Title Page

Rural Geographies in the wake of Non-Representational Theories

i. A short informative containing the major key words.

This paper considers the influence of *non-representational theories* and associated conceptions of affect and emotion, on rural studies literature, particularly by Geographers. In the paper I argue that the rural studies literature has been led by geographers' engagement with rural spaces and places. I argue that development can be made by further considering questions of *practices*, and *re-presentation* of research into rural geographies using *non-representational theories* as a mode of thought.

ii. A short running title of less than 40 characters

Rural Geographies and Non-Representational Theories

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1 **Rural Geographies in the wake of Non-Representational Theories**

2 <u>Abstract</u>

3 Non-representational theories have come to exert an influence on rural geographies.

4 Geographers are engaging with rurality not just discursively, but as part of an

5 assemblage of the embodied, practiced and experienced elements of life. This paper

6 reflects on the emergence of non-representational theories and considers what non-

7 representational theories have brought to the study of rural geography to date. This

8 recent work has considered diverse topics, from rural gentrification to an

9 understanding of different demographic conceptualisations of rurality. The paper will

10 consider further trajectories of where an embodied approach can take rural

11 geographies, this includes assessing the challenges researchers wishing to engage

12 with non-representational theories may face, from methodological considerations to

13 the debates surrounding the presentation of research. The paper concludes by

14 considering how rural geography can progress its engagement with non-

15 representational theories, through the expansion of empirical research informed by

16 this theoretical approach.

17 <u>Key Words</u>

18 Rural; rurality; non-representational theories; affect; practices, presentations;

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Introduction

The emergence of non-representational theories over the last two decades in social and cultural theory has led to a plethora of calls for further engagements with this mode of thought to address specific subdisciplinary topics within human geography (for example, see: Jones, 2011 on the geographies of memory, Skinner *et al.*, 2015 on the geographies of ageing, Andrews, 2017 on the geographies of sport and Hall & Wilton, 2017 on the geographies of disability). The contention broadly sits that engaging with non-representational theories can enliven or respond to contemporary situations in a variety of contexts through a focus on practice, material-social relations and what representations *do* (Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Vannini, 2015; Anderson, 2018). Indeed, Lorimer (2015) argues that there is now an expanding community of scholars and scholarship engaged with this influential mode of thought, in subdisciplines such as nationalism (Merriman & Jones, 2017), ageing (Herron, 2018), heritage studies (Waterton, 2014), geopolitics and political geographies (Dittmer & Gray, 2010; Muller, 2015) and nursing studies (Andrews, 2016). Within this corpus of work there is, however, minimal engagement with empirical examples, and minimal discussion of *how* one would go about engaging with non-representational theories.

Rural studies, led by geographical engagement with rural spaces and places, have presented a number of works that respond not only to the call for an engagement with this "contemporary moment's *most influential* theoretical perspectives" (Vannini, 2015, p. 2, emphasis added; see: Halfacree, 2012; 2013; 2014), but also partly respond to the lack of empirically driven research. Recent rural geographical research has engaged with non-representational theories, considering the embodied experience of being in the countryside (Carolan, 2008), the practice of driving in the

49   countryside (Hughes, 2014), pro-rural-migration (Halfacree & Rivera, 2012),

50   embodied aspects of rural gentrification (Phillips, 2014) and age as an contour of

51   people's rural lives, through work on both young (Farrugia *et al.*, 2016) and older

52   (Maclaren, 2018) people. With this recent work in mind, in this contribution I consider

53   how rural geographies in the wake of non-representational theories are developing

54   as a subdisciplinary topic of geography, but also where future research might go.

55   I first introduce non-representational theories and outline some of the core features

56   and themes, whilst noting some of the criticisms levied. I then place rural geography

57   in relation to non-representational theories, where I focus on how rurality has been

58   previously understood as representational but that contemporary movements have

59   led to a more material and representational joining, through a focus on the lives of

60   the rural and the practices of people in rural areas. I end with where rural

61   geographical thinking could progress with a continued engagement through non-

62   representational theories, but also by suggesting what can be brought to non-

63   representational theories from rural geographies.

