

## Concepts as light seductions

Teija Rantala

University of Turku, [teija.rantala@utu.fi](mailto:teija.rantala@utu.fi), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3325-9751>

Mirka Koro

Arizona State University, [mirka.koro@asu.edu](mailto:mirka.koro@asu.edu), <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0216-6007>

**Keywords:** concepts; seduction, fabulation; posthuman theory

### Guidance to the readers

This conceptual paper discusses seduction as a form of light obsession. We are especially interested in thinking about/with/in fabulating concepts as one of the vital, yet slightly seductive, parts of academic research. The vitality and obsessivity in thinking, writing and researching, also speak to seduction's influence in making concepts, in articulating experiences, and in creating new language and knowledge with/in Academia. We explore seduction in the fabulation of concepts through various spaces and practices. We hold here, that, in this process of fabulation, scholars, data, theories, concepts, and matter, both seduce and are seduced. In the attempt to illustrate the workings of seduction, and to offer examples of conceptualizing our experience of being seduced in these fabulations, we draw upon two altogether different kind of events; theoretically seductive encounters between two scholars, and a methodologically seductive workshop with graduate students. We use Manning, Massumi, Deleuze and Baudrillard as conversation partners to think fabulation through seductive relationality, a focus which lets our dialogues pivot around in more or less intentional ways.

Here, seduction is treated as an obsessive but vital life force that might operate as a part of inquiry and knowledge production which simultaneously often functions as aporetic or (im)possible 'limit-experiences' (see Derrida, 1993). However, forces such as seduction – and their potentiality and logic – are rarely discussed, especially in the academic contexts. In this paper we discuss disturbances and the messy affects that the processes of seduction might produce through its attachment to people, events, theories, inquiries, data, 'methods', texts and writing in the (per)form(ances) of qualitative inquiry. We ask questions about the sensical and non-sensical functions of seduction and how seduction's different affective forces might become possible. What might be the potential affects of seduction in Academia? What if seduction offers only

useless scholarship interactions and a meaningless, self-indulgent academic life? What if seduction is not the only, but one, possibility to work through the relationships and inter-relatedness embedded in (post) qualitative inquiry?

But, what then seduces academics to fabulate? Is it the unbelievably juicy theories or the intriguing conversations in the Academia that get us started? In our case, it was all and none of that, and more. So far, this (current set of) fabulation(s) is an aftermath of several events and phenomena, including berry tasting, writing in the desert, academic narrations, religious mothers' storylines, and panties hanging on a washing line. These fabulations took hold within a (post)methodological workshop with graduate students, a conference paper presentation, and within one and countless conversations between two scholars. As rather a discontinuation from these experimental conceptualizations, this article aims to trouble these experiments with seduction, and with the sensory and affective pulls their fabulations include.

### **What does seduction promise for an experimental inquiry?**

*Being seduced by a thought, (non)thinking bodies, and matter consumes, potentially overwhelms and shapes mundane activities associated with scholarship and our lives more broadly.*

Seduction produces encounters and forces that work as accomplices in thought as it constructs boundary conditions and thresholds of potential (see Massumi, 2015). Seductive thought-in-the-act (see Manning & Massumi, 2014) lures scholars with its' relational force and ecologies of potentiality. Seductive thinking-feeling intensifies the relationships between the body of the researcher, data, theory, theory material; human and non-human. Seduction is something that exceeds propositional meaning (see MacLure, 2017) and it happens to the (scholarly) bodies enabling resonance and relation (to the 'other'). MacLure (2017) worries about inquiry which is unable to go far enough. It is possible that inquiry which is unable to 'live' and go far enough cannot seduce or be seduced – even at those times when seduction has the potential to stimulate vitality and a sense of being alive. Seduction also resembles emergent and self-improvised structure; structure that structures itself and has a plural logic (see Massumi, 2015). First, the impermeable non-passage; a door that does not open, or relationship that does not connect. Second, the absence of limit or too porous a limit; a seduction that is too easily permeable as a border, or 'forbidden' experience. Third, the impossible seduction; a seduction that erases itself. In some ways, seductive madness in scholarship cannot be 'dealt with' or only theorized but it must be lived; preferably through potential and limits, in small dosages and through small openings.

However, for Baudrillard (1990) seduction takes a different turn. Baudrillard explained that seduction "never belongs to the order of nature, but that of artifice - never to the order of energy, but that of signs and rituals" (p.2). Seduction involves mastery over the symbolic universe, and it breaks the referentiality of sex. Seduction creates a space of play and defiance. In addition, for Baudrillard, seduction has no rules and it cannot be anticipated. "Seduction is more intelligent, and seemingly spontaneously so. Immediately obvious - seduction need not be demonstrated, nor justified - it is there all at once, in the reversal of all the alleged depth of the real, of all psychology, anatomy, truth, or power. It knows (this is its secret) that there is no anatomy, nor psychology,

that all signs are reversible. Nothing belongs to it, except appearances - all powers elude it, but it "reversibilizes" all their signs." (p.10). Power seduces only when it challenges itself and seduction constitutes oneself as illusion.

Seduction may function as an infinite and becoming force. Seduction never ceases to produce and, as such, it seduces even more. "The law of seduction takes the form of an uninterrupted ritual exchange where seducer and seduced constantly raise the stakes in a game that never ends...And because there is no limit to, the challenge to love more than one is loved, or to be always more seduced - if not death" (Baudrillard, 1990, p.22). It is also possible that seduction is built on a strategy of deception. Power of insignificant signifier. Nonsense as a seducer. Proof is unnecessary. Seduction may begin in secrecy and through accidental encounters. "To produce is to materialize by force what belongs to another order, that of the secret and of seduction. Seduction is, at all times and in all places, opposed to production. Seduction removes something from the order of the visible, while production constructs everything in full view, be it an object, a number or concept" (p.34).

