

# NEW CONCEPTS AND MEANINGS OF *SLOW*

## The case of Slow Art

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**Abstract** – The present study explores new meanings and values of the word *slow* in the context of *Slow Art Day*, a global event that takes place once a year and whose aim is to encourage both visitors and museum curators to engage with art in new and different ways. Since 1989 and the early days of Carlo Petrini’s Slow Food Movement, the concept of slowness has become a relevant and ethical topic that is often related to what is organic, local and sustainable. While the notion and impact of slowness have been studied in different areas such as food (Petrini 2003), media (Rauch 2011), medicine (Wear *et al.* 2015) and education (O’Neill 2014), museums are yet to be investigated in depth. Through the lens of Appraisal Theory (Martin, White 2005) and corpus linguistics (Sinclair 2004), I focus on a diachronic study of the language of evaluation adopted in the Slow Art Day official blog, which keeps a record of the reports of the museums that take part in the yearly event. By using both a quantitative and qualitative approach, I focus on how appraisal is used to enhance and promote the new and different semantic dimensions related to slowness. My analysis of the Slow Art Day blog will illustrate how slowness is no longer related to the semantic dimension of Time, but also to those of Wellbeing and Inclusiveness, while a close study of evaluative language will show how these dimensions are interconnected to one another.

**Keywords:** Appraisal Theory; blog; corpus linguistics; promotional discourse; slow art.

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to explore new values attributed to the adjective *slow* in the context of the *Slow Art Day*, focusing specifically on the linguistic options adopted in the promotion of the event.

In 1989, to protest against fast-food chains and support local and ethical production in favour of a ‘good, clean and fair’ economy in Italy, Carlo Petrini created the *Slow Food Movement*. The coining of such a slogan, seems to suggest that, within the context of analogous movements, the adjective *slow* acquired new meanings in English: as a matter of fact, *slow* seems to be associated with issues related to wellbeing and sustainability and not only to time (Nocella, Bondi Submitted). Little did Petrini know at the time, that Slow Food would be in fact used as an example all over the world to initiate similar movements, such as Slow Academia (O’Neill 2014), Slow

Medicine (Wear *et al.* 2015), Slow Shopping, Slow Housing (Steele 2012), Slow Media (David 2015), and Slow Art. Terry founded the Slow Art Day in 2010 to encourage museum visitors to engage with art in a non-consumeristic way, encouraging them to spend more than the average of 28.7 seconds in front of a piece of art before moving on to the following one (Grant 2018). The Slow Art Day movement is intended for both visitors and for museums themselves, which is why for the event museums agree to organize exhibitions where visitors have to focus on five different art pieces for ten minutes each (Gould 2018). The end of the exhibition is usually followed by a convivial discussion around food and drinks where people will share their feelings and impressions. Since 2009, more than 200 museums have taken part in the initiative, and the Slow Art Day team writes posts on each event which are then published throughout the year on their official blog.

Which values are promoted in the Slow Art Day blog (SAD-blog)? And how are they linked to new concepts of *slow*? Given the change in meaning of the adjective *slow* in English (Nocella, Bondi Submitted), it would be interesting to explore whether such changes are also applicable to the Slow Art Day movement.

This paper will open with a review of the literature on blogs (section 2.1) and evaluative language (section 2.2), with a specific focus on Appraisal Theory (Martin, White 2005). Then it will examine materials and methods used (section 3), followed by results (section 4) and conclusions (section 5).

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Blogs

The classification of blogs has been a topic of interest in research over the years. Blogs are virtual spaces where people share, disseminate and recontextualise knowledge according to their readers' needs (Luzón 2012). Herring *et al.* (2005) identify three types of blogs: topical blogs, which are news-based; journals and diaries, which are more personal; and knowledge-blogs, where authors share their expertise. Blog posts, which are "authors' entries" (Bondi, Seidenari 2012, p. 17) can vary in style, from colloquial to formal, and by target, addressing a small or large audience, and select their readership based on personal or professional elements (Puschmann 2013, p. 88). Despite this variation that we encounter in the different types of blogs, Puschmann (2013, p. 91) argues that some linguistic properties and elements seem to be universal. For example, blogs show consistency in their construction: usually they start with a title, followed by a text, and they close with tags or keywords related to the content of the post, name of the author, time of publication and the URL (Winer 2001). Blogs also distinguish

themselves for being text-based, for showing posts in reverse chronological order (from the most recent to the oldest), as well as for being frequently updated, and for having links to other websites (Baron 2008; Schmidt 2007).

Blogs are real instances of language in use: they provide readers with glimpses of how language is used to carry out communicative actions, both at professional and everyday levels (Bondi 2018a), and their authors even interact with different audiences at different levels (Lazzeretti 2021), creating “interwoven polylogues” (Bondi 2018a, p. 46), and maintaining simultaneous conversations with their audience. However, they have also been studied as a space for both self-promotion and creation of group identity (Davies, Merchant 2007; Luzón 2012; Myers 2010). Academic blogs, for example, are encouraged by institutions, becoming “a key means of disseminating research, visibility and expanding outreach to commercial and lay worlds” (Zou, Hyland 2019, pp. 714-715). As a useful tool for self-promotion, blogs become “virtual arenas where content (including news) is produced, shared, and – crucially – commented on evaluatively” (Bondi, Seidenari 2012, p. 18). According to Puschmann (2013, p. 88), blogs are “a highly variable form of self-expression”, where bloggers and commentators tend to show their attitudes towards their audience, making evaluation a central discursive function in blog texts (Bondi 2018a; Bondi, Seidenari 2012, p. 18). In fact, the “inherently evaluative nature of blogs” (Bondi, Seidenari 2012, p. 25) has led blog authors to use a high number of subjectivity markers in this genre (i.e., personal pronouns and adjectives). The degree of subjectivity has been explored in the genre of blogs (Bondi 2018a; Bondi, Diani 2015; Cacchiani 2019, 2023), in more specific academic blogs (Bondi 2018b, 2018c; Zou, Hyland 2019) and scientific blogs (Bondi 2018a).