64   **Non-representational theories**

65   Before exploring current engagements with non-representational theories, it is useful

66   to consider its emergence within human geography. Non-representational theories

67   "are concerned, first and foremost, with doings – practices and performances – and

68   how spaces are made through practical application" (Anderson, 2016, p. 189). The

69   development of this mode of thought within human geography originally grew out of

70   the work of Thrift (1996; 1997; 1999; 2000) and his graduate students at the

71   University of Bristol (Dewsbury, 2000; Harrison, 2000; Dewsbury *et al.*, 2002;

72   McCormack, 2002, 2003; Wylie, 2002, 2005), with the agenda subsequently taken

73   up by a wider community (Lorimer, 2005, 2007, 2008; Anderson, 2006; Laurier &

74   Philo, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2006). It was a response to the cultural turn of the late

75   twentieth century which was built on the symbolic and the representational. Thrift

76   argued that cultural geography focused on textual representations at the expense of

77   practice and performances, with cultural geographers still "wedded… to the notion of

78   bringing back the 'data', and then re-presenting it (nicely packaged up as a few

79   supposedly illustrative quotations)" (Thrift, 2000, p.3). Non-representational theories

80   thus emerged within geographical thought as a way to "better cope with our self-

81   evidently, more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds" (Lorimer, 2005,

82   p. 83). Non-representational theories are about addressing the *embodied*

83   dimensions of being in the world[i]. Of course, representations play a part in this, they

84   have a force in the world as much as any human or non-human object does. Yet,

85   discourses and deconstruction can only tell so much of the story. There is a need

86   then to appreciate how life is relationally embodied. Scholars drawing on non-

87   representational theories are aiming to address the interrelated nature of being in the

88   world and how lifeworlds are constantly in a state of becoming through our relations

89   with human and more-than human actants (Thrift, 2004). This involves thinking about

90   how life *takes shape*:

91   "At first, the phenomena in question may seem remarkable only by their

92   apparent insignificance. The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains

93   expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters,

94   embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective

95   intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous

96   dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an

97   escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings

98   and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and

99   ultimate representation. In short, so much ordinary action gives no advance

100   notice of what it will become. *Yet, it still makes critical differences to our*

101   *experiences of space and place*"

102   (Lorimer, 2005, p. 84, emphasis added).

103   The interrelated concepts of affect and emotion have been used by scholars to

104   engage with spaces and places in this way and to examine the everyday, embodied

105   experience of being in the world. There is, however, "no stable definition of affect"

106   (Thrift, 2004, p. 59), it is "a different kind of intelligence about the world" (Thrift, 2004,

107   p. 60), associated with how the body moves, walks, touches, senses, feels and

108   perceives the world around us (Latham *et al.*, 2009). It can be understood in a three-

109   part structure of Affect-Feeling-Emotion (Ahmed, 2004; Anderson, 2006, 2014),

110   where:

111   "*affect* can be understood in terms of a pre-personal intensity of relation

112   between bodies, where bodies do not necessarily need to be human…*feeling*

113   can be understood as the sensed registering of this intensity in a

114   body…*emotion* can be understood as sensed intensity articulated and

115   expressed in a socially recognisable form of expression"

116   (Latham *et al.*, 2009, p. 112, emphasis added).

117   Affect can then be thought of as a critical mode of attunement with the world

118   (Anderson, 2014) that allows us to question how people interact with everyday

119   experiences, atmospheres and conditions. Those who use non-representational

120   theories then are interested in everyday life, and the everyday practices that

121   constitute the spaces and places in which life 'takes shape'.

122 Non-representational theories as a mode of thought have not escaped critique

123 (Rose, 1997; Castree & Macmillan, 2004; Thien, 2005; Pain, 2006; Tolia-Kelly, 2006;

124 Pile, 2010; Wetherell *et al.,* 2015). Castree and Macmillan highlight the risk of a non-

125 representational approach "jettisoning the substantial power of representational acts"

126 (Castree & Macmillan, 2004, p.469) and privileging the non-representational over

127 representations. Wetherell *et al.* (2015) define themselves as "against non-

128 representational perspectives" in favour of practice-based viewpoints (2015, p.56).

129 These critiques can, however, partly be considered as being against a singular

130 theoretical approach, which does not represent how different scholars engage with a

131 non-representational perspective. It is arguably better to consider non-

132 representational *theories*, a plural, as an umbrella term for a series of theories which

133 share common concerns, but have a diverse intellectual history and a multitude of

134 approaches, depending on what specific issue is being thought through. There is no

135 archetypal non-representational theory (Anderson & Harrison, 2010; Anderson,

136 2016). Critiquing research in this way risks characterising research as singular, but

137 also means that affinities between research epistemologies become harder to find or

138 engage with (Colls, 2012).