Seduction also poses a challenge and it separates itself from production; production of objects, states, and apparent materials. To seduce is to appear weak. It is possible that seduction is nothing more than an exchange value. "Seduction's entanglement with production and power, the irruption of a minimal reversibility within every irreversible process, such that the latter are secretly undermined, while simultaneously ensured of that minimal continuum of pleasure without which they would be nothing - this is what must be analyzed. At the same time knowing that production constantly seeks to eliminate seduction in order to establish itself on an economy of relations of force alone; and that sex, the production of sex, seeks to eliminate seduction in order to establish itself on an economy of relations of desire alone." (Baudrillard, 1990, p.47.)

Seduction seems to be everywhere. "Seduction cannot possibly be represented, because in seduction the distance between the real and its double, and the distortion between the Same and the Other, is abolished. Bending over a pool of water, Narcissus quenches his thirst. His image is no longer "other;" it is a surface that absorbs and seduces him, which he can approach but never pass beyond. For there is no beyond, just as there is no reflexive distance between him and his image. The mirror of water is not a surface of reflection, but of absorption." (Baudrillard, 1990, p.67.)

Seduction is an opposite to communication, yet it can be shared. "Seduction operates only because never spoken nor intended" (Baudrillard, 1990, p.79) One enters the secret but cannot exit. There is no time for seduction, but it has its own rhythm. To be seduced is the best way to seduce—endless refrain. "there is no active or passive mode in seduction, no subject or object, no interior or exterior: seduction plays on both sides. one cannot seduce others, if one has not oneself been seduced" (p.81). Seduction has multiple sides: "the moment of seduction, the suspension of seduction, the risk of seduction, the accident of seduction, the delirium of seduction, the pause of seduction" (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 84).

Seduction, like desire, can be understood here as a combination of multiple forces. In seduction

there are various forces that are partly separate from desire in their unfoldedness. In contrast to desire which is the 'fundamental' force of 'life', seduction seems to act more in the 'betweenness' of relational fields and forces, and is only 'sensed' or 'felt' in the foldings of connections made in encounters, or when things collide. Seduction seems also to include fluctuating and unpredictable modes of game and fate which are capable of creating suspensions in which we are pulled in as much as we pull others within the game (see Baudrillard, 1990). This expected 'habitual' excitement; the relation in which one anticipates, perhaps, pleasure, enjoyment or interest to follow as well as disaster, tragedy or catastrophe to occur. It is a relation in which "the pull" is the illusion of breaking the 'law', committing something that is against the law, while the passion for rules is the actual attraction that pulls us in/to the game.

*Seduction is repetitious, it is in love with its own name, but it is never monotonous. The pull that twists and turns endlessly.*

The rules that pull one in/to seductive relation, in the first place, operate beyond laws and structures – they are created as part of the game and therefore they are illusory yet functioning, but remain mostly hidden and unrecognized. The rules need no referent points of any kind, they are not grounded in, and do not obey, truths or laws. They seem to flourish when shared in seductive relations; there, where the collective laws soar above and beyond reach (see Baudrillard, 1990). The seductive pulls occur always as shared, they cannot operate or exist without their relations to the 'outside' and to their connective forces.

If relation and relating are the primary modes of seductive act, then we need to give up the logic of separation, and move toward what Massumi (2015, p. 187–191) calls "mutual inclusion"; multiple presences without including/introducing binaries of separate 'subjects'. To work through the paradoxes that mutual inclusion and seduction are likely to produce, scholars could pay attention to the middles and enactments of their decisions. For instance, in studying (religious) women's maternal embodied aspirations with the notion of seduction, this co-writing starts to resonate with affective encounters, events, in which these aspirations are felt, embodied and lived. These are the seductive affective enfoldings of encounters and events, which take different forms from atmospheres, feelings and reactions to embodied intensities, sensations (Massumi, 2008; Blackman, 2015). The focus here shifts from the conceptual seductions to individual human encounters and productions.

*Mirka: what happens when seduction does not communicate? It does not share language, symbols, signs. It does not transmit the meaning. Can seduction be a relation force which does not communicate? Maybe it pulls, attracts, creates, performs, moves.*

*Teija: but it does not have an object.*

*Mirka: pull as a gravitational force? There is matter but potentially no way to recognize the sources of pull or gravitational forces. Explorations of relational space matter, perhaps.*

## **Fabulating with seductive concepts**

Fabulation is true! Absolutely true, in the only register of truth affirmation knows: the pragmatically speculative. Pragmatic because it does what it does, it mobilizes *just this way*, under just these conditions. And speculative because how it will unfold, what it can do, what else it will be, remains unknowable in advance of the doing (Manning, 2016, p.227).

The sensory experiences of remembering, tasting, and attuning to the textures of life and berries (as one materiality of life) come together within the other events of fabulating concepts. The first fabulation takes place close within Arizona desert in April sun in 2016 as part of workshop 'Workshop in method/ology: Experimenting with ecological writing and diffractive reading' shared among graduate students. This experimental workshop was influenced by an ecological wordings workshop lead by Dr. Astrida Neimanis at the New Materialism conference in Turku, 2013, and in which, the limitations and possibilities of posthuman thought were explored in writing theoretically based on *écriture féminine*, corporeal phenomenology, and critical materialist thought. The aim of our workshop was to experience 'wording' the world we live in and the things we encounter(ed) that day; the coolness and softness of the grass in the garden you lay on in the midmorning sun; the fruit and the berries we touch, smell, and taste; the heat of the desert; the sand in the afternoon which you try to escape; the cool water on your feet in the pool after the writing trip to the desert, while engaging in conceptualizing our experiences.

