Anticipatory knowledge: an antenarrative perspective on TrumpLand and the future of higher education

David M. Boje, New Mexico State University, dboje@nmsu.edu

Marita Svane, Aalborg Universitet, msvane@business.aau.dk

Abstract

Our theory is that competing anticipatory future strategies have come into an unbalanced dialectical relationship that has prompted a defunding of humanities, and the professoriate is in its death throes. We develop 'antenarrative' dialectic is contributing theory of 'anticipatory knowledge'. Antenarrative precedes full-blown narrative and counternarrative, and living story webs of experience. The dialectic of antenarratives for the 'good society' and antenarratives extending the gap between rich and poor, actually constitute anticipatory knowledge. This has implications for the dialectical transformation of 'knowledge society' into 'knowledge economy', happening around the world. Specifically 'knowledge society' a longer-term vision of 'social good' of public education, technology, wages, health-care, and housing is giving way to 'knowledge economy' of short-term 'consumer good', defunding public universities, and wealth concentration scenarios. In the U.S. the knowledge economy has its new leader in the Trump election, and all the climate denier appointees. We review the implications of the knowledge society to knowledge economy transition in the areas of climate change, which in the U.S. has degenerated for 'science' to a debate. What we contribute a way to resist TrumpLand with counter-acts of 'dialectical theater.' Three kinds of theater are reviewed: Aristotelian, Hegelian, and Marxist (including Boal and Brecht). Each is a quite different dialectical model.

Key Words: antenarrative, theater of TrumpLand, ethic of fore-caring, narrative and counternarrative

Introduction

What is the future of 'social and environmental good' after the Trump election? Two anticipatory futures are imagined, one a knowledge economy in which global capitalism flourishes. The other, a downward spiral of economic crises, defunded public education, and a rise in global warming bringing on extinction events. Our purpose here is to develop what we call an 'antenarrative' approach to producing and using 'anticipatory knowledge' claims about the future. Our contribution to this stream: antenarrative produces knowledge about the future in ways that change the future, and have a 'looping effect' to change past and present experience (Hacking, 1999).

We will develop antenarrative in relation to anticipatory knowledge, then apply this to TrumpLand.

What is antenarrative?

"Antenarrative is defined as 'the fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted, and pre-narrative speculation, a bet, a proper narrative can be constituted'" (Boje, 2001: 1). Antenarrative is before both living story webs of lived experience and the dominant narratives and counternarratives (mostly with Beginning Middle End, what we call BME plot structures of coherence), each monological and polemical. Antenarrative threads do not come into explicit awareness, because they are submersed in pre-reflexive, pre-predicative, and pre-thematic, until collapsed into narrative and counternarratives (Boje et al. in press, Svane et al. 2015).

How does antenarrative relate to anticipatory knowledge?

In antenarrative theory, processes of fore-caring can be initiated or nurtured in order to develop futures that are not emerging on their own. Can fore-caring for the anticipatory future change the self-fulfilling prophecies of what narratives and counternarratives portend? (Svane, M., & Boje, D., 2015, Boje, D. M., Svane, M., Henderson, T. L., & Strevel, H. B. (in press))

A self-fulfilling prophecy starts as an option, a technological promise, and becomes a

necessity, or necessary requirement (van Lente & Rip, 1998a: 216, as cited in Nelson, Geltzer, & Hilgartner, 2008: 547).

Antenarratives intervene in self-fulfilling future, bringing about a different future by fore-caring for it, rather than other futures widely observed. Fore-caring involves activities of projection and prospective sensemaking. The antenarrative promises one future over others expected, making increased social, economic, and political investment in an intelligent fore-sight or fore-telling.

