Scrabble Liberation - Research Poet/ry Creating Being

Marketing
Master's thesis
Iida Hietala
2013
Abstract

Among other arts-based methodologies, research poetry has recently become a popular way to inquire and express in consumer research. At the same time, postmodern consumer culture has placed consumers as agents of their own being through immaterial consumption. Yet, there is hardly any research which addresses research poets’ being-in-the-world by means of performative research poetry.

This present thesis focuses on illuminating conceptualizations that illustrate the being-in-the-world of research poet/ry – that is, research poet and performative research poetry. The goals of this thesis are pursued by reflexive and conceptualized discussion with perspectives drawn from theoretical literature and my own performative research poet/ry. Ultimately, I suggest that the performative research poet/ry in contemporary academic writing creates and materializes its own being. The performative acts of creativized writing and empathized reading are illustrated to be in the core of creating the being of research poet/ry. The nature of this being of research poet/ry is best illustrated as liberatory and self-transformational – reincarnatory, to say.

Keywords research poetry, postmodernism, consumer research, academic writing
SCRABBLE LIBERATION
RESEARCH POET/RY CREATING
BEING
IIDA HIETALA
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRO</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postmodern Consumer Culture</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Info</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH POETRY</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Writing</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Reading</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Poet/ry</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## PART 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LIBERATING RESEARCH POET/RY</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativized Writing</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathized Reading</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reincarnations</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## OUTRO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scrabble Liberation</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I THINK IN ART, but especially in films, people are trying to confirm their own existences.

Jim Morrison
"[...] the human is animal symbolicum; that is, a creative being in constant search of one's self, a creature who in every moment of existence must examine the conditions of this existence through work, language, myth, religion, art, science, history, or some other system of human activities."

(Venkatesh et al. 2006, 21-22, citing E. Cassirer)

In recent years, marketing and consumer scholars have produced a body of literature having to do with the arts. Some scholars have been interested in the arts as such, but others have gone one step further and theorized the production of the arts as a research method. To be clear, these two types of literature should be understood as separate. The first, marketing-orientated research has studied the consumption of the arts by following the paradigm of logical positivism, and thus, the methodological tradition of neopositivistic semiotics. For instance, works on the artists and brands (Schroeder 2005), heritage sites (Leaver & Schmidt 2010), and consumer responses to works of art (Goulding 1999,
2000a; 2000b), have connected the cultural product framework to aesthetic processes and contemporary consumption practices. Although these studies have found important characteristics, such as authenticity and emotion, as the key factors of postmodern experiences, they have not succeeded in engaging their readers and providing understanding exhaustive enough (Brady 2004, 622; Holbrook 1996, 139; Sherry and Schouten 2002, 219; Thompson, Locander and Pollio 1989, 134-137). The latter type of research has found the arts as central organizers and constructors of human experience, also in research. Therefore, the this orientation has joined ways of doing research and different forms of art together. (Holbrook 1996, 139-140; Venkatesh et al. 2006, 20-25) The benefits of using the arts in research are manifold; “Art can be representational, but it also can be evocative, embodied, sensual, and emotional; art can be viewed as an object or a product, but it also is an idea, a process, a way of knowing, a manner of speaking, an encounter with Others; art can reveal an artist’s perceptions and feelings, but it also can be used to recognize one’s own” (Bochner et al. 2003, 508). For instance, the production of arts, such as photography (e.g. Holbrook 2006), videography (Hietanen 2012) and poetry (e.g. Sherry et al. 2002), has been seen as methods of research or even expression. Somewhat surprisingly, poetry, has recently become a popular way to gain understanding of the contemporary consumer culture (Sherry et al. 2002, 218). Poetry is, after all, one of the oldest art forms in Western culture’s history, practiced as ‘ekphrastic’ (i.e. descriptive, clear, truthful and poetic) writing already at the rhetorical schools of ancient Greece (Prendergast 2006, 370).

This present study regards postmodernism as ‘a theoretical grid’ to examine and understand consumer culture (Thompson and Hirschman 1998, 58). Two decades ago, postmodernism managed to lurk into consumer research with a little help of Thompson (1990), who discusses two approaches taken to evaluate interpretive research; foundationalism, which leans on positivism and subject-object distinction, and anti-foundationalism, which could overcome the dichotomy storming the field of research. This study takes the anti-foundational stance, in which "knowledge and understanding are conceived as ways of being-in-the-world and the relevant task of philosophy and/or social science is seen as
describing the socio-cultural context in which knowledge is constructed [...] Anti-foundationalist thought has been at the center of the "linguistic turn" occurring in philosophy, the social sciences, and the sociology of knowledge [...] For the major anti-foundationalist philosophers, to inquire into the nature of being is to inquire into the nature of language [...]” (Thompson 1990). Sure enough,

“[f]or purposes of identifying evaluative criteria for interpretive research, Wittgenstein provides a sound starting point because 1) Wittgensteinian thought is central to the critical relativist program proposed for consumer research [...] and 2) Wittgenstein’s philosophy has an explicit methodological focus in seeking to use linguistic analysis to clarify "pseudo-problems" passing as philosophical dilemmas. A prominent Wittgensteinian concept is that of language game. By postulating that words attain meaning from their relation in a given language game, Wittgenstein contextualized meaning. For this view, the "meaning of a word is it's use in a particular situation" and it is due to a misguided "craving for generality" that philosophers seek out the one absolute meaning of a concept [...] Wittgenstein redefined philosophical problems as "grammatical fictions" arising from the assumption that a word used in different language games must have the same meaning.

With respect to consumer research, the critical relativist program is amenable to Wittgenstein’s account of linguistic meaning. With language games, meaning is not simply a correspondence between word and object. With critical relativism, scientific knowledge is not simply a correspondence between a theoretical term and a state of the world but emerges from a system of metaphysical beliefs, value commitments, and cognitive aims [...] Thus, it can be said that what constitutes scientific knowledge depends on which language game is being employed. Just as no one ostensive definition describes the meaning of a word, no one set of methodological procedures describes the constitution of scientific knowledge. Critical relativism proposes that the evaluative criteria must vary according to the assumptions and cognitive aims underlying the research. Researchers are required to explicitly state their assumptions, cognitive aims and also to provide appropriate evaluative criteria. The reader of the research is required to understand the study’s aims and assumptions and faithfully seek to apply the relevant evaluative criteria” (Thompson 1990).

The name of this study playfully refers to the word game Scrabble (1938), "in which two to four players score points by placing tiles, bearing a single letter, onto a gameboard which is divided into a 15×15 grid of squares. The tiles must form words which, in crossword fashion,
flow left to right in rows or downwards in columns. The words must be defined in a standard dictionary” (Wikipedia 2013a).

In other words, the gameboard of Scrabble depicts the theoretical array of postmodernism. The two main postmodernist theory rows or columns, whatever you call them, of this study, are considering 1) consumption as an immaterial process, and 2) the conceptual inseparability of consumers and their consumption. These claims are based on the notes by Holbrook (1996, 103), who states that instead of considering consumption as "processes through which economic resources are used up... in the satisfaction of human wants", "human beings may, however, also obtain gratification from activities which do not, in any conventional economic sense, involve the use of resources at all (except those of time and human energy), such as the appreciation of natural beauty or the enjoyment of friendship", and Kozinets (2002, 22-23), who suggests that “In postmodern liberatory conceptualizations, consumers and consumption are sensibly employed as bridging terms [...]": "consumers" are human beings, and "consumption" is the many human acts that people perform as they interact with the material world around them”.

In addition to regarding postmodernism as a theoretical grid, it may also be viewed as a set of tendencies affecting consumer culture itself (Thompson et al. 1998, 58). Consumer research has conceptualized a postmodern consumer culture “as a dynamic constellation of diverse practices and transnational flows”, such as meanings, styles, and conventions” (p. 58). Following the idea of immaterial consumption, Shankar (2002, 501) states that “Consumers are increasingly looking for the market to provide resources and technologies that will enable them to achieve rewarding and sustainable states of ‘being’.” The postmodern tendencies that have an impact on consumer culture are overviewed in the next subchapter in more detail. In the meanwhile, hopefully the metaphor of Scrabble helps in comprehending the postmodern consumer culture not only as commercial and material, but also as meaningful and immaterial reality.

This paper considers some theoretizations of existing and being in the world, as well. Existentialism refers to a philosophical “integration of literary, philosophical, and psychological concerns” which is based on
the existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre’s idea of “existence preceding essence” (Thompson et al. 1998, 402). That is to say, the “materiality of one’s existence (or social circumstances) does not determine the actions that one undertakes in these conditions, the personal meanings one decides that these conditions will hold, or the existential possibilities of who one will become” (p. 402).

“[f]rom this perspective, a person exists simultaneously as a locus of subjective awareness and as a material being in the world and, hence, lives in an ambiguous condition of situated freedom […] The sense of freewill afforded by one’s subjective awareness co-exists with the multitude of less volitional forces that affect the embodied subject. The meanings and dilemmas that ensue from this paradox underlie many of our actions, perceptions, and experiences” (Thompson et al. 1998, 402-403)

Thompson et al. (1998, 403) state that regardless of the initially different conceptions of a subject’s identity in existentialism (coherent) and postmodernism (fragmented), “the identity dilemmas posed by the consumption centered, pastiche quality of postmodern culture […] may well enhance the contemporary relevance of an existential view of embodied identity”. Therefore, “postmodern consumers are likely to manifest a kind of hyper-existentialism in their conceptions and experiences of their own bodies” (p. 403). In spite of these ideas of existentialism as a philosophy above, this study does not deal with the philosophical stream of existentialism, per se. However, the theoretizations of being-in-the-world in consumer research do stem from this tradition. In order to avoid direct reference to existentialism and concentrate on the existential conceptions illustrated in consumer research, I will be using mostly the words of ‘being’ and ‘being-in-the-world’, when referring to existing.

On ground of these theories, the purpose of the present thesis is to gain understanding of the being-in-the-world of research poetry and research poet in contemporary academic writing culture. As Thompson (2002, 142) points out, ”a given piece of research reveals as much about a research community as it does about the phenomenon under study”. In this study, the idea is taken also quite literally (see Brown 1998). Based on this and the earlier theoretizations presented, I see research poetry as immaterial consumption, research poet (also the writer and the reader)
as a consumer, and academic writing as consumer culture. By using a term of research poet/ry later on, I refer to the inseparable, embodied and performative relationship of the consumer and consumption – the research poet and her text. The goals of this study are methodologically pursued by reflexive and conceptualized discussion between the theoretical literature of postmodern consumer research, academic writing, and me - the research poet and her research poem – or, thesis, that is to say (see Gray 2003, 266, for understanding an article as a performance). Ultimately, I dare to suggest that the performative research poet/ry in contemporary academic writing creates its own being. In addition, the performative acts of self-expressive creativized writing and self-explorative empathized reading are in the core of creating the being-in-the-world of research poet/ry. This being is best illustrated as liberatory and self-transformational – reincarnatory, to say

**POSTMODERN CONSUMER CULTURE**

"Our identity, or who we are at any moment in time, is simply a way of being."

(Shankar et al. 2002, 512.)

Postmodernist tendencies have had a quite radical effect on consumers and their consumption. This subchapter first reviews the postmodern impulses of alienation and liberation that have an impact on self, society and research, and next, it suggests that postmodernism has transformed having into being (Goulding, Shankar and Elliott 2002, 263; Shankar and Fitchett 2002, 511).
The postmodern society may be seen to alienate consumers. Traditional narratives of complete self, others and culture have been replaced with postmodern fragmentation, emptiness and meaninglessness, and in order to respond to this movement of fragmentation, consumers have adopted a ‘performing self’ that constructs the DIY (do-it-yourself) identity through consumption (Goulding et al. 2002, 264-265; Thompson 1998, 58-59; Thompson et al. 1998, 403-404). This self-creation through consumption has been entitled as play, which portrays consumption as interactive, intrinsically motivating activity that provides satisfying, fun, emotional and hedonic sensations (Holbrook, Chestnut, Oliva, and Greenleaf 1984, 728-729; Holt 1995, 9; Kozinets Sherry, Storm, Duhachek, Nuttavuthisit and Deberry-Spence 2004, 659-660). The hyperreal, superficial and image-based culture offers consumers a (cyber) platform of blurred reality to operate with consumption meanings in the construction of identity. For instance, new technologies, such as video screens and television, “[…] have become indispensable parts of the spectacular experience, providing a new form of stage that enables consumers to breach fantasy and reality, to transcend physical limitations, and to conjure the iconic spirits of the celebrity pantheon” (Kozinets et al. 2004, 660; see also Venkatesh and Meamber 2006, 26-27). This postmodern process of combining play and new technologies – screen play - stems from the interagency of both Freudian scopophilia, the obsession to gaze, and the consumers’ own, subjective agency (Kozinets et al. 2004, 668-669). Kozinets et al. (p. 670) suggest that consumers are not only creating themselves but also pursuing for moments of greatness and “a sense of attention and even appreciation, elevation, and worthiness”. This idea stems from the Lacanian mirror theory of self-production ‘through an outer gaze projected inward’, as well as from the Foucauldian metaphor of a panopticon as ‘the self-disciplinary gaze by which people exercise restraint over their own desires’. Kozinets et al. (p. 670) actually shape the idea of the panopticon to ‘observe panopticon’, which refers to the exhibitionistic desires of participatory consumer agents. These theories suggest that consumers desire to see and to be seen. However, these desires and fantasies in the image-based culture have said to lead to excessive focusing on others, and thus, either to anxiety or narcissism
(Kozinets et al. 2004, 671). Scholars have also offered the terms of ‘authenticity’ and ‘nostalgia’ to depict the reactions to fragmentation, alienation, meaninglessness and performative existence. The quest for authenticity takes place in active everyday consumer practices, which may be described as ‘authenticating acts’ and ‘authoritative performances’. Authenticating acts are "self-referential behaviors actors feel reveal or produce the 'true' self," such as flow experiences and ritualistic display”, whereas authoritative performances may be illustrated as "collective displays aimed at inventing or refashioning cultural traditions". Consumers value authenticity, since it is considered ‘real’ in the image-based culture. As for authentic identity, the a poor, oppressed and primitive is regarded as real (Rose et al. 2005, 284, 286-287). Although contemporary consumption offers a consumer the possibility to construct oneself and one’s own reality by means of self-oriented playful interconsumer interaction, the expanded variety of possibilities forces a consumer in the alienating process of finding a socially valid identity for oneself from the image-based culture (Goulding et al. 2002, 264-265; Thompson 1998, 58-59; Thompson et al. 1998, 403-404). In other words, all these endless choices of self-creation are seen to lead to confusion over the multiplicity of roles, and ultimately, to alienation.

