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Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Theorising ambiguity: telling deliberately equivocal viral stories**

Toft, D.F.

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Stellingen behorende bij het proefschrift getiteld:

## **Theorizing Ambiguity - Telling Deliberately Equivocal Viral Stories**

### Relating to the subject of the dissertation

1. Viral reality marketing content is driven by abrupt, brief connections. The features that manage to temporarily unite people are unpredictable.
2. People are connected through specific combinations of time and references. Content is often held together by unorchestrated, ad hoc relations, existing through strong in- and exclusion.
3. The result of participants trying to create order and closure is simply increased fragmentation. Therefore, ambiguity is both the driving force and the challenge.
4. Explicitly seeking out potentials and meeting connections with curiosity provide novel and unanticipated insights. This holds for potential futures of any kind: people's dreams, plans and predictions.

### Scientific propositions relating to the field of the subject

5. Ambiguity can be created analytically and projected back in time, just as it can be unintentionally removed in retrospective accounts. Being aware of one's spatial as well as temporal position helps to attend to such matters without analytically creating a particular order where it isn't.
6. Creating order is an enactment that both informant and researcher perform. Awareness of the continuously shifting positions of researcher and informants, and of the objects they each construct, is a prerequisite for gaining insights into the methodological concerns of studying phenomena that grow because they change.

7. The core lessons of performing fieldwork “in the thick of it”, with all the ambiguity and lack of clarity of the informants, is not to strive for answers and not to discard unconfirmed, seemingly irrelevant, or disputed relations.
8. The temporal present (Akrich, Callon, and Latour 2002a; Akrich, Callon, and Latour 2002b), potential future (Michael and Brown 2010; Brown, Webster, and Rappert 2000), and relationships between absences and presences (Law 2002; Law and Mol 2001) are powerful tools when approaching quickly changing phenomena.

### Intersections between the research and science fiction writings

9. Chronological order, or any order, is an enactment. “Anything that happens, happens. Anything that, in happening, causes something else to happen, causes something else to happen. Anything that, in happening, causes itself to happen again, happens again. It doesn’t necessarily do it in chronological order, though.” (Douglas Adams 1992)
10. The necessity of something specifically required to be absent, and, by extension, the agency of the absence, are conditions that deserve attention (Callon & Law 2004). “For a moment, nothing happened. Then, after a second or so, nothing continued to happen.” (Douglas Adams 1979)
11. An object or actor that is analytically deconstructed, is a network of actors (Latour 2005) “If you try to take a cat apart to see how it works, the first thing you have on your hands is a non-working cat.” (Eulogy for Douglas Adams 2001 by Richard Dawkins)
12. Cats, chronology, the deconstructions of objects, the agency of absence, and superpositions of potential things intersect with academic writing and science fiction. They are specific combinations of time and references that the writer of this dissertation has handpicked. Speaking of cats: When you, the reader, start reading this dissertation, perhaps you will find Schrödinger's cat in it. Before you start reading, at the same time it may or may not be in the dissertation. After you read it, perhaps it was there all along – as a potential.