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Chapter 1

Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradiction in Terms?¹

Peter Jan Margry

The definition of the term 'pilgrimage' is in need of re-evaluation. This does not imply that there have been no previous re-evaluations – quite the opposite, in fact. The phenomenon of the pilgrimage has been a focus of special attention in various areas of academic research for several decades. As a result, a broad corpus of ethnographic, comparative and analytic studies and reference books has become available, and the pilgrimage has been 'regained,' 'localized,' 're-invented,' 'contested,' 'deconstructed,' 'explored,' 'intersected,' 'reframed,' etc. from a variety of academic perspectives.² However, the results of all these different approaches have certainly not led to a fully crystallized academic picture of the pilgrimage phenomenon. There are still plenty of open questions, and distinct perspectives and schools of thought still exist.

This volume is based on a symposium held in Amsterdam in 2004 which was dedicated to the phenomenon of 'non-confessional pilgrimage' and the issue of religious pilgrimage versus non-religious or secular pilgrimage.³ By both widening and narrowing the scope, the differences between 'traditional' pilgrimage and 'secular' pilgrimage were discussed, and in particular to what extent secular pilgrimage is a useful concept.⁴ However, it is not up to the outsider to distinguish between the two concepts in advance. In this context, the evaluation will depend on the behavior and customs of the visitors to these modern shrines. Therefore, the authors in this volume would like to make a new contribution to the pilgrimage debate by focusing their attention on contemporary special locations and the memorial sites and graves of special individuals in order to determine whether apparently secular visits to these sites and adoration or veneration of them has a religious dimension or may even be religiously motivated, and – if this is the case – whether it is in fact appropriate to refer to these visits as pilgrimages. This book sets out to analyze manifestations of pilgrimage which parallel or conflict with mainstream

pilgrimage culture in the modern world and at the same time to define the distinction between secular and religious pilgrimage more precisely. Although it is often difficult or impossible to make a distinction of this kind, it is counterproductive to use the concept of pilgrimage as a combination term for both secular and religious phenomena, thereby turning it into much too broad a concept. The term secular pilgrimage which is bandied about so much today actually contains two contradictory concepts and is therefore an oxymoron or contradiction in terms.

An important factor in the large amount of academic interest focused on pilgrimage is the personal fascination of researchers, but an even more important factor is perhaps the awareness, shared by many, of the great socio-cultural and politico-strategic significance of this religious phenomenon. After all, the pilgrimage, a complex of behaviors and rituals in the domain of the sacred and the transcendent, is a global phenomenon, in which religion and *a fortiori* religious people often manifest themselves in the most powerful, collective and performative way.

Insights into the great significance of shrines and cults in relation to processes of desecularization and 're-enchantment' in the modern world have in themselves also reinforced the pilgrimage phenomenon (cf. Luckmann 1990; Berger 1999, 2002; Wuthnow 1992). The growing importance of religion in its social, cultural and political context has only increased the significance of the pilgrimage. For example, over the past few decades an informal fundamentalist Catholic network, active on a global scale, has apparently succeeded in strengthening the conservative movement within the Catholic church with the help of the relative autonomy of contestative Marian shrines (Zimdars-Swartz 1991; Margry 2004a+b). The best-known and most important example is the Marian shrine at Medjugorje (Bosnia-Herzegovina). It is important not only because of its spiritual and liturgical influence but also – and above all – because of the ecclesiastical and political conflicts it has led to (Bax 1995). But the growing social and political role of Islam in the world has also strongly enhanced the significance of the hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, which is one of the five sacred obligations of Islam, in strengthening identity in the Islamic community (Abdurrahman 2000; Bianchi 2004). This significance in

terms of identity formation is not only manifested on a global scale as in the case of the *hajj*; the symbolism and identity-forming powers of shrines have also increased greatly at the local, regional and national levels. In general, the considerable attention devoted to religion and rituals in the modern world has also indirectly enhanced ethnic/religious identities (Van der Veer 1994; cf. Guth 1995). Partly as a consequence of this, pilgrimage sites have also become involved in the strategies of military conflicts; the deliberate destruction of pilgrimage sites and shrines has evolved into an effective tactic for the purpose of harming national or religious identities or as a rationale for provoking conflicts, as in the case of the Sikhs' golden temple at Amritsar (India 1984) or the Shiites' golden mosque at Samarra (Iraq 2006, 2007).

However, because of its significance in relation to identity, the 'rediscovered' pilgrimage has also once again become a pastoral instrument in the secularized West, used to help control the crises in the institutional churches – in particular the Catholic church – in Western society, and to propagate the religious messages of the church more emphatically (Antier 1979; Congregazione 2002: 235-244). Apparently, shrines and pilgrimages have characteristics which enable them to generate, stimulate or revitalize religious devotion and religious identity (cf. Frijhoff 2002: 235-273). These dynamics are reminiscent of the situation in the nineteenth century, when the Catholic church used the pilgrimage on a large scale as an instrument to fend off enlightenment, rationalism and apostasy with the help of the church-going population; and in the twentieth century, after the Russian revolution and during the Cold War, pilgrimages and veneration of the Blessed Virgin were again used as a social and political instrument against atheistic political ideologies and secularization. Precisely in the Western world, especially in Europe with its anomalous secularization process (see Davie 2002), people who no longer had any ties with the institutional churches acquired a framework for new forms of religiosity and spirituality and for the alternative shrines and pilgrimages that went with them.

Research into change

Eventually, due to the ecclesiastical innovations in the Western world in the 1960s, the Catholic church also began to have reservations toward popular religion and to oppose some elements of it. The Catholic Church's view that religion and church needed to be modernized even led to a temporary removal from the church's pastoral and ritual repertoire of practices such as pilgrimages and the veneration of saints, which were now seen as relic phenomena. Paradoxically, this process and the wide media coverage it led to brought the theme of the contemporary Western pilgrimage very much into the limelight, and it was partly because of this that it made it onto the research agenda of academics. Until then, the pilgrimage had been more or less the exclusive domain of ethnographers, church historians and theologians, who had been analyzing the phenomenon since the nineteenth century, mainly at the local level (Margry and Post 1998: 64-74). In terms of analytic comparison, pilgrimage in Europe had been relatively poorly studied, until the interest of cultural historians and cultural anthropologists was aroused. It was scholars such as Alphonse Dupront and Victor Turner who opened the theoretical debate about the significance of pilgrimage from the 1960s on.⁵ The most important themes of that debate will be briefly evaluated below.

How 'clandestine' and little known and thus poorly studied the phenomenon of pilgrimage could be was revealed – for example – in the Netherlands. The stereotypical image of this small Western European country is of a Calvinist nation. Lengthy Protestant domination of the country had made the significant Catholic minority (35-40%) 'invisible' in the public domain. Nevertheless, it turned out that the Dutch Catholics had a large and finely meshed network of pilgrimage sites and pilgrimages, which was not widely known, even in the Netherlands itself. It was due to historical factors – the rigid political and social segmentization of the country into ideological 'pillars' and the constitutional restrictions imposed on the public manifestation of Catholicism – that the pilgrimage had been reduced to a more or less clandestine phenomenon ever since the Reformation. A large-scale ethnographic and historical study in the 1990s resulted in a sizeable body of data about no fewer than 660 *Dutch pilgrimage* sites, of which about 250 are still active today.⁶ The amount of mate-

rial which emerged from this effort to catch up made it possible to analyze the functions and meanings of Dutch pilgrimages in greater detail. From a broad anthropological perspective it became clear that the pilgrimage is becoming less and less an exclusively Catholic phenomenon and that more and more inter-religious and other forms of pilgrimage can be distinguished.⁷ This is why at the conclusion of this research project, during the symposium referred to above, attention was drawn to various new forms of pilgrimage which had acquired a place in the world in connection with the changes in society, culture and religion in the second half of the twentieth century and are usually categorized as 'secular pilgrimages,' and implicitly opposed to 'religious pilgrimage.' To distinguish the two concepts and to analyze them in relation to each other, I would like to define religion (and *a fortiori* religiosity) as follows: all notions and ideas that human beings have regarding their experience of the sacred or the supernatural in order to give meaning to life and to have access to transformative powers that may influence their existential condition. Seen in this context I take 'pilgrimage' to mean a journey based on religious or spiritual inspiration, undertaken by individuals or groups, to a place that is regarded as more sacred or salutary than the environment of everyday life, to seek a transcendental encounter with a specific cult object for the purpose of acquiring spiritual, emotional or physical healing or benefit. I will come back to these two definitions later.