In contrast to the somewhat pessimistic, alienating views of the postmodern consumer culture, the second, optimistic perspective of liberation, is growing acceptance within the field of consumer research. The liberating view regards consumers as free and active subjects in the creation of themselves and their own reality. For instance, the fragmentation of society and self may be actually seen as liberatory forces. In a fragmented culture, consumers are free to construct and express their identities through consumption and consumption experiences (Goulding et al. 2002, 264-265; Thompson et al. 1998, 403-404). Therefore, the liberating view celebrates the new and emancipated consumer. Even though, for instance, the conceptualization of consumption as play may be seen as ultimately alienating, the perspective of liberation pays more attention to the strengthened freedom of choice and consumer agency. To illustrate, play takes part in the social construction of self and reality through experimental, imaginative and
free sign consumption. Self-expressivity, improbable behaviors, resistance and even anarchism enable a moment of emancipation. This makes postmodern consumption a productive and meaningful process. (Goulding et al. 2002, 264-265, Kozinets et al. 2004, 659-660, Thompson et al. 1998, 403-404). Kozinets et al. (2004, 660) add that “consumers find freedom or emancipation in reflexively—perhaps even playfully—subverting market signs in favor of meanings that are more expressive of their individual identities”. In the liberatory spirit, a recent conceptualization on consumer agency is the one of performativity. Denzin (2001a, 26) argues that “We inhabit a performance-based, dramaturgical culture. The dividing line between performer and audience blurs, and culture itself becomes a dramatic performance. […] But the matter goes even deeper than blurred boundaries. The performance has become reality”. He continues that this postmodern performative society has certain features; “(1) it has turned the confessional mode of discourse into a form of entertainment; (2) the private has become a public commodity; (3) persons are assumed to have private and public and authentic selves, and the private self is the real self; (4) skilled interviewers and therapists (and sometimes the person) have access to this self; (5) certain experiences, epiphanies, are more authentic than others, they leave deep marks and scars on the person; (6) persons have access to their own experiences; (7) first-person narratives are very valuable. They are the site of personal meaning” (p. 28.)

As presented, postmodernism has come with both alienating and liberating effects. In addition, it has transformed having into being. Shankar and Fitchett (2002, 503-504, 506) suggest that the ‘having’ mode prioritizes ownership of experience, whereas the ‘being’ mode of representation finds the lived experience more important. In contemporary consumer culture, individuals no longer find ‘having’ satisfactory. Consequently, they have started to concentrate on their state of being. The theoretical dichotomy of having and being relates to the discussion of the humanistic perspective in consumer research, started by Hirschman (1986). The humanistic perspective is presented in more detail later on, but put briefly, it stems from existential and phenomenological philosophies and “considers what it is to be a human being and how people can achieve a more authentic state of being in a
given social context” (Shankar et al. 2002, 505). Drawing from humanistic perspective, the consumers find the being mode of existence more rewarding and meaningful, and therefore, a consumer becomes an ‘agent of being’ (Shankar et al. 2002, 506-507, 509). In other words, “contemporary conceptualisations of the self reject identity as an object that one is given, has, owns or possesses. Rather, identities are created or […] performed. Our identity, or who we are at any moment in time, is simply a way of being. […] It is inaccurate to assume we are what we have, the sum of all our possessions. Rather, the possessions that consumers have and seek to acquire must ultimately be understood and valued by the extent to which they allow, enable or facilitate a positive sense of being and identification” (Shankar et al. 2002, 512).

STUDY INFO

In this subchapter, I am first going to locate the study among the versatile field of contemporary consumer research, and next, present the methodological principles of the study. Finally, I am going to explicate my motives for writing this study and offer a research question.

location

By locating this study among the field of consumer research, I take part in the ’movable feast’ (a metaphor by Hall 1999, 39, referring to the construction of identity in postmodern societies) of the direction consumer research. Although several scholars aim at contributing the understanding consumer research has on, say, consumption symbolism or marketing imagery, they also contribute to the understanding of the arts and other cultural offerings (Holbrook 1996, 113, 139; 2006, 716). Following a similar line of thought, Sherry (2008, 91) adds that “our growing understanding of consumer culture can be harnessed in a
revitalization movement that encourages the active re-appropriation of culture through the use of the very stuff of the marketplace.” Hainic (2011, 72) supports these ideas by stating that contemporary researchers “should take the risk of losing professional autonomy and open their research to other domains so that its results may gain more recognition”. Based on these three thoughts, I am writing this study with readers from all disciplinary backgrounds in mind, not just consumer researchers.

I suppose it is needless to say this is a qualitative, interpretive research with a touch of postmodern magic. However, there are three small sites in the field of contemporary consumer research, which might help in locating this paper. These sites are **performativity**, **critical-reflexive inquiry** and **conceptual humanism**.

**Performativity** leans on the so-called seventh moment of qualitative research, which, among other things, values emancipatory, dialectical, aesthetic and transformative commitment to social criticism, instead of only revealing empirical and interpretive understanding (Denzin 2001b, 326; 2003, 249; see also Murray and Ozanne 1991, 135-136); “This new generation of scholars is committed not just to describing the world but also to changing it […] They inscribe and perform utopian dreams […] of a world in which all are free to be who they choose to be […] I seek an existential, interpretive social science that offers a blueprint for cultural criticism. This cultural criticism is grounded in the specific worlds made visible in the writing process. It understands that there can be no objective account of a culture or a social situation […] the ethnographic, the artistic, the epistemological, the aesthetic, and the political can never be neatly separated” (Denzin 2000, 261). In addition, the concept of performativity promotes the idea of performing as constitutive action rather than as mere acting (Morison et al. 2013, 568-569).

In a similar vein, **critical-reflexive approach** promotes the deconstruction of taken-for-granted research conventions, thoughts and ideologies by being “[…] on par with a critical literature review than it is a conventional replication and extension study. Like a literature review, it is a special kind of integrative analysis through which consumer researchers can take stock of their field; rather than offering a compendium of what we know, the outcome is a critical reflection on
how we know and a revelation of questions and issues that are not represented in our disciplinary maps” (Thompson 2002, 145). Hence, instead of social criticism, critical-reflexive approach concentrates on scrutinizing research itself; “a given piece of research reveals as much about a research community as it does about the phenomenon under study”, because research practices are based on "taken-for-granted disciplinary assumptions, values, metatheoretical preferences, and dominant narrative conventions for representing a consumption phenomena” (Thompson 2002, 142, see also Brown 1998).

Moreover, a critical-reflexive approach recommends interdisciplinarity (alternatively, multi-disciplinarity, but I prefer the ‘inter-‘ prefix) as a provider of fresh insights: “the poststructural quest for reflexive narration is a truly multi-disciplinary movement in which critically minded scholars have challenged their particular discipline's canonical voice for privileging particular socio-cultural positions at the expense of others. These works demonstrate that the inclusion of alternative voices alters taken-for-granted paradigmatic assumptions and open new avenues of social scientific theorizing.” They continue that “multi-paradigmatic form-the consumer research community is ideally positioned to become an innovative leader in developing critical pluralistic research approaches” (Thompson et al. 1998b, 146-152). Shankar et al. (2010, 490-491) continue that actually “In upholding a relativistic ontology and constructivist epistemology, methodologically the only tenable position is to concurrently accept methodological pluralism. If we accept that there is no privileged access to a truth then methodological pluralism will enable us to access multiple and possibly competing claims to that truth.” In order to develop an interdisciplinary, critical pluralistic research approach, in addition to consumer research literature, this study explores also other literature from the fields of media, art and qualitative research. These all have actually much in common, and for instance, media culture and consumer culture are “theoretically overlapping and empirically inseparable constructs” (Kozinets et al. 2004, 671). However, one must move “beyond the use of existing criteria that exists for qualitative research and toward an understanding of interdisciplinarity not as a patchwork of different
disciplines and methodologies [...]. Therefore, interdisciplinarity is actually

“[...] a place of being “without.” This without is not a form of negation, a lack, or a denial of what has been previously done. Without is a space of active participation where one discovers that previous methodologies are not sufficient while simultaneously resisting the formation of specific criteria to replace them. Without “intimates process rather than method and alludes to a condition in which you might find yourself while doing work” [...] Similarly Mieke Bal [...] contended that the success of interdisciplinarity, which is necessary, exciting, and serious, “must seek its heuristic and methodological basis in concepts rather than methods” (Springgay et al. 2005, 899).

I will be addressing the idea of concepts later on in next subchapter, Methodology.

Conceptual humanism is described as a type of orientation that raises “issues of personal values and humanistic concerns that often surface in the realm of stories, anecdotes, and metaphors. In this view, a world of poetic imagination and expressive narrative is inhabited” (Holbrook 1996, 139). Conceptual humanism pursues to increase beauty in the world by focusing on the aesthetics of a theory (Hirschman 1985, 232). In other (somewhat value-laden) words, “consumer research should be undertaken for its intrinsic value and for personal satisfaction—not to serve some external, managerial objectives” (p. 235). As to Hirschman (pp. 226, 232, 234), a researcher may also personally adopt this orientation. Conceptual humanist researchers tend to have the personal traits of intuiting and feeling, and thus, use their imagination, innovation and freedom of thought to generate novel knowledge. A conceptual humanist strives for conceptual clarity by immersing oneself passionately into the study and concentrating on the intimate and emotional relationship with the topic of inquiry. I will be adopting conceptual humanism, as follows:

“What we found at the seminar was something new under the sun, or more precisely, a ray of light shining through the winter darkness. Here was a research community committed to foregrounding the opportunities opened up by conceiving art as a mode of narrative inquiry. These artists considered what they produced, whether in a studio, in a laboratory, or at a desk, as something made, not something found. To make art is to participate in an activity, to do something. Thus, the product, the work
of art, is inextricably tied to the processes of production, including the artist’s or writer’s subjectivity. As artists, these researchers also recognized that gaps exist between what can be shown, seen, or felt and what can be said. In contact with art, people could see and feel more than they could say. Although they depended on the language of art to express what they knew, meant, or felt, artists were reminded continually that language is not transparent [...] Language is “deficient and exuberant”; it communicates less than one desires and more than one intends [...]” (Bochner et al. 2003, 507-508).

Moreover, a conceptual humanist aims at enlightening the human condition in general:

“Conceptual humanists generally are quite open about their particular biases, often presenting their ideas as position or opinion statements rather than as objective empirical data. Their writing style tends to be imaginative, passionate, and speculative [...] Conceptual, rather than empirical, inquiry modes are favored by the conceptual humanist, and the preferred form of logic is the dialectic [...] conceptual humanists may undertake large-scale, grandiose projects designed to alter people’s thinking about a topic they deem important. "The conceptual humanists’ motto is: Better to fail in attempting to achieve the grand, than to succeed in reaching the small” (Hirschman 1985, 232).

Since conceptual humanistic inquiry stands for an alternative for the traditional positivist approach, it may be perceived as criticism towards those who pursue positivism, but “[h]umanists—of all researchers—are obligated to remain always aware that no one approach or paradigm is the "only" approach or paradigm. The humanist way is not the only way; it simply is a way” (Hirschman 1986, 248). This stance takes into account the foundationalist logic presented earlier, and thus, refuses to be positioned as a counteract to positivism.

Finally, to clear up my own position, I cite Holbrook (1996); “[m]y own position emphasizes the importance of scholarship above and beyond that of science in consumer research [...] From that perspective, it matters less whether one’s colleagues accept [...] as potentially scientific than whether they acknowledge its possible usefulness, meaningfulness, and validity as a scholarly enterprise capable of making potentially valuable contributions to the study of consumer behavior. Specifically, I wish to contend that the aims, concepts, and methods of [...] research on consumption experiences may be useful, meaningful,
and valid in the context of consumer-related scholarship.”

I have located this study in the field of consumer research drawing from the sites of performative theory, critical-reflexive inquiry and conceptual humanism. Next, I will continue to the methodological principles of this study.

**methodology**

Methodological principles I am following in this study are those of reflexivity and conceptualization. Both of these principles, or techniques, require engagement and embodiment from the researcher. Bring it on.

First, I am following the principle of reflexivity, which according to Shankar et al. (2001, 492) means

“a sensitisation that takes advantage of one's dual consumer-researcher role” […]. We believe that the onus is on us as researchers to develop these reflective skills and build them into the interpretive process. Pre-understanding (Vorverständis), the presuppositions, experiences and interests which we as interpretivists bring to the process of understanding, assumes greater importance, and (self) reflexivity becomes increasingly fundamental in sensitizing ourselves to our pre-understandings. This suggests to us that before we can ever hope to understand others, we first must understand ourselves”.

Shankar et al. (pp. 492-493) continue discussing that “one way in which this reflexivity can manifest itself is in the ‘authorial stance’ adopted”. To adopt the authorial stance as clearly as possible, I emphasize my own voice(s) by using the personal pronouns of I, me, my and mine. Nevertheless, I do not have only one authorial self (wouldn’t that be fun in a postmodern study). Instead, you may hear me speaking polyvocally, with multiple, unfixed voices, which are up to the reader to hear (Thompson et al. 1998b, 148-152). With this authorial stance, I aim at transparency, which is “the issue of most probable pressing concern to consumer researchers” (Sherry et al. 2002, 221). Transparency refers to “the ability of a text to seem familiar despite its provenance” (p. 221), and it reveals the reasoning of a researcher, helping the reader to decide whether to buy the offered ideas or not.
Reflexivity also contributes to the positioning of the researcher by using the researcher’s own experiences as topics of inquiry, since “scholarly activity and ‘real life’” cannot be separated (Shankar et al. 2010, 492). As for this study, my own life and the process of thesis writing as well as the research text are not separated. Quite the contrary, they are strongly intertwined, since I study my own creative writing (and reading) process. However, reflexivity is not a narcissistic or irrelevant revelation of self; the idea is to be “[...] sufficiently self-conscious to know what aspects of self it is necessary to reveal to an audience so that they are able to understand the process employed, as well as the resultant product, and to know that the revelation itself is purposive, intentional [...]” (Shankar et al. 2010, 492). Therefore, my personal characteristic of heightened sensitivity of observing supports the deployment of reflexivity. Since a little girl, I have seen myself clearly from the outside, sensed other people’s feelings with an enormous intensity and found my own being a very ambivalent construction. Unfortunately, I have not always had tools to cope with these perceptions. This has lead to a blues of over ten years now, and I am still struggling to wake up every day. However, recently, I have learned to see also myself from the inside with (somewhat introspective) the techniques of meditation and mindfulness. These techniques have provided me tools to observe and cope with my sensations. These abilities of ‘sufficient self-consciousness’ and sensitivity are something that feel purposive to tell for the reader in order to justify the methodological principle of reflexivity, and continue the study, especially the final chapters in mind.

