turn, facilitates different ways of receiving and co-producing the atmosphere around us – both in the past (narratives lingering on), present (narratives directing the attention) and future (narratives creating expectations).

Even though mental processes can direct the way you attend to atmospheres, in the end, it is the body that, embedded into the atmosphere, embodies an experience. Our cognition is embodied and our mental processes cannot be separated from the bodily situatedness in the world (Kirchhoff 2018, 243). We know the world through our body and therefore we know atmospheres through our body. It might sometimes be that this perception of atmospheres stays on the subconscious level where it is not even translated into a mental representation. Nevertheless, even though you are not aware of them, they still act on our body. For example, our mind is also not thinking that gravity is pulling us down, but somehow our body is altering its position accordingly. Many aspects of experiential atmospheres are integrated into our body, but not necessarily into the mind. This means that the experience of an event, place or object can settle into the body through its atmospheres; either as affect, emotions or other bodily phenomena. But the way we experience that event, place or object is very dependent on how the body interacts with its atmosphere, which puts the relation between the body and its environment as central to experiential atmospheres.

This leads me towards the body and its interaction with the environment. Rather than a third-person, distant, mental experience, I am talking about the first-person, biased encounter of an experience. The atmosphere is (at least an aspect of) what renders an experience within phenomenology subjective. The body is a lived, experiential entity that enters in interaction with the environment beyond the five senses. According to Hermann Schmitz's account of "the felt body or [Leib]", it is a "surfaceless space" that interacts through "embodied stirrings" as different ways of perceiving with the body (2018, 10). Schmitz presents the example of feeling a headache. He physically observes the head as the material body [Körper] while the headache itself is something situated around the area of the head without it being delineated by its material surface. We feel the pounding or banging of a headache, but that particular feeling is not situated in a delineated part of the body (10). I want to extend this metaphor to the perception of atmospheres. This grasping of the atmosphere is done by the felt body and transcends this division of the body and its environment. As Schmitz states:

It is an error to conceive of these embodied stirrings as felt states of the body. In so doing one would overlook the difference in the manner of spatial extension. The body of a human or an animal is constantly extended, limited and divisible by surfaces, with various positions and distances of its elements. Anything embodied, however, is surfaceless. One cannot feel surfaces in one's own felt body, while one can look at and feel one's own material body. (Schmitz 2018, 10)

This also correlates to the idea of the body as biologically permeable. We might think that the human body is isolated from the environment with a layer of skin, but even the skin is a permeable organ allowing substances to enter and exit (Schaefer, Zesch and Stüttgen 1982, 542). Besides, other bodies such as plants or animals but also objects (for example paper being permeable to water or soil being permeable to nitrogen) often possess an outer layer that is permeable to their environment. Bodies are in constant exchange with their environment and extend into an atmosphere as well as the atmosphere can permeate them.

This idea of a body extending into the space is also visible in Michael Marder's account of plant-thinking (2013). I believe it is valuable to consider these non-human perspectives within the context of atmospheres for two main reasons. First, as already mentioned above, the concept of atmospheres itself originated within natural sciences as a way to describe our surroundings. I believe that humanities can still learn from natural sciences about the perception of atmospheres as the other way around. Secondly, in this dissertation, I try to

take on a more rhizomatic approach towards my object of study since this way of thinking¹¹ is inherent to the concept of atmospheres. Therefore, I intend to think in a rhizomatic manner by considering the actual organisms creating rhizomes in the first place – plants. In Marder’s (2024) talk about his book at Mono Lisboa, he discussed how plants possess an extended cognition that is not only material but also includes phenomena such as smells. According to him, plants seem to shift between an individual and collective way of being in the world and we must “[...] eschew the metaphysical binaries of self and other, life and death, interiority and exteriority” (Marder 2013, 53). This relates to Schmitz’s extension of the felt body and how the perception of atmospheres blurs the line between an individual and its environment. I discussed this relation between the inside and the outside above, related to affect. Marder furthermore claimed in his talk that humans possess a certain vegetal intelligence which is part of our subconsciousness, as opposed to the psyche being the non-plant-thinking (2024). This loops back to the embodied perception of atmospheres as an unconscious, tacit observation affecting our thinking on a bodily, subconscious level. When we experience something unconsciously, i.e., alike vegetal thinking, it is as if we are extending ourselves into the environment. With plants not exploiting mental processes, they epitomize the purely bodily interactions with our environment.

Besides Marder’s non-human epistemological account of plant-thinking, it is relevant, in the context bodily knowledge, to inform my account of experiential atmospheres by a non-Western concept. I bring forward the concept of *Kò* (Cyrille-Isaac 2023, 203-204), while enunciating that I am a white woman living in Western Europe, studying Portugal, and therefore situated in a framework of Western epistemology. The concept of *Kò* comes from the Caribbean phenomenology of the body and integrates both the mental processes which are embodied as well as the body extended into its environment: “[...] his perceived body, sometimes called *kò*, sometimes *kadav*, is inhabited and traversed by the spiritual forces that make a man a real and living body and not a corpse (a skeleton)” (Cyrille-Isaac 2023, 203).

¹¹ A rhizomatic approach takes on the metaphor of “A rhizome [which] has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo” (Deleuze and Guattari 2014, 406). Taking on a rhizomatic approach takes on a perspective of mapping out and **connecting different points of thought**. As in a Rhizome, “[t]hese lines always tie back to one another. That is why one can never posit a dualism or a dichotomy, even in the rudimentary form of the good and the bad.” (Deleuze and Guattari 2012, 228) “The rhizome is [...] a map [...] it constructs the unconscious. It fosters **connections between fields**, [...] it is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. (229-230, my emphasis)”

Caribbeans inform my image of the body with the idea of a living body not separating the mind from the body. There is just *kò* and “when these forces leave you, you begin to decay because they are the ones who ‘keep’ the body alive” (203). Atmospheres therefore *live* in and through our body – relationally. They live through us as not only a mental nor only a bodily, but a living force. Their inextricable approach towards the body also extends in many directions:

When we say *kò*, we are at the same time evoking all the relationships that link the individual to his family, that is to say to the living as well as to the dead, in a symbolic chain that integrates the relationships to illness, to life, to death, to the ancestors, to the spirits, and to nature.[...] ‘to think about the world in the world’” (Cyrille-Isaac 2023, 204).

The concept of *Kò* extends the body into the world around it, which makes the atmosphere around *Kò* part of *Kò*. Atmospheres are just another folding in “the continuous process of folding into each other” (205). The experiential atmospheres *live* in and around our bodies.

1.4. Atmospheres as Subjective, Quasi-objective, Intersubjective

As it becomes clear throughout this chapter, atmospheres are not easily graspable. They are rather ephemeral and alluring. We call them the ‘in-between’, which makes them both subjective, objective and intersubjective as I will lay out in the next sections.

Atmospheres are read by every body in its own way. When the atmosphere is perceived, it is internally observed and mirrored against one’s own values, norms and current mood. From this point of view, atmospheres become a very individual, subjective experience that is dependent on the individual’s mood and personality. In this case, they are part of an internal process rather than an external one. Besides, atmospheres in this perspective seem only to be existing when and because an individual perceives them. Related to this aspect, Böhme criticizes Hermann Schmitz’s perspective on the introjection of atmospheres:

The impression or coloring of a thing through atmospheres must be interpreted according to Schmitz by means of the classical subjectivist ‘as-if formula’. That is to say, we designate a valley as serene because it appears as if it is imbued with serenity. [...] His conception of atmospheres rules out the possibility that they could be produced by qualities of things. This means that the whole sphere of aesthetic work is excluded from the perspective of his approach” (Böhme 2016, 18).

This reflection also relates to the above-mentioned aesthetics of production and reception. When approaching atmospheres from an introjected perspective, Schmitz excludes the whole area of production aesthetics that acknowledges an object and an atmosphere as something autonomous.

This autonomous character assigns an objective dimension to atmospheres existing independently of the way a person perceives it. This idea is further supported by the existence of practices such as design or scenography, whose object of creation is exactly what atmospheres are. At the core of these practices lays the premise that atmospheres are manageable and that a theoretical framework exists for creating specific atmospheres that make people feel a space in a certain way (Böhme 2016, 3). Or at least, that we can stage conditions that might cause a certain atmosphere to emerge instead of staging the actual atmosphere itself (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 98).

Scenography and design also assume that the objects, their textures, the light, and the colours in a room could create a certain atmosphere. This assigns a material dimension to the emergence or the staging of atmospheres. There is a part of the perception of atmospheres that is done through the five biological senses: auditive, visual, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory. What is perceived through these senses can be objectively confirmed by scientific research, nevertheless, how it is perceived brings us back to the subjective dimension of atmospheres. Perception possesses a large mental dimension that includes to memory, meaning making and, as mentioned before, an exchange with the internal mood. Moreover, the concept of *Seselelāme* already showed earlier that our perception might include other bodily phenomena such as passion or intuition. In this way, the objective and subjective dimensions keep in encountering each other.

I borrow here a term from Böhme for this ambiguous relationship between subjectivity, objectivity, and atmospheres. He calls atmospheres “subjective facts” (2016, 2). The fact that we can discuss atmospheres and argue about them, but at the same time that they can influence your personal mood, gives them a quasi-objective character: “It [an atmosphere] is the reality of the perceived [object] as the sphere of its presence and the reality of the perceiver [subject], insofar as in sensing the atmosphere s/he is bodily present in a certain way” (Böhme 1993, 122). The fact that we discuss atmospheres and that we have created such a rich vocabulary to describe them, means that we can relate to them. Atmospheres can be shared; they can be intersubjectively perceived. The very description of

atmospheres includes this collective element. Atmospheres are what lies in between and what connects people, objects and environments. According to Mikkel Bille, Peter Bjerregaard and Tim F. Sørensen, an atmosphere is “the very sensuous interface of people, places and things [...]” (2014, 37) and Andreas Rauh claims that atmospheres are “the atmospheric phenomenon [which] undermines the separation of subject and object” (2019, 149). Recall the example of the sunset mentioned earlier: this is a moment when people join to view the landscape changing in colour. There is a shared matrix of feeling that hangs in the air when people join together to watch the sun setting. People’s behaviour somehow gets calibrated to the atmosphere around them and they are immersed in a similar mood, filled with shared meaning and emotion.

Finally, this brings me to the relationship between subjectivity, objectivity or intersubjectivity and atmosphere. Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen make a very interesting division between the object and the elements through which one perceives that object: “[...] this focus on in-betweenness highlights a potential shift from addressing the ontology of the object to the ontology of the elements: whereas the object is an entity for subjective perception, elements are dimensions through which perception takes places” (2014, 32). A question that arises in this paragraph, but also throughout the rest of my dissertation, is if the atmosphere is the medium or the object of perception. For all these ways of perceiving (subjectively, objectively or intersubjectively), the atmosphere might not be the object/entity of perception. Atmospheres might be the medium, the elements, *through* which we subjectively/objectively/intersubjectively perceive an object. For example, Böhme’s conception of ecstasies supports this idea of atmospheres as a medium. Atmospheres are not the object of perception but the way in which an object “comes forth from itself in a certain fashion and thereby make the presence of something perceptible” (Böhme 2016, 19). This brings forward the question if we can actually identify something through which we perceive. My research on the atmosphere of the Camino might therefore be seen as a meta-analysis: I think *about* something which I think *through*. Moreover, it is one of the interesting research qualities of atmospheres; to function at the same time as the research object as the research medium. In my research I might not perceive the Camino objectively, subjectively or intersubjectively, but atmospherically?

1.5. Dualities of Atmospheres

It is fundamental to atmospheres that many of its features show an ambiguous character that we can approach from two (or more) perspectives. These ambiguous features can however show us how atmospheres conceptually take up a connective role. They transcend our way of thinking dualistically and make us search for ways of thinking that encompass this separation. Atmospheres direct our way of thinking towards a rhizomatic way. The ambiguities that I will discuss in this section are the following: their definitive and indeterminate character, their introjection and our manipulation/co-creation of them, their presence and absence, how they are spatially enclosing and being enclosed and their temporal but at the same time lasting presence.

The first aspect that is fundamentally ambiguous about atmospheres is their definite/indefinite status. Atmospheres are ethereal: we do not seem able to capture them, they are something in the air that we cannot explain with logical or rational reasoning. As Ben Anderson puts it: “[it is] something that hesitates at the edge of the unsayable” (2009, 78). Atmospheres are undetermined or intangible as a whole and cannot be narrowed down to one object or specific sensory inputs. However, at the same time, we have endless descriptions of atmosphere(-aspects) at our disposal that we use on a daily basis: ‘This coffee bar was cozy’ or ‘walking in between the tourists in Lisbon feels so claustrophobic these summer months’. The effect they have on our body and mood is a confirmation of their existence and it is these effectual descriptions that we use to describe atmospheres. They seem to be omnipresent but at the same time, the concept of atmospheres feels very familiar. Even though we cannot assign them to one specific object or sensory input, we seem to believe that we can create the conditions for them to arise within practices such as design and scenography. They form as it were a bridge between our tacit knowledge and the meaning that we assign to places/people/things.

A second duality that I raise here concerns one’s personal mood or emotional state. A personal mood can be impacted and even re-sculpted by the atmosphere one is encountering. Hermann Schmitz’s phenomenological account of atmospheres describes it as “[...] a foregoing introjection. He [Herman Schmitz] shows how early in our culture, that is, in the Homeric period, feelings were experienced as something ‘outside,’ as forces which actively intrude into the human body” (Böhme 2016, 17)¹². However, the subject also performs the

¹² Original source not available in translation.

act of perceiving/feeling into your environment. Therefore, s/he partly cocreates the tone of the atmosphere. The mood that you are in before encountering an atmosphere enters into dialogue with the atmosphere and thus cocreates the mood of that atmosphere. Your mood will make you interpret or receive the atmosphere in a certain way and that reception becomes then a production of the atmosphere. Namely, the reception comes along with a reaction that in turn will influence again the current atmosphere. Andreas Rauh describes both dualities under the name of “two facets of the whereby”:

[...] the encounter of subject and object in perception refers neither exclusively to the condition of origin (‘and’) nor to the place (‘in-between’) of atmospheres, but also to their product: They are not only determined in a perceptual interplay, [...] On the one hand, the ‘whereby’ of the influence on the subject, which creates perception only through the relationship between environmental qualities and state of being, and, on the other hand, the ‘whereby’ of the effect on the subject, which influences perception and behaviour through the atmosphere, which is able to influence posture and movement style itself (2019, 150).

The connective layer that atmospheres take on in this duality lays in an interaction between the two. They can continue to interact with each other: where *the way* you perceive an atmosphere again changes the atmosphere, the atmosphere in turn then changes your mood and this cycle continues until the duality blurs.

The third and fourth dualities situate themselves in the field of spatiality. An atmosphere seems to be absent and present at the same time (Anderson 2009, 77). On the one hand, an atmosphere’s material, tangible dimension is so pervasive within its environment that the atmosphere can be considered as absent. It does not feel like something physical and we cannot physically touch it. However, an atmosphere is felt in other ways and shows at least a level of affect on us. One could argue that an atmosphere’s presence is not perceived in its materialization but rather in its consequential influence on the embodied experience of a space/experience/environment. Atmospheres, here, form a bridge between the intangible and the material radiating the presence of the latter through the space.

The other spatial duality I bring forward concerns the space an atmosphere takes up. It can be enveloped by an architectural element or by a spatial setting such as the building of a church. Before entering the big wooden doors, you are immersed in another atmosphere, while when inside, the acoustics, the height of the interior and other elements make you enter a different atmosphere. On the other hand, an atmosphere can also envelop a space or a group of people on the move. I remember attending a dance workshop at a festival in an open tent,

where I went together with the teacher through research on how a body can move. At the end of the class, he made us move outside the tent and as passers-by stopped to see what we were doing, it was clear that we had this bubble around us, this atmosphere that was created throughout the dance class. The passers-by were observing its atmosphere but were not able to immerse themselves in it. Here the atmosphere was not constrained to any element but rather the opposite, it was constraining the elements (the dancers) to continue to be in the same mood. Atmospheres form the bridge between a delineating space and the delineated elements by acting itself as an intermediate. An atmosphere can either take up the role of being a non-material space that is holding together certain elements on the move or it can be that element which are enveloped by a specific place.

However, even though atmospheres might (not) move along with certain elements through time, they are not static. Atmospheres twisted into different temporalities that include the present, past and future as already mentioned above. Both memories, expectations and the present phenomena cocreate the atmosphere at hand. Besides, atmospheres unfold over time but we need a certain perceptual commitment in order to encounter all its configurations. So even though atmospheres might be tied to a certain space or presential dimension, it is also dynamically encountered upon. Atmospheres brings together the past, present and future but also a static and a dynamic character. Atmospheres can change and evolve while at the same time we are only able to observe it in the present moment.

1.6. Why Researching with Atmospheres

To describe an experience and that what gives it value or to describe how certain phenomena are attached to it, I should not only describe it quantitatively or qualitatively but also describe its qualia (Tye 2021). Within culture studies, the dimension of tacit knowledge is very large, as we internalize our culture and often put it into practice without thinking. This tacit dimension is also present upon the encounter of atmospheres and it is embedded in the way we interact with them. Our immersing in, attunement to, or influencing of them often occurs without awareness. Through the research of atmospheres, I shift the focus of my research towards this tacit dimension and therefore acknowledge its manifestation both on the experience of hiking the Camino as well as inside the field of culture. I believe that what Sandra Burke mentioned on affect being a “potent arena to examine the way processes

that go unseen and unconsidered, never-the-less, play a significant role in experience” (2014, 82) can also be applied to atmospheres. They can give us a better understanding of the meaning, experience and bodily knowledge that a certain event provides us with.

Atmospheres are centred around the environment, the context, and our presence in that environment. These three elements are very relevant while hiking the Camino and I believe focusing on them in my research approach is necessary to properly understand the Camino. It shifts the focus of the research from something rationally, and numerically approached, towards an emphasis on the bodily and the context. Within culture studies, it is always important to contextualize our objects and, as mentioned above, atmospheres often take on the character of being both the object of and the medium through which we research. In this case, the contextualization almost becomes the object of my research as I am reflecting on the atmosphere of the Camino. Therefore, atmospheres are a very relevant tool within culture studies and they might even question how much we as researchers within culture studies focus on the contextualization of our objects.

The use of atmospheres might also counteract our often too-prominent focus on the output and bring it back to the experience and the process of how something is evolving. It is about the atmosphere unfolding as we go through it, it is not just about the object. This was very visible in the description of affordances within the aesthetical perception of the atmosphere. When approaching atmospheres through an aesthetical mode of attention, we do not approach them with the idea that something, such as the Camino, should be practical and useful. We approach them with the idea of an aesthetical affordance: “The aesthetics of atmosphere directs attention to [...] literally nothing; i.e. that which lies ‘between,’ the space” (Böhme 2016, 27). This means that we do not attend to an objective or a goal, but the focus rather lies on what surrounds the object(ive). This is also what the Camino is about. There is a famous saying going around pilgrims supporting this viewpoint: It is not about arriving in Compostela, it is about the journey towards it.

I believe, having hiked the Camino three times, that it puts us in a different mode of attention. It alters how we go through life and what we sensorily, but also morally, intellectually and socially attend to. I believe this different mode of attention is induced by its atmosphere, which is why I also focus on the atmosphere when researching the Camino. It is not just the landscapes or the hike or the history or the narratives that alter a pilgrim’s mode of attention. Naturally, all these elements influence the atmosphere and therefore also

the way you attend to life on the Camino. Nevertheless, it is exactly the combination, the gestalt of all these elements, that creates the atmosphere and its effect.

One could argue that the atmosphere is a very vague, undetermined concept, exactly because of its bodily and tacit dimensions, which keeps it from being useful in research. And this would be very true in scientific research that tries to ground everything in numbers or rational explanations. However, in culture studies, we try to understand matters that are in themselves undefined, abstract and ambiguous such as power, gender, creativity, but also the concept of culture itself. The goal of this research is to try and approach the Camino from a concept that possesses the same character as the case study that I am researching. With its intersubjective dimension, it also takes my research away from trying to achieve an objective perspective. Instead, I acknowledge my bias and the lens through which I research (atmospheres) and use it to create an informed, intersubjective perspective.

Finally, atmospheres, with their ambiguous character, are a flexible tool to research an experience. Taking on the character of both the medium through which we experience something and the actual thing we research, it acts as both the lens through which we research and the object of study itself. Therefore, investigating (through) atmospheres is a flexible tool and shows a methodology that can (be) adapt(ed) easily throughout the research. Moreover, as discussed in the subchapter on dualities, atmospheres seem to bridge many dichotomies, rendering the ambiguity of the concept useful to approach the Camino in a rhizomatic way, rather than a dichotomic one.

2. The Camino de Santiago as a Case Study

The Camino de Santiago consists of a series of routes crossing multiple countries and ending in Santiago de Compostela in Spain. In this chapter, I introduce the Camino de Santiago as the case study of my research and reflect on multiple aspects of the Camino that form a relevant context to the rest of this dissertation. I start with a historical account of the Camino, how Santiago became the patron of Spain and how motivations for hiking the Camino have altered over the years. Secondly, I discuss the Camino as a contemporary experience. This involves general aspects of the Camino experience after the COVID-19 pandemic and how the pandemic had an influence on the Camino. Then I introduce the Camino as a cultural practice, informed by scholars who also researched the Camino before the pandemic. I discuss the cultures it puts into practice, spanning from Spanish to European, from religious to a potential Camino-culture and discuss how local culture gets affected by globalization processes. After this account, I discuss the Camino as something that is more than a cultural practice. I include the role spirituality and religion, the Camino as an interface between the material and the immaterial and the body as a central actor for this relationship. This brings me to the aspect of movement and how movement directs me towards peculiar time-space relations. I describe how, on the Camino, a tension between a linear and tangled timeframe comes into being and I describe the Camino (not) containing certain aspects of a (non-)place (Augé 1995, Tuan 1979). Finally, I go into the concept of *communitas* (Turner 1974) and its social structure that is both absent and present in the Camino. I end this chapter with the notion of narratives that are a large aspect of the Camino. I discuss how some of the narratives around the Camino are institutionalized and how these institutions (national, religious) benefit from them. Furthermore, I describe how narratives on the Camino create a connection and nurture the community feeling that is highly present. These are mostly personal narratives in which I make a distinction between instructive narratives (what does it mean to be a pilgrim) and experiential narratives (what have I experienced on my Camino(s)).

2.1. Historical Context

The Camino de Santiago is a pilgrimage towards Santiago de Compostela that arose around the 9th century. The pilgrimage can be traced back until possibly the 7th century, but

in 950 the first record of the pilgrim Gotescale, a French bishop from LePuy, was found (Dunn and Davidson 2000, xxiv). The Camino Primitivo was established specifically “[a]round 830 [...]. When King Alfonso II was warned [about the remains of an apostle], he went there, making from Oviedo the first pilgrimage to Santiago in history” (Xosé Medina, Lois González, and Somoza Medina 2022, 2174). From the 12th century, the routes were well-established, and international traffic started passing through. Besides, from this period onwards the first guidebooks were written about the Camino, with detailed information about the way, its practicalities and religious important details. The most important guide was the *Liber Peregrinationis* (1139) and later its adapted version *Liber Sancti Jacobi* (1150) which remained the main guidebook for the Camino de Santiago until the 19th century (Dunn and Davidson 2000, xxv). In the 13th and 14th centuries, there seemed to be less interest in the pilgrimage, although in the 15th century many religious or spiritual accounts of the pilgrimage were published (xxvii). After the 16th century, the Camino never really stopped being walked but the interest in it as a spiritual pilgrimage diminished, along with the reformation until the 19th century (xxviii). Then, many guides for tourist-pilgrims were published combining practical information with personal narratives (xxix). Again, a drop in interest occurred during the 20th century, although the holy years still stirred up success and from the 1980s, we can observe a rising popularity until today (Luik 2012, 25, Pilgrim’s Reception Office 2020).

The cult of Santiago/Saint James/Saint Jacobs became important around the 7th century (Costen 1993, 137) together with the fall of the Suevic Kingdom, the Muslim conquest and the establishment of the Carolingian Empire. These three events urged the kings in Asturias to search for a new Patron, with the previous Patron, Martin of Tours, losing face with the destruction of the Suevic Kingdom (Dunn and Davidson 2000, 12-13). Santiago was a good candidate as one of the apostles of Christ and because the establishment of the cult coincided with the reconquering of the Spanish territory from the Moors. “[H]e became the heavenly patron who supported the armies of the nascent kingdoms of Leon and Navarre against the Moslems.” (Costen 1993, 141). Moreover, in the 9th century, Santiago’s remains were discovered by a hermit, Pelayo, in Galicia, where the current Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela is situated (137). From then onwards, Santiago also appeared on several battlefields against the Moors as “St James the slayer of the Moors” (141) and from the 10th

century, the first foreign pilgrims started visiting Santiago's tomb. Currently, there is still a big debate whether or not the remains are actually situated in the Cathedral of Compostela.

Throughout the years, the motivations behind the pilgrimage evolved. The Camino, as mentioned above, started as a pilgrimage to pay tribute to Saint James. Around this time, people believed that saints or heroic figures would put them in direct connection with Jesus and God (Costen 1993, 19, 139). The two main reasons for walking a pilgrimage were both protection (Dunn and Davidson 2000, 24) and healing (Costen 1993, 142). They wanted to connect with God so they could heal their "spiritual sickness", which could manifest itself in physical or psychological sickness. The Camino was also used as a penance for releasing one's sins or later for the soul to be "purged" (143). Furthermore, the reconquest also had a large influence on the number of pilgrims. The propaganda from the Spanish military against the North using Santiago as the Patron against the Moors, attracted many pilgrims to go and hike the Camino de Santiago. (Dunn and Davidson 2000, 15). Later, the Camino became a pilgrimage for the sake of the journey, curiosity and physical health, which is also reflected in the fact that the reformation did not have an immense effect on the popularity of the Camino (Costen 1993, 152). However, pilgrims became poorer, and the pilgrimage took on a more secular character (xxviii) with the 19th century as a blooming example: "This pre-tourist era spawned curiosity-seekers looking for adventure, excitement and new frontiers" (xxix). According to Xosé Medina, Lois González and Somoza Medina: "The reinvention of the Camino de Santiago is much more recent. It was restarted during the Franco dictatorship, when the government promoted the restoration of numerous religious buildings along the Camino to vindicate the role of the Catholic and conservative memory of Spain at the time" (2022, 2175). After the 19th century, the World War II in the 20th century was naturally also impactful: "it is only at the end of World War II that the city of Santiago de Compostela and the pilgrimage to the apostle's grave experienced a spectacular revival, supported by the desire to unify the countries of a continent that was ravaged by the horrors of war" (Frey 1998, 239). Nowadays, the popularity of the Camino de Santiago has risen immensely and only keeps rising, with an arsenal of reasons.

2.2. The Camino de Santiago as a Contemporary Experience After COVID-19

As is clear from the historical account, people (within Spain and Europe) have been walking the Camino pilgrimage for around 1200 years and it has been through many changes. Pilgrims' nationality expanded over the years and the Camino is now considered as a phenomenon affected by many processes of globalization (Sánchez and Hesp 2015). In this dissertation, my personal account of the Camino (2023 and 2024) is situated within a post-COVID-19 pandemic context. However, the writing of this chapter is also informed with research about the Camino before the pandemic, to account for the state of the art of research on the Camino. I also include reflections on how the pandemic has influenced the Camino-experience (Roszak and Tomasz 2022), which constitute relevant information for the next two chapters – based on personal observations of the Camino in 2024. It is worth mentioning that the sources I used in this chapter reveal a very large bias in terms of how scholars only researched the people that have executed the Camino. I am aware that they are not by or about people who have *not* hiked (intentionally/not) the Camino. Moreover, the consulted blogs and forums that are made about the Camino are not created and managed by people who have chosen *not* to hike the Camino.

Firstly, I would like to describe some elements that are typical to hiking the Camino Primitivo. I collected this information from the main informative source about the Camino: Gronze.¹³ On the Primitivo, one walks through many remote landscapes, crosses old villages and three major cities (Oviedo, Lugo and Santiago de Compostela). Along the road, pilgrims follow yellow arrows and marker stones that indicate, with the symbol of Saint Jacob's scallop shell, which way to follow. The local community that lives along the way knows about the Camino and interacts with the pilgrims in different ways. Very often, they wish them the famous "Buen Camino" when they are greeted with "hola". Some provide shelter, food or other facilities and conversate to help pilgrims to stay on the right track or to recommend them local places to visit. Others show displeasure with pilgrims or do not interact with them.

