"The reservoir": towards a poetic model of research in design
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Introduction

Although, it is generally claimed that we are in an exciting period where we are still evolving and constructing our validating networks and methodologies for research in art and design, it is apparent that we are still not sure of what impulses lie in the core of our creative practice, and are consequently unaware and uncertain of how and what we may validate as research.

In this uncertainty we reach for philosophical positions that are not figured in consideration for what lies in this core. In Design, particularly, with its foundations in functionalism, the danger is that we will default to paradigms of research founded in the sciences or proto sciences, privileging what Gerald Holton (1978) (drawing on Nietzsche) calls the neo-Apollonian position in research. The neo-Apollonian philosophy promotes rationalism in its strictest sense. It draws sustenance from the work of philosophers like Karl Popper who hold that in science there is a common language and a common set of assumptions which hold across all time and all space. For him the "project of knowledge" is continuous, rational, progressive and universal. That which lies beyond what can be rationally determined holds no truck with him. The context of discovery, let alone the dynamics of creative supposition is of very little interest and is considered of little merit to him.

The initial stage the act of conceiving or inventing a theory seems to me neither to call for logical analysis, nor be susceptible to it. The question of how it happens... may be of great interest to empirical psychology, but it is irrelevant to the logical analysis of scientific knowledge. The latter is concerned only.... with questions of justification and validity (Popper quoted by Holton 1978 p.104.)

That which is hypothetical and provisional is not easy to frame and form for validation and in Popper's eyes is not valid. In contra-distinction, Einstein wrote in his scientific papers, that the two postulates of relativity were no more than "hunches" that he decided to elevate to the status of postulates without recourse to experiment or testing. In perhaps the most significant advance in science in centuries, rigorous method is accorded no part by its originator and the work of the imagination is merely a point - a "hunch". So, it was all

as if of nothing! This is of course disingenuous and throwaway and typical of Einstein. The aesthetics of his hunches is what convinces him of its worth. The imagination is framed critically and is validated in the symmetry of the postulate.

In much writing on science the "hunch" features as the creative input in an otherwise scientific methodology. Alex Seago writes:

....the process of discovery in much successful research work is, in reality, a combination of rigorous methodology and the following up of intuitive "hunches". (Seago 1994, p.5.)

In the recognition of what makes up research, of the kind described above, the "imaginative hunch" becomes merely a point on the horizon of practice whereas rigorous methodology is considered a trajectory and thus the process. The "hunch" is subsumed by "methodology". The "hunch" is so slim that it is not possible to develop techniques and dynamics or indeed a methodology for it. The input of the imagination has been so reduced that it is considered only in terms of a point of outcome - the "hunch"; which is subsequently considered in subjugation to rigorous method (following up). Rigorous method forecloses on the notion of research in this instance as imaginative process in as much as the hypothesis is only valid at the moment at which it is proved through "experimentation". It is evaluated in outcome, i.e. in ways and means that wish to settle it as an account and not consider it in the aesthetics of its process. An "intuition" is singular and instantaneous and as a result of this the activity of the imagination is marginalised.

The neo-Dionysian disposition on the other hand opposes the "objectivity" of the rationalists with an intense subjectivity. Holton writing in the late seventies, suggests that writers such as Theodore Roszack, R.D. Laing, and Charles Reich (following a long tradition including Wordsworth, Blake, Goethe, Dostoevsky etc.) are neo-Dionysian. He writes that the neo- Dionysians are antipathetic to rational scientific method, indifferent to methodological concerns and are concerned to celebrate, the private and the personal, and other suchlike matters which are not of scientific concern. He believes that a concomitance of this position is:

A Ptolemaic, homocentric conception of the world order...[which] ..may allow intense, moving and satisfying experiences; but doing or understanding science is not among them, nor is any field of scholarship in which the warrant of validity stems not from private enthusiasm but from some sense of community consensus, for those activities require the recognition that the individual self is the only true reality. (Holton 1978, p91.)

The neo-Dionysian stance described by Holton leads to hermetic, irresponsible and in-communicable research. In this position it is all "hunch", the imagination is unfettered by criticism, unfocussed and involuted - exclusively and only valueable as a "private enthusiasm". The "hunch" expands inordinately but only in relation to the individual.

The Apollonian and the Dionysian are only limitedly sketched in Holton's analysis. He has a point to make, and does so. This point is, I believe, still pertinent. The polar philosophies of the neo Apollonians and the neo Dionysians each build their own distorting practice. He is right in calling for an investigation of the contributions of the imagination in research, but as a philosopher of science it is clear that he still privileges the Apollonian tendency in research and doesn't move forward to fully accommodate the wilder, ecstatic breeze of Dionysius that ventilates its space and drives a tendency of the imagination.