139 Pile considers the hypocrisy of scholars, through the production of written research,

140 re-presenting what they are defining as non-representational. He describes the

141 approach as "fundamentally a representational practice that is, importantly, unable to

142 recognise itself as such" (Pile, 2010, p. 17). This critique that befalls non-

143 representational theories is also part of the wider consideration around emotional

144 geographies and psychoanalytic geographies of whether researchers can truly lay

145 bare emotions, both felt and multiple feelings and relations during research. Indeed,

146 the ineffability of affect as a pre-cognitive state does present a valid critique; how can

147 we know it in the first place, and then in particular even attempt to represent those

148 affects? Responding to this critique remains a key challenge for researchers

149 engaged with non-representational theories. We cannot literally feel through words.

150 We can however articulate encounters (Laurier & Philo, 2006) and attempt to attend

151 to people's feelings and gain an insight into their lifeworld (Carolan, 2008). To not

152 attempt this ignores the embodied dimensions of being in the world and presents a

153 partial perspective of everyday life, and thus risks ignoring a fundamental part of our

154 everyday experience.

155 As Colls outlines, although there are of course limitations to any body of knowledge

156 or epistemological perspective, we should rather ask "how might non-

157 representational [theories] allow us to think…differently and to think differently

158 as…geographers?" (Colls, 2012, p. 442). This I see as the challenge and inspiration

159 for engaging with non-representational theories. Not out of novelty (Castree &

160 Macmillan, 2004), but to think differently and offer different perspectives, for

161 example, when considering rurality, and how rural spaces and places form a

162 significant part of people's everyday lives.

163 Most recently the *expanding community* of scholars and scholarship engaged with

164 non-representational theories has been challenged by Lorimer (2015) who asks

165 three interrelated questions of practices, pedagogies[ii] and presentation: "what is the

166 nature of praxis" (ibid, p.181) of non-representational theories?; how might we not

167 forget students who are keen to learn and engage but are often "foxed by the

168 prospect of venturing out alone" (ibid, p.184)?; and how have non-representational

169 theories affected the way geographers write and present their research? Of these

170 three concerns, practices and presentation are interesting to consider against the

171 many calls for an engagement with non-representational theories. How do we

172 practice non-representational theories and how do we write or present non-

173 representational theories? Before engaging with these questions directly within the

174 context of rural geographies, I turn now to the development and growth of rural

175 scholarship, to consider how rural geographies have responded to the growing

176 influence of non-representational theories.

177 **Rural Geography: from the representational to the non-representational**

178 Mapping the changing interpretations of rurality closely follows the evolution of

179 geographical theories, characterised through a "shifting theoretical lens'" (Cloke,

180 2006, p. 19), reflective of the *turns* or *paradigms* within geographic thought. Rurality

181 has previously been considered in terms of functional characteristics that could be

182 quantified and through which differences between 'rural' and 'urban' identified (c.f.

183 Cloke, 1983). The expansion of critical geographies within post-modernism and post-

184 structuralist perspectives involved a move to consider the social constructions of

185 rurality (Halfacree, 1993; 1995; Cloke, 2006), where rurality is considered through an

186 expanded notion of discourse and social constructivism (see, for example: Halfacree,

187 1993; 1995; Marsden *et al.*, 1993; Cloke & Thrift, 1994; Jones, 1995; Cloke & Little,

188 1997; Murdoch *et al.*, 2003; Cloke, 2003a, 2003b; Cloke *et al.*, 2006). Rurality came

189 to be understood as an outcome of socially constructed and deconstructed

190 representational practices, through and from different actors, whether political, lay,

191 academic or otherwise.

192 Whilst there have been difficulties in and critiques of defining what is 'rural' (c.f.

193 Hoggart, 1990; Mormont, 1990), there is a general acceptance of the socially

194 constructed nature of 'rural'. This notion of a social construction of rurality presents

195 the 'rural' as "a category of thought that each society takes and reconstructs"

196 (Mormont, 1990, p. 40–41). With that, each consideration of rurality is discursive and

197 therefore a representation contextualised to specific times and spaces (Halfacree,

198 1993; 1995; 2006). Such a view of rurality meant that the representations that came

199 to be known as rural became detached from their original geographic space (Cloke,

200 1997; Woods, 2011).

