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A NON-REPRESENTATIONAL FOCUS ON WILDERNESS AFFECT

By

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Dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Doctorate  
in Forest and Conservation Sciences

The University of Montana  
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A Non-Representational Focus on Wilderness Affect  
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Wilderness is integral to the fabric of American culture. With the National Wilderness Preservation System, America has a measure against which everyday life may be compared. But there remains concern over disconnection between members of society and wilderness. Non-representational theory (non-rep) is a rich and recent style of scientific practice that holds potential. Non-rep places emphasis on habitual practices and everyday life. Those interested in human affection for and connection with wilderness and the outdoors may find non-rep intellectually and practically refreshing. One aspect of this study offers a macrostructural analysis of the levels, layers, and sub-layers on which non-representational theory is founded. The analysis is intended to serve as a map for future outdoor recreation scholars interested in non-representational research. A great strength of non-rep is its capacity to inform research paths into the dynamics of human–nature connections. This study clearly marks one such path.

Affect is a popular theoretical construct that has received substantial scholarly attention in non-representational theory and elsewhere through the so-called affective turn. To reveal insight into the concept of affect, another aspect of this study focuses on wilderness affect through a non-representational theoretical lens. Research indicates that societal and cultural forces play an influential role in wilderness relationships. What's lacking is a focus on how wilderness may affectively influence, build, or sustain human–wilderness relations at the personal rather than societal scale. Through the performance of non-representational research methods, 15 people participated in a study of how wilderness affect occurs in everyday life. For one week following a visit to the Moosehorn Wilderness Area participants kept a diary and camera to take notes and photographs when wilderness feelings or ideas formed. The diary-photograph, diary-interview method was augmented with exemplary and evocative anecdotes. The results of the study show some of the ways the emergence of affect becomes perceptible. It offers an example for how affect-oriented inquiry can be carried out and thereby can inform further outdoor recreation research. Wilderness affect is suggested as a different way of thinking about the potential to appreciate and respond to the differences that emerge from relations with wild nature. The study helps focus further inquiry into human–wilderness relations.



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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

### Overview

This study documents an experimental foray into the applicability of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research. This process of scientific inquiry included an empirical investigation of affective encounters during the everyday lives of people who had recently visited a wilderness area. This study sought to explore the concept of affect and examine non-representational theory. Non-representational theory (non-rep) was characterized for outdoor recreation researchers through a description of its worldview, normative commitments, and research program applications. In other words, the elements of social science research, namely, theory, data collection, and data analysis (Babbie, 2013), with regard to non-rep, were explored so that future research efforts that adopt a non-rep approach may be better informed. In particular, because it is common for non-rep research to be affect oriented, a key supposition was that researchers interested in human–nature relationships could use non-rep approaches to better understand the affection that people have for elements of the natural world. That is, the study was premised by the supposition that affects emerge through a relational process among people and what they encounter.

This doctoral project employed qualitative methodology in an application of non-representational theory with a specific focus on affect as a theoretical construct. Participants of this study included a convenience sample of 15 students enrolled at the University of Maine at Machias during the Fall 2017 semester. The knowledge and awareness generated by this investigation can give new insights and guide new approaches in outdoor recreation research.

This chapter begins with the context and background that situate the study. What follows then are the problem statement, the statement of purpose, and the aligned research questions.

This chapter also includes discussion of the research approach, the rationale and significance, and key terms used in the study. The chapter ends with a discussion of the researcher's assumptions and perspectives.

### **Background and Context**

Theoretical research in outdoor recreation has recently moved closer to non-representational theory by adopting new perspectives that include posthumanism and post-dualistic ontologies (Ryan, 2015). Barbara Humberstone (2015) has also opened new investigative arenas by connecting non-representational theory and outdoor recreation experiences. She noted that recent investigations of embodied outdoor experiences have expanded the purview of outdoor recreation research. Specifically, she noted an increasing interest in the concept of affect. The influence of Thrift (2008) and the non-representational theory he founded is growing in outdoor recreation research (Humberstone, 2011, 2012, 2015; Thorpe & Rinehart, 2010). Seemingly, non-representational theory affords an expansion of possibilities for outdoor recreation researchers. An exploration of non-rep research can raise awareness of this style of social science, address key considerations, and suggest further research priorities.

Non-representational theory uses a particular "style of engagement with the world that aims to attend to and intervene in the taking place of practices" (Anderson, 2009, p. 503). In other words, it uses a style of inquiry that is directed toward gaining a better understanding of what is involved in the acts and processes of life. Thrift (1996) coined the term *non-representational theory* to emphasize a shift away from human thought bound strictly to mental processes and toward the thinking that occurs through and amid the contexts in which life is lived. That is, non-rep is oriented around life *as it is lived*. This means that non-rep is oriented

around the perceptions and feelings of human existence, relationships, or activities in general while they are actually forming. Non-representational theory urges inquiry beyond the notion that humans relate to the world strictly through signification. Be it ever so subtle, the difference is a focus on articulation (i.e., expression) rather than representation (i.e., symbolic indication). In other words, non-rep focuses on the concrete expression of thought in action rather than thought as something present only to the mind. Non-rep carries an ethos of innovation and therefore it especially aims to present research outcomes that bring forth new possibilities for the patterns and contexts through which the activities of life take place. This means that non-rep is specifically interested in studying how everyday life is conducted with an eye towards its open-endedness.

Everyday life is integral to non-rep research in three ways. First, the practice of everyday life brings about commonplace routines. Non-rep research examines people's habitual inclinations and the environmental conditions that can predispose people to certain everyday activities (Cadman, 2009). Second, non-rep research studies people's routines with a focus on the places and spaces through which people move. The supposition is that where somebody goes and who or what is encountered during one's mundane movements is much more potent than people may realize. Everyday life can be modified and non-rep can systematically serve to examine the options and possibilities inherent to it. Third, non-rep research seeks to engage an affective "force, or an excess, which constitutes the everyday rhythms" of environments (p. 459). This means that non-rep often focuses on affect as a changing force or influential capacity that acts as a compositional element in everyday life. To say that affect acts as a compositional element in the rhythms of everyday life means that affect, as what emerges from people's relations, is part of the general makeup of people's regularly recurring activities and encounters. In sum, non-rep

research takes an interest in understanding the dynamics of everyday life as a habitual but improvisatory realm, as the setting for encounters, and as a venue for affective processes.

Wilderness was related to everyday life in a pivotal 1962 report from the Wildland Research Center to the Outdoor Recreation Resource Review Commission. Wilderness was referred to as a way “to measure the ordinary against the superlative and thereby retain perspective on the ordinary” (p. 28). The report went on to state that “the real worth of any exceptional thing lies not alone in its own entity but as well in the influence it casts over an array of things” (p. 28). Accordingly, wilderness, as a superlative among natural resources, casts an influence on everyday life and how it is perceived. But how do people relate to wilderness in everyday life? That is, by what means does wilderness influence people’s perspectives in everyday life? This project sought to document the activities, places, and things participants related to wilderness during the week following a wilderness visit. This study documents some of the ways wilderness affectively showed up in the everyday lives of people who had recently visited a designated wilderness area.

### **Statement of the Problem and Objectives**

The adoption and advancement of novel research traditions, such as the new approaches that non-representational theory affords, depend on conceptual clarification. While there are recent advancements in other applied disciplines such as health studies (Andrews, 2018), there is a lack of conceptual clarity that surrounds the structure and practice of non-representational theory in outdoor recreation research. It is assumed that most outdoor recreation researchers do not know why, how, or with what outcomes non-representational research might be conducted.

Apart from a few exceptions (Bugbee, 1974; Dustin, 2003; Friskics, 2011; Pohl et al., 2000), connections between wilderness and everyday life have not been probed. Importantly,

non-representational theory is uniquely oriented toward everyday life. Non-rep research focuses on affect as one of life's most salient features. The research problem is a lack of familiarity with non-representational theory and its distinct approach to the associated concept of affect within the discipline of outdoor recreation research. This dissertation will serve to inform the development of further studies by examining an application of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research by way of an exploration of affect in the everyday lives of wilderness visitors.

One objective of this study is to characterize the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory as a means of exploring and furthering its potential use by outdoor recreation researchers. Because affect is a core construct within non-representational theory, a second objective of this study is to offer insights that help develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect through an exploration of its occurrence in wilderness visitors' everyday lives.

### **Statement of Purpose and Research Questions**

This dissertation documents an experiment with, and exploration of, non-representational theory for outdoor recreation research. The purpose of the study was to examine non-representational theory and explore the concept of affect to gain preliminary insights and inform future research. It is anticipated that insights from this study can inform future outdoor recreation research by helping researchers avoid potential misunderstandings and mistakes when considering non-representational theory.

This study is, in part, an introduction of non-representational theory to the field of outdoor recreation research. Patterson and Williams (2005) articulated a detailed macrostructure for understanding research traditions. Their framework provides a structure through which non-

representational theory can be examined in order to better relay its theoretical and practical features to the outdoor recreation research community. Therefore, the first research question asks, what are the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory?

Along with a review of relevant literature, Chapter II presents a macrostructural analysis and philosophical characterization of non-representational theory. A general introduction to non-rep will better orient readers. As much as it is possible, non-rep focuses on life as it occurs. The focus is on the ongoing processes through which life takes place. This means that non-rep takes a specific interest in practices, or people's habitual or customary ways. Also, rather than mental states, non-representational theory is more concerned with feelings and the events that spur their occurrence (Parr, 2014).

Another objective of this study is to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect. The investigation was premised by the notion that the concept of affect can be used to better understand the ways people relate to wilderness in everyday life. Affect is a popular theoretical construct that has received substantial scholarly attention in human geography's engagement with non-representational theory (Anderson, 2016). Non-rep assumes life to be "an endlessly emergent, porous, improvisatory, associational, and circumstantial realm" (Lorimer, 2015, p. 180). In other words, it focuses on life in its transitory but influential progression. Affects emerge and are perceptible through people's encounters in life. Stated another way, "affect refers to the experience of life as it is lived" (Anderson, 2014a, p. 761). Non-representational theories "think of the world as *lively* and in a state of *becoming*" (Cresswell, 2012, p. 227, emphasis in original). Non-rep researchers study practices to understand their role in shaping the patterns of encounters through which affects emerge.

The empirical component of this study aimed to document participant perceptions in a way that most effectively conveyed what it was like to live through encounters in their everyday lives that brought about wilderness ideas and feelings. Non-representational theory holds a substantive interest in everyday life, that is, “the ordinary practices by which life unfolds” (Cloke et al., 2014, p. 742). Thus, the second research question asks, what insights are revealed from an exploration of affect in the everyday lives of wilderness visitors?

Specifically, the researcher solicited respondent diaries and photographs from wilderness visitors for a week following a researcher-facilitated wilderness visit. An important premise is that affect is a relational phenomenon. As Anderson stated, “affects emerge from relations between people and between people and things” (2014a, p. 766). For the purposes of this study, the term *wilderness affect* refers to what emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. Therefore, to document wilderness affect, participants were instructed to take diary-photographs during encounters in everyday life when they sensed the formation of wilderness ideas or feelings.

Participants were instructed to later use their photographs to discuss the influence on, or change in, their feelings in order to further explore affect in the lives of wilderness visitors. It was assumed that qualities of wilderness affect would be evident in the ways participants related the subjects of their diary-photographs to the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. It was assumed that if participants took photographs when wilderness ideas or feelings formed, then wilderness affect had emerged from the relations with what they encountered. If wilderness affect is what emerges from the relations between a person and something that stimulates wilderness ideas and feelings, then wilderness affect could be traced through the feelings of what happened during those encounters. In this study, encounters with things that stimulated the

formation of wilderness ideas and feelings were documented using diary-photographs, explored using diary-interviews, and exemplified using anecdotes. A more detailed rationale and a more thorough description of this study's data collection, analysis, and synthesis methods are presented in later chapters.

### **Research Approach**

With the approval of the institutional review boards of the University of Montana and the University of Maine, the researcher investigated wilderness affect in the everyday lives of 15 college students who visited the Moosehorn Wilderness Area in Washington County, Maine, United States. Each participant went for a hike in the Moosehorn Wilderness Area, kept a diary, and took pictures with regard to wilderness feelings and ideas. Participants later reviewed their photographs and diary entries while giving in-depth interviews to the researcher.

The diary-photograph, diary-interview method guided the data collection (Latham, 2003, 2004, 2014, 2016). Each interviewee was identified by a pseudonym, and all interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The researcher assembled excerpts from the participant diary entries and interview transcripts and from these constructed anecdotes to provide a "relational understanding" of wilderness affect for readers (Van Manen, 2014, p. 268). Eleven exemplary anecdotes were thematically analyzed in an attempt to convey the ways wilderness affect manifested during the everyday lives of wilderness visitors.

### **Rationale and Significance**

Hayden Lorimer (2015) identified three notable features of non-representational research. Those three features can be used to illustrate potential implications of this study. First, non-representational research "produces artful variants and offshoots of creative practice" (Lorimer, 2015, p. 181). One distinct feature of this scientific study is that it is a productive execution of

non-representational research that can offer a reader the opportunity to encounter affective photographs and anecdotes that strive to convey a felt sense of wilderness in the everyday lives of participants. More than that, as an artful variant, this study serves the interests of intellectual diversity and exhibits an approach to knowledge production in outdoor recreation research that differs from other research styles.

Second, the mode of non-representational theory, or its research position, is in the middle. The middle is “where research happens when things take place, together, in real time, phenomenally. Non-representational research is inherently associative, an exercise *between* and *with-*” (Lorimer, 2015, p. 181, emphasis in original). Non-rep research practices attempt to sense the general mood or emotional currents in an area or activity. Another distinct feature of this study is its methodological approach. The researcher attempted to access the everyday lives of wilderness visitors and document the emergence of affect from the relations between participants and what they encountered while wilderness ideas and feelings formed. Therefore, the study has the potential to inform research about affective wilderness relations.

Third, non-representational theory is connected with the wider field of affect studies. Affect studies often focus on pairings of abstract and concrete nouns. Intangible but perceptible themes such as “hope, anxiety, care, desperation, joy, wonder, enchantment, dread, attraction, security, health, intelligence, and mobility” (Lorimer, 2015, p. 181) have been linked to “bodies, buildings, airports, animals, landscapes, trains, ships, hospitals, balloons, and bacteria” (p. 182). This study has the potential to identify such abstract and concrete nouns as key variables or relationships for further affect-oriented inquiry in outdoor recreation research.

## Key Terms

### **Affect**

“It describes prediscursive, embodied experiences that are subsequently codified into subjective emotions” (Lorimer, 2009, p. 344). “Affects emerge from relations between people and between people and things” (Anderson, 2014a, p. 766).

### **Events of Encounter**

“Happenings, unfoldings, regular occurrences inspired (but not over-determined) by states of anticipation and irregular actions that shatter expectations” (Vannini, 2015b, p. 7).

### **Everyday Life**

“The setting for the routine and mundane, but also improvised and transformative practices” (Cadman, 2009, p. 456).

### **Non-Representational Theory**

An emerging project in human geography that began at the University of Bristol’s School of Geographical Sciences. Its primary distinction is a focus on practice rather than product; action but not outcome. Non-representational theory

insists on: the flow of things – on the practical and processual (posited as opposed to the finished and fixed); on the production of meaning in action (rather than through pre-established systems and structures); on an ontology that is relational (rather than essentialist); on habitual interaction with the world (rather than ‘consciousness’ of it); on the possibilities of things emerging surprisingly (rather than being predetermined); on a wide definition of life as humans/with/plus (rather than strictly humanistic); and on all-inclusive materiality where everything produces ‘the social’ constantly (rather than an already achieved ‘social’ constructing everything else. (Cresswell, 2012, p. 230-231)

**Practice**

“Competences and (embodied) dispositions which precede and exceed contemplative thought and reflection” (Cadman, 2009, p. 456).

**Assumptions**

Based on the researcher’s experience and background as a wilderness recreationist and scholar, three primary assumptions were made regarding this study. First, there are elements of wilderness experience beyond wilderness area boundaries. This assumption is based on the Wilderness Act (1964) and the premise that wilderness presents “outstanding opportunities for... [an] unconfined type of recreation.” Wilderness recreation, understood more universally, is not confined to designated parcels. Second, the experience of wilderness beyond wilderness areas (and the wilderness idea) can be traced. This presumption is guided by the principle that effective outdoor management and wilderness stewardship in particular requires that information be gathered about many aspects of the outdoor recreation experience (Manning, 2012). Third, the concept of wilderness affect could express a way people relate to wilderness within or beyond designated wilderness areas. This assumption is based on the premise that affect refers to what emerges from the relations between people, places, and things. Fourth, a typical college student is able to perceive and record information regarding their own experience of wilderness affect when instructed to notice the formation of their own wilderness feelings and ideas following a wilderness visit. This assumption is based on the premise that there may be something singular and distinct about the wilderness recreation experience in terms of the “thoughts, emotions and feelings associated with being in wilderness and the more enduring changes in attitudes, perceptions, and sense of self that arise from these encounters with wilderness” (Cole & Williams, 2012, p. 3).

### **Position**

At the time this study was conducted the researcher was employed as a faculty member in a university program instructing coursework in recreation and tourism management. The researcher was and is a passionate wilderness enthusiast and supporter of the National Wilderness Preservation System. Thus, the researcher brought experience both as an academic and as a member of a wilderness stewardship community of practice.

The same experiences that are so valuable in providing specialized insight could serve as a liability, biasing judgment regarding research design and the interpretation of findings. In addition to the assumptions and theoretical orientation being made explicit in the first part of this dissertation, the researcher remained committed to ongoing critical self-reflection. Moreover, to address the researcher's subjectivity and to strengthen the credibility of the research, various procedural safeguards were taken. For example, as a validity check, participants were asked to review and affirm the anecdotes developed from their encounters.

### **Summary**

This study was designed to offer an informed understanding of non-representational theory as it might apply to outdoor recreation research. By placing a focus on affect, it sought to explore, examine, and exemplify the influence of wilderness in everyday life. As an examination of non-representational theory it can provide preliminary insights and inform how, why, and with what outcomes outdoor recreation researchers can work with non-rep. Using theory to perform a macrostructural analysis, the study explicates the levels and layers that constitute non-representational theory as a research tradition. The study also suggests a preliminary model for understanding affect as an influencing, composing, and relating capacity. This study can support further affect-oriented inquiry in outdoor recreation research.

## **CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview**

As previously stated, the purpose of this study was to examine non-representational (non-rep) theory and explore the concept of affect. Briefly, the researcher's objectives were: (a) to characterize the philosophical foundations of non-rep, and (b) to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect. Throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation phases, the researcher continually sought out scholarly literature to inform this exploratory study.

The study was premised by the notion that exploring an affect-oriented approach to outdoor recreation research could bring an added dimension to current understandings of how and why humans relate to outdoor recreation resources. Therefore, it was important to initially review the most prevalent current approaches to outdoor recreation experiences. Non-representational theory is reviewed to provide an outline of this emerging style of social science research and many of its unique qualities. Affect is central to this complex and contested area of inquiry. In this chapter the concept receives a detailed and precise examination for the purposes of this research project.

### **Approaches to Outdoor Recreation Experiences**

In their seminal work, Clawson and Knetsch (1966) offered a model of recreation experience that included five phases: anticipation, travel to the site, on site, travel back from the site, and recollection. In later research, Driver and Brown (1975) mentioned but omitted recreational recall (the recollection phase) while switching the predominant focus to a production line model where outcomes and satisfaction took precedence. This was an important shift from a process-oriented model to a product-oriented model of outdoor recreation experiences. The mainstream approach to outdoor recreation research focused largely on motivations and

satisfaction until scholars in the 1990s and 2000s moved beyond the production line model and articulated an approach that was less focused on the fulfillment of motivations and more focused on meanings and relationships (Watson et al., 2016; Williams et al., 1992; Williams, 2005).

Earlier research on the nature of wilderness experiences emphasized motivations and experiential outcomes while more recent work “more deeply explores the lived experience in wilderness, its ebb and flow, and the process by which experience is constructed and developed into long-lasting relationships” (Cole & Williams, 2012, p. 3). Some later research (Quay & Seaman, 2016) has relied on experiential and existential philosophies, like those of John Dewey and Martin Heidegger, to further broaden commonly accepted models of experience in outdoor studies. This more recent scholarship has emphasized and encouraged qualitative affective thinking as “thinking *in* practice rather than thinking *about* practice” (p. 43). Such a focus on practice shares similarities with non-representational theory, but little outdoor recreation research has expressly discussed non-rep approaches. While meanings-based and relationship-based approaches to outdoor recreation have flourished recently, research efforts have not moved considerably further towards a focus on the practices and relations that, in part, constitute outdoor recreation.

Cole and Williams (2012) reviewed the various approaches to researching wilderness experiences. They named three prominent ones: motivation-based approaches, experience-based approaches, and relationship-based approaches. Motivation-based approaches focus on the cognitive results that follow from wilderness visits. Experience-based approaches focus on the mental and physical responses that arise during wilderness visits. Relationship-based approaches focus on the series of actions or changes experienced by the visitor that influence the meaning of a wilderness area to a visitor. Importantly though, in this study the recollection phase is given

greater attention than the on-site phase of the wilderness experience. Previous approaches to wilderness experience, while emphasizing different underlying concepts, have focused predominantly on the on-site phase.

Researchers have suggested that wilderness relationships form through “dynamic engagements that fluctuate and accumulate over time” and various forces “can influence our interactions with wilderness and the meanings constructed through our experiences” (Dvorak & Borrie, 2007, p. 12). In proposing a relationship-based approach to wilderness experiences, Dvorak and Borrie noted that changes in cultural and social forces influence wilderness relationships. But for Dvorak and Borrie, the emphasis is placed on large-scale socio-demographic, environmental, and policy-based forces. There are also smaller-scale forces that influence wilderness relationships. Dvorak and Borrie suggested that it is “through experiences in wilderness and the construction of long-term meaning, people build ongoing relationships with wilderness areas” (p. 13). Here they identify two elements, wilderness experiences and the construction process for long-term meaning. For the latter, long-term meaning making takes place in part through events beyond wilderness area boundaries. Both experiences in wilderness and meaning making processes influence wilderness relationships. But meaning making processes take place during all phases of outdoor recreation experiences. An affect-oriented approach could more effectively address the offsite dimension of meaning making and thereby provide greater insight into how people relate to wilderness.

Fix et al. (2018) offered an aggregate-individual model of recreational experience with one level that corresponds to a motivation-based approach in the aggregate, and another level that corresponds to a meanings-based approach with the individual. They encouraged multiparadigmatic cooperation based on the notion that despite different normative

commitments, a more integrated model of recreation experience would allow for complementary insights. In identifying two approaches only, Fix et al. subsumed the relationship-based approach into a meanings-based approach. This project's non-representational focus assumes that there are unexamined meaning making and relationship building dimensions of outdoor recreation experiences.

### **Non-Representational Theory**

Non-representational theory is an area of research concerned with the ways human existence, relationships, and activities come to have a distinct feel or general character (Lorimer, 2005). Non-representational theory emerged in the 1990s from the work of British geographer Nigel Thrift (1996). The three philosophical movements with the strongest connections to non-rep are post-structuralism, neo-vitalism, and phenomenology. The philosophical approach taken in this study largely invokes the phenomenology of emotion and embodied practice (Van Manen, 2014) and a neo-vitalist interpretation of affect (Thrift, 2008). Having concern for the body and emotions, non-rep focuses on the ontologically active ways in which bodies can be interpreted (Cadman, 2009).

Phenomenological and vitalist approaches place a focus on animate *and* inanimate bodies by asking what they can do. Approaches such as these focus on understanding the capacities of bodies to influence other bodies. This, again, emphasizes that bodies hold capacities for affecting and being affected and that these capacities can make a difference in human life through (non-representational) preconstructions of expression (Thrift, 2008). From a phenomenological and vitalist perspective, bodies make preconscious impressions and hold an affective force of existing. As such, it is important to reiterate that the definition of *body* used in this study is rather broad. It is akin to the term *object* and the way objects are traditionally referred to in the natural

sciences. The point, however, is that for non-rep, bodies affect the way human existence, relationships, and activities feel.

Anderson and Harrison (2010) outlined the emergence of non-representational theory from a particular representational approach, social constructivism. Social constructivism focused on the structure of cultural representation. The “collective symbolic order” was often the primary ontological object for social constructionists. “The collective symbolic order is that by which its members make sense of the world, within which they organise their experience and justify their actions” (p. 4). Social constructions are presumed to reflect a society’s values while, for non-rep, practices manifest meanings. Practices, one’s habitual or customary actions, are meaningful in that they are the ways in which one’s understandings of given situations are performed. In other words, the practices a person performs convey that person’s understandings of the situations that person encounters.

Anderson and Harrison (2010) argued that there were epistemological implications when the symbolic order was isolated from practical events and encounters. They claimed that social constructivist representations separate meaning from practice while non-rep emphasizes the expressive aspect of practice. For non-rep, meanings emerge as expressions of bodies, habits, practices, and surroundings. In contrast, social constructivism typically puts meaning in various texts that made reference to bodies, habits, practices, and, to a lesser extent, surroundings. The distinct difference here is that social constructivism turned expressions of meaning into disembodied texts. And herein lies the representation. Text is representation. But non-rep posits that practices express meaning. Non-rep accounts for expressions of meaning beyond texts or signification.

Non-representational theory does not dismiss representation offhand. Non-representational

theory is in counter-position to the notion of representation as mere repetition or mirroring. Anderson and Harrison stated, “non-representational styles of thinking can by no means be characterised as anti-representation *per se*” (2010, p. 19, emphasis in original). For that reason, Lorimer (2005) suggested that non-rep could be more accurately referred to as more-than-representational theory. Non-rep shifts the focus toward practices, events, and the emergence of meanings in actions and expressions. The focus is moved to the actual expressions of meanings in the moments they occur.

Non-rep researchers are often “much less interested in representing an empirical reality that has taken place *before* the act of representation than they are in enacting multiple and diverse potentials of what knowledge can become *afterwards*” (Vannini, 2015b, p. 12, emphasis in original). This means that non-rep researchers make it their goal to present findings in ways that make impressions on their readers or audience members. The interest is often in

what can become of your work, in what unique and novel ways it can reverberate with people, what social change or intellectual fascination it can inspire, what impressions it can animate, what surprises it can generate, what expectations it can violate, what new stories it can generate. (p. 12)

Vannini (2015b) qualified non-rep research in three ways. First, the research is methodologically brave in its incorporation of creativity and performative elements. By consciously adding measured liveliness to their methods, researchers attempt to convey a felt sense of the ongoing flux of life. Second, non-representational research is often applied to ordinary events and seemingly mundane, rote, or commonplace activities in order to learn more about everyday life and how it emerges, forms, and then seemingly falls into the background. Third, non-rep research efforts are performed in a characteristic spirit of animation. It is an ethos

that often manifests in researchers' aspirations. Non-rep researchers aim to enliven their own practice of social science by adopting an enthusiastic style. Non-rep researchers want their work to resonate with audiences and to evoke images, memories, or emotions.

Having briefly introduced non-representational theory, this chapter now turns to a more precise examination of the research style. A macrostructural analysis is presented in an attempt to give an organized exposition of non-rep. In the spirit of non-rep, it should be noted that the structure offered below is "caught in the act of research" and is therefore not meant to strictly solidify, standardize, or reify any one way of conducting non-rep research.

### **A Macrostructure for Non-Representational Theory**

The macrostructure serves as the appropriate unit of analysis when the goal is identifying the unique qualities of a research tradition. Non-representational theory presents an approach to social science that may be unfamiliar. The abundance of theoretical language and seemingly disruptive dynamic led Lorimer (2015) to suggest that it seems "dubiously abstract, impressionistic, and so hellish hard to put a finger on" (p. 179). A systematic and structured description will help convey and further promote the interpretability of non-rep research. The characteristics of non-rep's foundations are described using a framework drawn from Patterson and Williams (2005).

#### ***Worldview***

At the worldview level there are position and dialog layers which, in their characterization, differentiate research traditions. Non-representational theory holds a posthumanist worldview that is aligned with vitalism. Vitalist posthumanism "is more open to the materialities and affective forces that flow between humans, organisms, and objects, cutting across modern ontological divides" (Lorimer, 2009, p. 345). Vitality refers to the capacity of

objects to influence human intentions (Bennett, 2010). Vitalist posthumanism addresses the ontological issues surrounding the ways humans and nonhumans interrelate. Investigations of “the embodied, affective, and nondiscursive basis to much of social life” (Lorimer, 2009, pp. 347–348) are common.

**Position.** Position, in this framework, refers to how diversity is handled with regard to scientific practice. Non-rep takes a performative position. The continuum of positions from extreme rationalism to extreme relativism can be characterized in terms of “ideological underpinnings” (Patterson & Williams, 2005, p. 371). Extreme rationalists strictly follow the scientific method while extreme relativists tend to reject the establishment of rules for scientific practice. Performative science recognizes a need for specificity. That is, performative science produces differences in the world and recognizes the need for researchers to be specific about the possibilities that emerge when a difference is made. Performative science is conducted in bounded and structured ways that allow for reasoned improvisation. It expressly embraces failure, adjustment, and repetition. The performative position distinctively and intentionally looks for new thinking, relations, and practices to emerge.

**Dialog.** A posthumanist worldview does not promote oppositional, integrative, or incommensurable dialog (Patterson & Williams, 2005). Like a critical pluralist worldview, speculative dialog is reflective to the degree that non-rep researchers discuss, compare, and contrast the worldviews that underlie their various theories and methodologies. The distinction is that reflective dialog is oriented toward the differences among fixed approaches and insights while speculative dialog is directed towards the exploration of ideas and methods that are in the process of coming into being. That is, non-rep dialog is especially concerned with the development of new concepts and questions (Anderson & Harrison, 2010).

**Diversity.** The dialog layer of the worldview level also deals with questions of diversity, validity, and legitimacy (Patterson & Williams, 2005). The dialog that arises from a performative position is often expressly directed toward the possibility of new practices for research and problem solving. Discussions are oriented around exploration of the diversity of styles in scholarship.