"The Dionysian chorus which ever a new discharges itself in an Apollinian world of images". (Nietszche 1967; p65.)

The introspection and uncontrollability of the Dionysian principle remains a problem for Holton. But it is incorrectly defined by him. Individuation is an Apollonian trait, and in Holton's analysis this characteristic is transposed in to the Dionysian space. Nietzsche's Dionysius acts in and through a chorus- a clamorous, polyvocal and varied group- representing the view of the spectator. This technically pulls the drama into the spectator's space and delivers the spectator's view back to the text of the play. The chorus allows the view beyond the stage/action to be represented and in turn translates the actions on stage to the spectators. In this flux/reflux between chorus, drama and spectator the Dionysian communicates. In the poetic these are the points of inference. In the Dionysian meaning is inferred. The Apollonian is communicated through the text of the drama itself. Through direct reference to established bodies of knowledge. Although Apollo is ethical, measured and reasonable he is also a dream reader (Nietzsche 1967; p44); moving between waking and dream state and approaching the dream in a critical way.

The Apollonian and the Dionysian work diacritically. They define, form and inform each other; the one being the complement of the other.

And behold! Apollo could not live without Dionysius! The titanic and the barbarian were in the last analysis as necessary as the Apollonian. (Nietszche 1967; p46.)

The "titanic and the barbarian" are still not adequately figured in research; the Apollonian is without its complement in the Dionysian and furthermore is also inadequately developed. The imperatives of conventional research remain to a large extent a forced hand. The "hunch" is tamed and reduced within its methodologies. The pull to originality is ignored. The original part of research, in conventional research, is found in an act of detection and not in creative activity.

In reaction, this paper, questions the expectations, methods and demands of "conventional" academic research, not in order to negate conventional method, per se, or question its validity in particular circumstances but rather to draw through it the possibility of research that is other to it, and proscribed by it - research that engages in the "hunch"; in other words, "poetic research". In this paper it will be evident that the "poetic" cannot be fully incorporated in the methodological forms of conventional research. 1 The notion of poetic research emerges from a questioning of practice (design) which tries to locate parts of its creative drive so that it may be brought through in regard to research. The poetic in research can be seen as an attempt to develop a technicity of the "hunch". What follows in effect, is a description of this attempt. The Dionysian and Apollonian attitude are approximated in two forces acting within design practice.

Centripetal and Centrifugal

I have adapted Bakhtin's ideas of the centripetal and the centrifugal to analyze different tendencies in creative practice in design (these are not read as methodological positions or philosophical attitudes but rather as impulses in the creative process). 2

Ground and Open Water

The two forces allow us to diagram the "hunch". In other words, create a visual of the "pull to originality". "Ground" refers to an extant body of knowledge or mode of practice. "Open water" is the space of originality; that is that which has not yet been established.

The centripetal force (Fig. 1) pulls inwards trying to make coherent and urges to make compossible with a body of knowledge (ground); drawing connections to established research practice and established knowledge. It works in constant reference to what adheres or to what is ordained within boundaries of an established doxy. The program of the centripetal is to make fast, secure and stabilize. Its tendency is to ground or establish a grounding for design research. It is a program creating certainty through normalization of method and through an aim to establish if not truths then justifiable statements. It is foundationally driven; it substantiates and draws connection through direct reference to established theories and practices. The centripetal force may be symbolized as a straight line. A line of "substantiation" or "intent" (focussedly intended research).

The centrifugal force (fig. 2) pulls away from the ground, its movement is counter to the process of grounding. It pulls into open water. Centrifugally driven practice/research explores possibilities beyond, and creates deviations from programs to normalize. Its aims are to expand and develop opportunities. It relies on the substantiations of the centripetal, but it moves in the opposite direction and in this movement it rattles the movement to substantiate. The impulse is not towards certainty but to escape from it. It pulls out in different directions. It is depicted in the diagram as a number of errant lines - "lines of discovery". It is, in its extreme, provocative and radical and aims to rupture the normal and the normalizing program. But the force has different strengths and it can be a more moderate program for change; the volition to originality being its essential nature.

The paradigm for research on the ground is supported in the images of excavation and construction. Research in open water may be imagined as swimming and diving. In open water the swimmer or diver is immersed and at the mercy of the element, water, whereas, on land, the element lies outside the person digging or building and is very much controlled by them.