Zou and Hyland (2019) identify four attitudinal dimensions, also known as elements of stance, through which writers present themselves to readers. These are hedges, used to withhold a complete commitment to a position; boosters, which are used by authors to gain credibility; Attitude markers, which indicate the writer’s affective side; and self-mention, which shows the “writer’s intrusion in the text” (Zou, Hyland 2019, p. 717). Zou and Hyland (2019) also analyse engagement strategies that are used by authors of academic blogs to recontextualise as well as to attract an audience. Such rhetorical strategies include readers-mention, which attracts readers by using second person pronouns (i.e., the use of *you*); directives, which give instructions to readers through the use of the imperative or obligation modals; and questions, which invite readers to a “direct collusion” with the author, by appealing to readers’ shared knowledge (Zou, Hyland 2019, pp. 717-718).

## 2.2. *Evaluative language and Appraisal Theory*

The notion of Evaluation is widely used in discourse analysis and in analysing lexical expressions related to speakers and writers' emotional attitudes. It is related to the expression of the speakers'/writers' attitude or stance towards a viewpoint or feeling about something (Hunston, Thompson 1999, p. 5). While evaluation can be achieved linguistically, lexically, and grammatically through texts (Hunston 2011, p. 12), lexical items (such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns and verbs) play a fundamental role thanks to their "chief function and meaning" (Hunston, Thompson 1999, p. 14).

Therefore, evaluation can be described as "comparative, subjective, and value-laden" (Hunston, Thompson 1999, p. 13) where its core lies in identifying signals of comparison, subjectivity, and social values while still highlighting the polarity between what is good and what is bad, with good coinciding with what helps us to achieve a goal, and bad with negative obstacles (Hunston, Sinclair 1999, p. 85). While different studies provide appropriate approaches to delimit evaluation (Bednarek 2006; Channell 1999; Hunston 2011; Su 2016), for this specific case study I will use Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory, which specifically focuses on issues regarding speakers/writers' evaluation, and considers different parts of discourse without necessarily focusing on grammar.

The appraisal framework is organised into three main systems, namely Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation, which are then divided into different subsystems:

- Attitude is concerned with "values by which speakers pass judgements and associate emotional/affectual responses with participants and processes" (White 2001, p. 1).
- Engagement focuses on language users' resources that are adopted to negotiate the arguability of their utterances.
- Graduation involves the intensity and modulation of prepositions.

Particular attention is placed upon Attitude, which is especially relevant for this study as it provides tools and identifies strategies that will be useful to analyse the type of language used in the Slow Art Day blog. Martin and White (2005, p. 43) claim that "Attitudinal meaning tends to spread out and colour a phrase of discourse as speakers and writers take up a stance oriented to affect, judgement or appreciation". This particular system of meanings provides tools to map feelings in English texts (Martin, White 2005, p. 42), not to mention the fact that "the canonical grammatical realization for attitude is adjectival" and that grammatical frames are useful for distinguishing kinds of attitude with respect to this kind of realization (Martin, White 2005, p. 58). As this paper also concerns the new meanings of the adjective *slow*, a system

of attitudes provides the right tools to carry out my investigation.

As previously mentioned, Attitude is further divided into three main subsystems concerning emotions, ethics, and aesthetics, which respectively correspond to Affect, Judgement, and Appreciation (Martin, White 2005).<sup>1</sup>

- Affect belongs to the semantic field of emotion (e.g., *happy/sad, confident/anxious*). It is concerned with positive and negative feelings, emotions, and reactions to different kinds of behaviour, text/processes and phenomena.
- The subcategory of Judgement concerns how we construe our attitude towards people and the way they behave, and it is further divided into the subcategories of Social esteem and Social sanction (Martin, White 2005, p. 52).
- Appreciation can be thought of as the system by which human feelings, either positive or negative, towards products, processes and entities are institutionalised as a set of evaluations (Martin, White 2005, p. 42). It is a “mental process ascribing an attitude to a thing” (i.e., a person considers/sees something [appreciation]) (Martin, White 2005, p. 42), with “things” referring to what we make, performances and natural phenomena (Martin, White 2005, p. 56). Appreciation can be further divided into Reaction (impact of the object), Composition (the complexity of a product) and Valuation (how it is valued).

Martin and White provide a series of lexical-grammatical resources that help classify and evaluate propositions for each category, highlighting how words act in context.

### 3. Materials and methods

This study is based on the analysis of the *Slow Art Day corpus* (from now onto referred as SAD), which contains 250 posts selected from the Slow Art Day blog (SAD-blog) over an eight-year (2020-2012) in the typical reverse chronological order of blog posts. Texts were encoded according to the year and month of publication, using the following denomination: Year\_SAD\_Blog\_MonthDay (e.g., 2014\_SAD\_Blog\_January14). Table 1 shows the number of posts for each month and year from 2020 to 2012 and provides a general idea of how posts are distributed across time.

<sup>1</sup> Further information on the Appraisal Framework can be found on the official Appraisal Website, developed by Peter White (2015) and available at <https://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/> (16.6.2021).

Table 2 mirrors Table 1 showing the number of tokens contained in the posts, which are again divided by month and year, reaching 51,660 tokens for the whole corpus. Similarly to Table 1, Table 2 shows that 2012 and 2020 are the years that contain the highest number of tokens. This might coincide with the opening of the blog (2012), and therefore more publicity might have been needed, and with the pandemic outbreak (2020) that forced people to stay at home and engage with online activities.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
JANUARY	-	9	2	1	-	1	-	-	8
FEBRUARY	1	3	2	-	2	1	1	-	1
MARCH	2	2	5	-	6	2	7	1	3
APRIL	13	6	16	3	8	7	6	14	3
MAY	3	2	2	-	-	5	-	-	8
JUNE	1	4	2	-	-	1	-	9	3
JULY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
AUGUST	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	5	2
SEPTEMBER	3	1	-	-	1	1	2	2	3
OCTOBER	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	4	4
NOVEMBER	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	7
DECEMBER	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	4	3
TOTAL	41	34	29	4	17	18	16	42	47

Table 1  
Number of posts on the SAD blog.