The Camino Primitivo starts in Oviedo and pilgrims usually overnight in a municipal albergue, a hostel or a hotel. In the case of the municipal albergues, pilgrims pay a reduced price, but they need to show their pilgrim passport to validate their identity as a pilgrim on

¹³ Gronze. "Camino Primitivo". September 2024, via <https://www.gronze.com/camino-primitivo>.

the Camino. Besides, they often sleep in bunk beds and there is sometimes a kitchen available for cooking together. A day on the Camino Primitivo often starts with waking up and packing things early in the morning. Many pilgrims start walking at sunrise and have breakfast at the first place they encounter. On the Camino Primitivo, however, with its more rural stages, it is sometimes necessary to plan breakfast or lunch beforehand. Along the way, some pilgrims walk together, some have occasional conversations and some fully isolate themselves for a more solitary experience.

In the contemporary experience of hiking the Camino, the religious dimension still echoes, and many pilgrims still hike the Camino as a form of honouring the shrine and the Christian elements on their path. This includes attending the mass or collecting the stamps from the symbolic monuments along the way. However, there has been a shift towards a less institutionalized spirituality that seeks to escape from the every-day life in search for something transcending (Malis, Masilka and Janeckova 2023, 576). Moreover, the reasons of hiking the Camino these days have expanded with meeting people, gaining fitness, being in contact with nature or searching for a primitive way of living among other reasons (Kim, Yilmaz and Ahn 2019, Farias et al. 2019).

The current pilgrims on the Camino are more and more of a globalized character. Going from less than 3000 to 347000 (2019), 54144 (2020) and 178912 (2021) in the recent years (Pilgrim’s Reception Office 2020). The majority of pilgrims still comes from within Spain, but many others travel from outside the country from different parts of the world – with a tendency towards pilgrims from within Europe. Remarkably, not many people who do the pilgrimage come from the African continent (See *The multiple nationalities present on the Camino*, together with the majority coming from Spain, cultivates a mixture).

Year	July 2019	July 2020	July 2021	July 2022
<i>Continent</i>				
<i>Europe</i>	57507	9455	32004	1347
<i>North America</i>	1932	66	1094	104
<i>South America</i>	1321	173	629	110
<i>Asia</i>	1502	42	155	51
<i>Oceania</i>	319	12	29	5
<i>Africa</i>	233	4	52	0

Table 1: The number of pilgrims from different continents based on the statistics of the Pilgrim's Reception Office (2020).

The multiple nationalities present on the Camino, together with the majority coming from Spain, cultivates a mixture of Spanish, English, and non-verbal language as a way of communicating. Interestingly, knowledge of the local language can change the experience of the Camino, as the threshold to conversate with locals becomes less high. Besides, being capable to translate for other pilgrims puts a person in a social role, while if you are only able to speak one language, your experience might feel more solitary on the Camino.

These days, the Camino has also been equipped with many services that make the road more feasible to walk. The availability of accommodation along the way has increased, along with the number of showers and the presence of hot water – which was not the case in 2010 (Cazaux 2011, 359). Many restaurants provide a “pilgrim's menu” and, along the way, one can see many advertisements for transportation (for backpacks) or ho(s)tels offering all kinds of services to take care of one's body. Parts of the Camino have taken on a commercialized character:

For example, in 2004, no shelter was offered to the pilgrims in the abandoned village of Foncebadón except in the little chapel which remained open. By 2008, three institutions offered beds to pilgrims: one is municipal, the two others are private. Even a restaurant has opened its doors; waiters dressed in period costumes serve medieval cooking (Cazaux 2011, 359).

This can be reinforced by my personal observations of a sudden augmentation of (tourist-)pilgrims that join the Camino for the last 50 kilometres. They walk for 2 days as a city trip to Compostela, which has caused the facilities to boom in these last 50 kilometres. One encounters many more (coffee) bars, restaurants and accommodation facilities. This commercialization is also present in Santiago de Compostela itself, with the many tourist shops selling all kinds of symbolic souvenirs such as magnets with the typical yellow arrow or the famous Jacob's shells that pilgrims wear on their backpacks (360). This is, however, in high contrast with the pilgrims who walk for a longer number of days. Many of them seem to go back to a more primitive way of living and focus on the walk rather than the destination.

As mentioned above, I discuss the changes through which the Camino went during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Informed by Piotr Roszak and Tomasz Huzarek's account, I found two major phenomena that prominently changed the experience of hiking the Camino: the loss of spontaneity and a greater distance. During the pandemic, the albergues created a

system of reservation, while, before, hosts were following the principle of first come, first served (Roszak and Huzarek 2022, 6). This makes everyone plan out reservations of accommodations along the entire Camino in advance so there is less room for improvisation. The idea of listening to one's body and intuition or of going along with the pilgrims encountered that day has been lost in the reservation-system. It took away a part of the adventure or the surrendering to the Camino and replaced it with a planned certainty.

Secondly, a certain distance was created between the host and (between) the pilgrims. This was mostly visible in the municipal albergues in Galicia, built by Xunta de Galicia, where a plastic wall separated the host from the pilgrims upon 'welcoming' (Roszak and Huzarek 2022, 3). Moreover, after COVID, many albergues decided to take away kitchen utensils, which created a strange, distant atmosphere. Pilgrims see modern, beautiful kitchens and dinner rooms without utensils to cook and eat together. In the albergues, there used to be a close relationship between the host and the pilgrims. They would eat together, and the host would either nourish the formation of a Camino family or enter into a family (depending on how far along the way they met). These albergues can still be encountered in the beginning of the Primitivo, however, in Galicia they are rarely found.

2.3 The Camino de Santiago as a Cultural Practice

The Camino can be considered as a practice where pilgrims perform rituals and meanings which are connected to a certain or multiple culture(s). As Clifford Geertz describes in his example of a wink how this simple act is situated within a cultural context. He claims that "Culture is public because meaning is. You can't wink (or burlesque one) without knowing what counts as winking [...]" (Geertz 1973, 12). In this subchapter, I discuss the potential cultures that contextualize the Camino as a practice. As the Camino is a pilgrimage to a shrine in Spain, with Saint James / Santiago the Patron of Spain, the Camino is a practice connected to the Spanish culture. Besides, as mentioned above, the majority of pilgrims on the Camino are identified as Spanish, which makes the main language, among pilgrims and locals, Spanish (Pilgrim's Reception Office 2020; Slavin 2003, 12). The Camino also passes alongside many Spanish historical monuments depending on which Camino one decides to walk. Examples are the León Cathedral (Camino Francés), Lugo's Roman Walls (Camino Primitivo), the Tower of Hercules (Camino Ingles) or the Vizcaya Bridge in Bilbao (Camino Norte). Depending on the Camino, one gets immersed in different

Spanish cultural sceneries. The Primitivo, in particular, crosses Asturias and Galicia and pilgrims can for example have a taste of the Asturian and Galician gastronomy and music. In Asturias, one can enjoy the typical cider and in Galicia pilgrims get familiar with their siesta-hours and their typical tapas. Besides, the musical encounters can go from a local concert in a village to a Spanish pilgrim/host/local sharing the music s/he usually listens to. Therefore, the main Spanish culture which the Camino performs, is that of the geographical locations the Camino passes through.

The roads to Santiago de Compostela expand beyond Spain into different European countries. And even if pilgrims do not start from their home country, they walk the Camino as a European citizen and a representative of their (national) culture. In this sense, the Camino becomes a place of encounter of European culture. This is also visible in the nomination of the Camino as the first European cultural itinerary by the Council of Europe in 1987 (Gardner, Mentley, and Signori, 2015, 59). The importance of the Camino as a cultural practice for the European culture, was further confirmed by the addition of the Camino Francés in 1993 and the northern pilgrimages in 2015 to the World Heritage list by UNESCO. The Camino was connected to the European culture based on different criteria (UNESCO n.d.). According to criterium ii, the Camino is an important catalyst for cultural exchange between different European countries with the Iberian Peninsula. According to criterium iv, the European value of the Camino is visible in their “complete material registry of all Christian pilgrimage routes” (UNESCO n.d.) and finally, criterium vi claims how faith related to the Camino has a powerful effect on people from different social classes as well as from different origins within medieval Europe (UNESCO n.d.). As seen above, in table 1, most pilgrims come from within Europe and, while a larger number of ethnicities walk the Camino, the majority is part of a Western cultural landscape.

Besides the discussion of the Camino as a cultural practice within a national, continental and geographical cultural context, I emphasise the cultural context of religion in which the Camino acts as a cultural practice. This pilgrimage, historically, was a way to connect with Christ and God through his Patron (Costen 1993, 141). Besides, currently, many people follow religious reasons (among others) to embark on the Camino (Cazaux 2011, 363; Roszak and Huzarek 2022, 5). I also encountered some pilgrims with religious intentions who attended the mass every night. Along the Camino, one passes by many churches and Catholic monuments that often include a stamp and therefore an interaction

with religious characters such as a priest or a nun/monk. However, today, the “pilgrimage is losing its purely religious character and thus the distinction between pilgrim and tourist is beginning to blur” (Malis, Masilka, and Janeckova 2023, 587). Malis, Masilka and Janeckova make a distinction between tourists, who direct their attention outwards to consume the cultural practice in that “[they] suck[s] the energy out of a place of pilgrimage” (587) and pilgrims, who direct their attention inwards by “recharging” the “place of pilgrimage” (587). The religious cultural context, in this sense, might be replaced by a tourist cultural context – which comes with its own behaviours and modes of attention.

Finally, contrary to Egan’s claims (2010, 108), we should also consider the possibility that the Camino might also represent its own culture. Egan believes that a culture cannot be created within a month-long pilgrimage (108); that said, what he does not take into account is the constancy of the Camino over space rather than time. The Camino has been present in the same space for around 1200 years and has undergone many developments. As such, if we consider the Camino as a space rather than an activity, I believe it is not unreasonable to question if the Camino also has established its own cultural context rather than being a cultural practice connected to another culture. I am thinking, above all, about the locals’ orientation towards a Camino that passes by their homes or the fact that pilgrims take on roles and practice behaviours that are typical to a pilgrimage, maybe even specific to the Camino as a pilgrimage. Zhang et al. mention this very issue in their research: “Some Chinese pilgrims pointed out that the Camino itself represents a culture characterized by a spiritual quest, a simple lifestyle, benevolent traditions, cross-cultural interactions, and unity. This culture seemed unusual and unique in contrast with their everyday social reality” (2021, 7). The combination of pilgrims’ behaviours feels unique to the experience of hiking the Camino. Pilgrims often arrive home in need of a recalibration to the everyday life. It seems as if they were immersed into a different cultural context. This context might not directly come forth from a Western Cultural context even though the Camino is situated in the geographical West. For example, the profoundness in which people connect in such a short time stands in opposition to our Western individualistic culture (Mencher 1947). Another example is how pilgrims practice slow pace in which they do things such as movement inefficiently on foot, while in our current Western culture the values of the Enlightenment i.e. progress, efficiency and fast pace are still embedded (Jervis 1998, 91, 229).

Because the Camino is known among the locals who live along the way and many pilgrims pass along small villages, the Camino is embedded in the local culture and the local culture embeds the Camino. The Camino is not just a hike; it is a practice embedded in the cultural landscape that it crosses. Manifestations of this include the fact that there are arrows everywhere, painted on structures and properties; pilgrim's menus are offered in restaurants; pilgrims blend with locals at coffee bars, parks or along the hike; local medical centres help treat the pilgrims' possible injuries; and many places provide a stamp for the pilgrims to validate their travel. Along the way, locals show pilgrims the correct route or say "Buen Camino" to wish them a "good hike". The pilgrims who speak some Spanish, can get involved in conversations with a local waste collector or farmer. On the Camino Português, some places even offer accommodation at fire stations, called "Bombeiros Voluntários" (Vialusitana, 2021). A cultural practice in which local and transnational cultures meet, gives rise to augmented realities and, at the same time, tensions arise. Think about how interacting with the locals can make a pilgrim realize their place as a tourist that is passing through someone else's backyard. This can raise a greater awareness about the care they want to give to their surroundings. On the other hand, the language exemplifies how these cultural encounters can create points of tension. It might separate the Spanish pilgrims, who are verbally very connected to the local culture, and the foreign pilgrims, who remain more distant because of a language barrier.

As I am discussing the interrelation between a local culture and the transnational cultures on the Camino, it is important to discuss how processes of globalization might affect these interrelations. As Paul Genoni claims, this encounter between transnational cultures and the local culture is deeply affected by processes of globalization (Genoni, 2015). According to them, the Camino, emerging within the local, Spanish/Christian culture, now inspires many other pilgrimages to emerge and take shape. "[T]he Camino serves as a wellspring from which other parts of the world continually draw as they remake pilgrimage for the 21st century" (Genoni, 2015, 174). Through the processes of globalization – which includes global transport, a space-time contractions and rapid modes of communication through different media, the local pilgrimage has had an impact far beyond its local cultural context. On the other hand, looking at it from the opposite perspective, the local culture through which the Camino crosses, might be neglected and overwhelmed by the visit of so many other cultural representatives. "[...] with descriptions of walking paths buried beneath

highways; villages erased by economic “progress”; families and communities ravaged by unemployment and social displacement; and the Camino itself commercialized and exploited. (Genoni 2015, 188). Processes of globalization impacted the local culture along the Camino in the sense that the Spanish culture is sometimes set aside for the many bars, hostels and tourists’ shops that are opened for pilgrims along the way. It seems that the goal on some places became for people to visit Spain (on the Camino), rather than for the locals living on the Camino.

Even though, the Camino as a cultural practice might provide a gateway for many different cultures to be manifested into behaviours, habits and rituals, I also question here why certain cultures are not encountered on the Camino. There is a selection barrier at play which attracts and – possibly unconsciously, denies specific ethnicities. Many habits and rituals are connected to a Western culture as well as the main language spoken on and religion connected to the Camino (Zhang 2015, 8). People from different ethnicities might not identify themselves with this cultural practice because it does not nurture enough encounters beyond the Western cultural landscape. In this regards, Ke Zhang accounted for the experience of certain Chinese pilgrims on the Camino de Santiago. Moreover, the Camino is still strongly connected to a Christian religion. This is visible in the historical narratives created by subjects and objects along the way or by the rituals performed. This might put up a boundary for people from other religious backgrounds to hike the Camino. On the one hand, his account confirms this selection barrier: “I had little preparation in understanding the churches. We visited some of them but didn’t really understand them. If there are any stories or background history, we must have missed that” (Zhang et al. 2015, 9). On the other hand, they found elements of their own culture such as a harmonious relationship among pilgrims and between pilgrims and nature:

The representation of the Camino as a ‘magical’ way because of the countless serendipitous encounters with others that happen along the way, as well as the frequent interpretation of such encounters as predestined relationships (yuanfen) in play, can both find their roots in Chinese folk beliefs, originally introduced from Buddhism, about the causes and timing as to when people enter or exit relationships with one another (Zhang et al. 2021, 10).

This reflects how people might use the Camino as a bridge between cultures (12) with the intention of escaping their usual daily life and culture. I loop this back to the first chapter, where the idea of bridging is also inherent to atmospheres. The similarities between the

Camino and the concept of atmospheres, show how atmospheres is an appropriate concept research the Camino.

Finally, describing the Camino as a cultural practice makes us question its singularity and plurality. Is there just the Camino or are there multiple Caminos? The singularity is mainly visible in the fact that, even in this dissertation, I still call the Camino by its Spanish name. We are not just talking about any ‘way’¹⁴, but when I mention the Camino, everyone is aware that I am speaking of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Besides, there are many narratives on the Camino that seem to indicate a specific way of executing the Camino, which also refers to the abovementioned idea of the “Camino culture”. However, this very much contradicts the narrative that “everyone has their own Camino”. Each individual experiences the Camino differently on a personal level, be it in their intention, physical relation to the Camino, or inner/outer journey. For example, when someone is rushing every day to reach their destination, they would have a very different “Camino” from someone that embarks on their journey slowly, while taking in every sensuous stimulus. Besides, different pilgrims start the Camino with different intentions or motivations for hiking the Camino (Farias et al. 2019). This causes them to enter and therefore relate differently (in)to the Camino. Besides, even though we say “the Camino”, as already mentioned above there are multiple Caminos geographically spread over Spain and the first question people ask when you say you will hike the Camino is “which one?”. Moreover, these days some pilgrims hike the Camino in the opposite way, having a completely different experience. They meet a new group of pilgrims every day, which we could interpret as meeting a new Camino every day. The network of people that is formed along the Camino is integrally part of the Camino, which makes this pilgrim hiking it in the opposite way, encounter and exit a new Camino every day. Others again transform the Camino into their personal experience, such as Phil Volker. He took the idea of the Camino to a new level and brought it to his backyard (Barush 2021, 17). Instead of walking the Camino in Spain, he calculated how many laps he would need to take in his backyard to hike the same distance as the Camino starting in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port. In this way he hiked his own representation of *the* Camino, following a completely different (physical) path. If and why I would consider Volker’s way of hiking the Camino as actually “hiking the Camino” might actually be embedded in the way the

¹⁴ Camino is translated into English as ‘way’ or ‘hike’ which could semantically refer to any ‘way’ or any ‘hike’.

word is used metaphorically. People often say after they arrive in Compostela, “now the real Camino begins.” This refers to the process you mentally go through when hiking a pilgrimage and the mental process you need to go through when arriving back home. Therefore, the Camino metaphorically refers to the mental kilometres your mind has covered as spend so much time thinking while walking.

2.4 The Camino de Santiago as More than a Cultural Practice

Framing the Camino as a cultural practice is not a straightforward task and leaves out some noteworthy aspects. In this section I, therefore, discuss how the Camino’s embeddedness in cultural landscapes might manifest itself in something beyond practice into tacit dimensions. This is also visible in “the struggle to define a pilgrimage” (King 2023). Sánchez y Sánchez’ (2015, 146) description of the Camino as an interface, a channel and a matrix, offers an interesting approach to start this subchapter. The Camino connects the material and intangible, the physical and the profane, the holy and the earthliness (146), which again relates to the concept of atmospheres and their relational properties.

The first and most evident way in which the Camino acts as a channel is for and through its spiritual dimension. With its roots in the Christian religion, the Camino was established as a way to connect with God. The passing of many holy monuments on the way and the shrine as the end destination cultivates this spiritual intention (Costen 1993, 139). The idea of searching for something transcendent, translates itself now into many other forms of spirituality:

In fact, the infrastructure created by the Church on the Camino de Santiago has contributed to a blossoming of multicultural, postmodern spirituality. This spirituality manifests itself in an individualized inner search for the essence of one’s being and the values and meanings by which people live, often avoiding or replacing traditional religious institutions (Gardner, Mentley, and Signori 2015, 58).

For example, the thought processes and conversations between pilgrims are much faster of a profound nature. The kilometres of solitary walking or walking in conversation cultivates a (self-)reflective attitude that questions both superficial and fundamental aspects of the pilgrim’s life. In addition, there is a large amount of time (Slavin 2003, 6) and space on the Camino both present in the emptiness of the day and the surrounding landscapes as pilgrims spend their day outdoors. This brings about the embodiment of a spiritual dimension

that does not situate itself on the level of a cultural practice but rather concerns a tacit experience of the culture around us.

Moreover, the intention of many pilgrims to hike the Camino is very often already spiritual-oriented. Some reasons can be religious, but some can entail the search for answers to a particular question or the process of a loss (Egan 2010, 109). Another way in which spirituality manifests itself on the Camino is through meditative practices: “[...] the central reason for walking [is] to engage in a meditative practice. One focused upon the journey and the self as opposed to the destination” (Slavin 2003, 4). Another way in which the Camino acts as a channel of and through spirituality concerns serendipities. Because the Camino is, by nature, based on spontaneity and openness, there is a lot of room for encountering things that you did not expect or look for. As Suzanne Van der Beek describes: “at the Camino, all pretence falls away, and the notion of ‘coincidence’ is unmasked as the inability of the ordinary person to oversee his or her life as guided by a greater force” (2017, 29). Pilgrims are more attuned to these serendipities and, because they notice them, they are more inclined to question them, which can bring them into a spiritual mode of attention.

The Camino can also act as an interface between the material and immaterial. The modest number of items a pilgrim travels with reflects the large intangible dimension s/he immerses her/himself into. Moreover, it is the absence of items on the Camino that makes pilgrims question their identity and makes them aware of how they relate to these objects. The things that are absent on the Camino include using a computer, occupying a personal space, feeling surrounded by a familiar network of people or the familiarity of a local shop. Instead, pilgrims encounter new people spaces every day and are confronted with an analogue way of going through life. One of the most significant things (most) pilgrims lose on the Camino is comfort and luxury. They must work hard to get to their next destination, often prepare their own food upon arrival and wash their clothes by hand. They sleep in a room full of other people, in an uncomfortable bunk bed and they must stand in line to get a spot in the shower. The loss of comfort is an example of how phenomena on the Camino question bodily processes and identity construction. Pilgrims start taking care of each other “because [they] are all in this discomfort together” (Egan 112, 2010) or they start relating to their own bodies differently. After returning from the Camino, pilgrims question if they need (to go back to) this comfort and luxury in their homes. Many pilgrims also start hiking the Camino alone and, because they are not surrounded by their usual network and familiar

spaces, a part of the things that normally constructs their identity is removed. Surrounded by a new environment and with people questioning who you are or what you value also, one's identity is questioned by the presence of new things rather than only the absence of them. Therefore, the Camino is an interface between the material and the immaterial and acts as a channel that makes pilgrims question their identity on a spiritual level.

Another way in which the Camino acts as an interface between the material and immaterial dimensions is through the pilgrim's bodily relationship with the material around them. The Camino cultivates a large focus on the body, where a pilgrim literally step by step engages with the Camino, their body relates differently with its surroundings. Therefore, pilgrims are more focused on and present in their body and they feel their body much more through the pain and work it has to endure. A large awareness is cultivated based on how the body relates with the objects (such as plasters against blisters or a stick to help a pilgrim walk) the pilgrim engages with. Therefore, the Camino acts as an interface between the body and the way it engages with the material.

Samuel Sánchez y Sánchez researched how the body relates to certain objects on the Camino, such as a walking stick. He claims that:

The very materiality of this walking stick allows this object to simultaneously serve not only as a mnemonic device but also as a catalyst that both triggers and embodies memory and identity. From this perspective, the material world on the Camino serves as a channel to directly embody rather than represent narratives (Sánchez y Sánchez 2015, 152).

The body, therefore, engages with the material on the Camino, e.g. a walking stick, as something that means much more than just the object itself. The object does not just serve a functional purpose but becomes an extension of the body and part of the identity of the pilgrim. Reciprocally, the object also influences the subject and, hence, the subject becomes an extension of the object:

Humans do things with images and objects, but objects also do things to us; because of this, we need to respect their autonomy and integrity – their materiality. If we have an object before us (and granted this is not always possible), how do we best make use of it? (Buggeln 2015, 357).

The body on the Camino makes a physical journey that moves forward, not circular. This physical journey then translates itself into a mental journey, in which the mind makes a mental/spiritual inner journey and processes certain tangles of the mind (Sánchez y

Sánchez 2015, 146). Keith Egan connects the physical act of moving to the mental act of moving through rhythm as he quotes Rebecca Solnit: “They can help an abstract cognitive process become “a physical rhythmic act” (Solnit 2002: 13) where the body can think itself through the landscape of the mind” (Egan 2010, 110). Also the pilgrims that Ke Zhang reflected with, seem to approach this physical journey as a metaphor for the travelling mind on the Camino: “A journey of the inner self” or ‘a journey of the mind’ (xinling zhi lv) [...] The Chinese word ‘xinling’ consists of ‘xin’ (heart), and ‘ling’ (spirit), and together they mean one’s inner world in contrast to the physical world, or the mind in contrast to the physical body” (Zhang 2021, 8). Finally, according to Slavin, walking the Camino, “explores a nexus between the body, self and the world” (2003, 16). He acknowledges the fact that the body is situated in specific material circumstances, as I also discussed above, and how these can help the body to create spiritual immaterial experiences: “They [the experiences produced in the body] respect its materiality and its presence, but also allude to a mystery beyond” (16).

This focus on movement and how the body situates itself in the passing landscape leads me to explore the Camino and its relationship with time and space. In this regard, I discuss two ways in which the Camino can be approached through a spatiotemporal perspective rather than approaching it as a cultural practice. The relation between the Camino and time can be very peculiar. As Slavin describes very well, there is a tension between the present moment on the Camino and the Camino as a journey with a beginning, middle and end:

This points to a tension between narrating the journey as a complete thing, with, in Aristotelian terms, a beginning, middle and end, and the desire expressed by many pilgrims to exist in the moment within the journey, without any particular consciousness beyond the moment (2003, 14).

This desire not to think further ahead but instead to be *in* the journey is reflected in the words “Buen Camino”. When someone passes a pilgrim or decides, after walking together for a while, to walk further on alone, they do not say “goodbye” or “when will I see you again”. No plans are made for the future and “Buen Camino” is a way of acknowledging this spontaneity, non-planned behaviour. However, the narrative of moving forward, rather than remaining in the journey, stresses also a focus on the Aristotelian description of a beginning, middle and end (Slavin, 2003, 14). For example, the typical indication stones that show how many kilometres to Santiago de Compostela is a very clear indication of moving forward and time passing by linearly. Another way in which this narrative of the demarcated journey

is interrupted is through the metaphor of “the Camino does not end in Compostela” or, upon arrival, when pilgrims say, “the Camino starts only just now”. The Camino continues after arriving both through the contrast one encounters when returning to everyday life but also through the stories people narrate after they arrive back home. The Camino continues in the minds of those who walked it and they look back at the “past” experience that somehow is still very present in their behaviour. Examples are the feeling of fitness, a longing for slowing down time or a disconnection with their phone. Therefore, even though people make a linear journey with their body, the timeframe seems to take many turns involving the present, future and past.

The other perspective I discuss is related to space, place, and non-place (Turner 1974; Slavin 2003; Augé 1995, Tuan 1979). The Camino has a destination, but it seems to be all about the journey, so I question here if the journey is a (s)place on its own. Starting from Yi-fu Tuan’s idea of space and place, at first sight, the Camino as “directed space” is not a place. “Such space [a directed space] is structured around the spati[al]-temporal points of here (now) and there (then).” (1979, 400). According to him, “only non-directed homogeneous spaces can be place” which makes the Camino, at first sight, not a place. As opposed to a place, I bring into discussion Augé’s concept of non-place. He describes a non-place as a place frequented by people passing through or passing by. In a non-place, people do not create meaningful relationships with the place, nor with other people that also pass there. If I consider the Camino for a moment as just a hike, passing through villages, landscapes and places to sleep, the concept of a non-place seems appropriate. As Tuan agrees: “To be always on the move is, of course, to lose place, to be placeless and have, instead, merely scenes and images.” (411). The idea of “passing through” coincides with the idea of a non-place. Examples of non-places are airports or supermarkets, where people follow instructions rather than personal connections: “they [non-places] are defined partly by the words and texts they offer us: their 'instructions for use', which may be prescriptive, [...] prohibitive [...] or informative (Augé 1995, 96).” On the Camino pilgrims have their identity document called, the pilgrim passport, ready which needs to be shown upon arrival at an albergue to verify their identification as pilgrims. Besides, the yellow arrows themselves are a clear instruction of the road every pilgrim must follow. However, in spite of these aspects and Tuan’s idea of directed space as not space, approaching the Camino only as passing through geographical space would be very short-sided. I brought it into discussion exactly because it demonstrates

that the Camino is about more than just passing through. One important characteristic Yi-fu and Augé respectively mention about places and non-places is that the first is and the latter is not formed by relationships. “So too a place, through long association with human beings, can take on the familiar contours of an old but still nurturing nanny.” (Tuan 1979, 410) Even though a pilgrim crosses through the landscape and seems to be on the move every day, s/he forms relationships along and on the way. For example, one of the evident relations between the pilgrim and the Camino is the destination i.e., their “passing through” is always in relationship to Santiago de Compostela: “The high point at the end of the pilgrimage is, by definition, overloaded with meaning” (Augé 1995, 90). A pilgrimage carries a lot of history and cultural connection and, in this way, is not fully marginalized from its geographical and cultural landscapes. Instead, like as

[a] marching man [moves....] open space displaces the constrained space of linear distance and point locations. [...] The sense of beginning and end weakens as also the articulation of directions. Directed, historical space acquires some of the characteristics of homogeneous space (Tuan 1979, 400)

Similarly, the Camino moves along with the pilgrim. The Camino stands in relationship to everything it passes through and shows many relationships, both among pilgrims, between the pilgrims, with the locals or the hosts. Augé also claims that “[t]he space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude” (103). Contrarily, the Camino seems to almost move with the pilgrim. There is a whole community – both locals along the way as well as other pilgrims walking – which acts in function of the Camino. Besides, many stories on the Camino travel along it and are picked up by pilgrims and travel with them to the next Camino. Accordingly, the Camino’s identity is also shaped by the pilgrims walking it and history that is being (re-)told. Pilgrims leave things behind along the way and interact with the space as they walk, which affects the space of the Camino and turns it into a place.