The two forces draw different relationships of theory and practice. The centripetal is integrational, whereas the centrifugal is relational. The centripetal draws into a particular theory and the research is compossible with it, whereas the centrifugal creates sets of references that relate to a number of theories without necessarily conforming or committing to any one.

The creative program in design proceeds in a fragile balance of the centripetal and centrifugal. The centrifugal force without its centripetal balance threatens an explosion in pure and unmediated possibilities (neo-Dionysian ecstasy). The centripetal without its similar balance of the centrifugal would result in an involution where there would be no original movements and this would lead inevitably to hackneyed research (neo-Apollonian rigour).

I would suggest that all design research works through management of both the centripetal and centrifugal impulses. Particular design methodologies and philosophies bias towards one or other of these two forces, though.

Characteristics of originality in Conventional Research

The notional plotting of the centripetal and centrifugal forces in particular research methodologies allows us to schematize their characteristics in regard to the "move to originality".

Originality in conventional research

Conventional research is essentially centripetal. The characteristics of conventional research -showing the way conventional research tries to pull to an original position in relation to a ground (body of knowledge)- are illustrated in Figure 3. Conventional research starts with a question and develops a research stratagem in advance of the process. It organizes strategically. This sets a "focal channel". The errant line (centrifugal) which describe the conditions of discovery moves within the channel and is organized and controlled by a straight line of "intent"; that is a line that substantiates, makes reference and grounds the project. In other words the centripetal impulse described above. The research channel is clear focussed and predetermined. Context is constrained and the weave between the errant line (discovery) and the line of intention (substantiation) is held in this limiting channel. Results are to a large extent predictable and held within the limits set at the outset for the research. The favouring of the centripetal results in a design practice/research that progresses linearly. Its program is one of improvement and is predicated on predictive and projective measures. It works in a calculus of laws that work to predict regular trends. Conventional research defers to Ockham's Razor- thought starts from simple clear ideas and progresses to simple and clear outcomes.

Research Focus in Conventional Research

Conventional research methods, focussing as they do on precisely what they seek are inevitably linear in their research methodologies. Conventional research is channeled by a research problem; singular, simple and clear. Pre-formed in advance of the research process it produces research in line with the answerability of the question; again, singular, simple and clear. The pull to the original is here formed in certainty and is directed to a stable objectification.

Poetic Research-a sketch

In proposing the possibility of poetic research I am suggesting that the imagination in research need not be just the site of intuitions but also of actions, which in turn may have a technicity.

The poetic can be considered as a dynamic process in which the imaginative course of practice can be developed as research. It starts not in the simple but in the complex. Drawing out from a number of sources simultaneously. In this it is open, multiple and anti-Cartesian. For Bachelard, "there are no simple ideas only complexities" this being particularly in evidence when ideas are applied.

Application is complication. (Bachelard quoted by Lechte 1994; p5.)

Poetic research engages with the notion of complexity, weaving together disparate elements in a complex and evolving structure.

Characteristics of originality in poetic research

Originality in poetic research

An example of the lines of force in poetic research is given in Figure 4 above. The "original" (creative) impulse starts from a number of grounds and the lines of discovery are not constrained at the outset. The favouring of the centrifugal creates a practice that seeks non-linear links, which destabilizes, makes leaps and seeks alternative paths to those that may be predicted from the outset. The poetic pulls outward along a number of erratic trajectories. It looks within its own volition to establish its research program. It leaps between different points in response to irregular and evolving rules. It organizes on the hoof. It organizes tactically. Poetic research is rhizomatic in nature it sets out roots and shoots that break and reform, reproduce and transform. The process may be broken at any point but at the point of rupture it can reconstitute itself to form connection again. It develops its future by looking for radical forms, breaks and lacunae in thinking.

Background and Foreground

The poetic disposition is inclined centrifugally, pulling away from that which binds. But it is not all about drawing out, there is, inevitably, a recoil back towards that which provokes thought. The lines of intention (centripetal) act as support and controls in the developing territory. They refer back to the ground - back to source(s). And in this thinking back to source(s) there is an aspect of poesy.

This is why poesy is the water which in times flows backward toward the source toward thinking as a thinking back, a recollection (Heidegger 1993; p376.)

This pulling back equates to a "needing to know" or a "needing to assimilate" and it is an essential part of the poetic program. It is the background to the poetic research program. Each reference back is a movement on of the project; editing and energizing the emerging project. It is the rationalizing force within the poetic and crucial to the progression of the research.