Conceptualization refers to the idea of using flexible, dynamic, interactive, intersubjective, and inherently interdisciplinary concepts to study a topic. Concepts offer an “active participation of doing and meaning making within research texts, is a rupture that opens up new ways of conceiving of research as enactive space of living inquiry” (Springgay et al. 2005, 898-899, 908-909). In her dissertation, Saarenmaa (2010, 34-37) refers to Mieke Bal, who has criticized cultural research of first being brave in adopting a new and experimental topic of research, but still staying in utilizing traditional disciplinary conventions and discourses. Therefore, Bal suggests a conceptual approach instead of a theorized one. A researcher should engage oneself in a continuous...
discussion with theories, concepts and the topic of research. Consequently, I follow Saarenmaa’s methodological work by using conceptualization as the main methodological principle in this study. In addition, to keep myself away from the endless (and difficult!), methodological swamp, I utilize these Saarenmaa’s and Springay’s interpretations on Bal’s theorizations. To illustrate, the concepts are tools that guide me and give structure for my thinking. I have chosen the topic based on my personal, conceptual preferences, I arrange theories, interpretations as well as the structure of the study based on concepts. I tack constantly between literature, my own thoughts and concepts as the project starts to make sense. Finally, these concepts separate, but still intersubjective, provide a plot depicting the research poet’s creation of one’s own being-in-the-world, in the levels of abstract and concrete. In addition, I have wanted to avoid conventional discourses, and hence, ended up in using concepts that do not evoke (at least excessive) dualist connotations. This is something I personally find quite refreshing. However, I am aware of the dualist undertone some discussions might sound.

As for the validity of this research and methodological principles, Thompson et al. (1998b, 146) have said it all; “In the words of one CMC reviewer, "let us take the demon validity out into the fields and drive a stake through his heart". However, if you are interested in the validity discussion, see more in Thompson et al. 1998b, pages 146-152. The validity of this study locates somewhere between ‘transgressive’ and ‘voluptuos’ validities. Or, do something more fun and read this:

“[a]ttention to issues of validity, voice, reflexivity, and representation is a current preoccupation of qualitative researchers. Criteria for judging are viewed as practical, moral, and ethical rather than epistemological; they are continually (re)negotiated rather than being abstractions and rely on exemplars for extension and elaboration […] Uncertainty, contingency, and the absence of final vindications are embraced by these researchers […] Rather than stipulate categorical criteria, they seek to balance rigor with imagination […] developing open-ended lists that change over time […] The orientation to validity shifts from triangulation to transgression, its rhizomatic (i.e., densely rootlike) and situated character constantly being reassessed […] Authenticity is viewed as an integral component of validity […] Validity is interpreted as the seeking of verisimilitude and the evocation of lifelike, believable experience […] the central imaginary for postmodern texts as a crystal rather than a
triangle, and her construal of "crystalline validity" being dependent on one's "angle of repose" has become a hallmark of sixth moment qualitative inquiry" (Sherry et al. 2002, 221; see also Faulkner 2007, 231).

Shankar et al. (2010, 491) suggest a stance inbetween; the notion of a universal truth may be rejected, but the possibility of specific local or personal forms of truth might be accepted. Therefore, postmodernists are moving forward to a direction of becoming ‘storytellers’ who write ‘microhistories’.

By these flexible methods (and the standpoint for validity), I study the being-in-the-world of research poet/ry. My ‘data’ is the research literature and myself. In a way, I follow Hainic’s (2011, 72) idea of “[…] a new type of art critic, one that casts off both the “scholarly” discourse characteristic of pure artistic forms, as well as all pure subjective interpretations of art […] this new type of critic is the artist himself. He conducts his critique by “citing” or “altering” […] which the artist allegorizes through a combination of heterogenic signs, forms and motives so that they produce a new discourse, unknown up until presently […] “. Finally, I accept the following challenge;

“[…] it is the task of the researcher to convince one’s peers of the validity of a particular research approach and the believability of the resulting report. When researchers choose methods that are regarded as experimental (or worse, heretical!) within a discipline, the task becomes particularly daunting. We invite you to accept […] challenge to consecrate your intuitive perception in formulaic language worthy of your insight. Cast a spell that moves your readers rather than simply informing them” (Sherry et al. 2002, 231).

"Like Telemachus before us, we remain very much naïve youngsters setting out on a journey of discovery and hope, leaving behind the relative security of our Ithacan home to return there in maturity.

Our initial contact with the outside world has led us to the belated observation that we have been
socialized into an implicitly positivistic worldview, beguiled by Calypso’s comforting charms.

Moreover, the brash fearlessness of youth allows us to criticize the contributions of our intellectual forebears, and to square our shoulders and glare at the world, convinced of the inevitability of our project.

Time will, no doubt, judge our confidence to have been misplaced, but in the meantime we journey forth, eager to converse and debate with the hero(ines) of our discipline.”

(Shankar et al. 2010, 493.)

The form of this study aims to conform the postmodern research ideals. Yes, my language might in some cases mimic scholarly langue and, yes, the structure of the study follows some rules. However, the critical points of breaking the rules are, nevertheless, in breaking the rules. It is neither usual to write a thesis from the perspective of ‘I’, nor to take part in a strange, postmodern-ish conceptualization rally. Although I do not craft research poetry as such (besides in the end), and maybe it is even better that I do not, this study with its peculiarities still belongs to the same bin of alternative postmodern research feasts. (See, a new location.)

I have to admit, I do not really like research questions. No doubt curiosity and asking questions is part of the process, but clear-cut questions in the beginning of a study limit the use of intuition. Instead, I am following my own interests, intuitions and imagination in the process. This also engages me more in the study.

Anyhow, for the readability’s sake and to provide myself even some sketchy directions, I am going to ask throughout the study the following question:

**What kind of conceptualizations illustrate research poet/ry’s being-in-the-world?**

I feel happy to be a marketing student, the underdog of research. I am currently writing behind the philosophy bookshelves at the
University of Helsinki main library, Kaisa. I guess these other guys here don’t have a clue what I am doing... applying all these great theoretizations in human history in a such promiscuous manner. (Okay, I am the only one here with a MacBook, cherry Coke, liquorice root almonds, an ironic wolf woolly and listening to Arcade Fire’s latest album from Spotify. Must be hipster.) However, it is just much easier to apply philosophical ideas, when you know only a tiny fragment of them.

Nevertheless, I prefer to stay on the abstract level in order to understand deeper the contemporary culture we are currently living in. What is more, although I don’t mind about generalizations in the traditional sense, I feel this study becomes more ‘generalizable’ when staying on the conceptual stage. For instance, I hope this study in a way illuminates the present innovation and creativity hype in contemporary consumer culture (see also Hirschman 1980).

After writing this study, I am convinced that especially consumer research is one of the most permissive, experiental and less ideological streams of research in the academic field at the moment. Among other, for instance, humanistic studies, the word ‘consumer’ is loaded with negative connotations of the ‘market shit’ (for using ‘market shit’, see Kozinets 2002, 25). Please, forget the connotations and move on. And besides, the terms ‘consumer’ and ‘consumption’ actually depict better the constant activity and performativity, than, for instance, the stagnant terms of ‘human’ or ‘person’.

I am not going to present the different poetic research conducts, practices and procedures, since there is a great variety among them. If interested, for instance Canniford (2012) offers an enlightening review on procedures that are easily applied into consumer research. I am going to stay on the conceptual level and concentrate discussing the being of research poet/ry.

This study is organized into two parts. The first part consist of two chapters that both construct the basis of this study. The first, introductory chapter, Intro, has already provided a theoretical framework shedding light on postmodernism. In addition, it has offered information of the location, methodological principles and motives of this present study. The second chapter, Research Poetry, concentrates on presenting research poetry as a style of academic writing and reading.
conducted by the researcher. Finally, in the end of Part 1, research poetry and its creator, research poet, are joined together into research poet/ry.

The second part, … well, it’s a surprise. A surprise of ”[...] blank prose or, rather, blank generation prose – sorry, make that slacker scholarship, X-scholarship, gonzo scholarship, dumb and dumber scholarship, Tweedledum and Tweedledumber scholarship, Drink me scholarship”. Yep. I refuse to cite. Remember, a surprise.

Ultimately, why am I interested in the topic? Mainly, I am motivated by the fact that I passionately desire doing somewhat alternative research, preferably with artful elements. I also want to criticize the traditional constructions of doing research and offer alternatives by myself. I am enchanted by the idea of doing things differently and to provide new insights, never again spending time to justify why I do things the way I do. I also just turned 27, so I really need a lifesaver (Jim Morrison et al. didn’t have one).

Ultimately, when I grow up, I don’t want to return to Ithaca.
'Writing is seen as a secondary or mop-up activity in our professional pursuits.'

(Van Maanen 1995, 134)

"Probably the most controversial method published to date in the Journal of Consumer Research is that of researcher introspection, which we have asserted is a reasonable analogy for the writing of some poetry."

(Sherry et al. 2002, 229)

Not only has postmodernism had an effect on consumer culture, but also on the conception of legitimate academic inquiry and its tool of representation – writing. Denzin (2001a, 24-25) describes seven
historical, but still present, periods of qualitative research; “(1) the traditional (1900–1950); (2) the modernist, or golden age (1950–70); (3) blurred genres (1970–86); (4) the crisis of representation (1986–90); (5) the postmodern, or experimental (1990–6); (6) the post-experimental (1996–present); and (7) the future, the seventh moment”. Many scholars find the fourth period, the crisis of representation (alternatively, linguistic, cultural, interpretive or textual turn), as the basic theoretical stance to study cultural texts. This turn has promoted “language in the scheme of things and reverses the relationship typically thought to obtain between a description and the object of description” (Van Maanen 1995, 133-134), and views ‘representation’ (the production of meaning with signs through representational systems, such as verbal or visual languages (Hall 1997, 16-17)), as well as ‘narrative’ (a story providing a way of knowing), as the key terms of studying and operating with cultural texts (Shankar et al. 2001, 493). By concentrating on the seventh moment, this study takes into account the critical perspectives on the crisis of representation; “If, of course, we are in an ongoing and – oxymoron alert! – permanent state of crisis, then we can only conclude that the concept of “crisis” is itself in crisis, though we must acknowledge the possibility that the crisis in crisis may also be crisis prone and, hence, the crisis in crisis in crisis is crisis-stricken and … is that an infinite regress in your pocket-edition or are you just pleased to “C” me?” (Brown 1998, 367); and avoids the specific post-structural linguistic theories, which would attempt to provide systematic tools to examine cultural texts empirically (Shankar et al. 2001, 488-489). Postmodern tendencies have offered a variety of alternative research practices and philosophies for consumer researchers, but still, the subtle, taken-for-granted positivist ideals, such as objectivity and measurement, maintain to dominate the field (Holbrook 1996, 139; 2006, 714; Springgay et al. 2005, 897; Thompson, et al. 1989, 134-137; Van Maanen 1995, 133-134; see also Shankar et al. 2001, 482-483, 493-494)

Arts-based research “[i]s not exactly an art, nor is it a science […] It is a hybrid of fields, a truly interdisciplinary ground […]” (Lafrenière and Cox 2013, 320). A wide range of names has been suggested for this matrimony of arts and research: artful science (Brady 2004), art-informed studies (Lapum et al. 2012), arts-based research (ABR) (Lafrenière et al.
2013, Leavy 2010), art-based methodologies (Herman 2005), a/r/tography (Springgay et al. 2005), and artful research, just to name a few. From now on, I will be using the term research art (‘art research’ is already taken), to be avoid any valuative connotations and to strive for a relationship as equal as possible. (To discuss especially this present study, I will use the term research poetry or poetry. According to Faulkner (2007, 220), poetry in research should be called strictly ‘research poetry’ rather than ‘poetry’, since a methodological approach to poetry and its metapoetic discourse are not justifiable in literature studies. To illustrate, poetic writing style does not necessarily lead to poetry. However, for readability’s sake, I will be using also ‘poetry’.)

Research art builds upon two contemporary applications of academic writing, new ethnographical writing and cultural phenomenology that offer “[d]iverse means of producing enlightening, unpredictable and novel depictions of consumer culture, as well as powerful methods of reflexivity” (Canniford 2012, 392). In new ethnographical writing, writing itself is understood as a method of inquiry; ways of expression are exploited in order to produce intimate, self-reflexive and dialogical accounts of understanding that capture the ongoing construction of self, knowledge and representation (Sherry et al. 2002, 221-222). For example, autoethnography expands and emancipates both the stylistic form of academic writing and the researcher’s body with embodied writing, in which the researcher performs a research that positions the researcher’s body and self as central sites of contextualized knowing (Spry 2001, 710-711, 718, 724-727), whereas subjective personal introspection (SPI) leans on studying the essence of consumption experiences by observing researcher’s the inner world, such as evoked thoughts and emotions, with an expanded consciousness (Holbrook 1996, 113, 122-123, 139). The reader of new ethnographical works may personally assess the goodness of the text by deciding whether the text feels honest and compassionate, and therefore, evokes emotions, empathy and experiences (Sherry et al. 2002, 221-222). Cultural phenomenology combines both embodied and self-oriented new ethnographical writing styles to humanistic inquiry; to arts-based, creative representations and methodologies (Sherry et al. 2002, 220), since the humanities may be seen offer “major potential contributions to our understanding of
consumer behavior ... and vice versa” (Holbrook 2006, 716). Hence, cultural phenomenology privileges personal emotional experience, blurs the boundaries between writer and reader, and abandons the ethnographic realism of social worlds, in order to grasp presence and capture “what it feels like to be present in those social worlds” (Sherry et al. 2002, 220). To briefly open up the phenomenological side, understanding of the immediate experiences rather than psychological or unconscious motivations is pursued (Goulding et al. 2002, 269). Anyway, I am not going to address phenomenology this further.

