Research Poetry and the Non-Representational

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Abstract

A call for cultural geographers to experiment with different ways of re-presencing their work has gained momentum in recent years (see DeLyser & Hawkins, 2014; Lorimer & Parr, 2014; Vannini, 2015). This climate of experimentation has seen a number of cultural geographers openly promote their interests in, and engagements with, the creative arts: some have explicitly developed practices in response to longer-standing geographical interests (e.g., Cresswell, 2013/2014; Gallagher, 2014; Gorman-Murray, 2014; Wylie, with Webster, 2014), while others have more established art practices that inform, and are informed by, their geographical work (e.g., Crouch, 2010; de Leeuw, 2012; Zebracki, n.d.). In this article, I explore the potential of poetry to animate accounts of geographical fieldwork via an intellectual engagement with the ideas and tenets of non-representational theory. I begin by outlining the history of ‘poetry as method’ in the social sciences and then acknowledge poetry’s status within phenomenology. From there, I consider what a post-structuralist account of geographical fieldwork might entail, drawing from Deleuzian philosophy. Then, using three conjoined poems of my own as a vehicle, I critically analyse the work that poems do as research as well as the ways in which they operate in literary terms.

Author Biography

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Candice Boyd is an artist-geographer with a background in clinical psychology. She has recently completed a second PhD in cultural geography and the creative arts at the University of Melbourne and is Honorary Senior Fellow of its School of Geography. Her interests are in the geographies of mental health, cultures of sense and movement, therapeutic spaces, rurality, and contemporary museum geographies.
Although few researcher-poets integrate poetry as the method for their inquiry, many researchers use poetry to synthesise, concentrate and re-present data generated during research (Lahman & Richard, 2014; Richardson, 2005) and to “seek to enter lived experiences with a creative openness to people and experiences and “Corresponding author. As a researcher using the art of poetry, I have expanded my understanding of research and the researcher role. Non-Representational Theory presents a distinctive approach to the politics of everyday life. Ranging across a variety of the spaces in which politics and the political unfold, it questions what is meant by perception, representation and practice, with the aim of valuing the fugitive practices that exist on the margins of the known. This book questions the orientation of the social sciences and humanities and makes essential reading for researchers and postgraduates. His research includes work on international finance, new forms of capitalism, cities, social and cultural theory and the history of time. International Library of Sociology Founded by Karl Mannheim Editor: John Urry Lancaster University Recent publications in this series include: Risk and Technological Culture.