Particularly because of its frequent use in the media since the 1980s, the concept of pilgrimage has become embedded in common parlance, all the more because the massive 'subjective turn' in Western society meant that basically everyone could decide for themselves what they regarded as a pilgrimage destination, and sanctity or sacrality could be attributed to anyone or anything.⁸ To an increasing extent the media themselves rediscovered pilgrimage and pilgrimage sites as interesting focus areas. These concepts, with their suggestive connotations and significances, could also be applied in a society where mass culture and personality cults such as those associated with film and rock stars, sports celebrities and royalty took on an increasingly important role, and media coverage followed the trend (cf. Couldry 2003: 75-94). Any place where people met occasionally or en masse to pay their respects to a

special deceased person soon came to be referred to as a 'place of pilgrimage,' although it was not clear what this actually meant. Although the religious realm in the postmodern 'Disneyesque' environment is changing, it is questionable whether visitors to or participants in such diverse destinations and occasions as the house where Shakespeare was born, the military Yser Pilgrimage in Flanders, a papal Mass in Rome, the D-Day beaches in Normandy, the Abbey Road zebra crossing, the World Youth Days, personal journeys, Disney World, or shopping malls can really be categorized as pilgrims (Reader and Walter 1993: 5-10; Clift and Clift 1996: 88-112; Lyon 2000; Pahl 2003).

Occasionally, a certain link with religion may be found, as in the case of the 'civil religion' element in commemorations of war victims and monuments and in visits to the houses or graves of national heroes or famous battlefields (Zelinsky 1990). Even in the early twentieth century, visits to war cemeteries were referred to in newspapers as pilgrimages.⁹ A form of religion also often seems to be involved in these visits. In this context Lloyd wrote that the presence of the memory of the war in private lives 'transformed these sites [battlefields/cemeteries] into places of pilgrimage' (Lloyd 1998: 217). It is more or less clear that religion frequently plays a role (Walter 1993; Lloyd 1998). However, Lloyd also takes the 'pilgrimage' concept for granted in his study, without operationalizing it or giving it any further empirical basis. His conclusion is that 'Pilgrims distinguished themselves from tourists in order to stress their special links with the fallen and the war experience' (Lloyd 1998: 220). A short, generalizing statement like this is rather unsatisfactory, especially because Lloyd draws attention to the individual and emotive experiences of mourning, coping with grief, and the role of traditional religion in visiting war cemeteries, elements on which he could probably have based a more explicit evaluation of the status of the visits as 'pilgrimages.'

It was mainly pop music and the rise of fan culture which stimulated their own culture of visits to the graves of rock stars and icons. Particularly in rock culture, where stars relatively often die young in dramatic ways, new forms sprang up in which the adoration and veneration of the deceased heroes and idols came together. Graceland is the most famous and most spectacular example (Doss 1999). However, it is certainly not clear how attributions of ho-

liness to the last resting places of music stars in general should be interpreted (Frijhoff 2004). A striking feature of Reed and Miller's visual reportage is that practically all the musicians' graves seem to be associated with rituals, consisting for example of placing flowers, objects and texts by the graves (Reed and Miller 2005). Accessorizing graves with objects relates back to age-old commemorative practices, and although these rituals associated with (western) rock legends are influenced by Christian culture, they are actually shared across many religions. This does not mean that the secular pilgrimages do in fact convert the sites into pilgrimage sites; nevertheless, the visual and material culture associated with these graves does in fact seem to connect them with cults and pilgrimage. But is this really the case? Is it a matter of individuals visiting a grave or have the locations acquired lasting and universal sacred significance?

At most of the sites the meanings attributed by the visitors to the individual and that individual's grave are confused or contradictory. Asking them does not always produce helpful results either, because the language used among fans is itself influenced by the media and therefore often consists of idiomatic narratives. Because the concept of the pilgrimage has been stretched, the word has acquired a new semantic dimension, so that more and more frequently visitors themselves refer to profane practices and events as pilgrimages, partly because fans themselves are often aware of parallels between traditional Christian religion and their own (Cavicchi 1998: 51-57). Fans of rock singer Bruce Springsteen said that they regarded going to one of his concerts as 'going to a church and having a religious experience' and visits to places where he had lived and places mentioned in his songs as 'pilgrimages' (Cavicchi 1998: 186). In her description of Graceland, Christine King – unlike Doss in her later study – used so many Christian terms with so little discrimination that it became a self-fulfilling academic prophecy and – without any substantial empirical justification – the place was proclaimed a pilgrimage site in the universal sense (King 1993). What meanings are concealed behind these terms, and how can the religious factor be identified and interpreted?

To an increasing extent, not only the media but also researchers characterize tourism and other transitory phenomena metaphorically as 'pilgrimages'

(cf. Reader and Walter 1993; Kaur 1985; Basu 2004; Hodge 2006; cf. Chidester 2005). In his book *Sacred Journeys*, anthropologist Alan Morinis ascribes an explicit place to the allegorical or metaphorical pilgrimage, namely the pilgrimage 'that seeks out a place not located in the geographical sphere' and says that 'one who journeys to a place of importance to himself alone may also be a pilgrim' (Morinis 1992:4). No matter how titillating it may be to thought processes and the imagination to combine these apparently similar phenomena, constantly linking them to each other does not seem to have provided any essentially deeper insights into the 'traditional' pilgrimage; in fact, its main result has been to increase the confusion surrounding the concept. For example, as Jennifer Porter wrote: 'By broadening the boundaries of pilgrimage to encompass such secular journeys [= Star Trek Conventions], pilgrimage scholars can perhaps go where they've never gone before.' Expanding on Morinis's work, Porter goes on to say (merely on the basis of external analogies and without further substantiation): '...then *Star Trek* convention attendance truly does constitute pilgrimage in a secular context' (Porter 2004: 172; cf. Chidester 2005: 33).

Be that as it may, in recent decades the question of what the term pilgrimage means exactly and what should be regarded as the criteria for a pilgrimage has only become more complicated. This applies even more strongly to what is referred to as 'secular pilgrimage' – a term consisting of two concepts which are troublesome to define and difficult to unite. In order to define pilgrimage as a religious phenomenon more exactly and to deconstruct secular pilgrimage as a concept, we need to evaluate the main academic research themes relating to the constitutive elements of pilgrimage.

Communitas vs individuality

One of these themes is the relationship between the individual and the group and possible interference between these two social categories during a pilgrimage. An initial theoretical debate on this issue arose as early as the 1960s when a dispute broke out in German ethnographic circles about whether pilgrimage could be regarded as an individual affair at all (Kriss 1963; Dünninger

1963). According to some ethnographers, the fact that group pilgrimages were universal in the German cultural area excluded individual pilgrimages. They therefore only regarded a sacred place as a 'pilgrimage site' if pilgrimages to the site were undertaken by groups or in a processional way. The problem was that this view only took the public manifestation of pilgrimage and its performative character into account, and not its motives and the social relationships involved. Due to this functionalistic approach, the pilgrimage was regarded as an extension or confirmation of the everyday social structure – a view which was based only on a specific regional *praxis* and was therefore eventually rejected as a theoretical concept (Brückner 1970).¹⁰

The first to approach the Christian pilgrimage as a phenomenon with the intention of forming a new theory was the American anthropologist Victor Turner. Because of the inter-related dynamic social processes involved, he thought that he could see a special kind of group formation during pilgrimages, and on this basis he developed what was to become a leading theory in cultural anthropology. Proceeding from the notions of Van Gennep, Turner drew up a theoretical framework for pilgrimage as a rite of passage (cf. Van Gennep 1909). Turner saw pilgrimage not as a phenomenon which confirmed the existing social structure with its status and hierarchies, but precisely as an alternative structure – therefore termed 'antistructural' – because of the development of a new community of pilgrims. In his opinion, pilgrimage was a temporary antithesis of the ordinary, everyday community to which the pilgrim normally belonged (Turner and Turner 1978; Turner 1986). The liminal and transitional character of pilgrimage temporarily eliminates the pilgrim's normal situation and status, and in consequence spontaneous, egalitarian ties are created which Turner refers to as the group experience or 'communitas.' Turner also drew attention to a certain tension between the journey and the location, and in connection with this, to the necessity of 'liminoid' behavior on the part of the pilgrim.