Further arguing how the Camino is *not* a non-place, I bring into discussion Victor Turner’s concept of “the liminal space. Turner regards a liminal space as situated on the margin of the cultural and social frames (Turner 1974, 13-14). He does not, however, define a liminal space but rather sticks to the negative approach of a non-place (Slavin 2003, 9). Interestingly, a liminal place relates to an ‘in-between’ space (Turner 1974, 52), which is an aspect that has been discussed in relation to the Camino – and in relation to atmospheres,

multiple times. Slavin connects this in-betweenness again to the body: “[...] the importance of the body as nexus, both of place and displacement” (2003, 8). The body therefore is the connective element, it is the place that displaces itself and moves along with the pilgrim and the multiple bodies of the other pilgrims moving along with each other while, at the same time, forming a place.

While the liminal space is a perspective on the spatial situation of the Camino, Turner extends it into a social dimension. He introduces the term “Communitas” as “a social anti-structure” (Turner 1974, 45). He believes it to be “as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders” (170). On a pilgrimage, one tends to disconnect from everyday life. Many characteristics, systems and habits from one’s usual social life are interrupted or suspended. Therefore, this idea of communitas is an interesting concept to consider in relation to a pilgrimage as going beyond a cultural practice. For example, when one walks and starts talking to people, it is the rhythm rather than a social circle which determine who you meet. However, in the routine of daily life, it might be less likely that a person encounters many other people and have profound conversations with them beyond their own social circles. Besides, pilgrims all wear similar hiking clothes and backpacks, as they all suffer through the same activity. This common goal and the way of reaching that goal, connects pilgrims on a deeper level and, according to Snežana Brumec, suspends their social roles and status (2023, 47). However, following Keith Egan (2010, 108) and Eade and Sallnow (1991), I criticize this idea of a communitas and I do not fully agree with the claim that social roles/status are not present on the Camino. First and foremost, there is already a cultural selection process occurring as mentioned above. Besides, economical boundaries related to the commercialization of the Camino form a selection when it comes to who walks the Camino. Moreover, people who do not have time to take so many holidays from work or people who cannot travel this far are left out of the pilgrimage. With the commercialization of the Camino also many “pseudo-pilgrims”, as Brumec calls them, were attracted to hike the Camino. These are pilgrims “who travel by bus in organized groups for only a few days to fulfil the minimum conditions to obtain a Compostela, make organized daily trips, walk without backpacks, and usually sleep in hotels” (Brumec 2023, 47). Very often, long-term pilgrims, i.e. pilgrims walking for more

than 4 days, look down on these “pseudo-pilgrims” and do not consider them as part of their group or *communitas*.

2.5 Narratives on the Camino de Santiago

A community is created and supported by its narratives and we can also observe this on the Camino (Cope et al. 2019). Narratives are pervasive on multiple levels and can manifest themselves in many ways on the Camino which makes me structure the next sections into several divisions. The first division I want to make is between two ways in which narratives cocreate the Camino. First, there are the instructive narratives. In these narratives, it is discussed what a pilgrim is and the “the right way” to do a pilgrimage is being told. This is often done through blogs, forums and guides with “[...] pilgrims [that] recommend to each other in pilgrim forums what gear to buy, what shoes, sleeping bags, packs – all these very sophisticated pilgrim gear, which help make the Camino doable” (Schrire 2006, 80).

The second way to cocreate the Camino through narratives is more of an experiential nature. Pilgrims narrate their personal experience on the Camino which colours its image. There are multiple ways in which these narratives manifest themselves: on the one hand, extensive literature has been written about the Camino, spanning from travel guides to personal experiences; on the other hand, digital blogs describe both what one needs or how the experience of the Camino feels like¹⁵. Moreover, there are many forums¹⁶ through which the Camino almost becomes something which has ‘a fanbase’. Besides, there are artistic accounts that capture the experience of the Camino through exhibitions (Mediahub 2004), cinema (Passaretti 2020) and even performances (Barush 2021, 17).

Another level on which I divide the narratives that are being told about the Camino is between institutionalized narratives and personal ones. The main institution that created narratives about the Camino is evidently, the Christian religion that used the pilgrimage to glorify their new Saint (Santiago) as mentioned above. Christian leaders wanted to create a common spirit that would help them conquer the battles against the Mores (Costen 1993, 141). Besides, they used this pilgrimage as a way for cities along the Camino to thrive from pilgrims doing penance. But also, nowadays,

¹⁵ Examples are: <https://stingynomads.com/> or <https://www.gronze.com/>.

¹⁶ Examples are: <https://www.caminodesantiago.me/community/>; <https://vivecamino.com/en/forums/>; <https://www.gronze.com/foros>.

there are disputes between villages on where the authentic Camino path went through. This results in an increasing diversification of the Camino so that more villages would benefit from the Camino's economic success, and indeed for many locals the Camino is all about making a reasonable living (Schrire 2006 79).

On a larger level, this raises debates on which culture the Camino belongs to, as thoroughly discussed in subchapter 1.3. National (Spain), economic (businesses along the way such as restaurants or hostels) or religious (the church) institutions benefit from the creation of narratives that attract more (tourist) pilgrims. They each have their own agenda, but for the national and religious institutions a main "[...] aspect of the pilgrimage from the past [...] is that the pilgrimage involves shared effort and represents a common ideal" (Moulin and Boniface 2001, 241). Steven Gardner, Carlos Mentley and Lisa Signori point out an interesting idea in relation to the story of the Camino as a cultural practice of the European culture. "[...] they both choose to idealize the historical Camino de Santiago and ignore the brutal conflicts of Europe's past, rather than help Europeans confront their violent and oppressive history" (Gardner, Mentley, and Signori 2015, 57). It seems that Europe wants to use the Camino as a story that narrates unity and idealized values (57). This is often translated into writing guides that spread the word among potential hikers and funding literature or other artistic accounts about the Camino. These guides have already been created from the early beginning of the pilgrimage with the very famous "Liber Sancti Jacobi (LSJ)" (Dunn 2000, xxv-xxvi). The guides idealize a brutal past in which the Camino was used as a symbol to fight the Mores (Gardner, Mentley and Signori 2015, 57).

One aspect that narratives can bring forth and that is very present on the Camino is the collective dimension it can create: "Community narratives are typically reflected in stories that reminisce about what the community was and speculate about what it will be and become part of a new community story" (Cope et al. 2019, 13). Narratives on the Camino are one of the most salient phenomena that bring pilgrims together into a temporary family. They narrate what a pilgrim should be and how the ideal pilgrimage is portrayed these days. Moreover, the narrative of being unable to put the Camino into words romanticizes the experience and gives pilgrims the feeling they are part of something special, together. Besides, pilgrims do nothing other than talk about previous Caminos or narrate stories they have heard from other pilgrims to cocreate their expectations with the listeners. This is often the first level in which pilgrims connect, by either learning or passing on what it means to be a pilgrim and why pilgrimages are so special. The narrative of what it means to be a pilgrim also adds a performative dimension to the Camino. Pilgrims connect with each other

by taking on the role that is narrated about pilgrims and, to a certain extent, do not consider people as pilgrims if they do not join in this performance. Dani Schrire lists many “traditions” that fit the perfect pilgrim as opposed to the earlier mentioned “pseudo-pilgrim”:

On the Camino, Pilgrims Eat Dinner Together [...] Live like a Big (Ideal) Family [...] Pilgrims Walk Slowly so that They can Take Time to Think, [...] Pilgrims Give as Much as They Can [...] Pilgrims Live Closely to Nature [...] Pilgrims Live a Simple and Modest Life” (Schrire 2006, 77-80).

But also in the pilgrims’ narratives, this supposedly ideal of a pilgrim, with its customs and ways, is narrated: “When they heard it was my second Camino, Romy was quite shy and begged our pardon for not knowing the Camino custom of eating together in the evening (it was their first Camino night, she apologized). On the following nights they became strong promoters of this newly learnt “custom”” (77-78).

Alongside the portrayal of what a pilgrim is supposed to do, people on the Camino talk a lot about the adventures they have experienced during the present or past Camino(s), which cocreates the image of both the listener and narrator on the Camino. “In retelling experiences together, different interests, capacities, and values can be explored and tested, stories reworked and fresh relationships realized as one comes into being on pilgrimage” (Egan 2010, 111). The listener will create different expectations if another pilgrim tells her/him that the next passage is a very hard and exhausting one rather than when another pilgrim describes the beauty and peacefulness of the landscapes. Aside from the listener, the narrator also gets influenced by the things s/he recounts since it adds an extra level of importance to the event s/he narrates and therefore her/his narrative shapes her/his image of the Camino as well. This can even be extended to the narratives that are being told after the return home from the Camino. Many people only start realizing what they learned/experienced/were taught on the Camino as they try to explain it to their friends, family, or on forums and blogs. Therefore, many pilgrims process their experience through the creation of a narrative around it. Blogs and forums give people an easy outlet for their reflections about the Camino, on the one hand, and give the people who have not yet walked the Camino an informal way to learn about the experience of hiking the Camino, on the other hand.

3. Researching *in* and *about* Atmospheres

This chapter is based on the methodology by Shanti Sumartojo and Sara Pink of researching *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres (Sumartojo and Pink 2019). I discuss what it means, according to them, to research *in* atmospheres and corroborate these ideas with the conceptual framework of chapter 1. Subsequently, I describe how *I* researched *in* the atmosphere of the Camino through fieldnotes and photographs. I also include a perspective on how the process of walking adds a new dimension to this need for researching *in* atmospheres. I connect researching *in* and *about* atmospheres in the discussion of visual ethnography and discuss the process of taking and analysing my photographs. Then I dive into Sumartojo and Pink account of researching *about* atmospheres and then discuss how *I* researched about the atmosphere of the Camino, including the processing of my data and the way I created a representation of the atmosphere. Finally, the rest of the chapter is dedicated to that representation of the atmosphere of the Camino. It discusses my observations and photographs from the Camino I walked in April 2024, following the conceptual framework of spatial and experiential atmospheres. I introduce this chapter by stating my enunciation: I am writing this thesis as a white woman who carries the perspective of a person living in a city in Western Europe. Therefore, other ways of living such as living in the countryside or living in a small village might have surprised me and make me notice elements that, for someone who lives there for a longer period, might not stand out.

3.1 Knowing *in* Atmospheres

As I utilize Shanti Sumartojo and Sara Pink's prepositions "in", "about" and "through" atmospheres and employ their research methodology, I will base these first sections on their account of knowing *in* atmospheres (Sumartojo and Pink 2019). A first reason why we should meet atmospheres physically is because they are constituted of a large intangible dimension. This means a representation of an atmosphere is not enough, because the intangible dimension is often lost in those accounts. In other words, there is knowledge gained while being in an atmosphere that is not accessible through its representations. We might not be able to identify this knowledge but after immersing ourselves into the atmosphere, we notice that there is something we cannot explain about it. We do not know

what this intangible dimension is, but the fact that we can identify that there is one, implies that knowledge was added to our body or subconsciousness during the immersion.

Being present and facing this research object/medium physically is a key feature of researching atmospheres. As mentioned before, the aesthetic and experiential dimension that is put forward in the discourse on atmospheres, demands an embodied approach. As Böhme related his new aesthetics to the perception of atmospheres, they can only be understood aesthetically and spatially while performing and perceiving them in the space. One needs to know atmospheres through the body which means, one needs to know *in* the atmosphere.

We need to know atmospheres beyond our five senses into other subjectivities that co-constitute a quasi-objective atmosphere. The “individual subjectivity informs [our perception of atmospheres] and is bound up in our experience of the world” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 36). In other words, besides “[...] smell, light, temperature, wind, sound, and texture” (59), “[...] colours, odours, temperature and air quality” (Schmitt and Schoer 2018, 5), passion, inspiration, intuition, affect and emotions also make up our experience of an atmosphere. All these impressions are integrated into the body and make us relate differently to the atmosphere. Our perception of them changes compared to if we would not have lived the atmosphere. I relate ‘lived atmospheres’ to the living body ‘Kó’ – discussed in the second chapter, to emphasise again this transcendence beyond using only the five senses.

It is also important to research *in* atmospheres to gain a sense of empathy toward other participants/co-creators of the atmosphere (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 40). People who have not experienced the atmosphere with their whole body, miss the importance of certain details when listening to a participant’s/co-creator’s memories. “This fine-grain detail that might otherwise go unnoticed takes on new significance as meanings accumulate and unfold over time and progressively contributes to how her surroundings feel to her and the ways in which she attunes to them.” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 25). Simple things can become very important within specific experiential configurations and one will only attend to them when they have been immersed into this configuration.

This brings me to another reason why immersion in the atmosphere is important for my research. An atmosphere is not just something that one can enter and exit like a physical space. As mentioned in the first chapter, one needs a certain amount of commitment to be able to attune to the atmosphere. An atmosphere unfolds itself as one lives through it (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 36). This means that researching atmospheres goes along with

unexpected encounters: “[...] knowing is gradually accumulated as we go through research sites and processes and is contingent on the configurations and encounters in which we find ourselves” (39).

In culture studies, we let the research object speak to the researcher as it unfolds throughout time and space. An atmosphere is ongoingly emergent which implies the need for a selection of configurations that the researcher includes in the representation of the atmosphere. This selection can only happen along the unfolding of the atmosphere. The researcher needs to let the atmosphere speak to her/him. Selecting the relevant configurations as the atmosphere speaks to the researching, also means that the researcher will draw on personal and cultural resources to understand the atmosphere (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 38). This can include for example the history of the event or space or the narratives that have been created around it. Besides, it can also include artworks that try to capture the atmosphere or accounts on social media. Therefore, a reflexive awareness is needed about how this selection and registration is performed. Besides, when integrating the past (memories) and the future (anticipation) into the perception of atmosphere, I claim that the atmosphere can only truly be captured in the present moment. That is to say, the anticipation and memories of both reader and author are different when reading *about* a representation of an atmosphere rather than when the author was immersing her/himself in this atmosphere. Besides, in chapter 1, I mentioned how the perception of atmospheres is embodied and embedded. This implies the fact that someone should situate themselves *in* the atmosphere to integrate both the embedded network and embodied perception into their cognitive output of an atmosphere. This embeddedness includes the antecedent mood and emotions that influence our reception of the atmosphere. Since the researcher’s and participants’ emotions/mood are unique to the situation at hand, this will also be the case for the reader reading a representation of the atmosphere. If one reads a book about the Camino, they will not be in the same mood as the author was while hiking the Camino s/he wrote about. Nor will they be surrounded by the people who project their mood into an atmosphere. Looping this back to the duality of reception/production of an atmosphere, one might be able to introject the part of the atmosphere that the author captured in his/her writings, but they will always blend it with the current mood the reader is in.

Finally, photographing an atmosphere also has an influence on the way someone researches *in* atmospheres. Being immersed by the atmosphere as a photographer, means

absorbing the atmosphere differently than when being immersed by it as a person taking fieldnotes or someone who is not researching. Photographing puts me in a different mode of attention and “provid[es] another route to knowing in the atmosphere [... they saw] the market from the inside via the perspective of Nick’s expert use of his camera” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 59). This also brings me to the ethics of taking fieldnotes and photographing other participants and the atmosphere that surrounds them. This atmosphere is not individually constructed and, therefore, describing it, applying it and researching it also means describing, applying and researching someone else’s experience. This ethical dimension makes the researching *in* atmospheres essential. One cannot account for other participants’ experiences without immersing oneself into the atmosphere to be able to cocreate it and consequently understand its configurations and networks that are not visible through its representations.

After theoretically framing what it means to research *in* the atmosphere, I dedicate the next two sections to how *I* researched *in* the atmosphere of the Camino. The period I researched *in* the Camino spanned from the 15th until the 26th of April 2024. I hiked the Camino Primitivo (322km), which starts in Oviedo and took me 12 days to walk. The stages I hiked were: Oviedo – (32km) San Marcelo – (23,180km) Bodenaya – (27km) El Espin – (27km) Berducedo – (22,400km) Grandes De Salime – (25,230km) A Fonsagrada – (31,87km) O Cádavo – (29,8km) Lugo – (19,350km) Ponte de Ferreira – (31,03km) Ribadiso – (20km) O Pedrouzo – (19,280km) Santiago de Compostela. As I was researching *in* the atmosphere, I took fieldnotes along the way. I always had a notebook at hand for spontaneous notes, which left room to note down (unanticipated) configurations that unfolded before me. Moreover, every day, I took a moment after walking to fill in a form with structured observations (See annex A). The latter is drawn up in a way that made me reflect and focus more consciously on the atmosphere around me. The form includes questions that were based on the discussion of atmospheres in chapter one as well as informed by the many ethnographical descriptions of atmospheres in the book *Exploring Atmospheres Ethnographically* (Schroer and Schmitt 2018). It starts with a column to write down the date, time, place as well as extra context of the day. The first question concerns the main narrative around the concept of atmosphere: “How do relations and dualities manifest themselves? (enveloping/being enveloped, consumption/production, presence/absence, intersubjective vs objective...)”. The second guiding question is about the meaning of the Camino, more

specifically what it is that we can note down about something intangible: “Which meanings manifest on the Camino?”. The third question is: “Which materials stood out?”, which points out a focus on objects’ ecstasies cocreating the atmosphere (Böhme 2016 5). Thereafter, the question “What modes of attention did I encounter?” intends to make me aware of how I am attending to the atmosphere and when this attention makes me tune into the atmosphere to a greater extent. Furthermore, I provide space to answer the question: “What spaces and times did I encounter?” This question helps me uncover how the atmosphere manifested itself in space and throughout time. Next, the form is structured around my bodily notions, providing room to describe the visual, auditive, gustatory, olfactory, and tactile. But as already mentioned multiple times, bodily notions go beyond the five senses and, therefore, both the questions “What non-verbal communication was present?” and “What did I feel?” are added. As a last question, I leave room to discuss observed representations (rituals, patterns, traditions) and narratives, since they can give an idea about how pilgrims are sometimes guided into certain atmospheres. Besides these questions, there is still empty space left for other questions that might come up – because often questions can be more interesting to reflect upon than answers. There is also a space left for quotes, in order to emphasise how my personal experience should be corroborated by other pilgrims’ experiences of the atmosphere. Finally, on the right, there is an extra column for self-reflexive comments. It was important that I was and still am aware of the fact that I was/am both researcher and participant/co-creator of the atmosphere. Therefore, my actions influence(d) the atmosphere and this should be acknowledged.

I also took photographs with an analogue camera while researching *in* the atmosphere. I consciously chose this mode of analogue photography, since it would make me think twice about taking a picture as there were only 36 pictures to be taken with one roll. Analogue photography made me reflect and linger more on the atmosphere instead of consuming it with an immense number of photos. Due to an empty battery, I also had to suspend photographing from 18/04 until the 22/04. Therefore, one of the pictures I selected in my discussion below was taken with my phone, consciously reflecting on if I would have captured that image with my camera or not. I took my photographs as I moved through my environment, so my photographs embody the movement and researching *in* the atmosphere. The feelings that were present as I was walking are in this way integrated into the

photographs. In this sense, the photographs take us on a walk, following the narrative of moving through the Camino (Pink 2013, 86).

3.2 The Importance of Walking *in* the Atmosphere of the Camino

With walking as the main bodily act on the Camino, another layer of importance is added to researching *in* atmospheres. In the next sections, I answer the question “what is it about walking that makes me want to emphasise the researching *in* atmospheres in this particular research?”

Imagine walking through a landscape that reaches far beyond our eyesight and compare this to the imagination of driving a car through the same landscape. While walking, we relate differently to our environment: it stands much more in connection to us, as if it is an extension of us rather than something we look at through a window. As Erling Kagge puts it: “Becoming acquainted with these surroundings takes time. It’s like building a friendship. The mountain up ahead, which slowly changes as you draw closer, feels like an intimate friend by the time you’ve arrived” (2019, 16). This also relates back to the idea that an atmosphere unfolds itself as we go through it. A friendship is built slowly and integrates new information with every step. This integration entangles in such a complicated network of relations – with our environment – that it is impossible to dissect this knowledge afterwards. We know the landscape as we walk through it – as we research *in* it. Moreover, when we walk, we are literally in our environment and all our senses are activated to take in whatever we walk through. The fact that we are so connected to our environment and, present in the space we inhabit, makes this interaction surpass the mental. It drives us into researching *in* atmospheres: “Knowledgeable people, in short, can tell, **in all senses of the word**. As discerning observers, they can tell what is going on in the world around them, such as the movements of animals or impending changes in the weather” (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 5; my emphasis). People gain knowledge, and are knowledgeable, by embodying the walk instead of being the observer of the walk. Besides, walking allows for an inner and an outer journey at the same time, where “[...] the mind, the body, and the world are aligned, as though they were three characters finally in conversation together, three notes suddenly making a chord. Walking allows us to be in our bodies and in the world without being made busy by them” (Solnit 2002, 5). A balance is created, as if walking is our natural rhythm of going through life, where suddenly everything is in sync (the mind, the body and the world).

This state can only be understood when being in it, while when observing or reading about it, one is not embodying this rhythm and this state of being in the world.

Another aspect that follows from this idea of building a friendship with our environment is our perception of time that is twisted around. The relativity of time becomes very evident when approaching it through walking. It does not follow the rules of physics in the sense that, when one travels faster, the timespan one travels becomes shorter and therefore, we save time. In agreement with what Kagge claims, “time passes more quickly when I increase the speed of travel” (2019, 20). I believe, however, that we actually lose time when we rush past landscapes by car. This is because, at this speed, we are not taking the time to absorb any information. Conversely, when we are walking, we slowdown, which is exactly what aesthetics is about. We take time to give attention to something and attach an aesthetic value to whatever it is that we are observing (Brandt 2004, 212).

A last aspect about walking that I want to emphasise in this paragraph is the dimension of movement. As Sheets-Johnstone describes in his “Thinking in movement”, it correlates very much to the idea of thinking *in* atmospheres (2011, 419). Movement is so embedded in our body and in the activity of walking, that walking becomes a way of knowing. It makes us able to act upon the environment differently. We are informed by the knowledge emerging from our movement through the environment: “the whole [different ways of moving] united by a kinetic logic having its own unspoken integrity” (448). There is an inherent knowledge created while moving which we can only access by doing it – we cannot put it into words. Riza Dimitra describes it as follows: “Actually, the movement of the body provokes an embodied and active experience of perceiving the environment” (2017, 62). We go through the environment/atmosphere as we move and therefore interact with it as a moving body. We do the landscape instead of observing it.

3.3 Visual Ethnography as a Tool to Research *in* and *about* Atmospheres

I chose to represent the Camino’s atmosphere in this dissertation through fieldnotes but also using visual ethnography through photographs. There are multiple aspects connected to photography that help me to create a visual representation that complements the verbal one. Photographs are taken with intention. The photographer decides what to include within the frame and what not. Photographs include an “ethnographicness of photographs” (Pink 2013, 76), where the perspective of the ethnographer gets integrated into the choice of photo-

taking. Our attention shifts towards visual sensory input as photographs display colours, light details and shapes in a way words cannot. Moreover, images go beyond just the visual in the sense that taking a picture, and analysing it afterwards, invites us to imagine: “[...] images are also part of our imaginations and interior worlds (Edgar 2004, Irving 2010), as well as inviting us to imagine (Ingold 2010a)” (Pink 2013, 38). Images transport us to other worlds, inviting us to imagine. This makes images also inherently ambiguous. We seem to access reality through the visible but, at the same time, an image is portrayed together with an interpretation by both photographer and observer: “Visual ethnography [...] offers ethnographers routes through which to come to understand those very things we cannot see” (38). This relates the bodily perception while researching *in* the atmosphere to more than just the five senses but, instead, including other sensuous experiences such as imagination. There are layers present in the image that go beyond pure vision, even though we tend to treat photographs often as that what proves the situation at hand. Images are therefore a negotiation between aesthetics, realism and imagination. We linger on their beauty, use them to prove certain claims and let them stimulate our imagination and this is exactly what atmospheres are about. Atmospheres are quasi-objective phenomena (real but prone to our imagination) that, simultaneously, ask for an aesthetical mode of attention. The way we approach image-taking and image-observing brings us closer to the way we perceive atmospheres; therefore, images are a good addition to my rhetorical fieldnotes.

Moreover, images are not only about the photographer’s and observers’ input but also include the participants’ input and the situatedness of the photo. Both the subjects in the photograph and the environment surrounding the frame are codirecting the photograph. I collect participants of the atmosphere and potentially stage them with my camera, but I also get influenced by the way *they* image the Camino. David McDougal’s “corporeal images” are useful to understand this situatedness of images: “[they] are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world” (2006, 3): This includes, in visual ethnography, a turn to the contextual and correlates very well with the concept of atmospheres.

3.4 Knowing *about* Atmospheres

In this subchapter I will start, as I did above, discussing Sumartojo and Pink’s account of researching *about* atmospheres. When researching *about* atmospheres, I intend to

transform the knowledge I gained from researching *in* atmospheres into a tangible representation of that atmosphere. In doing so, researching *about* means investigating the past (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 41). This tangible account should, however, still try to maintain the atmosphere's integrity. This can be done partly by respecting its quality of emergence and variability, which coincides with its intangibility. As an example, I take here Sumartojo and Pink's discussion of a physical infrastructure as the representation of an atmosphere. It might seem a fixed representation but it takes on a processual nature when embedded in the perspective of atmospheres. They discuss how this physical place maintains its processual nature by investigating the atmospheres that move through it (42). Therefore, reading about an atmosphere and going through its historical and archival sources can still acknowledge this processual nature and its emergence qualities that are linked to intangibility of the atmosphere.

Another form through which researching *about* atmospheres can occur is by recordings, both visual and auditive. One could create photographs, videos or field recordings while researching *in* the atmosphere and then reflect on the atmosphere afterwards by examining these media files. This could be an interesting addition to archives or fieldnotes since photos, videos and recordings will capture certain details, sensory experiences and integrational knowledge that might not be possible to put in words. Besides, the intention behind making the recording, both made by a participant or researcher, might differ from when the researcher writes down their fieldnotes. In photography for example, while one looks through the eyes of a camera, the visual cues ask for a different attention and intention than when writing down what happens in the environment (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 44). Discussing these photos, videos or recordings afterwards can generate new questions about the atmosphere: Why was the photograph taken (like this)? Which immaterial conditions hide behind the photo? What was left out of the frame and why? What are the meanings related to the subject in the photograph? (43).

While researching *about* atmospheres, we digest the atmosphere and our knowledge about it transforms. This can happen in alternation with knowing *in* atmospheres. One can go from actively participating *in* the atmosphere to writing fieldnotes *about* the atmosphere and then back to participating *in* the atmosphere. This suspended moment of researching *about* can then change how the researcher moves back into the atmosphere and can then create new ways of knowing *in* the atmosphere: “[...] the subsequent images – and the

process of editing, sharing, reflecting on and discussing these amongst the team – also unfolded new ways to know about the market” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 60). One could approach the writing of fieldnotes and the taking of photographs, videos or field recordings both as researching *in* and *about* the atmosphere. In the former these modes of data collection then are directly co-constitutive of the atmosphere.

Finally, as researching *in* atmospheres, researching *about* them brings forward ethical considerations. While researching *about* atmospheres, one represents something that is not just a personal/objective observation. By researching *about* the atmosphere, the researcher includes the experience of other participants and transforms their experiences through interpretation. The researcher therefore needs to include other participants’ impressions and corroborate their ideas with her/his discussion of the event/space/environment (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 44). This asks for empathy towards the participants’ experience while creating and analysing a representation of an atmosphere.

