

Reimagining Mobilities across the Humanities

Volume 2: Objects, People and Texts

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10 Exploring tourism ‘slow’ mobilities

Margherita Cisani and Chiara Rabbiosi

Two summers ago, Chiara was struggling to find the right direction on a specific trail she was walking along as part of her daily stage in a walking holiday. The way-markers were very poor, and she was not able to proceed as initially planned as, every other minute, she had to spend a lot of time re-orienting herself in the correct direction. Having already lost the way a couple of times, feeling tired and afraid of being unable to reach the final destination by the end of the day, she was feeling very frustrated because she was ‘losing time’.

More or less at the same time, Margherita was on her third day of a biking holiday, enjoying the rush of a fast downhill slope that would have brought her quickly from Conor Pass down towards Brandon Bay. The fatigue of the ascent was now offset by the thrilling sensation of the descent, and by the majestic view of the bay, which was rapidly approaching. She would have liked to stop at every bend to admire and capture the view with her camera, but the feeling of being able to arrive quickly at her destination riding her agile bike (albeit weighed down by the two panniers) gave her energy and excitement, and the views remained behind her pedal strokes.

The authors of these chapters are both scholars and – indeed – tourists, with a specific interest in so-called slow tourism; the latter is an ambiguous term used in common discourse (including tourism promotion) to identify a form of transport for tourist mobility that runs at fewer km/hrs than common tourism-related transport such as motorised vehicles or airplanes. In this chapter we will delve into ‘slow tourism’ via two specific locomotive practices – walking and cycling. Inspired by our auto-ethnographic revelations, we will sketch some ‘fictional vignettes’ (Rabbiosi and Vanolo, 2017), that is to say, “stories or situations that do not strictly report factual realities observed by the author, but that, in any case, implement the heuristics for the arguments that the author wants to raise” (p. 265). Merging debates on ethnographic fiction and on history as a narrative discourse with methodological reflections on autobiography and auto-ethnography, Rabbiosi and Vanolo (2017) have suggested that the power of fictional vignettes is that they may serve to communicate research outcomes, to explore specific topics and to build meaningful

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arguments, in ways that effectively take into account and connect multiple events, diverse perspectives, non-linear chronological structures, downplaying 'grand scholarly stories', in favour of small stories and everyday lives. In this chapter, fictional vignettes will help us to consider a range of speeds enacted in walking and cycling performances of place. By adopting this method, we will be able to show various aspects of tourist mobility that are generally overlooked.

In the first two decades of the 2000s, and at least until the breakdown of the global pandemic connected with Covid-19, tourism was considered an ever-growing economic sector, one which was also a major driver for the circulation of people, objects, images and, indeed, money. As a consequence, tourism mobilities could be considered a major force within the dynamics of space and place at any given scale. As the famous article by Mimi Sheller and John Urry was published in 2006 claiming for a 'new mobilities paradigm' (Sheller and Urry, 2006), the latter author was a well-established sociologist whose work on the 'tourist gaze' had been published in 1990 (Urry, 1990) and was already considered a seminal work. Together, Sheller and Urry had also co-edited a book specifically on 'tourist mobilities' in 2004 (Sheller and Urry, 2004). In parallel, a larger group of anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, historians and cultural theorists were making tourism the object of their research, not as an end in itself, but as a means to develop theory concerned with society, mobility and space (with MacCannell, 1976, being a decisive forerunner in this direction). The accent was then posed on 'place performances' (Bærenholdt et al., 2003; Coleman and Crang, 2002; Edensor, 2009) and on 'tourism mobilities' (Hannam, 2008; Hannam et al., 2006) to include embodied, hybrid, multiple and always 'in becoming' socio-material entanglements. Tourism started to be considered as a way of "dwelling-in-motion" (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 214) and tourist destinations were then considered as "consisting of physical stuff, which is itself always in motion: new hotel developments, airports and roads, eroding beaches and erupting volcanoes, stinging mosquitoes and deadly viruses" (Sheller and Urry, 2004: 1) – to end up with a very current quote despite having been written more than 15 years ago. Moving on from these premises, in the next section we will propose a framework to discuss 'slow tourism' according to a mobilities and humanities perspective.