**Validity.** Performative research is speculative in its commitment to stretching and striving. Researchers stretch when they take a chance and design new practices for collecting data. They strive by braving the inevitable pitfalls on the way to innovation (Dewsbury, 2010). What is distinctive here is non-rep's frequently aspirational and hopeful orientation (Thrift, 2008). Instead of stopping and reflecting, non-rep research is committed to further speculation and vigilant sensitivity to new possibilities so that researchers remain open to ongoing inquiry through innovative methods.

Because non-representational theory is concerned with specific moments of life in the immediacy of their occurrence, the dialog that non-rep researchers employ can be characterized as deictic. Stemming from the Greek *deiktos*, meaning shown, deictic dialog involves discussion of a particular subject or event that points to, indicates, or depends upon the time, place, or situation in which the discussion is occurring. The philosopher Albert Borgmann (1987) described deictic discourse as a communication style that points to something in an audience's common experience that can call out consideration or regard for the significance of what is being indicated.

Deictic discourse is a form of articulation as explanation. It is a witnessing or appealing style of communication (as opposed to expository, persuasive, or rhetorical styles). Deictic communication conveys "something that is present visibly, forcefully, and in its own right, and it

can address others by inviting them to see for themselves” (Borgmann, 1987, p. 178). By raising the question of their own experiences, deictic dialog offers considerations of validity to the interlocutors. “Speakers of deictic discourse never finally warrant the validity of what they tell but point away from themselves to what finally matters; they speak essentially as witnesses” (p. 178). The topic of validity will be discussed further in Chapter III.

*Legitimacy.* To reiterate, from a posthumanist position, speculative dialog promotes an a-centered image of thought [that] shifts the focus from knowledge “about” procedures for producing knowledge, and concerns about what knowing “is,” to questions about what knowledge does, how it works, and how it effectively may generate more (not less) life. (Taylor, 2016, p. 11)

To generate more life simply means to give rise to new practices. It means generating more relationships and activities in an intentionally defined fashion. It requires dialog among subject matter experts and practitioners. Legitimacy counts in the sense that the research efforts are traceable and repeatable. The productive capacity of science remains of great importance. Thrift (2008) emphasized that non-rep is meant as a modest supplement, but it is supplementary nonetheless. Non-rep research differs in that researchers typically complete their work in ways that suggest “yes, and” or “all this and more...” to emphasize their ongoing commitment to carrying on with new ways of researching (thinking, relating, and practicing). Non-rep is adamantly open-ended.

Non-rep does adhere to three criteria of science: it is empirical, subject to external critique, and systematically rigorous. That the dialog allows for speculation reflects the importance of research procedures. What is important is that social science remains intelligible across paradigms (given adequate communication). Scholars have expressed concern for

research that hastily employs experimental approaches without proper consideration of normative commitments. Problems of conceptual consistency can arise when paradigms are spliced. It is wise “to emphasize the internal consistency” (Williams & Patterson, 2007, p. 934) in how research programs are practiced in accordance with normative paradigmatic commitments. Next the analysis turns to a consideration of non-representational theory at the paradigmatic level. Further consideration is given to the non-rep worldview in Chapter V.

Before explicating the ontological, epistemological, and axiological commitments of non-rep it will be helpful to summarize the approach again. It is of primary importance to note that non-rep emphasizes the open-ended, emergent, and ongoing aspects of life (Cadman, 2009). Non-representational theory involves and seeks to disclose overlooked aspects of everyday life. Thrift (1996, 2008) has espoused and expanded upon his tenets of non-rep in great detail. Briefly, non-rep is a set of ideas with a focus (1) on process rather than stasis, (2) on more-than-human rather than strictly human life, (3) on practice rather than cognition, (4) on things rather than discourse, (5) on procedures rather than templates, (6) on affect rather than motivation, and (7) on invention rather than convention. Further informative and cogent discussions of these seven principles and how they are practiced are available in volumes edited by Anderson and Harrison (2010) and Vannini (2015b).

### ***Paradigm***

**Ontology.** Ontologically, non-representational theory holds that at the most fundamental levels, the world is made up of encounters (Thrift, 1999). That is, events of encounter are the basic ontological units in non-representational theory. Synonymously, encounters are sometimes called occurrences. The term is drawn from what Deleuze (2016/1978, para. 27) called Spinoza’s “quite strange but very important” choice of the Latin *occursus*. Encounters, or occurrences,

exist where bodies meet or relate. Again, the term *body* is quite broad in non-rep. It may refer to a human or more.

Encounters entail affects, which, for humans, stimulate feelings. “To the extent that I have affection ideas I live chance encounters” (Deleuze 2016/1978, para. 27). This presumes that encounters naturally stimulate a response. The notion of affects through bodily encounters dates back at least to 17th-century philosopher Benedictus de Spinoza (1994). Non-rep is committed to “a relational ontology of affects. Affects are the material properties and forces of a body that condition the nature of any interaction” (Lorimer, 2009, p. 349). In other words, if non-rep is concerned with the ways that life comes to have a distinct feel, then it is concerned with the ways bodies interrelate through encounters that entail affects that register as feelings.

Ontology also concerns the nature of human experience. Non-rep assumes an embodied model of experience. Human action in non-rep takes root “via embodied and environmental affordances, dispositions, and habits” (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 7). A key distinction for non-rep is that tacit and preconscious influences shape the way people inhabit and relate to their environments. For non-rep, life is shaped by the ways people interact with people and things. In the most general terms, humans encounter other bodies and either mesh or clash with them to a greater or lesser degree. The fluctuating degree to which somebody clashes or meshes with what is encountered influences a person’s experience. For non-rep research, experience is founded and forms in an “embodied, affective, and nondiscursive” manner (Lorimer, 2009, p. 348).

The subtle but actual shifts in how people relate to and connect with other people and things are a crucial area of inquiry for non-rep. That is, researchers have been interested in the (non-representational) affects that emerge from relations which are perceptible and experienced as lived durations (however brief). The subtle affective shifts, those thoughts-in-action whereby

somebody meshes or clashes with whatever has been encountered are “non-representational” (or more-than-representational, as Lorimer (2005) rephrased it). The important point here is that non-rep assumes there are no direct ways to symbolically indicate the subtle changes somebody experiences in terms of how a person feels (in the moment) while relating to what occurs. Non-rep is founded on the notion that while it is important to represent lived phenomena, it can be especially useful to express the changes in somebody’s feelings that occur during an event of encounter. It is presumed that evocative expressions that bring about feelings, memories, or images are better suited than representative values to convey the perceptible influence of affect that is felt from an encounter.

Human nature is a topic appropriate to ontology (Patterson & Williams, 2005). Non-representational theory orients its model of behavior around practice. According to Thrift (1996), people make sense of the world through their deeds more than their words. Non-rep researchers posit that it is through practice that meanings are manifested. In non-rep, meanings are not extractions held apart from life. Rather, “the meaning of things comes less from their place in a structuring symbolic order and more from their enactment in contingent practical contexts” (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 7). According to the non-rep approach, thought is part of human nature and is inseparable from conduct. In non-rep, “practice is not conceived as the property of individuals with prior intentions but as dialogical and processual. This means that practices are responsive” (Cadman, 2009, p. 459). Non-rep researchers assume that intentional human actions are dependent on the existence of human practices: “Actions presuppose practices and not vice versa” (Thrift, 2008, p. 8). Non-rep assumes a practice-oriented model of human behavior.

**Epistemology.** Thrift’s (1996) discussion of non-rep epistemology emphasized the importance of positionality and situated knowledges. Positionality refers to the influence that

personal values and situated contexts have on one's understanding of the world. This means that non-rep researchers embrace the contingency of their own knowledge and the contextual nature of the concepts with which they are reflexively working. Non-rep researchers stand in the midst of research rather than outside the relations of knowledge production. They attend to positionality and practice reflexivity when they recognize social relations that affect research processes.

Non-rep researchers position themselves relationally in the midst of their contexts of inquiry. They attempt to understand the ways practices, ideas, and things are associated. Non-rep researchers closely examine the relations between humans and their material environments. The knowledge produced from such investigations can build understandings of the often taken-for-granted practical engagements between humans and the objects that make up their environments. With non-rep research, the knowledge that is produced informs the understanding and development of practices in life.

**Axiology.** According to Thrift (2008), the terminal goal of non-representational theory is to develop greater ontological consciousness. The overall goal is “to produce a politics of opening the event to more, more; more action, more imagination, more light, more fun, even” (p. 20). This means being open to conditions that tolerate and even invite the development of new practices. The development of greater ontological consciousness requires two steps. First, people must recognize that the way life is lived is largely up to them. People would benefit from an understanding that life is brought into being by the way they live their lives. Simply put, everyday practices constitute life ways. Second, people must use these understandings of themselves (personally and collectively) to craft their own cultures (Spinoza et al., 1997).

Opening events to more means recognizing that the organization of encounters (no matter how casual) influences a person's practices, relationships, and activities.

Non-rep research is against the blind adoption and blind perpetuation of the status quo. But it is more opposed to blindness than the status quo. Non-rep promotes awareness of and openness to the possibilities that arise from innovative practice.

In turn, this ethic of novelty can be connected to the general theme of "more life", for it suggests a particular form of boosting aliveness, one that opens us to our being in the midst of life through a thoroughly ontological involvement. (Thrift, 2008, p. 14)

Non-rep research successfully supplements public life if it generates modest increases in social receptivity to ingenuity. The desired result is an increase in the conceivability of everyday life practices (Thrift et al., 2010). The goal is to increase people's capacities to imagine new practices associated with their particular sets of circumstances. Non-rep honors and acts on the assumption that there is always something more to life and it attempts to work out what more there may be. Non-rep is suited for "those who want to redesign everyday things, those who, in other words, want to generate more space to be unprecedented, to love what aids fantasy, and so to gradually break down imaginative resistance" (Thrift, 2008, p. vii). Non-rep embraces innovation and strives for discovery while setting precedents for further innovation.

Given the innovative nature of non-representational theory, it is challenging to report any strict evaluative criteria. But again, this is not an "anything goes" approach. Non-representational theory is subject to external critique, in that it is logical, systematic, and empirical. Posthumanist theorist Isabelle Stengers (2008) was cited by Knudsen and Stage (2015b) when they stated that "experiments should produce conditions for events to happen that bring something into existence that has got the power to produce situated truth and subsequent agreement among competent peer

colleagues” (p. 14). The concept of situated truth aligns well with the deictic discourse employed by non-rep researchers.

Non-rep researchers employ deictic discourse to disclose situated truth and earn the agreement of colleagues. They present their findings for the consideration of scholarly audiences. The findings result from real and genuine encounters. Their strength comes from the specificity of actual human experience. An evaluative question would assess the degree to which a study’s research outcomes are met with agreement among competent peer colleagues. With deictic discourse, an appeal to sympathy is made to convey the truth of what is being shared.

Sympathy requires that one testify not simply by setting out in some way what matters but by inviting the listener to search his or her experiences and aspirations; and so one ensures that the listener is as fully engaged as possible by the concern to be conveyed. (Borgmann, 1987, p. 178)

McCormack (2014) touted exemplification as a research aim for non-rep work. He stated, “exemplification is a way of remaining faithful to the singularity of the event-full qualities of relation-specific circumstances rather than presenting the singularity as a particular instance of a general rule or theory” (p. 12). What’s more, “exemplification affirms a commitment to the activation of the details of the world such that they may circulate beyond the context of their taking place” (p. 12). Non-rep research aims to affect audiences by giving a felt sense of the particularity and singularity of the events being investigated, documented, and shared. Researchers aim to exemplify the qualities of encounters that made a difference to participants who experienced the encounters. With their examples they attempt to activate details of the encounters in ways that will allow those qualities that made a difference to circulate beyond the contexts of the actual encounters.

In summation, non-rep seeks to raise ontological awareness. This means that the ultimate goal of non-rep is to raise awareness of the constitutive force of practice in everyday life. Using deictic discourse, non-rep researchers present their work to peer colleagues for consideration of the work's capacity to touch their feelings. Researchers exemplify the qualities of the phenomena under inquiry by presenting findings in ways that attempt to make an illustrative impression on audiences.

### ***Research Program***

The conceptual, substantive, and methodological domains presented in this macrostructure come from Brinberg and McGrath (1985). The complete setup of that system is more detailed than is necessary for the descriptive purposes of this study. However, the structure itself is useful for describing non-rep's research program layers and for reviewing relevant examples of non-rep research. What is reviewed here begins in the conceptual domain with affect, moves to the substantive domain, and then presents methodological guidance for affect-oriented research with examples drawn from relevant studies.

**Conceptual Domain.** Brinberg and McGrath (1985) developed a detailed nomenclature to discuss research programs. Each of the three domains at the research program level can be characterized in terms of its elements, relations, and embedding systems. "In the conceptual domain, elements are properties of actors behaving in a context" (Brinberg & Hirshman, 1986, p. 163). Objects of scientific interest have properties or qualities and these properties make up one part of the conceptual domain. Encounters between bodies are the basic entities in non-rep. Affects are the conceptual properties that influence the distinctive character of an encounter.

In non-rep research contexts, "affect is used to refer to the taken-for-granted 'background' of life and thought: the feeling of what happens" (Anderson, 2014a, p. 766).

Affects emerge through bodily encounters where bodies are understood to be material or immaterial. Affects modulate intensities of feelings as forces that emerge from encounters. In other words, affects influence the potency of one's inner reaction to an encounter with someone or something. The character of an encounter can be qualified in terms of how agreeably or disagreeably somebody relates to whatever is encountered. Affective relations constitute a substantial portion of the conceptual terrain of non-representational theory (Anderson, 2014a).

Commenting on Anderson's (2006) study of affect, Pile (2010) gave a helpful, though simplified, three-layer model for affects, feelings, and emotions. In that model, the deepest layer consists of affects, which are situated "behind and beyond both pre-cognition and cognition" (Pile, 2010, p. 9). Affects "reside in bodies, plural: they are not simply a bodily content or capacity, affect refers to flows (of affect) between bodies" (p. 9). Feelings constitute another layer between affects and emotions. Feelings are pre-cognitive, "tacit and intuitive," though they "can emerge into consciousness" (p. 9). Feelings are the patterns that arise as outcomes of assorted affects. Emotions form the third layer in Pile's configuration as cognitive expressions of "conscious and experienced" feelings. "Although emotions emerge from feelings, and represent personal experience, they are socially constructed, through language and other representational practices" (p. 9). Pile's three-layer model remains distinctly different than standard psychological approaches to affect because it situates preconscious feelings between affect and emotion. Affects become perceptible when they coalesce into feelings and once the feelings are recognized and named, they can be considered emotions. Two studies are reviewed next in order to more effectively illustrate the way non-rep research operates in the conceptual domain.

Affect served as the concept of interest in an investigation of embodied understandings of Australian wilderness (Waitt & Lane, 2007). That investigation was premised by the notion that

tourists gain embodied knowledge by experiencing and responding to imagined wilderness in the Australian landscape. The researchers were interested in how tourists' use of four-wheel drive vehicles led to encounters that broadened their perceptual sensibilities. The research suggested that tourist practices create opportunities to gain embodied knowledge. Because the knowledge-in-practice is born from automotive encounters with a specific landscape, Waitt and Laine referred to what emerged from the human-landscape relations as a "drivescape" (p. 167). They concluded, "this embodied knowledge is conceptualised as generated through affective responses to the experiences of four-wheel drive touring practices" (p. 167). Waitt and Lane demonstrated how "non-representational theory provides a conceptual framework that simultaneously helps undo binary thinking of wilderness and is responsive to the affective power of lived experience" (p. 157).

Barnfield (2016) examined the role of affects, objects, and movement in his non-representational approach to running practices in Bulgaria. He used interview and field note excerpts to show how affects are sensed and perceived. By focusing on the affective register of running practices his work found that runners experienced sensations of comfort and conviviality along with sensory attunements to lighting conditions. Barnfield noted that "a non-representational approach draws attention to the importance of affects, movement and objects in how, where and when people engage in physical exercise" (p. 290). The above examples of four-wheeling in Australia and running in Bulgaria offer two contexts where a non-rep focus on affect was taken. The concept of affect is given a more detailed review further below.

**Substantive Domain.** Non-rep researchers focus on the relations between bodies engaged in practices. The substantive focus is on the degree to which the bodies have a bearing on or connection to each other. An interest in relations "prompts non-representational researchers

to study associations, mutual formations, ecologies, constellations, and cofabrications” (Vannini, 2015b, p. 8).

The focus on practices emphasizes the process-oriented approach of non-rep research. There is an emphasis on action, motion, and operation in non-rep. “Whereas representational theories study the mind and its operations as preconditions for action, non-representational researchers examine thought exclusively in action, concentrating on unreflexive, semireflexive, unintrospective, preobjective, and habitual actions and interactions” (Vannini, 2015b, p. 8). This means that non-rep research attends to practice “in the act.” The substantive domain is oriented around the ways in which a person relates to one or more other bodies during a particular set of encounter conditions.

Again, examples from the literature can help illustrate the layers of the research program level of the macrostructure. Barbara Humberstone’s (2015) work has dealt with the body and embodiment. Her work has emphasized the co-constitutive relations between bodies and their contexts. She noted, “the body is not set apart from, or at odds with space/environment, but dwelt inter-emergent production” (p. 65). Her research has been at the forefront of affect-oriented efforts to understand human–environment relations during physical activity, outdoor experiences, and nature-based sport practices (Humberstone, 2011, 2012, 2015, 2016).

Adventure settings have been identified as ripe for non-representational research. Non-rep allows researchers to consider “adventure as a performed kinaesthetic experience... [and to] focus on different types of performativity which can help us acknowledge the complexities of adventurous embodied practices” (Cater & Cloke, 2007, p. 13). Just as the tourist bodies and the emergence of drivescapes were of substantive concern in the four-wheeling example above (Waitte & Lane, 2007), so too was the co-constitutive interplay between bodies and various spaces of adventure a

substantive concern for Humberstone (2015). Non-rep researchers study the relations among bodies engaged in practices.

**Methodological Domain.** The methodological domain is concerned with ways of gathering and processing information. Non-representational theory embraces what have been referred to as inventive methods (Lury & Wakeford, 2012a). Inventive methods aim to “enable *the happening* of the social world – its ongoingness, relationality, contingency and sensuousness” (Lury & Wakeford, 2012a, p. 2, emphasis in original). An inventive method is not inventive in the sense of production or creation. Rather, inventive methods are united by the fact “that they are methods or means by which the social world is not only investigated, but may also be engaged” (p. 6). This is invention in the sense of coming into the context of inquiry and gaining greater access to the phenomena of interest. Inventive methods offer ways to introduce opportunities for participants to act more independently while following a researcher’s directions. The procedures allow researchers to document participants’ encounters without the disruption of researcher presence during everyday life or other conditions of interest.

Latham (2003) maintained that his use of the diary-photograph, diary-interview method (DPDIM) was useful for investigating how people make sense of everyday life. His inventive method was fashioned to learn how people relate to certain places in their everyday lives in an attempt to tap into how people are “engaged in an (often subtle) dialog” with a specific neighborhood in New Zealand (p. 1996). Latham noted three reasons why, for him, in-depth interviews alone were insensitive to everyday practices. First, there is likely no reason for a person to ordinarily give a second thought to such matters. For most people their everyday relations and relationships are not called into question and thus, it can be challenging for participants to speak about those during research interviews. Second, the non-rep view of

everyday life (as ontologically potent, productive, and porous) is likely foreign and perhaps obscure to interviewees. Third, the knowledge-in-action acquired via “competencies that come through the accretion of embodied practice” is practical rather than discursive. It can be difficult to talk about the “feel” or “knack” one has relative to everyday practices. Latham’s solution to the problem of answerability was to adopt the diary-photograph, diary-interview method (further discussion of DPDIM will come in Chapter III).

How might non-rep researchers attempt to collect data on the ways in which people relate to other bodies during encounters? That is, what are some non-rep ways for gathering useful research information? Apart from inventive methods, non-rep researchers also obtain data in a variety of other ways (Vannini, 2015b). Knudsen and Stage (2015b) mark the classic distinction between emic and etic types of data. In their focus on affect they denote the two categories respectively as

(1) firsthand data that is indexically linked to the body in affect (e.g., texts or images produced by the affected person), which can be produced either in the heat of the moment..., in site... or remembered... and (2) secondhand data documenting experiences of bodily affectivity. (p. 8)

The information comes either from the affected person or from an observer.

For example, Barnfield (2016) used a mixed methods approach in his non-rep study of running practices. He combined participant observation and autoethnography with qualitative interviewing techniques. Participant observation was conducted to gain a close knowledge and reveal intricate details of day-to-day practices. Autoethnography provided him the opportunity to document his own experiences “as an important source of insight into runners’ practices” (p. 284). Barnfield also noted his distinctive approach to qualitative interviewing. He took “a

theoretical-methodological stance that illuminates a more sensitive approach to understanding the contextual factors that influence or constrain participation in physical activity” (p. 284).

Methodological sensitivity is crucial where the perceptible influence of contextual factors can be slight. Non-rep research methods are designed to detect details about ideas and feelings that form preconsciously. The details are subtle and that makes them difficult to examine and describe. But what might a researcher do with the materials they gather?

Knudsen and Stage (2015b) suggested techniques for analyzing affective or non-representational content. Researchers can tune into affects by adopting any combination of the following strategies. Audio recordings and interview transcriptions provide an opportunity to focus on “*formal or stylistic characteristics of communication in affect* (e.g. outburst, broken language, hyperbole, redundancy)” (Knudsen & Stage, 2015b, p. 9, emphasis in original).

Elsewhere, picturing practices have been reported (Dowling et al., 2018). Textual or photographic materials created by researchers or participants allow for “*the intense building of assemblages*” (Knudsen & Stage, 2015, p. 9) that may in turn generate “*non-verbal language and gestures of affected bodies*” (p. 9). This could include firsthand data produced by the affected person or secondhand data that has been analyzed and assembled by a researcher to express participant experiences. It is the responsibility of researchers to systematically sense and convey the meaningful content present in the experiences.

Knudsen and Stage (2015b) called for practices that involve “*the rhythmic intensification, entrainment (through a common pulse) or destabilization of affective energy* in relation to specific spaces or (online) sites” (p. 9). Non-rep researchers can develop a set pattern of exposure to the settings they aim to understand by repetitiously attending the setting of interest. And in their analyses, they use “new ways of coding data that do not aim at saturating it to make

a structure visible, but instead aim to dwell at the moments where the data ‘glows’ or becomes affectively involving” (p. 7). That is, non-rep researchers aim to develop an attuned sensibility that is used to identify the most affectively engaging data. MacLure (2013) suggested that researchers should then work to think and write about what it is in their findings that has the greatest capacity to move others who may be interested in the specific research problem.

As an example of data analysis in non-rep research, Waitt and Lane (2007) gathered promotional tourist materials and interviewed those who had visited the Kimberley region. They then conducted a content analysis of the interviews and other materials that led to the development and expression of their drivescape concept. In Barnfield’s (2016) study of running in Bulgaria, themes were developed and elaborated on with a focus on movement, affect, and objects. The themes helped Barnfield to express “the emergent sense-making activities that exercise routines entail” (p. 284). Hinchliffe (2000) also used an analytic approach to develop themes that conveyed his findings from an investigation of experiential outdoor training practices. He stated that “themes have been arrived at through a consideration of field experiences, reading field diaries, consulting advertising and other company literature, talking to programme providers and participants, reading a variety of related and unrelated literatures, and drafting and receiving comments” (p. 585). Elsewhere in the leisure and tourist studies literatures, researchers have suggested ethnographic and autoethnographic approaches for investigating embodied and affective realms of human experience (Cater & Cloke, 2007; Humberstone, 2016). Having given a detailed description of a macrostructure for non-rep, it is now possible to summarize the levels and layers of this research style.

### ***A Macrostructural Configuration for Non-Representational Theory***

Drawn together in Figure 1 are the levels, layers, and sub-layers of a potential

**Figure 1***A Potential Macrostructure for Non-Representational Theory*

<b>WORLDVIEW</b>
POSTHUMANIST
<b>Position</b>
Performative
<b>Dialog</b>
Speculative
<b>PARADIGM</b>
NON-REPRESENTATIONAL THEORY
<b>Ontology</b>
Events of Encounter Among Bodies
<i>Nature of reality</i>
Encounters, Relations, Affect
<i>Nature of human experience</i>
Embodied
<i>Human nature</i>
Practice-Oriented
<b>Epistemology</b>
Relational
<i>Researcher stance</i>
Reflexive
<i>Knowledge production</i>
Contextually Contingent
<b>Axiology</b>
Ontological Awareness
<i>Ultimate goal</i>
Supplementary Practices
<i>Instrumental goal</i>
Exemplification
<b>RESEARCH PROGRAM</b>
AFFECT-ORIENTED RECREATION RESEARCH
<b>Conceptual</b>
Affect
<b>Substantive</b>
Bodies, Practices, and Encounter Events
<b>Methodological</b>
Inventive Access

Note. Adapted from "Maintaining Research Traditions on Place: Diversity of Thought and Scientific Progress," by M. E. Patterson and D. R. Williams, 2005, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, p. 364 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2005.10.001>. Copyright 2005 by Elsevier.

macrostructural form for non-representational theory. This summarizes what has been discussed to this point. Non-representational researchers assume a posthumanist worldview from a performative position while engaging in speculative dialog. Non-rep assumes an embodied and practice-oriented ontology of encounters. Non-rep's epistemology is characteristically reflexive and relational. Axiologically, non-representational theory informs research and innovation and is adaptable to researchers and others interested in the co-constitution of how particular contexts feel. That is, by raising ontological awareness, non-rep encourages people to intentionally organize their everyday practices and encounters within material environments to thereby craft their lifestyles. Researchers work to document testimonial knowledge of bodily states and degrees of affectedness by focusing on practices and encounters using inventive methods. These macrostructural characteristics will next be further illustrated by reviewing a specific investigation.

### ***An Example of Non-Representational Research***

The research of Alan Latham (2003) and the diary-photograph, diary-interview method he used can serve as an influential example of scholarship that used non-representational theory. Latham's (2003) effort to document a sense of everyday life along Ponsonby Road in Auckland, New Zealand is used here to better portray the macrostructural characteristics of non-rep.

The posthumanist worldview is a perspective that takes a performative position and generates speculative dialog about nonhuman life. Latham's (2003) work characterized the ambience of the neighborhood as a "curiosity" and his posthuman move was to work toward understanding a sense of agency ascribed to the area. It's referred to as "a sprawling, charming, mess of a street" that is assembled as "a chaos of balustrades, garageboards, and corrugated

roofing” (p. 1995). The background objects are brought to the foreground as Latham remarked on the road’s “studied yet casual stylishness” (p. 1995).

Furthermore, Latham’s (2003) performative position was evident in his use of novel presentations of data. He encouraged “experimentation with different forms of presenting and narrating research results” (p. 2009). The performative move was Latham’s rendering of research results as time-space graphs that included a collage of images interspersed with research participant quotes.

Likewise, the speculative nature of dialog that accompanies the posthumanist worldview was evident in Latham’s (2003) work. Latham adopted the established form of participant diaries and adapted it to his focus on the emergence of hybrid cultures in the Ponsonby Road neighborhood. His was an attempt to offer an alternative and more performative style of social science. Latham was expressly focused on “a possibility for a range of dialogs between already established forms of human geography and, more obviously, novel approaches” (p. 2012). This shows the non-rep propensity for speculative innovation.

Ontologically, Latham (2003) focused on embodied practice expressed through everyday encounters. Ponsonby Road is a place that is made “through the sensuous interweaving of the lives and daily projects of the thousands of individuals who daily dwell within” it (p. 2001). And it is through practical everyday encounters that such a place is constituted. Ontologically, “a great deal of the ‘making place’ becomes through the work of embodied routine, routines of occupation and use” (p. 2001). Latham maintained that Ponsonby Road comes into being through embodied practices and their repetition.

There is also a sense of reflexive and relational epistemology in Latham’s (2003) work. Latham took a reflexive stance in the way he recounted his own decision-making during the

research process. In a key passage he reflected on his choice to adopt a performative position: “Slowly it dawned on me that, if the world could productively be viewed in terms of sets of practical performances and enactments, the research process itself could, too, be framed as a kind of performance” (p. 2002). Latham reflexively shared how his own transformation process led to new research practices.

Latham’s (2003) work also evidenced a sense of the relational constitution of knowledge. One participant in the study, Joseph, had developed a seemingly boundless relationship with the area. The key point was that there was no unified truth about Joseph’s relationship with Ponsonby Road. Rather, there were variations in the way Joseph related to the place. As Latham stated, “The more he and I talk about it, the more detail and perspectives I get on Joseph’s relationship to Ponsonby Road” (p. 2007). And by approaching knowledge in an open-ended manner, Latham worked to present a detailed and nuanced feel for Joseph’s relationship with Ponsonby Road.

Axiologically, Latham (2003) was attempting to convey how Ponsonby Road felt to its inhabitants. His results, through the diary-photograph, diary-interview method, used photographs taken by participants and text from participant diaries. “They are meant to provide an additional set of narrative resources through which the reader can gain a sense of the texture of relationships the researcher is seeking to describe” (p. 2009). This serves as an example of the ways non-rep research works to broaden conventional research practices. Specifically, the intent to convey a felt sense of the relationships stands out as characteristic of non-rep.

Conceptually, Latham’s (2003) work dealt with bodily states and degrees of affectedness. His adoption of a posthumanist worldview through a non-rep paradigm “encourages us to think about a wide range of social phenomena such as the body, emotions, nonhuman objects, the

everyday, in ways that take us beyond an obsession with a politics of representation” (p. 2012). More specifically, Latham focused on different inhabitants of Ponsonby Road. Latham showed how Joseph “is engaged in an (often subtle) dialog with the people and objects in the cafes, bars, and other places he uses” (p. 1996). By focusing on Joseph’s everyday practices, Latham was able to highlight the nuanced ways that Joseph embodies, inhabits, and “works the possibilities of being” (p. 1996) on Ponsonby Road.