By mixing the conceptual and categorial world of theories with the emotional and experiential world of arts, research art may be seen to rejoin the scientific and humanistic worlds of inquiry separated by the dualist spirit of modernism (Brady 2004, 623; Sherry and Schouten 2002, 218; Snyder-Young 2010, 884; Springgay et al. 2005, 897). Research art disturbs “positivistic, hegemonic discourses by opening up collaborative spaces of kinesthetic, emotional, and intellectual inquiry” (Snyder-Young 2010, 889) by challenging the traditional academic writing style, prose, which has been long privileged above all other forms of writing (Lahman et al., 2010 46), and thus, it fulfills “many scholars’ stated desires to use aesthetic forms to critique hegemonic discourses and democratize scholarship” (Snyder-Young 2010, 991). Instead of seeing the process of writing as ‘a secondary or mop-up activity’, it is conceived as a practice that really matters (Denzin 2000, 256, Denzin 2001a, 23) and affects people; “I assume that words and language have a material presence in the world, that words have effects on people. Words matter. I imagine a world […] in which language empowers, and humans are free to become who they can be, free of prejudice, repression, and discrimination[…]” (Denzin 2000, 257). In addition, research art offers a diversity of voices and perspectives that generate new knowledge (Thompson et al. 1998b, 146); “The answers —if indeed there are any— must come from the polyphonic voices that comprise our highly diverse field. We must be willing to listen to each other and to listen with respect. […] The goal is to learn from one another such that our ink-on-a-page theories and consequent understandings of organizations can be improved” (Van Maanen 1995, 140). In spite of these ideas above, the goals of qualitative research and those of humanistic writing are actually
already alike. Both processes concentrate on working with material to create an expressive form that generates discussion and interaction between the writer and reader (Davidson 2012, 97; Minge 2006, 119). In addition, in consumer research, “person-object relations have been largely construed in humanistic terms” already, as “individuals are assumed to use commodities to construct and symbolize a coherent self narrative or identity” (Thompson 1998, 58-59).

Research poetry has become one of the most frequently utilized research art forms within consumer research (Canniford 2012, 392; Sherry et al. 2002 231; see also Van Maanen 1995). It sheds fresh light on consumers as meaning makers, has the power to refresh the soul of the discipline (Sherry et al. 2002, 218-219, 231), and “improve qualitative inquiry by acknowledging and illuminating the presences and experiences of researchers in the production of knowledge” (Canniford 2012, 392). Moreover, the performative researcher’s intuition, reflexivity and involvement – the researcher as an instrument – may be seen to offer possibilities for dialogue between the researcher and researched as well as the reader (Sherry et al. 2002, 221-223). Therefore, the validity has become “intersubjective instead of objective in nature” (Holbrook 1997, 123). The resulting narratives can thus be evaluated based on the readers’ perceptions of the experiences expressed (Bochner et al. 2003, 509).

To underline the performativity of research poetry, I will be presenting poetic inquiry as writing and reading (Sherry et al. 2002, 226-229). Although there are also other ways to illustrate research poetry, for instance, Canniford’s (2012, 405-406) ‘poetic witness’, which consists of poetic transcription and translation, or generally used separation of inquiry and expression/representation, I find the idea of writing and reading most suitable for this study because of its conceptual clarity. In addition, I think that this particular typology is appropriate for the present study, since it refers to the contemporary performativity of academic writing, acknowledges the importance of the act of reading and leaves room for reader’s imagination. Moreover, since research poetry should be challenging traditional ways of conducting research, I find the idea of presenting precise technical criteria somewhat reactionary. Therefore, instead of addressing the different technicalities or categorizations in huge detail, I am going to follow Sherry et al.’s (2002,
perspective of conveying “a sense of the elements of craft such that the reader might develop a feel for the criteria used by poets in evaluating the technical merit of poetry”.

Research poetry has been criticized, too. To assess arts-based works in general, Lafrèniere et al. (2013, 333) offer a framework to evaluate “both the scientific and the artistic merit of arts-based creations used as a means for data representation”. More specific critical points on research poetry occur on ontological, epistemological, and methodological levels. According to Maréchal et. al (2010, 67, 71), the first two criticize research poems turning either inward or outward - to the self or to the idealized other - and therefore, detaching themselves from the important aspects of place and moment. The last one takes a look on the methodological side and the form and structure. Based on the critique, poetry should concentrate in the moment, time, space and artistic quality. Moreover, poetry develops its own form and principles for one’s own poetic practice— *ars poetica*. This can offer a means of generating criteria for the evaluation of poetry developed in and through research practice.

Of course, the value and validity of a finished poem has raised some thoughts. Qualitative researchers from various fields have generally pursued to define the ways to craft research poetry and generate a set of criteria to assess the ‘goodness’ of the poems (e.g. Faulkner 2007; Lafrenière et al. 2013; Lahman et al. 2009; 2011; 2013). However, art philosopher Eldridge (2003, 166-167) states that one of art philosophy’s greatest historical questions is the one of the value of an artwork, and especially the subjectivity and objectivity of the evaluations of it. He argues that to date, there are no direct answers or solutions to define what makes some artworks good and some not. And for the devil validity? “Put simply, traditional measures of validity are not appropriate criteria for judging research poems” (Lahman et al. 2010, 47; see also Lahman et al. 2013, 9).

In the following subchapters, I will present a typology of research poetry as *writing* and *reading* in order to illustrate the performative nature of research poetry. Finally, I will connect research poetry and research poet into *research poet/ry*.
"Anyone who has read the painful attempts of beginning poets can understand why inspiration without craft is insufficient. Likewise, without the freshness of inspiration and the authenticity born of intimacy with the subject, craft has nothing with which to work; here writing becomes technical exercise, mere practice."

(Sherry et al. 2002, 229)

"[...] poets write [...] sometimes just celebrating "the sheer fact of being alive" [...]"

(Brady 2004, 631)

Sherry and Schouten (2002, 229) suggest research poets to be intimate as well as distant with the data in order to both understand and place the topic of inquiry into a broader context. The process of

"[w]riting poetry involves two distinct categories of activity, inspiration and craft [...] The process of inspiration or epiphany results from intimate engagement with elements in the poet's internal and external environments. It includes introspection and exploration of the multiple meanings of words and phrases. It is this aspect of the creative process that gives good poetry its characteristic authenticity and its freshness of language and perspective [...] It is in the crafting of the poem that the poet withdraws from the raw feelings and imagery enough to discover some truth about their relationships to each other, to the poet, and to life as the poet seeks to understand it. These two categories of process may rarely occur in neat, linear fashion. [...] In the final crafting, through word choice, "soundscape," punctuation, line breaks, and so on, the poet strives to produce a holistic work that coheres at multiple levels of meaning" (p. 229).

Drawing from this, I will overview literature of the process of poetry
writing in this subchapter.

The writing of poetry is a process, which the research poet comprehends as creating *inquiry, expression*, or both. As for inquiry, poetry is a method of qualitative research (Sherry et al. 2002, 226, 231). According to Lahman et al. (2010, 40), poetry is utilized in qualitative research in six major ways: ‘poetic allusion’ (a piece of poetry to connect with the work, e.g. in the beginning of introduction); ‘cultural poetry research’ (the study of how different cultures use poetry); ‘participant poetry as data’; ‘data poems’ (using participants’ own words from the data); ‘research experience poems’ (or ‘poems from the field’, constituted from fieldwork when researchers utilize the genre of poetry to share their experiences of conducting a research study); and ‘autoethnographic poetry’ (composed by researchers to reveal some experience of the researcher in order to shed light on aspects of life pulled from personal experiences that would not traditionally be considered data). The first three are accepted as legitimate tools without much methodological discussion, but the last three have been contested. Whatever the way is, poems are scarcely published as such. That is, poems are usually embed in articles or explicated in footnotes (Lahman et al. 2013, 7).

As for expression, research poetry may be seen to have two genres. The first genre of ‘narrative poetry’ (some might call it research poetry, but in this present thesis it would be somewhat confusing) refers to storytelling and utilizes a participant’s exact words to construct a story as to convey the central message, whereas the second genre of ‘lyric poetry’ (alternatively, interpretive poetry), depicts actual emotional experiences in a way that blurs the boundaries between the research poet and the reader (Faulkner 2007, 219). Consumer researchers tend to orientate on the latter category. The means of ethnographical and poetic writing have a lot in common, especially when it comes to reflexivity and reflectivity. By priviledging emotionality, they both capture the lived experience of consumption. (This is actually is a diagnostic feature of humanistic writing, too.) Moreover, ethnographical and poetic writing both bring embodiment, dialogue and self-consciousness into method, and therefore, engage the researcher with the topic of inquiry. Poetry in particular advises the reader to fuse and celebrate "experience and reality,
imagination and reason” in “both rigorous and imaginative practices as well as in expository and evocative expression”, and therefore, ethnographical and poetic writing usually succeed in capturing “the complexities of contemporary consumption” (Sherry et al. 2002, 221-223). The broader context could address some central and universal themes of humanity. Practically, this is done by “paying strict attention to the reciprocal projections of self on others, an inevitable function of being a meaning-making social animal”. As humans are sensible beings, the essential qualities, such as “fear, anxiety, loneliness, pain, reassurance, solidarity, ambition, confusion, failure, pleasures” and “puzzles of mind, and the stirrings of lust and love” may be eligible topics of poetry, but likely excluded from scientific reports (Brady 2004, 630). Research poets use the techniques of writing “in and with the facts and frameworks of what they see in themselves in relation to Others, in particular landscapes, emotional and social situations, sometimes just celebrating “the sheer fact of being alive”, to make the poem both educational and comparative (p. 631).

The writing of poetry consists of data collection and pattern seeking constitution (Sherry et al. 2002, 226). To gather the data, a researcher first observes his exterior and interior realities for appropriate material, such as sensations, experiences, mental images, memories, conversations and interactions, and then records these observations, for instance, by writing, photographing or videotaping. As the material is collected, the researcher starts to seek both thematical and artistic patterns intuitively sorting out words and affectively connecting with the topic of inquiry in the light of a particular research question (Prendergast 2006, 370-372, Sherry et al. 2002, 226). The process of writing poetry demands language skills from the research poet. Generally speaking, the literary style of a poem is a public way to pack and convey meanings (Brady 2004, 628). As Sherry et al. (2002, 220) point out, “Style and substance, word and deed, language and interpretation are inextricably intertwined”. Therefore, the conspicuous and experimental poetic writing style also manipulates “for meaningful effects in an effort to say new things, old things in new ways, special things about Being-in-the-World” (Brady 2004, 628). However, research poetry has been criticized of the absence of concentration on form and structure. Little attention is paid to a poem’s line, rhyme,
rhythmic patterns and almost none to poetic forms, patterns and genres, since poetic forms are thought to “offer a vehicle for a “quick-fix” access to an aspect of another culture […] Some haunt the boundary between poetry and prose as poetic transcriptions rather than poems themselves” (Maréchal et al. 2010, 69). Snyder-Young (2010, 889-991) suggests a professional-orientated and collaborative solution for crafting research art in general. A researcher is not necessarily trained for using aesthetic form that illustrates the findings clearly and well. However, if crafted by oneself, frameworks of technical principles, such as “the dimensions of sound, meter, form, genre, diction, tone, voice, imagery, and symbolism”, may be found from literature studies (Sherry et al. 2002, 223). In addition, also metaphors that explain “something in terms of something else”, could work as tools of discovery and dialogue in poetry as well as in scientific writing (Brady 2004, 629). The thematic and artistic pattern seeking and writing continues until the author finds the poem ready; that is, “a poem is not finished until its emotional truth resonates with us as authors and sometimes with others […]” (Sherry et al. 2002, 226).

Following the critique of visual ethnography by Hietanen, Rokka and Schouten (2013) and applying it to research poetry, poetry should not be seen just is a methodological tool that can shed light on consumers as meaning-makers. Moreover, the ontological critique of research poetry questions the assumption of a poem accessing and expressing something that is thought to be essential; a research poem “cannot be justified in terms of nostalgic access to and expression of an essential self or the essence of experiences: experiences of which a sense of self is itself an effect” (Maréchal et al. 2010, 67, 69, 71). In other (postmodern-ish) words, there is no true, authentic self, which can be attained through poetry, and hence, research poems should not turn inward toward the ethnographer’s self.

Faulkner (2007, 221, 224, 229) states that poems cannot be evaluated without exploring the craft. Her suggestion of ars poetica (the principles for poetic practice emerging from poetry itself) entails evaluating the scientific as well as the artistic merits of research poetry. Although the conversation of the goodness of poetry circulates around formational issues, there are also some criteria that leave room for more
flexible definitions, such as voice. That is, a poem with a certain stylistic utterance shows a world of recognizable presence (Faulkner 2007, 223).

Nevertheless, every research method and way to express require practice, training and discipline in order to be credible and of good quality (Sherry et al. 2002, 230). However, strict criteria limits alternative research writing “by constraining freedom and possibility because of the connection of criteria with situated power structures”, and therefore, a set of criteria of depending on the particular situation, could be used in assessing research poetry, since the “conceptions of good or effective poetry may alter through time, experience, and changing tastes” (Faulkner 2007, 231).

Finally, as Van Maanen (1995), points out, style is theory. The topic of inquiry is actually recreated in the expression. In a similar vein, Sherry et al. (2002, 223) argue that “life and text are mutually implicated; writing itself is a method of inquiry, a constituting force, a rewording of the world”. Therefore, each style of expression constructs a different reality, since they place different criteria for acceptable forms of expression. The change in style changes the analytic perspective and “the premises for research entry points” (Brady 2004, 627).

“Anywise, for far too long our field has studiosly ignored representation qua representation; that is, the words and symbols on the page. For far too long [...] we have looked through the text rather than at it. For far too long we have accepted the positivistic dogma that research must be reported in a spare, exact, transparent, unadorned, rigorous, unassuming, objective, unpretentious, parsimonious prose [...] as the “art of artless writing” (Brown 1998, 378).