We are interested in creating antenarratives of the future that contribute to 'fore-caring' for becoming in an 'ethics of care.' Fore-caring has four steps (Figure 1).
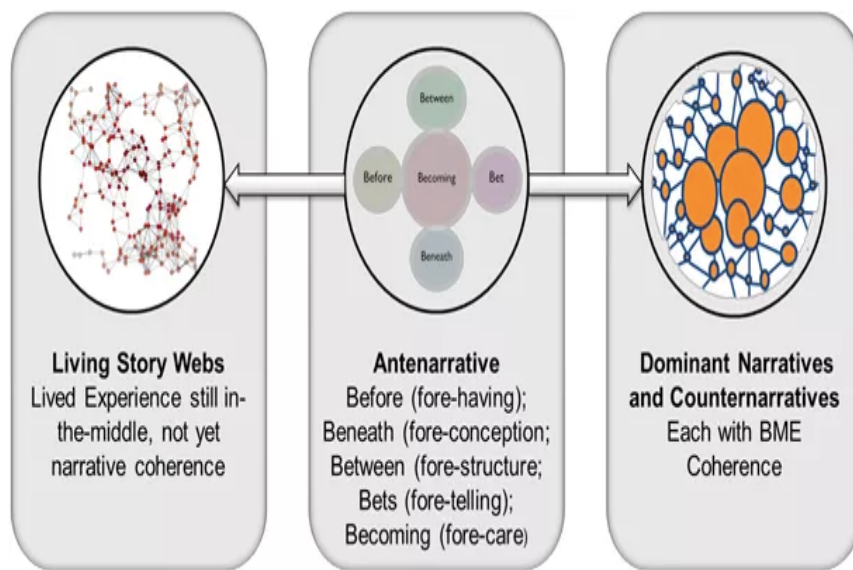

Figure 1: Antenarrative is antecedent and constitutive of living story webs and dominant narratives and counternarratives (Original drawing by Maria Svane).

Four steps of fore-caring:

Step 1: **Fore-having (BEFORE-Grand Narratives and Living Storyability)**: Storytelling interpretation of self-fulfillment does not occur in a void. Storytelling occurs in the totality of relationships of grand narratives (and counternarratives), living story web-ness, and antenarrative-connectivity. The wholeness of storytelling already 'lies before' and 'in advance' of the grand narratives within the world. Fore-having of multiple contexts is already at work in newliberalism (social stigma, economic survival of the fittest, political conservatism, cultural prejudices, unsustainability of the footprint of the super-wealthy…).

Step 2: Fore-structures (BETWEEN Grand Narratives and Living Story Webs):

Storytelling interpretation of the ante-structures (fore-structures) in both concern-for and caring-for living things. Neoliberalism is structurally interconnected by concern-for one's own property, and a lack of (heart-of) care for Others. Antenarrative interpretation of the between fore-structures that interconnect and intertwine and entangle grand narratives of egocentric self-hood with the living story webs of those declared by Othering practices. The structures of stereotypes in egocentric Othering is already (ante), present in the way one culture (i.e. the wealthy socioeconomic class) treats Other (classes). The fore-structures are already between in the multiple contexts of interconnection (social, economic, political, cultural, and so on).

Step 3: Fore-conceptions (BENEATH Grand Narratives and Living Story Webs): Storytelling interpretation of the conceptual frameworks articulating and linking up the 'as-whiches.' It includes the discourse, the conversation, of an uncaring elite for the 'Others' as 'immigrants' redefined and declared to be no more than animals, rapists, and thieves in TrumpLand. It is a distancing that comes from a lack of access or not-listening to, not-hearing the living story web of immigrant-people with names, people with character, people with histories, people that are impacted by stereotypes, stigma, and egocentric self Being-in-the-world in ways that are heart-less, lacking in compassion, and a worldwide crisis of care.

Step 4: Fore-sight (BETS on the Future suppressed by Grand Narratives and Living Story Webs): Antenarrative interpretation is an "angle of approach to what is to be interpreted. It brings the "as" into focus, such as 'walls for immigration' aimed at one's fore-sight in-order-to deal, in a cost-effective manner with a particular aspect of homeless people. It is cheaper than shelters, detoxification, mental illness health care, living wage job development, and so on. The TrumpLand fore-sight is a definite direction by the Haves toward the Have Nots. Fore-sight as antenarrative interpretation looks at many points-of-view that are needed to care-for-homeless, differently, by analyzing the many other potential bets on anticipatory future other-than-immigrants, other-than-climate-acting, that can be brought into Being-in-the-world.