10.1 A new pace for tourism?

More recently, the measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19 have stopped the sheer volume of global tourism, with some analysts considering that domestic tourism performed in a 'slower' way will (should) be the new trend (Fuzier et al., 2020). Indeed, the global pandemic of 2020–21 has led scholars to ponder whether we have arrived at a metaphorical fork on the tourism development road (Ioannides and Gyimóthy, 2020). Is tourism therefore encountering a change of pace?

Tourism developed as the downside of the industrial revolution (Équipe MIT, 2011); a context in which movement was confronted with the research for speed intended as a synonym of order, efficiency, and progress. For John Tomlinson (2003, 2007) the story of speed in western modernity begins optimistically, linking speed with emancipation, exhilaration and creativity. However, it eventually falters as ever-increasing speeds raise anxieties about the loss of control. This story is reflected in tourism as shown by the recent explosion of social and cultural conflict that came to be known as ‘overtourism’ and ‘tourismophobia’ – two terms having their genesis

in the rapid unfolding of unsustainable mass tourism [sic] practices at the beginning of the 2000s and the responses that this has generated amongst academics, practitioners and social movements concerned with the detrimental use of urban, rural and coastal spaces, among others, for tourism purposes.

(Milano et al., 2019: 353)

Another parallel between the story of speed in western modernity and the story of tourism concerns the dominion expressed by a cultural image presenting acceleration as inevitable and framed as a binary option of fast/slow or mobile/immobile. Indeed, this image has recently been the object of a critique seeking to complicate a seemingly single, continuous story of modernity by considering ‘slowness’ (Bergmann and Sager, 2008), ‘stillness’ (Bissell and Fuller, 2009), ‘moorings’ (Hannam et al., 2006) and ‘frictions’ (Cresswell, 2014) as key elements of modernity, and the same can be said for tourism.

Jennie Germann Molz has stressed how velocity is a crucial element of the way in which modern and contemporary tourism is generally represented (Germann Molz, 2009). She has also acknowledged that relatively little scholarly attention has been paid to the significance of pace in understanding tourist mobilities. Merging Henri Lefebvre’s notion of ‘rhythm’, insisting that rhythms are multiple and differentiated (Lefebvre, 1992), and Tim Cresswell’s ‘politics of mobility’ (Cresswell, 2010), Germann Molz has suggested that ‘pace’ is considered as contextualised velocity. With this conceptual framework, she has analysed media representations of ‘slow travel’, a label that – as Germann Molz was writing at the end of the first decade of the 2000s – was becoming popular in the tourism sector.

The labels of ‘slow travel’ and ‘slow tourism’ are commonly used today to describe forms of holidaymaking that are different from mainstream contemporary tourism in the context of the affluent world. The distance travelled in the same amount of time is shorter but considered richer in terms of experience both *en route to* and at the destination. According to some authors, slow tourism provides a response to the social dilemma of tourism development whilst at the same time offering a reduction of carbon emissions (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar et al., 2012). As such, slow tourism can be

broken down into four main dimensions. The first is the counter-cultural perspective on the time-society nexus it represents with regards to holidaymaking; the second strand concerns the interaction with the locality that is supposed to be deeper; the third relates to the mode of transport chosen to move within the locality and to reach the locality; finally, the environmental consciousness that slow tourism apparently demonstrates shall also be listed. Walking and cycling holidays can both fall under the label of slow tourism and have been proposed as such in the last decade.

Walking holidays can be defined as holidays where the "main motive is to walk for most days and for most of the day between accommodation points, either on a linear or circular route" (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010: 122). Walking holidays can also encompass outdoor forms of tourism, such as endurance tourism (Lisle, 2016; Olafsdottir, 2013) as they require fitness and link the two consumer realms of sport and tourism on one side, and adventure tourism on the other, mingling play and risk (Kane, 2004; Weber, 2001). Finally, walking tourism may also intersect pilgrimage tourism, particularly when the latter is considered from a secular and post-secular viewpoint (Collins-Kreiner, 2010; Nilsson and Tesfahuney, 2018), given the transcendental meanings attributed not only to reaching a specific 'sacred', though not necessarily religious, destination but, even more importantly, to the journey and the 'circulation' itself.