Hence, in poetry writing, the research poet is expressing, and consequently, creating the topic of inquiry from her own perspective.

POETRY READING

“[...] eyeball to eyeball, person to person, self-conscious knowledge cuts very close
to empirical ground in the sweaty little domain we call life. That experience plays out for all of us in a self-constructing arena largely as metaphor; for some, that same material is ripe pickings for poetic exposition. The result is a complex domain for and about Being-in-the-World.”

(Brady (P.643))

"If my poetry aims to achieve anything, it's to deliver people from the limited ways in which they see and feel."

Jim Morrison

Instead of taking for granted the act of reading, poetry reading should be seen as an active, co CREational and meaning-making encounter between the research poet and the reader (Sherry et al. 2002, 226). Poetry packs the polyvocal, complex aspects of consumer realities and experiences, such as feelings, seeings, touchings or hearings, into a condense and understandable package that may be unpacked and felt differently on every reading (Lahman et al. 2011, 887). In other words, in the process of reading, poetry offers alternative discourses that free language from the limiting canonical conventions and discourses, and contribute to new, imaginative ways of knowing, such as feeling (Canniford 2012, 393). In the process of reading poetry, important consumer experiences are experienced through the condense, expressive and intense language that helps the reader to grasp presence (Canniford 2012, 404; Faulkner 2007, 218-219; Maréchal et al. 2010, 67; Lapum et al. 2012, 103-104; Sherry et al. 2002, 218-219, 220, 221-223). For instance, “intense experiences of pleasure, pain, desire, joy or fear require spaces for expression and inquiry beyond regular modes of representation. Poetry, on the other hand, offers a means to present emotional experiences in a more emotive manner” (Canniford 2012, 396). That is, poems are efficient in capturing humanity, expanding consciousness, cultivating empathy, and hence, by blurring the boundaries and reproducing the writer and reader in a co-
creational process of reading, a poem takes its reader closer to understanding of oneself, to self-exploration and self-discovery (Faulkner 2007, 218-219; Maréchal et al. 2010, 67; Lapum et al. 2012, 103-104; Sherry et al. 2002, 218-219, 220, 221-223). Moreover, all research methods require a close reading, but “[…] poetry differs from other methods is in its expectation that the audience members engage their own imaginations to "read between the lines" and draw on their personal storehouses of knowledge and emotion. Therein lies the special power of poetry to reveal truth: it helps us find it within ourselves” (Sherry et al. 2002, 227). Therefore, the reading of poetry has been described as an "emerging sacramental event," a way of connecting more deeply with self and other; the poem gives "the gift of intimacy and interiority, privacy and participation" as we reinhabit it through reading […]” (p. 226).

Poetry is similar to storytelling, which is one of the most fundamental human activities. Its stories consist of elements taken from interior and exterior, and connects these to the “physical presence of being” in order to create a “space that is connected to the deepest level of existence” (Brady 2004, 630). Poetry is an effective way of writing intersubjectively and thus, it should be used for expressing gained understanding to others (Sherry et al. 2002, 220). According to Brady (2004, 630, 643), in the process of reading, the writer and the reader can meet and share universal themes of humanity everyone has in common. Poetry is a viable tool for emancipatory perspectives of consumer culture, since it is able to underline cultural inequities and question taken-for-granted power relations (Leavy 2010, 240, Sherry et al. 2002, 231.) Nevertheless, poetry does not only express conscious emotions and experiences, but also the unspoken and mystical aspects of human mind, such as dreams and fantasies;

“Such transcendent experiences may be difficult to understand and communicate because they are particularly resistant to scientific language. In Maslow’s words, they are "not communicable by words that are analytic, abstract, linear, rational, exact, etc. Poetic and metaphorical language, physiognomic and synesthetic language, primary process language of the kind found in dreams, reveries, free associations and fantasies, not to mention pre-words and non-words such as gestures, tone of voice, style of speaking, body tonus, facial expression—all these are more efficacious in communicating certain aspects of the ineffable" […]” (Sherry et al. 2002, 220).
The epistemological criticism on research poetry, questions poetry’s ability to encapsulate an experience into an simple entity. Research poetry “cannot justify itself in terms of a romanticized turning toward, and encapsulation of, the essential other”, but instead, the poems need to concentrate on the moment, place and motion (Maréchal et al. 2010, 69, 71). The reader always interprets, negotiates and understands texts actively from her own perspective, in spite of the author’s intentions (Shankar et al. 2002, 495; Sherry et al. 2002, 220-221). “The poetry we have in mind is ultimately allegorical, a vehicle of discovery for personal and moral truths that demands coparticipation and coproduction of readers and that engages the reader’s body as well as mind […] It acknowledges the intellectual, aesthetic, moral, emotional, intuitive, embodied "pull" […] that tugs every researcher a bit distinctively” (Sherry et al. 2000, 221-223). Therefore, “[the emphasis on lived experiences and emotional contexts in poetic representation can increase understanding […] shared experiences can in turn break down hierarchical barriers between writer and reader […] and writer–reader–participant”(Carroll 2011, 628). Moving to even more postmodern direction, Faulkner (2007, 224) argues that there is a “[…] need for poetry to make audiences feel with, rather than about a poem, to experience emotions and feelings in situ […] poetry will become an experience for the reader, rather than simply talk about an experience […]”.

As was already discussed, reflexivity refers to the idea of understanding oneself in order to understand others. In addition, it relocates the writer and reader. Poetry is a revelation of researcher point of view and a vehicle of researcher reflexivity (Sherry et al. 2002, 218, 231). Through reflexivity, the research poet is perspectively and emotionally located within the research process and ultimately, the poem. By reading a poem, one may simultaneously understand the thoughts, feelings and beings of the author and the topic of inquiry (Sherry et al. 2002, 224-226). Since poetry reflexively embodies the researcher’s experiences, emotions and presences in the production of knowledge, it in a way exposes research poet (Canniford 2012, 392; Prendergast, 2006, 371). In addition, poetic inquiry is said to entail a
performative revelation of the participatory reader (Prendergast 2006, 372). Due to poetry’s self-revealing aspects, the poet becomes the reader of one’s poetry, a self-producer and a self-consumer (Bradshaw et al. 2007). During the process, the research poet discovers and creates new understanding of oneself. To take a more postmodern stance, the understanding is actually extended to the writer’s co-existing, co-creating and synthesized selves (Brady 2004, 63).

Thus, since the research poet is simultaneously also the reader, poetry reading becomes a process of self-exploration.

**RESEARCH POET/RY**

“The poets of consumer research are ethnographers, introspective exhibitionists, brute empiricists, and mystics seeking to illuminate the production of consumption.”

(Sherry et al. 2002, 220.)

“[…] postmodern scholars perspicaciously realize that unless consumers and consumption are conceptualized as terms that bridge social and economic realms, consumer emancipation is impossible.”

(Kozinets 2002, 22-23.)

In this small subchapter I explain why research poetry could be actually written ‘research poet/ry’. This conclusion is based on themes discussed in earlier chapters and subchapters.

As explicated in the beginning of this study, I also consider consumption as an immaterial process. Therefore, I find research poet/ry as immaterial consumption, which is materialized in its performative
practices of writing and reading. Denzin (2001a, 36) illustrates that this “…is writing that speaks performatively, enacting what it describes. It is writing that does what it says it is doing, by doing it. […] performative writing is evocative, reflexive, multi-voiced, criss-crosses genres, is always partial and incomplete […] But in performative writing things happen, it is writing that is consequential, and it is about a world that is already being performed. To say that Smith writes performatively is to say that her scripts […] allow persons to experience their own subjectivity in the moment of performance. Performance writing is poetic and dramatic. It transforms literal (and transcribed) speech into speech that is first-person, active, in motion, processual. In such texts, performance and performativity are intertwined, each defines the other. The performer’s performance creates a space the other enters”.

In addition, I regard consumers and their consumption conceptually inseparable. Hence, research poet cannot be separated from performative research poetry. This speaks for the idea of research poet/ry.

To continue even further, I will add here the idea of the writer is also the reader, discussed in the previous subchapter. Denzin (2003, 252-253) summarizes that the “[…] performance tale is always allegorical, a symbolic tale, a parable which is not just a record of human experience. This tale is a means of experience, a method of empowerment. It is a vehicle for readers to discover moral truths about themselves. More deeply, the performance tale is a utopian tale of self and social redemption, a tale which brings a moral compass back into the reader’s (and the writer’s) life”. Based on these ideas, the writer of performative research poet/ry is simultaneously also the reader.

The stylistic form as well as the idea for research poet/ry builds upon Springgay et al.’s (2005) concept of a/r/tography. According to Springgay et al. (2005, 899, 908), a/r/tography is arts-based research as embodied, performative and active living inquiry. The researcher, who practices deep inquiry in one’s life and makes meaning through his or her senses, emotions, body and mind, is positioned in the roles of an artist, a researcher and a teacher. In a/r/tography, the inquiry is carried out through both the interconnected and meaning-constituting processes of art making and research writing, in which the readers take part. All of the elements and participants inform and shape each other in the active
moment of lived inquiry. What is more, new readings open doors for new meanings with time.

In sum, research poet/ry joins the writer (research poet), the reader and performative research poetry together. Research poet/ry is a performative and reflexive process of writing and reading. A conceptual mess, for sure. However, the idea of may be grasped easier, when thinking of an organic, living and breathing inquiry. If it helps, you are free to anthropomorphize and give even a name to it. Next, I will move on the second part of this study.
Listen, real poetry doesn’t say anything; it just ticks off the possibilities. **OPENS ALL DOORS.** You can walk through anyone that suits you.

*Jim Morrison*
Where’s your will to be weird?

Jim Morrison

Phew! So far, so… credible. But what a mess I’ve made, oh lord. Well, it is not my fault. As Brown (yep, now you get it) (1998, 368) notes, “[h]uman beings require consonance, they need things to make sense and are predisposed to impose structure on the existential flux and fragmentation of our daily lives. The idea that we live within a sequence of events between which there is no pattern, relation, progression or mutuality, is simply unthinkable. Hence, humankind is inclined to impose beginnings, middles, ends and all manner of breaks upon time. Just as our individual lives have a clearly discernible plot structure, so too “we project our existential anxieties onto history” […], “we hunger for
ends and for crises” […]”, we can’t avoid “a certain metaphysical valoration of human existence” […]”. Hence, I have been forced to mishandle your eyes with all the dots, commas, semi-colons and brackets. Pardon me.

I guess this part of the study also explains my enthusiasm for reflexivity and performativity. However, my authentic [sic] voice and reflexivity really is colored by postmodern irony (Still remember the wolf woolly? Good, I’ll wear it for my graduation), so this style of writing is a must.

Okay, there still is this existential and postmodern stuff even Brown seems to appreciate, so I’ll just stick to that. (Let’s keep this just between you and me, though. For a postmodern (sigh) kid like me admitting to believe in some construction feels like admitting to read horoscopes. I’m sagittarius, by the way.) Part 1 overviewed two theoretical themes: postmodern consumer culture and research poetry. As was discussed, postmodern consumers and their consumption are inseparable, since rather than having, postmodern consumers are looking for immaterial and meaningful states of being. Consumers are free and active ‘agents of being’ (just loving the 007 connotation); they create and perform their own identities and realities. As for research poetry, poetic writing has challenged traditional writing styles with a self-expressive breeze, whereas poetic reading has connected the writer/reader self-exploratorily. This part brings these theoretical themes together and views the being of research poet/ry in contemporary academic writing.

You know, I know, we all know that this liberation (or, emancipation, but as a feminist, I prefer liberation as it gives more room for the reader’s imagination) stuff is just one big setup. But seriously, I’m on a mission to liberate these research poets to transform a bit more weird. Brown (1998, 378). “[…] papers tend to describe rather than demonstrate the importance of rhetoric, storytelling, creativity, poetics or whatever. There’s nothing wrong with description, of course, or even prescription, but it’s kinda hard to get excited over, say, “liberatory” postmodernism when the paper is written in ponderous academic prose […]”. Well, touché. Hopefully this Part 2 of my thesis satisfies your appetite, Mr. Brown.

On that weird-o account, liberation from the constraints of
academic writing conventions may be seen as the main motivator of joining the realms of research and poetry together. Contemporary consumer researchers for sure value the traditional academic writing style, and ways to conduct research, since they have offered valuable tools to represent and achieve knowledge, but as such, they also limit the experimental endeavours and the generation of new insights. This study offers a good example; I cannot study just one framework, method, theory or topic. I need a pulsatile and manifold topic to feel inspiration, attraction and genuine meaningfulness.

However, the old zetetic, Kozinets (2002, 36), states that liberation is local and only temporary; “[i]t is easier for consumers to live in self-authenticating simulations when they are tightly bounded in time and in space. The speed of hypercommunity, the urgency of performativity, and the inversion of the festival all overlap to enthrone the disorderly, chaotic, anarchic, creative, risk-taking, and innovative forces of human nature, as against its orderly, planned, pre-programmed, boring, and imitative aspects. For practical reasons, communities of this sort can only be temporary. Yet the illumination of taken-for-granted market logics, the flashes of inspiration, and the transformation of individuals and groups may be longer lasting”. Yes, thank you. I appreciate the last sentence. Kozinets (p. 36) continues that actually, temporariness does not matter; “[r]ather than providing a resolution to the many extant social tensions in contemporary life—such as those surrounding the beneficial and oppressive elements of markets—it offers a conceptual space set apart within which to temporarily consider, to play with and within those contradictions. It falls short of some ideal and uncontaminated state, but it may be all the consumer emancipation most consumers want or need”. Amen.

Moreover, Kozinets (2002, 22) notes that “notions of consumer emancipation and theaters of consumption are inspiring and visionary, but abstract. They leave as an open question the processes by which (and even the mere possibility that) consumers can find a way to leave the market”. Wow, he’s on fire. Anyhow, I agree, but consumers necessarily do not have a need to liberate from the market at all, because in the end, why would they? I find the idea of big bad market, academic writing or even postmodernism as constructed (although materialized). Actually,
these abstractions do not limit anyone’s life as long as one finds ways to cope within these constructions. Kozinets (p. 33) continues that the “emancipatory drive is instead directed at an exploitative ethos that weakens social ties and dampens self-expressive practices”. True dat, as well. Liberation, therefore, offers a conceptual tool to discuss what is happening in peoples lives, or research poet/ry. In the final subschapter, I suggest that actually, liberation is a metaphor for self-transformation – not necessarily to adopt to the dominant construction (like if that would be essentially a bad thing), but liberating from the constraints and constructions of oneself, as well.