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
JANUARY	-	4,435	163	259	-	117	-	-	1,513
FEBRUARY	514	1,170	780	-	534	161	54	-	334
MARCH	824	446	732	-	1,465	289	1,144	81	628
APRIL	2,630	2,603	2,222	851	1,036	1,503	904	2,179	580
MAY	570	513	862	-	-	1,570	-	-	2,838
JUNE	386	996	199	-	-	403	-	1,603	1,502
JULY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	659
AUGUST	1,042	321	-	-	-	-	-	728	1,117
SEPTEMBER	915	228	-	-	74	158	235	332	1,722
OCTOBER	523	972	-	-	-	-	-	811	1,621
NOVEMBER	2,350	919	-	-	-	-	-	567	2,031
DECEMBER	1,087	185	-	-	-	-	-	898	816
TOTAL	10,823	2,561	4,959	1,110	3,109	4,201	2,337	7,199	15,361

Table 2  
SAD Blog: number of tokens per month.

To investigate the promotional features and values promoted in the SAD blog, I divided my analysis into two stages. First, I generated a wordlist and identified the most frequent nouns that best represented the promotion of the

event. A collocation analysis of such nouns allowed me to create a set of semantic preferences (Sinclair 2004), which were denominated “semantic dimensions” and which best reflect the representation of the SAD.

In the second stage of my analysis, I focused on the use of appraisal (Martin, White 2005) in the blog to explore the evaluative lexicon used to promote the SAD. The corpus was qualitatively and quantitatively analysed with UAM CorpusTool software, which not only provided me with statistics and comparative elements from the data, but it also allowed me to annotate sentences and clauses at both a macro and microlevel of analysis. At a macrolevel, the texts were tagged according to year of publication, while segments of texts were manually annotated according to the semantic dimensions found in the first stage of analysis. Segments that fell into more than one dimension were tagged more than once. At a micro-level of analysis, I annotated the speaker’s/writer’s evaluation, perception, and descriptions of the specific SAD event using Martin and White’s (2005) annotation scheme already embedded in the UAM CorpusTool. This allowed to analyse the evaluative lexicon used to promote the SAD event, as well as identify values linked to *slow* within the SAD context. Lexical items were annotated and analysed following two of the three categories of Attitude: Affect and Appreciation (Table 3).

ATTITUDE TYPES	
SUB-SYSTEM	SUBCATEGORY
AFFECT Evaluates an entity, process or state emotionally. E.g. <i>That makes me happy</i> .	UN/HAPPINESS - Happiness (+ve): Affection. E.g. <i>adore, be fond of, love</i> ; Cheer. E.g. <i>buoyant, cheerful, jubilant</i> - Unhappiness (-ve): Antipathy. E.g. <i>abhor, dislike, hate</i> ; Misery. E.g. <i>down, miserable, sad</i>
	DIS/SATISFACTION - Interest (+ve). E.g. <i>absorbed, engrossed, involved</i> - Ennui (-ve). E.g. <i>flat, stale, jaded</i> - Pleasure (+ve). E.g. <i>chuffed, pleased, satisfied</i> - Displeasure (-ve). E.g. <i>angry, cross, furious</i>
	IN/SECURITY - Security (+ve). E.g. <i>assured, confident, trusting</i> - Insecurity (-ve). E.g. <i>anxious, astonished, uneasy</i>
	DIS/INCLINATION Assessments as to the desirability attached to any object, person or undertaking. - Desire (+ve). E.g. <i>keen, long for, miss</i> - Fear (-ve). E.g. <i>fearful, wary, terrorized</i>
APPRECIATION Evaluates things, processes, and states of affairs aesthetically or with the social value accorded to the object. E.g. <i>They consider it beautiful</i> .	REACTION Values referring to, or derived from values of AFFECT but where the emotional reaction has been detached from any human experience of the emotion and attached to the evaluated entity as if were some property which the entity objectively and intrinsically possesses. E.g. <i>depressing, boring</i>
	COMPOSITION How the parts of the entity fit together. Positive (+ve). E.g. <i>balanced, harmonious, well-formed</i> Negative (-ve). E.g. <i>confused, convoluted, ill-formed</i>
	SOCIAL VALUATION Whether something is ‘socially’ valued for its usefulness, worthiness, efficaciousness,

health-giving properties: its contribution to the community or its values to consumers.
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Table 3  
Attitude annotation scheme – adapted from UAM Corpus Tool.

Table 3 shows the built-in UAM CorpusTool annotation scheme of the appraisal subcategory of Attitude which provides users with specific questions that are useful in classifying a lexical item.

## 4. Results

### 4.1 The SAD semantic dimensions

Starting from the wordlist that was generated by AntConc 3.5.8 software (Anthony 2019), I grouped items into three main categories that could best represent the promotion of the SAD: Arts, Occasion and People (Table 4).

ARTS	OCCASION	PEOPLE
<i>art</i> (2145)	<i>day</i> (1204)	<i>you</i> (381)
<i>museum</i> (445)	<i>event</i> (228)	<i>participants</i> (214)
<i>gallery</i> (219)	<i>experience</i> (193)	<i>people</i> (174)
		<i>hosts</i> (96)
		<i>visitors</i> (87)
		<i>artists</i> (84)

Table 4  
Categories of the most frequent items in SAD blog (adapted from Martin, White 2005).

In the category of Arts, I observed the collocations of the words *art*, *museum*, and *gallery*; for the category of Occasion, I investigated the words *day*, *event*, and *experience*; while for the last group, People, I examined the collocations of the items *you*, *participants*, *people*, *hosts*, *visitors*, and *artists*.