Since I have already discussed partly how *I* researched *about* the atmosphere of the Camino while I was hiking it, this section will focus more on how *I* researched *about* the atmosphere after I hiked the Camino. As I collected my data, I started ordering them chronologically. Along the process of describing the atmosphere, using these notes, I realized an atmosphere does not necessarily require a chronological account. Therefore, I started mapping all the observations on paper according to the questions listed in my structured observations (see annexe A). These maps consisted of relations between different observations that each belong to their own structured question. For example, within the question of meaning, my observations were grouped in several meanings (e.g., what it means to be a pilgrim and why pilgrims hike the Camino), but these observations could also interrelate across groups (e.g., the ‘usual’ pace of a pilgrim and the idea one hikes Camino to take time). Even though my body moved along a continuous line, my mind did not while collecting and processing of the data. As a metaphor for both the non-linear relationships that my thoughts followed and the fact that the Camino itself is a geographical road, I drew maps to process my fieldnotes. I exemplify one of the maps in *Figure 1* below, which structures the observations related to the topic of “relationships and dualities”. I chose to map out this specific example because the topic of relations and dualities shows this relational view the most. I brought the knowledge I gained from processing my observations into conversation with the theory on atmospheres – assimilated in the first chapter. In the

next subchapters I therefore narrate the actual representation of the atmosphere of the Camino, in other words, my research *about* the atmosphere. This I do within the context of the theory of the first chapter using both spatial and experiential atmospheres as conceptual frameworks. These observations do not follow a chronological order but are always accompanied by their hiking stage and their date. You can find these stages in chronological order both in the map above (see) and in the structured observations in Annexe B.

When it comes to the photographs, I chose those that related the most to the representation of the atmosphere. I could have performed an extensive visual analysis on them, but that would disregard the idea that the photographs complement the written observations with visual, aesthetic and imaginative representations. As already mentioned above, the photographs make us imagine a narrative, accompanying my fieldnotes and sparking the observers' imagination.

3.5 The Spatial Atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo

As mentioned above, in the following two subchapters I describe the atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo following the theoretical structure of the first chapter about atmospheres. I will first write *about* the atmosphere of the Camino, approaching it from a perspective of spatial atmospheres. After that, the representation of the atmosphere is complemented by the perspective of experiential atmospheres. It is important to say that I am describing the same atmosphere, just approached from a different angle. In other words, I think *about* the atmosphere from two different perspectives, creating two different representations of the same atmosphere. In these two subchapters I reconcile the theory from the previous chapters with observations and photographs from the Camino I hiked in April 2024 to create an informed representation of its atmosphere. These two subchapters are the outcome of thinking *about* atmospheres, integrating the implicit knowledge I gained while thinking *in* atmospheres. All observations I include in these subchapters will be written in italics followed by the date and location of the observation between brackets.

As became clear in the first chapter, atmospheres are about that what connects objects, people, and the intangible with the environment. With atmospheres being “the in-between” (Böhme 2016, 1) and “the connective interface” (Bille, Bjerregaard, Sørensen 2014, 37), I describe the atmosphere of the Camino following these relational manifestations: “While this complex of relations does indeed make atmosphere difficult to capture, it also means

that atmosphere is a connective factor, linking people, places and things together in often unpredictable ways” (33). The connective aspect of an atmosphere was very clear on the Camino. It appeared, for example, as the metaphor of *the Camino as a matrix connecting people* (17/04, *El Espín*). This metaphor stands for the coming together of people within one Camino, across multiple Caminos and outside of the Camino (locals). *It brings people together with different ages, nationalities, languages, interests, financial situations, and stories* (17/04, *El Espín*). The locations where the spatial atmosphere was more visible – that is to say, where the relationality or in-betweenness was the focus – were Berducedo, O Cádavo and Ponte de Ferreira. These junction points made everyone from the Primitivo join together in the same albergue, since there were no other sleep opportunities in the vicinity. *In O Cádavo, Ricardo decided to cook and we put a table outside on the terrace with our pasta salad, sangria and some appetizers. This terrace was situated on the main road and it felt like we were a stationary point around which many pilgrims moved back and forth while new conversations occurred and new configurations unfolded* (21/04, *O Cádavo*).



Figure 2: The table in O Cádavo where the whole Camino Primitivo kept on passing by (21/04 O Cádavo).

The special feeling surrounding the table itself and everyone passing by it, came forth from the atmosphere, as if it hung in the air. As Böhme claims, “[...] the new resulting

aesthetics is concerned with the relation between environmental qualities and human states. This [relation] ‘and,’ this in-between, by means of which environmental qualities and states are related, is atmosphere” (2016, 12). It is at these junction points on the Camino that the atmosphere really made us feel it aesthetically. The atmosphere needed to unfold through time and the network which came together at these junction points needed to settle into feelings, before I could have identified them as part the atmosphere. However, as I am concerned with spatial atmospheres in this section, I consider the part where the atmosphere was stationary, enveloping the table in O Cádavo. The elements (the people, the table, the food) present in that space, nonetheless, kept on changing. I captured this moment also with my phone as the battery of my camera was empty in those days (*see Figure 2*)
Figure 2: The table in O Cádavo where the whole Camino Primitivo kept on passing by. I was inspired to capture that moment – as if the atmosphere and its connected feelings had settled in my body and had driven me to take an image of that scene. The photograph is taken from a top-view angle, mimicking the perspective of a map, and therefore mirroring the interconnectedness of the moment. People are sitting around a table, that borders with the Camino, and sharing the leftovers of their food with friends of friends or other pilgrims. A photograph is a cross-section of a series of moments and thus, emphasises the spatiality of the atmosphere rather than its temporality. Still, if you look closely, details reveal the change over time. For example, the number of plates implies that people must have shared their plates with other people who joined in the table. The atmosphere was at that moment enveloping, although the elements around and on the table would constantly shift.

This delineation of the atmosphere also became clear when focussing on time/space relationships. I approach our displacement along the Camino as dubious. We were moving towards a destination and leaving landscapes behind, but at the same time the Camino Primitivo seemed to follow us. This also relates to what I discussed in the second chapter about the Camino being a place instead of a non-place. With the Camino moving alongside of us and with any village we crossed embedded in this Camino, we did not really feel our actual displacement. As if the Camino Primitivo was like a moving place which gave rise to the feeling of *walking alone together. People were passing me, I was passing them, we were walking while being inside and outside ourselves and while the other pilgrims were walking before, after or beside me. We walked alone, together (22/04, Lugo)*. Time somehow seemed to move with the walker which is something I became aware of, while actually walking *in*

the atmosphere. *We realized that certain groups of pilgrims very rarely met each other, even though walking the same stage, on the same day, but just always a few hours later (26/04 Compostela)*. It is not only the hour started walking, but also *the tempo often determined who I met along the way. Even when different Caminos joined, in the last 4 days, amongst the hundreds of pilgrims, the same people would appear again. We always ended up in the same spatial moving section of the Camino. As if time moved with us instead of us moving through time*. In these observations the enveloping of the atmosphere comes into being. As Anderson describes “[... a spatiality that is] spherical but it is, more specifically, a dyadic space of resonance – atmospheres ‘radiate’ from an individual to another” (2009, 80). This “sphere” made us feel like we were not actually displacing ourselves throughout the atmosphere but rather that the atmosphere was moving with us, connecting and affecting us as we walked on.

As atmospheres are loaded with feelings, they change our human state: “This ‘feeling well or not’ in a certain environment clearly is an indicator of the aesthetic qualities of it [...] and what mediates objective factors of the environment with aesthetic feelings of a human being is what we call atmosphere” (Böhme 2016, 1). However, the actual intangible dimension of an atmosphere that mediates these feelings is hard to describe. This is something I researched *in*. Instead, while researching *about* the atmosphere, I discuss the meaning that is connected to this feeling and complement it with photographs. As mentioned before, this meaning is the distant knowledge – but related to the tacit one, that we are actually able to put into words (Polanyi 2019, 10). Describing the atmosphere means translating the feelings it carries into the meanings we carry in our mind. *I met Johan and he told me he hiked the Camino to be closer to God (18/04 Berducedo)*. *Sean told “The Camino is a privilege of time” (19/04, Grande de Salime)*. These statements show what the atmosphere of the Camino means for them. They found it important to get closer to God or to use time to go on this adventure. This is reflected in *Figure 3*, which shows the message “Do you have time to evaluate the following ideas” on a yellow paper followed by many papers with different ideas, hung on a wall somewhere along the Camino. This endless list of ideas represents many things that are important on the Camino: not only the privilege of time to do the Camino, but also the time to think profoundly about subjects matters. The Camino offers us time to commit to its atmosphere and therefore to let its intangible dimension grow every step of the way. Time itself, as a meaning, becomes integrated in how



Figure 3: A long line of reflections pasted on a wall along the Camino Primitivo (Compostela 26/04).

we act upon the atmosphere of the Camino. The more steps we can take, the more time has passed and the more the atmosphere has unfolded. The vertical lines on the photograph represent the long walk, both mentally and physically.

A sentence which also held a lot of meaning on the Camino was that *the Camino might not give you what you want, but it definitely gives you what you need* (16/04 Bodenaya). This sentence implies a form of surrendering oneself to the Camino, which points to an aesthetical mode of attention of not thinking but instead letting go and being present (Grant 2013). For most of the pilgrims, what it partly meant to be a pilgrim became very clear in the last days of the Camino. We saw the luggage being transported by taxi, while pilgrims would walk with tiny backpacks and sneakers. *For the pilgrims from the Camino Primitivo, the Camino meant working hard, walking a lot and suffering so they could be proud afterwards on conquering the challenge* (24/04 Ribadiso). There is something in the atmosphere which gives meaning to hard work and suffering.

An atmosphere comes forth through objects, people and places, interrelating them all in the in-between. Therefore, In order to capture the atmosphere, I describe here the relations *between* pilgrims and objects on the Camino. In the light of Jane Bennett's "vibrant matter" I took on an "aesthetic-affective openness to material vitality" (2010, x) where "attentiveness to matter and its powers [...] can inspire a greater sense to which all bodies are kin in the

sense of inextricably enmeshed in a dense network of relations” (13). Objects that were shared among pilgrims affected each other within the atmosphere of the Camino. *In Berducedo at 6 o'clock in the morning, we were getting ready to leave, all at our own pace, with our own habits and suddenly Ricardo walked up to me and gave me a bracelet. "For you" he said. And more words were not exchanged but a hug and a sincere smile (18/04, Berducedo)*. This bracelet became vibrant within the connective atmosphere of the Camino. Representing a relationship between Ricardo and I, the object affected us both.

Beyond a relationship between two people, other objects really made the atmosphere's connective network visible. “Here, the concept of atmosphere could first of all, and at least, change perception. It directs attention to the relation between the qualities of surroundings and dispositions” (Böhme 2016, 133). Thinking about atmospheres, means I approach an object within a network rather than on its own. A first example of how this network developed around an object was through my empty battery. I narrate here a shorter version of how the object connected people, places and things, but the full extend can be read in annexe B. *In Berducedo, I started asking around if anyone knew a way to get a new battery for my camera as I desperately need it for my research. By the time I arrived the next day in Grande de Salime, the whole Camino Primitivo knew I was looking for a battery and many pilgrims gave me suggestions or asked me, upon re-encountering, if I had already found one. Then, as I decided to stay in Grande de Salime to have a better chance at finding a battery, the whole village was activated to find me a new one. Both strangers on the street, in bars and in the shops tried to point at ways to potentially find a new battery. As a self-reflective comment, I must note that both the atmosphere, but also my large need for a new battery, drove me into talking to strangers. The next day in Fonsagrada, again, people from the Camino, from the local bars and even a professional photographer took time to help me out. By the time I had activated two villages and the whole Camino Primitivo, I learned I had to let go of the battery until Lugo. In Lugo, me and my Camino-friend Ricardo went looking for a camera shop and there, with a lot of joy, we found a battery. That day, everyone I had encountered from the Camino, celebrated the new battery with me by taking beautiful photos (see Figure 5 and Figure 4 below) of the pilgrims we would leave behind in Lugo (18/04 Berducedo – 22/04 Lugo)*.

It is interesting how this battery affected my actions, decisions and interactions throughout the search for a new one. Focusing on this object visualizes my position within

Figure 4: Ricardo reacting on the click sound of the camera, confirming that it works (22/04, Lugo).



Figure 5: Gabriel and Bob saying goodbye to each other and celebrating that we could say goodbye through an analogue picture (22/04, Lugo).

the network of the atmosphere on the Camino. I am both influencing the situation of the object within the atmosphere as well as the object is influencing my situation within the atmosphere. Besides, the search for this battery confirmed the local embeddedness of the Camino within the villages that it crosses. (Cazaux 2011, 363). It becomes clear that, as the atmosphere of the Camino connects pilgrims to the places they pass as well as their residents, it was much easier for me to look for help. Therefore, the battery made visible how the interconnectedness of the atmosphere allowed me to easily look for help.

Besides matter that affects, matter can also just show their presence within the environment through the atmosphere. Böhme “use[s] the Greek word ecstasies to indicate the way things are radiating into space and thus contributing to the formation of an atmosphere” (5). Focusing on the remarkable objects makes visible their ecstasies within the

atmosphere. I tell here the simple story of a shoe, which, by researching *in* the atmosphere revealed how valuable this *simple* object became to the representation of the atmosphere on the Camino (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 25, 40). *I arrived at the albergue in Bodenaya and noticed I had lost a shoe. I walked out again, to see if it was lying somewhere on the road, and a pilgrim Teresa (at this point we did not yet know each other) arrived and told me:*

“Yes I know where your shoe is, it is 10km back before Salas”. I started laughing since I was not going to walk 20km extra for a plastic sandal. As pilgrims kept arriving and more information arrived along with them, we discovered how many travels the shoe had made through different pilgrims picking it up and putting down again. Alisson, our host, even told me she could e-mail this woman from Switzerland who would pass by the potential location of my shoe the next day. As we started talking about the woman, Monica, we discovered that I had walked exactly a year ago my first Camino Primitivo with her! So, Monica brought my shoe to Bodenaya, and I picked it up after my arrival in Santiago de Compostela. The next day I crossed the whole village Tineo, asking everyone in the neighbourhood if they could tell me where to find some new plastic shoes. For the rest of the Camino, pilgrims kept joking every time they saw me again about whether I still had my shoes or not (16/04 Bodenaya - 28/04 Bodenaya). This story narrates very well how a simple object can bring forward so much laughter, amazement and engagement. The fact that these pilgrims and the host went through so many lengths in order to get a simple plastic shoe back to its owner, shows how the atmosphere of the Camino relates this shoe to its surroundings and how as the atmosphere unfolded, this shoe became a big part of it. In *Figure 6* the new shoes I bought to replace the lost one, are laying in a stretched-out meadow which ends in the hills of Galicia. In this picture I show the simpleness of the shoes in relation to the adventures we conquer along the landscapes. However, the shoes are intentionally on the foreground and in focus, to emphasise that, even though they might be something small and simple, they strongly cocreated the atmosphere of the Camino. Feet are one of the most important body parts on the Camino, which need to be nurtured. This can only really be understood while embodying the walk itself. Thinking *in* the atmosphere of the Camino, this photograph reflected the bodily importance of feet and of plastic shoes preventing me from having to wear hiking boots after arriving. Instead, my feet could rest in the middle of a calm meadow.

Having already discussed the duality of medium/object in the first chapter, the following two questions help me representing the atmosphere in relation to this duality



Figure 6: The new shoes I bought in Tineo, resting in front of the landscape in (25/04, Pedrouzo).

(Bille, Bjerregaard, and Sørensen 2014, 32; Böhme 2016, 16). Approaching the atmosphere as a medium I ask in the following section: “How did we go through the atmosphere of the Camino?” Approaching it as an object I question “what made the atmosphere of the Camino so that we went through it with this mode of attention?” Spatial atmospheres ask for an aesthetic mode of attention (Böhme 2016) with a certain disinterestedness that directs us towards the spatial, the perception or the aesthetic instead of the functional (Saito 2007, 27). The atmosphere is the object of this aesthetic perception (Böhme 2016, 12) and this make the observations, in which I or another pilgrim was taking on a mode of aesthetic attention, representative of a spatial atmosphere. *I just passed by a river and saw a pilgrim aesthetically gazing at the landscape that unfolded itself on the other side of the river. It looked so peaceful and there was something so beautiful, so serene in the way I saw her sit there. We crossed eyes for a moment and smiled. “You are also a pilgrim and we are here hiking together through this beautiful nature, and we smile because we both know it’s beautiful”* (16/04 Bodenaya). This observation comes forth from a bodily knowing while researching *in* the atmosphere. This bodily way of knowing made me attentive to the woman’s aesthetic gazing which I could only understand as I was walking *in* the atmosphere. Walking allowed me to build a friendship with my environment in such a way that reached a new level of appreciation (Kagge 2019, 16).

Besides the fact that spatial atmospheres can put us in an aesthetical mode of attention, they can also act as a medium and afford modes of attention or afford us with ways of being present (Gibson 2015; Grant 2013, 20). One way of being present in the Camino translated itself into openness. *People are more open to talking about their personal stories since there is a sense of trust and maybe also a sense of distance. We only meet each other in the moment, not knowing if we will ever see each other again.* However, this mode of attention was not always nurtured by the atmosphere of the Camino. Both pilgrims walking the Camino with a friend/partner/family member as well as those walking with their phone often closed themselves off.

Another mode of attention that made pilgrims more immersed in the atmosphere was spontaneity. When acting in the moment, a pilgrim can really anticipate what surrounds them. Already on the first day *the host Patrick told me he normally had two more pilgrims coming, but that it was already late. “We don’t know if they will actually show up”, he said. Many pilgrims still a feel freedom on the Camino to do what they want and to follow wherever the Camino takes them (15/04, San Marcelo).* However, I must say that *some pilgrims on this Camino also did not want to let go of control and really planned out every step of the way (26/04, Santiago de Compostela).* This is also something I connected earlier, in chapter 2, to the experience of hiking the Camino after COVID-19 (Beek 2017, 29). As the pandemic needed to control the amount of pilgrims sleeping in the albergues, a reservation system emerged, which took away a large spontaneous dimension on the Camino.

A last level on which the atmosphere of the Camino afforded presence translated itself in making time. *Teresa took time to answer one of my philosophical questions by writing a letter. She told me how she could not explain it orally in English, because her English was not good enough. So, she sat down and used a translator to write her answer in a letter. Afterwards, she asked me to take the time to read the letter carefully and to attend to the personal matter she wanted to share with me (20/04 Fonsagrada).* Being present while doing an activity such as writing or reading a letter is important on the Camino. It is not only about writing or absorbing the content of the letter, but about being present with/in the activity of writing and reading that letter.

As it becomes clear, thinking *about* spatial atmosphere means thinking *about* the way I related to presence on the Camino and the way my body acted upon the qualities of the

environment around me: “What is perceived is an indeterminate spatially extended quality of feeling” (Böhme 2016, 15). Upon walking, the focus immediately shifted towards my senses and their sensing into the present: *I saw a lot of deforestation in contrast to the beautiful landscapes around me. I heard the happy screams of joy of pilgrims who reunited at a bar after not seeing each other for a long time (21/04, O Cádavo). I smelled nature breathing around me (26/04, Santiago de Compostela). I touched my backpack, making me feel how I shift my weight and how I move my body during hiking. The backpack became me, and I became the backpack (15/04, San Marcelo). I felt my feet tingling so profoundly as I laid in bed at night (20/04, Fonsagrada).* These observations show me relating to the environment as if, upon walking, a balance was created between my mind, my body and the world (Solnit 2002, 5). In *Figure 7* my photograph illustrates these many sensations which



Figure 7: A double-exposure photograph of me laying in a meadow in front of an old monastery overlapped with a photograph of a meadow full of flowers, reaching into the mountains of Asturias. (17/04 El Espín)

get integrated into my body and mixed into a pool of tacit knowledge. The feet laying in the meadow reflect the tingling feeling I had, when bringing my hikes to a pause. The double exposure of the old monastery and the mountains reflect the feeling of walking both in nature and between buildings – may they be old. Besides, the double exposure also brings to question the notions of time and space. It showcases the overlap of two different moments and places, bringing together now and then, here and there. This overlap reflects the idea that an atmosphere does not manifest itself chronologically. Through

time and space, sensations get integrated into a non-linear network of configurations that make up the atmosphere.

Even though bodily perception is central to atmospheres, as already mentioned, mental representations can also guide a person towards her/his perception of the atmosphere. Certain structural elements on the Camino do, in fact, make a pilgrim perform a certain role or hike the Camino a certain way (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 19). A first structural element was *the fact that along the way, there were only a few bars and albergues. This made everyone stop in the same places. It was like an accordion where people would spread out, walking on their own tempo, but congregating again in the next bar/albergue/junction point. This really created a feeling of family on this specific Camino (23/04, Ponte de Ferreira)*. Besides, *on the Camino, we are not connected with each other because we are friends. We did not “select” each other based on common interest or common values. Instead, we just happened upon each other because we walked the same tempo and therefore there was no selection, nor judgement, just a community bounded by rhythm (23/04 Ponte de Ferreira)*. By performing the role of hiking a certain pace, we got attuned to a certain atmosphere connecting specific people who were also performing this role.

On the other hand, as already mentioned in the first chapter, narratives can also induce certain behaviours that take up a certain role as a pilgrim (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 20; Cope et al. 2019). *Ricardo kept telling me that pilgrims should walk slowly so they can enjoy more what surrounds them and so get tired less easily (15/04, San Marcelo)*. *A few days later, Gabriel started to realize how he thinks a Camino should be done at your own pace, according to your own way – alone. “One should really walk alone to know what it is to hike the Camino. Then you really encounter your Camino and you really feel what it has to offer” (19/04, Grandes De Salime)*. On the Camino we perform the pace of walking in the sense that we learn, through narratives and practice, what is the right pace a pilgrim should walk. Pilgrims often, through personal experience or advice from other, more experienced pilgrims, learn that rushing through the Camino comes with negative consequences. On the one hand, this can lead to injuries. But on the other hand, as pilgrims in the beginning often follow someone else’s pace or rush through the landscape without attending to it, they learn that this brings forward a different experience than the one that is narrated on the Camino. Therefore, narratives on the Camino make pilgrims perform a pace of walking.

3.6 The Experiential Atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo

Approaching the atmosphere of the Camino as only spatial and aesthetically relevant, would leave out a large perspective to gain knowledge from. Therefore, I think *about* the atmosphere of the Camino in this section from the lens of experiential atmospheres (Sumartojo and Pink 2019). From this perspective, I focus more on how I lived through the atmosphere as it unfolds and how my embodied knowledge can give rise to experiential knowledge *about* the atmosphere.

As I approach my representation from the perspective of a dynamic atmosphere, it makes sense to start with the description of this dynamic aspect. An experiential atmosphere unfolds through time and configurations reshape as new events, people or phenomena appear (Edensor and Sumartojo 2018, 15). In this context, the metaphor of the Camino as a river stood out. *The Camino feels like one big river, flowing along the way and getting shaped through upstream and downstream events. A river that is shaped by tributaries but at the same time, creating new ones. Stories, old and new, travel along the Camino-river and pilgrims get submerged into them. There is not really “your” Camino, since other Caminos flow into “yours” through stories, narratives and rituals. We all walk along the same Camino (16/04 Bodenaya).* This metaphor of the river also sheds light on how the atmosphere of the Camino is both present and absent (Anderson 2009, 77). I bring here McMillin’s discussion around the meaning of rivers:

Rivers *move*, flowing over land, through history, and among diverse groups of people, changing considerably from their source to their destination; yet they also *stay*, permanent blue lines on our maps, constant waypoints and lasting landmarks. Rivers *connect*—state with state, interior with exterior, one region with another, the past with the present [...] (McMillin 2011, xii)

Likewise, the atmosphere on the Camino moves, through history and among diverse groups of people, unfolding between their source and their destination. It stays with the pilgrims that walk, enveloping them and connecting them to each other. As already mentioned above, tourist-pilgrims only walking the last 50km have a different experience than the ones from the calm Camino Primitivo, or the ones from the crowded, long Camino Francés. Linking this observation to my discussion in the second chapter about the Camino as a cultural practice, it confirms that the Camino can be considered as a plurality (multiple streams) within a singularity (one river).

As the atmosphere unfolds throughout time, past memories and expectations, that have been integrated into our body, can also cocreate our atmosphere at present. *Spatially separated Caminos contaminated each other as I caught up with Caminos and left Caminos behind. That is to say, I encountered the pilgrims of the Primitivo who walked a bit slower in the beginning and I left behind the people walking slower from Oviedo (16/04 San Marcelo).* Pilgrims often start the Camino with expectations, which colours their perception of the atmosphere: “In terms of atmosphere, it follows that a sense of futurity and potential is an important quality of how atmospheres are perceived and constituted when we are in motion” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 77). *Kyra said, “I thought the Camino Primitivo was more a Camino that would make us go into the ‘wild nature’, but now that I encounter so many places that are in the process of deforestation it really surprised me” (19/04 Grande de Salime).* Her anticipation made her receive the scenery with high expectations and therefore she could bring up less appreciation for the beautiful scenes and more disappointment for the deforested parts. In *Figure 8* we can observe a “raw” landscape which



Figure 8: A picture taken of a “raw” landscape in Galicia, on our way to Ribadiso (24/04).

I photographed along the Camino. People with different expectations, will search for different things in what they see or experience. At first sight, the landscape seems untouched,

but for the clever (or searching) eye, the human windmills become visible. There is an exchange at play between what is human and what is nature and if we should even separate the former from the latter. The Camino passes so many beautiful landscapes on foot and make the pilgrim, as mentioned before, build a friendship with their surroundings. Still, the Camino implies a strong human presence – a path created by humans for humans and, besides the windmills on the picture, its situatedness of the photograph – in this case, the photographer herself, is a human element implied. Pilgrims in the atmosphere of the Camino are faced with a relation between humans and nature and their antecedent expectations can colour the way they face this duality; whether it is like Raymond Williams claims “seen as separate from man” (1980, 77) or if there is something, such as the act of walking, overruling this duality.

As already touched upon in subchapter 3.5. – but also relevant for experiential atmospheres – I question if the unfolding of atmospheres is delineating or delineated. I already have mentioned before how an atmosphere, according to Anderson, relates to spatial enveloping. However, taking on the perspective of an atmosphere that unfolds and moves through time, this cannot spatially envelop one space:

[...] atmospheres are not necessarily only sensed through movement but are also made as people move through the world [...] to understand movement through the world as integral to how atmospheres and their changing temporalities are simultaneously constituted, made and experienced (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 26).

Upon moving, the atmosphere of the Camino changed or interchanged with other atmospheres. *We reached the city, Melide and the Camino Francés joined our Camino with its pilgrims walking the same path. On these last 50 kilometres, tourists, but also pilgrims that had been walking for a month from Saint-Pied-De-Port, or even pilgrims coming from other journeys would gather together on the way. You could say this diluted the river of the Camino Primitivo with other Camino-rivers. However, the contrast between the silent, calm Camino through the mountains of Asturias, with the crowded, touristic last 50km made us, from the Camino Primitivo, understand who we are (not). It became almost palpable in what atmosphere we had been immersed and how it unfolded into something different now. (24/04, Ribadiso).* An atmosphere seems to be delineating the Camino Primitivo, while at the same time unfolding into a new atmosphere upon junction with other Caminos. It almost feels like there is a negotiation happening between different atmospheres that, in the end, are all folding into each other.

Because of the importance of movement and temporality in this perspective on experiential atmospheres, rhythm is also one of the central ways of knowing the atmosphere of the Camino (Stewart 2011, 445; Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 17). An atmosphere can pull and push and stands in exchange with its network or configures accordingly (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 17). The atmosphere of the Camino took on a rhythm of nature, not subjected to any imposed socially constructed clock. Alike Henri Lefebvre's rhythm of his garden: "I have understood the rhythms: trees, flowers, birds and insects. They form a polyrhythmi[c] with the surroundings: the simultaneity of the present (therefore of presence) [...]" (2004, 26). As we were on the Camino, *we ate when we were hungry, we walked at the rhythm that our own feet could carry. When the sun would set, we would all crawl back into our sleeping bag and slowly fall asleep, while we would wake up just before sunrise so we could start walking as the sun would rise (Berducedo 18/04)*. If we would not act upon this invitation of the atmosphere to take on its rhythm, we would also not attune to it. We needed to commit to the atmosphere for a certain amount of time in order to perceive it (Schmetkamp 2022, 43). *Ricardo told us in Bodenaya how he used to be a trail runner and how he then started running several Caminos. He realized after a while that, while running the Camino, he missed a lot of the community experience because he passed everything too fast to take time to meet someone and connect with her/him (16/04, Bodenaya)*. This also occurred to a pilgrim who did not *feel the atmosphere* and decided to walk onwards with a faster pace. *He literally walked away from the atmosphere. He started to walk bigger stages and we lost him because we did not sleep in the same places anymore (23/04, Ponte de Ferreira)*. Atmospheres have rhythms and our body needs to attune to this rhythm in order to immerse ourselves into them. Also here, there is an exchange between the body and the atmosphere: the atmosphere can pull a body into a rhythm, but the rhythm of the body can also escape or influence the atmosphere.