Cycling holidays are vacations whose main goal is travelling by bicycle, the latter often considered not merely as a means of transport but as a tool for encountering and discovering destinations, seen as an intrinsic feature of the travel experience. Being a fairly multifaceted practice (Lamont, 2009; Ritchie, 1998), scholars explored this topic from various sides, focussing on the cyclist's behaviour and needs, in order to offer insights for place promotion and branding (Ritchie et al., 2010). They also highlighted the environmental and social impacts of bicycle tourism on destinations, especially those less affected by tourist flows (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010) and explored its narrative, phenomenological and cultural dimension (Fox et al., 2014). Bicycle tourism is an integral part of the current discourse on sustainable tourism, as it is considered to cause almost zero emissions and, at the same time, to produce profit for local economies.

There is a variety of aspects that walking and cycling holidays have in common. First of all, they both require a major physical effort, as human muscles are the driving force of motion. The body is therefore both the power and the friction of these kinds of tourism, subject to acceleration and deceleration according to the socio-material entanglements walking and cycling holidays are subject to. While walking or cycling, the body is largely exposed to the environment, its meteorological events and its specific morphology, as well as the technological modifications made to the infrastructure of the environment, in order to make it suitable for walking or cycling. The moving body is, in both cases, further empowered technologically by a variety of 'banal technologies' ranging from the sole of walking shoes (Michael, 2000) to the

ensemble of frame, bolts, wheels, not to say the set of digital technologies that are increasingly common in walking and cycling such as GPS or – in the case of bikes – electrical assistance. Another common aspect of walking and cycling holidays is their recent promotional success, with investment at national and local government level to provide transregional and transnational trails, standardising routes for walking or cycling for leisure purposes. Walking and cycling tourists can also now find specific facilities (from accommodation to repairing) along the trails and notices about them are fed through specific branding campaigns, which can also be ‘emplaced’ as in the case of way-markers to be found along the trails that also tell a story of the region walked/cycled.

Although similar, walking and cycling tourism are also different, with walking enjoying relatively more freedom in the choice of the route walked but being limited to a shorter distance than cycling. Walking is relatively less technological than cycling and possibly more un-mediated. Using our personal experiences with both these forms of ‘slow tourism’ proves useful to reflect upon a supposed change of pace in tourism, revealing also a specific ‘constellation of mobilities’ (Cresswell, 2010) that involves tourism. To maintain our focus on this aspect, we have organised our writing in three sections that aim to express three important aspects that inform new paces in tourism, and which we want to scrutinise critically: acceleration / deceleration; analogical / digital technological support; and spatial consumption / production.

10.2 Acceleration/deceleration

As it was her first, long cycling holiday, Margherita learned very carefully the skills needed in order to plan and perform her journey along the Irish Wild Atlantic Way¹ by bicycle. Luckily, she wasn't alone, as her partner was an expert cyclist. Together, before departure, they built their ideal itinerary, choosing hypothetical stages based on various factors: the length of the route, the hills and their steepness, the presence of towns where they could stop for refreshment and rest, the attractions to visit – National Parks above all – and, of course, campsites to spend the night in. As the tour started, Margherita kept monitoring their cycling speed with the odometer and checking their moving location on a specific app on her smartphone. Everything had to be performed in the quickest and most efficient way in order to be able to reach the next destination in time and to enjoy what was awaiting. However, once one of the legs of the trail was reached, the following destination had to be conquered and there was no time to linger! Sometimes, Margherita would have liked to stay more than one night in the same campsite, with time to observe, smell and feel the humid and green Irish landscape, as other tourists were doing, with their recreational vehicle parked, relaxing on their deckchairs in front of the ocean. During their cycling holiday, Margherita and her cycling partner met a Greek cyclist who was travelling across Europe from Athens to North Cape. His pace and speed were much faster than theirs! He wanted to reach Norway just before wintertime and

