

Music, culture and heritage: an heretical consumer research perspective

In September 28-30, 2015, after a three years hiatus, the Heretical Consumer Research (HCR) Conference reconvened in New Orleans prior to the annual Association for Consumer Research (ACR) Conference as was the case for earlier HCRs. As organizers of this gathering of scholars who are interested in introducing groundbreaking ideas and perspectives to consumer research, we thought that New Orleans was a perfect venue to rethink the themes of music, culture and heritage. The HCR Conference series started in 1996 at the Arizona State University West Campus, prior to the ACR Conference in Tucson, has been a fertile ground for new movements and ideas in the field simply by bringing some of the forward thinkers in consumer research. Consistently, HCR conferences have brought together groups of researchers from far corners of the globe to consider the current state of the consumer research and sister marketing disciplines along with issues, concerns, challenges and assumptions relevant to the disciplines. The goal of the conference was to engage with heretical considerations and similarly, the goal with this special issue is to encourage ongoing heretical interventions.

This special issue focuses on music, culture and heritage as an innovative lens by which to encourage creativity in the development of marketing theory and practice. Music, culture and heritage are symbolically embedded throughout the market, as well as within consumer lives and ritualistic practice, thus this special issue presents a consideration of music, culture and heritage as a discursive site of human action and social interaction. As recognized by *Arts and the Market*, the complex and evolving social action surrounding markets, music, culture and heritage are generating innovative, unconventional and radical shifts in the way the market operates, the way music is presented to the market, and consumed within, along with the associated cultural heritage and consumption thereof. More specifically, the ideological premises and underlying assumptions of contemporary consumer theory and practice are called into question within a growing body of critique (Cova *et al.*, 2013; Tadajewski, 2012). While, for example, rebellion and/or rejection of music and/or consumer research theories and/or practices is not a new phenomenon, human action is the guiding light in seeking to study, critique and engage in a dynamic dialogue of this heresy. As Friedman (1985) suggests, for as long as there have been marketing activities, consumers have rebelled accordingly. In the extreme, individuals and/or groups actively engage in action that communicates resistance and rejection of a particular ideology (Gabriel and Lang, 1995). Specifically, in the music scene, genres of music have emerged from the people organizing around songs that symbolize a rebellious message, a question of tradition or the challenge of assumptions (Lena and Peterson, 2008). In looking to such organic human action as found within music scenes and genres, researchers are provided a lens by which to investigate the movements towards heresy and critical action. Such interjections regarding music, culture, heritage and others offer a fruitful platform to develop novel, heretical and radical discourses to engage in. Accordingly, the papers presented in this special issue consider music, culture and heritage in a nonconventional, nonconformist manner, consequently potentially generating innovative, radical and even heretical schools of thought in arts marketing research.

To that end, the papers included in this special issue range from a consideration of the representation of rural England in contemporary folk music, to a questioning of the ideology of true Norwegian black metal music, to an ethnography of cultural memory and heritagisation of an independent English rock band, as well a netnography of an underground online music subculture, to the question of the color line in American music and the emergence of the phenomenon of vinyl tourism.



Introducing each of these papers more specifically, Heather Skinner offers a critical consideration of the representation of place, specifically, rural England, through the lens of cultural products such as song and music. From a critical literacy perspective and using narrative analysis of folk song text, a conceptual framework is offered that focuses on one aspect of a place's cultural system, music. The framework shows how the cultural product of folk music contributes to the construction and communication of rural place identities.

Shifting context from English folk to (true Norwegian) black metal music, Podoshen, Wallin and Venkatesh present an ideological reconsideration of evil and the anti-establishment ethos enacted by black metal consumers and producers. Delving deep into the symbolism evident within this extreme subcultural music scene, Podoshen and his colleagues offer an insightful exploration of evil as something more than simply the ontological absence of good. Using extensive and multi-national cultural immersion as a research design, this paper connects the concepts of good, evil and Satanism to the production and consumption of music through an ideological investigative case focused on the band Gorgoroth, Founder and Guitarist Infernus and one-time lead Singer Gaahl.

Also using an extended cultural immersion as the methodology, O'Reilly, Doherty, Carnegie, and Larsen address the question of how do music consumption communities construct their heritage, or more colloquially, how do musical communities remember their past? Focused on the context of an English rock band, O'Reilly *et al.* illustrate the unfolding story of an imagined past, and enchanted musical kin, who are seemingly magically sung into existence through, for example, exhibitions and artifacts. The heritage, legacy and collective memory of a music community therefore is argued to be deliberately cultivated through the shared social experience of emotional sanctuary.

The context of a music community is also the research site for Schembri and Tichbon's documentation of irony in an online underground musical subculture. This paper investigates the question of cultural production, consumption and intermediation in the context of digital music using a netnographic research design supplemented with virtual interviews and analysis of media related materials. The findings document subcultural participants as digital natives turned digital rebels and heretical consumers, argued to be better described as cultural curators.

The paper from Barretta offers a critical treatment of the color line in American music from the early twentieth-century and considers the impact of this musical heritage on the contemporary music market in terms of culture, economics and music commodification. From a content analysis of archival materials, the paper derives social, media, cultural, industry as well as economic implications.

Considering musical heritage in terms of tourism, Sonnichsen investigates the consumption of vinyl records as souvenirs and artifacts of musical tourism. While not designed for the purpose of tourism and/or souvenirs, the resurgence of vinyl is argued by Sonnichsen to perform a prototypical and unintentional counter-narrative definition of place. Expanding the discourse of post-Fordism, post-structuralist tourism, Sonnichsen covers issues related to emotional geographies, music marketing and touristic landscapes.

Collectively, this selection of papers provides an insight on what and how heretical interventions offer a valuable contribution to the world of arts and music marketing, as well as cultural and consumer research. More to the point however, this special issue demonstrates the potential of considering heretical perspectives and interventions in the advance of consumer research as well as arts and music marketing.

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About the Guest Editors

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