201 However, this socially constructed reality and deconstructive approach to rural

202 spaces and places has been called into question for leaving out the embodied and

203 sensuous aspects of the everyday lived experiences of 'rural' places (Carolan,

204 2008). Representations, discourses and social constructions can have "very real

205 material geographical and socio-political consequences" (Halfacree, 2012, p.390).

206 Yet, discourses and deconstruction can only tell so much of the story, where these

207 consequences exist in everyday practices and performances. Halfacree (2006) set in

208 motion this interest to get back to the practices and performances of everyday lives

209 via Lefebvre's (1991) work on the production of space. Halfacree (2006) proposed a

210 conceptual framing where rural space is conceptualised as a triad, consisting of a

211 rural space's *locality*, for example what is in a rural space, be it rolling hills, sparse

212 population; *representations of the rural*, images, writings, descriptions; and *lives of*

213 *the rural*, as the rural is not just a backdrop for life that happens but the practices and

214 everyday lives of human and non-human actors influence the nature of a rural space.

215 Over time the focus in rural studies, against this conceptual framing, has shifted from

216 locality to representations to everyday lives.

217 The everyday is important in shaping our understandings of rurality, as otherwise

218 conceptions of rural spaces or places would solely be considered "products of a

219 mind devoid of corporality… To ignore how understandings of the countryside are

220 embodied is to cut from our analysis a major (indeed the main) source of

221 understanding" (Carolan, 2008, p. 408-409). Indeed, Cloke has echoed this in

222 relation to performance and practice where he articulates that "much more needs to

223 be known about [conceptions of rurality and their] precise importance in relation to

224 how people perceive, practice, and experience being-in-the-rural" (2013, p. 229).

225 There is a desire to re-materialise rurality (Woods, 2009) and take forward an

226 engagement with the practices and performances of humans and non-humans,

227 material and immaterial in rural spaces and places (Edensor, 2006; Halfacree,

228 2006).

229 This movement towards engaging with embodied practice has come at a time when

230 the growth of scholarship engaging with non-representational theories has come to

231 exert an influence on rural studies through the work of a number of rural

232 geographers, as well as through cultural geographers studying rural spaces and

233 places. I turn now to expand on how this use of non-representational theories has

234 contributed to the study of rurality, before moving on to contemporary questions of

235 where such an engagement might go and what challenges scholars might face in

236 their research.

237 **Non-representational theories in rural spaces and places**

238 Carolan's (2008) work in rural Iowa, USA, is one of the first papers to draw explicitly

239 on non-representational theories in rural studies (although see Thrift, 2003). Carolan

240 argues that "mind is body; consciousness is corporeal; thinking is sensuous… To

241 ignore how understandings of the countryside are embodied is to cut from our

242 analysis a major (indeed the main) source of understanding" (2008, p. 409). This

243 trajectory of thought has inspired others to engage with rurality in such a way.

244 Carolan's research, through considering the practices of different individuals in rural

245 Iowa, highlights the different performative and thus embodied relations individuals

246 have in rural spaces, dependant on where they encounter the rural, such as the

247 difference between a farmer driving a tractor through a field and a non-farmer who

248 sees the same field from the road. This focus on the practice of driving and

249 encountering rural space has been traced by Hughes (2014) who describes an

250 engagement with the embodied nature of rurality not through walking, as Wylie

251 (2002; 2005) and Macpherson (2007; 2009; 2010; 2017) have done, but from being

252 behind the wheel of a car. Hughes (2014) argues through the act of driving rural

253 spaces are (re)produced through social practices, that are in turn influenced by how

254 spaces are shaped by practices.

255 Halfacree (2012) has taken forward this call in a broader discussion of an "affective

256 rurality" (p. 395) in line with considering the non-representational aspects that rural

257 spaces and places provide. Indeed, Halfacree cites the "'nature of rurality' [as]

258 hold[ing] the key to [rural spaces'] affective power" (2012, p. 396), thereby

259 demonstrating that "nature…adds value to culture" (Cruickshank, 2009, p. 104), and

260 that the "experiential" (Halfacree, 2012, p. 396), affective natures of rural spaces can

261 thus add to more discursive understandings of the countryside (see also: Bunce,

262 1994). Halfacree, with Riviera (2012), has also applied non-representational

263 theories, affects and affordances to rural migration, to understand migration beyond

264 solely the discursive reduction of individuals' movement to rural spaces and places

265 by paying attention to "everyday entanglements with (rural) place[s]". They

266 foreground the "affective and affordance-based dimensions of rural living" which can

267 "assume special prominence" in individuals' lives (Halfacree & Riviera, 2012, p. 107).