Latham (2003) sought “to articulate an understanding of everyday urban public culture as embodied practice—a practice that is creative, pregnant with possibilities” (p. 1994). This statement of intent clearly shows that the realm of everyday practices served as the real-world context for his study. Everyday life and the encounters that constitute it are crucial aspects of the substantive domain for non-rep research. Methodologically, non-rep research “requires a broadminded openness to methodological experimentation and pluralism” (p. 2012). Latham’s inventive adoption of DPDIM was an iterative process. After an earlier diary-based approach left him dissatisfied, Latham reframed his research as a performative practice and reframed the participant roles as performative too. In this way he was able to present “an interrelated mosaic of interpretive snapshots and vignettes of a particular social space and set of social practices *in the making*” (p. 2005, emphasis in original). Latham’s investigation of Ponsonby showed how non-rep research takes an inventive and experimental methodological approach.

### **Affect and Affect-Oriented Research**

Two researchers’ works on affect have largely defined the approach taken in this project. Anderson’s (2005, 2006, 2007, 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b) human geography research has consistently engaged affect through non-representational theory. Nigel Thrift (1996, 1999, 2008) is the founder of non-rep. His work in non-representational theory is foundational. In this section

a brief overview of Thrift's perspectives on affect is given first. The review then turns to a focus on affect-related outdoor recreation research. After that, affect-oriented research is described. Using the scholarly work of Hardt (1993), the primary modes of affect are reviewed. Finally, a conceptual framework for affect, its modes, and their operation are suggested before the chapter closes with definitions and a summary.

Thrift (2008) gave three reasons why affect has been understudied. First, latent Cartesianism has led some to overlook affect or frame it as an illusory and intractable bodily phenomenon. Second, affect and passions have been considered the purview of the creative arts rather than social science. And third, affect has been challenging to pin down as an object of inquiry. Anderson (2014a) identified two sources of confusion. First, there is "no consensus about what is or is not included" in the category of affect. Topically, it is broad. Second, "something about the type of experience being described appears to be difficult to fully capture in a definition" (p. 762). Conceptually, it is fuzzy. However, affect should neither be dismissed as irrational nor set aside as impossibly ephemeral.

As Thrift (2008) noted, "there is no stable definition of affect. It can mean a lot of different things" (p. 175). Thrift gave four senses of affect that he referred to as "the case of embodied knowledge," "the case of affect theory," "the world of Spinoza and Deleuze," and "the neo-Darwinian universe" (p. 182). Thrift stressed that in all four approaches "*affect is understood as a form of thinking*" (p. 60, emphasis in original). This means that in general, affect is a particular way in which impressions are processed. Thrift also emphasized that all the ways that affects operate "must be thought of in the same way, as means of thinking and as thought in action" (p. 60). Affects are a way that people process impressions of things. In other words, as thought in action, affect is a process of relation that involves the formation of ideas.

### **Affect and Emotion in Outdoor Recreation Research**

Emotion studies in recreation research have been primarily framed using approaches that relied on psychometric constructs. Farber and Hall (2007), for example, studied the emotional responses of visitors to the Dalton Highway in Alaska. Additionally, there's been inquiry into affect and mood (Hull, 1990; Hull & Michael, 1995; Tarrant, 1996) and studies of emotion related to the human dimensions of wildlife (Jacobs et al., 2012). These framings are different than the non-representational approach to affect. The primary difference is that psychometric measures of affect consider it to be an individualized or personal construct with the experience of affect being a completely conscious one. But through the lens of non-rep, affect is interpersonal and preconscious. There has been relatively little application of non-representational theory in outdoor recreation research.

There has, however, been some engagement with non-rep in leisure studies. Cater and Cloke (2007) used film and cognitive mapping to study the representational and non-representational dynamics of adventure experience in Queenstown, New Zealand. Making bodily performance their object of inquiry, they associated performative practices with adventure tourism. Thorpe and Rinehart (2010) applied Thrift's (2008) seven tenets of non-representational theory to alternative sport. They expressed a concern for what is omitted from understandings of recreation experiences interpreted strictly through language, discourse, and text. Thorpe and Rinehart concluded that non-representational approaches to affect offer a promising way for researchers to investigate alternative sport experiences.

Humberstone (2011) explored "the ways in which the body and senses feed into the emotions through physical activity in the natural environment" (p. 495). She argued for further exploration of emotionally uplifting, exuberant, or wonderful aspects of nature-based

experiences with an emphasis on the role of human affective capacities (Humberstone, 2012). Humberstone (2011) also offered a reinterpretation of numinous nature-based experiences and conceptualized moments of flow (Csikzentimihalyi, 1975) as spiritual experiences grounded in the embodied affects of recreationists. Humberstone (2015) has suggested that affect-oriented inquiry offers opportunities to interpret and express the more subtle yet powerful dimensions of embodied perception and background social practices. Humberstone's work clearly engages non-representational theory.

Waterton and Watson (2015) investigated affect during visitor experiences. They positioned "affect as a constellation of meaning around embodied states" (p. 101). They found interconnections between affect, feeling, emotion, and thought. Elsewhere, Barnfield (2016) aimed "to draw attention to the promise of non-representational theory in public health research in attempts to improve participation rates in physical exercise" (p. 282). He noted, "running clubs are involved in the process of helping to gather together and enmesh the use of objects, the modulation of experience through the dispersal of positive affects" (p. 285). Beyond what has been presented here and beyond other ongoing developments, there has been little application of non-representational theory and the associated concept of affect in outdoor recreation research. Non-rep has gained somewhat of a foothold in nature-based sport studies (Evers, 2004, 2006, 2009) and its application has gained momentum in recent investigations of embodied landscapes and seascapes (Anderson & Peters, 2014; Brown & Humberstone, 2015; Humberstone, 2011; Merchant, 2011). However, its potential has not been fully explored by outdoor recreation researchers. The review now turns to more focused coverage of affect and affect-oriented research.

### **Affect-Oriented Research**

Studies of affect through non-representational theory are based on the notion that the felt sense of experience and what stimulates such feelings are neither obvious nor stable. That is to say, how people feel and what causes their feelings changes over time and is often fleeting. People connect to the world and relate to their surroundings through affect. Affect refers to forces of relation between people, places, and things.

Though affect is an intangible and ephemeral phenomenon, there are still important considerations for researchers working to document the feeling or distinct experiential character of encounters (Anderson, 2016). Affect cannot be physically separated from the event of its occurrence, but it may be sensed. Affect may be expressed in a person's tone of voice or gesture. It can be felt in a shared background atmosphere of which a person is barely aware. This means that researchers need sensitive methodological approaches to effectively register and gauge affective inflections.

Because affects emerge relationally through human interactions, they are difficult to distinctly identify. Affects "are rarely clear and distinct because something about them escapes names and other ways of fixing" (Anderson, 2016, p. 184). Not only are affects challenging to identify because of their emergence from mixed relations, but they also mix with one another and other things. Affect poses challenges for planning, conducting, and presenting research because it is often entangled. Social scientists have increased the amount of attention given to the distinct methodological challenges of affect-oriented research (Anderson, 2016; Knudsen & Stage, 2015a).

As a primary area of inquiry in non-representational theory (Thrift, 2008), affect is "concerned, first and foremost, with doings—practices and performances—and how spaces are

made through practical action” (Anderson, 2016, p. 189). Non-representational theory attends primarily to practice itself. The focus becomes people’s actions and their enactment. But the focus is not only on people. As practical action unfolds in dynamic situations it includes non-humans and their forces of influence. Non-rep research is concerned in part with the ways material objects influence life. The presence and arrangement of objects influence the possibilities for encounter and practice. As Anderson and Harrison (2010) stated, “many different things gather, not just deliberative humans, but a diverse range of actors and forces, some of which we know about, some not, and some of which may be just on the edge of awareness” (p. 10). Researchers have increasingly oriented their work towards gaining a greater understanding of the ways such actors and forces influence the feeling of life as it unfolds (Dowling et al., 2016).

Affect-oriented research focuses on relations between bodies. The emphasis “is on *affect as bodily intensities* that happen below the threshold of individual consciousness” (Anderson, 2016, p. 190, emphasis in original). Affective feelings happen through the body. Through affect, bodies can receive influences from and make an influence on other bodies. “Emotion is the becoming conscious of capacities to affect and be affected and their insertion into already existing webs of meaning and signification” (p. 190). As “the most intense expression of the capture of affect” (p. 190), emotion is the recognition of changes to the body being acted upon. Emotion is also “an expression of affect’s always ongoing escape” (p. 190). Generally speaking, emotion is a conscious phenomenon, but affect is processed and expressed preconsciously by the body.

### **The Primary Modes of Affect**

The review of the literature, combined with the researcher's evolving understandings, has led to the development of a conceptual framework for affect. The framework shaped and focused the research process. It was expected that the modes of affect, which constitute the framework, would serve as useful categories in the pursuit of this study's objective to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect.

Seigworth and Gregg (2010) identified and described eight different approaches to affective processes. As a concept in social science, affect has no single standardized definition (Thrift, 2008). In order to offer a distinct understanding of how a researcher can practically investigate affect, the focus of this review now narrows to an approach associated with Spinoza and later reinterpreted by Deleuze. This approach builds upon a careful explanation of Spinozian practice that comes from Hardt (1993) and his interpretation of Deleuze (1990).

Affect encompasses a suite of concepts that deserve detailed analysis. Three forms of affect manifest through the interplay of passive affections, active affections, and common notions (Hardt, 1993). Deleuze's investigation of affect through Spinoza "reveals two tiers of distinctions: At the first level, he poses the distinction between active affections and passive affections; and at the second, he poses the distinction between joyful passive affections and sad passive affections" (p. 118). In a general sense, affections are distinguishable as active or passive and joyful or sad. For the sake of illustration and in order to present a more interpretable model for affective processes, consideration is given here only to the limited cases of joyful and sad affections. Encounters are more complicated than these two cases. Binary cases are offered only for illustration and it is more likely the case that a spectrum exists between both distinctions (joyful/sad, active/passive).

### *Passive Affections*

There are degrees of compatibility among bodies. Also, affects can combine in many different ways. Affections are passive for a person if the cause of the affections is external to that person. Affections have an external cause if the person's encounter with the affecting body is due to chance. Suppose that chance encounters give rise to joyful passive affections and sad passive affections. Joyful passive affections are produced if the affecting body is agreeable to a person. If the affecting body is agreeable to a person, it has relevance. If what is encountered agrees with a person, the body is suitable to the person in that particular circumstance (Hardt, 1993).

Encounters are productive in that a person's body and the affecting body together compose a new relationship. Affection is "the change produced in the affected body by the action of the affecting body in an encounter" (Protevi, 2011, p. 393). The encounter produces a relationship between a person and the affecting body. Affection is a change, and that change is the mixture of an affecting body and a person through an encounter. The mixture is an emergent effect that "will either mesh productively with the affects of the body, or clash with them." (p. 393). In other words, the degree to which a person relates agreeably or disagreeably to an affecting body determines whether the affection it gives rise to is joyful or sad. Meshing is agreeable and clashing is disagreeable to the affected person. Next, to get from passive to active affections, common notions must be examined.

### *Common Notions*

Most of the bodies that a person will encounter are not so agreeable that a person would want to compose a relationship with them. Therefore, most sporadic encounters result in sad passive affections (Hardt, 1993). Given this condition, Deleuze (1988) was spurred to then consider how an understanding of affect could be used to increase the occurrence of joyful

encounters (Hardt, 1993, p. 96). This begs two questions: (1) How do joyful passive affections form? and (2) How do active affections form? Common notions play a role in the formation of both joyful passive affections and active affections.

Recall that the affections are passive if the person does not cause the encounter with the affecting body and they are joyful if the affecting body is suitable to the person's circumstances. As Hardt explained, joyful passive affections form if a person recognizes common relationships that exist between that person's body and the affecting body. Joyful passive affections form if a person relates agreeably to an affecting body. "When we encounter a body that agrees with our own, when we experience a joyful passive affection, we are induced to form the idea of what is common to that body and our own" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 282; quoted in Hardt, 1993, p. 98). A person's experience of a chance encounter with an agreeable body leads that person "to recognize a common relationship, to form a common notion" (Hardt, 1993, p. 98). A common notion is the recognition of a connection between a person's body and the affecting body. Common notions are the relevance of one body to another. "A common notion is always an idea of similarity of composition" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 275; quoted in Hardt, 1993, p. 96). A person relates to another body through common notions. In response to the first question from above, joyful passive affections are formed by "recognizing similar compositions or relationships among bodies" (p. 96). But how do active affections form?

### *Active Affections*

What first distinguishes active affections from passive affections is that a person recognizes the cause of an active affection. Affections are active if a person causes the encounter with the affecting body. An affection is active "because it expresses its own cause; that is, it expresses the common relationship between two bodies" (Hardt, 1993, p. 99). Active affections

form when an idea of the common relationship shared between a person's body and the affecting body emerges and thus, that person then encounters a relationship to that body. The person recognizes that "this is me feeling this way" (Protevi, 2011, p. 395). Active affections form if a person encounters an idea of the common relationship shared between that person and the affecting body. What activates affection is the expression of the common relationship.

There are two crucial moments related to the formation of common notions and active affections. A person finds an affecting body to be agreeable in the first moment. This leads to the formation of a joyful passive affection. The second moment is a person's encounter with their own conception of the relevance of the affecting body. It is more than the fondness of a joyful passive affection because the person has an idea of what is agreeable about the affecting body. The person now has a way of relating to the affecting body and thus has a relationship with it. Active affection is a person's fondness for the way in which that person and the affecting body are connected.

### ***Definitions***

According to Anderson (2013, 2014a, 2014b), affect functions in three ways: as a bodily capacity, as an object-target, and as a collective condition. First, as a bodily capacity, affect is the influence that an affecting body casts upon other bodies. In this first sense, affect is a body's potential to act upon other bodies. Second, as an object-target, affect is a body's capacity to be acted upon and influenced. It is the way a person is sensitive to affecting bodies. In the second sense, affect is a body's potential to compose relationships with other bodies. Third, as a collective condition, affect is a means of conveying practices, relationships, and activities. It is the modification that a person undergoes during the formation of active affections. In this third

sense, affect is a process of relation between a person and an affecting body. Figure 2 illustrates and interrelates the modes and functions of affect.

All three functions of affect have two things in common. First, affects are social. Affects connect people to other people and things. These connections inform the ideas and practices in society (Anderson, 2014a). Affects are not limited to any particular person. Second, affects cannot be separated from life itself. Affects are immanent to human activities, relationships, and existence in general. They are an inherent part of life.

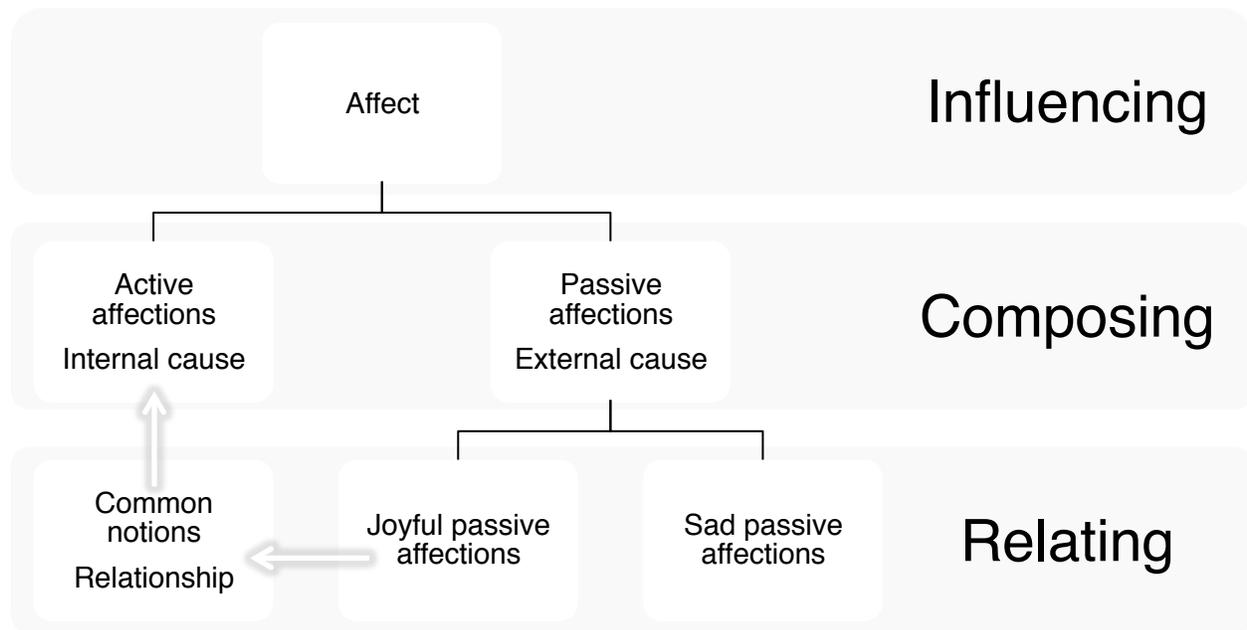
To summarize, though affect has been defined in multiple ways the term is germane to considerations of emotion and feeling. As a research topic, affect names the underlying sense or experiential texture of a given situation. Though they are perceptible, affects are not necessarily under the control of the person concerned. Finally, a basic premise in the study of affects is that they emerge from the way people feel about and behave toward other people and things.

### **Summary**

In this chapter three major areas of literature were critically reviewed: (a) approaches to outdoor recreation experiences, (b) non-representational theory, and (c) affect-oriented research. A review of pertinent literature provided an understanding of the various ways that researchers have conceptualized and investigated outdoor recreation experiences. Non-representational theory was reviewed to provide an outline of this emerging style of social science and to identify many of its distinct qualities. Non-representational theory offers a style of social science to researchers interested in the importance of practice and other processes that convey thought or feeling. As an interpretive heuristic, a macrostructure was given for non-representational theory.

**Figure 2**

*Modes and Functions of Affect*



*Note.* Through affections and common notions, affect functions influentially, compositionally, and relationally. Adapted from *Gilles Deleuze: Apprenticeship in Philosophy*, by M. Hardt, 1993, p. 100. Copyright 1993 by University of Minnesota Press.

Affect and affect-oriented research were reviewed to clarify the various approaches to the concept and to show how it is connected to non-representational theory. Conceptually, substantial attention has been given to affect as it is considered to be a way in which one's impressions are processed (Thrift, 2008). When a person encounters an affecting body affections form through a process of relation. Affect can be understood in three ways. Following Anderson (2013, 2014a, 2014b), affect refers to a body's potential to act upon other bodies, a person's potential to relate to other bodies, and a process of relation between bodies. These definitions and the conceptual framework for affect and affective processes served as practical working tools that guided the analysis of the data that was collected.



## **CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine non-representational (non-rep) theory and explore the concept of affect. This purpose entailed two research questions. The questions were (a) What are the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory? and (b) What insights are revealed from an investigation of affect in the everyday lives of recent wilderness visitors?

This chapter describes the project's research methodology and includes discussions focused on the following areas: (a) rationale for a qualitative research design, (b) rationale for diary-photograph, diary-interview method (DPDIM), (c) description of the research participants, (d) summary of information needed, (e) overview of research design, (f) methods for data collection, (g) methods for analysis and synthesis of data, (h) ethical considerations, (i) issues of trustworthiness, and (j) limitations of the study. The chapter ends with a brief summary.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research Design**

Qualitative research has been an effective way for outdoor recreation researchers to investigate the meanings people make in their lives (Ruddell, 2011). As opposed to quantitative research, its techniques deliver descriptions of phenomena related to differences in kind (not quantity). The focus of qualitative research is often on the meanings that emerge through various events in life and to understand those meanings in a specific time and place (in context). Indeed, an important strategy developed in qualitative research prioritizes the preservation of context. Qualitative researchers often aim to deliver "detailed and rich descriptions of phenomena that summary statistics (such as mean scores) cannot capture" (p. 116).

For this study, it was the researcher's contention that quantitative methods were unlikely to bring out the rich data necessary to address the research objectives. In the researcher's view,

the key advantages that distinguish qualitative research practices fit well with this study. As Ruddell (2011) noted, these advantages include (a) derivation of meanings, (b) elicitation of emic data, (c) embracing complexity and empathic understanding, (d) attention to context, (e) elicitation of serendipitous findings, and (f) generation of new theoretical insights. Likewise, Ruddell suggested key limitations that may be inherent in much qualitative research including (a) labor and time demands, (b) generalization weaknesses (a lack of representativeness through sampling), (c) potential for researcher bias, and (d) the risk of insufficient documentation of analytical techniques. The next section discusses the rationale for selecting a particular qualitative technique, the diary-photograph, diary-interview method.

### **Rationale for the Diary-Photograph, Diary-Interview Method**

An objective of this study was to offer insights to help develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect through an exploration of its occurrence in wilderness visitors' everyday lives. The researcher investigated encounters in which participants sensed the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings using a diary-photograph, diary-interview method. There is a rationale for using photographic methods in order to document the ways that people process their encounters in a given setting. Part of that rationale is based on the notion that photographic diary methods can "promote active, creative, bodily, and performative engagements with environments" for participants (Hall, 2015, p. 329).

Respondent diaries offer a systematic way of documenting some duration of a person's life. Diaries help researchers gain a feel for the impressions given by events in life or a part of life. Respondent diaries are helpful for researchers seeking to understand how practices in everyday life are related to events or occurrences in terms of the various people, places, and things that someone encounters. For example, a researcher might be interested in one's

impressions of what happens during one's mundane interactions in certain times or spaces.

Latham (2016) gave five reasons why respondent diaries can be an attractive research strategy. First, by being asked to attend to their behavior, the participants can gain a greater awareness of the practices they perform in their everyday lives. With this greater awareness they can more clearly articulate details surrounding those specific moments of interest to the researcher. Second, diaries provide a systematic format that give respondents opportunities for daily reflection and reportage. Diaries offer respondents opportunities to form narratives “told from within the perspective of their ordinary, day-to-day, lives” (p. 159). Diarists can later use them to reflect on the potential meaning of events, activities, and encounters from their own points of view. Third, the open-endedness of the diary structure allows participants to submit descriptions that suggest potential areas of inquiry that researchers might have overlooked. Fourth, “diaries can provide an opportunity for respondents to explain and explore highly emotional and personally sensitive issues with a frankness and openness that face-to-face interactions might inhibit” (p. 159). That is, it can be easier for participants to describe the affective content relevant to the context of their lives. Fifth, Latham suggested that diaries offer participants the chance to share ideas and explanations related to the phenomenon of inquiry that could otherwise go unconsidered.

One way to use respondent diaries is to follow up with diary-based interviews. With photographic diaries, respondents use photographs to describe or document portions of their lives. Typically, the respondents are directed to record the time and location along with the reason each photograph is taken. Usually the respondent meets with the researcher after the completion of the diary to discuss the photographs. The interviews allow the participant to reflect and expand on the written and photographic content of the diary. In addition, the interview

provides researchers with an opportunity to ask about the wider circumstances surrounding the events discussed in the diary. Researchers can explore the ways participants related to the events documented within their diaries.

Rose (2012) noted four strengths of photo-elicitation methods. Photographs hold a great deal of information. There is information in the content of the photo itself and in the context from which the photo was taken. Photographs give participants an opportunity to discuss aspects of the phenomena of interest that researchers may not have considered. Second, photographs have the power to stir memories and promote talk that is more emotional and affective. Third, photographs help explore the taken-for-granted activities of everyday life. They can provide an opportunity to look at ordinary phenomena more closely. Using the photographs, research participants are able to express thoughts and feelings that might have otherwise been implicit. Ordinary phenomena could be otherwise overlooked and not reflected upon. Fourth, photographs put research tools into the hands of participants and thus empower them by putting them on more level ground with researchers. The diary-photographs take a central role and it is their contents (along with follow-up interviews) that are relied upon to generate data. In this way, the participants lend their own perspectives when relaying the salient aspects of both the photos and the encounters that prompt the production of diary-photos.

Latham (2003) commented on the performativity of research and discussed the affectivity of photographs and their use in non-representational research. Additionally, Latham and McCormack (2009) drew from fieldwork in Berlin and suggested three ways that the use of images for research is compatible with non-rep. Images can powerfully convey both the inner and outer worlds of participants in that “an image is never just a ‘representational snapshot’ nor is it a material thing reducible to brute object-ness” (p. 253). In that sense images are “‘internal’

(dreams, memories, ideas, etc.) and... ‘external’ (photos, film, paintings, etc.)” (p. 253). Images serve both as forms of thought and as physical photographs.

Latham and McCormack’s study focused “on the question of what images do if we don’t understand their function to be solely or primarily a matter of representation” (2009, p. 253). Their methods were based on two premises. The first concerns what images do in terms of affective capacities and the second concerns what the generation of images might offer. Image generation (soliciting participant photographs) can reveal the ways a person relates to whatever is occurring in that person’s immediate experience. Images can evoke the affect or “singularity of each individual thing” and the ecology or “set of relations in which this thing is a participant” (p. 256). Specifically, it has been suggested that diary-photograph methods are useful in research projects where the aim is to document human behavior patterns and how a person’s encounters can imbue moments with a particular feeling (Latham, 2003).

As discussed in Chapter II, affect typically exists in the background of life’s events. When a participant takes a photograph in response to an experienced feeling or thought, the photograph serves as an attempt to document the feeling of what is happening (affect) in the moment. A first proposition is that there is something about the participants’ photographs related to the affective contents of their encounters. And a second proposition is that participants can connect and relate their thoughts and feelings from the encounters when photographs are taken to what appears in the photographs. The supposition is that researchers can explore and document the affective aspects of participant encounters by interviewing participants and asking them about their photographs and the circumstances in which their photographs were taken.

### **Description of the Research Participants**

Participants were recruited from students enrolled at the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) during the Fall 2017 semester using a convenience sampling strategy. At the time the research was conducted the researcher worked as an instructor at UMM. Institutional review boards (IRBs) at the University of Montana and UMM approved the study. Participants were given information about the parameters of the research and signed consent forms that were collected by the researcher.

At the time of this study, the learning outcomes of UMM's core curriculum were in alignment with both the research problem and the purpose of the project. UMM students are expected to "understand the workings of the physical and natural worlds" (UMM, n.d.b). The study was premised by the assumption that wilderness casts an affective influence at least in part through the natural world. Therefore, understanding the workings of the natural world coincides with an understanding of the affective influence of wilderness. The implication is that students who are focused on developing understandings of the natural world are suited to participate in a study investigating the affective influence of wilderness.

Additionally, one of the stated goals for UMM students was to "be able to express themselves artistically and understand the importance of creativity, imagination, and aesthetic traditions in human life" (UMM, n.d.b). The project design included aspects of imaginative and creative expression. In order to document wilderness affect, participants used photography to create images that were assumed to convey moments when wilderness ideas and feelings formed. Furthermore, UMM students "embrace the thrill of discovery inherent in taking intellectual risks, and in exploring and creating knowledge across multiple disciplines" (UMM, n.d.b). The project

offered an opportunity for UMM students to participate in a process of knowledge exploration and creation.

Because there was no intention of generalizing the findings to a population there was no formula for calculating a statistically representative sample size. Also, the concept of data saturation was not employed. “Data saturation presumes that the researcher is looking for what is characteristic or the same about a social group of people” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 353). The goal of the study was not to determine how frequently similar ideas arise. Methodologically, the goal was to exemplify qualities of participant encounters through the examination of experiential examples. Sampling, for this study, is an “attempt to gain ‘examples’ of experientially rich descriptions” (p. 353).

Researchers consider a study’s sample size in any investigation. Van Manen (2014) advised scientists to collect enough experiential accounts from participants to make it possible to present examples that can evoke life as it is lived. Cresswell (1998) advised researchers to involve 5–25 participants when conducting interpretive interviews. Having too little or too much empirical evidence can lead to challenges for researchers. Either a lack or an overabundance of material can prohibit the adequate development of a scholarly text. Given Cresswell’s recommendation of 5–25 interviewees, this study initially sought 25–35 participants. During the performance of the research project 19 UMM students took part in the wilderness visit phase while 15 student participants sat for interviews. Therefore, the study consisted of 15 research participants.

All participants were enrolled at the University of Maine at Machias when the data were collected. UMM was opened at its location in the Downeast region of Maine in 1911 and it encompassed 243 acres in the town of Machias within Washington County at the time of data

collection. The university at that time offered a liberal arts core curriculum and baccalaureate programs in biology, business and entrepreneurial studies, education, English, creative writing and book arts, environmental studies, interdisciplinary fine arts, marine biology, psychology and community studies, and recreation and tourism management (UMM, n.d.a).

The research project included a visit to the Moosehorn Wilderness Area for all participants. The wilderness area is part of the Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge and is administered by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). “Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge consists of nearly 30,000 acres of federally protected lands in eastern Maine. The refuge’s landscape is varied, with rolling hills, large ledge outcrops, streams, lakes, bogs, and marshes” (USFWS, 2018). Specifically, participants visited the Edmunds Division of the refuge along the North Trail in the wilderness area along the Hobart Stream flowage (see map in Appendix A). The chapter now turns to a description of the study’s information needs.

### **Summary of Information Needed**

This study focused on encounters in which participants sensed the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings during the week following their wilderness visits. Participants were students enrolled at the University of Maine at Machias who agreed to visit a wilderness area, keep a written and photographic diary, and sit for an interview. In seeking to examine non-representational theory and explore the concept of affect to gain preliminary insights and inform future research, two research questions were explored to gather the information needed. The information fell into three categories: (a) theoretical, (b) practical, and (c) perceptual. This information included

- an ongoing review of literature providing the theoretical grounding for the study;
- researcher reflections on the applicability of non-representational theory for outdoor

recreation research;

- information pertaining to participants, including participant photographs and diary notes documenting participant perceptions from encounters that occurred during the seven days following a wilderness visit; and
- participant perceptions relayed during interviews about the formation of their wilderness ideas and feelings including perceptions of the influences on, or changes in, their feelings.

### **Overview of Research Design**

The list that follows summarizes the steps performed to implement this research. A more in-depth discussion of each step comes after the list.