The pull into open water is erratic and needs its measure in the centripetal return.

The open water may be considered the foreground of the research program. In this space resonance and difference is sought. This is the place in which the movement in thinking is towards "that which has not yet been thought" towards an originality. The movement is a thinking into what withdraws; that is a thinking into the "draft of withdrawal" (Heidegger (1993); p365-392). And as such it is more a finding than a seeking ("I do not seek I find" Picasso).

Research Focus

In the case of the "poetic" the focal territory is found through a process. It is iterative, working in the space between substantiation and deviation. Backgrounding and foregrounding happen in a dynamic process and this produces a research context. Poetic enquiry evolves its field of focus whereas conventional research sets in advance its focal channel. (See figures 3 and 4). The focal territory in poetic research is established in open water.

The Rational, the Irrational and the Abnormal Paradigm

The "poetic" opens a dialectic between the rational and irrational, where certainty and doubt are mortised and jointed in an uncoiling and recoiling within the research curriculum. The poetic syllabus is therefore not rationalist but surrationalist. Surrationalism enriches and revitalizes rationalism through an abandoned interplay of theories and theoretical form and/or a playful re-engagement with primary experience. The poetic process works in paralleling the rational and the irrational. Background activity provides the rational ground for a foregrounded program of deviation. The background sets the normal paradigm (stable ground) and the pull to foreground is fashioned in alterity; it fashions an abnormal paradigm. The poetic program is one of making "other". The poetic reaches for the un-configured and the unusual expression of thought. It makes "other" through the use of paralogical and voluptuous method. The poetic is an attempt to review and overthrow the normalizing process (centripetal force) and touch again a rawness in both thinking and experience. At the heart of poetic methodologies, as stated above, is the "abnormal paradigm". The abnormal paradigm is only made pertinent through "points of inference" and these are configured in reference to "linguistic, contextual and general world knowledge". These points of inference act as the Dionysian chorus linking the "original complex" and the "culture complex". In other words that which has not yet been thought to that which has and is acculturated.

Mick Short in his book "Exploring the Language of Poems Plays and Prose" (1996; p7), uses a line from Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet to illustrate an abnormal paradigm.

Come, we have burnt too much daylight, ho!

What is foregrounded in the above line (what calls for attention) is the unusual idea of "burning daylight". This has no literal sense but makes poetic sense. The noun "daylight" is abnormal in relation to the verb "burn". One can burn oil, coal, paper, fuel and anything else that is combustible. Daylight is not combustible and burning it is not really possible and as a result the phrase is unexpected. It therefore commands our attention. The phrase speaks multiply - interpretations are layered. "Burning daylight" is an ambiguous phrase in which a complex of possible meanings is clustered. ("The hour is late", "we are wasting time" and so on).

The abnormal paradigm is produced through different poetic tropes - hyperbole, metaphor, ellipsis, pun, and so on. Each describes a different operation in deviating from normal readings and in the case of research, deviations from tame research topics and too readily accented methodologies in research. Poetic tropes deployed within a "conceptual program" for design may include developing neologisms from the words that define key areas in early research. An ex-student of mine took three key words in his fields of interest - heterotopias, schizophrenia and the Gaze - and broke down them down etymologically; subsequently recombining them to form new words e.g. hetero-phrenia, schizo-topia, schizo-gaze. Each neologism moved the work in to unexpected and fertile areas, which created an original set of focuses for research/practice. These neologisms quickly become legal research tender and whole areas of research move round them. In architecture particularly, subjects like hyper surfaces, meta-cities, hyper-cities, meta-surfaces and so on become research topics that are widely discussed and disputed. This research is to a large extent hypothetical laying down a conceptual abstract for practice.

Another student of mine used the poetic technique of "persona" as a research tactic to evolve a research program. Persona in poetry is another voice (other than the author) who

speaks the poem. Within this students project a character is used to speak its concerns; namely, Cyrano de Bergerac. The narrative and the character of Cyrano had tremendous influence on the design research. The result was a series of objects, drawings and models that were produced considering theatricality and romance, representation and reality, deception and honesty. Other students wittingly or unwittingly have deployed punning, metonym, metaphor, ellipsis, hyperbole, contextual shifting and other poetic techniques to develop, progress and realize design. These kinds of poetic disruptions are a keen tool in the progression of imaginative research in design.

The Reservoir

The Reservoir has (in different versions) been used in practice, as a tool both for the analysis of design and its methods, and for generating ideas and building and contextualising design projects. The reservoir uses spatial, temporal and material metaphor to map interests, principles and concerns, and to find contexts, sites and generating ideas for design.