The workshop began by relaxing on the grass in the garden while eating berries and reading aloud a book on the experience of berry tasting as a posthuman philosophical task:

*My favorite class at the time was philosophy. The teacher, Ms. Sweers, came into the classroom that day and dropped a crate of berries onto her desk. The fruit quivered lush and red inside the box. A sweet, loamy fragrance filled the air. Despite my mind's attempt to stay on top of my salivary glands, my mouth began to water. Ms. Sweers walked around the classroom and placed a berry on each student's desk. The fruit glowed in front of us like little lanterns. ...She sat back down on her desk and put a single berry on her palm. "I want you each to fully experience your berry," she said... I picked up my strawberry, not expecting much... Quickly, I discovered that I had never really looked at a strawberry before, not up close. As I carefully examined the nubbin of fruit, I wondered if I had ever looked, truly looked, at anything before. ... The strawberry became infinitely fascinating – its satiny skin, its intricate pattern of seed, its shaggy crown of delicately veined leaves. Was the whole world this richly complex? How much else had escaped my attention? I lifted the berry to my nose and breathed the scent deep into my lungs. My fingertips tingled against the edges of the leaves, thrilled with each curve of berry flesh. ....I rolled part of the berry around on my tongue. The sensations inside my mouth were so exquisite they almost hurt. As bits of fruit slid luxuriantly down my throat, I knew I had never felt so alive before in my life...That strawberry launched me on my life's path. It has been my quest ever since to unite body and word, language and flesh...The pages are still dripping with strawberry juice (Brandeis, 2002, *Fruitflesh*, pp. 3–6).*

(To further mobilize and materialize the event of berry tasting in potential listeners/readers/viewers, here is a vocalized version of the reading:

<https://youtu.be/nU4CXE25jMg>)

As we combined the reading and our new perceptions with the berries, we were more and more seduced by the captivating experience, and wondered about ways to come up with language that would express the mixture of smells, sounds, senses simultaneously. We wondered how our interactions and sensing of berries might carry us forward also in our qualitative inquiries.



If we were this attuned to our inquiry processes, if we sensed our participants and matter in our research contexts in this way, what might happen? Even if we were puzzled by the challenge of immersing ourselves in senses and opening more to different sensing experiences, of feeling the textures and the taste of sweet red berries, we would still keep trying to come up with conceptualizations, concepts, and language to describe what was happening and what was being sensed. What kept us engaged in this fabulation? Was it the relationality of the event, bodies, experiences, feelings, affects and (non-)actions in their inconsistent vitality, or some mysterious seductive forces?

When we aim to express or articulate our feelings or experience, we start working/playing with conceptualizations. As Manning (2009) notes: “Concepts are events in making. An event in the making is a thought on the cusp of articulation – a prearticulated thought in motion” (p. 5) as we could “feel the concept in making when we are on the verge of expression but cannot yet quite articulate the passage from feeling to language” (p.223). We become aware of the seduction of this event – concepts in making – as we feel obliged to create concepts, as these concepts cannot be re-used or transferred from one event to another as they change in their relationality with other concepts (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994). This happened to us as we tried to overcome the already set ways of reflecting past experiences with berries, grass, and sun and, instead, made space for newly encountered experiences and our expression of it. Naturally, there is always more to a sensory experience than we are ever able to verbally express. For example, the movement, degrees of awareness and attunement, the mobility of the language, and the stuttering and insufficiencies of words and utterings.

Fabulation is here understood as an affirmative practice in which the concepts, theoretical orientations, their conceptualizations, and life, are merging together. For us, fabulation works as a practical endeavour to endorse the speculative side of concepts and concept-making by bringing forth the affirmative aspect of fabulation which resonates with experimenting what is possible and with what effects are produced (Manning, 2016). Our lives, in their complex combinations and nuances, resonate with the sweet taste, blush-red colour, sharp yet smooth texture of berries. We

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would emphasize, like Deleuze (1988) writes with Spinoza's naturalistic ethics, that "there is no longer any difference between the concept and life" (p. 130), since "affect is the autonomous level where body and mind resonate, co-emerge, and matter" (Rantala, 2019, p. 58; see also, Massumi, 2002; Bergson, 1910/2010; Whitehead, 1978/1985).

Strawberries, qualitative inquiry, our bodies, sun, green grass, sound of birds and bypassing cars resonated and co-emerged. (Attending to) these relational resonances enable inquirers to sense and conceptualize their worlds more intensely and in potentially deeper ways: experiences, narratives, colors, textures, become diverse and diversified, the difference amplified and being sensed. These resonances may also inspire and activate scientific concepts and bring intensities to set these into motion (Rantala, 2019). Intensities and movement may alter time-space senses and notions, thus making possible inquirers to remain open to the new and the different. As the academic knowledge-making machinery also stresses openness to the new, it should enable novel conceptualizations, approaches and techniques to also take place. Attending to such relational resonances shifts inquiry and fabulation toward investigations and experiments beyond the usual, the comfortable and normative ways of doing research and sets them in motion (Koro-Ljungberg, 2012; 2016). Therefore, we use fabulation as a tool to create and mutate the regulated paths of conceptualizing. Fabulation is here to give space and attention to the movement, forces, pulls of different sorts, seductions in the making of concepts. Fabulation thus allows concepts to change, evolve and variegate with life and living, which is necessary in being able to respond to the needs of the present whilst attuning to, being able to articulate, and living with/in a rapidly changing milieu.

We work and live in the relational webs of resonances. These webs are made of human and non-human (corpo)realities, machines, desires and connections, which come into life when they encounter one another (Massumi (with Manning) 2015). Like here, as Manning and Massumi (2014) write "[l]anguage and movement meet in the thinking-feeling" (p. 42). Also, our writing bodies occur in this co-constitution, in the betweenness of two thinkings-feelings. So, the shared (lines of) thinking-feeling here, continuously resonates the movement of the past, the present and the presumed connections, the forces of desire and the seductions, of the future. We mimic each other exactly in those moments in which we are most separate in our thinking-feeling, and in the most 'unresonating' field in our communicative flow.