1. A literature review was conducted preceding the collection of empirical data to study the contributions of other scholars in the broad areas of non-representational theory, affect, and approaches to researching outdoor recreation experiences.
2. The researcher acquired approval from the IRBs of the University of Montana and the University of Maine to proceed with the research following the proposal defense. The IRB approval process included a description of all procedures and processes necessary to ensure compliance with policies regulating the study of human subjects, including participants' confidentiality and informed consent.
3. Research participants were recruited and those who agreed to participate visited the Moosehorn Wilderness in Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge and were given a research packet of materials at the conclusion of their wilderness visit.
4. Semistructured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 15 participants. Participants were granted gift cards to Dunkin' Donuts at the conclusion of the interview in gratitude

for their participation.

5. Interview transcripts, diaries, and diary-photographs were analyzed with content excerpted for the development of anecdotes. The anecdotes were further analyzed to identify thematic qualities.
6. Anecdotes were given to the participants on whose perceptions and excerpts the anecdotes were based so that participants could review and comment on the degree to which the anecdotes truthfully portrayed their experience.

### **Literature Review**

To inform this study the researcher conducted an ongoing and selective review of literature. Three topics of literature were identified: approaches to researching outdoor recreation experiences, non-representational theory, and affect-oriented research. The purposes of the review were to gain a better understanding of scholarly approaches to outdoor recreation experiences, to gain a better understanding of the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory, and to gain a better understanding of affect theory and the ways researchers have empirically investigated affective phenomena.

### **Institutional Review Board Approval**

Following the literature review, the researcher developed and successfully defended a proposal for this study that included the background/context, problem statement, purpose statement, and research questions outlined in Chapter I; an earlier literature review included partially in Chapter II, and the proposed methodological approach as outlined in Chapter III. Following the successful defense of the proposal, the researcher applied for and received consent to conduct the study based on reviews by the IRBs of the University of Maine and University of Montana on the grounds that the study posed a minimal risk to participants.

### **Methods for Data Collection**

To better guide readers toward the direction of this study, this section first characterizes this study's non-rep approach to affect-oriented research as a prelude to the details of data collection. Affect-oriented inquiry, as it has been taken up by non-rep researchers, has been characterized less by common methods and more by a shared ethos (Anderson, 2016). Part of the shared ethos has been a commitment to evocative expressions that attempt to convey the feeling of a given situation. It is a style of research committed "to speculation, curiosity, and the concrete, it tries to provoke attention to the forces that come into view as habit or shock, resonance or impact" (Stewart, 2007, p. 1). The research products are often assembled to make an impression on and garner thoughtful attention from those that encounter them. What that ethos also entails is an emphasis on immersion and the immediate experience of participants. A third aspect of the ethos is the embrace of methodological experimentation. Fourth, affect-oriented research seeks to encounter and get within reach of the preconscious realms of affective life. Researchers often put themselves or their research instruments in the midst of affective life as it unfolds.

### **Wilderness Visits**

The researcher developed and distributed a promotional flyer and recruitment letter inviting participation among UMM students (Appendices B and C). Flyers were posted to conspicuous locations about the UMM campus. The researcher distributed flyers during in-class recruitment in eight separate courses. A digitized version of the promotional flyer was shared through UMM's Facebook page. Potential participants were identified if they offered their name and contact information on interest forms circulated during class visits or if they contacted the researcher via electronic mail. The researcher responded to their interest with a copy of the text

from the recruitment letter and a digital copy of the promotional flyer. The researcher requested that those who were interested choose one of the Saturdays when the researcher would take participants from the UMM campus to the Moosehorn Wilderness Area.

Three outings into the Moosehorn Wilderness Area took place on Saturdays, October 14, October 21, and November 4, 2017. In total, along with the researcher, 19 participants plus six participant family members visited the wilderness area during the three outings.

### **Diary-Photograph, Diary-Interview Method**

Research participants used diaries to document the occurrence and formation of ideas and feelings related to wilderness. The diary-based methods were patterned after the work of Latham (2003, 2004). Latham's strategies are based, in part, on the diary, diary-interview method pioneered by Zimmerman and Wieder (1977). But Latham added photography to what he has called the diary-photograph, diary-interview method.

Immediately after hiking within the boundaries of the wilderness area, before the research party departed from the trailhead, the researcher distributed research kits. Participants received a quart-sized plastic bag containing a one-time-use camera, a copy of Wallace Stegner's "Wilderness Letter" (Appendix D, published by the Wildland Research Center [1962]), a ballpoint ink pen, and a 48-page memo book with directions (Appendix E) affixed to the back cover. Stegner's letter speaks to the wilderness idea (as opposed to wilderness area parcels) and characterizes wilderness as more than a physical resource. The letter's inclusion was intended to convey the notion that wilderness is influential beyond the boundaries of wilderness areas and to accentuate a subtle difference between the concepts of nature and wilderness for participants.

The participants' directions instructed them to keep the camera, memo book, and pen with them as much as possible for seven days. Participants were directed to note the time, the

place, and the purpose of their movements. They were to note the people, places, and things encountered and the events of each day. They were directed to describe their thoughts and feelings or impressions about whatever they encountered each day. Participants were directed to describe their reactions to and feelings about the events of each day for seven days. In part, the directions stated: "Each day, when wilderness ideas or feelings form, take photographs to show the influence on, or change in your feelings. Take three or four photographs per day. Note the who, what, when, where, why, and how of events when you take a photo."

Additionally, participants were given a one-time use camera. With a 27-exposure capacity, the cameras could accommodate an average of three to four exposures per day for the duration of the week (though participants were not expected to take any specific number of photos). Participants were instructed to take photos when they sensed wilderness ideas or feelings form. This was an attempt to document the emergence of wilderness affect along with any accompanying ideas and feelings. Participants were expected to note the time and place along with what was happening during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings.

After seven days, participants returned the diaries and cameras and the researcher had the film developed. After development was completed through a mail-order service and the researcher received the photographs, a time was set for an interview with each participant. Out of the 19 UMM students who made a wilderness visit, 15 participants sat for an interview. Two of the wilderness-visiting students did not take any photos or make any substantial entries into the diaries. The film was lost in processing by the development service provider for two others. Therefore, four of the 19 students were not interviewed, and their materials were not considered for analysis.

At the start of the interviews the participants were asked to choose three to five

photographs that, upon their estimation, strongly conveyed wilderness feelings or ideas. With the selected photographs, participants wrote a postcard-length description of what was happening in the photograph (Latham & McCormack, 2009). Following the selection and captioning of three to five photos, the photographs were organized chronologically by day. The researcher and participant discussed each day of the participant's week using the diary entries and photos as a discussion springboard. The researcher used a loosely structured interview guide (Appendix F) and asked probing questions with the aim of obtaining detailed experiential accounts.

Participants were asked about the circumstances surrounding the events documented in their diaries and photographs. Using a transcription service, the audio contents from the interview sessions were transcribed for analysis.

### **Methods for Analysis and Synthesis of Data**

The 15 interviews, diaries, and photo-sets provided ample material from which to draw experiential material. The participant diary entries, photographs, photograph captions, and interview transcripts were reviewed and excerpts were selected for further consideration and anecdote development. The construction and presentation of anecdotes has been called an evocative method (Van Manen, 2014). An evocative method is meant to generate a "feeling understanding" (p. 249) for a reader or audience. An anecdote is the product of a data treatment procedure that attempts to convey felt understanding by producing "an augmenting, enlarging effect. It produces a sense of nearness and intimacy with the phenomenon" (p. 249). Van Manen has touted evocation for its potential to bring to audiences or readers "images and sensibilities that are so crisp and real that they in turn evoke reflective responses such as wondering, questioning, or understanding" (1997, p. 354).

Anecdotes can offer vivid examples of experience. The researcher used interview transcript excerpts to construct anecdotes by following Van Manen's (2014) methods for anecdote structure and editing practices (detailed in Chapter IV). It is important to emphasize that anecdotes do not provide a mimetic account, but rather they attempt to emulate what an experience is like. "Stories or anecdotes are so powerful, so effective, and so consequential in that they can explain things that resist straightforward explanation or conceptualization" (p. 251). Anecdotes are presumed to have the potential to convey non-representational or experientially felt data.

Michael (2012) qualified the use of anecdotes in social science in three ways. First, an anecdote combines elements of real events in a constructed form and therefore serves as a complex non-representation that "allows one to start from a specific incident and explore its complex and constitutive range of associations without ever seeing this exploration as uncomplicatedly representational, nor regarding it as exhaustive" (p. 27). That is, anecdotes allow readers the opportunity to get a feel for an event under inquiry with enough open-endedness that readers can relate to the occurrence. Anecdotes contain a mixture of specificity and ambiguity that increases their potential for relatability. The specificity comes from being rooted in particular events and the ambiguity stems from their typically succinct style. Anecdotes are therefore precise without seeming confined to only one person's experience. Second, following Fineman's (1989) argument, anecdotes are able to both report past events and influence future events. Accordingly, "the anecdote can thus serve as a way of chronically invoking the performativity of both the anecdote and its associated analysis as they 'act upon' the reader and beyond" (Michael, 2012, p. 27). This means that anecdotes can convey information in an influential way that can affectively reverberate in the lives of readers. Third,

anecdotes often document notable occurrences. They render events as “something out of the ordinary. In the process, there is an enactment of difference and sameness: the unusual event articulated in the anecdote serves to highlight, and is highlighted by, the usual run of events that surround it” (p. 27). Anecdotes are able to draw attention to both unique occurrences and the mundane background of an event’s occurrence. Anecdotes can draw attention to everyday life and that which disrupts it. To summarize, anecdotes are the products of a data treatment procedure that attempt to convey understandings in non-representational, affectively performative, and elucidative ways.

The use of anecdotes is different from other qualitative strategies such as grounded theory or ethnographic thematic techniques. The anecdote strategy aims to recover “structures of meanings that are embodied and dramatized in human experience” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 319). Unlike grounded theory, it is not an explicit effort to systematically develop theory, although theoretical speculations may emerge. And unlike ethnographic thematic analysis, the intent is not to discover, categorize, and describe cultural groups and practices. Anecdotes were analyzed to suggest thematic qualities embodied in the perceptible emergence of affect. Specifically, after the excerpts were reconfigured as anecdotes, each anecdote was subjected to a wholistic, selective, and detailed reading (described further in Chapter IV). Correspondingly, the readings focused on meaning structures “at the level of the whole story; at the level of the separate paragraph; and at the level of the sentence, phrase, expression, or single word” (p. 320). The readings led to the development of preliminary characterizations of wilderness affect. Thematization techniques are discussed in further detail in Chapter IV.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Of vital concern in any social scientific practice are ethical issues related to the

safeguarding of participants and their interests (Brinkmann, 2012). It is the researcher's responsibility to provide protection and adequate information. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and their voluntary cooperation was enlisted. The treatment of participant information is also central to the protection of participant interests. The researcher anticipated that no serious ethical threats were posed to the participants or their well-being. And as a measure of caution, this study employed various protective practices to safeguard the participants and their rights.

First, throughout the study a priority was placed on informed consent. Each participant provided written consent to proceed with the study voluntarily. Second, of primary importance were participant rights and interests with regard to choices that were made for reporting or disseminating data. Participant names and significant identity characteristics were kept confidential by the researcher. Except for the possible exposure of participant photos to photo-development technicians, research-related records and data were stored securely and no one other than the researcher had access to this material.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Validity and reliability are key issues in scientific research. Qualitative researchers can address these issues as a matter of trustworthiness. Guba and Lincoln (1998) have referred to trustworthiness in qualitative research in terms of *credibility*, *dependability*, and *transferability*. This is based on an argument that the trustworthiness of qualitative research ought to be evaluated differently than that of quantitative research. In the following section the matter of trustworthiness is further addressed, along with a consideration of evaluative criteria. But first, regarding trustworthiness, an important distinction must be made between two notions of truth.

Van Manen (2014) gave an important argument distinguishing between two notions of

truth: *veritas* and *aletheia*. Social science practices that operate by the standard of truth as *veritas* can “have the implicit mission of conquering the ‘real’ by means of discourses of representation and theories of cognition” (p. 342). *Aletheia* is conceptualization of truth based on “the ancient Greek term that means disclosure, unconcealment, withdrawal, and openness” (p. 342). Basing his argument on Heidegger (1998), Van Manen (2014) posited that the demonstration of truth “is not an all-or-nothing affair, but rather a complex interplay between showing and hiding” (p. 343). Truth as *aletheia* speaks of truth as the giving of an opportunity to *experience* truth.

Researchers who operate by the standard of truth as *aletheia* give evidence that attempts to bring the truth of something “into presence in a pathic, performative, nonrepresentational modality” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 343). Van Manen contended that there are aspects of life with truths that can be served more effectively by presentation rather than representation. His point of reference here was the phenomenological work of Jean-Luc Nancy (1993) and his study of an encounter with the beauty of laughter. Van Manen showed how Nancy abided by the truth as *aletheia* in the way that Nancy presented and discussed a prose poem by Baudelaire:

this disturbing countenance, where quivering nostrils breathe the unknown and the impossible, burst, with inexpressive grace, the laughter of a wide mouth, red and white and alluring, that makes one dream of the miracle of a superb flower blooming on a volcanic soil. (Nancy, 1993, p. 370; quoted in Van Manen, 2014, p. 343)

The specific argument here is that an encounter with the beauty of laughter is rendered more truthfully by the presentation of the preceding passage than by propositional discourse.

Furthermore, Van Manen made his case for the standard of truth as *aletheia* by giving more of Nancy’s (1993) discussion of nonrepresentation. The poem is not a representation. It is

rather representation passing beyond itself, to its truth, which cannot be represented. But

this truth is presented: it is the presentation of the artist's desire, which knows itself to be the desire to die in the presence of what surpasses all representation. Such a truth is none other than what tradition has called the "sublime": presentation of the impossible presence, beauty beyond beauty. (1993, pp. 377–378, quoted in Van Manen, 2014, p. 344)

Van Manen's (2014) point was that some knowledge is not knowledge-for or knowledge-that but is rather knowledge-with. It is knowledge that uses expressive and experiential elements in accordance with truth as *aletheia*. That is, there are dimensions of human life, such as an experience of the sublime that involves a knowledge-in-action with "no clear reference or intentional object. They can only be gained through immediate nonintentional presentative language rather than through representational discourse" (p. 344). Non-representational research is suited for presentational truth as *aletheia* rather than representational truth as *veritas*.

### **Credibility**

Credibility is established when findings are truthful and believable from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants, and the reader. Researchers and reviewers evaluate validity by attending to both methodological and interpretive validity (Mason, 1996). Methodological validity is concerned with how well the logic of the method is matched to the kinds of research questions being posed and the kinds of evidence being presented. For non-rep researchers this means asking if the study is based on a valid non-representational question. That is, does the research attend to "practices, becomings, moods, and atmospheres rather than representations" (Parr, 2014, p. 758) and does the research ask about preconscious feelings and sensations.

Interpretive validity is concerned with how valid the data analysis is and the interpretation on which it is based. The focus is on the rigor and specificity of focus brought to

the analysis and interpretation of the data in relation to the research design. Vannini (2015b) argued that a unique strategy of non-representational research is the way non-rep researchers are oriented toward the “temporality of knowledge” (p. 12). Non-rep researchers analyze, synthesize, and present their research with a greater emphasis on the present moment when knowledge is shared with a reader, viewer, or listener. Analytic strategies aim to provide evidence that makes an impression on people. For non-rep researchers this means asking if processes were engaged with an expressed intent of sharing accounts that reverberate with people *in that moment* of encounter with the evidence. It means asking if the information shared can inspire intellectual fascination in ways that make a difference for the better development of knowledge *in the future*. Non-rep research has interpretive validity if the analyses and interpretations are oriented toward making truthful impressions in the present or future moments of apprehension.

This study was designed around the question of affective feelings and sensations related to wilderness in everyday life. That is, the researcher was interested in understanding what it meant for a person to become affected by wilderness during their life following a wilderness visit. In an attempt to further enhance methodological validity, the researcher documented the characteristics of the research designs, normative commitments, and world-view perspectives of non-rep research. That is, this study’s conceptual focus, its substantive context, and its system of methods were all aligned with the research questions and the kinds of evidence being presented.

To enhance the interpretive validity of this study, the researcher employed two strategies. First, the researcher clarified and claimed an axiological commitment to generating potential for new thought and practice in the field of outdoor recreation research. Second, the researcher added an anecdote construction process to the diary-photograph, diary-interview method. As discussed above, it has been argued that anecdotes can present evidence with open-endedness,

affectivity, and with a clear bearing on everyday life. Anecdotes can give evidence oriented more toward present and future knowledge. That is, following the guidance of Van Manen (2014), anecdotes were constructed to engage the attention of readers and to stimulate new thoughts. The anecdotes were presented to give readers the opportunity to generate new ideas. The objective was to stimulate and activate feelings and ideas for readers that could lead to further knowledge development.

### **Dependability**

The degree to which a study is repeatable is typically referred to as reliability. But the specificity of qualitative research can limit the range of participants and phenomena to such an extent as to reduce the reliability. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested that a more important question asks the degree to which findings are consistent and dependable with the data collected. This acknowledges the likelihood of inconsistency in repeated studies. The dependability of a study can be protected. This was done in this study using traceable analysis and synthesis techniques.

It is unlikely that studies designed to convey a felt sense of experience would be subject to interrater reliability evaluations. Different researchers who study similar types of events could present different understandings of affect in the everyday lives of recent wilderness visitors. Van Manen (2014) argued that it is possible to “study a phenomenon that has already been addressed repeatedly in the literature, but strive for new and surprising insights” (p. 351). However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that it is important for researchers to maintain an audit trail to track the evolution of thought and document the rationale for choices and decisions made during the research process. To that end, detailed notes about the researcher’s analytic and interpretative practices were kept.

### **Transferability**

Generalizability is not something this study was designed to maintain. However, transferability is worth considering (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transferability refers to the degree to which elements of the phenomenon under inquiry in a particular research context transfer to other contexts. Part of the purpose of this study was to systematically examine non-representational theory in order to inform its potential transfer to outdoor recreation research. Furthermore, the specific research into the affective influence of wilderness in the everyday lives of people who recently visited a wilderness area can also be engaged in terms of transferability. The researcher intended to share anecdotes that conveyed the affective dimension of events in the lives of participants. The development of evocative anecdotes is discussed further in Chapter IV.

### **Evaluative Appraisal**

Etymologically, the term validity is rooted in *validus*, which means strength in Latin (Van Manen, 2014). A non-rep study has strength to the extent that it exhibits acceptability and convincibility. A straightforward path to assessing the iconic validity of anecdotes derived from experiential materials was taken where the researcher shared the anecdotes with the participants from whose experiences the anecdotes were derived. The participants were asked whether the anecdotes showed an aspect of what the experiences were like for them.

Additional evaluative criteria can be used to appraise the strength of a study. In an investigation such as this one, strong evidence can give readers surprising or deep insights. According to Van Manen (2014), “Depth is the means the things have to remain distant, to remain things, while not being what I look at at present” (p. 355, citing Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 219). To further clarify what is meant by depth it is important to differentiate it from that which

is unusual, strange, or odd. A reader is given a deep insight if the insight takes the thinking of the reader from a narrower realm of thought to one that feels wider and more open. Research that presents findings in this way can be demanding of the reader. Van Manen (2014) posited that “one must evaluate it by meeting with it, going through it, encountering it, suffering it, consuming it, and, as well, being consumed by it” (p. 355). Van Manen suggested seven criteria for evaluating research that seeks to reveal expressive meaning.

The first criterion is a study’s capacity to promote heuristic questioning. Do the research products enable readers to discover or learn something for themselves? The second criterion is descriptive richness. Is there material based on actual experiences that is interesting and full of variety? Interpretive depth is the third criterion. Does the research present thoughtful, accurate, and deep understandings? Van Manen’s (2014) fourth criterion is distinctive rigor. Does the research document a thorough and careful investigation of a phenomenon’s recognizably different and readily distinguishable qualities? Strong and addressive meaning serves as the fifth criterion. Do the research products appeal to, consider, or deal with the human feeling of being an expression of existence? The sixth criterion is experiential awakening. Do the research products make impressions that address one’s emotional responsiveness and rouse feelings that occur prior to rational thought? The seventh criterion is inceptual epiphany. Does the study present a chance for profound understanding or an enlivened comprehension of everyday life? These seven criteria are suggested as useful in appraisals of the quality of non-representational research.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In this study there were limiting conditions related to critiques commonly associated with qualitative research methodology in general and there were limiting conditions related to the

specific research design. Indeed, qualitative research methodology has unique features that, in its usage, present potential limitations. The particular techniques employed by the researcher also presented potential limitations that deserve consideration. The researcher gave careful thought to how to account for these limitations and minimize their impact.

Qualitative research is limited in general by researcher subjectivity. This is due to the fact that the researcher's thoughts and choices guide the analysis. This rightly creates a concern for researcher bias and accordingly creates a concern for the ways that bias can influence a researcher's interests, assumptions, and perceptions. The issue of subjectivity and potential bias with regard to the researcher's own interest in and passion for wilderness was a key limitation for this study. Recognizing this limitation, the researcher acknowledged his personal and professional interests, his research agenda, and his assumptions up front.

Another limiting condition came from the fact that the researcher held a position of authority as a faculty member at the university at which all participants were enrolled as students. It may have been difficult for student participants to adjust to being interviewed by a faculty member. This has been referred to as participant reactivity (Maxwell, 2005). Participants may have shaped their diary entries, photographs, or interview responses in a way that reflected the student-faculty member relationship and its (assumed) associated power dynamic. Participants may have given extra effort to cooperate or offered responses that were perceived by the participants as useful for the researcher. Or perhaps due to the student-faculty member dynamic, participants could have been more guarded and less candid in their responses.

In recognition of these limitations, the researcher removed all participant names and assigned aliases to all participant materials to reduce the likelihood that the researcher would associate any material or data with any particular individual. The potential condition of

participant reactivity was addressed by the researcher's continual reflection on the possible ways he may have been influencing participants. Additionally, the researcher consciously attempted to provide an environment of mutual respect during the wilderness visits along with an environment that was conducive to honest and open dialogue during the interviews.

Another major limitation of this study, aside from potential issues of bias and reactivity, was that the research sample was restricted. One possible critique of this research is that the generalizability of the conclusions to other groups is limited. However, generalizability was not an intended goal of this study. Transferability, as it was mentioned above, was the more pertinent goal. Through the use of a systematic macrostructural analysis, evocative anecdotes, and vivid descriptions it was anticipated that this study's knowledge could be transferred and applied appropriately for further scholarly thought and practice.

Diary-photograph, diary-interview methods also present limitations. Diaries can be significantly demanding for participants and the researcher. The tasks of finding participants, arranging the wilderness outings, obtaining diary material that was adequately completed in alignment with the study's research aims, retrieving completed diaries, developing photographs, and arranging interviews are complex and prone to a reasonable degree of error or misfortune. These complex logistical conditions presented a greater likelihood that materials would be lost or that participants would not fully follow the research directions (Latham, 2016). The researcher addressed this limitation by striving for excellence in his organizational practices. But the organizational skills and practical focus of all participants was beyond the researcher's controllability.

Another limitation associated with the research methods is the demand it places on participants' time. This burden made it less likely that all the participants that were recruited for

the study followed through with the expected commitment. As an incentive to fulfill their expected role as participants, a gift was offered in the form of a \$10 voucher for Dunkin' Donuts restaurants for those who submitted diary-photograph materials and sat for an interview.

In addition to the logistical and time burden limitations, DPDIM assumes participant competencies in writing ability and camera operation. It was possible that participants found the task of diary writing intimidating if they were unfamiliar with generating self-directed passages of handwritten text. However, it was assumed that as college students the participants held the necessary competencies for the written portion of their role. And the participants received a basic tutorial for camera operation when they were given the research packet. Also, there can be great variety in the quality and depth of material generated in the use of DPDIM. Latham (2016) warned that many people often lack the refined skills needed to practice attentive observation and deliver detailed reportage. To lessen the impact of this limitation the researcher attempted to recruit as many participants as appropriate given the resource limitations.

The directions to participants instructed them to take three to four photographs each day when wilderness ideas or feelings formed to influence or change their feelings. These instructions, and the assumptions upon which they were based, present at least three potential limitations. The directions assumed first, that participants would sense wilderness ideas or feelings forming three to four times each day. Second, they assumed that participants would sense wilderness ideas and feelings distinctively. Third, the directions assumed that photographs could help serve the purposes of non-representational research.

This expectation that participants would sense wilderness ideas and feelings multiple times each day could have conditioned participants to be more sensitive to the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. If the study had been designed to conclusively deduce and explain

wilderness ideas and feelings that formed for participants, then their potential to sense more than was ordinary would have presented a problematic limitation. However, there is a logical match between methods for documenting the emergence of affect and an interest in exploring its occurrence. That is, the research was more focused on exploring wilderness affect than explaining its contents. Sensing the formation of more wilderness ideas and feelings would have meant more chances to document the emergence of wilderness affect.

This study was also limited by the potential inability of participants to distinguish between wilderness ideas and feelings and other impressions. As mentioned above, the participant packets included a copy of the letter that was requested from Wallace Stegner by the Wildland Research Center (1962). Stegner spoke specifically in the letter about the wilderness idea, rather than wilderness reserves as a resource. He spoke of the ways the wilderness idea influences life in the United States. Participants were asked to read the letter on-site because the researcher wanted them to get, in a subdued manner, a sense of what was meant by “wilderness idea.” It was also meant to help them sense a difference between wilderness and general nature. Their exposure to the letter could have had an outsized influence on how they related to what they encountered. It was also likely that participants conflated wilderness and nature ideas and feelings. The researcher did not specifically gauge the influence of Stegner’s letter on participants or their interpretations of what constituted wilderness ideas and feelings. This limitation has two consequences. Stegner’s notions of the wilderness idea may have influenced participants more than was intended. For the purposes of this study’s results, interpretations, and conclusions, wilderness affect refers to relations with wild nature rather than relations with any wilderness reserve.

The third assumption was that participant photographs could help serve the purposes of non-representational research. Not only that, the methods involved the use of diaries and interview transcripts as sources for excerpts that were later constructed into anecdotes and paired with the participant photographs. It would seem contradictory to use these representations while claiming that the methodology adheres to the commitments of non-rep. However, this potential limitation depends on a specific orientation to representations that was not applied to this study. Adopting the methodological use of representations would be particularly problematic if they were understood only in their role to mediate people's access to the world. But, in this study, the various representations were not included as texts to be analyzed as expressions of wider signifying systems (discourses). In contrast, representations were used to remain attentive to participant encounters, the relations that constituted the encounters, and what emerged from those relations with which the representations were entangled.

### **Summary**

This chapter has offered a comprehensive characterization of the study's research methodology. The study's rationale, its participants, the needed information, its overall design, and other considerations were described. The study was intended to make a contribution to the understanding of outdoor recreation and with regard to scholarly approaches to its study. More specifically, it was anticipated that this study would be of value to outdoor recreation researchers who seek to better understand the affections that people have for the natural world.

The researcher used a qualitative diary-photograph, diary-interview method and modified it by adding the development of evocative anecdotes to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect. A convenience sample was made up of 15 students at UMM. Data collection methods included the use of respondent diaries and cameras, along with interviews

oriented around the content of the diaries and photographs. The data were organized into excerpts using interview transcriptions. Credibility and dependability were accounted for through differing strategies, including the matching of methodological logic to the orientation of the research questions and the use of an audit trail to give a traceable path from findings back to the data.

The next chapter describes the excerpt selection and anecdote construction procedures in greater detail. It also presents the results of this study's investigation of wilderness affect. Chapter V then follows where the results are interpreted and insights into experiences of wilderness affect are offered. Chapter V also presents a focused discussion of the applicability of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research. Finally, Chapter VI presents conclusions, considerations, and recommendations.



## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

### Introduction

To reiterate, the purpose of this study was to examine non-representational theory (non-rep) and explore the concept of affect. The researcher assumed that a better understanding of non-representational theory would allow other researchers to approach outdoor recreation phenomena from an alternative worldview with different normative commitments and thereby build research programs that leverage the unique qualities of non-rep research. One objective of this study was to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect through an exploration of its occurrence in the everyday lives of people who recently visited a wilderness area. This chapter presents data that were obtained from the participants' photograph-diaries and diary-photograph, diary-interviews (DPDI) and the anecdotes that resulted from data treatment procedures. Also included are the results of the researcher's thematization process.

The next section is a thorough description of the data processing steps of extraction and anecdote construction. The data are then presented in the form of extended excerpts of text from participant diaries and interview transcriptions alongside the photographs and anecdotes that correspond with each excerpt. The researcher systematically reviewed the DPDI materials, extracted photographs and excerpts of text, and constructed exemplary anecdotes that correspond with specific participant encounter events. The chapter closes with a presentation of the thematization process and its initial results.

### Extraction

All of the photographs that participants took were individually inserted into clear page protector sheets and arranged sequentially in a set of three 3-ring binders. Participant diary pages were photocopied, and the copies of the diary pages were also stored in the binders. After

participant interviews were conducted, pages of interview transcription text were then inserted into the binders. Thus, at the end, for each participant, the photographs, diary copies, and transcription pages were gathered together.

At the beginning of the interviews, the participants were instructed to choose three to five photographs that were taken when they felt they had experienced their strongest wilderness ideas or feelings. (Recall that participants had been instructed to take photographs when they sensed the formation of wilderness ideas or feelings.) On the backs of the selected prints, participants were instructed to write both what was happening and the ideas and feelings they had when the photographs were taken. These descriptions were discussed during the interviews and appeared in the interview transcripts because participants also read them aloud.

During the interviews, the text in the diaries was read aloud in some instances where it was difficult to read the participants' handwriting. Therefore, a portion, but not all, of the participants' diary entries appeared in the interview transcripts. The researcher reviewed the photograph descriptions, diary entries, and interview transcripts to later extract passages for the construction of anecdotes. The researcher used highlighters and pens to identify sections of text that had the potential to evoke images, memories, or emotions.

There were two participants for whom the DPDI materials held no content that was extracted. One participant, Daniel, seemed to fundamentally misunderstand his role as a participant. His diary contained very few entries compared to other participants. Eleven of the 13 photographs from Daniel's camera contained "selfies," which he said were taken when he made the entries in the diary. Another participant, William, also seemed to misunderstand his remit. He took only three photographs and, in the interview, explained that they were all taken around the same time when he was preparing a meal in his dormitory. Due to their misunderstandings and

based on the researcher's discretion, Daniel's and William's materials did not provide any content for extraction or further analysis.