Alienation will be jealous, if I’m not saying anything about it anymore. Well, alienation, you have a special place in research poets’ hearts when they want “the world to admire their community’s creativity and authenticity, but they resist letting outsiders join in it “ (Kozinets 2002, 32) – positivists, to say. Second, speaking of the cultural role of artists, they “present themselves as being alienated from the machinations of commerce” (Bradshaw, McDonagh & Marshall 2006, 116). Nevertheless, instead of being alienated and passive, the artists demonstrate considerable agency in taking control of the administrative paperwork, and other aspects of for instance marketing, of their career. Hence, the Romantic of bohemian desires and the commercial discourses and are kept side by side, “through a complex and dialectical balancing act”, as alienation becomes part of their sense of self (p.116). There you go.

To add some performativity here, every social act may be seen to be a performance contributing a cultural, societal or personal being-in-the-world (Gray 2003, 255, see also Butler 2006/1990). From the point of view of this study, the performances most apparent are those of writing and reading. Usually these performances are learned, practiced and rehearsed, and people may be seen as performers in their life performances (Gray 2003, 255-266). Drawing from Kozinets et al. (2004, 671), a producer provides a consumer a stage to perform, and consequently, the “performance turns the consumer into a producer”. All roles and ways of being are discursive formations, illusions, that actually materialize the body; “[i]n other words, subjects are the effects rather than the causes of discourses” (Morison et al. 2013, 566-568).
Building upon Kozinets’ (2002, 22) conceptualization of emancipatory self-expressive and communal acts, but mainly based on my self-reflexive intuition, I will specify and conceptualize self-expressivity to creativized writing and communality to empathized reading, since personally I find these best in depicting my own, liberatory performatives. (Ha! I’m the queen of concepts.) I see creativized writing and empathized reading helping research poet/ry to pursue a liberatory state of being. Research poets might feel oppressed, but they are not completely running away from research. Quite the contrary, they are creating new, liberatory ways to acquire knowledge in the realm of research, since “resistance must always be articulated from within existing discourses” (Morison et al. 2013, 569). Performativity and liberation are inevitably connected, and “this grounded aesthetic functions both as a vehicle and as a site of resistance. […] They turn these negative images into positive representations. […] In the sensuous enactment of this aesthetic, the consumer becomes an active player in the construction of new racial identities” (Denzin 2003, 251). Usually, I have found pulsating, living energy from the arts. Art forms such as photography, film and music have worked as means to get closer to my emotional, living reality. However, there is also a huge selection of attractive and stimulating academic literature as well. Perhaps unconsciously, I have drifted towards this liberatory fusion of both inquiries. Minge (2006, 123) summarizes it well; “fusion of inquiry allows more entering room. The door into a new perspective opens, even ever so slightly. The fusion embraces complexity without privileging one form of inquiry over another.” In sum, research poet/ry adopts a subject position of a performer and performs the poetry and the poet freely and liberatingly at the stage of academic writing. (yawn)

In this second part of the study, I finally suggest that research poet/ry’s creativized writing and empathized reading create reincarnatory being-in-the-world. Both creative and emphatic performances promote being in touch with one’s own feelings. Feelings for their part remind of being alive. If one is connected with own and others feelings, one is one step closer to humanity. One is creating oneself and ‘becoming an existing human being’ (Holbrook 1996, 120). In other (more concrete) words, from the point of view of this study,
creativized writing and empathized reading contribute to self-making and self-transformation – to reincarnation. (Carnivorization, carnivorazation? Carnivorzation? ...which reminds me of feeding my dogs. Reindeer bones, haha. Merry Xmas, y’all and welcome to Finland. Actually, I’m a vegetarian. Just feeding my dogs raw, oh urban.)

In this chapter, I will discuss research poet/ry based on the body of literature reviewed in previous chapters. Some new, illustrative theoretical perspectives may still arise, but basically, they are there for the sake of curiosity and explicatory clarification, not fundamental theorizing. During the discussion, I lean mostly on Kozinets (2002). The goals of this study are pursued by the reflexive and conceptualized perspectives drawn from literature, as I am striving for research poet/ry – to be a research poet of this present research poem. This chapter entails three subchapters. I have already started by illuminating the most important metaphysical force and motivator, liberation, in both research poet/ry’s pursuit of creating one’s own being-in-the-world. In the first subchapter, I will continue to the creativized writing, which concentrates on self-expression. The second subchapter talks over empathized reading, which has more to do with self-exploration. The final subchapter discusses the reincarnatory being of research poet/ry.

**CREATIVIZED WRITING**

_I am the lizard king, I can do anything._

Jim Morrison

I guess you’ve already noticed I like to quote Jim Morrison? No? Well, he is God. And I am a nun in a marketing blonde disguise… no, but seriously, I LOVE HIM, I LOVE HIM, I LOVE HIM. (If anyone invents a time machine, please take me to 1969. And FYI, I have hurry to graduate, thus the lack of this metatext. Metametameta. This study has been a big fat meta extravaganza.)

With the conceptualization of creativized writing, I refer to the
research poet’s self-expressive performativity, which is materialized in
the writing of research poetry, as well as in the ‘writing’ of the story of
oneself – performing as a poet. These writings take place simultaneously,
in research poet/ry. I ended up with this conceptualization, since from
the beginning of this thesis project, my objective has been creativity. In a
way, I have been puzzled. I am well aware of the cultural construction of
the idea of creativity, but still, I enjoy the myth it embodies. There is
something mystical and magical in the term, and I adopted it with
(narcissistic) pleasure. In this subchapter, I will be addressing creativized
writing in more detail.

Creativity as a term may be understood from general and cultural
perspectives. Generally speaking, although creativity has been
occasionally associated with the interplay of madness and genius in
artistic or scientific achievements, it has been studied to be a set of
capabilities, such as problem-solving, social adjustment, empathy,
sensitivity, rationality and open-mindedness (Hirschman 1980, 283,
286). From a more cultural point of view, creativity is “posited as
enmeshed in a power struggle against mainstream representation and
overthrown by the reproductive and deauthenticating forces [...]”
(Kozinets 2002, 32). This cultural conception of creativity has its roots in
the ethos of Romanticism, which emphasizes “[...] “change, diversity,
individuality and imagination” as well as ”dissatisfaction with the
contemporary world, a restless anxiety in the face of life, a preference for
the strange and curious, a penchant for reverie and dreaming, a leaning
toward mysticism, and a celebration of the irrational” [...]”, and strives
to solve a dominant problem with the creative acts of construction and
reconstruction through an expanded consciousness (Holbrook 1996,
100, 107-113). The constant movement, activity and striving are the
ideals of the Romantic life (p. 108).

I find my creativized writing as a constant performance that aims at
self-expression. Therefore, my writing of this work reminds of the
creation of art, which emphasizes on “self-expression and self-
transformation rather than practical matters provides it with a useful
differentiation from the prevailing ethos of productivity and efficiency”
(Kozinets 2002, 31). To understand my enchantment of creativity, the
“ [...] discourse and practice relating art and self-expression to a vast
variety of forms of consumption and production can be understood as attempts to temporarily re-enchant a social world dominated by rationalized, efficiency-driven consumption by encouraging the temporary reemergence of an animistic culture where things regain their magical meaningfulness.” (Kozinets 2002, 32-33). As a marketing student with a humanistic mindset, I most definitely find the magical meaningfulness more luring than the traditional, efficiency-driven ideologies.

Instead of pursuing to express something that I find essential or inherent, I think I can attain creativity by writing a work that entails some primitive and mystified discourses, which are opposite to the traditional idea of academic writing. That is, primitivism is a discursive construction used to refer to an escape from the malaise of complex modern culture to the simplicity of premodern cultures: to illustrate, the primitive ideal emphasizes stress, ecological degradation, restrictions of civilization and urban living to be substituted with harmony, nature and carnivalesque rituals of tribal cultures (Canniford et al. 2012, 1052, see also Kozinets 2002; Sherry et al. 2007). Since “the nature/culture dualism” remains "ingrained in Western culture... organizing the imaginations of ordinary people" [...]”(Canniford et al. 2012, 1053, 1065), “[c]onsumers commonly frame nature as the opposite of culture in romantic consumption events that offer sublime, magical, or primitive experiences” (Canniford et al. 2012, 1063). Also poetry is associated with primitivism; "[p]oetry originated in primitive utterances of passion which, through organic causes, were naturally rhythmic and figurative” (Holbrook 1996, 106). Therefore, the poetic way to express could be seen as pure and primitive nature, where research poet may be seen to escape from traditional academic writing. This thesis works as an example of consumption in the level of abstraction, and since consumption in concrete places that are untouched and perceived authentic enhance “the existential risk and danger essential to sublime experiences”, but “are considered ideal to establish magical links with sacred nature”. (Canniford et al. 2012, 1052-1053, see also Kozinets 2002), it is easy to understand the existential and magical themes especially in the final subchapter of Reincarnations.
Other Romantic discourses that have a close relation to creativization writing of research poet/ry, are those of authenticity, enchantment and mystification. As already stated in the beginning of this study, the valuing of authenticity is typical of the postmodern. Creativity is seen as authentic and interesting, and for instance, underground subcultures are perceived more authentic than the mainstream. (Kozinets 2002, 31-32) I have to say, at least from my perspective (I’m not biased), I find my research poet/ry more authentic than traditional, positivistic research. For the part of enchantment and mystification, Kozinets (2002, 24) illustrates that “postmodern consumers produce a variety of consumption experiences for one another, they attempt to re-enchant or "re-mystify" the social world by discursively constructing a myriad of forms of production and consumption as forms of self-expressive art. By positioning production and consumption as expressive rather than productive, the rational efficiency motive that drives marketplace production is discursively disabled, and opportunities for re-enchantment emerge.” A self-expressive, mystified and enchanting practice is to adopt a pseudonym. Kozinets (p. 24) explains that a pseudonym “provides recreation, a degree of anonymity, and a type of decoration”. In Burning Man festival, people have ‘nom de playas’, Holbrook calls himself ‘Morris the Epicurean’ (Kozinets 2002, Holbrook 1996) and Jim Morrison declared himself as the Lizard King. To admit, I also do have a pseudonym, or an alter ego, of ‘Iida Maidenmaa-Pähkinä’ (something like “Iida the World of the Worlds–Peanut” in English). My close and always funny friends call me ‘Mm-P’. Although Holbrook has done it, I guess using that name in this thesis would have been somewhat… weird.

My creativized writing is motivated by self-expressional fantasies and the hedonism these fantasies provide. Hedonism, which draws from Romanticism and may be seen as one of the characteristics of contemporary consumption, has a strong linkage to fantasizing and imagination (Goulding 2002, 276, Holbrook 1996, 98, 100):

“Individuals employ their imaginative and creative powers to construct mental images which they consume for the intrinsic pleasure they provide, a practice best described as day-dreaming or fantasizing […] the contemporary hedonist is a dream artist […] convincing day-dreams are created, such that individuals react subjectively
to them as if they were real [...] Thus fantasizing is fundamentally a form of hedonism [...] Modern hedonism is marked [...] by a preoccupation with 'pleasure,' envisaged as a potential quality of all experience. In order to extract this from life, however, the individual has to substitute illusory for real stimuli [...] This modern, autonomous, and illusory form of hedonism commonly manifests itself as daydreaming and fantasizing [...] “(Holbrook 1996, 100, cursive added)

In other words, subjective imagination of an experience leads to the experience of pleasure (Holbrook 1996, 104). As Holbrook (p. 102) points out, this is also in line with Holbrook and Hirschman’s (1982) explorations of “fantasies, feelings, and fun” as the experiential aspects of consumption. More interestingly, the “celebration of the imagination as a unifying force that achieves "the reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities" together with an “[... ] emphasis on the role of feeling [... ]”, lead to the “view that "poetry must be passion", that is, passion is a requirement “[... ] for the production of poetry [...]” (1996, pp. 109-110). Passionate creation of poetry generates joy, happiness and peace, but however, “[i]n joy individuality is lost [... ]”, and therefore, there is a connection between “ the loss of joy and the drying-up of the powers of creative imagination” (p.110). This is a theme I will continue in the next subchapter.

One of the most central themes of Romanticism is that of a poet seeing oneself as a hero separated from nature and possessing a limiting self-consciousness. Thus, the poet-hero is on a quest to find an expanded consciousness from the primitivism of nature, and in other words, striving for overcoming the subject-object separation. (Holbrook 1996, 122.) My creativized writing entails an element of fantasizing; I have a fantasy of being this kind of poet-hero. My fantasies are constructed of my imagination, dreams, unconscious thoughts as well as cultural myths. Kozinets et al. (2004, 671) noted that consumers felt satisfaction based on identification; “brand, media, and celebrity images from the world of film, television, music, video games, and sports are profoundly interrelated and practically inseparable from consumers’ self-images. Media images are very often noted as important guides for consumer fantasies [... ]”. However, they (p.671) continue that

“Consumers also creatively make their own play and devise their own fantasies, riffing with the raw materials at hand—imagistic and otherwise. To dismiss the
intimate connections between intention and role modeling, between alterity and self-image, and between observing and doing, is to miss key aspects about what it is to be human and also to ignore the intimate feedback loops that create the stories, myths, and entertainment that endlessly enrich human culture. Refracted through consumer fantasy, consumer agency in an image-driven culture may have become indistinct. It may be indistinct, however, not because consumers are deceived or confined but because they (at least some of them) are inspired and satisfied."