Once we let the movement, the rhythm of thinking-feeling, take us apart and together simultaneously, we unconsciously keep adding elements in/to the movement - additions which we cannot control. Movement moves us since we cannot be conscious of the fact that we *are* interconnected constantly in the relational field within its movement; the pulls and attractions, charms and fascinations of all kinds, of that relational field. Like for us, our experiments, for instance, fabulating the concept of seduction involves this constant movement of change and separation, in our otherwise interconnected thinking-feeling bodies (see Ettinger, 2006). This relational field is made (up) of these various forces, including desire and seduction, which are not individual as such, but rather temporary arrangements of desire in motion. Movement is relational and relationality is movement (see Manning and Massumi 2014). Our fabulative relation with concepts is experimental, and constantly on the move, as our relational field is moving within and

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between various contexts: workshops, mentoring and thesis writing, co-imagining and co-creating contexts with seductive scenes which, in (re)turn, continuously reshape themselves and us. For instance, now, this writing has so far changed its context and theme: seduction has shifted into obsessive fabulations of concepts...and more.

Relationality in qualitative inquiry (and also of concepts and fabulations) serves as one alternative proxy for stable subjectivities, positionalities, and fixed research approaches. Viewing inquiry through relationality enables a deeper appreciation of movement, of continuous shifts, of hesitations, avoidances, and absences. Relationality in inquiry speaks to the ecologies of knowledge and matter - intra-activities within the relational systems. Baudrillard's notions of seduction has parallels with Massumi's (and Spinoza's) affect. For Massumi (2015) "to begin affectively in change is to begin in relation, and to being in relation is to begin in the event" (p.ix). Instead of thinking inquiry as individual activity it could be operationalized as collective individuation and thinking-feeling. Each thought is preceded with movement in the body and each movement in the body is relational, ecological and environmental. Inquiries are relational encounters in the world. Massumi (2015) proposed that "the most seductive products produce possibilities of connection" (p.23). (Academic) life is about immersion, "our belonging to each other" in order to live so "intensely together that there is no room to doubt the reality of it" (p.45). "Affective thinking-feeling is transindividual in...that it pertains directly to what is passing between the individuals involved, which is reducible to neither taken separately" (p.94): co-individuation.

### **Relatedness in fabulating seduction**

Relational techniques apply more to events and situations than to individuals, and therefore, the following fabulation worked at more conceptual levels but still evolved in event, as our conversations intensified further:

*Mirka: how does seduction happen?*

*Teija: It kicks in. It may go through desire. Desire is everywhere, force in everything. Desire produces. Seduction is some kind of light obsession; some kind of a pull. A combination of things and a form of plurality. Machinic. Drawing from Deleuze and productive machines.*

*Mirka: maybe we bring Deleuze and Baudrillard together when talking about seduction. For Baudrillard seduction is vital illusion, a force that relates but does not target physical objects. Illusion of the productivity of desire.*

*Teija: you produce something that does not work. Produce more production. Seductive moment and event. I can feel that moment. Blindness to everything else since you are so pulled in. Fold and non-production. Seduction is the by-product of desire's force which is socially limited. Can we talk about seduction without a human component?*

We can be seduced by a thought, especially when this thought is being expressed by, and shared with, another person. It generates unexpected emotions, sometimes events with extreme

intellectual vitality – often while walking, eating, sleeping, breathing, and simply living. There are no rules or prediction to these seductive forces. Oftentimes, however, uncertainty and a sense of not knowing keeps us intellectually curious and engaged which functions as fuel for detailed collaborative writing tasks and elaborate brainstorming within the relational spaces of the other and difference. The intimacy of thinking-feeling and relationality also shape these (un)scholarly connections. One exchange, followed by another and another and more ... to be continued forever ... within these changing relations.

*Tutkimuksen ja kirjoittamisen nesteellinen muoto kiehtoo. Liquidity of relational inquiry fascinates. Tutkimustyö, joka sujuu liian hyvin ja on liian kaunista, ei ole todellista. Inquiry moving too fast and too beautifully cannot be reached. Liquid movement, seductive clue and a rubber band. A motivated flow of (thinking-feeling-writing) acts without direction. Tarvitaan kuminauhoja.*

*Mirka: what about relationality which is hidden or intentionally secretive?*



*We sense the pull of seduction, yet we cannot put it into words, describe or relive it. Illusive and over-productive seductive forces. The force has been produced so many times that it does not recognize itself anymore. Seduction creates a force to keep individuals and matter engaged, it is vital but elusive. Not a reflection of a real. There is always unpredictability in seduction, which is actually the vitality of the*

*forces and not related to specific times and spaces. If I know I am being seduced, seduction becomes visible, it is no longer seduction but sexual desire, hunger, organized activity, a need for this and that.*

*Teija: there is pull, you want to return to the sense and pleasure of being seduced but you can never get back to it.*

*Mirka: seduction is not this or that but has transindividual characteristics. Not a psychological nature or recognizable object of desire. You can be obsessed with data, analysis and inquiry but this is not that kind of seduction. This seduction operates as different kind of forces which do not have an object or target but is powerful in its secrecy, vagueness, and unanticipated becomings. Yet we continuously live in it to various degrees. Illusive production which feels like seductive event even though there is no realness in it or there is all realness to it. It is sensed even though it is not recognizable or it is sensed since it is so over recognized that it loses its' recognizable elements.*

*Teija: it is so difficult to be able to see seduction without a human component, an actor and outside production, especially as illusive event that creates forces.*

*Mirka: for Baudrillard the real (and the human in real) has disappeared since it has been reproduced so many times. Seduction is a proxy, a virtual copy with the same degree of force as the real itself.*

*Teija: this is very seductive.*

*Mirka: if seduction functions as some unanticipated relationality, how to think, talk and write about it?*

*Teija: do we need objects to mirror, and language to describe?*

*Mirka: not sure. Illusion operates as a real; we have data, stories, relations, dirty pantyhose, line of wet clothes hanging in the wind. The matter is there, and we are doing things, but these things are any more real than we would be dreaming about it or hallucinating. Realness is not the present time, but we take things to operate as real. Illusive is sensed as real and it functions as real.*