### **Excerpts as Lived Experience Descriptions**

This research project documented a rational process in the sense that the researcher systematically explored affective encounters in the everyday lives of recent wilderness visitors. But the process also included non-rational aspects in the sense that the findings are presented using expressive means with the goal of creating a sense of resonance in readers. "Resonance means that the reader recognizes the plausibility of an experience even if he or she has never personally experienced this particular moment or this kind of event" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 240). The researcher sought to bring about opportunities for readers to sense knowledge of wilderness affect through non-representational ways of knowing. The types of knowledge this study aimed to produce are discussed further in Chapter V. The researcher used language and vocative methods (Van Manen, 2014) to provide opportunities for readers to feel an emotional responsiveness to the results, which come in the form of anecdotes. Most of the language in the anecdotes was drawn from extended excerpts of the DPDI transcriptions. The excerpts were considered by the researcher to be what Van Manen has referred to as lived-experience descriptions. Before the extended excerpts and anecdotes are presented, and due to the unique nature of this research approach, a more in-depth explanation of these kinds of data is offered.

### **Passage Selection**

The researcher reviewed the DPDI materials in order to identify and collect examples of "possible human experiences" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 313). Many researchers use techniques like interviewing, written response, and photograph elicitation to obtain data from participants. This research process was largely similar. But there were important qualifications.

The researcher was not primarily interested in the experiences of college students for the sake of reporting how *those* students experienced affective encounters in everyday life. The researcher's aim in identifying passages for excerpt was to collect examples of *possible* human experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life. The researcher's reflection and analysis proceeded therefore with an eye toward *examples* for excerpt.

Examples are often used in the natural and social sciences as a case in point to clarify abstract ideas or theories. Those illustrative examples typically do not contribute new knowledge of relevant phenomena so much as they interpret what is known. Accordingly, Van Manen (2014) has stated that "an example-as-illustration does not add new knowledge" (p. 258). In this investigation the researcher used a different kind of example to explore what is exemplary and singular about occurrences of wilderness affect.

Recall that in Chapter II the axiological commitments of non-representational research were characterized in terms of exemplification. Additionally, non-rep was noted to employ deictic discourse from a performative position. For this study, examples "have evidential significance: the example is the example of something experientially knowable or understandable that is not directly sayable—a singularity" (Van Manen, 2014, p. 258). This type of example is deictic in that it denotes an event whose meaning depends on the context in which it occurred. Deictic examples do not illustrate or advance an argument. They do not serve as particular instances of general ideas. But rather, deictic examples were sought in order to offer experiential accounts of wilderness affect in prereflective terms. The researcher reviewed the DPDI materials and extracted passages that would provide excerpts to be used later to construct anecdotes.

The passages were selected because they described what it was like for participants to live through the encounters. The researcher sought passages that described encounters from the inside of those events at the time of their occurrence. The focus was on feelings and impressions. The researcher was interested in finding descriptions of the particular occurrences that were documented by the photographs. The intent was to keep near to the actual instances of the encounters. Attention was given to passages that provided sensuous details relating to bodily feelings, smells, sounds, tastes, and so forth.

After reviewing the three binders of material the researcher used word processing software to compile 121 pages of text from the DPDI transcriptions. Then the researcher reviewed the 121 printed pages and made research notes in their margins and in research notebooks. The researcher further reviewed those experientially descriptive passages from the first extraction along with the research notes. Passages that seemed promising were then selected. The second phase of extraction resulted in the identification of 75 passages. Each of the 75 passages from the second extraction was associated with a distinct encounter during the everyday life of a participant when a photograph was taken due to the occurrence of wilderness feelings and ideas. This amounted to an average of five to six passages from each of the 13 sets of DPDI materials. Those 75 passages were then given further consideration in order to identify extended excerpts for the assemblage of anecdotes.

### **Excerpt Selection**

Before the researcher began constructing the anecdotes, a review of the passages was conducted. A third phase of extraction resulted in 11 extended excerpts that served as the source material for the 11 anecdotes. The researcher selected the final set of excerpts with the intention of assembling them into experiential anecdotes. To reiterate, the researcher first gathered all

DPDI materials into three large binders. From there the researcher compiled 121 pages of DPDI transcription text. From those pages the researcher selected 75 passages of text (amounting to 27 pages). Further review then yielded 11 extended excerpts. Those 11 extended excerpts were used for the assemblage of 11 anecdotes.

The process by which the initial passages were extracted was repeated such that extended excerpts were selected on the basis of their capacity to provide an account of an encounter that could leave an impression on a reader. What guided the selection of excerpts was the intent to enable readers to have a sense of the feelings and ideas that accompanied a particular possible life situation, the occurrence of wilderness affect. Again, excerpts that were likely to be relatable or affecting to readers were prioritized. In order to later construct anecdotes, the researcher extracted experiential descriptions that seemed to possess the greatest capacities to elicit feelings, or rouse readers from indifference.

The process of anecdote construction is discussed next. Then the 11 extended excerpts that were used to construct anecdotes are presented. The participant photographs associated with the extended excerpts will be given respectively in a figure that follows each excerpt. The anecdotes are presented as the captions for the figures.

### **Anecdote Construction**

The perceptible presence of affect in everyday life is often so small in degree that researchers need to use specialized techniques to detect and document slight affective influences and changes. Vocative methods (Van Manen, 2014) use an emotional style of expression to produce results that bring about a sense of resonance in readers. Most social science research presents results that are decidedly separate from the methods by which those results were

obtained. But vocative methods include the use of researcher-constructed anecdotes and are primarily expressive.

Anecdotes can be an effective way to allow readers to experience the perceptible presence of affect. Researchers assemble anecdotes from empirical materials in ways that provide an opportunity for readers to be stirred by their faculties to perceive or feel things. Non-representational researchers use anecdotes to render in understandable ways what seems to be beyond language.

Anecdotes are methodological devices that directly involve input from the researcher. Therefore, it is important to comment on their methodological status. The important methodological point is that the anecdotes are, to a certain degree, devised. Anecdotes were written using empirical excerpts drawn from the DPDI materials. But the excerpts lost their pure factuality once they were assembled into anecdotes (Van Manen, 2014). That is, though the research process employed empirical data, it does not make empirical claims with regard to the investigation of affect. The goal was neither to generalize to a certain population nor to draw factual conclusions about certain events. Instrumentally, the goal was to exemplify experiences of affect in order to reveal insights about its occurrence in the everyday lives of recent wilderness visitors.

The researcher followed Van Manen's (2014) guidance on the construction and use of anecdotes. Anecdotes have a typical structure. Anecdotes are short and simple stories that usually describe one particular event. They include concrete details and begin near the central moment of the experience being shared. In an anecdote there is a description of something that happened. Frequently, anecdotes end abruptly. The last line often makes a punchy, immediate impact.

As Van Manen (2014) noted, “experiential descriptions that are obtained through interview, written submissions, or conversations rarely possess the narrative qualities that make a text evocative, vivid, and experientially resonant” (p. 254). Each of the 11 anecdotes was associated with one encounter when participants perceived the formation of wilderness ideas or feelings and took a photograph. Extraneous and redundant material was deleted from the extended excerpts as they were edited into anecdotes. The researcher was careful not to change or distort the central focus of each excerpt. Later, the researcher followed up with the interviewees to confirm that the anecdotes showed what the experiences were like for them.

Following Van Manen’s (2014) guidelines, the researcher sought to maintain direct attention on the experience of the participants. The focus was on the ideas, feelings, and impressions expressed by the participants for each encounter event. The researcher used the present tense to enhance the anecdotes’ capacities to speak to and call upon the feelings of readers. Personal pronouns were used to pull readers into the experiences. Rewriting and editing was minimized to what was necessary to convey the affecting qualities of the encounters.

In summary, the researcher constructed 11 anecdotes as examples of occurrences of wilderness affect in everyday life. That is, the researcher assembled 11 separate anecdotes from 11 specific extended excerpts of DPDI transcription text based on what was gauged as the excerpts’ potential to provide material that could stir readers.

## **Results**

What follows are the results from the investigation of affect. The 11 extended excerpts from the DPDI transcriptions are given. Following each of the excerpts, the corresponding anecdotes are offered as the captions for Figures 3 through 13. The figures are the photographs that were taken by participants when they sensed the formation of wilderness ideas or feelings.

The anecdotes (figure captions) underscore the event of encounter that the photographs document. Each extended excerpt and figure are correspondingly named for referential purposes. What follows the presentation of these extend excerpts, photographs, and anecdotes is a description of the thematization process and the results of those procedures.

### **Extended Excerpts, Photographs, and Anecdotes**

*Josh, Tuesday, October 17, 2017*

I could not see what I was taking a picture of, because I was standing in the dense shrubbery. And I had taken my camera, and I lift it above my head, trying to show this crest of the bush.

[Photograph Description] I felt connected to this shot because it let the rest of the constructed world fade away. From that angle it could've been a real wild place. I felt like there was a sense of longing to be reunited with any time I was outside. Kinship with nature is the best way to put it.

You could see the leaves making their own ocean and they were reflecting the light in the same way the water does. And it reminded me of our five-day trip when I fell down to my neck in the snow. This was, it just reminded of the time that I was neck deep. That trip was the focal point of my wilderness identity. Because I've been on hundreds of campouts with Scouts, but none of them have come close to that five-day trip.

And falling into that snowdrift was very shocking to the core, but not in a bad way, in an awake way. And this just reminded me of that for a second. It reminded me of being surrounded and being not trapped, but encased. When you're stuck in snow, you're not stuck. You can move the snow. You can compact it and try to climb out. Just like in the bush, because I was in this bush.

Yeah, so this was a very good moment, cuz that trip, that was human interaction in a perfectly wild setting. And the back country, through that trip, has put a great respect in me for it. And I get reminders daily, even now, of that trip. But this was just more surreal, more physical, more wild.

And this was just a flashback to that joy. Community, and peace, and freedom. It was the escape, just for even moments at a time, from how grueling it was. When you go out into the wilderness, you reset your comfort level, you reset a lot of expectations you have for your environment. When I wake up inside a house, I expect there to be water and I expect there to be power. When you wake up in a tent, you expect to walk down to the stream and get some water. By lowering those expectations and realigning yourself with a wilderness identity and just changing your fundamental view, even though you know it's only temporary or it could be only temporary.

It's empowering, it's joyful, and it's pure. It's something that I always have a very strong interest in. I don't want anyone to ever do anything that isn't pure because, it doesn't make sense for somebody to waste their time in doing something that's not fully something they're invested in.

Wildernesses are as pure as you can get. Basic, undiluted, unchanged humanity is

also pure. But social convention and laws, and rules, and morals, and ethics change the purity. It doesn't mean make it worse, but it just alters them. My concern isn't the final result, whether it's good or bad. I'm not trying to figure that out or come to terms with that. I'm just considering, what the original unchanged level would be.

It comes up in relationships often, with friends and family, and of others. Something that, a good example is when you're young and your parents agree to do something for you. They agree to do it, but they don't do it out of desire of you doing it. They do it because it's a chore to them. But they recognize the need for it and still do it by doing the thing without the desire to do it, like driving you to a friend's house. I don't have a particular instance in mind, but it's something that's in my head. If you agree to do it out of a chore, you're not supporting a friendship. You're just supporting the fact that you know you have to do this. Obligation is the opposite of purity; doing it without reservations. So by being encased in this bush, in this example, it was a choice I made, for a process I wanted to go through. This is the photograph of the week.

**Figure 3**

*Josh, Tuesday, October 17, 2017*



I'm standing in the dense shrubbery. The leaves are an ocean that reflects light like water. I'm neck deep in the bush. I feel a sense of longing to be reunited with anytime I was outside. Kinship with nature is the best way to put it. It's familiarity or friendship. I'm surrounded but not trapped. I'm encased.

***Brandon, Monday, October 23, 2017***

So I've always loved clouds and looking at them, when I look at them they give me a feeling of wonder. When I was younger, I always try to imagine how large the clouds were in comparison to real life structures or towns or whatnot. Cuz you know how high up they are, how big they look, you know if they're closer to you they'd be massive.

So that was always something I was always fascinated, in knowing exactly how large these clouds were. They make me for the most part forget about current happenings. I always get really distracted when I'm looking at a cool cloud structure like rain clouds, how they're really puffy and always moving. I totally enjoy looking at those, even storm clouds, those really get my attention; like the tornado clouds or all those ones out West where you see awesome formations. And I took this photo because it was dreary, it was a gray sky, wasn't really much going on there. I don't really like necessarily how it makes everything else seem dreary too with it.

It affects yourself, your mood, it affects the mood of everything else you're looking at. Even trees look more dismal than they are, buildings look even more, [blech utterance] than they should, and people just, their attitudes just drop.

When it's gray, I feel not necessarily down but less motivated at times, especially in the mornings when you're just waking up and it's a dreary day, right then it has that effect on you. I feel like if it was a sunshiny morning where it's coming through the windows. Slower, everything's just moving slower during days like that. I definitely was feeling that feeling though, of kind of like that dreary slowness though.

**Figure 4**

*Brandon, Monday, October 23, 2017*



I look at the gray sky. It's dreary and I don't like how it makes everything else seem dreary too. When it's gray I feel not necessarily down, but less motivated at times. The sky has an effect on the atmosphere around it. It affects your mood. It affects the mood of everything. Everything moves slower. Trees look more dismal, buildings look more blech, and people, their attitudes just drop. There's a dreary, slow feeling.

*Matt, Saturday, October 21, 2017*

The first one is in the morning, my children wake us up 5:30 every morning. Greatest alarm clocks ever. And this morning it was incredibly foggy out. That is the backyard of the house that I live in, which is also our front yard.

[Interviewer, reading from diary] Okay, so in your memo it says, “This morning I woke up to find the woods at the back of my house shrouded in mist and fog, I have always liked fog these days, I find them peaceful, relaxing.” So was that your sense when the photo was taken, this feels peaceful?

[Matt] Honestly, it’s, a lot of people find foggy days to be sad or depressing, but I tend to go the other way with it. I think it’s because everyone around me is kind of, I don’t wanna say brought down, but decompressed a little bit by that, because they’re not, bubbly if you will. I find that, I always look at that and find it kind of less of it depressing more of kind of sleepy cozy kind of feel, not as much noise, there’s not as much people running around in a huff, it’s just quiet.

This was probably about 10 minutes after I woke up. If it was a normal day, then I would be getting up, getting the boys some breakfast and making coffee. Because I wake up much faster than anyone else in my household. I would have just gotten the boys breakfast. It was still unseasonably warm, so I would have opened the door. And I would have seen that and either went for the camera. They [his sons] were sitting at the table right next to the door nearby. I took a minute and just kinda stand there, relaxing, drinking coffee. Because that is my life blood in the morning.

**Figure 5**

*Matt, Saturday, October 21, 2017*



About 10 minutes after I wake up I get the boys' breakfast. They're sitting there at the table. It's warm so I open the door. I find the woods shrouded in mist and fog. A lot of people find fog to be sad or depressing, but I tend to go the other way with it. I find it less as depressing and more as like a sleepy-cozy kind of feel. I feel peaceful and relaxed. I take a minute and just kinda stand there, drinking coffee.

*Victoria, Saturday, November 4, 2017*

It was really like inspiring that we were able to get up and running and out the door on a Saturday before nine o'clock. Well it was more than just an accomplishment because it was like a, it was an awakening moment, I suppose, as to like this is possible and doable and something that we enjoy and something that we don't do enough.

It is, it was a big a-ha moment of yes, here's something that we enjoy, we don't do enough of and is totally something we're capable of. Often, all this shopping and going around and whatever, or even visiting friends or family, I have two crazy boys. So I spend a lot of my time telling them what they can and they can't do. And it just makes too much stress. When we all go out in the woods, we just enjoy it.

Like, my son, my little guy, kept wanting to sit in the moss and just think, this is paradise. My big guy was running all the way through and back again. And it's nice to not have to, the world is open to them and they can explore and they're safe for the most part. Everything was there. But there wasn't even anything there. They were able to use their imaginations. It's really nice to be in a space where they're satisfied and I'm not constantly having to say yes or no or anything.

When we take a break and we go out in the woods and my whole pressure is released. And everybody's happy and the children are loud and running around and their voices aren't bouncing off the walls and hurting my head. And we're all just happy and peaceful and we enjoy the woods a lot.

[Diary entry] When we went in the woods my youngest boy sat down on some mossy area with trees and said, "This is paradise" and he kept repeating it.

**Figure 6**

*Victoria, Saturday, November 4, 2017*



With two little boys, many things in my life cause stress. In the woods, no accessories are needed. The off-limit areas are pretty obvious. The world is open to them and they can explore safely for the most part. There isn't even anything there, but everything is there. They can use their imagination. They're satisfied and I don't constantly have to say yes or no to anything. It's an awakening. It's an a-ha moment when you realize this is possible and doable and it's totally something we're capable of. You feel it when your four-year-old sits down in the moss under the trees and says, "This is paradise."

*Jessica, Saturday, October 21, 2017*

This is again, one from the car. It was not foggy all morning. And then all of a sudden, when we turned down a road we'd never been on, it was very foggy. And that was it, and right after that, we didn't see fog at all for the rest of the day. A little pocket of fog. It was very, not in a bad way, but shocking and very like where the heck did this come from? It wasn't, it was a clear day, there was no clouds, it wasn't raining, it wasn't.... It was kinda spooky.

My youngest calls it froggy. So that's what I remember. I just remember, ooh Mommy it's froggy. [laugh] It's seriously just out of nowhere, we went turn down this road, and then went down a little hill. And it was just down the, it wasn't a very big hill. Just a little pocket of fog. And it was gone. It was there all of a sudden.

**Figure 7**

*Jessica, Saturday, October 21, 2017*



It was a clear day. There were no clouds and it wasn't raining. We turn down a road we'd never been on, all the sudden it's very foggy. It was very, not in a bad way, but shocking and very like, where the heck did this come from? We didn't see fog at all for the rest of the day. It was seriously just out of nowhere. It was kinda spooky.

*Chris, Thursday, October 19, 2017*

I saw a deer, maybe 150 or 200 yards off, all I saw was the back end, I have no idea if it was male or female or even maybe a really small moose. And I thought maybe I'd hide in the tree, I didn't wanna spook it, okay. I could maybe see it better too. It walked right under me. I can honestly say I have never been that close to a deer before. It was not my intent to spook it, so as silly as it sounds, hiding from it and just letting it go about its business, was probably for the best.

I'm definitely not alone and I saw, okay, so some students had set up traps in the woods, with birds. I found these traps actually a couple of days earlier. Actually, it might have been that same day. And we had found the traps in the woods accidentally but they, the traps, they might have just been cages, but they were around dead birds. There were cages around birds and the birds were collecting bugs. They were doing some entomological study on seagulls, I think.

But that's what the deer was investigating initially. The deer was way off from me. All I saw was the back end of it, because I was in the bushes going, what is this? So I was like, I'm gonna hide. I'm gonna stand right behind this tree and maybe it won't see me, because I wasn't sure if it was male or female, and I was in the trail. And it could probably go hopping off through the woods if I spooked it. But I wasn't sure if it was male, and I spooked it, it was gonna come running, hopping towards me.

I didn't really wanna spook it anyway, so I maybe if I just climb up in this tree I can see better, see if it's male or female. So then I climbed up in the tree and was like, it's definitely a deer. And then it's coming towards me. And then I'm like; I don't wanna spook it, because that's just not okay. It's wildlife and it was here before me, and it belongs here and I really don't. So I was like, I'm gonna just let it do its thing. So then it walks right under me, and I was just like, this is really cool. But this is really close.

It was right under me and then it looks up at me, and I'm trying not to have it notice that I'm there. And then it kind of looks up at me, and then it kind of just wanders off. And then I kinda wandered off, and I got stuck. Yeah, cuz it was really cool. But it just wandered off, and then I kind of tried to get out of the tree, but then my foot got wedged.

I was shaking when I got out of the tree. I was like; it's coming towards me. I was also really glad that it was a deer and not a bear. Yeah and it was kind of terrifying because I wasn't 100% sure that that was a deer at first. I was like, I think that's a deer, but I'm not really sure, I kind of hoped it was a dog. Because initially, cuz it was a really far away from me and I don't have a great vision. But it was really far away from me, so I'm like, is that a dog? And then I was like, no, that's too big to be a dog, and then I'm like, is that a deer? I hope it's a deer; maybe it's a small moose.

I was still on the pathway at that point and I'm trying to look for it, but like, it was it's kind of off in the woods a bit. But it was kind of blocking the path and I didn't wanna walk towards it, until I knew what it was. It was kind of half on the trail, mostly kind of in the woods, but its back end was in the trail part and I sort of saw the tail go up and down, but I didn't see enough to know that was a white tailed deer. Yeah, it was a little terrifying.

I was like, what is that? I didn't wanna bother it, even when I did know what it was. I'm like, I'm just gonna let this thing pass and go about its business, and then I'll go

on my way, in the opposite direction. I actually went, I fell out of the tree. I kind of, I went to try to get my foot out of the, because this foot got wedged. So I'm sliding down, like it's a fire pole.

I was trespassing here, at least, a few probably felt I was. That's the deer's home. I was probably, the deer probably felt like I was trespassing. I was invading its home. I was trying to just not spook it. I was trying so that it wouldn't feel threatened. I just didn't want it to feel threatened.

**Figure 8**

*Chris, Thursday, October 19, 2017*



There's something a ways off down the trail. What is it—a small moose!? Don't bother it. Climb a tree to get a better look. It's a deer. I'll just let it pass by and go about its business. It's coming towards me and I don't want it to feel threatened. If it's a male and I spook it, it might run and jump at me. It walks right under me, we make eye contact, and it just wanders off. I didn't spook it. It was a little terrifying.

*Josh, Sunday, October 15, 2017*

I had not been outside much that day at all. Just like walking to and from the dorm. I was alone. It was just the sun through the trees; it was a nice sunset. But you can't really tell in this picture, it all came out as grey. In the moment it was just pure. And that's something that I notice through all of them, all the photos. It was just the purity of nature was still present.

Stress, because a lot of work was being done. And then also I just, I didn't wanna be caught off guard by all of this falling down around me. So I was just incredibly stressed this week. And this was just a moment of taking a step back and letting myself not be worried or anxious or even joyful because joyful is expectations and peace and calmness is where I arrived.

Stressed, anxious and mostly just looking to pick my next fight, looking to get the next project done. I was in a very, in a very get-everything-done-immediately mood.

I wasn't completely alone. There was no one with me but I know there were people around me. And I was curious what they thought I was doing. Also I was wondering if the camera would give any justice to that shot cuz it doesn't look like any particular sunset but it was good enough.

And the tree is what I wanted to focus on because it gave me an impression that without any other human construct available in sight you could imagine a canopy overhead. I was avoiding the light next to it. Cuz I was standing at the intersection at Kilburn and the light is down a little bit. So if I had gone more to the right, it would have been the entire focus of the shot. That's why I couldn't get like the most prominent sunset either. It was more so the shot reminded me to take the photo. It wasn't, okay, find a picture to take. It was, it reminded me to do it.

[Reading from diary] At four I went to Kilburn. After this, at six, I left and took my first picture as I walked to my car. The twilight in the trees seemed as wild as any in that light. If I look just right I can put myself back in the forest. Not in a particular or even real forest but more of what I'd like to imagine it used to look like.

**Figure 9**

*Josh, Sunday, October 15, 2017*



I leave Kilburn at six and walk to my car. I'm in a very get-everything-done-immediately mood. The twilight in the tree seems as wild as any light. If I look just right I can put myself back in the forest; not in a particular or even real place but in what I like to imagine it used to look like. I take a moment. I step back and let myself not be worried or anxious. Calm and peaceful is where I arrive.

*Nick, Saturday, October 14, 2017*

One of the pictures is of the road, because up here, and just a little backstory about me is I'm from the city, up here in Machias. It's a very different feeling than where I'm from. So to get away from this, I usually drive. I drive as far as I can up here in the middle of the night, cuz I am also a double major up here, which is a big stress on me. So I drive as far as I can until I reach dirt roads where I finally feel a sense of solidarity, if that's even a word, in the wilderness.

So everybody has their demons, they're the skeletons they don't like to talk about. And they always come up whenever you get stressed, and once you forget about them, they're gone for the day. Everybody has stuff that they don't like to talk about.

There's constantly a monkey in there, you know what I mean, telling you all this crap. I don't know, a gremlin little monkey, but when he quiets down that's when you find peace out there. Out on a dirt road trying to think about what's happening, deduce all your issues.

Well, once I get on the dirt that's when I turn all the music down. I like to hear. I roll both my windows down. I like to hear the gravel and the dirt go through my tires. Then that's when I feel like I'm not part of the system anymore. So, just to roll down your windows and listen to all those rocks going through your tires, kicking them up and hitting your fenders in the back, you know.

But I guess that's where I handle things is I like to drive somewhere where I feel alone and know there's no houses, which is pretty far. Last year I put 30,000 miles on my truck. I'm trying to just get away from everything. Escape you know, the wilderness killed the demons and until tomorrow night. And it signifies all the, of course, it signifies all the stresses that have been going on, but, of course, they're gonna come back the next day when I go to my classes, after I do all my homework, after everything happens, then I go on my drives.

**Figure 10**

*Nick, Saturday, October 14, 2017*



It gets very lonely up in Machias. It feels very different than being back home. I usually drive to get away from this. Everybody has demons that come out with stress. A little gremlin tells you all this crap. When he quiets down, you find peace. I drive deeper and deeper into wilderness. I drive as far as I can until I reach dirt roads where I finally feel alone. I roll both windows down. I like to hear the gravel and dirt going through my tires. I listen to the rocks popping up into the fenders. That's when I feel like I'm not part of the system anymore. It helps me forget, but it's a good kind of forget. It lets me release everything that's going on. The wilderness kills my demons.

*Taylor, Monday, October 23, 2017*

But in the moment, you can see that there's this broken-down tree, right down here is its stem. And all of this is down. But if you look up, all of this has gone to the sky, all of these, if you were there in real time you can see past the green. The green kind of shrouds it. But there's branches in there that are going straight to the sky and they actually have apples on them. And it's still growing apples.

And the deer are always back there but you never really, I never really take the time to connect the dots to itself. It was just kind of one of those subtle things. It's like the resilience of nature. I mean, we all species have that resilience, but being a human, we're the strongest. We do this. We have brains, type of thing. And you don't think that a plant has a brain or a plant wants to live or does this or does that. I don't know. If you just kinda stop and think like, okay, the tree fell. Got broke. We fall, we can get broke.

It's a very large tree. It's taller than my house. And so, I just liked it because it kind of shows that, I don't know, it just went along with the whole growing thing. I was in a moment, I guess. I don't know. If it was to be corny or anything, like an out of body. It wasn't out of body, but maybe out of mind. You let go of, I let go of the school, the work, the kids, stuff like that, and just took a moment to just appreciate what was in front of me. And I think that's why I went on these tangents because I went from my focal point was, okay, that's beautiful.

That was the broken one. That was the one that almost fell on the house. How did it almost fall on the house and still grow? It's resilient. There was still something left and that's what mattered. It's quite green. I'm in awe of it. Falling and still persevering. As a mom working full-time, and in college and stuff, I don't know if that's why I hooked on to things that are growing, or going through the cycles, because getting stressed out and stuff, and wanting to succeed, wanting to be good. Yeah, I don't know, maybe some unconscious play was going on, to be honest.

**Figure 11**

*Taylor, Monday, October 23, 2017*



The broken-down tree has branches growing straight to the sky. It fell a couple years ago. How does it fall and still grow? That's straight resilience. I'm in awe of it. It falls and still perseveres. Stop and think. The tree fell, got broke. We fall, we can get broke. The tree came back and it's still providing. I was in a moment, I guess, like an out of body, but it wasn't out of body, maybe out of mind. I let go of school, the work, the kids and take a moment to just appreciate what's in front of me.

*Brandon, Sunday, October 22, 2017*

So I took this photo, because I really enjoy walking through leaves. Especially when they are crunchy. Not like after rain, so when they become soggy, but that nice fresh crisp. This is all like nostalgic stuff. They give me that nostalgic feeling of fun and excitement when I used to play in leaf piles or went for walks through the woods.

Yeah, it's like crunch and that [whoosh utterance]. Like that swooping, not swooping, but just kinda that sound where you just run through the leaves. It's kinda like a crunch. And yeah I don't know how to describe that sound, the sort of rustling, the crunch.

I don't know, it's in the moment, I just kinda, it is kind of satisfying. Just walking through them. Very simple, but still do it as much as I can. Like, even on the hike we did in Moosehorn. I think it's mostly just that memorable feeling. Just anytime I just kick through leaves, I can always just remember being in the woods in nature. I do like them. I wouldn't say, I'm like a leafer. It's just, little sporadic moments. Nothing big. Most of the leaves have been either blown away or what not. I don't really walk through them much.

**Figure 12**

*Brandon, Sunday, October 22, 2017*



I really enjoy walking through leaves, especially when they are crunchy and rustling. There's a hushed crackle whooshing sound. I don't know, it's kind of an in the moment thing. Just walking through them is satisfying. It's nothing big. It's a very simple pleasure that happens in little sporadic moments.

*Victoria, Thursday, November 9, 2017*

And I have a tendency to check out trees. There's one tree that looks like a giant bonsai tree, and I know these trees like I would know people. Right, so when I look at them it's like my hello or whatever. Just like recognizing them.

This tree is the tree I'm connected to. I watched it through its whole life. On the left-hand side of the road as you're coming down Woodruff Hill toward town. And just every curve and bend is an obstacle that it's overcome; like an ice storm or something. So the path that it's taken and the fact that it's curved almost into a complete circle like a half moon is inspiring to me.

Yeah, I watched it, I watched it die, it's dead now. But all it used to be this pine tree and it was just a spectacular spectacle to watch, because I watched it be alive and slowly die. And through the process of dying it changed all these colors like the fall leaves would, but it's needles and cuz it's a pine tree.

So the first connection would be noticing what it's overcome because of all the twists and turns of events. Like what a resilient tree this is. And then the second connection is watching it through its process of death. And the fact that even though it's dead it's still housing for all of these critters and life forms and it's still so nurturing.