The antenarrative standpoint nurtures fore-having, fore-structuring, fore-conceptions, fore-sighting that is all part of fore-caring for sustainable relationships between the Natural world and human societies, including homeless. Doing the opposite is not enough. Rather antenarrative standpoint is about creating alternative future possibilities, and collapsing those

waveforms into non self-fulfilling events. We can analyze the forewarn-looking antenarrative statements in media as other than 'idle talk' (Heidegger, 1962), or "hype" (Nelson, Geltzer, & Hilgartner, 2008: 547). Rather the antenarrative foretelling is what Heidegger (1962) calls 'attunement,' of which there are several kinds (Boje, 2014).
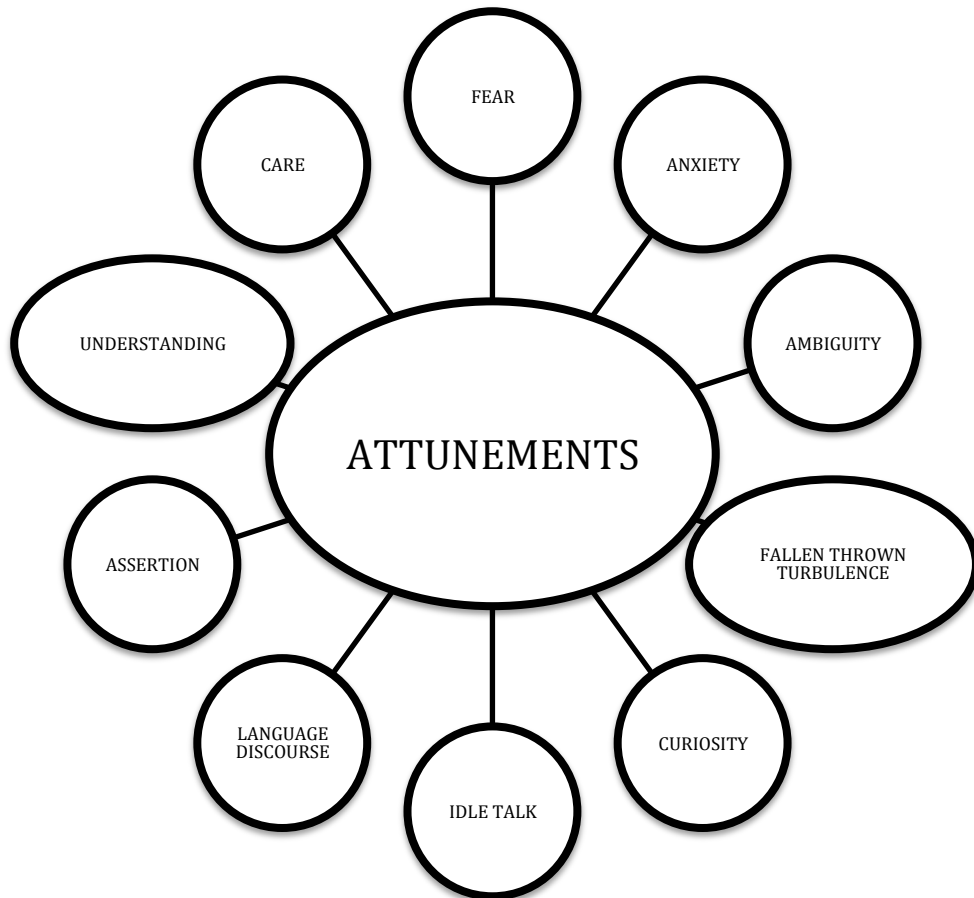

Figure 1: Types of Attunement in Heidegger (Adapted from Boje, 2014)

Antenarrating futures changes how that future is represented over time-present, and time-past. There are consequences for antenarrative generative mechanisms (AGMs) for policy-relevant anticipatory knowledge. Here we are incorporating a dialectical critical realism approach (Bhaskar, 1975, 2008). The State uses anticipatory knowledge in agenda setting, decision-making, and legitimation. Antenarrative stressed that we manage a plurality of futures that we collapsing-waves by anticipatory observation effect into particular event.