*Teija: In relation to seduction: arrangements are living 'entanglements' and 'dispositions', which 'travel' within their entire milieus, 'contexts' and 'backdrops' that they navigate, and their flows and currents, and therefore they always occur under certain, even temporary conditions and circumstances. In discussing the machinic productions of desire, or either the more secret and mysterious pulls of seduction, the concept of arrangement is useful since it seems to work without the need and aim to form an 'entity', instead, it forms a complexity, a 'living arrangement', which only ever function within the event in which it is assembled.*

*Mansikkahauta*

*Hengenvaara 0039.*

*Tapahtui Puolakankadulla Nokiolla. Ehkä vuonna 1976.*

*Mansikkamaalla.*

*Kenkä uppoaa syvälle mansikkahautaan,*

*juuret hiertää kenkää vieden sitä nytkähdellen vasemmalta oikealle.*

*Hengenvaara.*

*Huudan apua.*

*Uppoan niin syvälle että syvä loppuu.*

*Herään. Sataa lunta.*

*MK-2019*

Is seduction built on the strategy of deception? Power of insignificant signifier. Force of imagination. Maybe nonsense might function as a seducer, as seduction begins through accidental encounters. Seduction may generate unexpected emotions and vitality to everyday living in the form of surprises and change; one exchange follows another and another and more while also shaping academic writing. For example, Cixous (2013) advises women to bring forth the bodily felt, sensed dynamics in the production of writing. However, seductive scholarship might also be blinding in the case of taking an intensive focus on the subject/object of research through which some of the other, significant, elements might be disregarded. To be seduced is taking risk, as

seduction might fail, end abruptly, or it might slowly lose its pull and be replaced by cynicism and carelessness. Then, a researcher no longer desires to be seduced but is afraid of the risk of getting lost, being ridiculed, or rejected by others. Alternatively, the monetary benefits of research can seduce researchers, at the cost of maintaining independence and self-worth, or can create forces that undermine resistance to hegemonic practices and, therefore, produce various unanticipated and potentially harmful effects (see Huckaby, 2007).

### Further fabrications?

*Concept of the concept. Concept as a proxy. Seduction: yet another concept that produces potential; potential of 'what if'. Maybe then. Maybe there. Concepts pull us, scholars, in many different directions simultaneously. We hope to find some seductive madness in Academia. We might suffer from a concept(ual) of seductive overdose; without overdose one might not feel as a productive scholar. Concepts fill us with desire and seductive matter. We want more concepts, new concepts and concepts of concepts of concepts. Can concepts be free? Free from academic traditions? Or are all academic traditions proxies and matter of academic forces and pulls? Concepts always respond to problems. In this case our problem is seduction. Need, desire, and state of seduction in the Academy. Concepts respond to life.*

What happens to/with/of seduction in qualitative inquiry? We access (illusions of) seduction through various dimensions and events of our academic life, but exiting them seems impossible and, to some extent, also undesirable. Seduction might function as one possible relation and a form of relationality which enables and un-enables our lives as qualitative scholars. Seduction can be seen as a force which reverses visible and productive structures of knowing-sensing-living, acknowledging while 'celebrating' the imperceptible. Seduction might account for the unspeakable, indescribable, yet relational in our inquiries. It could be one potential force which produces, but cannot be located or articulated. Might we be able to remove ourselves, data, knowing, being, relation from the visible order and tangible (definable) productions of seduction? And, can we do that without a proof? (Baudrillard, 1990).

In the context of qualitative research, seduction offers a potential way of thinking relationality as affective thinking-feeling which functions as pre-subjective and trans-individual as it pertains to the event and what passes between subjects and objects. In the context of our examples, the unstructured composition of these inquiries/explorations/musings is multilayered; it consists of foldings, pulls, formations but also bodies, affects, connections and passions that are heading towards either mattering or non-production as such.

Seduction shapes our inquiry, lives, knowledge, and relations in the world in various yet unanticipated ways. In the context of this text we were interested in the seductive pulls and relations – of being seduced and seducing – and in seduction as a force in forming fabrications of the mattering aspirations concerning expression, articulation and conceptualization. Seduction here links knowledge formation, which involves subject-objects, and inter-relationality within (post) qualitative and posthuman conceptualizations. As scholars, we were 'seduced' to include our own sensing-living-musings to this inquiry. We wonder what seductive pulls might 'create', what kinds of foldings happen within the different seductive pulls –as they are considered,

simultaneously, as creative, non-productive, and also disastrous (Culp 2016). The relationality and liquidity of seduction might be familiar to some of us, as exemplified through our thinking, but also through our ecological, sensing and porous bodies. The viscosities of seduction are, here, understood as a threshold, which opens a way to view seduction, as an essential 'pull' and 'relation' connecting images, symbols, affects, bodies, enactments, practices and actions as practical fabulations of conceptual-data-intellectual-research-(a)musings and more.

These fabulations 'matter' as they connect the relational materiality of these seductive pulls into the co-resonating event-encounters. These seductive lines of inquiry probe the limits of traditional qualitative research and the 'static' constellations they produce. In sensing-living-musing qualitatively, these fabulations whisper in our ears ... seductively ... 'jump over, go through, or dig underneath whenever you need to overcome whatever 'obstacles' hold you back in enquiring ... and, experiment once more'... Forces of seduction are happening, affecting, sensed, operating as illusory events, offering overproduced reality as real and paths beyond the given meanings. Additionally, these forces might create fluidity in thinking, and performing, qualitative inquiry. They might assist in envisioning qualitative methodology and its future differently. Seduction performs, it is livable, it has gravitational forces of attraction, pulling the unrecognizable object, the social universe, as a light obsession.