This is on my road so I see this tree every day and this is one of those trees that I just check in with and it's at the bottom of a hill and I go by it sometimes five times a day.

[Diary Entry] As I'm traveling from point to point my mind taking little breaks for nature. I'm driving down the road past a beach, cool tree, sunset, etc. That's where my eye goes. I do my best to take it in.

There's this one crazy twisted pine tree that has withstood many years of abuse and it had finally hit its limit and was fading away. It was a twisted little pine tree that was slowly fading. Spikey little pine tree I watched it over the last couple years as its pine needles went from lush green to orange, yellow, brown, and gone. Yes, the whole world is scary and crazy and has me totally confused. And in these moments, it is nature that we turn to for comfort and to charge our souls.

**Figure 13**

*Victoria, Thursday, November 9, 2017*



While I'm traveling from point to point my mind takes little breaks. I find trees that catch my eye. I see this tree every day, sometimes five times a day and I just check in with it, like a friend. I know this tree the same way I know people. I recognize it and say hello. I've watched it over the last couple of years. I'm connected to it. The bends and twists show it has persevered and continued to grow. It gives me hope. It charges my soul.

### **Thematization**

The purpose of thematization was to assist the researcher in the development of thematic qualities through which further discussion could be developed. In this study thematic qualities were not understood as codifications, conceptual abstractions, or empirical generalities. Instead, “thematic analysis refers to the process of recovering structures of meanings that are embodied and dramatized in human experience” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 319). Thematic qualities, therefore, are structures that can be used to help portray the feeling of understanding of a possible human experience. The thematic qualities of an experience are “the experiential structures that make up that experience” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 79).

The 11 anecdotes presented above were examined in order to generate thematic phrases. This was done in an attempt to reveal possible qualities of experiences of wilderness affect exemplified in the anecdotes. In alignment with this study’s objectives, thematic phrases were developed to reach a greater understanding of occurrences of wilderness affect in everyday life. To develop the thematic phrases, the researcher followed Van Manen’s (1990, 2014) understanding of themes and how they relate to research phenomena.

Uncovering thematic aspects involves a search for a central meaning or point of an event. Themes can help to simplify experiences and make them easier to understand. They serve as a way to get a better handle on an event that one is trying to understand. Thematic phrases were developed to access the ways in which possible human experiences of wilderness affect are lived through or perceived and regarded. When they are well formulated, themes seem to somehow touch the core of an experience that one is trying to understand. But themes cannot ever measure up to the depth of actual experiences as they are lived. That is, themes are always reductions (Van Manen, 1990, 2014).

After the researcher constructed the anecdotes each one was treated as a source of thematic meaning at three levels. The anecdotes were given wholistic, selective, and detailed readings. In the *wholistic* reading the researcher focused on each anecdote as a whole. The question guiding the wholistic reading was “How can the essential meaning or primary significance of this anecdote be captured as a whole?” For each anecdote the researcher tried to express that meaning in a singular phrase. In the *selective* reading, the researcher read and reread the anecdotes, asking, “What words or phrases seem especially revealing about the event this anecdote describes?” For each anecdote the researcher then attempted to embed the expressive sense conveyed by those words or phrases in thematic expressions. In the *detailed* reading, the researcher reviewed each sentence of each anecdote individually, asking, “What does this sentence say about the event the anecdote describes?” The researcher did a sentence-by-sentence reading of each anecdote and attempted to express any meaningful aspects each sentence held.

The thematic expressions from the wholistic, selective, and detailed readings of each of the anecdotes (captions to Figures 3–13) are given below.

**Josh, Tuesday, October 17, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings is a yearning for the way the outdoors can get ahold of you.

***Selective***

The phrases, “I feel a sense of longing to be reunited with anytime I was outside” and “It’s familiarity or friendship” seem especially significant. How is it that what emerges from the relations induces a yearning for reunion with past events? What does it mean to be a friend of nature or family member to nature?

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

come through intentionally close encounters (Sentence 1),

feel like wading into a shimmering expanse of water (Sentence 2),

be immersive (Sentence 3),

be nostalgic (Sentence 4),

feel like a deep connection or even kinship (Sentence 5),

be a sense of familiarity or friendship (Sentence 6),

envelop a person in a way that allows easy exit or release (Sentence 7), and

hold, grasp, clutch, bundle, and wrap the person (Sentence 8).

**Brandon, Monday, October 23, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be distaste for the way gray skies influence everything around in a suppressive manner.

***Selective***

One sentence that seems especially significant is, “It affects the mood of everything.” The gray skies influence how everything under them interrelates in terms of the mood of everything under the skies. This suggests that what emerges from the relations may influence a person’s mood.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may connect to the sky (Sentence 1), influence what emerges from the relations between that person and something else (Sentence 2), not necessarily induce the same particular response in everybody (Sentence 3), have an atmospheric or widespread influence (Sentence 4), influence that person's mood (Sentence 5), influence the mood of a situation (Sentence 6), influence the tempo of a situation (Sentence 7), influence or color that person's general outlook (Sentence 8), and be boring or tiresome (Sentence 9).

**Matt, Saturday, October 21, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be for better or worse.

***Selective***

Two selections that seem especially significant are “shrouded in mist and fog” and “a sleepy-cozy kind of feel” because there may be a sense in which what emerges from the relations induces a feeling of being blanketed.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

occur in the flow of routine tasks like preparing breakfast (Sentence 1),

occur while any others that are around do not sense it (Sentence 2),

occur in a very familiar place like right outside your doorstep (Sentence 3),

have a misty, foggy, or hazy quality (Sentence 4),

feel like sadness or depression for some (Sentence 5),

feel like sadness or depression for some, or it may be a comfort to others (Sentence 6),

be a comfort that pacifies and relaxes (Sentence 7), and

be a cause for pause (Sentence 8).

**Victoria, Saturday, November 4, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be the realization of a new capacity.

***Selective***

Sentences 8 and 9 speak of “an awakening,” “an aha moment.” What emerges from the relations may be a sudden realization or epiphany. Wilderness ideas and feelings can be capacious. Wilderness can be a capacitor or empowerment apparatus.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

be in counter position to the stresses of everyday life (Sentence 1),

be an appreciation for simplicity (Sentence 2),  
be a consideration of new opportunities (Sentence 3),  
be an appreciation for how easily natural risks can be understood intuitively (Sentence 4),  
be paradoxical (Sentence 5),  
stimulate a person's imagination (Sentence 6),  
bring contentment (Sentence 7),  
dawn upon a person like an awakening (Sentence 8),  
be a moment of sudden insight or discovery (Sentence 9), and  
feel like finding paradise (Sentence 10).

**Jessica, Saturday, October 21, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be jolting.

***Selective***

The selection "a road we'd never been on" suggests that events whereby there is an element of the unknown may be conducive to the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. The selections "all the sudden," "shocking," "where the heck did this come from," and "out of nowhere" indicate an aspect of surprise. The selection "kinda spooky" indicates a frightening and yet fascinating aspect.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

come out of the blue (Sentence 1),  
be a response to the difference between preceding and emerging conditions (Sentence 2),  
may feel like coming into an unknown place (Sentence 3),  
be shocking in a good way (Sentence 4),  
heighten one's sensitivity to, or anticipation for, similar encounters (Sentence 5),  
arrive unexpectedly (Sentence 6), and  
be unease or unnerving (Sentence 7).

**Chris, Thursday, October 19, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be sublime, awesome, and a little terrifying.

***Selective***

The final two sentences, "I didn't spook it" and "It was a little terrifying" seem especially significant. They raise questions about the spooking of an animal and being spooked. How might the connection between spookiness and wilderness affect be explored?

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

be a sense of the unknown (Sentence 1),  
be misapprehension (Sentence 2),  
feel like interrupting something (Sentence 3),  
be a desire to seek a safer vantage point (Sentence 4),  
be a desire to confirm what it is that one is encountering (Sentence 5),

be a desire to disengage from the encounter (Sentence 6),  
be a desire to pacify the situation or avoid agitation (Sentence 7),  
be a sense of impending antagonism (Sentence 8),  
feel like being seen (Sentence 9),  
be the ability to not cause others to suddenly take fright (Sentence 10), and  
be slightly terrifying (Sentence 11).

**Josh, Sunday, October 15, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may have a timeless quality.

***Selective***

The phrase, “The twilight in the tree seems as wild as any light” seems particularly significant. What emerges from the relations may be boundless.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

come about during mundane moments (Sentence 1),  
interrupt task-oriented behavior (Sentence 2),  
seem inestimable (Sentence 3),  
be timeless (Sentence 4),  
bring about a lull (Sentence 5),  
tranquilize a person (Sentence 6), and  
pacify a person (Sentence 7).

**Nick, Saturday, October 14, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings can have the power to kill personal demons.

***Selective***

The sentence, “That’s when I feel like I’m not part of the system anymore” seems especially significant. What emerges from the relations may be freeing.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

mitigate loneliness (Sentence 1),

alleviate homesickness (Sentence 2),

come about when fleeing from loneliness and homesickness (Sentence 3),

be sought in response to stress demons (Sentence 4),

be sought in response to unexplained problems (Sentence 5),

mitigate a person’s unexplained problems (Sentence 6),

be sought through extended attempts to escape (Sentence 7),

be brought about when a person feels truly alone (Sentence 8),

be like opening up what is inside to the outside (Sentence 9),

be brought about by certain sounds (Sentence 10),

be brought about by intentionally creating and listening to certain sounds (Sentence 11),

bring about a sense of freedom or liberation (Sentence 12),

obliterate what is troubling a person in a good way (Sentence 13),

help a person feel carefree (Sentence 14), and  
alleviate whatever is tormenting someone (Sentence 15).

**Taylor, Monday, October 23, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be an opportunity to be fully present in the appreciation of natural resilience.

***Selective***

The phrases “The tree fell, got broke. We fall, we can get broke” seem especially significant. What emerges from the relations may be a sense of connection.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

- occur while observing natural growth (Sentence 1),
- occur while noticing something previously overlooked (Sentence 2),
- inspire curiosity (Sentence 3),
- be a recognition of resilience (Sentence 4),
- inspire awe (Sentence 5),
- be the capacity to appreciate life’s challenges (Sentence 6),
- be a reflective moment (Sentence 7),
- be regard (Sentence 8),
- be a comparison (Sentence 9),
- be the capacity to appreciate the way others overcome adversity (sentence 10),

be transcendence (Sentence 11), and  
be a powerful sense of presence (Sentence 12).

**Brandon, Sunday, October 22, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be simple, sporadic pleasures.

***Selective***

One selection that seems especially significant is the “hushed crackle whooshing sound” of walking in the leaves. What emerges from the relations may be the joy of moving through earthy textures.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

be the joy of motions and sounds (Sentence 1),  
be the enjoyment of a particular natural sound (Sentence 2),  
seem indiscernible or ephemeral (Sentence 3),  
be satisfying (Sentence 4),  
be subtle or seemingly inconsequential (Sentence 5), and  
be a simple pleasure that occurs in an irregular or scattered way (Sentence 6).

**Victoria, Thursday, November 9, 2017**

***Wholistic***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may be hope.

***Selective***

The phrases “see it every day” and “check in with it like a friend” seem significant. What emerges from the relations may be a sense of friendship.

***Detailed***

What emerges from the relations between people and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings may

occur during mundane comings and goings (Sentence 1),

occur when something catches a person’s eye (Sentence 2),

occur through everyday encounters (Sentence 3),

be friendship (Sentence 4),

be salutatory (Sentence 5),

be recurrent (Sentence 6),

be connection (Sentence 7),

be appreciation for enduring growth (Sentence 8), and

be hope (Sentence 9).

**Summary**

This chapter presented the results from an investigation of affect in the everyday lives of recent wilderness visitors. It presented extended excerpts from 11 specific encounter events along with exemplary anecdotes and photographs that chronicled those occurrences. Results from participant diaries, photographs, and interviews expressed the ways participants experienced wilderness affect in everyday life. The researcher used excerpts from the participant materials to assemble anecdotes that underwent wholistic, selective, and detailed readings to produce thematic expressions. While the amount of results that were presented in this chapter

was substantial, as is typical with most research, they do not constitute the entirety of data gathered during this study.

The next chapter presents interpretive insights developed from the researcher's reflections on the results, along with discussions of non-representational theory. The researcher suggests five thematic qualities of wilderness affect and discusses the applicability of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research.

## **CHAPTER V: INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to examine non-representational theory (non-rep) and explore the concept of affect. The discussions in this chapter follow from the study's research questions and the results that were presented in Chapter IV. The first part of this chapter focuses on the exploration of wilderness affect. Five thematic qualities of wilderness affect are introduced and discussed. These five thematic qualities are offered as interpretation of the results just presented. The second part of this chapter shifts the focus to the study's examination of non-rep. A critical reflection on the applicability of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research is given based on the macrostructural characterization from Chapter II. The third part of this chapter presents critical considerations of this study. This chapter closes with a summary of this study's findings.

### **Interpretive Insights**

These sections present interpretive insights into experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life. The researcher reflected on the anecdotes and thematic expressions in order to present a condensed interpretation of wilderness affect. Five thematic qualities of wilderness affect are suggested. There is no claim that the five qualities discussed below descriptively exhaust all experiences of wilderness affect. Each of the qualities is discussed in consideration of the events of encounter that were portrayed in the anecdotes.

### **Relationality**

Experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life seemed to exhibit relationality. The results indicated that wilderness affect manifests in a relational way. That is, wilderness affect seemed to arise, in part, from kinship, connection, or feelings of affinity. Etymologically, a

relation is that which is brought back to a person. Josh encountered a dense bush and plunged himself into it up to his neck. His relations with the bush induced wilderness ideas and feelings. For him it brought back a desire to reunite with past outdoor experiences. Those relations could be characterized as friendly, familial, or kinship (Figure 3).

Brandon was walking across a college campus. Looking up, he noticed the overcast skies. His relations with the sky induced wilderness ideas and feelings. Under overcast conditions, the way that Brandon related to the world was different. His relations with trees, buildings, and people were all influenced by the way he related to the gray sky (Figure 4). Wilderness affect was experienced in a relational way in that what it brought back to participants were connections between themselves and what was encountered.

Matt was going about his regular morning routine preparing breakfast for his family. Feeling uncomfortably warm he decided to open the door to the outside. He encountered the mist just outside the door. The relevance of the mist induced a particular feeling. He found those feelings to be relatable in a “sleepy-cozy” kind of way (Figure 5). Relationality could be considered a matter of relevance. The relevance of wilderness affect depended on the connections participants had with whatever they encountered.

### **Ineffability**

Experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life seemed to exhibit ineffability. The results indicated that wilderness affect can manifest in an effable way. That is, some participants experienced wilderness affect in ways that seemed beyond description. For one participant, her experience involved an a-ha moment through which she saw her family in a new light. What emerged from her relations with wilderness ideas and feelings was a moment of insight. Victoria’s understandings of herself and her family took a turn when she realized that they were

capable of enjoying the woods. It was an ontological insight in that she saw something emerging in their being. It was a moment where something in her family showed itself to her. She seemingly grasped the turn in her own understanding. The grasping of the turn occurred as an a-ha moment (Figure 6).

There are two senses in which ineffability is indicated. In one sense, by definition, an a-ha moment is a moment of sudden insight. Because the experience of such an insight is so great, the onomatopoeic utterance associated with the sound of inspiration (breathing in) was used. Victoria's a-ha moment had an ineffable quality in that it seemed to be beyond any expressive description that could reveal the depth of her experience.

In a second sense, such insight could be ineffable because it is the realization of a new capacity. Through insight she grasped the turn in her understanding of her family's capacities. This grasping of the dawning of a new capacity seems ineffable in the sense that a capacity is not what can be conceptualized or said but rather, it is what can be done. Wilderness affect may be experienced ineffably as the grasping of a turn in one's understanding of themselves.

Jessica was out for a joyride with her family on the weekend when they ventured down an unknown road (Figure 7). She underwent an encounter with fog so suddenly that the emergent shock was somewhat indescribable. There is a sense in which wilderness affect can be experienced so quickly and without warning that the person can find it hard to put the feeling of what happened into words.

### **Fluidity**

Experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life seemed to exhibit fluidity. The results indicated that wilderness affect could be experienced in a free-flowing or changing way. That is, wilderness affect can be experienced as a process. While walking alone in the forest Chris

encountered a deer (Figure 8). The encounter unfolded as an adaptive process whereby he adjusted his actions to suit the changing conditions. As the encounter changed, what emerged from the relations between Chris and the deer also evolved. Chris's impressions skittered from curiosity to terror. This suggested that wilderness affect could be experienced fluidly in an ever-changing way.

While walking to his car, Josh noticed the way the evening light was cast in the trees (Figure 9). He was transfixed by it. The urgency that he had been feeling lifted and he felt himself moved to peaceful calm. Wilderness affect was seemingly experienced as a recognizable state of change.

### **Corporeality**

Experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life seemed to exhibit corporeality. That is, the results indicated that wilderness affect could be experienced through certain bodily sensations. Nick took himself for a drive at night to blow off some steam (Figure 10). He liked the sensations that arose while he drove on gravel roads. He turned down the volume on the stereo. He rolled down the windows. He wanted to hear the gravel. He wanted to feel the rocks smacking his fenders. His association of certain bodily sensations with wilderness ideas and feelings indicated a corporeal quality of wilderness affect.

Taylor was walking around in the yard outside her house (Figure 11). She encountered a tree that had fallen a couple years ago. Something about the way the tree kept growing after falling down got to her. It gave her a sense of presence in her body and got her out of her head. These participant experiences indicated that wilderness affect could be perceived in an embodied way.

## **Vitality**

Experiences of wilderness affect in everyday life seemed to exhibit vitality. The results indicated that wilderness affect could manifest in a lively way. That is, participants experienced wilderness affect in ways that seemed stimulating or energizing. Brandon was walking across a college campus in October (Figure 12). He encountered some leaves on the ground and stepped through them. Something about the crunch of the leaves and the whoosh of his footfall among them got to him. Though it was sporadic, it was enjoyable and kind of satisfying for him. The moment of impulsivity seemed to give him a sense of fun and spirited excitement.

Victoria regularly traveled the same route from her home to town and back. She frequently encountered a certain tree along the way (Figure 13). She characterized her relationship with the tree as friendly. She liked greeting it. She expressed an appreciation for its enduring life force and that its perseverance inspired her. Encounters with it gave her a charge.

To summarize, after reviewing the anecdotes and the thematic expressions that resulted from wholistic, selective, and detailed readings of the anecdotes the researcher arrived at five thematic qualities: relationality, ineffability, fluidity, corporeality, and vitality. Wilderness affect likely has many other qualities. These five have been offered to characterize some of the ways wilderness affect became perceptible to participants in this study. The qualities were reflected upon to inform some of the conclusions presented in Chapter VI.

In addition to the insights revealed from an investigation of wilderness affect, this study also examined non-representational theory to inform future outdoor recreation research. The first section of this chapter focused on this study's objective to explore occurrences of wilderness affect. The quite distinct next section addresses the objective to explore the potential use of non-representational theory in outdoor recreation research.

### **Non-Representational Theory and Outdoor Recreation Research**

Part of the purpose of this study was to examine non-representational theory to inform further inquiry. In order to assist other researchers in their potential adoption of non-rep research approaches, the researcher compiled and analyzed non-rep literature to present a detailed description of its structures in terms of the worldview, paradigm, and research program levels. That detailed description was presented in Chapter II. In order to explore and further the potential use of non-representational theory in outdoor recreation research, its philosophical foundations are discussed in the following sections. Each section includes advantages and disadvantages associated with the applicability of non-rep to outdoor recreation research.

#### **Worldview**

Non-representational theory assumes a posthumanist worldview. Non-rep researchers are therefore interested in new ways to approach subjectivity. They are interested in understanding and offering new ways that people can be influenced by their own feelings, tastes, or opinions. The performative position gives non-rep researchers a different orientation to ways of being and becoming. The posthumanist worldview influences the ways non-rep researchers collect and evaluate empirical material. Posthumanism emphasizes processes of becoming and relational continuums instead of individuated states and strict binaries.

Non-representational theory assumes a performative position. Non-rep researchers conduct their work with an inventive attitude that takes the indeterminacy of practice into account. It also assumes a vigilant and expressive orientation toward what is becoming rather than what is. Non-representational theory generates speculative dialogue. Non-rep researchers often advocate for greater diversity in both scholarship practices and everyday life. But rather

than merely encouraging diversity, non-rep researchers speculate about and encourage the reworking of everyday life in order to remain open to new possibilities.

What advantages might a posthuman worldview, performative position, and speculative dialog offer outdoor recreation research, planning, and management? The posthumanist worldview is adamantly process oriented. With an emphasis on becoming rather than being, posthumanism is well suited for the contemporary conditions in which outdoor recreation research, planning, and management are practiced.

Blahna et al. (2020b) traced the evolution of outdoor recreation management from the Custodial Era (1910 through 1950s) through the Active Resource Use and Management Era (1960s through 1990s) and up to the Emerging Era of People and Land Interactions (2000s to present). They characterized the current era both socially and managerially. Socially, there has been greater recognition of the integration of humans within natural systems. Also, awareness of the breadth of values and depth of connections associated with interactions between people and landscapes has grown. Managerially, greater emphasis has been placed on civic engagement, consensus forming, and shared stewardship. Outdoor recreation professionals and agencies have also recognized their responsibility to increase visitor diversity and expand the kinds of experiences and opportunities that are available. But in what ways are these conditions suitable to posthumanist inquiry?

First, posthumanist perspectives do not emphasize strict distinctions between humans and nature. Like the emerging era of outdoor recreation management, posthumanism embraces an integrated perspective and as such it could be useful to researchers who seek to understand how connections form between people and to outdoor recreation resources.

Second, posthumanist perspectives assume a flattened rather than hierarchical ontology. Such a perspective could be useful to researchers and planners interested in understanding the dynamics of consensus building and the politics of shared stewardship (Stalker, 2019). Beginning with ontologies of links rather than ranks might help researchers build greater understanding of ways to advance co-management initiatives.

Third, posthumanism can be understood as an attempt to keep humanism's core values of freedom and flourishing but drop its tendency to mark as "other" those who are not "white-European-descended-heterosexual-masculine-able-bodied Man" (Kumm et al., 2019, p. 342). It embraces and promotes the power of difference and diversity, and as such, may be a useful perspective for researchers who are working to more effectively welcome minority populations into outdoor recreation spaces.

Researchers who attempt to apply a posthumanist worldview to the field of outdoor recreation management would also face disadvantages. Posthumanist theories can offer fresh perspectives to the more general field of leisure sciences (Kumm et al., 2019). But a shift in perspective from fixity to fluidity with regard to nature/culture and human/non-human binaries could present challenges. Adopting a posthumanist worldview would require researchers to both evaluate previously held assumptions and carefully consider new ones before engaging in active inquiry. It can be time-consuming and difficult to adopt an alternative worldview.

Outdoor recreation is often understood to involve three primary elements: resources, experiences, and management. Managers determine the most desirable resource, experiential, and managerial conditions. Statements about these conditions are considered objectives. Managers use indicators of quality to specify the measurable variability of the conditions. Indicators are quantifiable proxies of objectives. Managers set standards of quality that "define

the minimal acceptable condition of indicator variables” (Manning & Anderson, 2012, p. 6). Management objectives are met to the degree that indicator variable values remain within an acceptable (standard) range.

This useful management framework relies on categorical divisions between the social, managerial, and resource dimensions of outdoor recreation. Researchers who adopt a posthumanist perspective would need to carefully consider whether such a worldview could come into useful alignment with the assumptions that seem to undergird the management by objectives framework. That is, because of different fundamental assumptions, posthumanism and the prevalent outdoor recreation management by objectives framework may be incommensurable.

## **Paradigm**

### ***Ontology***

Encounters (sometimes referred to as *events of encounter* in the non-rep literature) are the basic ontological units for non-representational theory. The term *encounter* is derived from Spinoza’s use of the Latin word *occursus*. An encounter is a meeting between bodies. That is, encounters take place when bodies meet or relate. Affects emerge from the relations between bodies. That is, the ways in which two or more bodies are relevant to each other give rise to affects. Therefore, while encounters are ontologically fundamental, bodies and affects are also constitutive. But what are some advantages of an ontology built on encounters?

In more general terms, encounter has been a useful concept for researchers interested in degrees of commonality that exists between two or more things that come into contact (Askins & Pain, 2011; Valentine, 2008). Scholarly work on the concept of encounter has qualified it as a matter of commonality and difference. A focus on encounters could be used to better understand

the relations between people and their surroundings in everyday life. That is, by focusing on encounters a researcher may examine the degree to which a person feels connected to their environment. Alternatively, researchers may also examine the disagreement between someone and whatever they encounter.

Projects like the Los Angeles Urban Rangers (Bauch & Scott, 2012) have demonstrated that a focus on encounters with nature, no matter the context (protected area or urban avenue), can “encourage people to become more engaged in the places around them, whether by way of small acts of discovery or heightened involvement” (p. 405). The rangers led guided hikes in urban areas to promote an “affect of stewardship in urban space” (p. 403). Their work, and further work with the notion of encounter, can help answer questions about the changes needed to begin perceiving everyday habitats with fresh eyes. The ontology of non-representational theory allows researchers to study how a person’s everyday life might be different if it were encountered with the awe and curiosity that visitors bring to protected areas.

The concept of encounter has also been employed in studies of the experience of enchantment. Enchantment has been described as a state of surprise in which a person enjoys the novelty and charm of what they are encountering while also feeling somewhat out of sorts. Enchantment brings about “a mood of fullness, plenitude, or liveliness, a sense of having one’s nerves or circulation, or concentration powers turned up or recharged” (Bennett, 2001, p. 5). An affective force that can change a person’s emotional state emerges from the relations between a person and what is encountered. This affect of fullness or liveliness provides “a feeling of being connected in an affirmative way to existence; it is to be under the momentary impression that the natural and the cultural worlds offer gifts and, in so doing, remind us that it is good to be alive”

(p. 156). The ontology of non-rep lends itself to studies of the lively delight, vitality, or enchantment that may emerge from relations with the outdoors.

Encounters with wild nature and the affective feelings induced can lead to greater connectedness with nature. Bartlett et al. (2008) reported a strong correlation between the affect of enchantment and the development of long-lasting patterns of sustainable behavior practices. Further work with the notion of encounter could help answer more specific questions about encounter experiences that are powerful enough to induce transformational changes.

Encounter oriented scholarship has also focused on the production of difference through encounters and the concept has been useful for moving beyond essentialized identities (Brown, 2008). Posthumanist discourses that speak of possibility, potential, and becoming provide terminology for thinking more carefully about difference and for moving away from static notions of reified identities. By orienting inquiry around the fluidity of affect and its relational emergence through encounters, researchers can focus on both the contingent aspects of identities and the attitudes and categorizations that construct and constrain such identities (Wilson, 2012). In other words, outdoor recreation researchers could use the concept of encounter to better understand the experiences of diverse recreationists with less risk of reducing or essentializing their identities. Researchers may also use the concept to help recreation managers raise their awareness of and sensitivity to underrepresented recreation populations.

There are also potential disadvantages associated with a focus on encounters. The tendency to emphasize positive encounters can be problematic. An emphasis on positive encounters overlooks negative, sad, or otherwise less desirable events in life. When perspectives are limited in this way, importance may be equated with positive experience. It would be shortsighted to assume that only pleasant encounters matter. Researchers interested in studying

encounters should have an awareness of the potential importance of both agreeable and disagreeable encounters.

When researchers are interested in encounters there is a tendency to attend primarily to the ways a person perceives and deals with whatever is encountered. However, when a person encounters another human or other sentient being there are moments when that person fails to attend to or realize how the *other* being might be feeling. A problem arises when whatever is encountered is rendered as strange or as merely an “other.” That being’s perspective is inadvertently minimized. Though the potential for asymmetric perceptions has been well documented in outdoor recreation studies (Manning, 2010), researchers interested in studying encounters need to maintain an awareness of the challenge of attending to the multiple dimensions of any encounter.

### ***Epistemology***

Typically, non-rep research is epistemologically associated with relational forms of knowing. This means that researchers attend to the relations between humans, the relations between humans and non-humans, and to the relations between and among assemblages of humans and non-humans. The forms of knowledge generated by non-rep research are based on relational understandings. These are understandings that come from taking sympathetic or empathetic positions and making efforts to imagine or try to feel what another person feels. The key takeaway here is that non-rep deals with forms of knowledge that are not primarily cognitive or intellectual. Rather, non-rep has been associated with knowledge that primarily involves the body and emotions.

Non-rep research offers understandings that have to do with “the immediate or unmediated and preconceptual relation we have with the things of our world” (Van Manen, 2014,

p. 270). The advantage is that epistemologically, non-rep research offers an opportunity to document and interpret different modalities of knowing. Researchers can document occurrences of actional, situational, and corporeal knowledge. Actional knowledge is gained by understanding how people act and what they do habitually in their routines. Situational knowledge is gained by understanding how people know the world through things situated around them. Corporeal knowledge is gained through one's bodily sense of things and from the ways the body expresses awareness through gestures and demeanors.

Non-rep research is also at a disadvantage when it comes to articulating relational understandings. It is challenging if not impossible to express what an experience is like in a way that purely reproduces what was immediately felt. Relational forms of knowledge are not easily translated linguistically and they are challenging to conceptualize and represent. Therefore non-representational research is at a disadvantage in this respect because it involves the contextual contingency and immediacy of human experience and these are challenging to convey.

### *Axiology*

Characteristically, non-rep research is axiologically committed to generating opportunities for innovative thought-in-action. In other words, the terminal goal of non-rep is the boosting of ontological awareness. Non-rep researchers try to produce opportunities to raise awareness in scholarly communities, communities of professional practice, or social communities. Such opportunities are attempts toward generating greater receptivity to the disclosure of new practices or new ways of being-in-the-world. Non-rep research can help reveal the connection between everyday habits and joyful encounters. A more modest effort might simply encourage innovation or promote greater receptivity to fresh thinking. Ultimately, the goal is to establish conditions that enable people to approach life with more intention.