As our body takes on the rhythm of the atmosphere, it also perceives the atmosphere as inescapably embodied upon walking. These two concepts shift our notion of the perception of atmosphere from an aesthetical spatial point of view to an experiential one – in which the moving body is central to its perception. As already mentioned above, this bodily knowledge is hard to translate into words and a way around this is through the idea of Polanyi's distant knowledge of the meaning connected to what is bodily known (Polanyi 2009, 10). One of the things that had a lot of meaning upon movement had to do with pain.

Gabriel, who had to slow down because of his ankle injury, started understanding how this injury taught him many insights: *“I had to start walking alone because I could not keep up with the people I walked with, but this actually gave me the experience of walking my own Camino. Instead of sharing the pain of others, I focused on my own body and its pains.”* When Gabriel told me this, I suggested he could take a painkiller, but he felt like the pain told his body something, it meant something and so he did not want to numb it (20/04, A Fonsagrada). The bodily feeling of pain was a manifestation of the atmosphere of the Camino. It was present in both the complaints about the inclinations we had to conquer as well as in the casual conversations upon encountering someone:

“Hey man, how are your feet?” Gabriel asked upon seeing Sean again.

“They are okay, how is your knee?” Sean answered while giving him a hug.

“Ganz kaput hahaha...” Gabriel laughed (20/04, A Fonsagrada).

The feeling of pain did not only stay within the body. Instead, it travelled amongst the atmosphere and pilgrims started to take care of each other, even though they did not know each other very well. “Sometimes it [pain] even turns into an atmospheric force that, pervading our (lived) peri[]corporeal space and creating a gloomy and pathological climate in it, [...] it promotes attention, even of a social kind, for the sufferer” (Griffero 2017, 70). It is as if the atmosphere carried the feeling of pain and made everyone compassionate towards each other. *Teresa had heard that Gabriel was trying to stumble to O Cádavo, so she left her backpack and decided to walk the Camino in the reversed direction. She carried Gabriel’s backpack to O Cádavo and we all ate dinner together (21/04, O Cádavo).*

These forms of pain also happen as we walk. The movement gives us a way of knowing and a way of attending to our own body. Subsequently, as Csordas claims: “To attend to a bodily sensation is not to attend to the body as an isolated object, but to attend to the body’s situation in the world” (1993, 138). The pain of walking can therefore make us attend to our own body and following this, “attend with our body” (138). *We were walking the last 10km from O Cádavo to Lugo, but it was such a hard last leg, with a lot of asphalt, in direct sun and accompanied by a lot of pain. I felt how I was pulled back into my body each time new thoughts came up. As if my mind could not distract myself from the bodily sensations I was experiencing. Earlier, Adam, Sean and I had been talking a lot, but now we were just feeling the pain in our bodies, sharing it in our silence. (22/04 Lugo).* Figure 9 illustrates this idea of being pulled inside the body while at the same time being very aware of every step you



Figure 9: Ricardo hiking alone to Compostela. (Compostela 26/04). This photograph was edited into black and white.

take through the landscape. Through the pain, everything around you becomes vague, like silhouettes, and most of your attention is pulled inwards. There is a certain numbness towards the surroundings which is why I edited the photograph into black and white. Taking away the colour hides everything behind their silhouettes and adds a certain atmospheric mystery to the photograph. It takes away the information which colour can give a photograph and instead drives the observer towards their own imagination (Pink 2013, 38).

Besides pain, other feelings emerged and made my body part of the atmosphere. *I felt alone and insecure. At the beginning of a Camino this uncomfortable feeling of an unknown future always settles in (15/04, San Marcelo). I felt relief when I saw again an arrow confirming that I was still on the right path (16/04, Bodenaya). I felt so much warmth and happiness when walking away from Bodenaya. What a beautiful warm albergue (17/04, El Espín). I felt so alone in the fog on the top of the Hospitales mountain and then suddenly surrounded by people in Berducedo (18/04, Berducedo). Today, there was a very strong dream reverberation and I felt the emptiness of walking with its reverberation without being able to distract myself from it (19/04, Grandes de Salime).* While walking, there is only the act of walking and perceiving. It is the act of walking that creates space for feelings to emerge and lets us know differently about our feelings: “A way of walking, for example, does not merely express thoughts and feelings that have already been imparted through an education

in cultural precepts and proprieties. It is itself a way of thinking and of feeling [...]” (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, 2). These feelings are how the atmosphere settles in my body and how it settles into the activity of walking. *I felt annoyance and frustration when the man of the expensive, posh restaurant would not let me eat outside with the other pilgrims, so I left and, literally translating the Flemish expression, “I walked it off me”. Saying goodbye gave me a weird, warm feeling in my stomach bringing my body back to the journey that we had been through.* The event could be over, but that did not mean that the atmosphere was no longer present. Feelings that settled in, after the event was over, were – and still are, as much part of the atmosphere as they were during the event. As mentioned above, while researching *about* atmospheres, I digest the knowledge and transform it. Ways of knowing the atmosphere are therefore not only present in the presence and walking itself, but also in this account of writing *about* the atmosphere of the Camino.

Finally, I want to describe an aspect of the atmosphere of the Camino that does not follow any rational explanations. It dives into narratives that are mystical or religious. It seems that, when we are on the Camino, we become a lot more open and alert for serendipities and coincidences. Think about the abovementioned story of the shoe. Coincidences give the Camino almost a magical dimension and make us feel like we are part of something bigger, and it is the atmosphere that allows us to see this dimension. As Beek describes: “at the Camino, all pretence falls away, and the notion of ‘coincidence’ is unmasked as the inability of the ordinary person to oversee his or her life as guided by a greater force” (2017, 29). This mystical feeling hides in the intangible dimension of atmospheres but settles into moments of serendipity, which we are much more attuned to, in an atmosphere such as the one of the Camino. This atmosphere allows us to see serendipities more easily since our world becomes much smaller on the Camino and seems to be on the move with us. Moreover, due its connectiveness and network that spreads out over the Camino, synchronicities become meaningful (Magry 2008, 244). *When I got off the bus in Oviedo, I immediately encountered the first pilgrim, Sandra. We walked together to the Albergue and after half an hour I asked her what she does for a living. She tells me she is a stomatologist, and I stop, so stunned. I had never met a stomatologist in my life, and never needed one, but coincidentally, two weeks before my doctor had told me I would need to find a stomatologist. When we entered the Albergue, we had to check in separately and I did not see her again on the Primitivo. When my Bob and Sean stayed behind in Lugo, I told them*

to look out for a Portuguese woman, Sandra from Leiria, and that, if they found her, they should give her my number. The day after my arrival in Compostela, I met Sean on the Camino and walked with him his last kilometre. I asked him if he had encountered the stomatologist. He unfortunately said no and we arrived at the cathedral, gave hugs of joy and I turn around to see if Bob was already arriving and suddenly Sandra stood in front of me. I was so happy, we exchanged numbers and I actually went to her clinic to get my surgery. What a coincidence that I met her on my first and last days on the Camino (14/04 Oviedo – 27/04 Compostela).

I want to end this section with a moment that I highlight as “a real Camino moment”. It made me feel in awe. *I was walking very calmly in the morning while suddenly some loud music, caught my attention. I was drawn to a garden that had a small sign: “this is a private property but if you take care of the space, come and take some rest”. I entered the garden humbly with the sun rising on my right. Everything felt so inviting. There were comfortable chairs, hangmats, a waterboiler, a guestbook and a stamp on the table. There was a box for money “FOR OTHER PILGRIMS THAT MIGHT NEED It”. After wandering through the garden and tent, I saw my friend Ricardo passing by. I waved him over; he came and, upon hearing the music, he threw his sticks on the ground and started a tai chi session and invited me to do the same. So, there we were, for what felt like 45 minutes, enjoying the music and our meditation (21/04, O Cádavo). As a final photograph (see Figure 10) I chose a self-*



Figure 10: An awe-moment along the way to Ribadiso. (24/04)

portrait which I decided to make in a moment of awe. Hereby, I want to emphasise the personal dimension of my observations as well as the self-reflexivity that is needed. The fact that *I* felt in awe about the serendipities on and the beauty of the Camino, does not mean that it applies to everyone. However, I do believe that *The Camino invites to connect and to let go (26/04, Compostela)*, which is reflected in the fact that for a moment I stopped and deviated from the path into an open space of possibility. Within this space I decided to take a picture, gazing at the sunrise and appreciating the atmosphere around me.

4. Thinking *through* Atmospheres

In this last chapter of my dissertation, I bring into play the knowledge presented in the previous chapters. I do this first by discussing how to research *through* atmospheres. This allows me to integrate here the theory I build around the concept of atmospheres in chapter 1. I discuss how thinking *through* atmospheres focuses more on atmospheres as a research medium rather than a research object. Furthermore, it explores the atmosphere as a lens and/or a tool that enables us to acknowledge certain relational views. Besides, I also relate researching *through* atmospheres with movement and reflect on how the two are interconnected. Then, I introduce the idea of animated atmospheres as a result of the process of thinking *in, about* and *through* atmospheres. I frame the concept of animated by answering two questions related to (animated) atmospheres. The first question relates to how thinking *through* the atmosphere can lead to the idea of animated atmospheres and the second question deals with how an atmosphere can actually be animated. Nurit Bird-David's (1999), Christopher Braddock's (2017) and Adrian Harris's (2013) accounts are used to frame the concepts of anima and animated atmospheres. They respectively deal with relatedness and engagement, passive participation and affect, and enacted cognition and movement when discussing their conception of animated. Finally, the observations offered in the previous chapter are put into dialogue with the theory about animated atmospheres to ascertain if and how the atmosphere of the Camino can be presented as an animated atmosphere.

4.1 Knowing *through* Atmospheres

As before, I elaborate on researching *through* atmospheres using Sumartojo and Pink's (2019) research methodology. As I was researching *about* atmospheres, I considered the atmosphere as an object which I represented. However, when I research *through* atmospheres, I consider the atmosphere more as a medium *through* which I observe – as a route that transports my perspective to a new one (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 3). This ambiguity of atmospheres as the object/medium remains with me as a question throughout the chapter, providing multiple perspectives on the atmosphere of the Camino. While speaking of the atmosphere as a medium Pink and Sumartojo use the word “route” as a metaphor because it takes into account the emergent character of an atmosphere through which we move (44). Accordingly, the extra layer of the Camino as a route which offers

every day cumulative, atmospheric configurations, fits very well. As I understood the atmosphere, both while researching *in* and *about* it, I was already researching *through* atmospheres.

While researching *through* atmospheres, Sumartojo and Pink understand the atmosphere as a holding concept (12). As a concept, it “[...] enables us to acknowledge and **pull together the configurations of things and processes** that we are seeking to research and to understand (12; my emphasis).”. Atmosphere “is a holding concept for how things configure experientially and processually” (29). Sumartojo and Pink describe its relational power and its emergent character. We can use that relational perspective to understand new things about our research object. A concept can be operational, claimed by Mieke Bal, as “they [concepts] offer miniature theories, and in that guise, help in the analysis of objects, situations, states, and other theories” (2002, 23). As I am moving through atmospheres, I am developing a perspective on the Camino using the concept of atmosphere according to the definition provided in the first chapter. This concept can then act as a tool to visualize, according to its informed definition, how certain things, people, space-time environments relate to each other. From these relations onwards, new knowledge can be deduced about the object of research: “It follows that thinking *through* atmospheres demands a process of analytical reflection and the creation of new conceptual links amongst things that might not at first glance seem obviously related” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 12).

One last aspect that Sumartojo and Pink discuss in their book, relevant to this approach to atmospheres, has to do with mobility (2019, 25-28). As we move through our environment, we move through an atmosphere. Movement is a way to relate to and sense our environment and therefore a way to relate to the atmosphere around us. Think about proprioception¹⁷ and other senses we use to move and become aware of our environment upon movement. Movement is emergent and ephemeral because we are not static but instead, we are entangling ourselves into an emergent world upon movement. A temporality is unfolded in the stopping and continuing of our body. Therefore, movement can be a way to understand *through* atmosphere, i.e. as we move through an atmosphere we take it on: “It also requires that we move across different scales, considering meaning from the individual and micro-level of the body and its sensations, for example, to the largest scale of national

¹⁷ This is the process in which nerve endings in the muscles and joints are stimulated when the body moves, so that a person is aware of their body's position (Cambridge Dictionary).

or global collectivity. Indeed, atmosphere's comprehensibility at and across these different scales makes it a fruitful concept to think through" (12). As the concept of atmospheres connects different scales at which we move, it is an interesting concept to think *through* about walking a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is active on the level of the moving body, but also always connecting the moving body to its next destination(s). Moreover, people travel – and therefore move, from far away, to come and hike the Camino.

4.2 Animated Atmospheres

While thinking *in, about and through* the atmosphere of the Camino another relational phenomenon takes shape as integral to its atmosphere. As already mentioned in the second chapter, there is something in the Camino that makes it appear more than a cultural practice. Something that makes thousands of people engage with it, in ways that feel extraordinary and inspiring. In this chapter, I propose that this has to do with the fact that the atmosphere of the Camino is animated which becomes clear, precisely because I am approaching it *through* the lens of atmospheres. Atmospheres, as a concept, sheds light on relational configurations, on phenomena occurring within bodies instead of only in- or outside bodies, and it sheds light on the intangible dimension of a space/event/environment. These aspects of atmospheres show entanglements with the conception of anima, as I approach it in the following subchapters. I find a first association in Christopher Braddock's "contagious animism" (2017, 5). Braddock talks about how animism is not contagious in terms of residing in bodies, but instead how it "operates as an atmosphere or 'effluvia'" (6), thus revealing the connection between animism and natural sciences in terminology such as "contagious" and "effluvia". Interestingly, "effluvia" was also used in the 18th and 19th centuries in association with the term atmospheres. As mentioned in chapter 1, the field of medical science saw "social effluvia" as co-constitutive of atmospheres. These effluvia could manifest as smells and other energies (for example, humour) coming from social bodies (Riedel 2019, 86). In this sense, people's effluvia – or in the context of this chapter, people's anima – can merge with the atmosphere and give it a specific feeling. I connect this metaphor with Marcel Mauss' understanding that effluvia "[...] travel about" (Mauss 1972, 72) the atmosphere and cocreate animated atmospheres. Moreover, the scientific approach investigates the effect of atmospheres¹⁸ on humans which also assumes a certain anima

¹⁸ I refer here to the atmospheres as they are used in natural sciences.

within atmospheres. In the context of our environmental crisis, it is almost needless to say how the atmosphere can have an effect on our health and our well-being in the world. If we situate our body between the mountains without any exhaust gasses, we interact with our environment very differently than when we are in a city smelling its polluted air. In addition, it is not only odours that travel through atmospheres, but also sound and tactile elements such as temperature. In this dissertation however, I use atmospheres in the context of humanities instead of using a biological perspective, even though I believe that drawing parallels can show how natural sciences' use of atmospheres is intertwined with that of cultural scientists. In the next subchapters, I investigate how the atmosphere can be animated beyond its biological influence on humans.

Anima, animate, animism, and animation are all forms of the same word-group which each show an independent conception with a similar etymology (Papapetros 2012, 186). I focus here on the word “animate”, since I use it as a verb/adjective when talking about animated atmospheres. The word “animate” etymologically comes from the Latin word *anima* (life, soul), which is based on the Greek word *ἄνεμος* (anemos) (Papapetros 2012, 186; Harvey 2014, 58). Anemos means wind, breeze or air and I connect this idea with the fact that anima always has been something in the air, not easy to grasp and therefore situated on the same intangible level as atmospheres. According to the online etymology dictionary, in 1530, “to animate” was deduced from the Latin word *animatus* as “to fill with boldness or courage”. Animatus is the past participle of the verb animare, which means “to give breath to”. In this case, the use of animate was more “to endow with a particular spirit, to give courage or to enliven”. Animate could also be considered as an adjective from the 14th century, which in that case meant “alive”, also deduced from the Latin word *animatus*. It seems that animate has something to do with “alive” and something “in the air”.

There are three main accounts by Nurit Bird-David (1999), Christopher Braddock (2017) and Adrian Harris (2013) of animism that resonate and articulate well with the way I want to bring the atmosphere of the Camino in conversation with the idea of it being animated. I shape the discussion of their idea of “animated” by means of two questions. Question I considers how my conception of atmospheres in chapter 1 is appropriate to reveal the idea of animated atmosphere. As mentioned before, thinking *through* atmospheres visualises relations between matters, persons and space-time environments. It “connects us

conceptually to other aspects of experience” (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 12), which in my case is the animated atmosphere. In the discussion of my first question, I thus write about the process itself of thinking *through*. I do this by showing analogies between the way of approaching atmospheres in chapter 1 and the way of approaching anima by Bird-David (1999), Braddock (2017) and Harris (2013). These analogies then illustrate how the methodology of thinking *through* atmospheres revealed new knowledge about the anima of the atmosphere in my investigation. It both exposes how my thinking *through* occurred and approaches atmospheres as a medium/lens rather than as an object.

In question II, which I use to shape my discussion of the concept of animated, I question how the concept of animated might reveal that certain atmospheres *can* be animated – with the atmosphere of the Camino as one of them. I thus discuss Bird-David’s (1999), Braddock’s (2017) and Harris’ (2013) accounts of animated and show how atmospheres can display these features. During the discussion of this question I approach atmospheres as a research object. Answering these two questions, I make use of the flexibility of the concept atmospheres as a medium and an object here.

Before moving on to the discussion of these questions, it is important to make the reader attentive of one literary choice. I want to prevent continuing the modernist narrative of human/non-human duality, separating the human from non-human¹⁹ entities. Instead, I use “human” or “people” when I specifically refer to humans, while I apply Alfred Hallowell’s term “person” as an umbrella term both for human and other-than-human with a sense of personhood:

The more deeply we penetrate the world view of the Ojibwa the more apparent it is that ‘social relations’ between human being (anicinabek) and other-than-human ‘persons’ are of cardinal significance. These relations are correlative with their more comprehensive categorization of ‘persons.’ [...] Since in the Ojibwa universe there are many kinds of reified person-objects which are other than human but have the same ontological status, these, of course, fall into the same ethnoseme as human beings and into the "animate" linguistic class. (Hallowell 1964, 52-54)

Reading for example the word “atmosphere-person” refers to an atmosphere with a sense of personhood, i.e. an animated atmosphere.

¹⁹ Including “within the term nonhuman those entities that are not human but exist on Earth, either living (animals, plants), or artificially reproducing human characteristics (in particular artificial intelligence), or indeed presences that are or can be but do not conform to modern knowledge (especially animistic cosmogonies)” (Cástera 2023, 79).

4.3 The Concept of Devaru

Nurit Bird-David's (1999) observations of the Nayaka in the context of anima, brings together relatedness, engagement/affordances, the blur of subject/object roles and a dynamic character of anima. These are phenomena I discuss in the next sections. Nayaka is "a hunter-gatherer community of the forested Gir Valley in the Nilgiri region of South India." (Bird-David 1999, S71). Devaru is translated by Bird-David into "super-person" to avoid the dichotomic implications of the word supernatural(/nature) and spirit(/human) (S68, S71). I have chosen his account in the first place because he challenges the problematic character that animism has gotten in its early "anthropological theorizing and religious polemics" (Harvey 2006, xii). The main actor in this theoretical discussion of animism was Edward Burnett Tylor who established the concept "anima" in anthropology. In doing so, he appointed animism to undeveloped indigenous communities and religions or children (xiii). Animism had therefore a negative connotation and was connected to a modernist view on indigenous communities. Nowadays, the field seems to be revisited with more respect towards indigenous knowledges – with David-Bird's account one of them.

It is also important that I enunciate my position here as I am including non-western knowledges. I do not aim to understand and use devaru as a placeholder for anima to avoid a modernist approach. I am still educated in a Western epistemology and thinking and writing from a Western framework of knowledge. I solely count on the concept of devaru to contribute to my process of drawing connections about animated atmospheres within my own situatedness.

Nayaka, according to Nurit Bird-David's observations, go through their environment with a focus on relatedness. From the term "dividual", by Marilyn Strathern (1988, 13, 131), Bird-David derives the expression "to dividuate someone" in his discussion of devaru: "When I individuate a human being, I am conscious of her 'in herself' (as a single separate entity); [while] when I dividuate her I am conscious of how she relates with me" (Bird-David 1999, S72). Discussing question I – presented in the previous subchapter of this work – I also find this relational perspective in the conception of atmospheres. Relational bridging of dualities is a feature discussed in chapter 1 and therefore a way of thinking *through* atmospheres. As Nayaka take on a relational lens to see devaru, I take on an atmospheric lens, focusing my attention on the relation itself to see animated atmospheres. According to Bird-David, for Nayaka this relational thinking directly guides their perception of devaru.

They identify *devaru* as the person who makes them relate to or engage with: “*As and when and because* they engage in and maintain relationships with other beings, they constitute them as kinds of person: they make them ‘relatives’ by sharing with them and thus make them persons” (S73). Through *devaru* the relationship and relatedness between the two persons becomes objectified. However, *Nayaka* do not “baptize” a person into *devaru*. Rather reciprocally, attention to the *devaru* affordances (Gibson 2015, 121) makes *Nayaka* engage with them – it is about “what the animate objects **make** happen” (231; my emphasis). Discussing question II from above, I showed in chapter 1 how atmospheres can also afford its perceiver with a mode of attention such as presence. Some atmospheres urge the perceiver to feel, to take action or to be inspired. They make certain phenomena happen and, therefore, they feel as if they are alive. They feel as if they are animated. For example, as we encounter an atmosphere, we encounter its mood and, at the same time, we feel out the environment with our own mood. I recall the example in chapter 1 described by Bence Nanay (2019, 32) about the person who sat in front of a painting and let her emotions be evoked by the atmosphere present around the painting. At the same time, she arrived in this atmosphere with her own antecedent mood, influenced by the date she had gone on before. In this sense, the atmosphere around that painting felt animated, as it changed something in the person’s emotions so she could understand her own emotions about her antecedent date. This perceptual symbiosis between the body of the human and atmosphere-person engaged with or afforded each other in moods. However, these affordances do not only concern one perceiver and its atmosphere; instead, a network of affordances emerges that blurs the roles of subjects and objects. As David-Bird explains: “As they [*Nayaka*] move and act in the forest, they pick up information about the relative variances in the **flux of the interrelatedness** between themselves and other things against relative invariances. When they pick up a relatively changing thing with their relatively changing selves [...] they regard as *devaru* this particular thing within this particular situation” (David-Bird 1999, S74, my emphasis).

Returning to question I, thinking through the concept of atmosphere makes us attend to the bridge between a subject/object duality (Rauh 2019, 149). This was also already illustrated in the example above, about the mood of an atmosphere. This mood is produced by the perceiver (subject) through their own influence on the atmosphere. However, at the same time the perceiver also receives the atmosphere-person (now, the subject) while the

human-person gets influenced by its mood. The role of perceiver and perceived become blurred in a circular cocreation of the mood of the atmosphere as already discussed in the first chapter when writing about dualities. Thinking *through* atmospheres makes us think beyond dualities and therefore can visualise the anima in atmospheres. On the other hand, approaching the atmosphere as a research object and, hence, discussing question II, this capacity shows that the atmosphere can also itself participate in this flux of interrelatedness, leaving the role of subject/object or perceiver/perceived behind. This demonstrates how atmospheres can be considered animated.

Finally, according to Bird-David's account, the identification of *devaru* is dynamic and might change in accordance with the configuration of engagement and affordances of the *devaru*: "The lack of mutual engagement prevented the kind of relatedness which would have constituted this elephant (at this moment) as *devaru* while it might be perceived as *devaru* on other occasions (1999, S75)." This dynamic aspect complies with the dynamic character of an atmosphere as an unfolding experiential atmosphere. The atmosphere might be animated at a certain moment, while at other moments it might not invite one to engage with it at all.

4.4 Passive Participation

Christopher Braddock's account of animated shares a common ground with David-Bird but departs from the idea of participation into a field of affect. Christopher Braddock connects these two thoughts on animism in his book *Animism in Art and Performance* (2017, 197). In his terminology, using the term *effluvia*, he already presents an association between anima and atmospheres. His approach to animism brings together ideas from anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and philosopher Emmanuel Levinas and subsequently discusses the performance by Darcell Apelu called "Musu" (Braddock 2017, 191-211). His conception starts from the question of "what is participation?", connecting it then to "what is animated?" (Braddock 2017, 196). Exploring the most passive form of participation, Lévy-Bruhl claims it to be a field of affect held by the participating spirits or *effluvia* (Braddock 2017, 197; Lévy-Bruhl 1975, 102, 108). From this perspective, he links participation to a mystical experience, which is not subject to the principles of causality or identity (Lévy-Bruhl 1975, 102). I believe that his take on passive participation allows for the acknowledgement that

any person (e.g. an atmosphere-person) can participate, even though we might not be sure of their consciousness.

I have discussed affect in relation to atmospheres in chapter 1, in which I also linked fields of affect to the aliveness of surrounding objects. Both Böhme's ecstasies (2016, 5) and Bennett's vibrant matter (2010, x) illustrated this. While, as mentioned before, affect is not interchangeable with the concept atmosphere, it is entangled with the fields of affect at present: "By reducing it to its affective qualities, it suggests that an atmosphere pre-exists the presence of those who are suddenly subsumed within its affective field." (Edensor and Sumartojo 2015, 252). But as affect and atmosphere are very intertwined phenomena, thinking *through* atmospheres makes me more open to observe (animated) affective fields. That said, and answering my structuring question II, the atmosphere itself goes beyond the level of affect and carries emotional content and feelings (Bille, Bjerregaard and Sørensen 2014, 35). On the first level, the effluvia – which is both other person's effluvia carried by the atmosphere as the atmosphere's own effluvia – merge and passively participates through a field of affect. Beyond that field, the atmosphere can also participate on an emotional level and actively change someone's mood or feelings. Both participations together make the atmosphere itself, as a research object, alive. I purposefully mentioned effluvia that are carried *and* produced by the atmosphere. There is, as it must be clear by now, always an exchange between different persons that contribute to the atmosphere and the atmosphere itself which affects those persons.

The effluvia that participate through the atmosphere relate also to Hermann Schmitz's the abovementioned "Leib" (2018,10). The felt body is considered as surfaceless, extending into the space. He approaches this idea in terms of sensing the environment, while I apply it here in terms of animating the environment/atmosphere. Extending one's effluvia into a field of affect as a form of participation and as a form of cocreating the anima of the atmosphere. And, as already said, the atmosphere itself can also participate and affect other surroundings or encountering bodies. To link this back to Braddock's account of participation, he also addresses the blurring of roles such as subject/object, perceiver/perceived and body/space. His discussion of passive participation has to do with a form of participation that is beyond our control because participation through affect occurs before any conscious decision has been made. Consequently, there is no question of rational causality in this passive participation nor of subjecthood (Braddock 2017, 201). The duality of subject/object is

challenged in a field of affect because it does not encompass consciousness and therefore participants lose their identity in their participation. It is still true that effluvia extend into the space, but the identity of the effluvia, and the body from which they originate, blurs into the field of affect. The participants still exist, not because of their body and identity, but because of their participation. Lévy-Bruhl illustrates this loss of subjecthood in an example of fingers and their relationship with the body. He describes how a finger's identity, through participation, becomes independent of the ownership of the body (Lévy-Bruhl 1975, 107). Instead of being through their relationship with the body, they *are* because they participate. They are characterized “through communally affective and emotive participation” (Braddock 2017, 201) between the body and the finger. Levinas further emphasizes this anonymity of the participation through his conception of the “il y a” or “there is”, where the subject is not distinguishable anymore and there is only “il y a” (Levinas 1978, 60). His idea of participation goes beyond the social and beyond the ego into anonymity (Braddock 2017, 99, 200). Going back to question I, the concept of atmospheres allows for this anonymity, immateriality, and intangibility. This makes me acknowledge the intangibility or blurring when thinking *through* atmospheres and, therefore, allows me to uncover the anima in atmospheres. Related to question II, we might also not be able to pinpoint who it is that participates in the animated atmosphere and what this atmosphere, which itself is a participant, exactly is.