seemed very relaxed, and adaptable, as he was able to decide where, when and how long to stop according to his desires, and he also had more experienced and self-sustaining equipment. In fact, unlike Margherita who had a specific date to reach her final destination because of limited holiday time, the Greek cyclist was embarking on a trip with no precise theoretical end date. A few days later, Margherita met a couple walking the 'Dingle Way', an eight-day trail around one of the southwest peninsulas stretching into the ocean.² As the path was now pretty steep, everybody was cycling and walking at a decidedly slow pace, but Margherita knew that she and her partner would soon overtake the walkers and, by the end of the day, they would have been furthest ahead. Confronted with these encounters, Margherita realised she had – at least she had to try – to stop caring too much about how slow or fast she was cycling if she wanted to appreciate her own unique cycling holiday in Ireland.

The problem with much discourse about slow tourism is the way 'slowness' is presented: as a counter-cultural perspective and as a richer attitude in encountering destinations, or as an expression of environmental consciousness. Whatever the option, it tends to reduce its place performance to an essence. On the contrary, the term place performance – possibly a jargon term for human geographers – exactly pinpoints how essentialised definitions are always overcome on the grounds of practice. Enacted through mobilities, place performances reproduce and, at the same time, exceed common tourism representations (Bærenholdt et al., 2003; Edensor, 2009). Following this approach, Phillip Vannini suggested considering the term 'slow', used in labels to identify a variety of counter-cultural phenomena (e.g. 'slow food'), as a verb instead of as a noun (Vannini, 2014). Focussing on how people try to slow down

means to affect the way in which we dwell in the world, and in turn to be affected by it. To slow down is to act and move differently, to experience the social and ecological environment in ways that run counter to the logic of speed.

(Vannini, 2014: 117)

Slowing down is always relational, and it is also a far less intuitive and complex action than is generally acknowledged. It is about material practices merged with cognitive work and the emotions that are at work while performing deceleration through an assemblage of bodies, objects, media, technologies and time-space.

Think of the vignette presented above: as shown, cycling tourism requires a lot of attention in planning the 'speed' that any single stage of the route necessitates to be ridden, carefully reflecting upon the velocity your body-bicycle can reach and considering the different obstacles that could cause the 'frictions' for deceleration. The vignette shows that deceleration is far from intuitive. It requires cognitive work and a series of technologies to be enacted, from the work done prior to the cycling holiday – to consider difference in

heights, hours of light, paths accessibility, weather forecast – to that done during the holiday itself, where deceleration can be due to obstacles or unexpected events met on the way. However, it can also be due to considering that it is wiser to decelerate despite a faster potential to save energy or to enjoy the landscape crossed through better. Similarly, you might find yourself having to, or being willing to, hurry up. The second aspect the vignette would like to explore is that what may seem decelerated with reference to other forms of tourism – i.e., flying for miles to your destination to enjoy your holiday – presents its own degrees of acceleration, especially if compared with other place performances. Some cycling routes are equally shared by cyclists and walkers. Co-dwelling the same route in motion and affecting each other, their bodies will be compared in a way that enhances the acceleration of the former against the deceleration of the latter. The interaction of acceleration/deceleration emerges, shifting the scale of observation of place performances. We may be very fast tourists flying miles away to our destination to enjoy our holiday on a sandy Caribbean beach, but once there we might be even slower than cycling holidaymakers, who spend relatively little time ‘mooring’ – such as on a sun lounge – at their destination. This way, slow tourism can also represent a way of dwelling space in motion in a relatively accelerated way in comparison to other forms of tourism. As also the example from Chiara at the very beginning of this chapter shows, time-constraints are no less intense in slow tourism than in other contexts.

