

The Tweed Run: the sustainable rise of fashionable cycling

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Abstract

Purpose

This article explores some of the socio-cultural influences and trends that have contributed to a sustainable rise of fashionable cycling in the UK in the last decade. It focuses particularly on one case-study event – the Tweed Run – to extrapolate 'stories as lived and told' (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000) of those involved, looking at how material objects lend sustainable agency to a fashionable cycling experience.

Design/methodology/approach

Narrative Inquiry is used to explore how a subject interacts with their material objects as revealed through personal storytelling. This study also seeks to apply the psycho-social concept of the symbolic and aesthetic 'third' (Froggett and Trustram, 2014) within fashion research.

Findings

This paper proposes that there has been a sustainable rise in fashionable cycling due to influences such as the 'Olympic Cycling Effect' (Grous, 2012), social infrastructure investment and the proliferation of experiential cultural events, such as the Tweed Run. The participatory nature of the activity provides an opportunity to use and relate to material objects in a manner that supports their transformation to a 'symbolic' or 'aesthetic' third (Froggett and Trustram, 2014), initiating satisfactory [life] stories that can advance living action (Rosenwald, 1992).

Research limitations/implications

Narrative Inquiry aims to create a new sense of meaning and significance within the research topic, rather than focusing on establishing a grand narrative.

Originality/value

This research brings understanding to how material objects can be related to and used by individuals to become symbolic and aesthetic 'thirds', providing sustainable agency to an active fashionable experience.

Keywords: *narrative inquiry, fashion, cycling, sustainability, Tweed Run, material, story, storytelling*

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