In the discussion of David-Bird's account, I only called an atmosphere animated if the atmosphere would afford and engage its perceivers. Here, analogously, the atmosphere would be animated if it is participating, even though we might not be able to identify its material form and origin. Participation of an animated atmosphere is a mystical experience. Deducing a form of animism from this idea of participation links to the idea that “To be is to participate” (202) and, hence, “Being is no longer conceived by the questions ‘what’ or ‘who’” (201). Levinas speaks of animism as a complex network of mystic participations while paraphrasing Lévy-Bruhl (Levinas 1998, 49). In this complex network of mystic participations, the atmosphere can participate itself, which in that case I call an animated atmosphere. But even as a medium, atmospheres can still be animated in terms of participation. Atmospheres can carry spirits and be the medium that exchanges effluvia in a form of affect. In this case the atmosphere participates through those effluvia and can be called animated as well. However, to identify this type of participation a certain level of

disinterestedness is needed. It allows for a non-causal, mystical way of participating (199). The cognitive level should not be the focus while participating in this mystical way. Instead, we situate ourselves on a level of participation, in which other persons, without cognition, can also participate. Thinking *through* atmospheres also asks for certain disinterestedness, as we are not interested in the practical affordances of an atmosphere but rather, attuned to its aesthetical affordances.

4.5 Enacting the Genius Loci

Finally, Adrian Harris's (2013) ideas of anima overlap with Bird-David's and Braddock's but originate from embodied knowledge and movement related to Eco-Paganism (2013). Harris is an Eco-Pagan²⁰ insider and studied the UK Eco-Pagans to understand how they relate to their environment (2013, 403). His approach to animism stands in direct relation to the perception of environment, which offers an interesting outlook on my investigation in the relationship between anima and atmosphere. As discussed in chapter 1, atmospheres are spatial phenomena and, even though they are not always tied to a location, they are inherently situated in our environment and they are concerned with how we relate to our surroundings. His focus on embodied knowledge furthermore aligns with the way I conceptualise the perception of spatial and experiential atmospheres. Harris describes how Eco-Pagans relate to a "genius loci", which he translates into "the spirits of place" (403). Eco-Pagans focus on their intuition more than on mental representation of a space. Harris quotes David Abram in saying that "we are corporeally embedded" in a "living landscape" (Abram quoted in Harris 2013, 405). According to Abram, the perception of the living landscape is an interplay between the perceiver and the perceived (43), which is something already mentioned before when talking about animated atmospheres. The roles of perceiver and perceived disappear and become a blurred action of participation. Perception is in this case a participatory activity in which both perceiver and perceived become just participants. Harris brings Abram's perspective into the discussion with Tim Ingold's review of Hallowell's study of the Ojibwa in which he concludes that knowledge through perception means to enact on your environment (Harris 2013, 405). Movement of your awareness couples to the movement of aspects in the world (Ingold 2000, 11). Here, I discuss the

²⁰ UK Eco-pagans are practicing a form of paganism which include "spiritualities within the British protest movement" (Letcher 2005: 556) based around celebrating and preserving Earth.

perception of the environment from the idea that it is done upon (physical and metaphorical) movement. This angle is interesting to my discussion of the animated atmospheres as they are also researched through movement.

Therefore, I explore the “the Enactive Process Model” in which Harris further develops this perspective of embodied and enacted cognition (2013, 407). The model acts as a tool to think about the interaction with our environment, including the awareness that it is a model oversimplifying the reality. Nevertheless, it also allows us to think about and structure a thought process into a discussion. Embodied knowledge I have already situated in chapter one. Enacted knowledge in the context of this model has to do with how we act

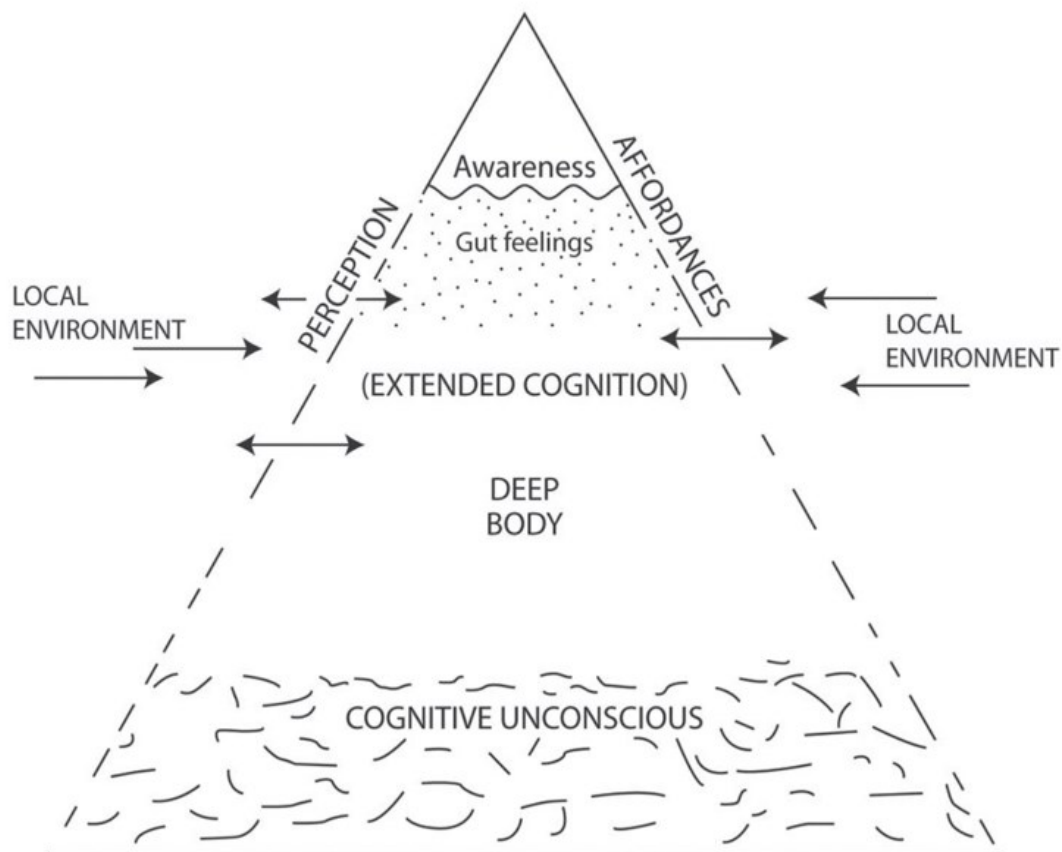


Figure 11: The Enactive Process Model by Adrian Harris (2013, 408).

upon the world as we explore it with our senses: “Because the mind is embodied and arises out of “an active handling and coping with the world”, then “whatever you call an object ... is entirely dependent on this constant sensory motor handling” (406-407). Harris’s model shows an iceberg (see Figure 11) with multiple layers that go from the top down deeper into the unconscious level of our perception and interaction with the world. At the top, the

awareness of the way we perceive the world is showed. It illustrates the mental representations we have about the world around us. If I then go deeper, I move into the area of gut feeling, which is susceptible to affordances and sensuous perception. The deeper we go, the more interaction is accessible between our body and the environment. The deeper we go, the more we extend ourselves into our environment and enact upon it. The deeper we go, the more the roles of perceiver and perceived merge into *one* atmosphere of existence. At the bottom, our unconscious layer of cognition is situated.

Adrian Harris discusses different ways in which one can access these deeper layers of cognition and illustrates this in an example about ritual and dance (2013, 411). He explains how, when moving, a dancer can bridge the conscious and unconscious beyond words, in which the dancer starts expressing the genius loci through movement that unfolds into dance (411). I relate this example to the earlier abovementioned example of sitting in front of a painting to see what feelings emerged about that person's earlier date. In the case of ritual and dance, they go a step further where the emotions that arose – similar as in the case of the painting, they were expressed in dance movements. I want to generalize this to any kind of movement, even in the metaphorical sense of being (emotionally/affectively) moved by something. I believe that animated atmospheres move something inside and/or outside bodies. The atmospheres move themselves; they move with the bodies and within them: “[...] first, the dance allows the genius loci or other spirit to communicate with the dancer at the level of the deep body; secondly, the dance can serve as a bridge between the dancer's deep embodied knowing and his or her conscious awareness” (411). This reasoning also applies reciprocally. An atmosphere that is alive might move people, but a person can also, through movement, show an openness towards the anima of an atmosphere. “[...] “If ... I'm frozen in some way physically, then I can't hear. I can't listen. Nothing will flow through me. So, I have to move in some way with it, however simple it is, I have to move physically in some way.” (411). The way he approaches the genius loci through embodied knowledge and through the idea of a body extending and enacting into the space also relates to the way I think *through* atmospheres. I encounter atmospheres with my living body or “leib” and through the sensuous perception of my environment. This is why, when researching atmospheres, I not only research *about and through* but also *in* atmospheres.

Harris discusses extended cognition and brings it to enacted cognition in terms of movement (2013, 411). We encounter atmospheres while we move *through* them which is

an integral part of researching *through* atmospheres. Moving coincides with the dynamic character of an atmospheres, which are continuously emerging and unfolding. Movement creates knowledge about our environment. We incorporate this knowledge – maybe only on a subconscious level – similar to how our body behaves in terms of proprioception. Movement is a way to encounter atmospheres and therefore – in the light of my structuring question I – atmospheres is an appropriate concept to think *through* about animated atmospheres. To illustrate this with Harris’s model, we are metaphorically moved by the genius loci, or in my case, the animated atmospheres, into these deeper layers of the enactive process model. Subsequently, this makes our body extend and merge with the space, which then might physically move our body into a material expression of this connection.

4.6 Atmospheres as a Medium and an Object

Atmosphere’s ambiguity related to medium/object shows a complex flexibility in the approach to animated atmospheres. I tried to stay true to this ambiguity discussing both structuring questions I and II. Moreover, there are three layers in which I have used this ambiguity throughout the last subchapters. I have approached atmospheres as an appropriate medium *through* which one would uncover the anima of a person (structuring question I). Besides, I discovered that, if we approach atmospheres themselves as an object of investigation, they can be animated in themselves (structuring question II). Even though I approach the atmospheres as a medium to research *through*, separately from the atmospheres as object of research, both are interrelated. Therefore, the third layer in which the ambiguity manifests itself shows how the atmosphere can bridge this ambiguity of medium/object. Assuming that the atmosphere as a research object is animated, it would allow, on the level of the medium, for me to see its animation. In other words, the fact that the lens itself is animated, allowed for the lens to show its anima. A form of reflexive thinking is here at play which is also what Pink and Sumartojo mention when they discuss thinking *through* atmospheres.

Being in atmosphere is therefore a consideration for the research approach and practices discussed in this section about knowing in atmosphere, but also sets up a way of thinking that informs the subsequent sections on knowing about and knowing through atmosphere. This is because acknowledging that we are in atmosphere has a dual purpose: first, to enable us to research with other people what it means to be in particular atmospheres that we seek to understand; and second, because it generates a **reflexive**

awareness about what and how we can possibly know **about** and **through** atmosphere. (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 36; my emphasis)

The relational framework of thinking provided by atmospheres, as well as the way Sumartojo and Pink presented the methodology of thinking *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres allows for the results to interrelate with each other. While thinking *through* atmospheres, the knowledge that emerges can say something *about* the atmosphere and while thinking *about* the atmosphere I already make use of the conceptualization of atmospheres. With atmospheres a relational medium through which I am researching, it makes sense that the medium itself might be included in the result. Taking on a relational perspective which acknowledges intangible dimensions, it would not make sense to only say something about the Camino as a cultural practice. Instead, it provides information about the Camino's atmosphere and this knowledge leads me to its anima. I could say that it is just the Camino itself being animated, but as a matter of fact, then I would be minimizing my results about the atmosphere of the Camino. What I say about the Camino also speaks about its atmosphere of the Camino and that what I discuss about the atmosphere also says something about the Camino as an event/cultural practice/etc. While I am thinking within this frame of knowledge that puts the tacit, relational, and embodied knowledge at the centre, it would not make sense to conclude about something that does not include relational, embodied and tacit knowledge. I research here how it is that atmospheres as a medium allowed me *through* multiple conceptual aspects, to identify an anima in the atmosphere – as an object – of the Camino.

4.7 The Animated Atmosphere of the Camino

As I outlined how an atmosphere can be animated in the previous section, I now apply this to my case study of the atmosphere of the Camino as I think *through* its atmosphere but also including the knowledge that I gained from thinking *in* and *about* the atmosphere. Nancy Frey talks about the “Reanimation” of the Camino, which:

means the act of [it] giving new life. My use of the term responds to Ford's idea of the Camino's lost spirit and counters with animism [...] There is no doubt that the Camino has been given new life in the twentieth century, and those who are ardently attached to the pilgrimage would probably attribute the changes to the indomitable “soul” the Camino possesses, surviving the winds of change, the capriciousness of human loyalty, and transformations to its roads and ways. (Ford 1855²¹; Frey 1998, 237)

²¹ Original reference not available.

In this subchapter I try to understand how the atmosphere of the contemporary experience of the Camino can be animated and how the concept of atmospheres itself sheds light on this idea.

The main metaphor, which I encountered while I was researching *in* the atmosphere was given by a volunteer who welcomed Belgian/Dutch pilgrims in Santiago de Compostela. He told me that *the Camino might not be the same for everyone but that, on the Camino, everyone is at least invited to give in. Those pilgrims who accept this invitation then seem to participate in similar phenomena (Santiago de Compostela 26/04)*²². This metaphor shows how the atmosphere can engage, invite, or inspire people, but only if those people are open to receiving its invitation. I believe that the atmosphere of the Camino is animated as it *invites* pilgrims to participate into the atmosphere. Pilgrims relate to the atmosphere as if it is alive, precisely because it is this atmosphere that invited them to participate. There are many phenomena to which this atmosphere invites pilgrims to participate in; such as a mode of attention of openness and spontaneity, a profound connection with pilgrims you barely know, a culture of care, appreciation for the small things and surroundings or a journey of introspection. As Frey claims: “When pilgrims begin to walk several things usually begin to happen to their perceptions of the world which continue over the course of the journey: they develop a changing sense of time, a heightening of the senses, and a new awareness of their bodies and the landscape” (1998, 72). Taking the atmosphere up on its invitation is also a way to let go of control and to give in to the anima’s mediation. You let yourself become part of this complex network of impulses and let them afford you with phenomena, which is also what happened when I observed a mode of spontaneity that pilgrims took on.

The invitation of the animated atmospheres points to a participation of the atmosphere-person and of the pilgrims which led them towards the abovementioned phenomena. The atmosphere-person of the Camino transcends the role of the object into a field of mystic participations. It is the atmosphere-person of the Camino that participates itself as well as the pilgrims and their effluvia. One aspect which is important to emphasise is indirectly visible in many of the observations from the previous chapter: the role of the path itself. Upon walking the Camino, everyone sticks to the path and walks the same way, follows the same arrows, and often sleeps around the same places. Instead of trying to control everything

²² Fieldnotes from the Camino 2024 will in this subchapter be in Italics, followed by their date and stage.

that comes upon our path as we chose to embark on this journey, the atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo, through its singular path, literally directs our movement. There is only one road we follow on our way to Compostela. There is something about this letting go, this giving into the path, which allows us to see the anima in the atmosphere of the Camino. This is also very visible when it is compared with the contrast of an atmosphere that is not considered animated.

There are three main moments in which the atmosphere of the Camino seemed to hold less of an anima. Taking on Bird-David's idea of *devaru* as dynamic, I also observed that the anima in the atmosphere of the Camino can appear and disappear. As Bird-David puts it: "These four stories show how elephants may be regarded as persons or as objects, depending on what happens between them and Nayaka, which itself depends on the 'affordances' of events involving elephants and people." (1999, S75) Like "Devaru are not limited to certain *classes* of things [and as] they are certain things-in-situations of whatever class or, better, certain situations" (S75), animated atmospheres are certain atmospheres in relation to the person that accepts or denies their invitation.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the atmosphere of the Camino changed around the moment tourists and people from the Camino Francés joined in. Along the last 50 kilometres, I saw one tourist support service system after the other: taxis, albergues with special offers and pilgrim menus, spas to heal one's feet and restaurants/bars/stamp collection points put up along the way to entertain the tourist-pilgrim. In this part of the Camino, it was not about giving in to the anima of the atmosphere anymore. Instead, it was about trying to control the way by entertaining its side-lines with everything imaginable, capable of supporting one's expectations. From this contrast it becomes clear that the atmosphere of the Camino is animated if we give in to it as opposed to an atmosphere that we try to control.

Another moment in which the atmosphere did not feel animated was when we arrived in big cities and the people around us, as well as the infrastructure seemed to drown the Camino in the fast-paced city life. In the city, people became more individuated and dispersed, while the citizen's life in the city was not as intertwined with the atmosphere of the Camino as it was on the countryside. The collectiveness gets lost in the individualistic life of the city. From this contrast it is important that the atmosphere needs to nurture this collectiveness in order to transcend into an animated atmosphere. A field of participation

needs to be created and pilgrims should collectively participate in order to feel the atmosphere's passive participation (Braddock 2017).

Thirdly, the invitation of the atmosphere of the Camino was closed off for people walking with their phone. This device prevented pilgrims from spontaneity, presence and embracing the absence of stimuli which the atmosphere on the Camino invites you to embrace. In line with what Tuan claims about the "Modern man, it is often claimed, has lost this sensitivity. He transgresses against the genius loci because he fails to recognise it; and he fails to recognise it because the blandness of much modern environment combined with the ethos of human dominance has stunted the cultivation of place awareness." (Tuan 1979, 410). This example illustrates again how animated atmospheres have to do with letting go of the control or letting of individualistic activities; and if this does not occur, pilgrims do not relate to the atmosphere as animated.

When travelling, we seem to do a lot of things for ourselves such as selecting the perfect hotel, scanning the destination for sights, making sure we can feel comfortable. We assure ourselves that the travel will entertain us or that it at least provides me with what *I* need. I believe, however, that this is not the case with animated atmospheres. This is an atmosphere in which the pilgrim him/herself also participates and animates it with his/her effluvia. This means that the pilgrim, as opposed to the individualistic traveller, in the atmosphere of the Camino, is raised above her/his individual level and into a collective atmosphere. The subject in the animated atmosphere is transformed to something collective that situates itself in between the network of objects and intangible phenomena. As Jan Masschelein claims about travelling:

This thinking understands the experience and therefore also the reading and travelling, not in the light of "becoming oneself", but of being expropriated from oneself (without merely speaking of a change). One assumes then that the experience is that what makes us, in one way or another, "different" and that what transforms us (Masschelein 1998, 123; my translation).²³

It is not about controlling the things in function of oneself anymore but instead about letting go, giving in and engaging with, or rather being engaged by, the atmosphere. On the Camino, this elevated network – in which subjecthood of the pilgrim gets blurred – became

²³ Dit denken begrijpt de ervaring en dus ook het lezen en reizen niet in het licht van het 'zichzelf worden', maar van het onteigend worden (zonder dat het hier louter om een omkering zou gaan). Men gaat dan uit van de gedachte dat de ervaring is wat ons op één of andere wijze anders maakt en transformeert.

visible when I narrated the story about the shoe and the battery in the previous chapter. In both cases, it was not me trying to control the Camino, but rather these objects entering in relation to the atmosphere and to me, so that we all pulled and pushed each other in a network of affordances. The suspension of the subject/object roles creates an atmosphere which transforms somehow the experience of it. Using Martin Heidegger's use of "to undergo an experience", it becomes clear how a pilgrim can undergo the experience of the animated atmosphere on the Camino.

To undergo an experience with something – be it a thing, a person, or a god [or an atmosphere] – means that this something befalls us, strikes us, come over us, overwhelms and transforms us. When we talk of "undergoing" an experience, we mean specifically that the experience is not of our own making; to undergo here means that we endure it, suffer it, receive it as it strikes us and submit to it. It is this something itself that comes about, comes to pass, happens (Heidegger 1971, 57).

The relational network which has other actors in play beyond the pilgrims walking the Camino was visible in the objects' participation. In both the story of the battery and the shoe, it was not the human playing the subject, but rather the relations that were formed between the object and other elements of the atmosphere of the Camino.

Besides, using Heidegger's "undergoing" of the atmosphere of the Camino, means spontaneously encountering whatever configurations unfolds, while at the same time through a reaction still influencing it. Linking this to my observations, the spontaneous attitude towards reservations and stops showed how certain pilgrims were invited to let go and gave in. Moreover, linking this to the idea of surrendering oneself to the way, it also correlates to the meaning of pain which was central along the hike. The fact that the atmosphere of the Camino does not only present joyful or pleasing elements, asks at least for a certain level of surrender. Evidently, some pilgrims surrender more to these uncomfortable elements than others, who prepare themselves with tricks to prevent blisters, arrange taxi-services to transport baggage and carry tape to support injuries. At the start of the Camino, my bodily observations displayed a feeling of insecurity and aloneness. Starting the Camino alone, not knowing what is to come, allows for the atmosphere to settle these feelings of insecurity and loneliness in my body. As described above, this "undergoing" is also "to suffer", "receive" and "submit" to the fact that the atmosphere is the actor playing part of the experience. A network of affordances is thus formed, blurring the actors and settling in as feelings and phenomena.

Atmospheres are alive in a relational way. This means it is not just the present event which makes atmospheres alive, but also its history, its narratives, its people and environment in which it lives. As I referred to Nurit Bird-David's conception of engagement and affordances in the previous subchapter, I can draw lines from his theory to the atmosphere of the Camino. Take for example the "flux of interrelatedness" (Bird-David 1999, S74) and how the Nayaka can notice a variance in this flux which can be then identified as *devaru*. Likewise, Gabriel immersed himself in the flux of the atmosphere on the Camino. He was moved by it and learned a lot about himself, about his experience of the Camino and about the contrast with his life at home. He spoke many times of this learning process and it became clear how, as the atmosphere unfolded, this learning was one of the affordances within the network of the atmosphere of the Camino. On the other hand, being engaged by and with the atmosphere of the Primitivo, settled in a family-feeling as pilgrims kept on meeting each other at junction-points. Pilgrims related this warm feeling to the atmosphere of the Camino. The way pilgrims *relate* with the atmosphere of the Camino mirrors the description by Bird-David about Nayaka relating to *devaru*. This relating made atmosphere on the Camino unfold through time as an animated atmosphere.

Personhood is dissolved in this network as it is both in Bird-David's, Braddock's and Harris's accounts of animated. Even though personhood blurs in the network bridging dualities, pilgrims' and people's spirits can still participate – as mentioned while discussing Braddock's account – in the atmosphere and in this way contribute to its *anima*. This occurs, for example, on the level of history, by means of the first pilgrims who started hiking the Camino still contribute anonymously to its atmosphere through narratives and rituals. Besides, current pilgrims connect with prior ones through the activity of walking itself: "In the medieval pilgrimage and pilgrim modern pilgrims find a direct link to the past, an authenticity based on sacrifice, endurance, and austerity imagined to have been lived by the medieval pilgrim, and a community of souls united by the rhythm of their feet as the second millennium comes to a close." (Frey 1998, 15). This was also discussed by one of the pilgrims on our Camino, who mentioned Carl Jung and his idea of the "unconscious collective". Besides, the idea that "the pilgrim could transfer part of the sacred to himself [...]" (12) adds to the animated network of effluvia in the atmosphere. "The faithful sought to bring themselves closer to the divine through physical contact with the relics" (12).

Apart from history, there are other ways in which people's effluvia participate in the animated atmosphere of the Camino. As mentioned in the previous chapter, stories travel between different Camino's and ways of thinking about the Camino are transmitted from pilgrims who have already hiked a Camino to new pilgrims hiking a subsequent Camino. Teresa's gesture of going back and carrying Gabriels backpack so he could reach O Cádavo, or Ricardo's silent invitation to practice tai chi in that garden for pilgrims, added to the network of "anonymous participation" as Levinas called it (1978, 60):

In the end it even felt like there was an exchange between the inside and the outside, as the boundary between my effluvia and the effluvia of/in the atmosphere seemed to merge. I could influence the atmosphere with my effluvia as I did an effort to participate, but, at the same time, I felt like I was pushed and pulled into many phenomena and moods by the atmosphere. As Drew Leder describes his walk in the forest as: "gradually, "[t]he boundaries between the inner and the outer thus become porous ... I feel the sun and hear the song birds both within-me and without-me ... They are not sense data internal to consciousness, but neither are they 'out there' somewhere. They are part of a rich body-world chiasm that eludes dualistic characterizations" (Leder 1990b, 165-166). As my body extends into the space and enacts on the atmosphere that moves it.

In light of this movement, there is also observation which leads me to research the atmosphere of the Camino as animated. Every year, it makes thousands of people literally *move*. As Blain explains: "Ingold (e.g. 2004, 2008) and others have discussed walking within landscape as something which involves many senses, an embodied placing and movement in a landscape which is lived, experienced and learned through the movement" (Blain 2014, 434). The movement in a pilgrimage is not just moving as we do on a daily stroll in the city or a day-hike in nature. Pilgrims move every day, for days, weeks or months, following a specific path, because that "what fin-de-siecle pilgrims find in the image of Santiago Peregrine goes beyond the obvious political overlay and leads us to a more personal view of what moves people to journey, like their ancestors, to Santiago" (Frey 1998, 15). Pilgrims are moved despite the boredom and emptiness of walking all day, they are moved despite the pain and weight of their backpack and they are moved despite whatever weather or surroundings they have to cross. There is something about the atmosphere of the Camino that makes pilgrims move, even though it might not be easy to do it. Looping back to Adrian Harris's view on movement in relation to the anima of a place, it seems that the atmosphere

of the Camino inspires people to move. Pilgrims enact upon this atmosphere according to the deeper layers of Harris's abovementioned enactive process model. They sink into the unconscious levels of their body and enact upon the animated atmosphere which moves them.

It is not only on a physical level that pilgrims are moved. I moved also with my mind and made a journey within myself, which I also discussed in subchapter 2.4 in relation to spirituality and the mental act of moving. It is as if, when we physically move forward, our mind moves with us. This way of knowing – where the mind moves along with the body, is only possible as we walk. The atmosphere of the Camino made our body and mind move and therefore the atmosphere animated through our movements, following our movement along the way. As mentioned in the previous chapter, movement forward does not make us lose the atmosphere, instead it seems to move with us and to unfold as we moved further on. Movement at a certain natural rhythm made it clear how this movement also felt part of the atmosphere and its aliveness. *From the moment we got into the host's car to quickly do groceries in the nearby town, I became very aware of how the landscape was rushing by and how it made me almost uncomfortable because I did not have time to gaze upon it. Besides, it felt like I was jumping between past (previous Caminos) and future (the way we would walk the next day) (24/04 Ribadiso).* This uncomfortable feeling was an indication of leaving the atmosphere and moving with a different tempo. This way, the atmosphere could not interact with the movement of my body anymore and therefore the body would no longer consider it animated.

“[W]e move with the rhythms of an animate universe” (Taiwo 2014, 492), Taiwo argues. As I link this to the Enactive process model, the pulling of our bodily attention into a deeper layer of enacted cognition that can be caused by an animated atmosphere. This certainly applies to the atmosphere of the Camino. As we were walking to Lugo and our gaze just slid into the body or into an aesthetic mode of attention, we were pulled by the atmosphere. The rhythm of walking created a perceptual relation with the landscape that is enacted upon in the act of walking. Combining this act with the atmosphere of walking on the same roads as other pilgrims – alone together – our attention gets drawn into deeper layers of our unconscious cognition and we literally walk the atmosphere. The atmosphere travelled through us in our movements and in this way showed its animated character. Interestingly, this was not the case at the last 50 kilometres, as the gazing beyond the

conscious was distracted by the many stimuli that tried to capture our attention (offers for taxis, all the pilgrims' conversations around us, the many albergues and bars that put up signs for us to read...). As they tried to capture our attention, the atmosphere had to compete with them and could not pull our attention to the subconscious level. We were intertwined in what Yves Citton calls an economy of attention (Citton 2017). Interestingly, he speaks of joint attention, which is what the people from the Camino in the end somehow were subjected to – constantly someone attending to their attention (84). The animated atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo got lost in other atmospheres which were not animated.

A final observation I want to discuss related to animated atmosphere of the Camino has to do with its mystical dimension. As I discussed at the end of the previous chapter, pilgrims seemed to be much more open towards serendipities or coincidences happening to them. This openness, and the fact that these coincidences were so abundant in our Camino, but also present in the stories about other Caminos, made it feel like *there was something about the Camino, something in the air (16/04 Bodenaya)*. The participation of the atmosphere through, for example our feeling about the story of the shoe, or the story of the Portuguese stomatologist, made us feel its interconnectedness. It was as if the atmosphere of the Camino made us see and listen to things, which we normally rush by. It created an openness towards the mystical experience of participation of the atmosphere, which settled into our body as a feeling of wonder. “Mysticism [...] has access to a completely different sphere, of which the object is but an extension and in which, between different fingers, a kinship is established which cannot be translated into thoughts, but is directly accessible to emotion” (Levinas 1998, 44). If to participate means to be, this form of mystical participation, which due to its interconnectedness and intangibility is not translatable into words, makes us give in to an atmosphere on the Camino that is alive.