268   Phillips (2014) furthers considerations of the affective and affordance-based natures

269   of individuals' lives by drawing on Thrift's (2003) notion of baroque rurality, where

270   'baroque' is considered in an ontological rather than aesthetic sense, as "nature

271   should be seen as a set of elements or actants that whilst often connected to one

272   another do not constitute some all-encompassing whole" (Phillips, 2014, p. 57).

273   Ultimately Phillips considers the complexity of individuals' experience of a rural

274   space, taking into account affective responses to rural natures, such as flora, fauna

275   and various other phenomenological attributes such as quietness and openness, but

276   also how long an individual has resided in the space and their relative positioning to

277   the space, whether walking, from the seat of a tractor or from an armchair in a

278   house.

279   Philo (1992) cited a need for rural studies to move away from solely considering

280   homogenous conceptions of rurality from privileged white, male, middle class

281   perspectives and to take into account "neglected rural geographies [of] 'other' human

282   groupings" (p.193) beyond the previously narrow focus that he identified. Within non-

283   representational rural research Philo's call has been taken up by Farrugia *et al.*

284   (2016) and Maclaren (2018) who focus on the demographic difference of age, by

285   respectively considering the experiences of younger and older people. Age is an

286   important contour of people's lives to consider within this embodied framing. Farrugia

287   *et al.* (2016) highlight how young people's relationship with the rural and the city is

288   linked to a future they imagine for themselves and the associated mobilities.

289   Maclaren (2018) argues that due to rural areas experiencing demographic ageing

290   faster than urban areas, there is an increasing need to understand not just

291   demographic changes on an aggregate, quantitative level, but to also seek an

292   embodied consideration of older people's lives and the complex interdependencies

293   of people and place that ageing brings.

294   As this brief overview shows, rural studies scholars, and particularly geographers,

295   are developing non-representational theories in their consideration of rural spaces

296   and places. Rural geographers have taken the lead in presenting empirical work that

297   deploys non-representational theories as a mode of thought, and this influential

298   theoretical perspective (Vannini, 2015) has certainly made an impression on rural

299   scholars, whether by revisiting previous research using a non-representational lens

300   (Carolan, 2008; Phillips, 2014; Farrugia *et al.*, 2016), by considering a new approach

301   to topics already under study, such as rural migration (Halfacree & Riviera, 2012), or

302   by expanding the focus of rurality beyond normative homogeneity into aspects such

303   as rural ageing (Maclaren, 2018). What follows now is a brief turn to support where

304   rural studies, and geographers in particular, might develop the use of non-

305   representational theories, through a consideration of the practices and the

306   presentation of non-representational research.

307   **Moving rural geography forward in the wake of non-representational theories**

308   Burgeoning research in rural studies has contributed to the expansion of scholarship

309   engaged in non-representational theories as a mode of thought. However, as

310   highlighted by Lorimer (2015), there remain questions around the practices and the

311   presentation of non-representational research. Lorimer challenged scholars to

312   consider *how* non-representational theories can be deployed and to consider the

313   different ways of *presenting* non-representational research. Whilst rural geography's

314   engagement with non-representational theories is expanding, there is still a lack of

315   clear guidance on *how* to do non-representational rural research. If more rural

316 scholars are to engage with this mode of thought, the practice and presentation of

317 non-representational theories within rural geography are challenges that need to be

318 addressed. This final section might not answer all the questions but will give an

319 explicit idea of how I see rural scholarship informed by non-representational theories

320 moving forward and might offer guidance to those wanting to explore non-

321 representational perspectives.