Although Turner's postulate that 'anti-structure' and 'communitas' are created during a pilgrimage is regarded as the only significant theory regarding pilgrimage and was decisive for the debate for a long time, the theory has been falsified over and over again on the basis of ethnographic case studies

(cf. Eade and Sallnow 2000: 4-5; Reader and Walter 1993: 10-15; Badone and Roseman: 3-5). In response, critics such as Eade and Sallnow called on researchers to collect much more ethnographic material.¹¹ Whatever the case may be, in practice researchers always encountered a wide variety of behaviors and experience, and to an ever-increasing extent the theory was abandoned (Sallnow 1981: 163-183; Morinis 1992: 8). The strongest formulation of this rejection was by Coleman and Eade, who regard Turner's notions on pilgrimage as a 'theoretical cul-de-sac' (Coleman and Eade 2004: 3). They also rightly question whether pilgrimage is in fact as exceptional as it is presented as being in the world of anthropology and in environments where the research focus is on the biggest shrines or on exceptional shrines.

But if there is no *communitas*, what is there then? Undeniably, during a pilgrimage there are various important group connections and forms of sociability. For instance, in Huub de Jonge's article in this book about Soekarno's grave, he identifies a metaform of *communitas* which develops on the basis of shared ideas about national and religious unity, while Marion Bowman describes a loose kind of sociability – an 'intermittent co-presence' – among individual pilgrims in Glastonbury. The wide revival of the 'traditional' group pilgrimage on foot in the Western world is also a clear example of new forms of sociability. The other side of the coin is that within Christian culture a lack of or aversion to the group process can be ascertained. While it is true that in Christian culture pilgrimage has collective elements which are identity-forming or demonstrative in character, in essence it is much more individual than is often thought. Alan Morinis has already asserted that pilgrimage, in spite of external manifestations such as group pilgrimages, penitential journeys and processions, is regarded in the first instance as an individual, personal affair rather than a social one (Morinis 1992). Although collective actions at or around shrines are the most obvious, fieldwork is showing more and more frequently that in the mainstream Western pilgrimage culture, pilgrimage is partly separated from the formal rituality and liturgy of the location. To an increasing extent it is a personal journey, which is undertaken collectively mainly when there is no alternative. Those who set off for a shrine in a group are often 'compelled' to do so because of physical injuries or practical

financial constraints. This applies even more strongly if the pilgrimage site is a long way away and the journey thus more arduous, more expensive or more complicated to organize. People prefer to conduct an activity which is so personal as a pilgrimage with a certain measure of privacy: with few other pilgrims present, without being constrained by collective rituals, and if possible using their own cars, perhaps accompanied by close family members or a good friend. Pilgrimages are personal visits, with strictly personal intentions directed toward the cult object. Pilgrims are generally not keen to talk about the religious dimensions and find it difficult to do so; this is also true of the pilgrims who feature in this book.¹² In fact, it may apply to them even more strongly, because on the face of it their motive has no right to exist in this environment which is so secular in other respects. For privacy reasons, this dimension is scarcely expressed in writing at all, with the exception of intention books with their anonymous messages. This characteristic individuality is also found in the pilgrimages discussed here. For example, it turned out that the close in-crowd fans around Jim Morrison's grave who did actually seem to have a form of *communitas* were not among those who had a religious motivation for their visit. Such a motivation was found mainly in individual visitors to the grave. If individualization is a sign of the times, then this is also reflected in pilgrimage.

Movement and travel vs sanctuary and locality

Movement is an inherent part of pilgrimage. As a result, throughout history the performance of the phenomenon has been visible as spatial movement. But at the same time the pilgrimage site is fixed in space (Coleman and Elsner 1995: 2002), and the holy place or shrine is the 'very *raison d'être* of pilgrimage' (Eade and Sallnow 1991/2000: 6) or as Dupront put it: 'Il n'y a pas de pèlerinage sans lieu [sacré]' ('There is no pilgrimage without a [sacred] place') (1987: 371). This is why it is important for the theoretical discussion about the primary aspect of pilgrimage to continue: should the focus be on location and locality, with the sacred site as the ultimate goal, or should it be on the journey and being on the way? As far as Christian pilgrimage was concerned,

it was possible to choose between the two (namely, the destination was the most important), but because of changes in pilgrimage culture over the past decades this choice is no longer feasible.

I would like to stress that in principle the core or rationale of the Christian pilgrimage lay within the physical boundaries of the shrine. In a process of placemaking, the presence of a cult object associated with a specific location gives shape to the sacred, both physically and intangibly. Sanctity is attributed to that object and *a fortiori* to its environment, a space where the pilgrim expects salvation, healing and solace, or hopes to effect a cure. Dubisch and Winkelmann formulate this as follows: 'Pilgrimage sites shape the pilgrimage and nature and history shape its power' (Dubisch and Winkelmann 2005: xviii). At any rate, this statement applies or has applied to virtually all Christian pilgrimage sites. The fact that things have changed is due to a development in which the pilgrimage journey has also become an end in itself.¹³ The most important catalyst in this process and its most powerful reflection is the modern pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. Whereas before the mid-twentieth century the cathedral of Santiago was the pilgrimage destination in the classical sense, it is now largely the other way around: the pilgrimage in the sense of a spiritual journey has become the rationale. Santiago has been discovered and reinvented by spiritual seekers and lovers of cultural history and tranquility. For many walkers the journey along the *camino*, the 'transit' as I would call it, has become an individual rite of passage or 'a pilgrimage to one's self' (Eberhart 2006: 160). The media and politics have also played a stimulating role in this development.¹⁴ Without the lengthy and wide media coverage of this ancient pilgrimage and the cultural politics of Spain, the transition from a destination-oriented pilgrimage to seeing the journey as a pilgrimage in itself would not have been so universal. It was due to this process that 'transit' pilgrimage made its appearance in the west. Transit pilgrimage does not really have a beginning or an end, or at any rate they are not relevant. Moving, walking, the accessibility and freedom of the ritual, being in nature, and tranquility are all elements which have contributed to its success. As a transit pilgrimage, the Santiago pilgrimage is sometimes even spread across several years or vacations, with one stage of the whole journey being completed at a time.

For many walkers the shrine in Compostela is now so far removed from their new experiential worlds that when they arrive there they are disillusioned.¹⁵ All kinds of pilgrimage routes and walking tracks can now be found all over Europe. This major innovation in pilgrimage culture is not restricted to Christian pilgrimages; this volume reveals that there are also transit pilgrimages like this around Glastonbury, and that the motorcycle pilgrimages undertaken by Vietnam veterans across the United States are similar in character.

Whereas in the first half of the twentieth century Santiago only functioned as a place of pilgrimage to a limited extent, it was initially an interest – with medieval overtones – in Romanesque heritage along the formerly French pilgrimage routes leading there which put the pilgrimage site and its access routes back on the map. This was stimulated by the strong focus on the three big pilgrimage locations (Jerusalem, Rome, Santiago de Compostela) of the Christian Middle Ages, which dominated historical pilgrimage literature for a long time. Since then, new editions of a guide to the pilgrimage to the shrine of St James in Santiago passed down in the twelfth-century *Codex Calixtinus* and the great interest shown by art historians in architecture and art objects along the route have converted the pilgrimage paths to Santiago into a constructed and invented heritage concept which could be widely appropriated in European society. Moreover, romantic images of pilgrimage as being strenuous, hazardous, and a constant form of penance were added to the picture: ‘The journey was to be arduous and dangerous’ (Swatos and Tomasi 2002: 207).¹⁶ It is partly due to this dominant element in the literature that the major shrines like Santiago and Rome (Holy Years), which appeal to the imagination, are constantly used as examples in research. While there is nothing wrong with this in itself, it should be borne in mind that these two places are not representative; in fact, they are anomalies.