The Reservoir awaits construction. It has necessary features, which need to be built into it, but it is empty before use, being merely a notional frame waiting to be filled by particular research. The Reservoir may be considered, for the most part, as a map of ground and open water - in plan resembling the diagrams shown above. The water signifies liquidity in thought and the ground a site of determined thinking. The Reservoir is used notionally to plot a creative search (a finding!):

Any creative search, whether for a new image or idea, involves the scrutiny of an often astronomical number of possibilities. The correct choice between them cannot be made by a conscious weighing up of each possibility cropping up during the search; if attempted it would only lead us astray. A creative search resembles a maze with many nodal points. From each of these points many possible pathways radiate in all directions leading to further crossroads where a new network of high- and by-ways comes into view. Each choice is equally crucial for further progress. The choice would be easy if we could command an aerial view of the entire network of nodal points and radiating pathways still lying ahead. This is never the case. If we could map out the entire way ahead, no further search would be needed. As it is the creative thinker has to make a decision about his route without having the full information needed for his choice. This dilemma belongs to the essence of creativity. (Anton Ehrenzweig 1971: p35-37)

The Reservoir is a landscape of an uncharted territory waiting to be explored, as well as a place to evolve its exploratory methods. The entire territory cannot be mapped in advance but changes with each chosen route (as is explained in the quote from Ehrenzweig above). Routes in the Reservoir are decided on tactically; assessing the last choice and hypothesizing about the next in making decisions about the next course of actions.

Programme and Project

The Reservoir for design practice/research may be analyzed in two parts. (Fig. 5.).

Although in practice and in creative theory they can be and are inter spliced and used in an iterative process - therefore non-linear. The lower section is the map of programme. By programme I mean the conceptual and creative base for design projects i.e. the discursive net which supports and surrounds design and designing. Programme is the discoursal

programme which contextualises design in socio-cultural debates and environmental concerns. Programme may therefore be considered as a weaving of concerns, themes and theories in order to site design a wider field.

The upper section of the Reservoir is project, which may be thought of as the "text" of designing. The project is about the particularities of design's application. The project aspect of research works in answering particular questions - What it is, who its for, where it is placed, how it works etc. "Project" usually work in the limits of its briefing - (Design a "something" for "someplace" to be used by "someone"). Each section offers opportunity for an area of research, which can be delivered independently of the other. The Reservoir can move from project to programme or vice versa. In the movement from project to programme the outline of project sets limits on an otherwise unconstrained program. In turn the weave of programme sets ghost patterns that read through in the development of project.

The Design profession works mainly in addressing project and if it moves to programme, it is only after research into project. The way we, at Goldsmiths, have used the Reservoir is in the other direction - moving from programme to project although not rigidly or linearly. As example of this movement I will describe stages of research building from programme to project. Although it is necessary for me to describe a linear methodology in actuality the student/researcher can start from different points in the programme and progress the research in different directions.???

Researching Programme

Usually, the first engagement with the Reservoir is to elaborate a stance for the practitioner/ researcher. Different modes of exploration are entertained and the researcher tries to situate him/herself in relation to the research to be undertaken.

Three Triggers

The next part of the Reservoir begins with a map of concerns and interest similar to a mapping of the field in conventional research. However this is different to conventional research mapping, in that the concerns and interest mapped in poetic research do not at this stage of development belong to one field. This mapping is heteroclyte i.e. a series of isolated and unrelated points. It must also be added that this is not brainstorming, in as much as what is being mapped is not outcome driven.

The next phase in developing the Reservoir is to branch out from these points in a series of associations - not necessarily, it must be added, to connect to the other points in the Reservoir but rather to expand the field. From this expanded field two, three or in some instances four areas are then established as focus areas for research

Reviewing the Triggers

The areas (usually established at this stage in words) are subjected to a testing which moves through a definition, de-definition and re-definition; acting to process, hone and clarify the area of interest or trigger. The tested interests/concerns become ground in the Reservoir. But the different areas need to be chosen with some care. If the areas are too distant from each in the research territory they will remain invisible to each other. The forces that work in relation to each ground will not cross - and create interference - and ultimately a field (programme) for poetic research. This may only become clear some way

into the research but adjustments can be made at any stage. If the areas of ground are too close the forces will align and the "poetic" will be compromised and end up as a linear pogram. Some students feel unsafe in open waters and will align their triggers thereby normalizing the programme and establishing a conventional approach to their research.