Since there are many organizations and institutions involved in social, economic, and political arenas at the local, national, and global levels, we address the interactivity of multiple collapsing-wave anticipatory observer effects. Right now this does not look like a democratic interactivity.
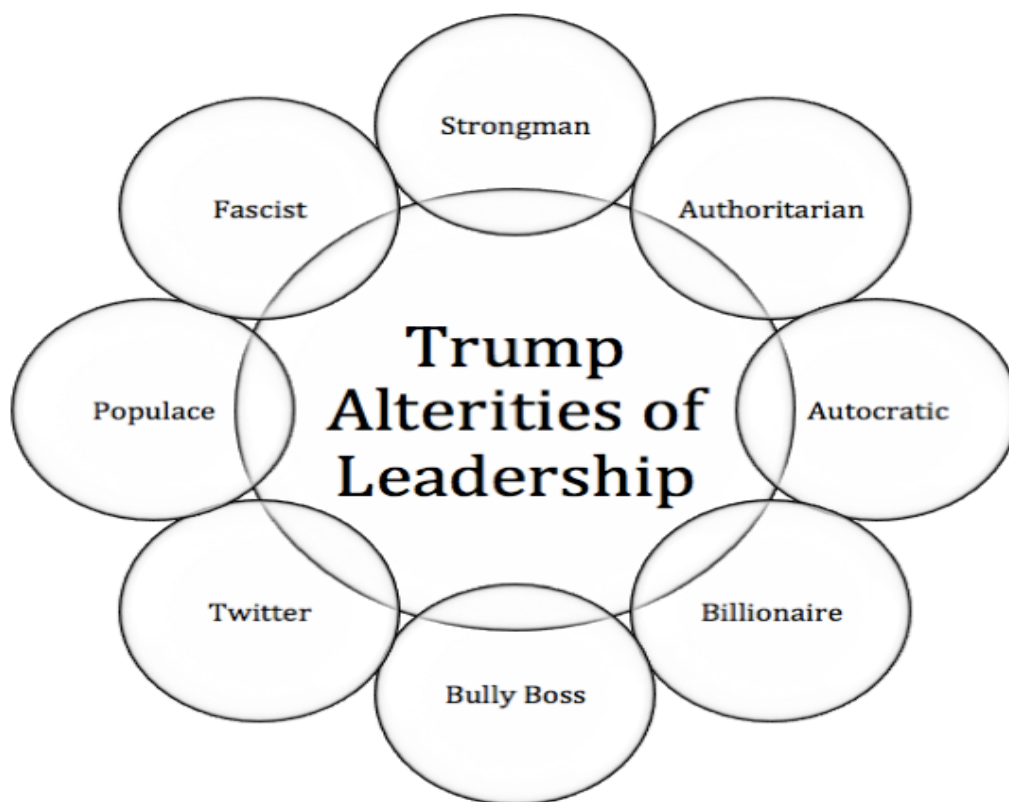

Figure 2 Trump Alterities of Leadership (Boje, in press).

Rather the future wave-collapsing is being done in TrumpLand in an arena of authoritarian knowledge-making, autocratic control, billionaire heroes, bully boss, Twitter-leadership, populate leader who will tear down everything, fascist, and strongman leader. This nexus defracts and refracts through self-fulfilling anticipatory futures: increased risks of war claims in polemic geopolitics, environmental destruction by climate deniers being put in charge of political institutions, domestic political trends the foretell expelling immigrants, defunding planned parenthood, fascism, increased global warming, more banking crises, renegotiation of NAFTA, and increased fundamentalism. A look at appointments to institutions of TrumpLand speaks volumes:

- **Carl's Jr. Andy Puzder, the fast-food CEO** chosen for Labor secretary, raised campaign cash for Trump and personally contributed $388,000 to the RNC and $150,000 to Trump's joint fundraiser. He also gave $10,000 to Rebuilding America Now.
- **ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson** chosen for Secretary of State.
- **Myron Ebell** picked to lead his EPA transition team. Ebell is Director of the Center for Energy and Environment at the industry-funded Competitive Enterprise Institute (CEI).
- **Scott Pruitt to head up EPA,** Oklahoma attorney general, who is a close ally of the fossil fuel industry.

The antenarrative set of fore-concepts are stained by 'knowledge economy' (neoliberal ideas), negotiating new NAFTA deals, putting up a wall to keep out Mexican immigrants, and so on, pulling out NATO that would increase the threat of war. There is increased CIA confirmation that the election of president-elect Donald Trump resulted, in part, from cyber-hacking by a foreign power. There is diverse anticipatory knowledge, diffraction through multiple antenarrative generative mechanisms (AGMS) in an increasingly adversarial mix. The self-fulfilling narratives and counternarratives are emerging. As with Thatcher, the counternarrative is 'There is No Alternative' (TINA).