The view that the journey is the most definitive aspect of pilgrimage was backed up by the results of the conference titled ‘Sacred Journeys’ which Morinis organized in 1981. In the volume of the same name which appeared later, he characterized the phenomenon of pilgrimage as ‘a human quest’ (Morinis 1992: ix, 4; cf. Dupront 1987: 413). With this approach he made a connection with the idea of the early Christian *peregrinatio* as formulated by St Augustine

(Bitton-Ashkelony 2005: 110-115) – a quest and a long-distance pilgrimage.¹⁷ Morinis narrowed down the research perspective, stating that ‘a true typology of pilgrimages focuses on the pilgrims’ journey and motivations, not on the destination shrines’ (Morinis 1992: ix, 10).¹⁸ He proposed a major classification based on pilgrims’ motivation perspectives, but paid little attention to the contextuality of pilgrimage and the placemaking process that results in a sacred pilgrimage site.¹⁹ However, no matter how clear it may be that pilgrimage research should not be limited to the location and that the journey is also such an important component of a pilgrimage that it must always be taken into account in the entire pilgrimage culture, there is no justification for reducing the phenomenon primarily to the journey element.

By now, the wide interest in pilgrimage routes and the decisive role attributed to the pilgrimage paths to Santiago, Rome and later also Glastonbury and other places has extended beyond the domains of cultural heritage and the New Age movement. Since the 1970s, in the Catholic church itself there has also come to be a stronger focus on the journey than on the cult object. Whereas formerly the journey was a necessary evil, nowadays it is seen as ‘tradition’ or as pilgrimage heritage, and more and more frequently a pilgrimage is only seen as a ‘real’ pilgrimage if it is completed on foot. While this is not the invention of a tradition, it is a reinvention of the meaning of a tradition. Nowadays, this kind of ‘active’ pilgrimage is used as a ‘new’ pastoral instrument to revive interest in religion, particularly among young people. The emphasis is on the group experience and the spiritual and healing elements of the journey – which often takes place in the evening or at night (Albers 2007). These journeys are successful because, as a rule, young people are much less interested in cult objects and the associated healing aspects than in the great questions of life and the meaning of religion. The pilgrimage formula is not restricted to young people. Various organizations offer people from a variety of denominations international, national, and regional opportunities to undertake reflective and spiritual journeys.²⁰

It was due to this development in particular that Coleman and Eade drew inspiration from the idea of physical motion for their book *Reframing Pilgrimage*. Following on from Hervieu-Léger’s *La religion en mouvement* (1999), they

see pilgrimages as 'cultures in motion.' By focusing on this aspect, like Morinis they relegate the place-centered approach to the background and concentrate on the sanctifying effect of forms of movement toward and at shrines. To a large extent, Coleman and Eade's reason for doing this was that they were convinced by the many testimonies of the spiritual and physical transformation effected by the journey to Santiago and the combination of 'travel, pilgrimage and tourism' on the *camino*. The fact that their concept is based mainly on practices associated with the pilgrimage to Santiago is surprising, since as has already been mentioned this pilgrimage is not representative of mainstream pilgrimage culture (Coleman and Eade 2004: 11). Its existence confirms that there is not just one kind of Christian pilgrimage. It is therefore questionable whether, on the basis of this specific case, motion can be assumed to be the primary constitutive element of the pilgrimage as a universal phenomenon. It may be true that no pilgrimage can take place without some distance being covered, but even this notion is now open to question. In the twentieth century the development of hundreds of 'branches' of the pilgrimage sites of Lourdes and Fatima all over the world had already made a huge difference in the distance to be covered, and now, in the twenty-first century, the Internet brings the virtual shrine right into people's homes (Macwilliams 2002, 2004). Moreover, no satisfactory answer has been given to questions about the relationship and distinction between pilgrimage and the local veneration of saints or cult objects.²¹

Because of the sacrality, rituality and exceptional material culture attributed to pilgrimage shrines, they are more or less dissociated from everyday life. This means that a pilgrim must consciously 'extricate' himself or herself from everyday life in order to set off for the sacred place. This is what Turner calls 'separation.' Because it requires going beyond the physical and mental boundaries of ordinary life, pilgrimage is a liminal activity. This crossing of boundaries is a constant element of pilgrimage. In the narrower sense, parish, village, or municipal boundaries must also be regarded as geographic boundaries. During the Dutch pilgrimage research project a somewhat ragged dividing line emerged according to which a cultus within the visitor's own parish is not regarded as a pilgrimage, and a visit to a holy place in the immediate vi-

cinity of the individual's everyday life is seen as local saint veneration. On the other hand, this does not mean that a pilgrimage necessarily entails long-distance travel. This became clear in the dominantly Catholic regions in the south of the Netherlands, where the lower limit for a pilgrimage turned out to be about five kilometers from the pilgrim's home. As a distance for a pilgrimage this seems very short, but apparently it applies at least throughout the rest of Europe as well. This suggests a much greater density of the network of places of pilgrimage and pilgrimages than has previously been assumed.²² However, as a rule, definitions associated with pilgrimage are still based on data relating to a few major shrines and not to the smaller ones which are probably more representative of destination-oriented pilgrimage because there are so many of them and thus provide a different perspective on Christian pilgrimage culture.

Tourism and Pilgrimage

In the wake of movement and travel, the concept of tourism also entered pilgrimage research. It was thought that tourism, because of its similar characteristics, would generate new insights into the operation of pilgrimage. After the French anthropologist Alphonse Dupront first put this theme on the research agenda in the context of collective psychology (Dupront 1969), Badone and Roseman tried to reconcile the conceptual dichotomy between religious travel and tourism as secular journeying. They write: 'Rigid dichotomies between pilgrimage and tourism, or pilgrims and tourists, no longer seem tenable in the shifting world of postmodern travel' (Badone and Roseman 2004: 2; cf. Timothy and Olsen 2006). However, this seems rather self-evident, since the element of tourism is 'rediscovered' on a regular basis (cf. Maciotti 2002: 89). Throughout the centuries the repertoire of pilgrims' secondary motives has always been wide, and has included 'tourism.' It started more or less with the *curiositas* and the *missio* of the early Christian *peregrinatio* referred to earlier and has always played a role ever since. In the past few decades a few modern pilgrimages – to Amsterdam, Lourdes and Witten (Netherlands) – have been the subject of sociological research based on multiple-choice questionnaires

aimed at collecting data on motive repertoires (Post, Pieper and Van Uden 1998: 19-48, 173-203). One reason for choosing this non-qualitative method was that, as a rule, pilgrims find it quite difficult to formulate their motives (cf. Reader and Walter 1993: 237-238). The wide variety of motives mentioned by the pilgrims is striking, but even more so is their sheer number. Sometimes the number of motives was as high as 20, and the tourist and social components of the journey were certainly included. However, they are secondary motives to the main objective, namely the religious reason for going on a pilgrimage (Post, Pieper and Van Uden 1998: 157-242).²³

The Turners' much quoted observation that 'a tourist is half a pilgrim, if a pilgrim is half a tourist' (1978: 20; cf. Swatos and Tomasi 2002: 208), which is often cited as 'proof' of the secular element of pilgrimage, is above all suggestive. Again, the fact is that the main goals are the sacred, the religious, the cultus object; without them there is no pilgrimage. Of course most pilgrims have one or more secondary motives: the beauty of the scenery, tourist aspects, the sociability of the collective journey, etc. But if that is all there is, then there is no question of pilgrimage; the journey is for tourism or other motives. Obviously, this does not alter the fact that sometimes individuals – tourists, passers-by, etc. – visit shrines without any religious motivation, but are in fact affected by the sacred place once they are there. This is part of what Badone and Roseman call 'intersecting journeys.' The concept does not imply that tourism and pilgrimage are interchangeable. Intersections between the two only come to the fore when tourists allow themselves to be carried away – intentionally or unintentionally – by the sacred experiences of the shrine or the pilgrimage. Tourism is also explicitly discussed in this volume. The grave locations of Elvis Presley and Jim Morrison are both tourist attractions where mass tourism is manifestly present. However, apparently visits to Graceland and Père Lachaise are stratified and contested. Erika Doss makes it clear that for a specific group of fans, the religious factor is in fact present, and that narratives employed by these fans during their visits are distinct from those of the tourist masses.