10.3 Analogical/digital technological support

Last summer Chiara decided to walk a part of the Via del Volto Santo³ across the border of the Liguria and Tuscany regions in Italy. Via del Volto Santo is a secondary branch of Via Francigena,⁴ a former famous pilgrimage route now turned into a ‘cultural’ transnational trail. Because of the constraints of her holiday time as well as of her physical ability, she decided to walk just a part of it, starting at the mid stage. She had previously gone through the paper guide entirely devoted to the trail, published by Terre di Mezzo Editore, an Italian publisher who is a guide and a point of reference for long-distance walkers wishing to walk historical routes. As well as this, Chiara had downloaded on her smartphone Wikiloc, an app offering user-generated GPS trails and waypoints and live tracking. Indeed, she had ensured that her smartphone was fully charged! Once she reached the location of the point of departure for the trail stage she wanted to walk, it was actually difficult for her to find the route as there was no explicit sign. There was something that might have been the path, but it was so full of weeds, dirt and discarded rubbish that it was difficult to say if it was a walkable route or not. Therefore, she decided to ask some folk in a café in the surrounding area, and received a somewhat baffling, but ultimately possible, answer. In the end, Chiara noticed a little faded sticker on a traffic sign standing at the crossing point between the traffic road she had had to walk to reach the point. Although faded, a blue arrow pointed in the direction of the path/wasteland she had

previously noticed. Throughout her walking day, Chiara encountered a variety of analogical technologies like these that routed her in the right direction and relied on human interaction, when possible, to clarify her doubts. In addition, she consulted her smartphone app frequently as the route was interrupted for a certain length due to forestry works. The digital support provided by the app meant that she did not lose her way and also allowed her to find a possible detour away from the official trail. For Chiara using the app is always a negotiation between her anxiety of becoming lost and the need for reassurance (provided also by brief human encounters and the wayfinder stickers encountered along the way) and the limits of embodied posture that the app imposes.

Tourism is indeed a form of productive consumption that connects people, organisations, material objects, environments and technologies. Analogical and digital technologies fulfil a significant role in both walking and cycling tourism. We can say that slow tourism is increasingly interlinked with 'smart technologies'. Long before the advent of the digital, place performances concerned with slow tourism were brought into being by collaborative and technologised doings and enactments, interlinking the corporeality of tourist bodies and their creative potential with the material affordances of places. Besides explicit and clearly visible technologies, slow tourism relies on a variety of technologies that are so 'banal' that they are not even perceived as technologies. This is the case with the sole of your shoes (Michael, 2000). Besides a vast range of technological wearable items that have recently filled the consumer realm of outdoor tourism as well as of ordinary leisure practices – think for instance of wind-stopper clothing or sweat-proof t-shirts – both cycling and walking holidays are increasingly familiar with digital supports to assist in finding the route as in the case of route trackers and GPS. These technologies can accompany the walker/cyclist, but can also be part of 'fixed' infrastructure allowing for easier moving, as in the case of waymarkers. Waymarking is one of the most significant technologies that can provide a 'script' for performing slow tourism. They can be very simple and analogical – as in the case of the little stickers described in Chiara's vignette – or increasingly detailed, including transmedial narratives to let the walker know both technical details of the route walked as well as information about the natural and the cultural heritage of the area walked/cycled. The sticker mentioned in Chiara's vignette might have included a QR code which, once framed with a smartphone, might have linked to a digital map or to a video. Smartphones are indeed miniaturised mobilities (Elliott and Urry, 2010) which may support both virtual and 'real' mobilities, or – increasingly – a mix of the two. The internet is the increasingly ordinary invisible infrastructure (so ordinary that we scarcely realise it is there, until some specific circumstance forces us to be deprived of it). The use of specific technologies made for supporting walking or cycling has an impact on how space is encountered and how place is performed on the move. In Chiara's vignette, having to rely on the app involved stopping, checking where she was, interpreting the live tracking to assess her own route, adopting a walking posture that continuously shifted

from the screen of the smartphone to finding other orienteering signs in the environment, making the immersive experience in the historical landscape of *Via del Volto Santo* something much more technologically complicated than the usual representations of walking holidays. Supporting technologies are also linked with the acceleration and deceleration discussed in the previous section. On the one hand, they may help with going faster, not losing the way; on the other hand, technologies somehow detract from the countercultural dimension of slow tourism by adopting the same dominant expressions and structures of contemporary society and culture more than is generally acknowledged.