Looking at the collocations of each of these nouns, I next identified six key semantic dimensions that were recurring in all elements belonging to each one of the three macro-categories Arts, Occasion, and People. These are not linked to the semantic preferences of each individual word form, but rather to the semantic preferences (Sinclair 2004) that characterize the representation of the slow art day event as a whole, as seen through the word forms initially identified as characterizing the event, its object and its participants. The dimensions that I identified are the following:

1. Education: this includes elements regarding empowerment and learning through SAD activities (examples 1-2).

- (1) Slow Art Day was created to *empower* museum *visitors* to change their experience themselves and help them *how to*\_look at and love art. [SAD-Blog/26 Mar2013]
  - (2) Not only do we want people to come to our programs, we also want them to be more active *participants* and to *encourage* conversation. [SAD-Blog/21 Aug2019]
2. Inclusiveness: includes elements of co-working, collaboration, and accessibility (examples 3-4). It also comprises terms connected to internationality (i.e. if the event is reachable and accessible to everyone).
- (3) *Slow Art Day* is an *accessible* and *affordable* activity that mirrors the ‘fair go’, non-elitist attitude of many aspects of Australian culture and life, i.e., that everyone should have *access to the same opportunities and experience*. [SAD-Blog/22 Sept2012]
  - (4) We invite *artists all over the world* to open their studio for Slow Art Day (...). [SAD-Blog/19June2019]
3. Innovation: focuses on the originality and the uniqueness of the event (examples 5-6).
- (5) If you’re in the area, stop for a *unique experience*. [SAD-Blog/11Apr2013]
  - (6) In the webinar, Sara spoke about how engaging all senses helps participants to engage with *art* in a *new* way, and how it brings *pleasant and unexpected* element to the *visitor’s experience*. [SAD-Blog/11Apr2014]
4. Time: focuses on elements of taking time to relax and engage with art and the activities of SAD (examples 7-8).
- (7) *Looking slowly and taking time* to move in and around this artwork completely changed my perception (...). [SAD-Blog/9Oct2019]
  - (8) *Slow Art Day* and the *value of spending time* looking at pictures. [SAD-Blog/24Apr2012]
5. Value of Art: focuses on the fact that SAD is a non-profit organisation, relying on the support of volunteers (examples 9-10).
- (9) *Slow Art Day* is an *all-volunteer*, self-organized, annual *global event* that aims to transform the art viewing experience. [SAD-Blog/27Apr2012]
  - (10) (...) and are quite avantgarde, subcultural, *non-profit art event*. [SAD-Blog/7Mar2013]
6. Wellbeing: is related to the positive effects that SAD has on participants, i.e., mindfulness, relaxation, etc. (examples 11-12).

- (11) We look forward to seeing what *mindful* and *immersive experiences* the Yorkshire sculpture park programs for Slow Art Day 2020. [SAD-Blog/15Apr2012]
- (12) Read on to find out Carol’s approach for an *inspiring yet meditative Slow Art Day* this year. [SAD-Blog/20Aug2020]

Table 5 shows how collocates were recategorized into the six dimensions. The collocates include all the verbs, adjectives and nouns that collocated with each one of the search words listed in Table 4.

DIMENSIONS	LINGUISTIC FEATURES
Education	<i>art and education; conversation about, how to look at, learn, think about, value of art</i>
Inclusiveness	<i>accessible, global event; events, hosts, museums around the world include more participants visitor engagement; empower visitors</i>
Innovation	<i>challenging, enjoy, really look at art rare, unique experience, event</i>
Time	<i>experience, look at, slowly enjoy art slow, long, full day participants are asked to spend an hour looking at... people spend their valuable time...</i>
Value of Art	<i>affordable, all volunteers, free, non-profit event</i>
Wellbeing	<i>art and wellness, makes love go around spiritual, rare, sublime event people feel more relaxed slow art day with mindfulness and meditation</i>

Table 5  
Linguistic features characterising the dimensions of the SAD blog.

Table 6 shows the general statistics of the tagged dimensions, which were calculated using the Statistics Tab on the UAM Corpus Tool.

DIMENSIONS	N.	PERCENTAGE
Education	256	20.50%
Inclusiveness	391	31.31%
Innovation	163	13.05%
Time	212	16.97%
Value of Art	45	3.60%
Wellbeing	182	14.57%
TOTAL UNITS	1249	100%

Table 6  
Relative frequencies of the semantic dimensions tagged in the SAD blog corpus.

Table 6 also provides details on the total number of segments (“Total Units” and “N”) that were tagged in the corpus, as well as the total number of

segments tagged for each dimension. It also shows the relative frequency of each of the dimensions in relation to the total number of tags in the corpus. As can be seen, Value of Art (3.60%) is the dimension that is mentioned the least, while Inclusiveness is the one mentioned the most, with 391 segments tagged and a relative frequency of 31.31%.

The graph in Figure 1 highlights the diachronic change in the relative frequency of each semantic dimension in its reported year.

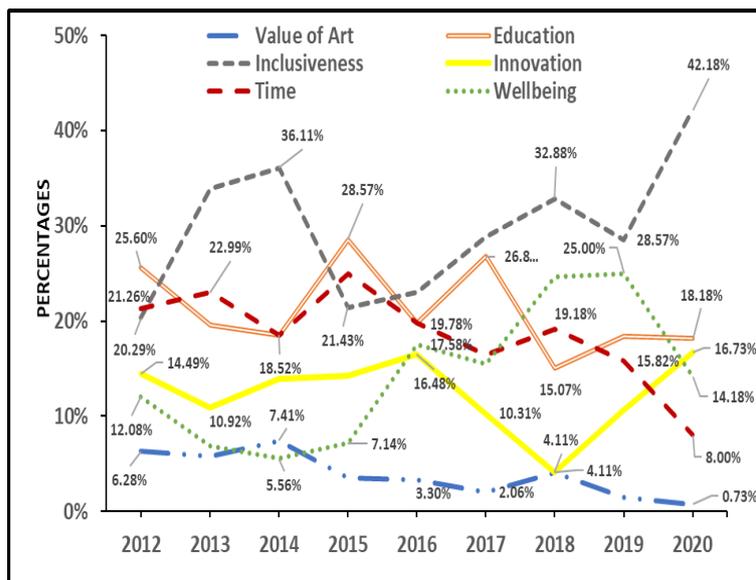


Figure 1  
Diachronic trend of dimensions in the SAD Blog from 2012 to 2020.