Thus, I have absorbed my conception of a poet – an artist – from media culture. Bradshaw et al. (2007, 131) illustrate this conception as follows:

“Dialectically understood through the lens of critical theory, the more our lives move toward an existence in which individuality becomes mediated through the marketplace culture, the more we yearn for a non-commercially constituted existence […] Thus, the arts and artistic expression – where this will toward market transcendence is fundamental – become sites for consumer imagining […] Indeed, with its reference to bohemian outsiders, the rebel sell has been termed ‘hip consumerism’ […] As marketers cleverly work bohemian mythology into branding strategies, they allow a product to be positioned as promising supposedly authentic countercultural self-reconstruction […] consumer culture is permeated by mythologies reflecting culturally resonant visions of an emancipated world […] In this sense, centred in bohemia, we can understand musicians as prophets of market emancipation and therefore find their high-profile attempts to negotiate the fundamental contradiction so gripping precisely because these efforts mirror our own market-grounded cultural anxieties […]”

Films, books, television series and advertising present artists as bohemian, creative and eccentric; “[…] appreciation of musicians is often driven by our perception of how well they organize the signs of their personality […] and, in particular, how they attempt to register bohemian ideologies of ‘truth’, ‘subjectivity’, and ‘authenticity’ within the market realities […] We are inspired by musicians who are seen to resist the market in favour of bohemian ideals […] because therein lies the possibility, for us Romantic consumers, of complete market emancipation and abstention from bourgeois conformity.” One of the biggest cultural myths of artists fascinated through the ages, is the one of artistic self-destruction (Bradshaw et al. 2007, 130-132). This narrative describes an artist, “a tragic, creative genius, who, is misunderstood by the utilitarian and conventional bourgeoisie, and therefore, a poorish
outcast of society. The artist is usually seen “as starving and dying; the artist as a deviant and a suicide; the artist as insane and alcoholic; the artist as undiscovered genius whose greatness is not recognised until after his death” (p. 122). I find an analogy between this self-destructive struggle and the idea of consumer liberation entailing the practice of sacrifice, which

“[…] is one of the most radical practices that can symbolize the temporary suspension of market logics of efficiency and productivity. Although major sacrifice […] has important practical benefits for the individuals who perform it, this takes little away from its rich ritual significance and potential to displace the productive, acquisitive, and exploitative self-interested calculus of the market. To disattach yourself from your belongings, to ask yourself what you can do without, what you came […] to burn, can be simultaneously self-reflective and self-transforming. […] the burning of acquisitions can be a transformational shrinking of this (over)extended material self—one that can be experienced on individual and social levels, linked to communal and antimatierist ideals. Sacrifice is semiotically bound up with religion, mysticism, art, and community.” (Kozinets 2002, 34.)

Creativized writing manifests concretely itself in performative research poet/ry. There is no need to settle for just dreaming, since the consumer agents, research poets, may play and perform the role of a poet. Actually, a research poet may even regard oneself as a ‘real’ poet: “An artist, in fact, may be viewed as metaphor; “a person who confronts her experiential world by means of a craft and without exerting any conscious conceptual influence and who draws on it to create something new. Thus, anyone can be an artist” (Saarnivaara 2003, 582). However, to convince other people of one’s ‘poetness’, research poets may perform some cultural roles and stereotypes of artists in general. Naturally, many of these stereotypes have their roots in the Romantic ideals of how an artist should live, as well as die (Bradshaw et al. 2007, 123). As already illustrated, one of the most common stereotypes of an artist, is the one of a self-destructive bohemian. An embodiment the cultural idea of a bohemian artist becomes with both brighter and darker side-effects. Bohemia might convey the feeling of authenticity for others and satisfy the artist by performing just for own pleasure. However, it might also lead to despair or making money and moving away from bohemia. (Bradshaw et al. 2007, 126.) As was discussed, the research poet
is simultaneously the writer and the reader of one’s poems. Interestingly, also the ideal bohemian artist is a self-producer and a self-consumer. Thus, in creative endeavours, the production as well as the consumption of one’s own artistic genius and aesthetic experience is always present. (Bradshaw et al. 2007.)

According to Bradshaw et al (2007, 132), “[…] central to the mythology of the self-destructing artist is the longing of admirers and critics for freedom, abandon, and self-determination”. Following a similar line of thought, Holbrook (1996, 115) suggests that important in the act of fantasizing is “[…] persuading others […] as to build a social consensus in support of a given approach […].” That is to say, although research poet/ry offers alternatives, it still longs for acceptance. If no one accepted this present study, it would be pretty overwhelming to ever continue with themes and styles like these. (Thanks, Brown.) Thus, research poets may at least unconsciously fantasize offering rhetorically persuasive material – or even a persuasive role – that convinces antagonists at some level. Therefore, I suggest that since the myth of an artist and her creativity, imagination and bohemia, is accepted as almost as an ideology, it is used to convince the antagonists poets truly inhabit these areas, and hence, the dream of being accepted is one step closer. At least on the level of fantasizing. Helluva self-expression, to say.

**EMPATHIZED READING**

"[...] The true poet, one might say, gropes in the dark. Far from being omniscient on the subject of his work, he is merely a faithful servant of his hunches. [...]"

(Sherry et al. 2002, 221, citing poet Charles Simic.)

‘Hunches’.... Hunchback of Notre-Dame, aww. Always makes me feel a bit sad. That little man in his tower, all alone. (And still, I have the graduation coming up. MY METATEXT, don’t go.)
Research poet/ry’s second liberating performance that I ended up with is the one of empathized reading. This performance promotes self-exploration, emotional encounter and connection with oneself in the pursuit of liberation. Surely, it would have been easier to bring a communal view to the liberatory discussion by stating research poets are empowered by the communality’s ideals of caring, sharing, connection, mutual interests and joining the agencies, roles, and identities together (Kozinets 2002, 33). Or perhaps to state that research poets find poetry as a means to unite and connect with different people, since they regard dealing with things that are in the core of humanity and ‘true’ understanding (p. 31). However, I settled upon this conceptualization, because this thesis writing process made me unsure whether research poet/ry really is about connecting with others. When being empathetic, one imagines how others feel. However, it is a pure impossibility to know how others feel, and thus, empathy is a projection of one’s own feelings. Moreover, I realized that rather than connecting with other people, I need to connect with myself, explore myself – of course, with empathy. Although in this subchapter I will be discussing some therapeutic themes, I would like to avoid overly medicalized discourses in order to give fresh perspectives – for my readers and for myself. Therefore, empathy.

Culturally speaking, a therapeutic ethos really does soar over the postmodern consumer culture (Thompson et al. 1998, 438-439). It’s like we’re all a bit nuts. We all seem to need to sit on Freud’s couch and explore our lives and ourselves. Kozinets (2002, 26) notes that “[…] a cure for this contemporary market malaise […]” is promoted by using “[…] therapeutic language, desire for self-transformation, and spectacular aura of the carnivalesque […].”

Empathy is pursued both in research and the arts. In consumer research, “[e]mpathy is required because the investigator must be able to learn the others’ reality, to understand how they think, feel, and believe. The comprehension attained through investigator empathy next must be combined with personal intuition to arrive at an interpretation” (Hirschman 1986, 240). As for the arts, “[p]utting oneself in another person’s shoes and truly understanding his or her experience is considered by some to be impossible […] However, through use of
artistic representations we are, at least, given the opportunity to imagine what it might be like […]” (Lapum 2012, 112). Since the arts is seemingly more acceptive with the employment of empathy, for instance, as a method of reflexivity, but also as a therapeutic modality, some researchers have recently brought arts to the realm of research (p. 112).

That is to say, the production of art, writing poetry, has been found to be therapeutical. Throughout the history, art has been a means to process pain. Recently, some researchers have told that they theorize in order to understand what is happening within oneself and possibly to create a healing space (Oikarinen-Jabai 2003, 572). For example, some have reflexively explored the ritualized performing of grief and shed light on coping with it (Sherry et al. 2002, 228; see also Minge 2006, 143; Schouten 2009). At least my writing this thesis has been very therapeutical, much so. And Freud, the couch isn’t that comfy.

Have you ever heard of trauma culture? Good, neither have I. Well, “the trauma culture of the teletechnological”… Okay, okay, let’s take it again. I won’t laugh. So, “the trauma culture of the teletechnological”…

Sorry, can’t just write it out loud. Let’s just hop into the end; “[i]deologically, this performance aesthetic refuses assimilation to white middle class norms and the traumas of that culture. It resists those understandings that valorize performances and narratives centered on the life crises of the humanistic subject […] In contrast, this aesthetic values performance narratives that reflexively recognize, go against the grain, and attack the dominant cultural ideologies […] These performances expose cracks in the ideological seams in these dominant cultural mythologies, both through political action and by their subject matter” (Denzin 2003, 248). Hate to admit, but research poet/ry seems to be such performance aesthetic attacking positivism, um, or something. (Oops, did I say it out loud? “The humanist way is not the only way; it simply is a way”, don’t be a foundationalist, humanist way is just a way, not foundationalist, just a way, my highway way …. sorry Hirschman, sorry Thompson.)

As discussed, through reflexivity, the research poet is emotionally located within the poem. By reading a poem, one may simultaneously understand the thoughts, feelings and beings of the writer. “I can see my experience more clearly. I am offered, through my art, a new vision. And
I offer this art to you, so you may take these colors as your own. You will never know my initial pain. I can only let you feel the process, through your own process, and your own interpretation. Perhaps then it becomes our experience, our embodiment, a fusion” (Minge 2006, 143). Consequently, empathized reading enables a research poet interpret and understand oneself; in other words, “[o]ur methodological practices of interpreting and writing necessarily bring to bear what we know and feel deeply about the outward world within which we live” [...] I use my writing to find the patterns, the understandings that arise from my own personal location: [...] Our voice is our location, our space for renewal, revival, realization, the very space we can heal” (Minge 2006, 121). The reading process reveals

“[…] an awareness of one’s self, one’s life, one’s meanings. […] By challenging readers to exercise their capacity to read differently, their transgressive, dialogic text troubles the reader into consciousness of conventional practices of reading a text […] Frustrated by attempts to pin down the authors’ meanings, the reader must move back and forth across multiple levels of reflections, drawings, and reactions, becoming an active participant in the dialogue, experiencing, feeling, and associating with the work rather than standing apart from it [...] a researcher’s understanding of others may be highly dependent on her understanding of herself. You have to see it for yourself/you have to see it in yourself. The art of telling and listening to the stories of others thus becomes a way to life” (Bochner et al. 2003, 510-512).

Interpreting and examining oneself through the process of empathized reading enables self-transformation (see Minge 2006, 143 for self-transformation). Therefore, “ […] individuals’ use of consumption as a means to gain some degree of control over their ever changing corporeal existence that they, as conscious agents, must work with and work within over the entire life course.[…] This process of constructing a narrative of identity around an ever changing sense of one’s embodied self and a continuously reformulated sense of one’s envisioned future (and ideals) can aptly be termed an existential project. […] In postmodern culture, acts of consumption […] are a primary means by which this project is enacted in the sphere of everyday life […] an infinite set of identity metamorphoses can be undertaken over the life course […] the lived body is instead a site of struggle […] not to a socio-political struggle (although that connotation certainly applies as well) but an existential
one. [...]” (Thompson et al. 1998a, 439-440). In addition, this has been a true ‘mystory’, “[...] simultaneously a personal mythology, a public story, and a performance text [...] a performativistic approach offers challenges but also empowering spaces” (Oikarinen-Jabai 2003, 578).

However, “[...] why is it so difficult for us to free ourselves from learned ways of thinking, given significations and images, ways of acting, and the armor covering our bodies? Is it too dangerous, too intimate to surrender ourselves to the play of life?” (p. 576) Davidson (2012, 97) answers that to surrender to the play of life pays off, since “we are at our best when we are most ourselves”.

All righty, back to research poet/ry. Research playing with the boundaries between social sciences and arts is needed, since it requires “keeping track of our own heart beat as we move through the process of research, regardless of the closeness or distance of the research topic to our daily lives. Art is a vital timepiece, a geographical positioning system, in regard to keeping the heart beat audible and located” (Davidson 2012, 97). Can you see me breathing? Hear me breathing? Feel me breathing? Smell me breathing? (just read my poem in the end) Thus, research poet/ry subjects the poet to remembering of being alive. Remembering I am alive and able to do whatever I ever want to, in a good, liberatory way, of course.

That’s enough for joie de vivre, let’s get back to black.

REINCARNATIONS

Actually I don’t remember being born, it must have happened during one of my black outs.

Jim Morrison

Medic, medic! We need a medic over here! Jim, baby, hold on a sec, stay with me.

Barthes (1990) must be satisfied, the author is struggling. And we’ve got another murderer in the house, Vanessa Place (2012). This cold-blooded vixen claims that poetry is dead, and she I killed it; “I have
written elsewhere that conceptual writing is annoying. Kenneth Goldsmith is the first to say that it may be boring. Bad lyric stinks; bad conceptualism is just another idea. And, as I have said before, what conceptualism does do is kill not the author, but the text itself. The writing is inert, formerly utilitarian, now deformed into nothing but an aesthetic object. All mirrored surface, no reflected soul.” Okay, I’m speechless. The author is dead, poetry is dead, conceptualism is dead, may you all rest in peace. But hey... at least I’m still alive. And Brown (1998, 371) seemingly is, as he notes that “[t]he insatiable human desire for crises and ruptures has been with us since the very dawn of civilization [...] it comprises nothing less than a primordial thanatic impulse, a universal urge towards the void. There is, let’s be honest, a kind of orgiastic excitement associated with crying crises, with the unleashing of wild forces, with the thought of total destruction. After all, it is only by letting slip the dogs of war, by destroying everything, by deliberately pressing the auto-destruct button, that we come to know what is really feels like to be alive. It is [...] part of a human, all-too-human desire for deep pain”. Ouch. And the painful discussion continues; “Pain is always, unfortunately, stronger than everything. What happens is not the jubilation of writing; it is the strange feeling, the outpouring of joy we can have when we discover (and not only in writing): I ought to be dead and yet I am not dead. Or else: this death which ought to kill me did not kill me” (Saresma 2003, 603).

So here we are, feeling pain and dying.
One more to go, bear with me and pardon my Nietzsche;

“He who has to be a creator always has to destroy” [...] and “if a temple is to be erected, a temple must be destroyed: that is the law” [...] For Nietzsche, in fact, conflict, animosity and the naked exercise of will-to-power is the very hallmark of modern civilization. It is what has enabled us higher men [...] to rise above the herd [...] Likewise, our leading, living literary critic, Harold Bloom [...] posits that thinkers generally and poets in particular are involved in a quasi-Oedipal, life or death struggle with their prodigious predecessors [...] and it is only by successfully overcoming (or, strictly speaking, sidestepping) the titanic forerunner that a distinctive poetic voice can begin to emerge” (Brown 1998, 372).