The Secular and the Religious

Pilgrimage is a product of the social environment, just as religion is a human, cultural activity. Activities of this sort are subject to change, and this also applies to pilgrimage. No matter how complex and stratified pilgrimage may be, not all phenomena related to travel and veneration can simply be included in the concept, as Reader tries to do, without distinguishing between different behaviors (Reader and Walter 1993: 2-3).

Not surprisingly, use of the oxymoronic concept of 'secular religion' leads to constant epistemological confusion. Practically all studies which work with this concept fail to reveal what they actually mean by it. Moreover, because of its vagueness, it stimulates over-interpretation, tending either toward the secular or toward the religious (Piette 2003: 93). Although the term secular religion is often used, the internal contradiction persists, and as such is rarely solved or explained in the studies in question. This obfuscating effect becomes even stronger if the concept is also used in a metaphorical sense. The problem is similar to the central question of Knott's book: how to locate religion in everyday life, in order to distinguish it from the secular (Knott 2005). If one assumes that the religious dimension or motivation is a constitutive element of pilgrimage, then the next question is whether the 'secular,' modern and non-confessional shrines and pilgrimages, outside the traditional (Christian) pilgrimage culture, do in fact have a religious dimension. To answer this question, the visits to special places and their associated veneration examined in this volume have been approached as much as possible on their own terms, quite apart from institutionalized religions, and authors have tried to ascertain whether forms of religious devotion could be found at these places, so that the epithet 'secular' could be omitted with respect to the components in question (cf. Glock 1962, 1974; Piette 2003: 96).

It is in fact not the first time that researchers have devoted attention to this topic. Ian Reader and Tony Walter more or less acted as pioneers when they edited *Pilgrimage in Popular Culture*, a book that was the result of an Implicit Religion Conference organized by Edward Bailey. Reader argued in favor of a further secularization of the notion of pilgrimage (Reader and Walter 1993: 221-222). Hopgood's more recent book, *The Making of Saints*, also

sees 'commonalities and convergence of forms' and common characteristics of pilgrimages and generic saints as a possible approach (Hopgood 2005b: xvi).²⁴ Hopgood examined 'processes of deification of secular personages' and in this context compared James Dean with El Niño Fidencio of Mexico, as representatives of secular religion and devotion and folk Catholicism, respectively. The research analysis compares many elements of the two cultures, but not the religious dimension which distinguishes a saint *a priori* from a hero, an icon or an idol. In cases like this, it is also unsatisfactory if the conclusion is more or less that in both cases T-shirts with images of the individuals in question are on sale (Hopgood 2005c: 140). Hopgood tries to explain the growth of the 'new sainthood' among celebrities – icons – mainly in terms of communication technology. He sees a blending of styles and narratives developing in this area due to the influence of modern technology and mediatization. However, the research practice is overly focused on external characteristics, on the adoption of styles and narratives, and on analogies of form and representation, while the differences in function and meaning are overlooked.²⁵

By contrast, the editors of the journal *Etnofoor* (Van Ede 1999: 3) have studied this problem in greater depth. In a special issue of the journal titled *Personality Cults*, they write that cults of this kind show an 'intriguing mix of the sacred and the secular.' And they ask: 'Is the likening of a political leader to a present-day saint mere trope, or can the anthropological understanding of saints as mediators between the mundane and the heavenly help explain the worship that he engenders?' They go on to state – quite rightly – that the boundaries between the religious and the secular are highly artificial and permeable. Nevertheless, in my opinion we still have to make the distinction, because otherwise their view that 'notwithstanding their secular content, personality cults are religious phenomena in the sense that they aim at rendering the world a meaningful place' (Van Ede 1999: 3) still does not define the relationship between the secular and the religious, not even when they write that 'personality cults around secular figures may be read as attempts to bridge the experiential world of the individual devotee with some larger system of meaning,' since such systems of meaning are not necessarily religious. In short, the existing view that the sacred and the profane are not two separate

worlds but are closely connected with each other has led mainly to further blurring of the boundaries. In order to determine whether the apparently profane or secular truly has sacred or religious characteristics, we have attempted in this volume to make a more precise distinction between the secular and the religious in relation to pilgrimage on the basis of ethnographic research (cf. Greil and Bromley 2003: 3-18).

Ethnography and Analysis

In their external appearances, visits to graves, shrines and special places display parallels in rituality, materiality or (religious) vocabulary, but these say little about their religious meaning. Piette has already stressed the importance of ethnographic fieldwork in determining the *'fait religieux'* in speech and writing in everyday life (Piette 2003: 101-108). He noticed an almost complete lack of such fieldwork relating to the monotheistic religions.²⁶ As religious experiences or impressions are difficult to pin down, how can religiosity – the condition of being religious – be identified? How does it manifest itself, and what exactly does religiosity consist of?²⁷ Is it purely a belief in supernatural powers or a transcendental reality? As religion is seen here as a human, culturally determined activity, it makes sense to reflect on what people may possibly expect from religion. Here we must consider elements such as finding meaning in life, membership of a living community and identification with its deceased members, safety and security, strength and support, comfort and hope, and healing and resolution, but also the expression of gratitude and possibly the expectation or hope of salvation and eternal life after death. I defined religion earlier in this article as all notions and ideas that human beings have regarding their experience of the sacred or the supernatural in order to give meaning to life and to have access to transformative powers that may influence their existential condition. But within the cognitive domain, religiosity is not only about having certain ideas, expectations, motives, or feelings inside one's head; it is also about the articulation of actions and practices. It is in behaviors and rituals and through the attribution of meaning to material culture that religion can manifest itself most clearly, while as a rule its most precise

expression is through oral or written communication or information about its content. Both methodological approaches have been utilized in this study. However, in practice it still proves difficult to identify the religious element unequivocally in the course of research. There are often several religious narratives that unfold simultaneously or are intertwined with each other. Especially in the Western world, which was partly created and missionarized by Christianity, almost all incarnations of religiosity are influenced by the continent's religious history. New expressions of religiosity and secular devotions in particular are frequently characterized by cultural hybridity. As such, the public perception of these cults is determined both by cultural heritage and the influence of the media and academics.

As has already been stressed, the analysis of motives and the reasoning on which it is based are of great importance to the analysis in this study. Previously published research has shown more and more clearly that the existential insecurity of individuals holds the central position in the contemporary motive repertoire of pilgrimage (Post et al. 1998; Margry 2004; Margry and Caspers 1997-2004). In the first instance visitors are seeking contact with the holy, the sacred, or with a god in order to gain support, protection, or eternal salvation. Empirical underpinning for this can be found in the texts written by pilgrims in intention books at the sacred sites,²⁸ but also in interviews with pilgrims themselves, in which the prevailing motives seem to be connected with the *condition humaine*, with problems of sickness, insecurity, levels of happiness and the meaning of life. Although in practice pilgrimage is often performed within a social context, the pilgrimage itself is primarily an individual exercise. In short, pilgrimage expresses the efforts the individual has to make to give meaning and direction to his or her personal existence.

The central place given to rationalism and the success of science and medicine in Western culture has changed the perception of pilgrimage to some extent, but it has not led to its disappearance. While some diseases have been conquered and people no longer need to go on pilgrimages to seek healing for them, new ailments have taken their place. Not only medical and social insecurity, but also a fundamental lack of confidence in social and political systems is a persistent problem. This is confirmed in the study by Dubisch and Win-

kelman based on the concepts of suffering and healing. They attribute major significance to a pilgrimage site as far as existential difficulties and healing are concerned (Dubisch and Winkelman 2005). Several case studies in this book confirm their findings. In relation to existential insecurity, Marijana Belaj has written as follows about people visiting the Tito statue in Kumrovec: 'The visitors connect the creative and prosperous period of their lives with their then leader, "the greatest son of these lands," in the hope that in their current troubled times Tito can do something for them again. Visitors to the small shrine of long-distance runner Prefontaine also see their cult object as an intercessor and as someone who can bestow blessings when a person badly needs support, just as Jim Morrison is expected to provide support for dealing with drug problems because of his own drug-related past.