Antenarrative theory can offer anticipatory knowledge in a blend of descriptive and performative dimensions and a complex, often ambiguous temporality to bring about alternative futurity (Nelson, Geltzer, & Hilgartner, 2008: 546). Anticipatory knowledge includes "forecasts, models, scenarios, foresight exercise, threat assessments, and narratives about possible technological and societal futures" (IBID.).

Here we will focus on what is called 'antenarrative' fore-sight antecedent to narratives. Antenarrative fore-sight and retrospective-narrative of past performance and anticipatory possible futures. Yes it is a "mixture of fact, conjecture, and fantasy" observation that set public policy for science and technology studies (STS) (IBID.).

Miller and Bennett (2008: 597) in the anticipatory knowledge special issue, addressed thinking about the future grounded in narratives that are people-centric, future-oriented, and focused on non-linear dynamics frame problems and identities differently. It is different than ways Trump and his appointees to head up government institutions are inventing the future of the knowledge economy (Newfield, 2008). Miller and Bennett prefer 'hard science fiction;

that stressed faithfulness to the laws of nature as a source anticipatory knowledge.

There are long-term social, economic, and political implications of technological change (Boje, D. M., Svane, M., Henderson, T. L., & Strevel, H. B. (in press). A knowledge society approach to technological change stress the social good in balance with Nature. The knowledge economy approach, by contrast, stresses the wealth-creating promises of emerging technologies. Society and economy are mutually constitutive relations of technological change that is within carrying capacity of the planet or outside it. The knowledge society and the knowledge economy present contradictory narrative fictions of the future and have quite different means of technological change. Citizen consensus conferences and other forms of public engagement fit the knowledge society. The kind public engagement in TrumpLand is more of a strong man, authoritarian, even fascist kind of engagement with the public.

The Downward Spiral of Public Research Universities The neoliberal (or knowledge economy) antenarrative wave-collapses are oppositional to the knowledge society wave-collapses. In the knowledge society, public education was a 'social good' and in the knowledge economy, public education is a 'consumer good.' The two antenarratives set up different kinds of fore-caring. Knowledge society fore-cares for equality, democratic inclusion, and multiculturalism. Knowledge economy fore-cares for maximizing surplus value, a faculty labor process that displaces full-time tenure-track and tenured faculty in favor of lesser paid adjuncts and college faculty who do not focus on basic research as part of their job description. The knowledge economy has been particularly influential since the 1979 election of Margaret Thatcher, and the 1980 election of Ronald Reagan. Reagan made extensive claims that liberal university professors were communists, and their Marxist teaching was leading society into moral decay. Earlier renditions of neoliberalism began in the 1930s in funding think tanks that set out the anticipatory knowledge Thatcher and Reagan, and their political successors used to create the conditions for TrumpLand to emerge as a political future in the U.S., as well as for the demise of the humanities, according to neoliberal propaganda, a known liberal-hotbed of Marxists, a set of majors that did not contribute to Science, Technology, Engineering, or Mathematics (STEM), nor did investment in humanities education lead to return on investment (ROI) for the oppressive student loans to pay ever-escalating tuition and fees. We did some analysis of the purge of the humanities from universities in Denmark, and experienced it in my own university in the U.S.

In New Mexico State University, it is an entity going through costcutting ($12.3 million already) and more to come. Each cutting is an absenting (120 positions of faculty, staff, mid-level administrators) – have already been cut. Another 27 faculty and 62 staff positions are being cut. Entire academic departments are being downsized then merged to save administrative costs. Enrollment keeps falling, and faculty and staff leave for greener pastures.

There is a trajectory of anticipated decline in public research universities, globally, a dumbing down of the curriculum, more vocationalize, more adjuncts, less investment. The U.S. is planning for, observing, and thereby collapsing a waveform into a less stable, underfunded, less excellent university system. This is done by attacking particular 'public good' futures as collar policy. This includes gutting social security and Medicare for an aging society. The demographic shift is 'inevitable' and neoliberal (knowledge economy) with Horatio Alger rags-to-riches mythmaking is seeing the public with visions of billionaire status. In reality, a high percentage of billionaires, do not actually work for a living.