Once the triggers (topics, theories and issues) are pinpointed background research is then conducted into each area. Theories and other research are investigated to establish not only what others have done but to provide resource for developing the whole research/ practice enterprise. The chosen areas then function as triggers to launch the rest of the research program. Some examples of triggers used by students (in sets of three) include:
duration, shadows and the urban.
routine, Kinder Surprise eggs and craft.
heterotopias, schizophrenia and the Gaze.
magic, flow and domesticity.

The three trigger areas when mapped in the Reservoir create a triangulation of conflicts (not to be confused with the triangulation of verification in conventional research) which set up perturbations in its surface. The weaving together of the three triggers creates a web of forces in open space that connects the project to its original focus and locks it into a set of discourse. It is in the aesthetics of the weave of the centripetal and centrifugal forces that the conceptual program for design is found and built. The research at this point happens through a number of media; writings (notes and fuller reports), conceptual models, film, photography and drawing. The programme is not set absolutely, triggers may shift or be replaced at any stage of the research process but at this point it creates a platform from which one can build a project (research and practice).

Research into Project

The development of "project" begins with a "fitting". The movement of programme to project across the "line of fit" in Figure 5. requires an inventive translation, moving from an abstract to a material situation. In the project aspect of research, object, site, situation, user and so on become the triggers in the Reservoir. These can also explored poetically. The Poetic process for project operates in the same way as in programme setting up the "abnormal paradigm" in order to push to original territory. Poetic tropes and techniques can be used to disrupt normal processes and question dead metaphors in design in order to develop rich work. Paradigm and syntagm shifting are used regularly within the research for project. Context shifting is also widely used.

A student I tutored on the MA in Industrial Design at the RCA, used context shifting to develop an original spin on cooking. He shifted the conviviality, equipment and techniques of outside cooking into the indoor space, eventually designing a set of briquettes to be used for a variety of cooking operations. The briquettes were designed, taking heed of appropriate technologies for indoor cooking. They are micro waveable and once heated they will remain hot for a good length of time. The briquettes are safe and are conducive to and promote the sociality of barbecue-like activity in an indoor space. Other poetic techniques can and have been used to open exciting and original projects. Elision, enjambment, metaphor, paradox, pun etc. when applied to research topics and methods will create exciting and original programs for research.

Conclusion

I am deeply suspicious of and fearful that we will, and possibly have, returned to a place where a scientific rationalism, which has little regard for the richness, plurality and complexities of creative practice yet again, creates the dominant paradigm for research. This return will not only militate against the possibilities of a rich field of research but also, more seriously, will go some way to reduce and or misshape practice itself. An adherence to this paradigm (neo-Apollonian position) - that is, the controls and laws that define and dominate what is acceptable to it as research - will create a pass where creative practice itself is thinned; bent, focussed and delimited into a narrow channel of conformity. All that can be dealt with in research, despite the plurality and expanse of practices, is that part of it all that may be so channeled. What is different or difficult in practice will be required to submit to that authority which validates it, but cannot without amputation (taking only that part that fits) or mutation satisfy its validating criteria. These are formed without sensitivity to practice.

The action of the imagination needs to be supported and promoted as research in itself and not just read as just a "hunch". We need to take a position, which argues against the reification of conventional research methodologies, and most especially the requirement to conform to the formalizing protocols of their epistemologies, which in their absolute application are unsympathetic to creative practice. Used tactically, conventional methods can inform and enrich the creative process and animate a rich field of research. But used absolutely they negate the possibility of research that is "other" to it.

This paper asks, as others ask, for a thickening of the definition of knowledge and a broadening of the definition of research. This will allow us to promote the techniques and methods involved in imaginative/poetic research so that they can be produced and considered as valid research. The "poetic" will not and can not be assayed in the programs of justification and/or validity that act as controls in conventional research. New forms of validity need to be evolved that are sensitive to poetic research; validity criteria that allow for the paralogic, the rhizomatic, the ironic and the voluptuous in creative and other practices (Lather referred to in Scheurich 1997; p89).

Endnotes

1 I take conventional research to mean all research that works from a clear research problem methodically to outcome - that is research that uses traditional scientific methods from positivism to "naive realism".

2 M.M. Bakhtin considers poetry as a constrained and hierarchised genre. Which indeed it is. He therefore defines it as essentially centripetal. In this paper I use poetry to describe a process and not the genre. In this reading it is centrifugal. It is a process of disruption and moves to the unconstrained.

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