Instrumentally, non-rep researchers seek to exemplify the essence of their findings in ways that bring truths so near that they can be cognitively known while being noncognitively felt (Van Manen, 1997). That is, researchers seek to accentuate the salient aspects of their findings in ways that resonate with audiences to inspire them to apply the insights to their own lives.

The axiological orientation of non-representational research aligns well with the goals of a subdiscipline in outdoor recreation management, interpretation. Freeman Tilden (1977) recognized provocation as the chief aim of interpretation. That is, the goal of interpretation is to stimulate people in ways that broaden their horizons of interest and knowledge. The goal is to provoke new understandings of the world in people and thereby disclose their freedom to live differently. Definitively put, the purpose of interpretation is to entice a person “toward broadening his or her horizons and then acting on that newfound breadth” (Beck & Cable, 2002, p. 39).

Similarly, the stated goal of non-representational theory is to produce situations where the background assumptions are broadened to enable a more active sense of innovative freedom. It is an approach to social inquiry that includes a modest effort to encourage people toward becoming more active in shaping social life. Non-rep researchers seek to expand the possibilities for thinking, understanding, and acting in life. Indeed, in both interpretation and non-representational theory the goal is to boost ontological awareness and expand the range of human interests, activities, and knowledge.

Furthermore, interpreters of outdoor recreation resources can take advantage of the axiological orientation of non-rep with regard to both theory and practice. Regarding theory, some outdoor recreation researchers have called for shifting the managerial focus more towards the connections between the outdoors and a person’s way of life (Blahna et al., 2020a). The call

stems from an understanding that people don't likely think about their outdoor recreation practices as discrete events. Rather, people may be more likely to think about outdoor recreation as a part of the way they live their lives. Outdoor recreation is connected to a person's lifestyle. When recreation is viewed as a pathway for human connection, the path stretches "into the realms of cultural values, lifeways, and livelihoods" (Blahna et al., 2020a, p. 66).

Along with their identification of a paradigmatic shift emerging in outdoor recreation research (Blahna et al., 2020b), researchers have recently looked to relational values to develop a more robust understanding of the role of outdoor recreation in people's lives (Blahna et al., 2020a). Relational values offer an alternative way to consider the importance that outdoor recreation has for people. In addition to intrinsic and instrumental values, relational values are another way that value is expressed and realized (Chan et al., 2016). The idea is that in order to fully comprehend the value of outdoor recreation in a person's life, it is important to understand that person's views on how recreation and nature are connected to a life well lived. In other words, relational values account for how a person's relationship with something is conducive to a good life.

Interpreters can apply this theoretical orientation to their practice. Aspects of an interpreter's quality of life can inspire visitors to a protected area. The relational value that results from an interpreter's relationship with the outdoors can be expressed. In the delivery of their interpretive programs, visitors will likely notice an interpreter's depth of knowledge or their sense of wonder, serenity, and fulfillment (Beck & Cable, 2002). Such expressions of relational value may spur visitors to ask themselves how they might realize these qualities in life. When interpreters are perceived to be living the good life (flourishing) they are able to arouse an interest in people to form their own connections with nature and the outdoors.

By returning to axiology, the link between interpretation, relational value, and non-representational theory can now be made. Non-rep is axiologically oriented toward enabling a wider range of possibilities in life. That goal would include an expansion of the possibilities for human flourishing. Relational values are philosophically rooted in the Greek concept of *eudaemonia*, the meaningful pursuit of the fulfillment of one's own potential (van den Born et al., 2017). A relationship with nature and the outdoors is surely helpful to many people in their pursuit of fulfillment. Likewise, the goal of interpretation is to open people up to their being in the midst of greater potential. Non-representational theory and interpretation are both axiologically aimed at enabling people to enliven their existence in one way or another. Because of this, non-rep research could be used to understand how natural heritage interpretive programs and materials can be crafted in ways that resonate with people's relational values. The axiology of non-rep lends itself to research that seeks to examine the affective impacts of efforts to interpret and promote human-nature connections.

The downside to the axiology of non-representational theory is that it can be frustratingly challenging to operationalize a study of the ways that nature and the outdoors, or in the case of this investigation, wilderness ideas and feelings, open people up to their being in the midst of greater potential. However, as the next section will detail, it is possible to build an outdoor recreation research program informed by non-representational theory.

### **Research Program**

The research program layers in Chapter II's macrostructure are based on the work of Brinberg and McGrath (1985). Using that same basic approach, this section discusses the conceptual, substantive, and methodological domains relevant to non-rep research. Like the

previous sections, the focus here is on the advantages and disadvantages of applying non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research.

### ***Conceptual Domain***

Affect is a primary conceptual element for non-representational theory. The concept of affect is interrelated with the paradigmatic assumptions of non-rep. Non-rep is ontologically founded on the assumption that encounters between bodies in relation yield affects. In a general sense, affect names a process of relation between bodies. For people, that process can be active or passive. Passive affection is a person's impression of relevance. It is a feeling of relevance that forms without conscious thought. Active affection is a person's expression of relevance. It is the feeling of relevance made known. That is, passive affection comes from a sensed but un conveyed connection and active affection comes from the acknowledgement of a connection. If the shift toward understanding outdoor recreation as connection continues (Blahna et al, 2020a), then affect will be a useful concept for researchers because of the integral role that connections play in affective processes.

As a concept, affect has certain advantages. It offers a new approach to understanding a broader range of connections between people and their outdoor recreation practices and places. With its distinct focus on connection, affect-oriented research is uniquely suited to address the contemporary challenges of enhancing recreational experiences and expanding the relevance of public lands to a more diverse visitor base (Collins & Brown, 2007). As a process of relation, affect offers a conceptual framework for better understanding the relevance of recreation practices and places along with the degree to which that relevance is appreciated.

A primary disadvantage of working with the concept of affect stems from its multiple interpretations. The originator of non-representational theory, Nigel Thrift, stated, "there is no

stable definition of affect” (2008, p. 175). Furthermore, Thrift suggested that the different ways of interpreting affect imply different ontologies that lead to different understandings of affect. Misunderstandings are likely to occur if researchers do not clearly articulate the paradigmatic assumptions on which they found their affect-oriented inquiry.

### ***Substantive Domain***

McCool et al. (2020) clarified a substantial challenge for the field of outdoor recreation research. There is a need “to identify new knowledge helpful to management and disseminate that knowledge in ways that effectively change how we enhance connections between us and our natural heritage” (p. 158). This challenge can serve as the substantive domain of a research program founded on non-representational theory. Non-rep research presents a pathway for gathering and sharing new kinds of knowledge about the ways people connect with their natural heritage. Such knowledge can help researchers better understand the relevance of public lands. It may help them examine new ways to promote connections with nature. Non-representational theory deserves consideration as a paradigm that can provide useful knowledge about expanding public lands relevance and enhancing public lands connections.

Using concepts from the model for affect that was presented in Chapter II, outdoor recreation researchers can focus on the substantive topics of relevance and connection. If affect is understood as a process of relation, then researchers can investigate the parts of that process. Recall that the conceptual framework for affect involves affections and common notions. Researchers can learn more about the ways that people relate to public lands by studying common notions. Researchers can also study people’s active affections for public lands to better understand their relevance.

If, for example, a researcher is interested in the relevance of a national forest to a certain subset of constituents, then that researcher could investigate their common notions by asking what it is about the national forest that those constituents relate to or find most relatable. Researchers could study active affections by investigating the ways these people maintain their feelings of connection with the forest.

Non-representational theory offers a new way to think through, conduct, and present research about the relevance of public lands and human connections with them. However, there are challenges facing researchers interested in applying non-rep to the issues of public lands connection and relevance. The first challenge stems from people's personal resistance to changing their assumptions and practices. Practitioners and scientists can be deeply invested in their paradigms and may be uncomfortable with new ideas and practices. Another challenge is the difficulty associated with introducing a new paradigmatic approach while the assumptions and understandings associated with that new approach are still emerging and forming. Finally, using non-rep research to address issues of connection with nature, the outdoors, and wildlife will be challenging because of the nested nature of paradigms. The ontological, epistemological, and axiological assumptions of non-representational theory are linked to worldview perspectives, positions, and dialog that will likely be unfamiliar to most practitioners and researchers. Finding the middle ground of shared paradigmatic assumptions and common worldview perspectives will be an important next step.

### ***Methodological Domain***

Using inventive methods, non-rep researchers seek to produce forms of knowledge that can be challenging to present. As such, non-rep methods relish diverse ways of knowing. Non-rep researchers move through the basic phases of thinking about, sensing, and presenting data

(Dewsbury, 2010). But in striving for more actional, situational, relational, and corporeal knowing (Van Manen, 2014), non-rep methods work to enliven, render, resonate, and rupture to foster further potential more so than to situate fixed ways of thinking (Thrift & Dewsbury, 2000; Vannini, 2015b). Crucial to the research logic of non-rep is a future-oriented perspective that emphatically looks forward to the possibilities of further inquiry and engagement. That is, non-rep methods are shaped by a concern for what the knowledge generated may become. There is a methodological interest in offering insights in ways that reverberate with readers, listeners, or viewers. Non-rep methods are unique in that they are informed by an interest to produce knowledge to inspire intellectual fascination or, more modestly, to help others to generate their own future stories (Vannini, 2015b). There is less emphasis put on what was concluded than on what becomes disclosed next.

What is fundamentally unique about non-rep research is its orientation to data. Non-rep researchers are concerned with offering data in ways that evoke future impressions in those to whom the data are presented. Therefore the methodological purpose of an affect-oriented non-rep research program that studies the relevance of the outdoors would be first, to gather data about people's affections during events of encounter with natural objects, and second, to present the data in ways that have an ongoing effect on the people to whom the research is presented. In other words, the goal would be to disseminate knowledge about connections with the outdoors in ways that inspire others to think more actively about their own encounters with nature.

Other researchers have characterized the use of this approach as an opportunity to "intervene in social life by offering certain forms of controlled sensual stimulation staging particular epistemic and aesthetic events in order for the researcher to see affective liveliness unfold and open up what exceeds current understandings" (Knudsen & Stage, 2015b, p. 10). In

other words, a non-rep research program could involve intentional human–nature relationship building through agency outreach initiatives. Researchers would conduct their studies of relevance in phases. The first phase would result in some form of media created by participants that evokes the connections between the participants and the outdoors. The second phase would entail the dissemination of the participant-generated media through agency social media channels. The posts could prompt the social media audience to go enjoy the outdoors and then share their own stories in the comment section of the agency’s post. A study such as this would provide a researcher with results that could reveal the kinds of affective liveliness that non-rep research seeks to spur. Given the open-ended orientation of non-rep, researchers would take what they learn from such an experiment and use it to continue calibrating and retooling their future investigations and initiatives.

With regard to wilderness in particular, findings from the U.S. Wilderness Managers Survey identified the need for additional research into the matter of wilderness relevance (Dawson et al., 2016). Given a general concern for the current relevance of wilderness in the United States (Smith & Kirby, 2015), innovative programs are needed to document and analyze the various ways people connect with wild lands (McCool & Freimund, 2016).

There is, however, a potential downside to the development of a research program that uses non-rep approaches to gain a better understanding of recreation resource relevance. These approaches risk the reification of established discourses. Well-intentioned researchers may “un-reflexively enroll social actors in the new environments without creating contestation, discussion, or adjustment” (Knudsen & Stage, 2015b, pp. 14–15; citing Marres, 2012, p. 80). That is, without a dedicated reflexive awareness and practice, researchers run the risk of misidentifying, misrepresenting, or even foreclosing the possibilities for potent expressions of

unique human–nature relations. Because of the non-rep interest in multiplicative effects and reverberation, researchers must remain critically conscious of the importance of keeping an open mind about the variety of connections that are possible between humans and nature. This risk would be unintentional reinforcement of majority perspectives without consideration of alternatives.

### **Critical Considerations**

There are three main areas of this study that deserve further consideration. The following sections consider the issues related to (a) a post implementation assessment of the study, (b) discursive expression, and (c) the relationship between wilderness and nature. The chapter then closes with a summary.

#### **Post Implementation Assessment**

A post implementation assessment of this study revealed four difficulties: (a) the wilderness conundrum, (b) the imprecision of non-representational theory, (c) data processing and interpretation, and (d) ecological validity. Each of these four difficulties is discussed in the following sections.

#### ***The Wilderness Conundrum***

The concept of wilderness presents confusing and difficult challenges. On the one hand, you have the idea of wilderness, and on the other, you have designated wilderness areas that are stewarded by federal agencies in the United States. There has been so much discussion about wilderness that, for example, two volumes containing 79 essays were compiled and published in collections edited by J. Baird Callicott and Michael P. Nelson (1998; 2008). The debates over wilderness continue as scholars interpret the concept (Vannini & Vannini, 2016; Kowarik, 2018) and critique the arguments against it (Duclos, 2020).

In the United States, the National Wilderness Preservation System is the legal embodiment of wilderness. Four federal agencies: the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service, steward the system's units. According to the guiding framework for federal wilderness stewardship agencies (Landres et al., 2015), what distinguishes wilderness from all other lands is the interaction of environments, experiences, and meanings. The Keeping It Wild framework defines five qualities (natural, untrammeled, undeveloped, solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation, and other features of value) that combine to make up wilderness character and make wilderness unique. Wilderness character is "a concept that can be at times abstract and contentious, but critical to the essence of wilderness" (Dvorak, 2015). While wilderness character is not defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act, the five qualities combined distinguish wilderness from other lands.

Recognizing the contested notion of wilderness and realizing the variety of conceptions, the researcher supplied participants with a controlled version of the wilderness idea. Stegner's "Wilderness Letter," which was first published by the Wildland Research Center (1962), offers an understanding of the wilderness idea that speaks to the spiritual value of wilderness as a resource that has influenced the culture and people of the United States.

Early on in the study, the researcher noted a passage from the Wildland Research Center's 1962 report. It was a passage that expressed the notion that wilderness can influence people's perceptions of everyday life. The researcher then endeavored to study wilderness affect to understand better how wilderness influences people's ordinary perspectives. In this way, the researcher positioned wilderness affect as a dependent variable (noting that such causal logic of dependence was not part of the study's design).

However, participants' exposure to Stegner's interpretation of wilderness created a condition where "The Wilderness Letter" could have been a confounding variable of sorts. The researcher explored wilderness affect as a function of what emerged from the relations between participants and what they encountered during everyday life while wilderness ideas and feelings formed. It is possible that the "Wilderness Letter" influenced both the researcher's concept of wilderness affect and the participants' wilderness ideas and feelings.

A variable is confounding if it is closely related to a study's independent and dependent variables. While this study did not use this type of language or strategic approach, it is still possible to identify potential independent and dependent variables. If that sort of research strategy were used, then wilderness affect would have been the dependent variable and what emerged from the relations between participants and what they encountered during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings would have been the independent variable. It is possible that Stegner's letter had an influence on both variables and was thus a confounding variable. Therefore, the results may not reflect the actual relationship between people's perspectives in everyday life and wilderness experiences.

Admittedly, given the fluid nature of the concept, it was somewhat problematic for the researcher to expect people to isolate distinct influences of wilderness in the form of wilderness ideas and feelings in their everyday lives. The researcher partially confounded the situation by exposing participants to both designated wilderness and Stegner's interpretation of the wilderness idea. The researcher recommends that future researchers of wilderness affect should take into consideration whether they are investigating affective experiences of wilderness areas, the affective dimension of a person's relationship with a particular wilderness area, or the affective dimension of a person's perception of the wilderness idea. Because many wilderness

visitors can be confused about legal definitions of wilderness, researchers are also advised to specify for participants whether they are investigating people's relationships with specific, legally defined wilderness areas or people's relationships with the wilderness idea. In the future, researchers should also consider how researcher-supplied materials like "The Wilderness Letter" might introduce biases.

### *The Imprecision of Non-representational Theory*

Post implementation assessment also revealed difficulties related to the imprecision of non-representational theory. Imprecision here refers to a lack of exactness in the broader focus of non-rep. The issues were related to social science theory in general, and the relationship between philosophy and social science. The difficulty related to theory had implications on the philosophical assumptions that informed the study.

Merton (1967) differentiated between grand theory and middle-range theory, with the latter referring to explanations for social phenomena that are limited to specific domains. Relative to the macrostructural framework presented in Chapter II, middle-range theories operate in the substantive domain of the research program layer. In contrast, grand theory offers broader perspectives on more abstract phenomena associated with the paradigmatic and worldview layers. Thrift's (1996) early expressions of non-rep sought a particularity of focus by especially emphasizing the role of practice in everyday life. Though his later work in non-rep adopted a wider focus that included a greater emphasis on affect. Indeed, the potential macrostructure suggested by this study offered bodies, practices, and encounter events as the substantive focus for non-rep. In hindsight, each of these areas is deserving of the greater specificity offered by middle-range theory. As has been noted, it remains an open question "(w)hether Thrift has successfully clipped the wings of Grand Theory" (Gregory, 2009, p. 315).

Non-rep is akin to grand theory in that it focuses on broad, abstract concepts like agency, affect, embodiment, subjectification, and processes of becoming (Simpson, 2021). Because of their limited scope, middle-range theories can bring together and explain empirical phenomena more precisely. As an approach to theory construction, middle-range theory avoids the search for some overarching variable that operates in all social processes. Proponents of middle-range theory assert that it is too challenging to attempt to determine any essential concepts that would sufficiently serve to analyze all social phenomena (Boudon, 1991).

Indeed, much of the research labeled non-rep “mixes conceptual vocabularies, complex social theories, and references to seemingly esoteric continental philosophy” (Simpson, 2021, p. 6). The abstract orientation of non-rep makes it challenging to apply to practical situations because the kinds of knowledge it produces may be incommensurable with policy guidance expectations of recreation resource managers. That is, its grand theoretical approach and the particular emphasis on open-endedness makes non-rep ill-suited for knowledge production that can be applied to managerial situations.

There are important reasons to consider the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory. If the paradigmatic assumptions are misunderstood, there is a chance that the researcher’s assumptions will not match well with the chosen methods and design. This makes it much less likely that researchers can generate valuable knowledge about reality. In turn, this can limit the likelihood that findings would be used in practical applications.

A significant challenge to note related to non-rep and knowledge production has to do with this research project’s goal. The goal was, in part, to offer insights about affect in relation to wilderness in everyday life. This was based on the assumption that wilderness would be affectively discernable to participants. Based on non-rep’s emphasis on the concept of affect, the

researcher assumed that it would be relatively easy to gain insights on the experience of wilderness affect. Future researchers might consider an approach to affect within the middle-range of affect theory rather than the grand range of non-representational theory. Both affect theory and non-rep seem promising for the field of outdoor recreation research. But by focusing more on the middle-range of affect theory specifically, researchers can set aside the diverse philosophical influences on non-rep and explore the concept of affect with greater scientific precision.

### ***Data Processing and Interpretation***

The third difficulty that post implementation assessment revealed involved challenges associated with data processing and interpretation. To process the data, the researcher extracted extended excerpts and constructed anecdotes from them. The anecdotes were presented as captions to photographs related to specific participant events of encounter. The researcher subjected the anecdotes to a thematization process. That described what the researcher did with the data. But why did the researcher use those methods?

Why was it necessary to move beyond the extended excerpts into the construction of anecdotes? As an exploration of non-rep, the researcher attempted to assume non-rep's performative position. As such, the exemplary anecdotes, presented along with the photographs, were an attempt to document the felt experience of wilderness affect and transmit the feelings to an audience. The assumption was that the affective content of the data could more effectively "glow" in the photo-anecdote presentations.

Why was the interpretation limited to the thematization of the anecdotes? If the researcher adapted the thematization method from Van Manen's *Phenomenology of Practice* (2014), then why not take another step and present further interpretation of the data in the form

of phenomenological writing? The purpose of such writing would have been “to infect the reader with a sudden realization of the unsuspected enigmatic nature of ordinary reality” (Van Manen, 2014, p. 360). The reason this was not done was that it was not an objective of the study. The study’s relevant objective was to offer insights that help develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect by exploring its occurrence in wilderness visitors’ everyday lives. The researcher determined that the photo-anecdotes adequately conveyed the felt experience of wilderness affect. Therefore, inductively, the researcher chose to offer interpretive insights rather than further (abductive) interpretation through phenomenological writing.

### ***Ecological Validity***

The fourth difficulty that emerged from a post implementation assessment involves ecological validity. Qualitative research often relies on naturalism. Researchers seek data from naturally occurring situations and environments. The strength of this study’s ecological validity came into question because of the way participants were led to their wilderness visits. Furthermore, the directions instructed them: “Each day, when wilderness ideas or feelings form, take photographs...” The instructions somewhat compelled participants to form wilderness ideas and feelings. The implication is that wilderness affect experiences may not be as everyday or as perceptible as was the case for this study’s participants because the researcher cannot be sure that the encounter events were natural occurrences, or if the participant instructions spurred them.

People have many reasons for visiting wilderness and the experience or outcomes they expect vary widely. The participants visited in part because they were part of the study. But for many of them, there was likely some draw other than an interest in a research project. The participants brought their own preconceptions, ideas, and feelings about wilderness. The post

implementation assessment, like the study itself, did not reveal whatever preconceptions the participants had about wilderness.

The study employed an event-based approach to the photo-diary, photo-interview method. It was likely that to some degree, the project spurred the participants to relate to wilderness more so than they naturally would have done so. That is, the encounter events that the study sought to document and explore may or may not have happened without the implementation of the study. But the participants' interest in the study, and the data they generated, showed that wilderness was relatable to them.

### **Discursive Expression**

The second main area of this study that deserved further consideration is related to discourse. It is critical to re-assert that non-representational theory cannot avoid representation. Even the photographic data, which attempted to convey non-linguistic information, is representational. The photographs were part of the researcher's attempt to translate more-than-representational content and provide a felt awareness or feeling-sensation of the events of encounter.

This consideration led the researcher to the realization that there seems to be no way around discursive expression. This does not discount the existence of a pre-linguistic realm. But translations of the content that flows from such a realm will inevitably come through discursive expression. For this reason, despite the more common use of the "non-representational" qualifies, the researcher agrees with Lorimer (2005) that the more apt descriptor is "more-than-representational" theory.

Wetherall, a proponent of affect-oriented inquiry, criticized the early claims that non-representational theory enables access to "unmediated, pre-social body tracks, and for direct

connections between the social and somatic” (2012, p. 20). Some affective content may be simply inaccessible, and other affective phenomena may be ineffable. Affect itself is not the preconscious or unconscious realm. But it seems to *index* such a realm. Wetherall promotes a focus on affective practice more so than events or encounters. A focus on affective practice makes it easier for researchers to hone in on specific patterns and processes. A focus on practice allows researchers to emphasize affect’s performative and generative dimensions. Inquiry into affective phenomena is generative because the presentation of affective evidence can spur further thought and discursive expression. Non-rep researchers cannot draw a thick dividing line between bodies and talk and text.

### **The Relationship Between Wilderness and Nature**

The third main area of this study that deserved further consideration involves the relationship between wilderness and nature. The difficulties in this area of the study were associated with participant experiences and thematic insights.

#### ***Participant Experiences***

There are two related researcher reflections associated with participant experiences. The participants went into the Moosehorn Wilderness Area and walked on a trail for about one hour. The first concern is that this limited exposure to wilderness may not have been enough to support an assumption that the visit provided a “wilderness experience” that was fundamentally different from a nature walk. The concern is that the participants did not gain enough exposure to a wilderness area to prepare them for the subsequent research tasks.

The second concern, which is related to the first, is that if the day hike did not provide participants with an experience that was distinctively wilderness-oriented, to what degree can the researcher be confident in the participants’ ability to discern any difference between the

formation of wilderness ideas feelings as opposed to nature ideas and feelings? The participants' everyday encounters with natural phenomena may have had little connection with wilderness or their experiences in the Moosehorn Wilderness Area. In other words, the second concern is that because of their lack of exposure to wilderness, the data that participants contributed may not be strictly wilderness-related. Again, the recommendation is for future researchers to take the degree to which participants have familiarity with wilderness into consideration in their studies of wilderness and affect.

### ***Thematic Insights***

The second difficulty related to the relationship between wilderness and nature in this study is associated with the study's thematic insights. The qualities of relationality, ineffability, fluidity, corporeality, and vitality are not distinctively wilderness affect themes. They could also apply to other conceptual interpretations of affect. The researcher assumed that the participants' feelings or ideas were wilderness feelings or ideas. It is recommended that future studies of wilderness affect further consider ways of documenting the influence of wilderness in everyday life.

### **Summary**

This study's objectives were to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect and characterize the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory to gain preliminary insights and inform future research. This chapter presented the findings from an investigation of wilderness affect and a discussion of non-representational theory's macrostructure concerning its applicability to outdoor recreation research. Five thematic qualities of wilderness affect were suggested. The macrostructural levels and layers of non-rep were related to the contemporary

practice of outdoor recreation research. The researcher identified and discussed three key areas of critical consideration.

The relationality of wilderness affect was evidenced in the connections expressed by participants between themselves and the natural objects they encountered. The ineffability of wilderness affect was evidenced in experiences of sudden insight. The fluidity of wilderness affect was evidenced in the unfolding and changing character of participant experiences. The corporeality of wilderness affect was evidenced in the embodied character of participant experiences. The vitality of wilderness affect was evidenced in the spirited enjoyment experienced by participants.

The applicability of non-representational theory to outdoor recreation research was discussed at the worldview, paradigm, and research program levels. Because non-rep recognizes the co-constitutive influence of non-human actors, its posthumanist worldview could be advantageous to researchers, planners, and managers interested in understanding how people from all walks of life become connected to outdoor recreation resources and how they may become engaged in shared stewardship efforts.

There are ontological, epistemological, and axiological considerations related to the application of non-rep to outdoor recreation research. Encounters, the fundamental ontological unit in non-rep, is a concept that could be fruitful. It could be used to understand the enchanting dimension of outdoor experiences better. It could also be useful for investigations of different forms of wilderness relationships.

Non-rep research deals with diverse ways of knowing. Recent calls for a focus on more varied forms of connection with public lands demonstrate a need for further research into the actional, situational, and corporeal knowledge people hold about outdoor recreation. Non-

representational theory is epistemologically suited for research that aims to understand recreation as connection.

Axiologically, non-rep is applicable to studies of natural heritage interpretation, a subdiscipline of outdoor recreation management. Non-representational theory and the practice of interpretation seek to broaden people's horizons and enhance their conceptions of what is possible.

The possibilities for an outdoor recreation research program informed by non-rep were considered with regard to the conceptual, substantive, and methodological domains of empirical inquiry. This study offers a conceptual framework for affect by which it is understood as a process of relation that involves affections and common notions. Affections are feelings of connection. They are felt experiences of relevance. A common notion is a person's distinct idea of how something is relevant. Common notions connect the relevance of something to someone. For outdoor recreation research, these concepts, and the conceptual framework for affect, offer an approach to understanding what connections people have, how connections are made, and how it feels to experience a connection. The real-world context of an outdoor recreation research program would be situations where managers, planners, or decision-makers would benefit from having or sharing knowledge about how people form and keep connections with the natural heritage of a particular area. Non-rep is methodologically diverse but distinctively future-oriented. Researchers who use concepts like encounters, common notions, and affections to study relevance and connection would seek to bring knowledge to light in ways that would evoke ongoing thoughts amongst those with whom the knowledge is shared. They would attempt to share diverse forms of knowledge in ways that would resonate with those the knowledge reaches.

Finally, three key areas of critical consideration were identified and discussed. A post implementation assessment revealed concerns surrounding the wilderness conundrum, the imprecision of non-representational theory and its impacts on knowledge production and effective practical applications, challenges associated with data processing and interpretation, and questions about ecological validity. Discursive expression was the concern of the second area of consideration. The researcher recognized the inescapability of discourse and affirmed more-than-representational theory as a better-suited way of referring to non-rep. The relationship between wilderness and nature was the focus of the final area for critical consideration. The researcher recommended that future investigations of wilderness and affect take into account the participants' degree of familiarity with wilderness. Conclusions and further recommendations are given in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine non-representational theory (non-rep) and explore the concept of affect to gain preliminary insights and inform future research. This chapter presents conclusions, recommendations, and a review of the study's significance. The conclusions follow from the research questions, results, and interpretations and therefore address two primary areas: (a) non-representational theory and outdoor recreation research, and (b) wilderness affect. Recommendations that follow from the conclusions are suggested for outdoor recreation researchers, stewards, and enthusiasts. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of this study's significance to the field of outdoor recreation research.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions have been reached:

1. Non-representational theory can help outdoor recreation researchers learn about human–nature connections.
2. Wilderness affect emerges in the ways that wilderness relates to a person's life.
3. Wilderness affect emerges in ways that exceed its representation.
4. Wilderness affect emerges through changing relations.
5. Wilderness affect's emergence becomes perceptible through bodily capabilities.
6. Wilderness affect emerges through the ongoing process of life.

### Non-Representational Theory and Outdoor Recreation Research

The first conclusion addresses one objective of this study, which was to characterize the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory as a means of exploring the development of outdoor recreation research informed by non-rep. A characterization of the

worldview, paradigm, and research program levels of non-rep revealed several potential advantages and disadvantages for its use in outdoor recreation research. At the worldview level non-rep adopts a posthumanist approach that could be useful to researchers seeking to better understand connections between humans and nature. In part, this is because posthumanism does not rank humans above the environment but instead links them to it. At the paradigmatic level non-rep assumes an ontology of encounters, an epistemology of relational knowledge, and an axiology of enhanced ontological awareness. Correspondingly, researchers can use non-rep to examine people's environmental encounters, their relations with their environments, and how nature-based experiences can broaden their horizons. Non-rep methods and strategies are shaped by less concern for identical representations and more concern for how people relate to what researchers reveal and the differences made by those relations in the future. As such, non-rep seems to be conceptually, substantively, and methodologically suited for studies that seek to both share different ways of thinking about outdoor recreation and build more relations with outdoor recreation resources.