The Value of Art dimension (related to the field of money, ticket prices, volunteers etc.) is rarely mentioned in the SAD blog, thereby representing around 4% of the semantic dimensions throughout all the years taken into consideration, showing a slight decrease towards 2020. This might be due to the fact that it relies on volunteers, and that the event does not entail costs nor an explicitly stated price of hypothetical museum membership that might be intimidating to new participants. The dimensions of Time (related to taking time to relax, time spent during the visit, etc.) and Education (linked to concepts of empowerment and learning), despite showing different peaks over the years, seem to be less frequent in 2020, with Time occurring only 8% and Education in 18% of the dimensions. On the other hand, the dimension of Wellbeing (related to the positive effects that SAD has on its participants) has been slowly increasing since 2012 reaching a peak in 2019, which is followed by a sudden drop in 2020 (representing 14.18% of the dimensions mentioned the posts). Innovation (linked to elements of uniqueness and originality) and Inclusiveness (with reference to co-working, accessibility, etc.), emerge as the most frequent dimensions occurring in the blog over the years. Reference to Innovation increased by 2% from 2012 to

2020 in the SAD blog, while Inclusiveness is the dimension mentioned the most, representing 20% of the dimensions in 2012 and increasing to around 42% in 2020. This might be because the participants' approach towards museums might have changed over the years, suggesting that museums are not only seen as places of education and culture but also of entertainment and relaxation.

## 4.2. Attitude in the SAD blog

In the following subsections, I will explore in further detail how appraisal features reinforce the purpose of each dimension. However, the dimension of Value of Art will not be analyzed in detail, as there is almost no evaluative language to boost this non-profit and volunteer-based organization.

### 4.2.1. Attitude in Education

With regards to Education, Table 7 and Table 8 provide us with a detailed overview of the word forms that have been used to evaluate education in the SAD blog. It is worth pointing out that, for both categories of Appreciation and Affect, all collocates carry connotations.

COMPOSITION	<i>diverse, wide audience</i> <i>complex, unmediated conversations</i> <i>clear, compelling, creative, interesting design</i> <i>rich, smallest details</i> <i>collaborative drawing</i> <i>deeper, descriptive, direct engagement</i> <i>brilliant, challenging, easy-to-follow, energized, exciting, hard, global, immersive, innovative, international, important, lively, meditative, more powerful, poetic, quiet, self-organized, spirited, well-planned, worldwide event</i> <i>contemplative, intense, multi-sensor, simple, slow digital experience</i> <i>detailed, great, good piece of art, images</i> <i>dramatically higher, average time</i> <i>immersive, interactive tool</i> <i>reflective, slow walking tours</i>
REACTION	<i>amazing, exciting, fantastic, great, incredible, meaningful, soul-touching, sublime, successful, unique, very mindful and peaceful, very well unexpected and surprising, wonderful experience, (art) event, webinar</i> <i>positive, terrific feedback</i> <i>unique and easily recognizable, unique and contemplative image, approach, way of experiencing art</i> <i>exhilarating, interesting to learn, discuss</i>
SOCIAL VALUATION	<i>effective approach</i> <i>eye-opening discussion</i> <i>resources are easily accessible</i> <i>community-oriented, important opportunity</i> <i>inspiring art, reflections; look at art in a new way; new art, breath of freshness, education-based movement, perspective</i> <i>insightful, mindful, rewarding, thought-provoking event, exercise, experience</i>

Table 7  
Collocates of Appreciation in Education.

With regard to Appreciation (Table 7), we can classify further semantic fields that are used to describe the activities linked to education and learning. First, the level of complexity of the SAD activities is highlighted through the presence of descriptive terms such as *engaging, contemplative, challenging, and simple*. Second, there is a nuance of collaboration, as visitors learn about art through *collaborative drawing, direct engagement, and engagement activities*. SAD activities seem to suggest a form of experiential learning, promoting a new way of gaining knowledge, through principles of inclusiveness, community building and shared knowledge, achieved through *complex or unmediated* conversations between visitors, artists and curators. Third, wellness seems to fall under the realm of Composition with the description of *energized, immersive, meditative, and spirited* activities that are again a new and innovative way of learning. Moving onto the subcategory of Reaction, the use of positive adjectives emerges related to the experience of learning through a new and innovative approach to art (i.e. *it was amazing to learn/discuss about*). Within the specific aspect of learning, we find the semantic fields of awe (*amazing, incredible, sublime*), newness (*unexpected, surprising*) and wellbeing (*mindful, peaceful*). The adjectives from Social Valuation are related to empowerment (e.g. *gives more confidence*), wellness (e.g. *meditative, mindful*), newness (e.g. *eye-opening, new, thought-provoking*) and to elements of accessibility (e.g., *accessible*).

Examples (13) and (14) below provide some instances of Appreciation in the context of Education.

- (13) The discussions after each exercise and at the end (we took two hours) were very *inspiring*. [SAD-Blog/17Apr2017]
- (14) One participant noted it was “*meaningful* to exchange our drawing with a partner, interpret each other’s, then explain our own”. [SAD-Blog/29Apr2019]

Allowing visitors to not only gain new skills, but also leave the exhibition with positive feelings and a high level of self-confidence, the SAD proves to be valuable and useful from an educational perspective. Education seems to be intertwined with the dimensions of wellbeing, innovation, and inclusiveness: while learning, visitors acquire the skills of independence and empowerment, as well as gaining a sense of wellbeing and relaxation.

This sense of wellbeing and relaxation can also be seen in the results conveyed in Table 8, which shows in detail the use of Attitude in Education, and in particular, the effects and feelings that learning has on visitors during the SAD.

ATTITUDE IN EDUCATION	
Happiness	<i>enjoy, joy, love</i>
Inclination	<i>participants/we actively, deeper, deeply, slowly</i> engage with
Satisfaction	<i>delighted, inspired, pleased, surprised</i>

Security	<i>Empowered</i>
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Table 8  
Expressions of Affect in Education.

Table 8 does not display the nodes of the collocates as they mostly coincide with the experiencer (e.g., *we are delighted with, visitors enjoy taking time, we feel empowered by...*). Moreover, as all the adjectives and adverbs carry a positive connotation, I named the subcategories leaving their positive type of classification (Figure 1), hence Happiness, Inclination, Satisfaction, and Security. We can see that Happiness and Satisfaction share the sense of wellbeing and pleasure from learning. Security, which is related to the sense of confidence and trust that a person has towards something, provides further support to the findings already discussed in the social evaluation of education, namely that SAD activities leave the visitor with a sense of empowerment (example 15).

(15) I feel *relaxed* and *empowered* with a new tool – how ‘to be’ with art. [SAD-Blog/9Oct2019]

Concerning Inclination, adverbs such as *deeply, slowly* and *actively*, refer to the way visitors approach the activities that are proposed for the event. I would like to pay particular attention to the adverb *slowly*, which would normally be linked to notions of time, and that in this case is actually used as a synonym of ‘with detail’, ‘closely’, or ‘attentively’.