322 *Practices*

323 How you undertake, or 'do', a study with non-representational theories is probably

324 the most fundamental question emerging from much of the work calling for non-

325 representational theories. Non-representational theories are a mode of thought, a

326 way of attending to the research. A mode of thought captures fully the intentions

327 behind using or drawing from this perspective, whether directly as Maclaren (2018)

328 or Hughes (2014) did in their research design or as others did post-hoc reviewing

329 completed research and applying a new lens to analyse their findings (Phillips, 2014;

330 Carolan, 2008).

331 Here I focus on using non-representational theories as part of the research design

332 within a rural setting, where there is a desire to focus on the emergent, affective and

333 embodied aspects of the lifeworlds in rural spaces and places. The research

334 questions drive the practices but, for the types of knowledges under consideration,

335 the practices will be drawn from the qualitative suite of research methods, such as

336 ethnographic methods, defined as "participant observation *plus* any other

337 appropriate methods/techniques/etc. . . . *if they are appropriate for the topic*' (Crang

338 & Cook, 2007, p. 35; emphasis in original). This means being in the world, whether

339 the world of those who participate in your research project, using interviews, walking

340   or 'go-along' interviews, focus groups, and/or ethnography of just being in and

341   experiencing the rural locale. The aim is to not just be a participant observer in the

342   spaces of the interview or the rural place under study but an *observant participant*

343   (Thrift, 2000; Dewsbury, 2010). By this I mean that you, as a researcher, are

344   immersed in the rural spaces and places under study. As Dewsbury articulates:

345   "gather a portfolio of ethnographic 'exposures' that can act as *lightning rods*

346   *for thought*. . . [where you] set upon generating inventive ways of addressing

347   and intervening in that which is happening, and has happened, as an

348   academic, that such a method produces its data: a series of testimonies to

349   practice[s]. . ., embodiment[s] and materialit[ies]".

350   (Dewsbury 2010, p. 327, emphasis added)

351   These *lightning rods for thought* may come from reading about the place you are in,

352   the materialities of the surrounding, the emotions vocalised by participants in an

353   interview or the affective capacities of a moment. This means in practice maintaining

354   a research diary, for example, that records the multiple textures of the rural spaces

355   and places you are in, by attending to: the images of a space or place you are in as

356   well as those associated with it and their affective capacities (Roberts, 2016); the

357   materialities of a space and place; the everyday performances and practices ongoing

358   in a space and their associated temporalities (c.f. Lager *et al.*, 2016 on rhythm); any

359   implicit or explicit rules a space or place may have; and the interrelated affects,

360   feelings and emotions (Anderson, 2006, 2014) that a space and place has. Within

361   rural spaces, a research diary could record the daily social routines of greeting on

362   village high streets, paintings depicting a rural idyll in contrast to derelict buildings,

363   the feelings and emotions of interview participants about their bond to their rural

364   space, and the feelings experienced by the researcher when immersed in their rural

365   locale of study. For example, sitting in a café in a rural village, I might make notes

366   related to the materiality of the café itself, full of rustic style furniture that is

367   'quintessentially' rural, with walls covered in paintings and images depicting the local

368   fields, at harvest, in the autumn, with landscapes depicting idyllic scenes of past

369   agricultural practices, prior to mechanisation. I might note groups of people sitting in

370   the café discussing the world around them, sitting reading, with a fire crackling

371   behind them. This example might situate itself in representing the embodied aspect

372   of the rural idyll, of a 'community' centre where people come to meet, and are

373   reminded in their everyday lives of the longer history of the place. This research

374   diary technique affords a way for a rural researcher to gain and build a layered

375   perspective of the space and place under research.

376   Research that draws on non-representational theories as a mode of thought is thus

377   inductive and involves being present in the world (Macpherson, 2007; Carolan, 2008;

378   Hughes, 2014; Maclaren, 2018). The analysis of such a methodological practice

379   does not therefore happen at a discreet stage of the research process but is

380   iterative. Throughout the empirical moments of being in the field, reflecting on the

381   notes taken during interviews, reflecting on the contents of transcripts, diaries,

382   pictures, books, readings and thus starting to pull together emergent themes and

383   their associated stories from the research, that can be sorted and organised as

384   simply as piles on the desk or floor, to highlighting with pens, or on computer

385   assistive software such as Nvivo or OneNote. The (re)presentation of these and how

386   you draw out the stories to be told is considered next.