The neoliberal strategy is to defund the Environmental Protection Agency, put ExxonMobil executives in charge of energy policy, and so forth. By promoting climate denial, there is a delegitimation of foreknowledge from climate science methods and predictive models. The temperature data is readily available, with a broad consensus among scientists. However, public policy is muddied by climate denial research studies, and analysis funded by the Koch Brothers, and by ExxonMobil, who also heavily invested in bringing about TrumpLand. In TrumpLand societal decision making about climate change is in an arena where propaganda 'trumps' scientific assessment. Neoliberal precautions about the future are quite unlikely to depict 'real' future of the planet.

Conclusion

Propaganda and spectacle in TrumpLand now 'trumps' science. It is not about making accurate predictions about the future. Billionaires are growing in number, and their self-interest is to accumulate wealth at the expense of the planet, and its inhabitants. With the decline of the public university, comes a predictable growing gap in knowledge between the general public and elite. Anticipatory knowledge is spread and repackaged in an antenarrative

process ruled more by propaganda than by fact.

We call for critical realism reflections on dialectic clashes of frames of knowledge economy and knowledge society. To do frame-changing future narratives and future antenarratives need to be presented in public debate.

Miller and Bennett (2008) develop new ways to democratize what we are calling antenarrative generative mechanisms (AGMs) for making anticipatory knowledge. These debates need to deal with the increasingly one-sided dialectic where knowledge economy narrative is dominating the knowledge society narrative. This suggests that to counter-TrumpLand we need to develop institutional capacity for public universities to create knowledge about the future from a knowledge society process. The dialectic of quite different AGMs impact the form and flow of knowledge about potential futures.

We need healthy fun with lots of irony dialectical to the spectacle entertainment diversion of Humorless statecraft because direct confrontation of counternarratives to Trump-land narratives will be crushed, is no solution. We need little windows of opportunities for Carnivalesque subversion, creative disrespect, masks, and role reversals (e.g. the poor become masters using brooms [symbolically] sweeping away the wealthy corrupt class

References

Bhaskar, R. (1975). 1978. A Realist Theory of Science. London/NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. http://uberty.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Roy_Bhaskar_A_Realist_Theory_of_Science.pdf

Bhaskar, R. (1993/2008). *Dialectic: The pulse of freedom*. London/NY: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Boje, D. M. (2001). *Narrative methods for organizational & communication research*. Sage.

Boje, D. M. (2011). ***Storytelling and the Future of Organizations: An Antenarrative Handbook*** (London: Routledge Studies in Management, Organizations and Society)

Boje, D. M. (2012c). Reflections: What does quantum physics of storytelling mean for change

management?. Journal of Change Management, 12(3), 253-271.

Boje, D. M. (2014). *Storytelling organizational practices: Managing in the quantum age*. Routledge.

Boje, D. M., Svane, M., Henderson, T. L., & Strevel, H. B. (in press). Critical corporate social responsibility in tamara-land: The role of tetranormalizing fractals. In R. Ocler (Ed.), Book chapter for a Springer collection, Rodolphe Ocler (ed.).

Boje, M., & Svane, M., Gergerich, E. (in press). Counternarrative and Antenarrative Inquiry in Two Cross-Cultural Contexts. Cross Cultural Management.

Hacking, I. (1999). *The social construction of what?* Harvard university press.

Heidegger, Martin (1962. Being and Time. Translated by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson. NY/London: Harper & Row Publishers

Miller, C. A., & Bennett, I. (2008). Thinking longer term about technology: is there value in science fiction-inspired approaches to constructing futures? *Science and Public Policy*, *35*(8), 597-606.

Nelson, N., Geltzer, A., & Hilgartner, S. (2008). Introduction: the anticipatory state: making policy-relevant knowledge about the future. *Science and Public Policy*, *35*(8), 546-550.

Newfield, C. (2008). *Unmaking the public university: The forty-year assault on the middle class*. Harvard University Press.

Svane, M., & Boje, D.; Gergerich, Erika M. (2015). Counternarrative and Antenarrative Inquiry in Two Cross-Cultural Contexts. Accepted for publication in Special Issue on counternarrative, *European Journal of Cross-Cultural Competence*.

Svane, M., & Boje, D. (2015). Tamara land fractal change management – in between managerialist

narrative and polyphonic living stories. *Sc'Moi, Standing Conference for Management and Organizational Inquiry*, Las Vegas.

Van Lente, H., & Rip, A. (1998). The rise of membrane technology from Rhetorics to social reality. *Social studies of science*, *28*(2), 221-254.