Conclusion

I started my dissertation with the conviction that I believe there is something about walking and I decided I would dive into the walk of the Camino de Santiago de Compostela in this dissertation. As I developed my research it became clear that it was interesting to approach this “something about walking” with the concept of atmospheres. Gernot Böhme compares atmospheres to “feeling suspended in the air” (2014, 93). They display a vague, ambiguous character. As I researched *in*, *about* and *through* them, I understood that it is exactly this ambiguous character that led me to understand new things about the Camino.

I approached atmospheres from two main angles: spatial and experiential atmospheres. In the former, atmospheres are approached from an aesthetical point of view (Böhme 2016), focusing on what it is (the atmosphere) that makes a space feel the way it feels. Here, I discussed how we feel atmospheres in the present as something in the air but also how atmospheres can happen to us. To attune into spatial atmospheres, we need to commit to an aesthetical mode of attention that includes presence and disinterestedness. Objects in this way contribute to the atmosphere, not in their functional purpose, but as they “radiating [their presence] into space” (Böhle 2016, 5). Spatial atmospheres affect and have an effect on our body, as they, for example, exchange moods with their perceiver. Spatial atmospheres are engaged in a perceptual symbiosis between the feelings suspended in the air and those within the perceiver’s body.

Experiential atmospheres shift the focus from an atmosphere in space, to an atmosphere unfolding through time (Sumartojo and Pink 2019, 4). As I discussed this perspective on atmospheres, it became clear how the perception of atmosphere manifest itself for a great deal on the level of tacit knowledge. This tacit knowledge is only accessible through the meaning that we give to certain atmospheres. We know experiential atmospheres through “leib” or the “felt body” (Schmitz 2018), which is a body extending into the space. The perception of experiential atmospheres connects the inside of a body with the configurations that make up the atmosphere outside the body. Moreover, the perspective of experiential atmosphere relates “kò” or “the living body” (Cyrille-Isaac 2023, 203). Here, the body perceives an atmosphere beyond the five senses with its living body. Instead, perceptual nuances such as memories, expectations, passion, family, or spirits are at play for the living body that is perceiving an atmosphere.

Besides spatial and experiential atmospheres, it is worth mentioning that atmospheres, as an ambiguous phenomenon, have a very strong connective capacity. As a concept, they emphasise commonalities rather than dualities. We cannot quite capture what atmospheres are, while at the same time, we have a wide vocabulary to define them; we introject them while they are also influenced by us; atmospheres seem to affect us although we cannot observe them; they seem to envelop us as they are enveloped by a space; they unfold over time but are perceived in the present moment. Atmospheres are the *in between* connecting the tacit knowledge and the meaning we assign to people, places, and things; they are the *in between* connecting perceivers and perceived; they are the *in between* connecting the material and immaterial; they are the *in between* enveloping and being enveloped; they are the *in between* connecting the dynamic with the static.

Throughout my dissertation, it was clear that the perception of atmospheres takes on a large individual, subjective dimension. However, as I could discuss them, and people can relate to them, their sensation is also shared until a certain level – they are quasi-objective (Böhme 2016, 2). We might observe them in an intersubjective manner, but we also observe through them. What is interesting about the concept of atmospheres is that it takes on both the role of a medium through which we observe and of an object that we observe. Instead of an (inter)subjective or quasi-objective observation of atmospheres, I observed them atmospherically.

As a case study in this dissertation, I discussed the atmosphere of the Camino Primitivo. The Camino is a series of routes in Spain – with the Primitivo being one of them – that all travel towards Santiago de Compostela in the context of a pilgrimage. As this dissertation is mostly based on my personal account of the Primitivo – and I only walked the Camino after COVID-19 – I focused more on the contemporary experience of hiking the Primitivo. On the Camino, all pilgrims follow the same route, indicated through yellow arrows, and usually divided up in typical stages. Pilgrims cross many villages that usually play a very active part in the Camino. On the Primitivo in particular, pilgrims cross more rural areas in which they must conquer many hills along the way.

Its contemporary experience entails a hike where many pilgrims bring transnational cultures to the Camino and embed the cultural practice of hiking the Camino in a wide cultural landscape. I discussed how this cultural practice stands in relation to the Spanish, European, Christian and a potential Camino-culture. Besides, the interaction between the

local culture and transnational cultures put the Camino forward as a role model for other pilgrimages. On the other hand, as the Camino becomes more popular, the local cultures along the way are being neglected in function of the commercialization of the Camino (Genoni, 2015, 174). Lastly, because so many cultures encounter each other in one hike, I questioned if the Camino is a singular or a plural phenomenon. On the one hand, we all refer to *the* Camino as a shared experience that pilgrims do collectively. On the other hand, many factors led me to believe that the Camino is a personal experience and that everyone hikes “their own Camino”.

More important throughout my dissertation was the dimension of the Camino beyond a cultural practice into cultural tacit manifestations. In the literature, the Camino showed a large intangible dimension, which was later, both corroborated by my fieldnotes in chapter 3, important for my conclusive notes about the atmosphere on the Camino. This intangible dimension was also one of the reasons why I researched the Camino in relation to its atmosphere – tacit knowledge is inherent to the concept of atmospheres. The Camino’s intangible dimension translated itself mostly on the level of spirituality/religion as well as serendipities. Furthermore, the little material that pilgrims carried along the Camino implied a large immaterial dimension and, the fact that they were in constant movement, their embodied knowledge implied an ungraspable dimension. Walking formed a “a nexus between the body, self and the world” (Slavin 2003, 16). Consequently, moving bodies implied a strange spatial-temporal interaction with the time frame and the landscape they moved through. It seems that, on the Camino the past and future constantly contaminate the present experience of the hike. Besides, their relation to the landscapes they crossed seemed ephemeral – as they were always on the move – but somehow the Camino managed to move as a place (Tuan 1979, 400) with pilgrims and form relations with whatever was moving along. The Camino could be considered as “a liminal space” (Turner 1974, 13-14) situated somewhere in between.

Finally, something still worth mentioning is the Camino’s relation to narratives, as they are pervasive before, during and after hiking the Camino. I claimed that narratives can be instructive (what a pilgrim is expected to be) or experiential (what a pilgrim already experienced) but also institutional (narrated by for example the church as a way to motivate people’s spirit during wars) and personal (narrated by a pilgrim her/himself). These

narratives found their way into the atmosphere of the Camino, making us tune into it differently.

Having explored atmospheres and the Camino theoretically, I moved onto the empirical observations to create an ethnographic-theoretical dialogue on the atmosphere of the Camino. In this part of my dissertation, I explored how researching *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres can make us arrive at new knowledge about that atmosphere (Sumartojo and Pink 2019). While researching *in* the atmosphere, I hiked the Camino Primitivo in April 2024 to embody and enact on its atmosphere. In doing so, I collected (un)structured fieldnotes and photographs that integrated the bodily knowledge at present into a representation of the atmosphere. This bodily knowledge entailed the intangible dimension of both the atmosphere and the Camino, but also an understanding of the unfolding atmospheres in which simple details became important to the atmosphere. Researching *in* the atmosphere also gave me a change at reflecting on how the atmosphere went from my embodied knowledge into a representation.

This representation I further explored while researching *about* its atmosphere. Researching *about* meant digesting and transforming my knowledge gained while researching *in* the atmosphere. I drew up maps, connecting the different observations into a network of knowledge that helped me writing out a representation of both its spatial atmosphere and its experiential atmosphere. I extended this representation with a visual narrative of photographs.

Discussing the spatial atmospheres demonstrated how the atmosphere situated itself in between pilgrims, objects, and places on the Camino. Its interconnectedness enveloped us as we walked and manifested itself in aesthetic feelings. These feelings were often too implicit to put into words. Nevertheless, their meaning pointed us towards words. For example, the way time felt as a privilege to pilgrims. It also became clear how simple objects such as a shoe or an empty battery, in the atmosphere, affected and pulled together a lot of people along the Camino. Their importance to the atmosphere had become clear by the researching *in* its atmospheres as the shoe, for example, was connected to the embodied pain a pilgrim endured while hiking the Camino. Researching *about* the spatial atmosphere of the Camino, furthermore, shed light on how its atmosphere afforded us with several modes of attention and ways of being present. I observed pilgrims' aesthetical gazing, their spontaneity, and their approach to making time. These ways of being present made pilgrims

sense their surrounding space with their body. They took in the atmosphere through their five senses as well as through other modes of sensing mentioned above. Finally, researching *about* the spatial atmosphere of the Camino, demonstrated how representations and narratives on the Camino made pilgrims “perform” a certain role as for example a pilgrim that hiked with “the right pace”. This pace made us tune into the pace of the atmosphere itself which seemed to make pilgrims and their surroundings slow down.

When researching *about* experiential atmospheres, the atmosphere unfolded throughout time and movement on the Camino. As Caminos (groups of pilgrims walking at the same pace) moved forward, joined in, dropped out and interacted with each other, its atmosphere was both static and dynamic – like a river. It moved along with the pilgrims, delineating them in a connective network, but also pulling and pushing new and old elements into and away from this network. The experiential atmosphere of the Camino was dynamic, changing over time and including past and future elements into its present manifestation. Both memories and expectations about for example the wildness of the Camino, cocreated how pilgrims received the atmosphere. Upon movement, the atmosphere of the Camino established its own rhythm, which was very much in tune with natural rhythms such as the sun coming rising and setting or not going faster than the feet of a human body can go. In movement, ways of knowing *about* the atmosphere of the Camino were embodied. The pain a pilgrim had to endure became very meaningful to the atmosphere and manifested itself in a mode of compassion. Besides, these embodied ways of knowing, made pilgrims turn inward and showed how the atmosphere can connect the inside of a body to its outside. Finally, researching *about* the experiential atmosphere of the Camino also made visible its mystical dimension. As pilgrims were more open on the Camino, serendipities and coincidences seemed to happen more frequently and to a greater extent. These encounters were translated in a feeling of awe. The atmosphere on the Camino was so interconnected along the path, that synchronicities became very meaningful to pilgrims.

Already during my research *about* the atmosphere of the Camino, I applied atmospheres’ theoretical framework to structure my representation. This meant that I was already researching *through* atmospheres. In researching *through*, the atmosphere is used as a concept, to go from knowledge *about* an atmosphere, thinking *through* atmosphere’s relational conceptual framework and arrive at new knowledge about that atmosphere. The new knowledge I arrived at had to do with how the atmosphere on the Camino was animated.

I further structured this researching *through* the atmosphere by answering two questions. Question I led me to understand how researching *through* atmospheres helped uncover the anima of the atmosphere on the Camino. In Question II, I focused on what it is about atmospheres that make them available for being animated. As I discussed these questions, they also allowed me to frame the idea of animated. I did this in terms of Nurit Bird-David's notion of Devaru (1999), Christopher Braddock's idea of passive participation (2017) and Adrian Harris's conceptualization of enactment (2013).

I first informed my idea of animated with Bird-David's account of devaru, who worked with the Nayaka community of Gir Valley in the Nilgiri region of South India (1999, S71). In his account of devaru, he emphasised the *relationship* between the person and the devaru, which are called devaru precisely because they make the person engage with them (S73). Discussing question I, thinking *through* atmospheres also allowed me to approach things from a relational perspective and therefore arrive at animated atmospheres. In relation to question II, atmospheres are available to be animated (in the sense of devaru) as they can engage with us in two ways; they can pull us towards different ways of being present as well as engage with us by influencing our mood. Bird-David talks about how devaru act in a flux of interrelatedness, in which they are identified by a noticeable engagement between the devaru and the person in that flux (S74). Again, thinking *through* atmospheres (as a medium) provide the appropriate relational framework to approach the atmosphere (as an object) from its network in which these engagements can be noticed. The atmosphere itself also takes on this interconnectedness between and within people, places and things. They can engage with these elements and cause variances within their network, which makes them available to be animated. Finally, as Bird-David discusses that devaru are not static and their sense of devaru can change according to their engagement, atmospheres also unfold over time and might be encountered as being animated one moment while at other times they might not.

After David-Bird's account of animated, I encountered Christopher Braddock's (2017) idea of passive participation, which allows persons to be animated in a field of affect through passive participation. He claims that "to be is to participate" (202). I discussed in relation to question I, how atmospheres are a medium connecting a body's inside with the in between, blurring this bodily extension into a network of interrelations. Thinking *through* the medium of atmospheres allows us to acknowledge this field of affect in which persons participate anonymously. I brought into discussion Böhme's ecstasies of objects, in which

they allow the object “to go forth from itself in a certain fashion and thereby make the presence of something perceptible” (2016, 19) in the atmosphere. In my discussion of question II, atmospheres as an object are also available for participation, as they can participate in the field of affect and have an impact on people, places and things. Besides, I discussed how atmospheres could also be animated when they carry people’s effluvia (extended participation) into the space, which is on its own e/affective. Interestingly, I encountered in Braddock’s account an emphasis on anonymity and mystical participation which goes beyond the cognitive (199). This namely allows for a participation of persons without a consciousness. Their personhood is lost in a network of interrelations. I observed that this form of participation needs a certain amount of disinterestedness, which is exactly what thinking *through* atmospheres provided. This, in combination with the large intangible dimension of atmospheres allowed me to see the mystical participation that atmospheres can bring forth. Furthermore, in relation to question II, atmospheres themselves are available to participate in an anonymous, mystical way, as the effect they have on us is not traceable to its original form. The roles of perceiver/perceived are blurred in the reciprocal interaction of an atmosphere with other elements.

Finally, alongside Bird-David and Braddock, I informed my idea of animated with Adrian Harris’s idea of enactment. He claims that “the spirit of place” manifests itself through movement of our bodies. I mostly found his Enactive Process Model useful to think about animated, in which he believes that the deeper we go into unconscious cognition, the more we extend ourselves in the space and the more we enact upon our environment in an unconscious way. An animated environment, according to Harris, pulls us towards this unconscious mode of being and moves us as we enact on this animated environment. I discussed this model through question I, where atmospheres as a medium implies this extension in the space. We can only observe atmospheres when we acknowledge their interrelation of the inside of our body to the in between of the space. Moreover, this unconscious interaction with our environment loops back to the intangible dimension of atmospheres and how it allows us to focus on the bodily rather than the mental. In light of question II, atmospheres are available to e/affect on a bodily level, pulling the person into its bodily layers rather than its conscious ones. Besides, atmospheres can move people both physically and mentally, for example when spatial atmospheres pull someone into an aesthetical mode of attention.

Throughout this dissertation, and especially throughout the thinking *through* atmospheres, the concept of atmospheres jumped back and forth between being the research object to being the research medium. This flexibility of the concept was important to my research as it allowed for the new knowledge about the atmosphere to maintain the same level of relationality and intangibility as the methodology through which I researched. In other words, the research object about which I provided new knowledge was of the same calibre as the research medium through which I researched. The flexibility of the concept was also visible in the methodology where research about atmospheres (as an object) through them (as a medium), and in them (as both an object and a medium) plays with this duality of object/medium. Going back to my main research question related to how this methodology made me arrive at new knowledge about the atmosphere of the Camino, I believe that this duality is one of the most important discussions pervading my dissertation. Moreover, it allowed me to stay true to the aspects of both the concept of atmospheres and the concept of animated.

Finally, I discussed the actual knowledge I arrived at while thinking *through* the atmosphere of the Camino. In this part of my dissertation, I integrated both the conceptual framework of atmospheres and of the Camino, as well as my empirical data of researching *in* and *about* atmospheres. As I researched *through* the atmosphere of the Camino, there were multiple dimensions that confirmed this coupling of animated to atmospheres. A first dimension concerns the invitation by the atmosphere of the Camino to surrender to its way. Both atmospheres and anima bring into focus the relational. Here, I believe the fact that atmospheres are animated always stands in relation to the person they engage with – as also mentioned in the above accounts on animated. Therefore, the atmosphere must invite the pilgrim and the pilgrim must be open to this invitation and to the surrendering.

Another dimension in which the atmosphere of the Camino felt animated has to do with the fact that they shifted the focus from the self into the collective. I realized that, as I stopped controlling the entertainment on the way in function of what I needed, the atmosphere of the Camino could pull me into a collective field of affect in which I, other elements on the Camino and the atmosphere participated in an anonymous way. This was for example visible in the suffering of the pilgrims, which, instead of entertainment, brought us compassion. The atmosphere of the Camino also seemed animated at times when other elements, carried by the atmosphere, e/affected us. One of the examples that I mentioned is

how a simple element such as a shoe could bring forward so much laughter, amazement and engagement. This showed how the atmosphere itself is animated but also, on another layer, how it provides the medium through which other elements can radiate their presence and participation. In light of movement, the atmosphere of the Camino felt animated in the sense that it made so many pilgrims, on different levels, move. The atmosphere of the Camino could pull a person inside her/himself because of the pain of walking, which brought them to a layer of subconsciousness in which they walked (the pace of) the atmosphere. Finally, I came to realize that the many serendipities and coincidences on the Camino related to an atmosphere that was animated through its mystical participation. Its interconnectedness along the road and the way it afforded pilgrims to be very open, left room for an almost magical feeling that the atmosphere was alive, affording pilgrims with serendipities and coincidences.

Ultimately, I want to end my dissertation with possible paths for the future, as I believe many doors could still be explored in relation to Sumatojo and Pink's methodology as well as to the intangibility of the Camino. First, I believe that the atmosphere of the Camino could still be explored from different angles. One would be including an artistic work when researching *about* the atmosphere, to see how art stands in relation to the concept of atmospheres and the intangible dimension of the Camino. Do artworks about the Camino try to capture its anima? I believe that art on some level attempts to express what we cannot capture. Besides, I believe further research could investigate other atmospheres and compare them to the atmosphere of the Camino. This could both bring forward new understandings of atmospheres as well as a specific understanding of what animated atmospheres are (not). Moreover, I believe the methodology of researching *in*, *about* and *through* atmospheres needs to be further developed by establishing a more profound and meaningful dialogue between the theory about atmospheres and its empirical data. All three ways of researching are still very abstract and need more practice in order to arrive at new knowledge more easily. In addition, the flexibility of the concept as a medium and an object could also be interesting to apply to other research. Another road that future research could take has to do with the politics of atmosphere and if we are able to design (animated) atmospheres. Or, if we cannot design them, another interesting and currently relevant topic could be about how we can preserve them. The atmosphere changed in the last 50 kilometres of the Camino, as it became more prone to commercialization processes. Another possible research would be to connect

atmospheres to current movements such as commercialization, globalization or the fast pace our society is moving in. In general, I believe atmospheres to be a very interesting concept to apply in many ways and shift our focus from the object to the context in a relational manner. I wish we could think more atmospherically because it makes us focus on the bodily, contextual and processual.

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Annexes

A) Form for structured observations

STRUCTURED OBSERVATIONS	General: how do I compare this to non-Camino atmospheres?
<p>Context: <i>Date:</i> <i>Time:</i> <i>Place:</i> <i>Context of the day:</i></p>	<p>How did I impact this?</p>
<p>How do relations and dualities manifest themselves? <i>(enveloping/being enveloped, consumption/production, presence/absence, intersubjective vs objective...)</i></p>	
<p>Which meanings manifest on the Camino?</p>	
<p>Which materials stood out?</p>	
<p>What modes of attention did I encounter?</p>	
<p>What spaces and times did I encounter?</p>	

<p>Bodily notions (<i>immaterial hints, aesthetical affordances, the living body</i>) <i>What did I see?</i></p> <p><i>What did I hear?</i></p> <p><i>What did I taste?</i></p> <p><i>What did I smell?</i></p> <p><i>What did I touch?</i></p> <p><i>What non-verbal communication was present?</i></p> <p><i>What did I feel?</i></p>	<p>How did I impact this?</p>
<p>Observed representations (rituals, patterns, traditions) and narratives that add to the atmosphere:</p>	
<p>Questions that came up:</p>	
<p>Quotes (who, when, where, nationality, relationship)</p>	

B) Structured observations (transcribed in full)

These observations are structured according to the form in Annexe A. Within each aspect of the atmosphere, the observations are organized chronologically, indicated by the date and stage of the day the observation was written down.

Relations and Dualities	
16/04 Bodenaya	The Camino feels like one big river, flowing along the way and getting shaped by streams ahead and behind, shaped through tributaries but also creating new ones. Stories, old and new, travel along the Camino-river and pilgrims get submerged into them. There is not really “your” Camino, since other Caminos flow into “yours” through the stories, narratives and rituals, while we all walk along the path (16/04 Bodenaya).
17/04 El Espín	The Camino is a matrix connecting people. It brings people together with different ages, nationalities, languages, interests, financial situations, and stories. At some point, the people around the table, with Ricardo being the only Spanish-speaking pilgrim, started stuttering some words in Spanish/English about music. Each of them rotated to put on their favourite song. Suddenly, Ricardo could join the conversation by talking through the music. His face lighted up so much while putting his songs. Something was in the air.
18/04 Berducedo	I was sitting at the top of the mountain called Hospitales, surrounded by fog. When Bob told me he would walk a bit further before stopping, I really felt alone. Strangely enough I felt so alone and almost scared of the potential bears that could walk around this area, but at the same time I knew that pilgrims were probably so close by, struggling with their kilometres somewhere before or after me on the same trail.

<p>21/04 O Cádavo</p>	<p>In O Cádavo, Ricardo decided to cook and we put a table outside on the terrace with our pasta salad, sangria and some appetizers. This terrace was situated on the main road, and it seemed like the whole Camino Primitivo passed by that road. People joined for a while at our table to talk and tell stories of the past few days. We hadn't seen most of them for a while.</p> <p>Some people have already been walking on the same tempo from the beginning and I can see how we have become a group. But in every stage, there are new people that I have not seen before. It is interesting how the duration that someone is already part of a certain Camino (some people start in Oviedo, some in Fonsagrada, some in Lugo) influences their situation in the network.</p>
<p>23/04 Ponte de Ferreira</p>	<p>We cooked with the people we had been walking with since Oviedo because we had become a group that often discussed where we could sleep the next day together, our Camino-family we call it (23/04, Ponte de Ferreira).</p>
<p>24/04 Ribadiso</p>	<p>The contrast between the silent, calm Camino through the mountains of Asturias and the crowded, touristic last 50km made us, from the Camino Primitivo, understand who we are (not). It was so much more obvious in what atmosphere we had been immersed and how we could still find this bubble when, among the mass of pilgrims, we would find the Camino-pilgrims that had been walking together since Oviedo.</p>
<p>26/04 Compostela</p>	<p>It seems like the Camino does not only bring people in interaction with each other but also brings languages together. Later, in Compostela, a Camino-friend told me how different languages along the Camino start talking to each other. One says something in English and the other replies in Spanish.</p>
<p>Meanings</p>	
<p>15/04 San Marcelo</p>	<p>It was visible in the difference between pilgrims who had already advanced in the Camino Primitivo and those who had only just started. Ricardo told me on the first day: "Let them walk fast, they will soon learn that, as a pilgrim, you need to walk sustainably. Slow and steady."</p>
<p>16/04 Bodenaya</p>	<p>In the Albergue Bodenaya, we went around the table, telling why we hiked the Camino or what it meant for us. Many people answered different reasons, but most were related to escaping or processing something. It felt</p>

	<p>so uniting to share this and put it on the table. When the hosts spoke, they told us they had seen many pilgrims pass and heard many stories about different Caminos and the conclusion they wanted us to walk with was: “the Camino might not give you what you want, but it definitely gives you what you need”.</p>
<p>17/04 El Espín</p>	<p>A famous opening question to start a conversation between pilgrims was “Why are you hiking the Camino?”</p>
<p>18/04 Berducedo</p>	<p>I met Johan and he told me he hiked the Camino to be closer to God. He was the only one that gave me a religious reason.</p> <p>For Phillip, what it meant to be a pilgrim was to be able to go and sit at another pilgrim’s table and then start talking to them about their Camino. He also said how this disappears in the city and how suddenly it is not appropriate anymore to engage with a pilgrim like that.</p> <p>After three days, the forecast became so beautiful (sun and 18 degrees for the next 2 weeks) that the whole atmosphere changed. We drank beers together outside on the terrace instead of in the dark albergues and we walked on a slower tempo, as it felt nice to be outside in the sun</p>
<p>19/04 Grande de Salime</p>	<p>Sean told me he hiked the Camino because it seemed a good idea to do this while being in between jobs. “The Camino is a privilege of time” he said.</p>

<p>20/04 A Fonsagrada</p>	<p>Gabriel, who had to slow down because of his ankle injury, started understanding how this injury taught him so many things, almost as if this needed to happen to him: “I had to start walking alone because I could not keep up with the people I walked with, but this actually gave me the experience of walking my own Camino. Instead of sharing the pain of others, I focus on my own body and pains.” I suggested he could take a painkiller that I had with me, but he felt like the pain told his body something. It meant something and so he did not want to numb it out.</p> <p>“Hey man, how are your feet?” Gabriel asked upon seeing Sean again.</p> <p>“They are okay, how is your knee?” Sean answered while giving him a hug.</p> <p>“Ganz kaput hahaha...” Gabriel laughed.</p> <p>In Berducedo I asked a philosophical question after the dinner I cooked for my Camino-family. I only got an answer to my question from some of the pilgrims and I told them they could also answer me later. Two days later, in Fonsagrada, Teresa walks up to me and gives me a piece of paper. “You wanted me to answer your question, but my English is not good enough to have a conversation about it. That is why, instead, I took the time to use a translator and write it down in a letter. Read it whenever you want.”</p>
<p>21/04 O Cádavo</p>	<p>We had a conversation about Gabriel’s injury and how he might have to take the bus to the next stage: Adam and I both understood how it hurts your ego and how it feels like breaking the experience once you decide to skip certain walking stages with the bus or by taxi. However, Nicole valued the fact that we would all be able to arrive on the same day more. When Teresa heard that Gabriel was trying to stumble to O Cádavo, she left her backpack and decided to walk the Camino in the reversed direction. She carried Gabriel’s backpack to O Cádavo so we could all start dinner together</p>
<p>24/04 Ribadiso</p>	<p>For the pilgrims from the Camino Primitivo, the Camino meant working hard, walking a lot and suffering so they could be proud afterwards of conquering the challenge. It meant enjoying this feeling of tiredness afterwards and appreciation for the small things such as a shower</p>
<p>Materials</p>	

<p>14/04 Oviedo</p>	<p>I saw the girl sitting with a huge backpack while she was wearing sneakers. Her whole journey still had to start and I could not help but be curious how she would manage. I never saw her again.</p>
<p>15/04 San Marcelo</p>	<p>“The asphalt today felt so bad for my knees. Will it get better in the next few days?” said a Slovenian pilgrim in San Marcelo. “Yes, it will. But then, in the end, we will almost only defy asphalt...” I answered smiling</p>
<p>16/04 Bodenaya</p>	<p>I arrived at the albergue in Bodenaya and noticed I had lost a shoe. I walked out again, to see if it was lying somewhere on the road, and a pilgrim (Teresa, at this point we did not know each other) arrived and told me: “Yes I know where your shoe is, it is 10km back before Salas”. I started laughing since I was not going to walk 20km extra for a plastic sandal. We discovered together that someone (Nicole) had seen the shoe and had picked it up, walked with it for a while and had asked Teresa if it was hers. When Teresa said no, Nicole left the shoe somewhere on a rock and walked on. Someone else then had picked it up again, walked with it for a while, and had put it in a very visible place, so that the owner might find it on the way back. Then someone else had taken a picture of it and had asked her Camino-contacts if it was theirs. And through this photo, I traced back the location of the sandal, but I had no way of getting it back... Until Alisson, the albergue host, told me she was in contact with a pilgrim who would stay in Bodenaya for the second time. She told me she could e-mail this woman from Switzerland and that maybe Monica could then pick it up the next day. I asked her again “and this lady is called Monica?” Alisson answered me, “Yes she is from Switzerland and she is celiac. You know her?!” I shouted “Yes! I walked exactly a year ago my first Camino Primitivo with her! What a coincidence that she is on the same Camino, walking just one day behind me”. So, Monica brought my shoe to Bodenaya, so that I could pick it up after the Camino. The next day I crossed the whole Tineo, asking everyone in the neighbourhood if they could tell me where to find some plastic shoes. For the rest of the Camino, pilgrims kept joking every time they saw me again about whether I still had my shoes or not.</p>