When learning about art during SAD, visitors seem to create a deep connection to what they are learning, they become active viewers, totally and actively engaging with the work of art they have in front of them.

#### 4.2.2. Attitude in Inclusiveness

Table 9 below shows the linguistic features used to enhance inclusiveness in the SAD blog.

COMPOSITION	<i>accessible, compelling, poetic</i> words <i>easy-to-follow</i> instructions <i>global, local, multi-sensory</i> event, experience <i>important for everyone</i> <i>simple</i> exercise <i>wide</i> audience
REACTION	<i>a universal</i> experience <i>it was delightful, great, reaffirming</i> to ... <i>invigorating, wonderful</i> slow art day <i>very well received</i>
SOCIAL VALUATION	<i>accessible, community-oriented, encouraging, informative, new and varied, valuable, worldwide shared</i> experience

Table 9  
Linguistic features of Appreciation in Inclusiveness.

Looking closely at Composition, it emerges that inclusiveness is conveyed mainly through two aspects of accessibility: I have labelled the first ‘physical accessibility’, and the second ‘educational accessibility’ (examples 16-17). ‘Physical accessibility’, is mainly related to the reachability of the event, namely its audience (how widespread it is, how many people it includes, nationalities, etc.); its dimension (i.e., whether it is large, small, or virtual), and how important and reachable it is (i.e. *accessible, global, local, or virtual*). Physical accessibility is also promoted in an implicit way through periphrases such as “*multisensory* experience at home”, referring to the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak and the new solutions adopted by museums. In terms of ‘educational accessibility’, activities organized during the SAD are *accessible, easy to follow, and simple* so that anyone can take part in them. The simplicity of the activities is also indicated in the absence of complicated and difficult jargon, in favor of simple language, which suggests an inclusive approach that takes into account all kinds of readers.

- (16) I guarantee it will put you in a good mood and show you some of the magic of this *global/local* Slow Art Day phenomenon. [SAD-Blog/8Apr2019]  
 (17) We recommend that other Slow Art hosts consider this *simple* but powerful memory drawing exercise. [SAD-Blog/25Nov2020]

In terms of Reaction, the response to the event with respect to inclusiveness is again positive. Positive reactions emerge concerning community-building activities, such as group discussions with other visitors, artists, and museum curators (i.e. *it is great to have artists and spectators communicating; it was well-received across social media...; It was delightful to see that participants engaged...*). In the SAD blog, inclusiveness also emerges indirectly (hence not through the description of the accessibility of the event), by using questions which are directly addressed to the reader (*Was the experience of*

*the Slow art day invigorating?*), or by using the imperative so that readers can follow instructions and be directly involved with the activity (*take your time; take a deep breath before...*), increasing the level of engagement of the visitors/readers (Ravelli 2006, p 70).

Social Valuation focuses mainly on the usefulness of the SAD in terms of community building, which justifies the presence of modifiers such as *accessible, community-oriented, and encouraging*. The global dimension of the SAD also helps to shape the importance of the event and to make it “*valuable for a wide audience*” as well as emphasizing the sense of belonging and the feeling of “*encouraging to be part of a community*”.

Table 10 below shows the linguistic items for each of the subcategories of Affect.

AFFECT IN INCLUSIVENESS	
Happiness	<i>excited, fun, hugged each other, joy, loved</i>
Inclination	<i>mindfully, openly, quickly, slowly</i>
Satisfaction	<i>enriched, grateful, impressed, inspired</i>
Security	<i>active, feel like a part of slow art day beyond their immediate ...</i>

Table 10  
Linguistic features of Affect in Inclusiveness.

Happiness and Satisfaction (example 18) include positive feelings deriving from learning through discussion groups and community-building activities, such as the sense of excitement (e.g. *excited, fun, and joy*) and that of pleasure (*grateful, impressed*). The sense of enrichment and inspiration obtained from activities of inclusiveness are linked to the sense of empowerment the education and sharing provide for the SAD participants.

- (18) I am *extremely grateful* for the family-friendly drawing program – my kids benefited more than I did! [SAD-Blog/25Jan2020]

The subcategory of Security deals with elements of calm and trust, which assess the level of confidence that people experience in certain situations. In this case, participants are described as *active co-creators*, who do *not feel intimidated* by taking part in activities, and feeling *included, relaxed, and part of a community*, while *naturally* engaging with new activities (examples 19-20).

- (19) That connection helped them feel *a part of* Slow Art Day beyond their immediate circle, appreciating the event as part of a universal experience overall. [SAD-Blog/10May2012]

- (20) Slow Art Day and All Stars project are working together to help more people how to learn and love art – how to walk in a museum and *not feel intimidated*, to approach art as if we were *all included* because we are. [SAD-

Blog/13Jan2017]

This confirms, once more, the feeling of empowerment that visitors have when engaging in discussion activities where their opinion is considered valuable and important in co-creating meaning and interpretation of a piece of art.

#### 4.2.3. Attitude in Innovation

Table 11 provides a general overview of the lexicon adopted in the dimension of Innovation.

The subcategory of Composition contains elements related to the digital world, such as *asynchronous*, *online* and *social-media-based* (example 21). Such elements were more frequent in 2020, with the sudden increase of online activities due to the pandemic, which challenged museums to organize the SAD event virtually, with the support of digital platforms and social media.

Concerning Reaction (example 22), most evaluations are related to how the SAD strikes and has an impact on visitors. Positive adjectives (*meaningful*, *well-received*, *wonderful*) not only refer to the innovative idea of SAD activities, in other words to the originality of dedicating time to connecting with a piece of art and discussing ideas with other participants, but also refer to the impact and reaction of the use of innovative social-media and technological platforms in the age of Covid-19 (as in “*beautiful transition to virtual platforms*”).