The first conclusion is based on the results of an examination of non-representational theory. The conclusion suggests that non-rep has qualities that make it useful for researching the relevance of outdoor recreation in terms of the ways people relate to and connect with nature. A recent national initiative to understand and strengthen the connections between Americans and nature found that meaningful integration of nature into life “requires that experience of nature become a repeated and recurrent part of lives” (Kellert et al., 2017, p. 292). This requires the desire to begin “making contact with nature habitual—a more routine part of daily and weekly life” (p. 292). As this study showed, non-representational theory assumes a practice-oriented perspective on human experience. Non-rep research methods can be adopted for “the

modification of habits and habitats according to a strict procedure: they are a way of implementing changes in everyday routines and living spaces” (Marres, 2012, p. 78). Non-rep research can be used to generate greater awareness of the links between people’s routines and the potential to connect with nature. The researcher concluded that non-representational theory can help outdoor recreation researchers learn about human–nature connections.

### **Wilderness Affect**

The other five conclusions address the second objective of this study, which was to develop a greater understanding of affect through an exploration of its occurrence in the everyday lives of wilderness visitors. In broad terms, the thematic qualities of relationality, ineffability, fluidity, corporeality, and vitality are suggested as experiential structures that provide insight into how wilderness affect’s emergence becomes perceptible. In the following sections the remaining conclusions are positioned and discussed in terms of related bodies of literature and previous research.

### ***Relationality***

Wilderness affect is defined for this study as what emerges from the relations between participants and things during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. Generally speaking, this means that affect emerges as part of the process by which people’s impressions become perceptible. This conception concurs with Thrift’s assessment that non-rep approaches to affect understand it as a form of thinking that is often indirect and nonreflective. As such, wilderness affect is understood as what emerged from the ways participants related to things during encounters when ideas and feelings about wilderness were forming.

This study’s results suggest that part of what emerged during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings was expressed as kinship and a longing for reunion. They also suggest that

what emerged from the relations between a person and one thing could influence the relations between that person and other things. Other results suggest that a person felt that their sense of what emerged was different than the way others would feel.

As such, this study's results suggest that wilderness affect emerges as (a) a connection with the outdoors, (b) the differences that it makes on other relations, and (c) a discernable contrast between the difference that it makes to one person and the difference it can make to others. This indicates that affect emerges through the relevance of something to people, their relations, and others. Therefore, the researcher concluded that wilderness affect emerges in the ways that wilderness relates to a person's life.

Outdoor recreation researchers have studied the symbolic relevance of wilderness (Cole, 2005; Schroeder, 2007). Formal stewardship policy documents have also addressed this topic. The interagency strategy to monitor wilderness character trends in the National Wilderness Preservation System defined wilderness character *in part* as "symbolic meanings of humility, restraint, and interdependence that inspire human connection with nature" (Landres et al., 2015, p. 7). Elsewhere leaders of the wilderness movement in the United States also mentioned such symbolic meanings. Howard Zahniser, the principle author of the Wilderness Act of 1964, argued that apart from the shared values, purpose, and vision for protecting American wilderness, its crucial contribution is that it allows people to know responsibility and indebtedness (Harvey, 2014). There is a sense in which the symbolic meanings of humility, restraint, and interdependence could serve as a starting point for further inquiry into the common notions of wilderness. That is, given the conclusion that wilderness affect emerges through the relevance of wilderness to a person's life, further inquiry into the relevance of humility, restraint,

and interdependence could offer insights useful to those interested in enhancing the relevance of wilderness (McCool & Freimund, 2016).

### *Ineffability*

Affect has been referred to in this study, in part, as a difference that is made to a person during the formation of active affection (McCormack, 2014). That is, affection emerges from the relations between people and things and the emergence of affection can make a difference to a person. Active affection emerges as a person's fondness for the way in which something becomes relevant or relatable. For some participants, the difference made during the emergence of affection seemed to exceed its representation.

Participants expressed fondness for some of the ways that what they encountered became relevant to them. That is, the results suggest that affection for the way things became relatable emerged during the formation of wilderness ideas and feelings. For one participant, the woods became relatable as something enjoyable. She expressed fondness for the way it dawned on her that her family was capable of enjoying them. Another participant expressed fondness for the way that fog became relatable in an all-of-a-sudden way. She expressed fondness for the way her feelings changed suddenly from out of nowhere.

As such, the results suggest that wilderness affect can emerge as a fondness for (a) awareness of the potential to the woods and (b) a sense of shock. This suggests that some participants were fond of the changes they underwent during the emergence of wilderness affect. In both examples it seems that what the participants were fond of went beyond their representations of it. Victoria expressed affection for the way in which she was able to see her family in a new light because of what it meant they could do in the future. Jessica expressed affection for the shock that left her at a loss to know from where the fog came. What emerged,

and their relations to it, seemed to exceed their perceptions. That is, participants seemed to undergo perceptual changes that exceeded their representations of them. This suggests that, in part, affect is understood in terms of ineffability, the quality that concerns what is beyond representation. Therefore, the researcher concluded that wilderness affect emerges in ways that exceed its representation.

This study's results suggest that relations between people and what they encounter outdoors have the potential to make a difference that goes beyond people's representations of that difference. The results suggest that people related to what they encountered in ways that exceeded their descriptions. The notion that outdoor encounters can bring about perceptual changes that overflow a person's ability to represent the changes suggests that researchers interested in the transformative potential of outdoor recreation could find affect-oriented approaches to be useful.

### ***Fluidity***

One of the ways affect was defined in this study was as a condition or process of change that emerges from the relations between people and things. For one participant, what emerged from a deer encounter unfolded through curiosity, concern, and terror. For another participant, what emerged from the relations with twilight was a sense of timelessness through which he imagined himself in a primeval forest that brought about a sense of peace.

As such, this study's results suggest that wilderness affect emerged in (a) unsettled and (b) changing ways. This implies that affect is understood in terms of fluidity, the quality or state of flowing conditions. Therefore, the researcher concluded that wilderness affect emerges through changing relations.

Leisure scholars have recently begun adopting posthumanist worldviews that emphasize becoming more so than being. Stalker (2019) offered an exploration of the concept of becoming as it applies to leisure: “Becoming can be thought of as a change of relations to others and/or material objects that is generative of new ways of life” (p. 348). Researchers interested in expanding the relevance of outdoor recreation resources can study how affects emerge as a process of changing relations in order to learn about the kinds of encounters that are more likely to lead to the adoption of outdoor recreation practices. That is, the fluidity of affect seems to lend itself to affect-oriented studies that would seek to understand how people become outdoorsy.

### ***Corporeality***

Another way that affect was defined in this study was as a person’s capacity to relate to other bodies. One participant expressed appreciation for the sense of escape and release that accompanied the sounds and feelings of gravel bouncing off his fenders when he had driven to where it felt like wilderness. Another participant encountered a fallen tree that had continued to grow from its own resilience. She related to the tree in a way that brought about a carefree sense of presence out of her head and in her body.

As such, this study’s results suggest that wilderness affect emerged as (a) bodily sensations and (b) embodied presence. Therefore, the researcher concluded that wilderness affect’s emergence becomes perceptible through bodily capabilities.

Humberstone (2015) emphasized the importance of focusing on the body to understand how the outdoors are processed through bodily senses that allow people to have meaningful connections with their surroundings. For Humberstone, the body is not separate from the environment. Instead, affects emerge from relations between one’s body and other bodies to form an evolving state of connection with one’s surroundings. This study’s results support

Humberstone's (2011) suggestion that researchers should take bodily capacities to become affected seriously because "there is potential in exploring how the body comes to 'know' through such practices and how these embodied experiences give expression at the personal, social, and 'political' levels" (p. 507).

Further investigations that focus on wilderness affect could help outdoor recreation researchers better understand what has been referred to as the unconscious and deeply seated power of wilderness. In his study of symbolic wilderness meanings, Schroeder (2007) touched on both the ineffability and the corporeality of wilderness: "People sometimes find themselves unable to capture in words the experience of fascination and meaning that wild nature evokes" (p. 15). He also suggested that unconscious wilderness meanings play a role in conscious experience through emergent symbolism. Such notions of emergent symbolism, unconscious meaning, and affect share an ontological assumption about the nature of human experience whereby there "is a broader field of awareness that extends beyond our self-contained sphere of human concepts and embodies our original sensual, experiential involvement in the surrounding natural landscape" (p. 17). This speaks to the conclusion that wilderness affect became perceptible in part, in an embodied manner. It suggests that the concept of wilderness affect could be used to explore the embodiment of symbolic wilderness meanings.

### *Vitality*

What emerged from the relations between one participant and a pile of leaves was sporadic joy. A sense of simple pleasure emerged from a chance encounter with crunchy leaves. The participant expressed fondness for the sense of youthful exuberance that also emerged from the encounter. Another participant shared that hope emerged from the relations between her and

a frequently encountered tree. She was actively checking in with the tree throughout the patterns of her everyday life. The tree was relatable to her in an enlivening way.

As such, this study's results suggest that wilderness affect emerges, in part, as (a) the ephemeral charm of passive relation and (b) the rejuvenation of active relation. This suggests that affect is understood in terms of vitality, the quality concerning the continuance of life. Therefore, the researcher concluded that wilderness affect emerges through the ongoing process of life.

The results upon which this conclusion is based suggest that wilderness affect emerges in active and passive ways during the ongoing course of people's lives. Both of the examples above suggest that encounters with wild nature can bring a sense of liveliness to everyday life in varying intensities. Further inquiry into the degree to which such intensities vary with regard to passive versus active affections could be fruitful. One objective of such inquiry would be to examine the differences between affects from encounters with wild nature that are actively caused by participants and those that occur by passive happenstance. In the next section the researcher offers recommendations that follow from the conclusions.

### **Recommendations**

This section presents recommendations based on the results, their interpretation, and the conclusions of this study. The recommendations that follow are for outdoor recreation researchers, stewards, and enthusiasts. The section that follows will close the study with a review of its significance.

#### **Outdoor Recreation Researchers**

Non-representational theory is introduced as a nuanced and intricate inquiry-based schema for thinking about, observing, and learning about life's events. This study concludes that

non-rep is especially suited for researchers who aim to learn about what happens between humans and other people, places, and things in the context of outdoor recreation. Non-rep researchers study the encounters that make up life and the potential ways people appreciate and respond to the differences that encounters make. Non-rep research presents ways of thinking about the potential for people to differently relate to what they encounter. If the integration of nature provides benefits and that integration depends on making nature encounters more habitual (Kellert et al., 2017), then non-rep could be useful. Researchers can examine and exemplify practices that increase encounters and enhance relations with nature.

Non-representational theory is an approach to social science. It offers ways of thinking about research practices. As such, it offers ways to think about how to observe, document, analyze, and interpret the relations between people and nature during the practice of outdoor recreation. An important next step will be for researchers to investigate differences among practices that influence the occurrence of encounters with nature in everyday life. Outdoor recreation researchers will find methodological guidance in volumes edited by Lury and Wakeford (2012b), Vannini (2015a), and Knudsen and Stage (2015a). Also, recent reports on emerging practices in qualitative methodology are recommended for outdoor recreation researchers interested in non-rep research (Dowling et al., 2016, 2017, 2018; Kumm & Berbary, 2018).

In particular, outdoor recreation researchers are encouraged to:

1. Consider non-representational theory to help them learn about the ways people relate to nature in order to help people enjoy nature more.
2. Consider affect-oriented inquiry to help them learn about the differences that emerge from the relations between people and things during the practice of outdoor recreation.

## **Outdoor Recreation Stewards**

An understanding of the concept of affect can help stewardship practitioners who want to gauge or build relevancy with recreation resource area constituents. Stewards with an awareness of affect as a process of relation have a way to think about how constituents' encounters and relations can influence the ways people think, feel, and behave with regard to the area. Based on the results of this exploration of affect, it is recommended that stewards use interpretive programs to encourage recreationists to actively consider how their relations with recreation resources make a difference in their lives.

In particular, outdoor recreation stewards are encouraged to:

1. Consider developing training events to help stewards better understand their affective sensibilities to the differences made by recreation in their lives.
2. Consider developing interpretive programs that enhance visitors' awareness of their abilities to appreciate and respond to nature in their lives.
3. Consider developing interpretive programs that help visitors express the differences that nature makes in their lives in ways that go beyond words.
4. Consider developing interpretive programs that enhance visitor awareness of the way nature can make a difference in unsettling, disruptive, or ever-changing ways.
5. Consider developing interpretive programs that enhance visitor awareness of the ways people's bodies can sense the differences made by nature.
6. Consider the development of interpretive programs that enhance visitor awareness of the ways sporadic and intentional nature encounters can make an ongoing difference in life.

### **Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts**

One of the background assumptions for establishing nature preservation and protection systems in the United States was to keep within modern American life opportunities for people to feel themselves as kindred and connected to all life on earth. Support for this notion, with specific regard to wild nature, is found in Howard Zahniser's speech "The Need for Wilderness Areas." Zahniser stated: "the true wilderness experience is one, not of escaping, but of finding one's self by seeking the wilderness" (Harvey, 2014, p. 136). Zahniser, like many, lamented Americans' growing "disregard of their interdependence with the other forms of life with which they—together—derive their existence from the solar center of the universe" (p. 132). That important speech was later added to the United States Congressional Record (Harvey, 2014). The speech was also the spearhead of a publicity campaign to garner support for the eventual passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964. It serves as a reminder that part of the inspiration behind the construction of a system to preserve wild nature in the United States was an effort to stimulate a sense of connection between people and other forms of life.

The Wilderness Act (PL 88-577), as an expression of preservation efforts, presents ontological implications. Zahniser, its principal architect, suggested the existence of a mutuality of being or kinship between humans and all forms of life. The kinship between a person and other life forms is constituted in the relations between them. Wilderness affect is offered as a way of thinking about the potential to appreciate and respond to the differences that emerge from relations with nature. Based on this study's results and conclusions it is recommended that recreationists who primarily enjoy the outdoors in designated areas consider the potential to encounter nature in their everyday lives.

In particular, outdoor recreation enthusiasts are encouraged to:

1. Consider adopting practices that increase their tendencies to encounter nature in everyday life.
2. Consider the ways nature relates to their lives.
3. Consider that their ways of relating with nature have the potential to make differences that exceed their representations.
4. Consider the changes in their feelings during nature encounters.
5. Consider their bodily sensations during nature encounters.
6. Consider the ongoing difference that encounters with nature can make in their lives.

### **Significance**

This research was oriented around the problem of outdoor recreation researchers' lack of familiarity with non-representational theory and its distinct approach to the associated concept of affect. The study's first objective was to characterize the philosophical foundations of non-representational theory as a means of exploring and furthering its potential use by outdoor recreation researchers. The study has presented a detailed examination of the worldview, paradigm, and research program levels along with the commitments associated with the layers that make up each level. This provided the means for an interpretation of non-rep's applicability to outdoor recreation research. As such, the study makes a meaningful contribution to the extent that it can activate new ways for researchers to think about, observe, and understand outdoor recreation.

The study's second objective was to develop a greater conceptual understanding of affect through an exploration of its occurrence in wilderness visitors' everyday lives. The study documented participant encounters during the week after wilderness visits and exemplified some of the ways the emergence of affect became perceptible. In doing so the study makes meaningful

contributions in two more ways. By offering an example for how affect-oriented inquiry can be carried out, it informs further affect-oriented outdoor recreation research. Additionally, five thematic qualities are suggested to provide a structure for understanding some of the ways the emergence of wilderness affect became perceptible. Wilderness affect is suggested as a different way of thinking about the potential to appreciate and respond to the differences that emerge from relations with wild nature. As such, the study helps focus further inquiry into human-wilderness relations and can potentially help people build more relations with wilderness.

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**APPENDICES**



**Appendix B: Participant Recruitment Flyer**

**PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY  
HIKE IN THE MOOSEHORN WILDERNESS AREA  
KEEP A DIARY & TAKE PICTURES FOR 7 DAYS  
DO AN INTERVIEW & GET \$10 DUNKIN' DONUTS**



**EMAIL [MARK.DOUGLAS@MAINE.EDU](mailto:MARK.DOUGLAS@MAINE.EDU)**

**AND JOIN THIS RESEARCH STUDY:  
THE LIVING WILDERNESS EXPERIMENT**

### Appendix C: Participant Invitation

To the potential participant:

I'm doing a study of wilderness visitors and trying to understand their ideas and feelings after they visit a wilderness area. I'm inviting people to join an outing to the Moosehorn Wilderness Area where we will hike about four miles. After the day hike, we'll return to campus and all the participants will get a small memo book with a pen to use as a diary. Each participant will also get a one-time-use camera.

Because I will be interested in learning about their wilderness feelings and wilderness ideas, during the week after the wilderness area visit, participants will be asked to take photos when "wilderness ideas" form or when they sense "wilderness feelings". In the diaries, the participants will describe any thoughts or impressions they have at any time. The diaries are for recording their reactions and feelings about the events and encounters of each day.

I'm seeking people that are willing to talk to me in an interview for up to three hours about their diary notes and photographs. With permission, I will be audio-recording the interview in order to make a transcription later and learn from it. If you're interested in going for a hike in a wilderness area, keeping a diary and taking pictures for week after the hike, and doing an interview, please respond with your name and UMM email address. Anybody that goes on the hike, takes photos and keeps a diary, and then does an interview will get a ten dollar Dunkin' Donuts gift card.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. This study is in no way related to any expectations, obligations, or evaluation measures for the course in which you are enrolled or your status as a UMM student.

Thank you for considering this research participation opportunity. Please contact the researcher, Mark Douglas, if you have any interest in or questions about this research project.



Mark Douglas  
PhD Candidate, University of Montana  
Lecturer, University of Maine at Machias  
[email] mark.douglas@maine.edu  
[cell] 615-347-9180  
[office] 207-255-1401

**Appendix D: Wilderness Letter (Wildland Research Center, 1962)**

Los Altos, Calif.

December 3, 1960

David E. Pesonen  
Wildland Research Center  
Agricultural Experiment Station  
243 Mulford Hall  
University of California  
Berkeley 4, Calif.

Dear Mr. Pesonen:

I believe that you are working on the wilderness portion of the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission's report. If I may, I should like to urge some arguments for wilderness preservation that involve recreation, as it is ordinarily conceived, hardly at all. Hunting, fishing, hiking, mountain-climbing, camping, photography, and the enjoyment of natural scenery will all, surely, figure in your report. So will the wilderness as a genetic reserve, a scientific yardstick by which we may measure the world in its natural balance against the world in its man-made imbalance. What I want to speak for is not so much the wilderness uses, valuable as those are, but the wilderness idea, which is a resource in itself. Being an intangible and spiritual resource, it will seem mystical to the practical minded—but then anything that cannot be moved by a bulldozer is likely to seem mystical to them. I want to speak for the wilderness idea as something that has helped form our character and that has certainly shaped our history as a people. It has no more to do with recreation than churches have to do with recreation, or than the strenuousness and optimism and expansiveness of what the historians call the “American Dream” have to do with recreation. Nevertheless, since it is only in this recreation survey that the values of wilderness are being compiled, I hope you will permit me to insert this idea between the leaves, as it were, of the recreation report. Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed; if we permit the last virgin forests to be turned into comic books and plastic cigarette cases; if we drive the few remaining members of the wild species into zoos or to extinction; if we pollute the last clear air and dirty the last clean streams and push our paved roads through the last of the silence, so that never again will Americans be free in their own country from the noise, the exhausts, the stinks of human and automotive waste. And so that never again can we have the chance to see ourselves single, separate, vertical and individual in the world, part of the environment of trees and rocks and soil, brother to the other animals, part of the natural world and competent to belong in it. Without any remaining wilderness we are committed wholly, without chance for even momentary reflection and rest, to a headlong drive into our technological termite-life, the Brave New World of a completely man-controlled environment. We need wilderness preserved—as much of it as is still left, and as many kinds—because it was the challenge against which our character as a people was formed. The reminder and the reassurance that it is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it. It is good for us when we are young, because of the incomparable sanity it

can bring briefly, as vacation and rest, into our insane lives. It is important to us when we are old simply because it is there—important, that is, simply as an idea.

We are a wild species, as Darwin pointed out. Nobody ever tamed or domesticated or scientifically bred us. But for at least three millennia we have been engaged in a cumulative and ambitious race to modify and gain control of our environment, and in the process we have come close to domesticating ourselves. Not many people are likely, any more, to look upon what we call “progress” as an unmixed blessing. Just as surely as it has brought us increased comfort and more material goods, it has brought us spiritual losses, and it threatens now to become the Frankenstein that will destroy us. One means of sanity is to retain a hold on the natural world, to remain, insofar as we can, good animals. Americans still have that chance, more than many peoples; for while we were demonstrating ourselves the most efficient and ruthless environment-busters in history, and slashing and burning and cutting our way through a wilderness continent, the wilderness was working on us. It remains in us as surely as Indian names remain on the land. If the abstract dream of human liberty and human dignity became, in America, something more than an abstract dream, mark it down at least partially to the fact that we were in subdued ways subdued by what we conquered. The Connecticut Yankee, sending likely candidates from King Arthur's unjust kingdom to his Man Factory for rehabilitation, was over optimistic, as he later admitted. These things cannot be forced, they have to grow. To make such a man, such a democrat, such a believer in human individual dignity, as Mark Twain himself, the frontier was necessary, Hannibal and the Mississippi and Virginia City, and reaching out from those the wilderness; the wilderness as opportunity and idea, the thing that has helped to make an American different from and, until we forget it in the roar of our industrial cities, more fortunate than other men. For an American, insofar as he is new and different at all, is a civilized man who has renewed himself in the wild. The American experience has been the confrontation by old peoples and cultures of a world as new as if it had just risen from the sea. That gave us our hope and our excitement, and the hope and excitement can be passed on to newer Americans, Americans who never saw any phase of the frontier. But only so long as we keep the remainder of our wild as a reserve and a promise—a sort of wilderness bank. As a novelist, I may perhaps be forgiven for taking literature as a reflection, indirect but profoundly true, of our national consciousness. And our literature, as perhaps you are aware, is sick, embittered, losing its mind, losing its faith. Our novelists are the declared enemies of their society. There has hardly been a serious or important novel in this century that did not repudiate in part or in whole American technological culture for its commercialism, its vulgarity, and the way in which it has dirtied a clean continent and a clean dream. I do not expect that the preservation of our remaining wilderness is going to cure this condition. But the mere example that we can as a nation apply some other criteria than commercial and exploitative considerations would be heartening to many Americans, novelists or otherwise. We need to demonstrate our acceptance of the natural world, including ourselves; we need the spiritual refreshment that being natural can produce. And one of the best places for us to get that is in the wilderness where the fun houses, the bulldozers, and the pavement of our civilization are shut out.

Sherwood Anderson, in a letter to Waldo Frank in the 1920s, said it better than I can. “Is it not likely that when the country was new and men were often alone in the fields and the forest they got a sense of bigness outside themselves that has now in some way been lost.... Mystery

whispered in the grass, played in the branches of trees overhead, was caught up and blown across the American line in clouds of dust at evening on the prairies.... I am old enough to remember tales that strengthen my belief in a deep semi-religious influence that was formerly at work among our people. The flavor of it hangs over the best work of Mark Twain.... I can remember old fellows in my home town speaking feelingly of an evening spent on the big empty plains. It had taken the shrillness out of them. They had learned the trick of quiet....”

We could learn it too, even yet; even our children and grandchildren could learn it. But only if we save, for just such absolutely non-recreational, impractical, and mystical uses as this, all the wild that still remains to us. It seems to me significant that the distinct downturn in our literature from hope to bitterness took place almost at the precise time when the frontier officially came to an end, in 1890, and when the American way of life had begun to turn strongly urban and industrial. The more urban it has become, and the more frantic with technological change, the sicker and more embittered our literature, and I believe our people, have become. For myself, I grew up on the empty plains of Saskatchewan and Montana and in the mountains of Utah, and I put a very high valuation on what those places gave me. And if I had not been able to periodically to renew myself in the mountains and deserts of western America I would be very nearly bughouse. Even when I can't get to the back country, the thought of the colored deserts of southern Utah, or the reassurance that there are still stretches of prairies where the world can be instantaneously perceived as disk and bowl, and where the little but intensely important human being is exposed to the five directions of the thirty-six winds, is a positive consolation. The idea alone can sustain me. But as the wilderness areas are progressively exploited or “improve”, as the jeeps and bulldozers of uranium prospectors scar up the deserts and the roads are cut into the alpine timberlands, and as the remnants of the unspoiled and natural world are progressively eroded, every such loss is a little death in me. In us.

I am not moved by the argument that those wilderness areas which have already been exposed to grazing or mining are already deflowered, and so might as well be “harvested”. For mining I cannot say much good except that its operations are generally short-lived. The extractable wealth is taken and the shafts, the tailings, and the ruins left, and in a dry country such as the American West the wounds men make in the earth do not quickly heal. Still, they are only wounds; they aren't absolutely mortal. Better a wounded wilderness than none at all. And as for grazing, if it is strictly controlled so that it does not destroy the ground cover, damage the ecology, or compete with the wildlife it is in itself nothing that need conflict with the wilderness feeling or the validity of the wilderness experience. I have known enough range cattle to recognize them as wild animals; and the people who herd them have, in the wilderness context, the dignity of rareness; they belong on the frontier, moreover, and have a look of rightness. The invasion they make on the virgin country is a sort of invasion that is as old as Neolithic man, and they can, in moderation, even emphasize a man's feeling of belonging to the natural world. Under surveillance, they can belong; under control, they need not deface or mar. I do not believe that in wilderness areas where grazing has never been permitted, it should be permitted; but I do not believe either that an otherwise untouched wilderness should be eliminated from the preservation plan because of limited existing uses such as grazing which are in consonance with the frontier condition and image.

Let me say something on the subject of the kinds of wilderness worth preserving. Most of those areas contemplated are in the national forests and in high mountain country. For all the usual recreational purposes, the alpine and the forest wildernesses are obviously the most important, both as genetic banks and as beauty spots. But for the spiritual renewal, the recognition of identity, the birth of awe, other kinds will serve every bit as well. Perhaps, because they are less friendly to life, more abstractly nonhuman, they will serve even better. On our Saskatchewan prairie, the nearest neighbor was four miles away, and at night we saw only two lights on all the dark rounding earth. The earth was full of animals—field mice, ground squirrels, weasels, ferrets, badgers, coyotes, burrowing owls, snakes. I knew them as my little brothers, as fellow creatures, and I have never been able to look upon animals in any other way since. The sky in that country came clear down to the ground on every side, and it was full of great weathers, and clouds, and winds, and hawks. I hope I learned something from looking a long way, from looking up, from being much alone. A prairie like that, one big enough to carry the eye clear to the sinking, rounding horizon, can be as lonely and grand and simple in its forms as the sea. It is as good a place as any for the wilderness experience to happen; the vanishing prairie is as worth preserving for the wilderness idea as the alpine forest. So are great reaches of our western deserts, scarred somewhat by prospectors but otherwise open, beautiful, waiting, close to whatever God you want to see in them. Just as a sample, let me suggest the Robbers' Roost country in Wayne County, Utah, near the Capitol Reef National Monument. In that desert climate the dozer and jeep tracks will not soon melt back into the earth, but the country has a way of making the scars insignificant. It is a lovely and terrible wilderness, such as wilderness as Christ and the prophets went out into; harshly and beautifully colored, broken and worn until its bones are exposed, its great sky without a smudge of taint from Technocracy, and in hidden corners and pockets under its cliffs the sudden poetry of springs. Save a piece of country like that intact, and it does not matter in the slightest that only a few people every year will go into it. That is precisely its value. Roads would be a desecration, crowds would ruin it. But those who haven't the strength or youth to go into it and live can simply sit and look. They can look two hundred miles, clear into Colorado; and looking down over the cliffs and canyons of the San Rafael Swell and the Robbers' Roost they can also look as deeply into themselves as anywhere I know. And if they can't even get to the places on the Aquarius Plateau where the present roads will carry them, they can simply contemplate the idea, take pleasure in the fact that such a timeless and uncontrolled part of earth is still there.

These are some of the things wilderness can do for us. That is the reason we need to put into effect, for its preservation, some other principle than the principles of exploitation or "usefulness" or even recreation. We simply need that wild country available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in. For it can be a means of reassuring ourselves of our sanity as creatures, a part of the geography of hope.

Very sincerely yours,

Wallace Stegner

## Appendix E: Participant Instructions

### DIRECTIONS FOR THE LIVING WILDERNESS EXPERIMENT

---

Keep the camera & this memo book & pen with you at all times (as much as possible).

---

Note where you go, when you go there, and the purpose of your movements.

---

Note the people, places, and things you encounter and the events of each day.

---

**Each day, describe your thoughts or impressions about whatever you encounter.**

---

Describe your reactions to, and feelings about the events of each day for seven days.

---

Each day, when wilderness ideas or feelings form, take photographs to show the influence on, or change in your feelings. Take three or four photographs per day.

---

Note the who, what, when, where, why, and how of events when you take a photo.

---

**Use up to seven pages per day to log your encounters, events, and photograph notes.**

---

Return the book and camera to Mark Douglas in his office in Sennett 127.

---

## **Appendix F: Interview Guide**

### **A Non-representational Focus on Wilderness Affect – Interview Guide**

I'd like to learn about your feelings and ideas during the week after the visit to the Moosehorn Wilderness Area.

Would you arrange these photos in piles according to the day they were taken? You can use your diary notes for reference.

Now would you arrange each pile of photographs in the order they were taken? Please arrange the photos with the first photo of each day on the top of the piles in order to the last photo of each day at the bottom of each pile.

Using this pen, would you label the back of each photo with the day of the week it was taken and a number corresponding to the order in which it was taken that day.

Please select three to five photographs taken when the wilderness feelings or ideas seemed strongest to you. On the back of each selected photograph, please write out what was happening at the time the photograph was made. Also describe any feelings or ideas you were having when you took the photograph. After you make the captions for the selected photos, please put them back in order.

Now we'll use your photographs and diary notes to talk through your experience of wilderness feelings and ideas during the week. Using your diary notes and the photographs, I'd like you to lead me through your week. Let's take a look at the photos one day at a time and one photo at a time. Whenever we talk about a specific photograph, we need to identify it by the day and number you wrote on the back.

#### **Potential Questions**

When did this happen?  
What were you doing?  
Was there anybody else around?  
Did somebody say something?  
And what did you say?  
What happened next?  
How did it feel?  
What else do you remember about this event?