10.4 Spatial consumption/production

Luca, a walker, and Anna, a cyclist, have just randomly met at a rest area on the Via dei Terrazzamenti ('terraced route') in Valtellina.⁵ He had just finished a wine-tasting visit in a local winery and had arrived at the area by car in order to have a view of the landscape, while she had rented an e-bike, rode the Sentiero Valtellina⁶ cycle path and had decided on a small detour, intrigued by the signposts, before reaching the farmhouse where she was to spend the night. The panoramic rest area along the cycling route was designed and equipped to allow visitors to park their vehicle, have a snack and – above all – appreciate the surrounding mountainous landscape. The landscape here is marked by dry-stone walls, a technique for supporting the vineyards on steep slopes. An information panel was located in the rest area in a position that directed the tourist gaze so that the dry-stone wall, as well as the other 'hidden treasures' of the valley, could easily be spotted. However, instead of devoting their tourist time to the visual consumption of the landscape, Luca and Anna soon began chatting, finding similarities and differences between their reciprocal experiences. While Anna had moved across the bottom of the valley next to the river Adda bordering the cycle path, Luca's wine-tasting trip had focused more on the terraced slopes and the random villages located there. He had not even perceived the presence of a river! But he had noticed many industrial sheds along the highway marking the valley in its entire length as much as the river. Thus, while chatting, they assembled the tiles of the landscape mosaic they had moved through in different ways. In the end, astonished by their different perceptions of it, they decided to walk together as far as the next rest area, so that each could point out to the other what he or she might have missed of the landscape.

As already stressed, slow tourism is often represented as an alternative to 'mainstream' tourism, characterised by a deeper engagement with the locality visited and by the higher consciousness those who perform it should have when faced with the environmental impact and cultural implications of tourism. For these reasons, interest in promoting slow tourism has increased in the last few years, with both local and national governments supporting local development through walking or cycling tourism (see, for instance, Fabritius, 2018). With this aim, a range of policies have been implemented that seek

to exploit lesser-known tangible heritage sites, such as 'minor' monuments and examples of vernacular infrastructure, and intangible heritage, such as rituals, working traditions and everyday community life, in order to decrease the pressure of tourism in certain areas and support the local economy in socially and economically deprived areas. While the French National Agency for Tourism Development has published on its YouTube channel five videos to promote the supply chain of *slowtourisme*,⁷ the Italian Ministry for Culture and Tourism promoted the Year of Italian Walking Routes in 2016 (*Anno dei Cammini d'Italia*), which was followed in 2019 by the National Year of Slow Tourism (*Anno del Turismo Lento*). Slow tourism therefore represents some of the major themes of our age with respect to the marketisation of places, no less than other business-as-usual forms of tourism. Indeed, tourism is a form of consumption, with services, objects, images that are assembled in place performances, therefore becoming productive in both symbolic and socio-material terms, as we are contending.

Routes and itineraries walked and cycled are performative themselves in so far as they increasingly represent an active way of 'selecting' specific narratives and aesthetics of a place, supported by planning policies that favour the maintenance of landscapes in a way that can easily be consumed by tourists. Landscapes are increasingly shaped in order to be consumed by 'mobile' forms of tourism, favouring specific place performances to the detriment of others. Exploring both the planning and the use of slow tourism itineraries shows that there are multiple dynamics for both place production and consumption, often interweaving and sometimes conflicting. As the vignette illustrates, slow tourists' performances are scripted as much as other kinds of tourists' performances are – think of how a rest area or an information poster along a cycling path could have been designed to facilitate the sight of specific elements of the landscape and a specific narrative and embodied storytelling. Slow tourists, like any other tourist, build their landscape experience combining information that comes from different sources: internal (their knowledge and senses) and external (such as the information on posters), which together cooperate in producing tourist place performances.