### **Proxy data**

Conference presentation: Koro-Ljungberg, M. & Rantala, T. *Seduction as one possible relation with(in) qualitative inquiry*. American Educational Research Association, AERA Meeting. New York, 13–17.4.2018

Recorded conversation (between the authors), 12.3.2018

Recorded Arizona writing workshop titled *Workshop in method/ology: Experimenting with ecological writing and diffractive reading*. Arizona State University, 22.4.2016

## 'Blind' Re-view: (and responses)

Dear authors – light seductions

Thank you for this contribution. It has lured and fascinated me for some time and in ways that are only (sometimes, in some ways) available in the re-viewing comments that follow. There are many temptations available here, and, so easily, I could spend my time now in a salivating yearn for strawberries . . . especially as I look at and listen to your musings and compositions on seduction scholarship ☺☺. Of course, there are many other seductions that hail me here, as I sit with the effects and affects resonating from the back-and-forth of your embodied co-constitutions. And, these co-constitutions continue to (re)produce this co-writing, as I read it now and muse. Is seduction scholarship in any way containable? Is it map-able? Would you want to chart its flows (further) as it (re)produces affect elsewhere, beyond that involved in its own (co/re)production in this paper? Hmmm!?! How might seduction and seductive maps feel?



I become so much more than a reader as I feel the sensuous pulse of being and becoming a part of some of the inquiries that you mention here. In particular, I am transported (back?) into the Arizona desert and the times both before and after. I am returning home. Somebody's home. Nobody's home. What is this place and how do spaces seduce?

I can easily feel the seductive joys, experimentations and frustrations of inquiring how I might try to conceptualise both the particularities of this event and the multiplicities of this event as it pulsates in other (mundane and extraordinary) events of inquiry – the stuff of making a life and living in and around the academy. The green grass, the sharp-sweet berries, the pool water that  
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cools the hot desert tramp, help me, as a reader, to imagine my own wrestlings when attempting to articulate those ordinary affects that seduce me daily. I wonder if you might help me further ... help link me to some of the other events that you mention at the start of the paper? Maybe, I'm not supposed to sense-feel those (other) events in the same way . . . but, as they are, also, all so fabulously tempting ... For example, there is mention of religious mothers' storylines, and the (re)appearance of underwear—albeit, mostly this time in the form of pantyhose on a washing line. (Why are undergarments featuring as a (re)occurrence in this special issue on seduction?? What contortions of shame/pride are signalled in having one's clean smalls out on the washing line? What's at stake in and for qualitative inquiry when washing one's dirty laundry in public?!) Anyway! I wonder what I can do now with the (mere) allusions to the other events that you signal in the paper but don't make very explicit. I'm not sure whether/how these are part of the assemblage that compels and propels your paper. Can you help me here? Do you want to??

### *Berries - seduced?*

Your use of Baudrillard really helps me flesh out, to think-feel, the potential and possibility of seductive scholarship more fully. There are lots of chunks of text, of him, here. Are you happy that he remains where he is? I wonder if you might mess with him a bit more. What might happen if this 'Baudrillard', this helpful 'him' became a hymn? Might the sense of this him/hymn become even more helpfully seductive as a chant, as an enchantment, that is fractured and/or resonates more explicitly across the writing? Might (t)his Braudrillardian refrain be more productive if it echoed further/farther across the paper as a messier set of pulsing and impulsive (scholarly) tones, as a set of re-enfoldings, and/or as a way of entangling his seductive musings with your own? Are you happy that this him/hymn remains (at least explicitly and largely) in the introductory section? Would Baurdrillard mind you messing with him, with making him a bit messier, a bit more of a roaming seductive force in the paper?

### *Baudrillard – seduced?*

Why would an author, creator, or reader care about happiness? And whose happiness is being seduced or seduces?

I love (and am in love with) the idea of focusing your explorations on the relational affordances between seductive forces and fabulation(s). I love the (temporary, provisional and seductive) frame of fabulating, of fabricating, or 'making-it-up' as we go along, in (y)our becomings. I am particularly pulled to those relational forces that shape our encounters and entanglements with/in our (qualitative) inquiries: those inquiries that we (per)form in (and outside of) the academy; those inquiries that leak out of, and spill from, the wor(l)dings made (im)possible when we playfully and seriously attend to seduction scholarship. I like how you show us how such fabulation occurs in the relational conversations that develop between you over the paper. Here is messy, speculative and speculating fabulations in their becomings. Could you help the reader with linking this (per)form(ance) of conversational fabulation (back) to some of the theoretical speculations that you take from your conversation partners (Baudrillard, MacLure, Massumi, Derrida . . .)? Might you be seduced in/to doing that (some more?) for your readers?

*Massumi- seduced? YES please!*

I was with you in, and now carry with me, the Arizona desert. I'm speculating about what's possible and productive for (my own) academic work in taking your ideas about seduction and fabulation seriously. My desert is starting to fill and fabulate with some of those things that you evoked, as well as with some

others that make me float (along with) your lines of seductive flight. What would happen if Baudrillard came to the Arizona desert, now? Would he eat strawberries on the grass? Would he flick cooling pool water as you fabulated your experimentations? Would you go back with him? Would you find any enchantment in chanting his/your wor(l)dings (back) at him? Imagine ... another (dead famous) body in the desert. What flowerings might that decomposition/recomposition help to fabulate?

*Baudrillard is dead. I attended his funeral (in my work).*

I'd like to follow the line of flight of enchantment which takes me into the world of witches. Enchantment and to enchant are even more than to seduce. How was it possible to forget them? Here I want to offer you what I 'discovered' about the world of witches (sorceresses) so that, perhaps, you can continue to speculate on seduction.

*Witches- seduced?*

Witches have a long history; we can remember here Circe, the enchantress, daughter of the God Helios or Medea. Starting from the Middle Ages, witches were accused and condemned, and I 'discovered' that the accused were not only women but were also male and adolescent men as well. This happened in Normandy, in Finland, in England and especially in Estonia where half or most of the witches were male. Christina Lerner stated that sorcery was criminalized, but the condemnation did not depend on the sex of the people accused: sorcery was sex related but not sex specific.