COMPOSITION	<i>asynchronous, online, social-media-based</i> event <i>complex, interesting, unmediated</i> conversations <i>creative innovative</i> process, programs, ways, works <i>different, meditative</i> approach looking in a <i>different</i> way <i>diverse</i> perspectives <i>multi-sensory</i> activities, experience doing something <i>radical</i>
REACTION	<i>amazing, creative, great, immersive, meaningful, unexpected and surprising, powerful, unique, well-received, wonderful</i> idea, event <i>beautiful</i> transition to virtual platforms <i>different, fascinating, innovative, involved and thoughtful</i> activities a <i>great privilege</i> to have this experience
SOCIAL VALUATION	<i>accessible, different, exciting, good, immersive, important, interesting, new, powerful, rare, special, thought-provoking, truly inspiring</i> event, opportunity <i>slow potential</i> as physical interactions

Table 11  
Linguistic features of Appreciation in Innovation.

The originality of the event also emerges in its Social Valuation, where innovative activities are targeted as *an opportunity*, or as *powerful* and *inspiring* occasions to learn and to connect with art (example 23). Again, the different elements are intertwined with one another: innovation is linked to learning that triggers the development of useful skills lead to independence of thought and empowerment.

- (21) A number of organizations is experimenting with *different* formats, including *online* sessions, *asynchronous* techniques, and *social-media-based* approaches. [SAD-Blog/4Apr2020]
- (22) “The event was *wonderful*, *thought-provoking* and *well-received*.” [SAD-Blog/7Apr2019]
- (23) To look slowly and to engage oneself with art is a *truly inspiring* experience. [SAD-Blog/4May2017]

Table 12 displays a close-up of the linguistic features expressing Affect.

AFFECT IN INNOVATION	
Happiness	<i>joy, love, very excited</i>
Inclination	<i>differently, powerfully, strongly</i>
Satisfaction	<i>attentive, delighted, electrified, gratified, inspired, surprised</i>
Security	<i>without being compelled</i>

Table 12  
Linguistic features of Affect in Innovation.

In line with previous results, as visitors’ feelings and reactions are all positive, the subcategories have been named according to their positive type (Happiness, Satisfaction, Security, and Inclination).

Examples (24) and (25) provide two instances of Affect in the context of Innovation.

- (24) But afterwards, many of us shared how quickly the 10 minutes passed and *how surprised* we were by what we noticed, especially with the pieces weren’t attracted to. [SAD-Blog/22Apr2019]
- (25) At Slow Art Day HQ, we are *excited* to see the Museum build *new* programs based on the success of its Slow Art Day initiative. [SAD-Blog/9Dec2020]

Visitors’ sense of cheerfulness while embracing something new and different is visible in the positive feelings of love and joy belonging to the subcategory of Happiness.

In particular, the subcategory of Satisfaction seems to gather experiencers’ feelings of awe related to the innovative and creative events of the SAD, such as *delighted*, and *electrified, inspired, gratified, and surprised*. These indicate the feeling of excitement that SAD visitors have when facing new activities. Elements of newness are also visible in the subcategory of

Inclination where the adverb *differently* refers to the new approach to art that visitors have towards art, allowing them to think outside the box.

#### 4.2.4. Attitude in Time

Examining how Time is appreciated in the SAD blog (Table 13) the connotations of Composition in relation to time are not always fully positive. Adjectives *not easy*, *hard* and *too long* refer to the challenge of looking at a piece of art for more than five minutes, which appears to be a difficult skill to learn in the age of multitasking (example 26).

Concerning the impact that spending time before a piece of art has on visitors, the reaction is extremely positive (*great*, *interesting*, *surprising*, *wonderful*, etc.) (example 27). Spending time on a piece of art is connected to elements of innovation and learning: by looking at and dedicating time to something, one discovers more details while experimenting something new (i.e. “*it is surprising what you can see and learn*”). This is also true in the Social Valuation of time, where one of the most frequent adjectives is *new* (example 28). Again, when dedicating time to looking at art, one sees *new*, *important* details, as well as learning more about oneself (*insightful*). Therefore, the value of education is linked to that of time, where time is not only seen as the part of existence that is measured in seconds, minutes and hours, but it also becomes a useful and *important* skill in the age of multitasking, which can be acquired through exercise.

COMPOSITION	the average time spent on their website was <i>dramatically higher</i> than ... <i>hard</i> , <i>not easy</i> looking at ... <i>slow and long</i> day discussions seem <i>too long</i>
REACTION	we had <i>great</i> time it was <i>interesting</i> to be spending time looking at ... taking my time with art was a <i>positive and rewarding</i> experience making time for <i>slower digital</i> experience some works of art seem to inherently invite a <i>slower, more involved</i> viewing experience <i>surprising</i> nature of slow time <i>wonderful</i> to take time to absorb and chat about
SOCIAL VALUATION	it is <i>great</i> to be spending time looking at ... slow looking <i>brought new aspects</i> of ... we think this <i>simple</i> concept is <i>important</i> <i>wonderful and insightful</i> time

Table 13  
Linguistic features of Appreciation in Time.

- (26) The recommended 10 minutes of slow looking without discussion seem *too long*. [SAD-Blog/10May2014]
- (27) “*Wonderful and insightful* time. It opens up the art world to spend time with others discussing the works. [SAD-Blog/18Jun2019]
- (28) (...) how the experience of slow looking brought *new* aspects to the surface that only emerged over time. [SAD-Blog/24Jun2019]

AFFECT IN TIME	
Happiness	<i>enjoyed, loved</i>
Inclination	<i>mindfully, really</i>
Satisfaction	<i>always pleased, amazed, slowly</i>
Security	-

Table 14  
Linguistic features of Affect in Time.

Happiness (Table 14) includes aspects of cheer and affection, and in particular the positive feelings of enjoyment of the experiencer when engaging with art at length. This also emerges in the positive feelings of the sense of pleasure (*pleased, amazed*), which again links time and education (example 29).

Attitude of interest is also assessed by the adverb *slowly*, which not only carries its connotation of time, but it is also used as a synonym of ‘attentively’ (e.g., “*take time to slowly look at art*”). It seems that time intrinsically carries a meaning of precision and education: the more time one spends looking at something, the more one sees and learns. Regarding Inclination, adverbs such as *mindfully* and *really* again refer to the way visitors approach art while slowing down, as shown in examples (30) and (31).