The institution of a cycling or walking trail is not merely an act of naming an itinerary on a map (a territorialising act). It is a scripting technology which includes different agencies and disciplines. Designing a cycling/walking trail also involves the selection of areas to be crossed by the itinerary and of the elements of the landscape that will be enhanced so that they can easily be consumed while on the move. Cultural heritage plays a major role in this regard. For instance, the vignette refers to dry-stone walling, an ancient technique to make room for cultivations in mountain areas that is also today recognised in the Unesco Representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.⁸ Enhancing the landscape of vineyards may be a good strategy to support slow and gastronomic tourism, but it is nevertheless a process of value production that tends to segregate some areas – despite the importance for the local economy and community they might have – concealing them

unless the tourist manages to deviate from the predetermined itinerary (Puleo, 2013; Visentin and Vallerani, 2018).

Slow tourists can – no more, no less than other tourists – be responsive to the script prepared for them in different degrees and, in the end, the slow tourism landscape they will consume will actually be their own personal production. In this landscape production process, the mobility pattern adopted is crucial, as in the two cases – Luca’s and Anna’s – portrayed in the vignette.

10.5 Conclusion

In this chapter we have aimed to offer a humanities perspective to tourism mobilities by moving from the analysis of a kind of tourism which has originated as the opportunity to give an alternative pace to the frenetic rhythms of contemporary tourism, namely ‘slow tourism’. By focussing on three dichotomies that may connote ‘slow’ tourism mobilities as the opposite of mainstream ones, we have actually tried to question and challenge the label of slow tourism. Focussing on place performances enacted via cycling and walking tourism has provided the chance to go beyond the typical essentialisation of velocities, rhythms, qualities and emplacements that are intrinsic to the use of the label ‘slow tourism’ in common discourse. By using fictional vignettes, we have shown how acceleration and deceleration are always relational, mingling the pace of tourism – historically and situated – with the different velocities experienced and given meaning to. The focus on analogical and digital technologies has served to question the apparently unmediated experience turning space into place that is generally implied in discourses presenting slow tourism as a more authentic experience than other forms of tourism. This focus has also contributed to reinforcing and clarifying how much slow tourism is contextualised mobility, the product of a consumer society from which it is basically impossible to escape. Lastly, we have tried to challenge the opposition between spatial consumption and production with a specific reference to how landscape is encountered in slow tourism. As we have shown, contemporary slow tourism – which we have presented in the form of cycling and walking holidays – is no less scripted than other kinds of tourism, channelling the embodied tourist performances as they move and as they moor.

Slow tourism is but one piece of a constellation of mobilities and is always the result of a sum of diverse patterns of mobilities. This aspect relates to a further point often taken for granted which is actually of major importance in light of the climate and urbanisation crises we are currently facing. In tourism promotion, slow tourism is often presented as a ‘zero emissions’ consumption practice. Although the amount of greenhouse gas emission is undoubtedly lower in walking, running or cycling and the behaviour of slow tourists is generally eco-friendlier (Dickinson et al., 2011), the ‘slow’ and un-pollutant walking or cycling journey of a weekend relies on the opportunity to reach the starting point of the itinerary, which in most cases does not coincide with

one's home doorstep. Indeed, the quest for the rural or for the 'natural idyll' is often one of the causes of the uncontrolled urbanisation of remote areas and of spoiling the landscape. The latter consideration is even more topical, as the pandemic crisis is, on the one hand, putting pressure on rural and remote areas, seen as the 'relief valve' of overcrowded tourism destinations as well as urban areas and, on the other hand, seeing a renewed preference for cars compared to collective means of transport as they are perceived as safer vehicles in which to travel. What will the pace of (post)pandemic tourism mobilities consist of?

Notes

- 1 www.discoverireland.ie/wild-atlantic-way Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 2 www.dingleway.com/ Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 3 www.viadelvotosanto.it Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 4 www.viefrancigene.org Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 5 www.valtellina.it/en/via-dei-terrazzamenti Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 6 <https://sentiero.valtellina.it> Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 7 www.atout-france.fr/services/les-tutos-du-slowtourisme Last accessed 14 April 2021.
- 8 <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/art-of-dry-stone-walling-knowledge-and-techniques-01393> Last accessed 09 April 2021.

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