<p>18/04 Berducedo</p>	<p>We were getting ready to leave at 6 o'clock in the morning, all at our own pace, with our own habits and suddenly Ricardo walked up to me and gave me a bracelet. "For you" he said. And more words we did not exchange, only a hug and a sincere smile.</p>
<p>21/04 O Cádavo</p>	<p>Gabriel asked around the table if someone had a crème for his injury and later at least four people came with different cremes to make sure he was taken care of.</p>
<p>22/04 Lugo</p>	<p>Another object that became alive during the Camino was a little note I left at the border of Asturias and Galicia. I had stumbled upon a birthday celebration in an albergue when I wanted to drink something for breakfast. The pilgrim Jurgen asked me to sing in a language he did not know and then offered me a piece of cake, even though I had never met him. I left afterward and said my thanks and goodbyes. 10km later, I wrote a little note "Happy birthday Jurgen" and left it on a stone at the border with Asturias and Galicia, without a name. I did this because in my first Camino Primitivo someone had done it for someone else and I found it such a beautiful, simple, funny idea. In the next three days, so many people that I met on the Camino asked me if I had written the note. Apparently, Jurgen had been cracking his head on who it could have been and had been asking everyone he encountered on the Camino if it was them who had written the note. In the end he asked me and he was very grateful for the little game. That is how I became friends with his whole Camino-family, because all his friends asked me about the little note.</p> <p>Finally, the last object that travelled through the atmosphere of the Camino was the battery of my camera that died. In Berducedo, where all pilgrims join to sleep in the only places available, I started asking around if anyone knew a way to get a new battery for my camera. By the time I arrived the next day in Grande de Salime, the whole Camino Primitivo knew I was looking for a battery and many pilgrims gave me suggestions or asked me, upon re-encountering, if I had already found one. Then, as I decided to stay in Grande de Salime, to have a better chance at finding a store with a battery, it made me connect with all the locals of that village. I practically activated</p>

	<p>the whole village to see if we could find a battery that could replace mine. I asked in two “Ferretería’s”, then went to a random local sitting in the park who told me he did not have one. However, later, he came to me running and told me to go and talk with the woman who was walking a bit further ahead because she owned the tobacco shop that was closed that day. This woman told me she would only be able to help me the next morning, not knowing if she actually had the right battery. Then I walked into a bar and tried the people behind the counter. They told me they also did not have one, but that they could call a shop in Fonsagrada – the village where I would stay the next day. The man behind the bar made three calls, but without any success. He told me a photographer lived in Fonsagrada and used to have a shop, so maybe if I could ask around in his neighbourhood, I might be able to pin him down. I tried this the next day and received his number in the bar near his closed shop. I texted him but he replied he did not have this type of battery and that he was not in town at the time. This was the moment I learned I had to let go of the battery until Lugo. In Lugo, my good friend Ricardo went together with me to a camera shop and there, with a lot of joy, we found a battery and my camera worked again. That day, everyone I had encountered from the Camino, celebrated the new battery with me by taking beautiful photos of the pilgrims we would leave behind in Lugo</p>
<p>24/04 Ribadiso</p>	<p>The small backpacks that people were wearing the last few days stood in contrast with our heavy big backpacks and hiking shoes.</p>
<p>26/04 Santiago De Compostela</p>	<p>On my first Camino, my uncle had given me a bag of little key chains in the form of hands. He told me he got it from a man who distributed these hands to people who meant something to him on his Camino and wanted them to do the same. Every pilgrim, who inspired a Camino in some way would then be identified by a hand hanging on their backpack as they hiked. I distributed two hands on this Camino, one I gave to Gabriel and one to Ricardo. Gabriel made such a journey on his Camino and the way he approached both the journey and the fact that he had to cut it short inspired me a lot. Ricardo was definitely a pilgrim who always made sure everyone had food, a good story and a good laugh – even though he spoke very little</p>

	English, he said so much. The little hands now hang on their backpack for the next Camino.
Modes of Attention	
15/04 San Marcelo	The host Patrick told me he normally had two more pilgrims coming, but that it was already pretty late. “We don’t know if they will actually show up.” He said. Many pilgrims still feel a freedom on the Camino to do what they want and to follow wherever the Camino brings them.
16/04 Bodenaya	I just passed a river and saw a pilgrim aesthetically gazing at the landscape that unfolded itself on the other side of the river. It looked so peaceful and there was something so beautiful, so serene in the way I saw her sit there. We crossed eyes for a moment and smiled. “You are also a pilgrim and we are here together hiking through this beautiful nature, and we smile because we both know it”.
18/04 Berducedo	Gabriel realized, while walking alone, that he wanted to do things differently in his everyday life. His new habits on the Camino made him reflect about his own actions and being alone amplified this reflective mode, it made him go inside himself.
21/04 O Cádavo	I saw so many people pausing to look and admire what was around them. I just had succeeded in climbing a big hill after meeting some pilgrims who were walking a bit behind me. I stopped to look. It was so beautiful... The other pilgrims arrived and I told them that Sebastien had told me how you need at least 1 minute to imprint a landscape in your mind. So, Nadine asked me if she could join me and there we were, next to each other, imprinting the landscape in silence
22/04 Lugo	We were walking the last 10km from O Cádavo to Lugo, but it was such a hard last leg, with a lot of asphalt, direct sun and a lot of pain. I felt how I was pulled back into my body each time new thoughts came up. As if my mind could not distract myself from the bodily sensations I was experiencing. Earlier, Adam, Sean and I were also talking a lot, but now we were just feeling the pain in our bodies, sharing it in silence. People are more open to talk about their personal stories since there is a sense of trust and maybe also a sense of distance. We only meet each other

	<p>in the moment, not knowing if we will see each other again. However, I did notice how both walking the Camino with a friend/partner/family member as well as the phone can make the pilgrims close themselves off. I met several couples on the way, and I noticed how it was harder to have a personal conversation with them because they already had their bubble of support and often walked together rather than alone.</p> <p>I asked Sean if calling his family and friends every night pulled him out of the atmosphere of the Camino, he answered me “No, I actually talk about what I have been through during the Camino, so in a sense it actually makes me feel more part of the Camino since I am retelling the stories to my loved ones”.</p> <p>We were talking about how Bob and Sean would stay a day longer in Lugo to visit the city. “It would feel weird for me to just stop with our continuous routine, to go and consume the (cultural) landscape in a different way.” Theresa told me.</p>
26/04 Compostela	Some pilgrims on this Camino also do not want to let go of control and really plan out every step of the way. “This is their Camino”, Ricardo said to me
Space and times	
15/04 San Marcelo	Distance connects to time through velocity following both physics and logic. We started measuring our time into kilometres (Grandes de Salime 19/04). Some pilgrims counted each minute and kilometre. However, as it was my third Camino, I stopped counting the kilometres and it changed my perspective on time. I did not see the time pass by so much and I was much more present in my body as I did not anticipate any arrival anymore.
16/04 Bodenaya	<p>Ricardo told us how he used to be a trail runner and how he then started doing Caminos as a runner. He realized after a while that, while running the Camino, you miss a lot of the community experience. You pass everything too fast to take time to meet someone and connect with them.</p> <p>Different Caminos contaminated each other. I caught up with Caminos and left Caminos behind. I encountered the pilgrims of the Camino Primitivo</p>

	<p>who walked a bit slower in the beginning and I left behind the people walking slower from Oviedo</p>
<p>18/04 Berducedo</p>	<p>Everyone took on the rhythm of nature. When the sun sets, we all crawled back into our sleeping bag and slowly fell asleep, while we would wake up just before sunrise so we could start walking as the sun would rise.</p>
<p>19/04 Grandes De Salime</p>	<p>As the Camino is sometimes something boring, or at least empty of entertainment, time can sometimes really move slowly. I often really longed for the arrival or for already being able to go to sleep. The physical activity of the day had exhausted me. However, today I also had moments where time seemed to move so fast, while I was talking to Gabriel, or while I almost took on a meditative way of walking and listening to music, time flew by.</p> <p>Many people on the Camino already started thinking about what their next Camino would be, contaminating that Camino with the created expectations from the current one.</p>
<p>21/04 O Cádavo</p>	<p>We had put a table outside in O Cádavo and were eating our self-cooked meal with a few pilgrims, when all these people kept exiting our albergue or passing by our terrace. It felt like we were a stationary point around which many pilgrims moved back and forth while new conversations occurred and new configurations unfolded.</p> <p>“I was talking to my friend on the phone and told her I walked more than 20km a day and she said back ‘20km?! That is so much!’. And I had to laugh, because now, for us, 20km does not feel like a lot at all”, Kyra told us at the table.</p> <p>I also met Nadine on my way to O Cádavo and she told me she had started the Primitivo last year, but because of a knee injury, she had to stop and continue another time. Therefore, she had paused her Camino, had gone to Compostela to wait for her Camino-family and had seen see them arrive 6 days later. Now, she had picked up from where she had left and was determined to walk the rest of the way. “The Camino does not run away, you can just enter it at a stage and pick up where you left, but then with</p>

	<p>different people, as if you start watching in the middle of a new series but still can follow the story”.</p>
<p>Lugo 22/04</p>	<p>I suddenly saw Teresa, Nicole and Gabriel sitting at a table on the main square in Lugo. I joined and the whole afternoon, pilgrims who had been dispersed in between the visitors and habitants of the city, rotated around that table. This table seemed the perfect place for unexpected reencounters and proper goodbyes.</p> <p>The displacement in terms of walking felt dubious in the sense that we were moving towards a destination and leaving landscapes behind, but at the same time the Camino Primitivo followed us. This made us not feel a displacement so much until Lugo and Compostela since the people with which we were making a connection moved along. As if the Camino Primitivo was like a moving place which gave rise to the feeling of walking alone together. People were passing me, I was passing them, we were walking while being inside and outside and while the other pilgrims were walking before, after and beside me. We walked alone, together.</p> <p>Then, from the moment we entered Galicia, indication stones would show us about every 300 meters how many kilometres were left until Compostela. “Seeing these stones really makes the end coming closer, it really makes us confront the destination arriving”, Bob said. “Yeah, but paradoxically, the stones are every 300 meters so every time I see a new stone and I look at it, it feels like I am walking so slow!”, Adam answered laughing.</p> <p>The picturesque villages with their medieval architecture or papers that communicated who had died made me feel like I travelled back in time. This stood in contrast with the cities such as Lugo we crossed, which had such a different tempo and organizational structure. But also, walking through nature felt more like walking in the time dimension/ on the rhythm of nature in contrast with the time in old villages and progressive cities. Interestingly, it seemed that instead of the village changing through time, time was moving with the villages</p>

<p>23/04 Ponte de Ferreira</p>	<p>One of the pilgrims did not feel good with some other pilgrims in the group and he literally walked away from the conflict. He started to walk bigger stages and we lost him because he did not sleep in the same places anymore.</p>
<p>24/04 Ribadiso</p>	<p>As the Camino Francês joins the same path many people are walking here with a different past (in terms of Camino), having started at different stages and walking with different groups that stabilize their Camino. Clearly, for the people of the Camino Primitivo, it still felt like a connected matrix contrasting the people who were walking with a different past Camino.</p> <p>In Ribadiso, the lady of the albergue offered to drive us to the supermarket and back so we could cook ourselves. This was a really strange experience since we suddenly were travelling so fast over the Camino, passing many pilgrims and passing the way that we would walk the next day. We were travelling at such a different tempo, with such a different level of comfort. I became very aware of how the landscape was rushing by and how it made me almost uncomfortable because I did not have time to gaze upon it. Besides, it felt like I was jumping between past (previous Caminos) and future (the way we would walk the next day).</p>
<p>25/04 O Pedrouzo</p>	<p>Teresa decided that after she would arrive in Compostela she would walk back to the airport to catch her plane. “It is only 10 km and it will be fun to see all the pilgrims walk towards Compostela while I walk the other way around. It is like walking in the past.”</p>
<p>26/04 Santiago de Compostela</p>	<p>Time somehow seems to move with the walker. Every day, I meet people who have been walking the same stages as I had and who have also started in Oviedo. “But how is this actually possible?” We asked each other. And then one of us asked, “Well, at what time do you start to walk?” Then we realized that certain groups of people very rarely meet each other, even though walking on the same stage, on the same day, but just always a few hours later. And it is not only the hour we wake up, but also the tempo, which is often determined by who we meet along the way. On the Camino Primitivo, I kept on meeting the same people in the bars along the way. But even when different Caminos joined, in the last 4 days, I would see the same people over and over again. Amongst the hundreds of pilgrims, the same</p>

	<p>people appeared again, since we always ended up in the same spatial moving section of the Camino. As if time moved with us instead of us moving through time.</p>
<p>Bodily Notions</p>	
<p>15/04 San Marcelo</p>	<p>I saw flowers, green landscapes I see so many birds and calves. I heard so many birds, cowbells and music from a playlist cocreated by other people. I tasted the spicy but nicely cooked food by Patrick, the host. I smelled eucalyptus and flowers around me. I touched the backpack and its weight. It made me realize, definitely while walking up, how I shift my weight to move my body during hiking. The bag is me and I became the bag. I feel my soles carry so much weight. I touched the freezing and even painful water of the river waking up the feet that were warm and numb from the many kilometres. It was a very intense sensation. I encountered smiles followed by a buenos dias from the many locals I passed. I felt alone and insecure. There were not so many people on the way this time and this beginning always puts forward the question of “will it be so magical?”</p>
<p>16/04 Bodenaya</p>	<p>I heard construction works on the way that were sometimes bouncing on the rhythm of the music I listened to. I tasted hot chocolate on a cold rainy moment. I smelled the butter and freshly baked pastries in the local bakery I passed by in the first village after I left the Albergue. I touched the heat from the shower versus the cold from the humidity and wind. I felt a walkers high, suddenly my feet just walked for me, after warming up on that high slope I tried to communicate non-verbally, pointing with my finger to choose a plate and asking the size of the plates to help me choose. I felt bad, tired, with a detox-headache and annoyance with the weather but once I arrived in the albergue, I felt happiness, connection. I felt the group and as if I was arriving in (someone’s) home. I felt relief when I saw again</p>

	<p>another sign which confirmed that I'm still on the right path. I felt unknown towards the future of this Camino.</p>
<p>17/04 El Espín</p>	<p>I saw the baker's proud expression when she showed me her oven. I heard the music after hiking while we were sitting in the sun around a plastic table in a garden with a beautiful view on the mountains of Asturias. I heard the shaving of landscapes. I smelled the flowers I picked for Silvia. I touched the heat of the heater in the big old barn that did not keep any warmth inside. Through non-verbal communication, the baker showed me the whole process of how she would normally bake bread. This is the bakery from which we had eaten fresh bread in the morning. I observed that all the humble pilgrims did not choose the double bed. I felt so much warmth and happiness when walking away from Bodenaya, the beautiful warm albergue. I touched my feet massaging them everywhere we go sit down because the asphalt is really hard on my sole.</p>
<p>18/04 Berducedo</p>	<p>I saw the beautiful landscapes, mountains, the wind turbines and the death trees but also its regrowth. I saw the branches embody the fire. I heard the silence. I heard very little birds in this black forest. Silence I tasted the pasta I cooked with everyone together. I have got so much food and sitting here at the top but I got no one to share it with. I feel alone and in between alone together. It makes me not know how I have to act... I touched Ricardo who gave me a big hug when we saw each other again in Berducedo. I had not seen him since the depart in Bodenaya because he went to sleep somewhere else in Borres. He told me then he was so happy, He feels like the spark. I felt alone and then suddenly surrounded by many pilgrims. My hands felt so cold!</p>
<p>19/04 Grandes</p>	<p>I saw the sun in the mist and a rainbow created by it. I saw the sunrise with wind turbines as moving silhouettes on the horizon. I saw two birds</p>

<p>De Salime</p>	<p>following each other in a dance. The sunset colours are warm pink-yellow light over green/brown mountains and in the distance, I see some pink clouds embracing the snowy tops of Asturias. My feet are covered with flowers and water from the dawn.</p> <p>I heard Roberto 3 times in different places in the town. I heard the dogs shouting and the rooster crowing.</p> <p>I tasted the menu of the day.</p> <p>I smelled the fish at the dam and the flowers smelling amazing.</p> <p>I touched the shitty mattresses I slept on in the Albergue municipal. (I decided to sleep in the cheap hostels). I felt my calves being “battered” by the uphill effort. I touched the first sunrays warming my face</p> <p>I felt the happiness and introspection that day. There was a very strong dream reverberation and, in the end, again aloneness and peacefulness. I went to sleep at 9:30 today.</p> <p>Ricardo doesn’t understand a lot of English but he understood a lot then by observing. He saw that Gabriel suddenly walked alone while before always walking with Theresa.</p>
<p>20/04 Fonsagrada</p>	<p>I saw big forest fires far away and big fumes travelling in the sky along the mountains.</p> <p>I heard a lot of music that day. I heard many dogs howling.</p> <p>I tasted the hard, dens bread of Asturias.</p> <p>I smelled the delicious meat smell of a restaurant which made every pilgrim stop 5km before the end destination.</p> <p>I felt my feet tingling and the smile of Ricardo when I arrived at the albergue as he was sitting at the edge of the doorway. I felt my gaze moving through my body feeling/seeing all my body parts. I felt annoyance and frustration when the man of the expensive restaurant was so inflexible and wouldn’t eat me outside with other pilgrims. (I think there was some miscommunication on the word menu too) When two big dogs started running at me, I felt a moment of intense fear but then the dogs stopped and their owner started to say sorry. I was laying at night in bed while feeling</p>

	<p>my legs so profoundly tingling. Other sensations passed my body in that moment but it was hard to put them into words.</p> <p>I noticed the non-verbal communication in the limping of the guy arriving very late with his big backpack. The grimacing of Ricardo and Gabriel standing up communicated non-verbally their pain.</p>
<p>21/04 O Cádavo</p>	<p>I saw a lot of deforestation in contrast with beautiful landscapes around me and some landscapes were embraced by the clouds.</p> <p>I heard the happy screams of pilgrims who were all reunited at a bar. I heard the bells of the church. There was some music quite loud but with soft notes playing on the right of me.</p> <p>I tasted the homemade dinner of Ricardo and at noon the typical sandwiches with chorizo.</p> <p>I smelled a guy's stinking feet in the morning.</p> <p>A guy was sitting next to the road and seemed tired so, during the conversation with Philippe I checked with the pilgrim if he was okay by a non-verbal thumb and a questioning facial expression. He confirmed with a smile and a nod that he was fine.</p> <p>I was drawn to this garden that had a small sign: this is a private property but if you take care of the space, come and take a rest, so I entered humbly with the sun rising on my right and it felt weird to put the experience into words. Everything felt so inviting: comfy chairs, a hammock, a water boiler; a guestbook and stamp on the table, a little box for money on which "for other pilgrims that might need it" was written, a sign translated in every language about what a pilgrim should be. I saw Ricardo passing by on the other side and waved him over, he came; heard the music and threw his sticks on the ground to start a Thai chi session. I too threw my backpack on the ground and for 10min we were just there enjoying the music and our meditation.</p>
<p>22/04 Lugo</p>	<p>I saw posh, grumpy people, traffic lights that I suddenly had to stop for and no smiling back. I saw pilgrims touching, caressing plants on the edge of the path.</p> <p>I did not hear a Buen Camino in Lugo.</p>

	<p>I felt sadness to say goodbye to many people. I looked at a landscape and felt nostalgic towards the mountains of Asturias. I walked together with 2 guys today and we had all these talks about ecology, plants, our daily life, but in the last 5km, there was only silence. We all had turned into our body. We saw things but did not look at them, our gaze was directed inwards.</p>
<p>23/04 Ponte de Ferreira</p>	<p>I saw green and blue colours.</p> <p>I heard many cars, German and Brazilian chatter, happy chattering in the evening of different conversations among different tables.</p> <p>I ate “tortilla de batatas” and “secretos de porco preto”.</p> <p>I smelled cow shit.</p> <p>I feel insecure, alone again and stress of the life that after I would arrive in Compostela, is coming closer. I would need to start organizing it. My emotions are definitely heightened because I am more <i>in</i> my body. That is why the atmosphere is so present here. There was so much asphalt and many cars that were passing by on it. I always had to stay alert for them.</p> <p>The non-verbal communication I saw was between Gabriel and Ricardo: “Aahh, I will miss u Ricardo,” Gabriel said and he looked at him and patted with his hand on his heart as Ricardo did the same. I saw so much pureness in that gesture.</p>
<p>24/04 Ribadiso</p>	<p>I see so many people. I saw low clouds that had so many colours and that showed sneak peaks of the landscapes. I was rays of sunbeams coming through the clouds. It was one of the most beautiful mornings because it was so unexpected. I saw a landscape full of diversity – with eucalyptus spots but also a lot of other green round trees. The hills gave everything relief with empty plains in between. I did not see any houses but humans indirectly present. The wind was making the clouds allow some light on different places, as a movie of light moving over the landscape highlighting different points. Suddenly I see so many different kinds of pilgrims. Groups of schools, families, people with really tiny backpacks, people without a backpack. Some wear a shelf, some not. Some say Buen Camino, mostly the ones with a big backpacks, some not.</p> <p>I hear my footsteps and I hear my backpack cracking.</p>

	<p>A motor passed by after coming back from a raw landscape and the noise and smell was so bad and so contrasting!</p> <p>I tasted our homemade fajitas and Ricardo's vegetable pasta and we ate arroz doce as dessert.</p> <p>I touched the freezing and even painful water of the river waking up the feet that were warm and numb from the many kilometres. It was a very intense sensation. I felt the cold windy morning. My toes have gone from tingling to burning.</p> <p>I felt alone together, bodily more present of the movement of walking. (I tried to practice gaga on the hike).</p> <p>A girl (Yonshu) came to me and asked: "you speak south Korean?" I laughed and told her no and she asked, "English?" I tell her yes and she started to talk to herself in Korean and trids to explain, with a lot of gestures, to wash our clothes together since it was cheaper. I pointed at the other beds to indicate that we are doing one now if she wants to join and she bowed with her hands like a praying gesture and said "thankyou" three times. I asked her name 3 times in order not to forget as it was the only way I could let her know that she mattered on my Camino, even though the verbal communication was very minimal.</p>
<p>25/04 O Pedrouzo</p>	<p>Today it is misty and rainy. I see everyone with their coloured rain covers and raincoats. I counted and I saw at least 21 pilgrims before me within 50 meters. I saw so much luggage arrive through transport services.</p> <p>I could see, hear, feel, and smell the rain. I just arrived before it started and now showers of down pours are falling down!</p> <p>Kilometres were passing by so quickly today. I still felt my feet and the weather was reflecting my introverted state. I did not feel happy today. Rather, alone together. I stopped saying Buen Camino to everyone and went into my personal bubble. "If this is the amount of people on the Frances, then I don't want to hike it."</p> <p>I am in a church in Pedrouzo to follow the miss after arriving. They welcome the pilgrims in 2 languages.</p>

<p>26/04 Santiago de Compostela</p>	<p>I see so many more wild flowers and trees covered in green skin. I see the green landscapes changing into cityscapes and people smiling at me when sitting on a bench near the end. People cry upon arrival and make group photos.</p> <p>I hear airplanes as we passed the airport.</p> <p>I taste the food from bar “La Tita” and I taste the pilgrim’s menu from “Casa Manolo”.</p> <p>I smelled a lot of eucalyptus and the nature was breathing around me into the humidity in the air.</p> <p>I touched so many hugs upon arrival. So many hugs.</p> <p>I felt sadness for the end and confusion for not arriving together and for dispersing again afterwards. Were we not we a group? The forest felt mystical.</p> <p>I smiled to the Catalan girl as we kept passing each other.</p>
Representations and Narratives	
<p>15/04 San Marcelo</p>	<p>Ricardo kept telling me that pilgrims should walk slowly so they can enjoy more what is around them and get tired less easily</p>
<p>16/04 Bodenaya</p>	<p>Many pilgrims also came with expectations and narrated these or the fact that they were (not) met on this Camino. “I thought I did not have expectations of the Camino, but I seem to have one, the road”, Thomas said laughing but also with a touch of frustration about the amount of asphalt we encountered.</p> <p>Ricardo told me how the Camino feels like being connected to our ancestors, since we go back to an activity so primitive as walking that we are nurturing Carl Jung’s “unconscious collective”.</p>
<p>17/04 El Espín</p>	<p>On this Camino, the simple life is narrated in many ways. Philip said that, when he speaks English, his sentences and the topics he talks about become very simple. “But that’s okay,” he said, “because we are on the Camino”.</p>
<p>19/04 Grandes De Salime</p>	<p>Gabriel started to realize how he thinks a Camino should be done at your own pace, your own way, alone. “One should really walk alone to know</p>

	<p>what it is to hike the Camino. Then you really encounter <i>your</i> Camino and you really feel what it has to offer”.</p> <p>Kyra said “I thought the Camino Primitivo was more a Camino that would make us go into the ‘wild nature’, but then I encounter so many places that are in the process of deforestation which it really surprised me.”</p>
<p>22/04 Lugo</p>	<p>On the first part of the Camino Primitivo, there is the narrative and expectation that hosts and pilgrims connect in a very authentic way. Once we entered in Galicia, a lot of things changed. The clearest change was the albergues which were not donation-based anymore. Instead, there was a woman behind the counter, welcoming us, listing a set of rules and giving us plastic bed sheets. “This is such a contrast with Bodenaya. I miss the albergues in Asturias”, Ricardo said.</p> <p>But then we encountered, on one of the last days, a garden where a man had created seats out of pallets and had put music and parasols. He handed out watermelons and fresh water for anyone who wanted it. “Donation-based”, he said. When I started talking to him, he told me he was a pilgrim himself and he knew that this particular part was very hard because there was no bar for 10km straight. Therefore, he had bought this land and made it into his personal pilgrim-oasis. “This is so Camino”, Ricardo said.</p>
<p>23/04 Ponte de Ferreira</p>	<p>Narratives made us also attune to a simpler life which left space for other things for which we normally did not have time. “It is so simple, I do not really have to think about what to wear, since I only have three pairs of outfits that I wear and the weather pretty much determines which one I wear each day”, said Teresa. She would, instead of taking time to choose her clothes, have time to see the sunrise while starting to walk early in the morning.</p> <p>I encountered a couple walking along the road, enjoying their day outside. I got into a conversation with them and they said that they were just going around to see all the neighbours and that, if I would walk three kilometres further, I would encounter a bar with a very sympathetic host that they, evidently, also knew.</p>

	<p>The fact that there were only a few bars and albergues on the way, made everyone stop in the same places. It was like an accordion where people spread out, walking on their own tempo, but congregate again in the next bar/albergue/junction point. This really created a feeling of family on this specific Camino.</p> <p>Interestingly, Teresa also told me something that relates very well to the structural, meaningful narratives on the Camino: “On the Camino, we are not connected with each other because we are friends. We did not “select” each other based on common interest or common values. Instead, we just happened upon each other because we walked the same tempo and therefore there was no selection, nor judgement, just a community bounded by rhythm</p>
<p>26/04 Santiago De Compostela</p>	<p>When I got off the bus, I walked to the albergue, but immediately, I saw a woman, Sandra, with a backpack walking towards me, a bit confused. The first words we said, in Portuguese, “You are also going on the Camino Primitivo!” We walked together to the Albergue and after half an hour I asked her what she does for a living. She tells me she is a stomatologist, and I stop, so stunned. I had never met a stomatologist in my life, and never needed one, but coincidentally, I had gone two weeks before to Belgium and my doctor had told me I would need to find a stomatologist. When we entered the Albergue, we had to check in separately and I lost her. I knew she would walk shorter stages than me, so I would not end up in an albergue with her again. When my Camino-friends stayed behind in Lugo, I told them to look out for a Portuguese woman, Sandra from Leiria, and if they found her, to give her my number. The day after my arrival in Compostela, I went to sit in a cafe to see my friend arrive. I walked the last kilometre with him and asked if he had encountered the stomatologist. He said unfortunately no and we arrived at the cathedral, gave hugs of joy and I turn around to see if my other friend was already arriving and suddenly Sandra stood in front of me. I was so happy, we exchanged numbers and I actually went to her clinic to get my surgery. What a coincidence that I met her on my first and last days on the Camino.</p>

	<p>A bit later, I suddenly see the Brazilian mom and her son again and they tell me they will stay in the same hostel as me, even though there are so many hostels in Compostela. We went to have one last dinner together in an Italian restaurant and I invited another friend, Sean, to come along. We all joined around the table and I asked my Brazilian friend to show the tattoo he went to get in the afternoon and it seemed that my other friend had gotten the exact same tattoo, at the exact same tattoo shop, 30 minutes after my Brazilian friend. “Now we are tattoo brothers”, they said.</p>
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