387   *(Re)Presentation*

388   With non-representational theories' development, a focus on writing has come to the

389   fore, and in particular the styles of writing scholars consider to be 'academic'

390   (Vannini, 2012; see also: MacDonald, 2014). However, it is this full appreciation of

391   writing, and indeed other presentation methods, as part of research, rather than an

392   afterthought, I turn to now (see also Crang & Cook, 2007). The re-presentation of

393   work that alludes to be non-representational may seem ironic: how can someone re-

394   present the feelings and affects, materialities of a moment? Carolan provides us with

395   a contextual use of this critique in that "we cannot literally feel in these pages what

396   respondents truly experienced in their lived experience. But this does not mean that

397   we cannot at least get a taste of their world through their words" (2008, p. 412), or

398   indeed our own descriptions, taken with the necessary positionalities of such

399   research.

400   I focus on re-presentation here, not just on writing, as scholars do more than just

401   write, we talk about, present, discuss and represent our research in increasingly

402   diverse ways, including conference presentations, photo essays (Swanton, 2012),

403   interactive articles (Vannini & Taggart, 2013) and monographs (Vannini, 2012). The

404   ambition then of re-representing the non-representational, emotional and affective is

405   still not "an unproblematic procedure to someone claiming to adopt an epistemology

406   that is non-representational…. [but rather it is an] attempt not to represent but to

407   reveal, to enliven, and animate…through a (hopefully) evocative and impressionist

408   rendition strategy" (Vannini & Taggart, 2013, p. 228). This becomes the key ambition

409   of non-representational scholarship, not only in representing such work, but in taking

410   these different representations seriously, as performative practices in themselves. A

411   researcher might not explicitly draw from non-representational theories in their work

412   but the lifelines and underpinnings or "blueprints" (Lorimer, 2015, p.186) of a piece of

413   work may be drawn from such a body of knowledge to enliven it (see for example:

414   Lorimer, 2012; Lorimer & Wylie, 2010). We might begin to experiment and move

415   toward more embodied and affective descriptions of places both from the author's

416   and research participants' perspectives, weaving narrative and references together

417   to give a rounded context of place for those engaged with a research paper,

418   presentation or otherwise. There are of course examples of the types of writing

419   (Cloke *et al.*, 1994) and representation this can take (Vannini & Taggart, 2013), as

420   well as works that can act as inspiration for types of writing beyond solely academic

421   frames for rural studies.

422   **Conclusion**

423   In this paper, I have argued that in order to move forward with non-representational

424   theories there is a need to consider not just what research has been done, but where

425   research using this mode of thought might go. Lorimer's (2015) articulation of

426   practices and presentation offers a useful base for work that still needs to be done

427   and conceptualised by those engaged with non-representational theories.

428   There is also value in considering, adapted from Colls (2012), how non-

429   representational theories might allow us to think and/or write differently as rural

430   geographers? And what does rural geography have to gain from adopting non-

431   representational perspectives? It provides a mode of thought through which to

432   engage with the embodied and sensuous aspects of the everyday lived experiences

433   of the rural space. How life interacts with the rural is central to our understandings of

434   rural spaces. They do not exist in a vacuum; human interaction and engagement

435   with rural spaces defines rural geographers' interest in the rural. For rural

436   geographers, an engagement with non-representational theories means continuing

437   to re-materialise their engagement with the dynamics of rural life in all its diversity, by

438   getting out there, into the fields, hills, valleys, villages, hamlets, crofts, tundras,

439   forests, coasts, and engaging with how these rural places in all their variety are

440   bound up in economic, political, ethical, moral, social, cultural and environmental

441   concerns, what associated representations *do* in place, how emotions and affects

442   play a role in wider lives and how at its heart these come to be practiced through the

443   interdependences people have with their rural places.

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[i] Non-representational theories though, as describing it as a mode of thought implies, are not the only way to address the affective and emotive lifeworlds. The wider affective turn (Wetherall, 2012) in social and cultural theory has seen the development of other geographical engagements including 'emotional geographies' (Bondi *et al.*, 2004) and 'psychoanalytic geographies' (Kingsbury & Pile, 2014). All three, non-representational theories, emotional geographies and psychoanalytic geographies, share overlapping underlying perspectives (Pile, 2010).

[ii] It is beyond the scope of this article to consider the pedagogical questions of how to teach students and others interested to use and think with non-representational theories in their research. Halfacree (2012, p. 395-397) offers some useful questions to consider around rural geographies specifically. Cloke *et al.* (2004, p. 299-305) and Couper (2015, p. 98-103) present accessible descriptions and introductions (see also Vannini, 2012, 2015) that are as much use to those practicing already, as those keen to learn.