The witches are almost supernatural, half-fairy herself, or even completely non-human in certain traditions. They have always lived in the West. They are present in fairy books and can be antagonists or heroes, but sometimes even their counsellor. They crowded a certain medieval imaginary and especially, in the centuries immediately following, the trial documents of Europe and New England, as absolute enemies of the Christian and social order of the time. They reappeared in the last century, no longer just as witches, but as activists for the rights of minorities, ecologists who promote the sacred respect of bodies, nature, harmony between human and non human beings ...

What I find so fascinating in the world of witches is the 'enchantment' and the 'magic'. Witches do

things with words, but the magic needs also some gestures and things (such as a magic wand). The magic – for example the dialogue with deaths, the generation of love, the freedom from satanic possessions, recoveries, the fights against evil spirits, filters... - raises constant doubts about the reality of what is experienced.

Is there any connection between seduction and the magic world? I leave this question to the authors.

Oh, I can hear your seductions so clearly!! The (story)lines ... fascinations about the reappearance of panties, knickers ... well undergarments in this special issue on seduction is palpable. And, the interest for 'private' revelations of them (or any other) clearly makes you somewhat curious ... are these linked and how are they possibly linked to the material-(dis)ursive or materially cursed (the lived, embodied and felt) side of academia? Are these illusional? Are these insinuations to act? Or, are these mere expressions of the hard working (converted and conformists) who are part of the academic knowledge-production 'objective-illusional' machine who, during the day and, at night, are drawn to the (other)wisely (un)seen powers of magic, the body and desire?; drawn to those powers that relate (at least) some things to do with the body and desire as seductive, somehow forbidden, secretive and magical, or even sinful. Everything that is seen, felt and acted upon does not fit into the traditional academic, to the explicit, objective and neutral and valid. Or, are these attempts and insinuations to allow the multiple 'voices' and magic of colours (even of panties!) to shine through and together with the theories of seduction and academic situated knowledge productions which are always polyphonic, multiple and truthful? When you are seduced *the real* is as real as it is felt and lived; like the sensory experience of smelling-tasting of a berry(-with-seeds) even when it is re-imagined or dreamed about (see Manning, 2009). The seduced is kept on the move, on toes and dreaming with the witches, fairies or any other kinds of compassionate humans or others. But, the seduced is also held response-able for the sensory and intuitive to be taken seriously.

*Curses, seeds, secrets- seduced? Absolutely.*

Manning, E. 2009. *Relationescapes. Movement, Art, Philosophy*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

*(Heavy and lightly seductive) Responses*

Is seduction scholarship in any way containable? Is it map-able?

Would you want to chart its flows (further) as it (re)produces affect elsewhere, beyond that involved in its own (co/re)production in this paper?

How might seduction and seductive maps feel?

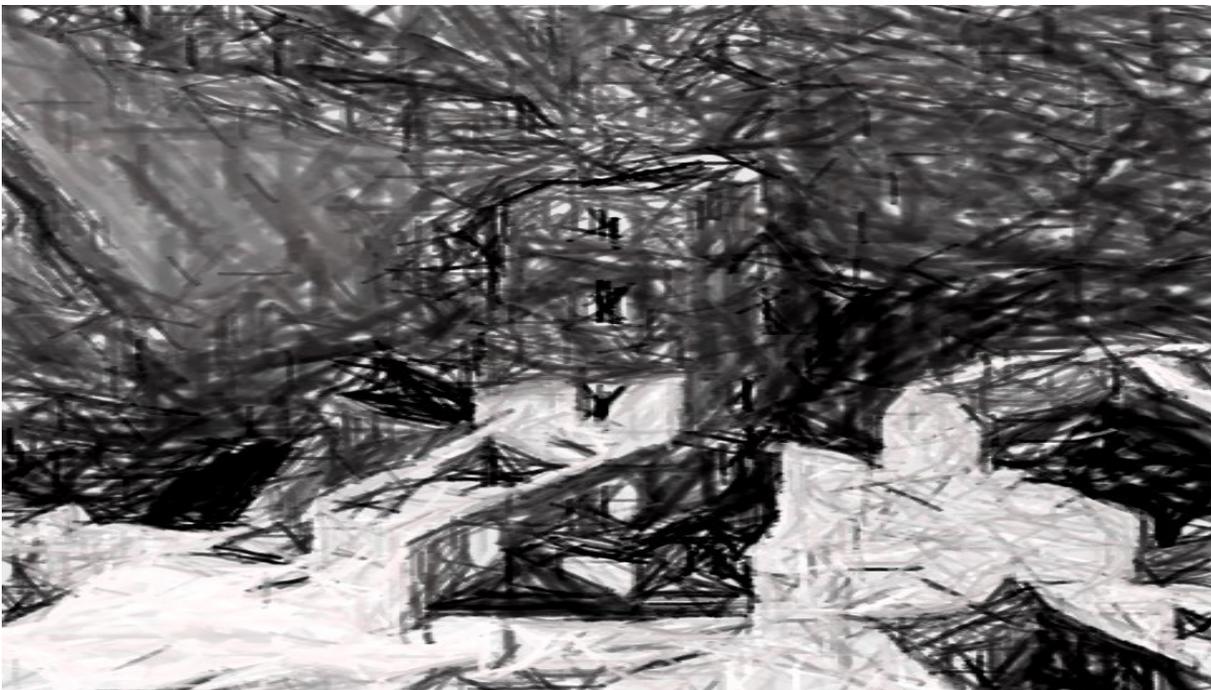
What is this place and how do spaces seduce?

What might (seductive) maps do? They may trace seduction, locate, dislocate, create relations, pulse, name, and find and confuse (get lost). Maps may suggest seductive forces and they offer possibilities for seductive journeys, travel, and movement. Seductive scholarship maps may

(dis)orient and (dis)place but it never forces and demands a particular path or journey.

Maps function as seductive inaccuracies. They do not represent 'real' but reproduce multiple possible copies of seductive 'reals' (see Hegarty 2004). Maps precedes its seductive content and thus include all possible feelings and multitude of affects. Maps may spread over seductive territories and merge with them slowly and rapidly moving over clusters of seductive forces. A seductive space manipulation.