Where the traditional religious contexts are no longer present or functioning, or are barely so, significant existential insecurities can develop, and people will look for alternatives. Several values surveys have indicated that the subjectivation of life and an increasing feeling of insecurity are widely occurring processes in contemporary Western society (Halman et al. 2005: 60-73). This concurs with what Hervieu-Léger (1999) states in her book about pilgrims, namely that due to major insecurities, the meaning systems which enable individuals to give personal meaning to their lives have been destabilized. The fact that people are led less by an external truth, as was the case in the traditional churches, can be seen in the places that have institutionally separated themselves as fundamentalist or secessionist movements and where the work of salvation can be seen as a pluriform process that can be mobilized for various groups and individuals, as described in the case studies in this book. It is precisely in these places that a desire for existential support and guidance in personal life is more emphatically present. New paths of religiosity are responses to the insecurity which has resulted from letting go of the churches; individuals have started to seek new forms of spirituality or new itineraries into the sacred.

People's dissatisfaction regarding the unreliability of politics and government or the inability of politics to solve the central problems of modern multicultural societies may also lead to unexpected forms of religiosity or persona-

lized attributions of sacredness. The assassination of the charismatic politician Pim Fortuyn, who was able to gain the support of a large part of the Dutch electorate in a short period of time, suddenly stirred up all sorts of terms associated with saintliness, as though people hoped that even from beyond the grave, like a sort of Messiah, Fortuyn would be able to provide solutions for their existential insecurities (Margry 2003: 118-122; cf. Colombijn 2007). Huub de Jonge observed something similar among the visitors to Soekarno's grave. They direct both personal requests and appeals to improve the situation at a national level to him, or as one pilgrim described Soekarno: 'He is able to revive the lives of those who are still alive.' The Soekarno cultus differs from other Indonesian pilgrimages in that it deals with both personal goals in prayer and thought and with national issues. Hope for a change for the better in their own situations is linked to a desire for improvement at the national level, something that can also be found among visitors to the Falcone tree in Italy.

Such forms of religiosity or spirituality cannot simply be lumped together under the heading of what is generally called 'New Age' or a 'holistic milieu' in the West, or as an element of the 'spiritual revolution.' With the exception of Glastonbury, there is no direct connection with the cults listed in this book. They should be seen as independent religious expressions reflecting the same massive subjective turn of modern culture (cf. Heelas and Woodhead 2005: 129-130).

Because of the falsification or inadequacy of pilgrimage concepts, the understanding that pilgrimage has different meanings for different pilgrims and the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon, it remains difficult to formulate a general definition of the term 'pilgrimage.' The currently held theories are primarily based on post-modern conceptualization, and that most commonly used at present is John Eade and Michael Sallnow's theoretically open concept, according to which pilgrimage can be described as an 'arena of competing religious and secular discourses' (Eade and Sallnow 1991/2000: 2, 5; cf. Kruse 2003: 156).

In this book, we assume that pilgrimage is in the first place transitional. This implies movement, but not as a central focus as it is for Coleman and Eade. The distance traveled is relatively unimportant; for pilgrims the essence

of a pilgrimage is to approach the sacred, to enter it, to experience, to draw near, to touch, to make it their own, and if possible to hold onto it for their everyday lives. To avoid qualifying every location visited by many people or every cultus associated with a local saint as a pilgrimage site, a few criteria for pilgrimage sites were drawn up for the Dutch researchers involved in the pilgrimage project.²⁹ Pilgrimage was defined in advance as a journey undertaken by individuals or groups, based on a religious or spiritual inspiration, to a place that is regarded as more sacred or salutary than the environment of everyday life, to seek a transcendental encounter with a specific cult object, for the purpose of acquiring spiritual, emotional or physical healing or benefit. A pilgrimage must therefore entail interaction between the sacred or the religious, an element of personal transition and the existence of a cult object. Without these elements, there is no pilgrimage; there is thus an essential distinction between pilgrimage and 'secular pilgrimage' (such as recreational travel, etc.) in that pilgrimage has a transformative potential to give meaning to life, healing, etc.

Against this background and on the basis of ethnographic fieldwork, the authors of this volume have examined ten case studies relating to the theme of 'secular' pilgrimage. The authors come from various research disciplines, primarily anthropology, ethnology, and folklore studies, and from a wide range of research traditions. They have reflected upon the religious dimensions of the sites where a secular person is remembered, admired, or venerated. The geographical distribution of the sites was primarily determined by the limited availability of researchers who are actively studying this phenomenon.³⁰ Almost all contributions deal with shrines and pilgrimages in Western culture and the former 'Eastern Europe.' One contribution, the cultus associated with the former Indonesian President Soekarno, is located outside the European-American hemisphere and shows that 'secular' pilgrimages are not just a 'Western' phenomenon.

Based on the various subjects and the results of the study, the articles can be sorted into four categories: pilgrimages that occur in political, musical, or athletic (sports) contexts; and pilgrimages that can be placed under the heading of 'Life, Spirituality and Death.' The contributions are classified in this

way because in modern society it is in the first three contexts in particular – three clearly distinct social categories – that veneration, glorification and idolization of secular individuals takes place. It is precisely in these three realms that mediatization is an important element and where the relationship between the secular and the sacred or religious is not clear. There have always been cults associated with individuals from the fields of state and politics, popular music and sports, but in the past few decades this element, accompanied by attributions of sacrality and sanctity, has increased exponentially. This was why it was important to conduct ethnographic research on the right themes.

Another factor is that the spectrum of pilgrimage has widened further. Due to processes of change in religious culture and in social and cultural areas, a new genre of pilgrimage has arisen in which the focus is on the communal or, more correctly, on the individual and the personal within the collective. The domain of 'Life, Spirituality and Death' has therefore become somewhat more diffuse. In this categorical context the pilgrims do not focus on one specific cult object, but seek meaning, support, comfort and healing in collectivity, in places of shared spirituality or shared suffering.

The contributions grouped under the heading of the political realm deal with the religious dimensions of the worship of 'political' individuals: statesmen, politicians and officials, in cases where veneration is based on grass-roots practice rather than on state-organized pilgrimages. In this context, a truly living monument – a tree – for the assassinated Italian anti-Mafia judge Giovanni Falcone has become a central point of reference for opponents and victims of the Mafia. Deborah Puccio-Den makes clear that the texts placed there and the commemorations held at the location constitute a large-scale protest against both the Mafia and the government. At the same time, the martyr Falcone has become a symbol of persistence and self-sacrifice, acquiring the iconic dimensions of a saint in Italy. Puccio-Den has not studied the sacralization of anti-Mafia judges as a process of memorialization, but as a praxis in which a religious dimension is attributed to a civil act.

A comparable practice can be observed in the Croatian village of Kumrovec, where in addition to the usual traditional buildings in the open-air mu-

seum, the house where the former Yugoslavian president Tito was born and a statue of the man are situated. The area around his statue is seen as a stage on which conflicts between different collective memories take place, especially during the annual celebration of the Day of Youth in Kumrovec, organized by the Josip Broz Tito Society in Zagreb. While it was not the society's intention to create a personality cult, Marijana Belaj observed that there were groups of women who circled around the statue touching it, while some would simply touch it and cross themselves. Some spoke or sang to the statue or simply saluted it. Many lit candles at the foot of the pedestal. A major aspect of the attraction is Tito's background of poverty and his struggle for humanity during his presidency. As one of his biographers wrote, his was the 'story of an ordinary man with an extraordinary life.' In the first part of this narrative, many visitors can identify with him and project their hope and need for support onto him. The site is thus converted into a pilgrimage shrine, particularly for visitors who come to make close contact with Josip Broz. It is somewhat remarkable that this happens only at the statue, whereas his actual tomb, located in a triumphant memorial park in the former capital Belgrade, hardly attracts any visitors and can certainly not be regarded as a pilgrimage site.

Like Belaj, Huub de Jonge studied a former head of state who managed to forge unity in an ethnically divided country for a long period of time. His account of visits to the grave of former Indonesian president Soekarno depicts the only non-Western pilgrimage of this volume. Although the grave is visited by people who simply want to commemorate Soekarno, there are also many who worship him in a religious manner. De Jonge follows Eade and Sallnow in their theoretical approach, according to which a pilgrimage consists of an arena of competing discourses and has 'accommodating power.' He shows clearly that both elements are powerfully present in Blitar. Although Indonesia currently suffers from internal divisions, De Jonge sees a form of national *communitas* taking shape at the grave and at the same time the realization of religious tolerance. He asserts that although the space and materiality of the shrine have been changed to fit in better with Indonesian Islamic culture, it still brings believers from different religious denominations together, and the pilgrimage appears to consolidate and reinforce feelings of being Indonesian, highlighting the country's aspiration toward unity in diversity.