- (29) I’m *amazed* at what I’ve seen in twenty minutes. [SAD-Blog/13Jan2013]
- (30) Taking time to *really* look at this seemingly simple painting, our visitors were surprised at the details they were able to pick out and discuss. [SAD-Blog/4May2017]
- (31) (...) and this year we are shifting to unique virtual techniques to help us all *mindfully* slow down. [SAD-Blog/4Apr2020]

*Really* is connected to the dimension of education, of learning and of seeing beyond the piece of work, while *mindfully* is connected to the semantic dimension of Wellbeing. Slowing down not only becomes a way of taking time to learn and to try something different but is also related to a positive feeling of relaxation and mindfulness.

#### 4.2.5. Attitude in Wellbeing

Composition provides insight into how Wellbeing is evaluated in terms of

Appreciation with the innovative activities connected to Wellbeing that were organized during the SAD (Table 15).

COMPOSITION	<i>contemplative, decelerated, rich</i> learning experience <i>immersive, mindful</i> activities, drawing, events, exercises, programs <i>quiet, meaningful</i> art event <i>reflective</i> dialogue
REACTION	<i>a heck of a lot of fun</i> <i>fabulous, fantastic, great, immersive, mindful, multidimensional, new, really nice, peaceful, soul-touching, sublime, wonderful</i> event, experience <i>relaxed heightened</i> emotions
SOCIAL VALUATION	<i>emotional and intellectual, full, helpful, joyful, meditative, mindful, powerful and simple, relaxing, rewarding, spiritual, truly inspiring</i> (way to) experience (art)

Table 15  
Linguistic features of Appreciation in Wellbeing.

In fact, for the SAD event some museums organized physical activities to help visitors slow down, relax, and better engage with the work of art. Activities include yoga sessions, *mindful breathing*, or sitting in front of *rich landscapes* in a *quiet* space to connect with nature or with an *immersive* work of art. The adjectives used to describe such activities are connected to the semantic sphere of peace and calm (e.g., *calm, mindful, and still*) which are essential characteristics to find inner wellbeing and relaxation (example 32).

The impact related to such activities shows that reactions include extremely positive adjectives to assess the wellbeing activities (*great, mindful, sublime, or wonderful*). The adjective *new* reinforces the idea that innovation and wellbeing are intertwined, where certain activities are seen as innovative, as exemplified in (33).

With Social Valuation, the positive effects and social worthiness of such activities are highlighted again by the positive elements, such as *emotional, intellectual, or powerful*.

The social worthiness of wellbeing activities is not only found in the positive physical effects they leave (e.g. *relaxing, spiritual*) (example 34), but it also emerges in the sense of empowerment that certain relaxation techniques leave visitors, creating a *mindful* and *rewarding* experience.

- (32) The easy-to-follow instructions involved *mindful* breathing, slow-looking (...). [SAD-Blog/8July2020]  
 (33) “*Soul-touching* and *relaxing*, with a *new* breath of freshness.” [SAD-Blog/7Oct2020]  
 (34) ... some participants found it a *spiritual* experience. [SAD-Blog/13Apr2016]

Concerning Affect (Table 16), the feelings related to wellbeing are again extremely positive and related to happiness and joy.

AFFECT IN WELLBEING	
Happiness	<i>awe and joy, excited, happy, love</i>
Inclination	<i>mindfully, really</i>
Satisfaction	<i>centered, entranced, gratified, leisurely, lightened and uplifted, moved, peaceful</i>
Security	<i>at peace, calm, comfortable, ease, empowered more relaxed</i>

Table 16  
Linguistic features of Affect in Wellbeing.

Within the subcategory of Satisfaction, pleasure is enhanced by positive feelings related again to peace and relaxation, such as *entranced, lightened, and uplifted*. Security gathers elements of tranquility and quietness that are reinforced by visitors' feelings of comfort (e.g., *at peace, calm, comfortable, or ease*). Such feelings indicate a sense of ease that visitors have when engaging with any of the SAD activities, once more linking education with wellbeing.

## 5. Conclusions

Within the specific context of Slow Art Day, the adjective *slow*, used to define a special event, already carries new meanings other than that of time. This is in line with how Petrini's movement has attributed new meanings to *slow*, which have been then reborrowed by English, especially in the context of slow movements (Nocella, Bondi Submitted). In fact, with *Slow Art Day* *slow* does not only refer to issues related to time, but it implicitly carries within it the meaning of most of the semantic dimensions that were identified when analysing the related corpora. In this context *slow* means dedicating time to *really* look at art (Time and Education), to learn something new (Education and Innovation), to meet people, to share thoughts (Inclusiveness), to relax, and to connect with one's inner self and with the piece of art (Wellbeing). Studying the promotion of the event revealed the use of positive language within each of these five semantic dimensions that were initially identified as core aspects of the representation of the event.

Attitude analysis of the evaluative language adopted in the Slow Art Day blog revealed that Appreciation is the most represented subcategory. Additionally, evaluative language tagged under the subcategory of Composition is used either to reinforce the meaning within each semantic dimension of the SAD event, or to emphasize the interdisciplinary nature of the event. Reaction is used similarly throughout all dimensions, underscoring

the positive effects of the SAD on participants. As for Social Valuation, evaluative language is used to emphasize the worthiness (i.e. *new*, *insightful*, and *useful*) of each dimension as well as highlighting their interconnection. Concerning Affect, outcomes reveal that evaluative language is used similarly throughout all the dimensions, confirming the sense of happiness and satisfaction that visitors experience after a SAD activity. Results are in line with how blogs have become an important space for self-promotion and for the creation of group identity (Davies, Merchant 2007; Luzón 2012; Myers 2010), which is why the analysis of the Slow Art Day official blog is fundamental to trace elements of self-promotion and community-building.

Further research on this topic could be carried out by investigating people's perceptions and the importance of slowness and of slowing down in other contexts such as the effects of the pandemic outbreak, looking at how technology has changed our relationship with slowness and with the various slow movements. In addition, the analysis of the SAD Blog could be expanded by carrying out a multimodal analysis of its webpages to explore whether and if so, images help convey the idea of slowness. Further lines of investigation could be also explored in terms of slow discourse, looking into the introduction of other/new elements in language related to slowness and that may support the need of social deceleration (Rosa 2003).

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