For Deleuze (1995) maps are set of interacting lines. Some lines represent and others are abstract. They function spatially differently. Some trace outlines and others do not. Everything including seduction has its geography and cartography. Seductions are made up of lines and seductive spaces correlate with different lines. Cartography can only map out seductive pathways and moves. Not seduction itself.



Can you help link me to some of the other events that you mention at the start of the paper?

Why are undergarments featuring as a (re)occurrence in this special issue on seduction?

What contortions of shame/pride are signaled in having one's clean smalls out on the washing line? What's at stake in and for qualitative inquiry when washing one's dirty laundry in public?

What I can do now with the (mere) allusions to the other events that you signal in the paper but don't make very explicit.

Can you help me here? Do you want to?

Yes of course, we take pleasure in helping you further! Seductive events referenced here do not have names or garments, and they do not smell like washing detergent. They come and go. They appear and disappear. Tracing them after the fact is impossible. Does it matter which events

connected with seduction, generated seductive forces, seduced us but not you? Events link to all possible other events. Undergarments were not used to make reference to a particular materiality, female body, or any embodiment of sexuality. Rather hanging undergarments produced intersecting lines, connected presenters, women, domestic labor, materiality of printed fabric with conference chairs, laptops, and scholarly thought. And much more.

Not sure we were washing dirty laundry in public. As a matter of fact, our panties were clean and some of them unused. Interesting that appearance of underwear in a conference space was connected with dirty laundry. We wonder what might have happened if we would have brought dirty laundry instead. Would that event include disgust, dismissal, a report of uncivilized professional conduct perhaps?

Now we are having second thoughts about helping you. If you want to be helped to understand OUR events deeper, we wish no longer to be helpful. If you would like to create your own lines some of which may connect with our lines, traces, and sensed events, we are here and available.

Are you happy that he remains where he (We ask who he is. Baudrillard?) is?

What might happen if this 'Baudrillard', this helpful 'him' became a hymn?

Might the sense of this him/hymn become even more helpfully seductive as a chant, as an enchantment, that is fractured and/or resonates more explicitly across the writing?

Might (t)his Baudrillardian refrain be more productive if it echoed further/farther across the paper as a messier set of pulsing and impulsive (scholarly) tones, as a set of re-enfoldings, and/or as a way of entangling his seductive musings with your own?

Are you happy that this him/hymn remains (at least explicitly and largely) in the introductory section?

Would Baudrillard mind you messing with him, with making him a bit messier, a bit more of a roaming seductive force in the paper?

Why would an author, creator, or reader care about happiness? And whose happiness is being seduced or seduces?

Could you help the reader with linking this (per)form(ance) of conversational fabulation (back) to some of the theoretical speculations that you take from your conversation partners (Baudrillard, MacLure, Massumi, Derrida . . .)? Might you be seduced in/to doing that (some more?) for your readers?

In our fabulations Baudrillard is present like a circular movement, a whirl wind hovering among us but also as an (un)invited guest of honor. (S)he repeatedly intervenes in our discussions as we can feel someone breathing on our necks and imposing seductive quotes on us. We love it really but equally hate it, too. We end up humming seemingly forever with the seductive musings of the Baudrillardian choir of voices, and perhaps even too far as we keep losing the points of arrival and

departure (which is which?). (S)he has the habit of messing us up, not the other way around, (s)he keeps us seduced whilst holding the strings. The constant humming takes us to play with the sensory and affective in seduction and use her/his seemingly semantic and symbolic musings to bring the tensions, the pulling movement into the play. So yes, this makes us happy, and it makes her/him roar, either of excitement or terror because we messed up with the intimate musings of our guest of honor! But this is a significant part of our mission; to intervene with the (un)touchable master theories and give them a taste of sensory experience, some fresh air and a chance to be converted (for instance, by taking them out for a walk in the desert) (see Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). This is a must for the theories to be in the service of the politics of affect and the transformation toward more polyvocal methods, truths and mattering conceptions inevitably needed in the academic knowledge-production in times like these; of political polarisation, ecological disaster, and postsecularism) (see Mendieta, 2010; Massumi, 2015)

What would happen if Baudrillard came to the Arizona desert, now?

I would talk to him until sundown. We would drink wine.

I would ask him to tell me philosophical-good-night-stories in his pajamas until I would fall asleep.

I would lock him in my hot and dry office and ask him to write nonsense until my return.

Would he eat strawberries on the grass?

Yes, of course.

Would he flick cooling pool water as you fabulated your experimentations?

He would listen and listen some more. Then he might dip his toes into cooling pool water just to sense the water's smoothing effects. I would dry his wet feet while he continues listening. I sing. I talk. I dry.

Would you go back with him?

There is always a return. Again.

Is there any connection between seduction and the magic world?

And, the interest for 'private' revelations of them (or any other) clearly makes you somewhat curious ... are these linked and how are they possibly linked to the material-(dis)cursive or materially cursed (the lived, embodied and felt) side of academia? Are these illusional? Are these insinuations to act? Or are these mere expressions of the hard working (converted and conformists) who are part of the academic knowledge-production 'objective-illusional' machine during the day and, at night, are drawn to the (other)wisely (un)seen powers of magic, the body and desire?; those powers that relate (at least) some things to do with the body and desire as seductive, somehow forbidden, secretive and magical, or even sinful. Everything that is seen, felt and acted upon does not fit into the traditional academic, to the explicit, objective and neutral and

valid. Or, are these attempts and insinuations to allow the multiple 'voices' and magic of colors (even of panties!) to shine through and together with the theories of seduction and academic situated knowledge productions which are always polyphonic, multiple and truthful?

What comes to these factual illusions, created or experienced, imagined or yet-to-come, they are always crowded with the magic of the present, luring invitations but not always to be acted upon but often dreamed upon throughout the days of the hard-working academic. It is curiosity that drives us: What is there to know? How is it done? Whom does it concern? Am I seduced enough?

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