Nationalism and social cohesion like that manifested around the grave of Soekarno can also be found within the realm of popular music and its stars, for instance around the grave of the Hungarian pop singer Jimmy Zábó. Ístvan Povedák focuses on the stereotypical plot elements in Zábó's life, which as it were predestined him for the role of a hero and idol who – in contrast to the leap that post-communist Hungary made into Western mass culture and the attendant media hypes – is cherished as an icon of anti-globalization. With his romantic repertoire, he was also a national identity-creating factor for the Hungarians and evoked a certain nostalgia for the past, elements which also played a role in the adulation of Tito in Kumrovec. Although his secular worship and adoration has assumed massive proportions, for a small minority of his fans his intrinsic significance extends beyond his music and the nation. In the context of secularization and individualization processes, they see Zábó as an 'Apostle of Love' who can provide a new religious and transcendental dimension for those seeking support in the everyday problems resulting from the arrival of modern capitalism. According to Povedák, this can be explained by the fact that with his music and his autobiographically-tinged lyrics, Zábó was able to forge a strong link between his own difficult life and the lives and social circumstances of many of his fans.

Whereas Zábó owes his special position primarily to his nationalistic and anti-globalist views, Erika Doss analyzes someone who stands for the mass culture of capitalist society: Elvis Presley. Doss has already described the meanings of Graceland (Doss 1999); here she deals specifically with the religious dimensions of Graceland, concentrating on three elements: ritual, religiosity and race. For her, Elvis consists of different conflicting images, many relating to his ethnicity (the 'All-White Elvis') and the social circumstances in which he lived, full of suffering and pain and loneliness. As the fieldwork showed, this is why he can function for visitors to his grave as a mediator between God and ordinary human beings. These specific fans regard him as a fellow sufferer. Some of them believe that Elvis has been resurrected or reincarnated, and similar ideas are also to be found in the Morrison cult. But, Doss asks, do ritual practices and revered images constitute the making of a religion or the creation of a saint-mediator? She sees parallels with other sacred sites as re-

gards devotional practices, material culture and commercialism, but are these sites actually linked to a transcendent reality? Graceland or going to Graceland are not religious in themselves, but they may become religious. The Elvis Week with the Candlelight Vigil in mid-August is the most obvious example; many gifts are offered to ask for Elvis's intervention in all kinds of personal circumstances. Doss goes on to show that Graceland is dominated by white people and that both visits and pilgrimages are imbued with an oppressive ideology of racial essentialism that completely disregards the original 'interracial' Elvis.

Despite the fact that, like Graceland, Jim Morrison's grave is also visited largely by white Westerners, the contrast could not be greater. Whereas Graceland seems to have grown to Disney-like proportions, Morrison's grave at Père Lachaise cemetery is hard to find and as modest as can be. In his contribution, Peter Jan Margry shows that within the mass of visitors, there are clearly discernible groups of visitors who follow different narratives, practices, rituals, and expectations and make the site a multiply contested space. Quite apart from the large stream of tourists, the 'real' Morrison fans are also emphatically present around his grave. In addition to a more general group of fans, there is a close-knit tribe in which sociability is very important. Another clear category of more-or-less individual fans are those who visit Morrison's grave in order to seek help and support for their existential problems from 'their Jim.' Based on Charles Glock's theoretical model, Margry determines the religious dimensions in this case. For the last group – the pilgrims – the espace Morrison is a sacred site, and Morrison himself functions as an independent cult object.

Pilgrimage in a sports context is represented here by Daniel Wojcik's study of the famous American long-distance runner Steve Prefontaine, an all-American folk hero and an icon and idol of American sports.³¹ When Prefontaine died unexpectedly in 1975, a 'spontaneous' memorial – Pre's Rock – was erected for him in Eugene, Oregon. As with the statue of Tito, this is a sacred place with a pilgrimage linked to an individual whose actual grave is located elsewhere. Wojcik places the erection of Pre's Rock in the context of spontaneous shrines and the theoretical pilgrimage debate. This small roadside shrine also appears to provide people with a new way of dealing with traumatic loss.

However, the success of the shrine has changed it into a monumental site and a place of pilgrimage for contemplation with 'a deeply religious experience.' Wojcik contends that because of the legends and lore surrounding Prefontaine and the way the media have depicted him, his fans go there to find a tangible connection, an 'authentic' encounter with their hero, in a setting that does not seem to have been commercialized or mass-mediated. At this peaceful place on the side of the road, Prefontaine's memory is maintained and nurtured through the desires of those who admire him. The visitors have transformed this place of death and mourning into a place of life, a dynamic ritual space where they can interact with him in some way.

We also find transformations of this kind under the heading 'Life, Spirituality and Death.' This section discusses research into pilgrimages which are more explicitly associated with life and the existential itself, with spiritual beliefs about life, with nature and the supernatural, and with the end of life. These three contributions are about one very ancient and two very modern sacred spaces within which pilgrimages are given shape. In all three cases there is no cult object, personal grave, or direct connection with the physically deceased individual. The pilgrims seek meaning, support, comfort, and healing in collectivity, at recently created locations where suffering and spirituality can be shared.

Marion Bowman opens this section. Her starting point is her extensive research on Glastonbury, but she presents new perspectives on the many journeys, quests and traditional and new pilgrimages she found there, provided by individuals, groups and both institutional and non-institutional religious movements. These are all framed in different paradigms of religion. Again, we often find the word pilgrimage used here as a 'container concept.' However, Glastonbury's position is different from that of the other shrines in this book, mainly because the town, with its pseudo-historical connection with Avalon, is seen almost by definition as sacred, as a sanctuary. People who feel drawn to Glastonbury regard it as a sacred place and perceive a journey there as a pilgrimage. Using Urry's theoretical framework of three bases of co-presence and against the background of the traditional pilgrimages to Glastonbury, Bowman shows how various New Age pilgrimages have found a place there

and how they function. Admittedly, it is not always clear who the pilgrims are and how a pilgrimage is undertaken. Bowman sees the experiential aspect of visiting Glastonbury as varied and complex and gives a detailed account of it. It turns out that in many cases, the journey to Glastonbury is itself secondary to the journey within Glastonbury. She finds several separate paradigms of religion there, built up over time. The latest, the amalgam known as New Age, has links to a multitude of sacred traditions: Pagan, Druid, Goddess-oriented and Christian. Bowman concludes that the visitors are all pilgrims and 'going with the flow.' There appears to be a growing consensus that regardless of the stated reason or focus of the pilgrimage, underlying the whole pilgrimage phenomenon is a motive on a larger scale: the timeless, universal pull of earth energies.

The Cancer Forest in Flevoland, on the other hand, has no historical roots or sacred myths at all. It was only planted in 2000, in a province of the Netherlands reclaimed from the sea. The 'Trees for Life Day' which is held there annually for cancer victims and their family and friends shows how individual grief management can develop into a public and collective manifestation of grief. In Paul Post's contribution he shows that the associated rituals have both public and individual dimensions. In this context he does not distinguish between classic religious pilgrimage and a newly emerging location-specific ritual like the Trees for Life Day. Instead, he focuses on the ritual in this particular case, employing what he calls the 'pilgrimage reference' as a heuristic instrument for comparative analysis. He does not specifically discuss whether the Trees for Life Day is a form of non-confessional or post-modern pilgrimage, but sets out to describe, analyze and interpret the ritual itself on the basis of this 'pilgrimage reference.' During his fieldwork he was confronted with many narratives about the lives and deaths of cancer victims, and over and over again these narratives suggested an unarticulated yearning for a broader context for those lives and deaths, and ultimately for support and hope. The visitors gain this support and hope by taking part in the ritual, through the idyllic setting of the living forest, and through the solidarity of the temporary community in the forest. According to Post these people, who have different religious backgrounds, find a functional ritual expression in this event.