And so here we are now, entertain us. There must be a way out, I’m starting to feel over quota with these teenage goths. However, I am happy
they have at least brought Freud’s Thanatos, the death drive, for us, since also Eros, the life force, comes along. That is, the other side of this destruction is the desire to create life. The liberatory being of research poet/ry is just this kind of life producing activity; “[…] the power of antistructure, a sense of release from these tyrannies—whether imagined or not—is enough to liberate considerable creativity, to release repression, to fulfill some sense of people’s hidden potential, to evoke self-expression, and to unleash the potential for self-transformation” (Kozinets 2002, 36). In addition, “Although fusing art forms makes a heavier particle of experience, it also releases energy […] The fusion widens the prospect of identification by offering the reader a different view of scholarship and in many ways, deepens the sensuous core of knowing about the world and experience. The fusion leaves room for interaction, response, interpretation, movement, embodiment, sensuous intrigue, and rejection. Fusing art forms as inquiry illuminates the complexity of understanding. Rather than privileging text-based inquiry and the minds that wrap around the text, the fusion offers other ways to view the world.“ (Minge 2006, 122). I am proud of my liberatory, empathized and creativized newborn baby, research poet/ry.

All right, Sartre looks himself in the mirror in Nausea (Thompson et al. 1998, 401-402), and some seventy years after, Schouten (2009, 390) goes into bathroom and reveals his lapse of hygiene. Seriously, what is wrong with these guys… some self-exploration, perhaps? As to Thompson et al. (1998, 401-402), the protagonist of Sartre’s book discovers “that he exists as an "object" within the gaze of others and even within his own self-objectifying gaze”. Everyone has body matters, but these guys certainly have some ontological concerns as well (Thompson et al. 1998, 404). But guys, listen, remember the rules? No Spectators, no panopticon, no obverse panopticon, no mirror theory, no Lacan, no nothing! Let’s not reproduce that goddamn dualism again (p.404). Everyone has to participate in performative practices, passive observation is not accepted. Just self-transform your teeth, no looking at the mirror! This is the liberatory declaration of postmodern times.

Of course, only those, who have the possibility to visit Sartre’s bathroom are endangered. That is, “the “postmodern perils of selfhood” apply only to the “middle-class life world” inhabited by academics and
philosophers and that “it is essential to remember that for the great
majority of people, the existential perils that trouble the elite are eclipsed
by real perils of survival and damage control” (Goulding et al. 2002, 280-
281). I guess we hipsters are also at stake; ”[…] “the romance of ruins”
looms large with indie culture. While the relatively privileged class
habitus of indie culture can lead to a preoccupation with leading-edge
subcultural capital, indie also has a preservationist strain that runs
counter to modernity’s relentless cycles of obsolescence […] “they
equate authentic with being ‘real’ […] Yet realness is elusive and seems
to fade with the spotlight, and so must constantly be sought elsewhere,
often in neglected corners of the cultural past” (Drew 2011, 448). Let’s
use the bathroom upstairs, Schouten’s still in.

Knock knock! …I guess it’s safe to step in, to a liminal space, a
performed text, research poet/ry. A liminal space is a hybrid, mixed,
nomadic and rhizoidic place in between. It is a marginal, unexpected and
outside the norms of one’s culture. As Herman (2005, 470-471)
illustrates; “We move to understandings that are outside the margins of
our personal and cultural experience and include a symbolic realm
shared by humanity: a way of thinking that is nonlinear and creative,
transpersonal and transcultural. In this interior liminal space,
consciousness is altered, and we break the normative rules that have
limited our perception. In this interior liminal space, we access images
that were previously outside our capacities to know them, and we are
able to see new patterns in the chaos. We return to everyday time and to
our communities to present a new way of thinking and being in the
world, open to greater possibilities”. Okay, a door to Narnia. Where’s
Aslan, I need to meet Aslan.

I guess I’ll transform myself to Alice, but no Lucy in the Sky with
Diamonds this time. (White Rabbit is ok.) And here I am, in virtual
Online Narnia. It’s pretty difficult to know who is who when
transcending the limits of embodiment… these hyperreal, fluid
presentations of self are somewhat suspicious (but I like to be Alice,
though). However, “postmodern consumer cultures’ dominant
discourses do not promote an escape (or transcendence) from the body.
Rather, they endorse a technological-moral imperative to not just shape
and discipline the body (the archaic modernist pursuit) but to sculpt (re-
sculpt) the body into more desirable cultural forms [...] Hence, the postmodern "body" is culturally inscribed in a discourse of fashionableness whereby its visible properties are rendered as malleable, transformable expressions of style” (Thompson et al. 1998, 404-405). Well, I’m still looking for Aslan. Aasslaan!

“Dearest Daughter. I knew you would not be long in coming to me. Joy shall be [posthumanly] yours” (Aslan XXXX, xxiv). Welcome to the hybrid form of spectacle (Kozinets et al. 2004, 668)! According to Venkatesh et al. (2006, 26-27), in the image-based culture of hyperreal, hyper-arts blur conceptual and aesthetic boundaries and play with the dichotomy of reality and illusion. Therefore, works of art are no more seen as self-reflective devices, but as the functionality itself has become a sign. This speaks for the possible transition from postmodernism to posthumanism (A brief question, um, is my text blurring some boundaries here?), which may be well defined as a philosophical research orientation, which pursues to deconstruct the human’s special position to other living or non-living creatures (Lummaa 2009). More importantly, posthumanism entails self-criticism and acknowledging the emotional, intellectual and moral failures and insecurities, so theorizing isn’t always supposed to feel good. (What is it with people wanting to hug Aslan?) This makes research even more humble and honest. The real people, Venkatesh et al. (2006, 26-27), continue that depending on the field of study, posthumanism may be defined as the junction of human mind and intelligence machines, the creation of new cultures of technological embodiment, or even the rise of cyborgization. However, from a cultural perspective, “recent writings on posthumanism suggest that we may be entering a new era concerning how we conceptualize human bodies and mental structures” (p. 27). Posthumanism might, hence, alter the concept of being a human through cybernetic advancements (p. 29).

“I WANT TO BE A MACHINE”, said Andy Warhol. (Okay, a bit random, sorry.)

Goldsmith (2013) brings forth the idea of romanticizing "the formal and emotional cleanliness of machine-based production" instead of the messiness which may, in some instances, be conceived as humanly, and refers to poet Christian Bök, who has stated that “[...] If poetry
already lacks any meaningful readership among our own anthropoid population, what have we to lose by writing poetry for a robotic culture that must inevitably succeed our own? If we want to commit an act of poetic innovation in an era of formal exhaustion, we may have to consider this heretofore unimagined, but nevertheless prohibited, option: writing poetry for inhuman readers, who do not yet exist, because such aliens, clones, or robots have not yet evolved to read it.” “It is in this context of the construction of the artificial that we place the whole discourse on posthumanism” (Venkatesh et al. 2006, 28).

Um, yep. I guess I’ll my bathroom visit is over, but hey, Aslan, it was nice talking to you!

Calmy, Aslan stands up, and declares; “In the extreme, nevertheless, metropoems can become mechanical (a “well-oiled machine”, see also Järventausta 2009) and the poet, a sort of “Robot-poet” (Maréchal et al. 2010, 75). All right then. I’ll stick around for another moment, speak. And Aslan speaks: according to Goldsmith, in cyber culture, the the writer may be seen as ’a meme machine’. That is, a writer writes her "works with the intention for them to ripple rapidly across networks only to evaporate just as quickly as they appeared. Imagine a poetry that is vast, instantaneous, horizontal, globally distributed, paper thin, and, ultimately, disposable.” Conceptualism in the wild! Wild, indeed. Quality is very much beside the point. These ways of writing, creativized writing, ”—word processing, databasing, recycling, appropriating, intentionally plagiarizing, identity ciphering, and intensive programming, to name just a few—have traditionally been considered outside the scope of literary practice”. Possibly no one reads these texts, or at least, they are digested pretty fast. Burp. Aslan takes a deep breath, and states; ” Daughter, your research poet/ry resembles posthumanist hyper-arts, a hybrid form of spectacle. It’s functional and the functionality of performative research poet/ry with its concrete writings and abstract readings, materialized creativities and immaterial empathies, or realist artist performances and illusory artist fantasies, connects living and non-living. Joy shall be yours, ugh.”

Knock, knock, I’m still here. (Okay, where exactly? I’m so Alice at the moment.) In the posthumanist being of research poet/ry, the nature of the Romantic has transformed into technology; “[c]onsumers
commonly frame nature as the opposite of culture in romantic consumption events that offer sublime, magical, or primitive experiences. We find, however, that experiences of nature transpire from assemblages of discourses, technologies, and material geographies. In this scheme, nature is not an ontologically separate category […]; rather, it is constituted through disciplined procedures that orchestrate material nature with market-cultural resources” (Canniford et al. 2012, 1053-1054). I beg your pardon, no rabbit holes? No talking cats? No Aslan?

Knock Knock. No answer.

Knock! Knock! Knock! “Daughter, as you already know, research poet/ry, is actually a sacred, sublime and magical liminal space. Don’t get lost.”

That is, “communities can represent phenomena that are quasi-cult-like in nature. Typically, popular music stars are assigned mythical heroic qualities, often accompanied by the use of quasi-religious terminology […] Fandom, not unlike cult or religious affiliation, is expressed through a shared sense of rituals, beliefs, symbolism and ‘religiosity’ […] Over time, ‘tribes’ leave temporal and spatial traces; like religions, tribes have sacred places and special ‘anchoring places’ […] which are sites of collective sharing of affective experience. Places of importance in the personal biography of music stars link mythologized events to practical historical realities. Place thus becomes meaningful by investing a location of significance in the artist’s life with visitor dwell-time, social interaction and emotion“ (Leaver et al. 2010, 109-112). Okay then, Père-Lachaise, here I come.

…or?

I’ll repeat:

“We move to understandings that are outside the margins of our personal and cultural experience and include a symbolic realm shared by humanity: a way of thinking that is nonlinear and creative, transpersonal and transcultural. In this interior liminal space, consciousness is altered, and we break the normative rules that have limited our perception. In this interior liminal space, we access images that were previously outside our capacities to know them, and we are able to see new patterns in the chaos. We return to everyday time and to our communities to present a new way of thinking and being in the world, open to greater possibilities

Phew, no more knocking. No playing with words or meanings. I
had a moment of flow, in the liminal space of my own research poet/ry. (For your information, I won’t be making any changes for the text.) What just happened, was weird. I’m puzzled, phew. I’m just incapable of theorizing at the moment, so I’ll leave it to my intellectual forebears.

As Brown (1998, 372) notes,

“[…] Deleuze and Guattari […] employ the metaphor of the barbarian invasion – what they term “nomadology” – to describe developments in latter day academic discourse. Distinguishing between “state thought,” which is rigorous, disciplined, objective and continually monitored by the apparatus of power, and “nomadic thought”, which is fluid, flexible, disconcerting (to the establishment) and invariably espoused by “outsiders,” Deleuze and Guattari draw upon the time-worn dialectic of barbarian hordes versus civilized society to suggest that, contra the myth of primitivism, nomadic bands are remarkably innovative in many respects (warfare, science, technology, social arrangements). They present a vital Dionysian spur to the uncivilized advance of “civilization.

Nomadic thought, then, is an attempted experiment in creativity and becoming; it is anti-traditional and non-conforming; it is opposed to stultifying orthodoxy; it involves breaking with convention; it seeks emancipation from totalizing or accepted modes of discourse; it revels in the proliferation of radically different perspectives and philosophies; it postulates a return to pre-cognitive forms of understanding (desire, intuition, spirituality, flow); it stresses the need to challenge disciplinary limits, canonical restrictions, extant ideologies and hegemonic critical practices. And, that’s just for starters!”

Okay, OMG, and as Roach (2004, 568) states,

"Perhaps then, by extension, actors with It are not merely there for us; they are there instead of us – there to live the sort of lives we can imagine and desire but for which we lack the courage, the gift, or the luck – in short, the It – to live for ourselves. In that sense, we are also there from them. This possibility prompts me, by way of conclusion, to speculate that the seemingly impossible demands for contradictory qualities, such as vulnerable strength and experienced innocence, stem from a deep ambivalence on the part of the consumers of It. As the possibilities of their own lives narrow, It seems to defy the limits of ordinary mortality. It keeps its options open, its outline on the wall. It is not merely youth, but it very much resembles what young people are like in their capacity to embrace contradiction without embarrassment as an opportunity for creative self-invention. That is the enduring – and fleeting – charm of It.” (Roach 2004, 568.)

I’ll never let go, Jim. I promise.
OUTRO

Scrabble Liberation

Who says ‘dogsy’ isn’t a word?
Hell, I wash my teeth in the shower.
Dogsy is a damn good word,

My world.


Brady, Ivan (2004), In Defense of the Sensual: Meaning Construction in Ethnography and Poetics. Qualitative Inquiry, August 2004; vol. 10, 4:
pp. 622-644.


Denzin, Norman K. (2001b), The Seventh Moment: Qualitative inquiry


Gray, Ross E. (2003), Performing on and off the Stage: The Place(s) of Performance in Arts-Based Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry* 2003 9: 254


http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2013.10.009


Lapum, Jennifer, Perin Ruttonsha, Kathryn Church, Terrence Yau and Alison Matthews David (2012), Employing the Arts in Research as an Analytical Tool and Dissemination Method: Interpreting Experience Through the Aesthetic. Qualitative Inquiry 2012 18: 100.


Lingel, Jessa and Mor Naaman (2012), You should have been there, man: Live music, DIY content and online communities. New Media Society 2012 14: 332.

Maréchal, Garance and Stephen Linstead (2010), Metropoems: Poetic Method and Ethnographic Experience. Qualitative Inquiry, January
2010; vol. 16, 1: pp. 66-77.


Spry, Tami (2001), Performing autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis. Qualitative Inquiry, Volume 7 Number


Thompson, Craig J., Barbara B. Stern & Eric J. Arnould (1998b), Writing the differences: Poststructuralist pluralism, retextualization, and the construction of reflexive ethnographic narratives in consumption and market research, *Consumption Markets & Culture, 2:2*, 105-160.


Place, Vanessa (2012), *Poetry is Dead, I Killed it*. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2012/04/poetry-is-dead-i-killed-it/

Into this world we're thrown /
Like a dog *without* a bone