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC is not the only focus of the commemoration of American soldiers who died in Vietnam, as Jill Dubisch's contribution makes clear. There is also a special event associated with Vietnam veterans: a 3,000-mile journey across the United States on motor-bikes – the Run for the Wall – which is claimed to be a pilgrimage. Dubisch, herself a participating biker (but not a vet), shows that the significance of the event lies in overcoming the traumas of the war and its later consequences, as the Vietnam veterans have to contend with above average social, mental, and physical problems and existential crises. On the one hand, the Run draws attention to their situation and gives them an opportunity to protest against the lack of adequate recognition of their problems; on the other hand, the journey is a ritual of resolution for them, and in that sense is comparable with the pilgrimage on foot to Santiago de Compostela, in which for most participants the journey rather than the destination has become the definitive element of the pilgrimage. Dubisch sees the Run as more than a political movement or a commemoration of war victims; according to her it is a profoundly spiritual journey with Christian and Native American connotations. Participants are swept up in the transcendent nature of the journey and its rituals, and are transformed into pilgrims searching for healing and a way to shake off their pain and grief.

Whereas in the following chapters themes relating to the secular and the sacred will be examined and analyzed on the basis of ethnographic fieldwork, in the final essay the main points which have emerged in the various contributions and the differences and similarities between them will be subjected to a synthesizing analysis. Obviously this does not mean that there is no more to say on these matters. Human beings constantly create new itineraries into the sacred, and research can only follow at a suitable distance.

Notes

1 With thanks to Marion Bowman, Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveldt, Charles Caspers and Willem Frijhoff for their comments.

2 These are some of the major concepts and approaches used in the following studies: Turner and Turner 1978; Antier 1979; Rinschede and Bhardwaj 1990; Eade and Sallnow 1991/2000; Morinis 1992; Post, Pieper and Van Uden 1998; Badone and Roseman 2004; Coleman and Eade 2004.

3 The symposium 'Non-Confessional Pilgrimage: New Itineraries into the Sacred in Contemporary Europe' was held at the Meertens Institute (KNAW) in Amsterdam on 28 June 2004.

4 It is important to realize that the meaning of the word 'pilgrimage' in English is not as precise as its equivalents in some other languages. It is possibly due to the focus in English-language pilgrimage studies on travelling and the early medieval *peregrinatio* idea that the wandering, travelling, tourism element has remained so strong in the pilgrimage concept; in contrast, in the Germanic languages concepts with clear semantic differences have developed, such as *Wallfahrt* and *Pilgerfahrt* in German and *bedevaart* and *pelgrimage* in Dutch. See Berbeé 1987.

5 Turner 1969; Dupront 1967, 1987: 366-415, cf. on the latter Frijhoff 2002: 282-284.

6 The key publication of this project is a four-volume lexicon (in Dutch) by Margry and Caspers (1997-2004). This entire work can now also be consulted online and is kept up to date: www.meertens.knaw.nl/bedevaart/. For the project's theoretical approach and its boundaries see Margry and Post 1998 and Caspers and Margry 2003.

7 For reasons of practical feasibility, it was decided that no attention would be paid in the Dutch project to the veneration of rock stars and other secular individuals or of monuments, etc. In the first instance another reason for not involving them in the project was that it seemed that the religious dimension would play only a very limited role in these cases or would not be an essential part of them. (Margry and Caspers 1997: 17).

8 Actually, views like this also existed in the past, but then they were regarded – for instance – as superstition.

9 The best-known is the Yser Pilgrimage to Diksmuide in Flanders where the Flemish victims of World War I have been commemorated since the mid-1920s.

10 A few years ago this issue was revived and brought up for discussion again. See Hänel 2004: 112.

11 This is actually only partly true, since in their research they rarely consult the large body of fieldwork carried out in *Volkskunde* or *Folklore Studies*. Also relevant in this context is the large-scale Dutch pilgrimage project, in which again no evidence was found of the development of *communitas* (Margry and Caspers 1996-2004).

12 As far as the modern 'new' pilgrimages on foot are concerned, the opposite is true. These pilgrims are eager to publish their experiences online or in book form (cf. Frey 1998; Post et al. 1998: 221-242). See also further on in the introduction.

13 Here I am disregarding theologians such as St John of the Cross who, building on the idea of the *peregrinatio*, have held similar views, mainly in the theological sense, ever since the Middle Ages.

14 In 1987 the Council of Europe declared the *camino* a symbol of European unity and identity, and the route network was designated a 'European Cultural Itinerary.'

15 This phenomenon is reflected clearly in the notes in pilgrim's books, a new genre of reflective journal which has arisen as a result of these changes. Most pilgrims keep these journals and if possible have them published later (Frey 1998; Post, Pieper and Van Uden 1998: 205-242; cf. Coleman and Elsner 2003).

16 Another romantic topos often found in pilgrimage literature is that shrines are located in places that are extremely difficult to reach: 'Marian shrines are often situated in inaccessible places'

(Swatos and Tomasi 2002: 207).

17 Cf. note 4.

18 To supplement the existing travel perspective, in addition to the standard 'exterior' pilgrimage Michael York also distinguished an 'interior' pilgrimage, which he characterizes as 'an individual's transformation from a spiritless or degrading position to one held in relatively high esteem according to the religious framework involved.' The 'revelatory experience and spiritual awareness' then become 'purely internal or mental journeys' (York 2002: 138). This notion did not appear from thin air; apart from the geographic pilgrimage, it also has a connection with the old *peregrinatio* idea. In late antiquity there was not yet any clear concept of what is now referred to as pilgrimage (Bitton-Ashkelony 2005: 17-19). According to Bitton-Ashkelony, between the fourth and six centuries St. Augustine's notion of *peregrinatio* became associated with the sacred topography, so that a sacred mobility arose, which was focused on personal rituality and attribution of meaning to local shrines (Bitton-Ashkelony 2005: 204-206).

19 Later Eberhart more or less repeated this suggestion among German-language ethnographers with the aim of shifting the research focus in the German-speaking areas as well from the shrine to the pilgrim (Eberhart 2005).

20 Apart from these functions, pilgrimages – and processions as well – are also important as opportunities for the participants to publicly disseminate their own religion in the community on the basis of the identity-forming power and demonstrative effect of these events (Margry 2000: 419-421; Hänel 2004: 118).

21 The distinction between local veneration of saints and pilgrimage cults is extremely important, but it is seldom evaluated or examined in detail in pilgrimage research. Especially in view of the rise of Internet shrines, this is a topic which should now be given priority on the research agenda.

22 This sheds a completely different light on quantitative studies by researchers such as the Nolans, which will need to be revised (Nolan and Nolan 1989). Just to compare – at that time Nolan and Nolan (1989: 34) arrived at a figure of 48 obvious Dutch pilgrimage sites, whereas the Dutch pilgrimage project (Margry and Caspers 1997-2004) ultimately included 660 bigger and smaller sites.

23 It should be noted in connection with this outcome that the system of multiple-choice questions has strong steering effects and more easily leads to checking off many motives than a system of open questions.

24 For this theme see also Korff 1997 and Frijhoff 1998, 2004.

25 Passariello's analysis with respect to Che Guevara in the same volume does not get much further than the observation that on the basis of external similarities, Che was 'like a saint' (Passariello 2005: 89).

26 Eade and Sallnow have posited a similar diagnosis regarding the Christian pilgrimage (1991/2000: 26-27).

27 For an approach and definition based on the psychology of religion, see Hill and Hood 1999.

28 We find few or no miracles in the traditional sense, but many supplications for support and help, often in an emotional sense, as well as thanksgiving for support and help received, cf. Pönisch 2003.

29 In short, the criteria consist of the following points: (1) there must be a specific cult object present; (2) this cult object is linked to a more-or-less permanent sacred cult site or space; (3) the site has not been visited only once or for a short time – in other words it must be rooted in both time and space; (4) the visit or pilgrimage must be an international phenomenon: visitors must travel some distance between their daily living environment and the pilgrimage site; (5) the cult site or object must be considered more beneficial than other sites or objects; (6) there must be some sort of religiously inspired pattern of action or expectation, cf. Margry and Caspers 1997: 15-16.

³⁰The somewhat declining interest in Princess Diana's grave in Althorp Park may explain why no researcher could provide a contribution dealing with this obvious example; by contrast, the spontaneous shrines raised for Diana immediately after her death were researched and immediately and also questionably considered pilgrimage sites, cf. Rowbottom 2002: 35

³¹For the phenomenon of sports' idols and idolatry, see Vanreusel 2003.