Dear all,

I am really sorry that I missed the meeting yesterday – I just missed my train by a minute and then the next one was late. I was particularly annoyed to miss this meeting because I had a lot to say about the materials that have been circulated.

So, I thought it best to generate some notes which might be helpful as we work towards drafting the article. See below.

With best wishes,

Maureen

Ps I thought it might be good for those of us attending the Cardiff meeting to try to meet—even if just briefly.

I offer a set of notes on:

* some specific questions pertaining to some of the reviews (which I would have asked at the meeting)
* STS work on imaginaries that we haven’t yet considered
* Variations in terminology around imaginaries as used in STS
* Some themes emerging from the work that I thought we might consider
* Practices of STS and imaginaries
* The canon of sources used in STS work on imaginaries

**Some specific questions** :

Marcus - I found it a bit difficult to follow some of the points made here. Sometimes this was related to typographical errors or confusions, but I wasn’t sure. Eg- bottom of para. 2 (before quote)- Yet the sense of imaginary developed in the volume did not quite the senses of imaginary as high-flown thoughts- Should this be expected or assumed?

Do the studies in this book consider that ‘imaginaries’ only come into operation when scientists experience instability or uncertainty, failure of discourses, or blocked experiences? (see para.3)

I did not quite understand the last sentence: In the process of doing that, the book presents conversations, memoirs, and interviews that document technoscientific imaginaries, but in themselves, have little reason to invoke imaginaries as such???

Taussig- My impression from this account is that ‘geographical imaginary’ is sort of an ‘add on’ to the technoscience. It is associated with religion and other social markers and identities—somewhat extraneous to the science itself. Is this correct?

Verran- I got confused about whether Verran is claiming that the issue is that Western science and cultures deny the significance of imaginaries or if she is claiming that they don’t have such imaginaries. (See reference to ‘restoring imaginaries’ in quote from p.249.; see also last sentence of Joan’s account.) I have discussed this with Joan. I agree with Joan’s points about Verran’s strange suggestions about individuals’ (versus collectives) and her idealism about rectifying the denial of imaginaries within Western scientific thinking. I thought we should look more closely at what she says about the concern with the aesthetic dimension of imaginaries within Western science/culture.

Fujimura- Does she use the notion of ‘future imaginaries’? What is the basis of the distinction between such imaginaries and ‘mere fantasy’? If F. Is claiming that imaginaries can be distinguished (identified?) by ‘persuasive rhetoric and hyperbole’ (her terms?), what is the basis of the distinction between these and fantasies? Is it only the capacity to mobilize resources, etc.?

I did not understand the final comment about the notion of the imaginary being ‘more appropriate than the notion of expectation’?

Fortun and Fortun – What do they mean by ‘friendship’? And why is critique so problematic as a mode of STS? Is there mention of any other subjectivity than that of the scientists (and/or STS researchers?)?

Hyysalo **-** I was not clear where the quotes ended in the section which was introduced with: ‘Here’s an extract from the paper’ and quite who was saying what. I was curious about the assessment that: ‘The disciplines to which the term is linked are familiar and perhaps even a little superficial?’ I would like to hear more about this.

Is it ‘maintaining a resemblance to imagination’ or ‘link with’ imagination?

What does ‘dissociating imaginary from mundane meanings’ involve?

What are the vague and prosaic descriptions—that is what makes these descriptions ‘vague and prosaic’?

What does it mean to say that the ‘uptake of imaginary in STS is partly a fashionable phenomenon’?

Jasanoff and Kim – I wondered about: ‘While there may be multiple and contending sociotechnical imaginaries at play in any society, some are selected to become dominant....’ - Do they really imply a conscious process of selection? Do they discuss the relationship between popular culture and the articulation of imaginaries in key policy documents, governmental discourses, etc. ?

Smith - Is Smith explicit about her use of Jasanoff and Kim’s notion of ‘sociotechnical imaginary’- does she work through the conceptual/political issues around this? I didn’t quite get the point relating imaginaries to Rabionow’s concept of the biosocial?

**STS work on imaginaries which we have not yet reviewed:**

Suchman and Bishop (2000) –in Hyysalo’s review

Gregory (2000) - in Hyysalo’s review

Mackenzie (1996) - in Jasanoff and Kim’s review

Borup et.al. (2006) – in Jasanoff and Kim’s review

Wynne (2005) - in Jasanoff and Kim’s review

Bowker and Starr (2000) - in Jasanoff and Kim’s review

Two further projects specifically on genetics and imaginary that we would need to include:

Franklin – uses notion of genetic imaginary (adapting Appadurai)

Van Dyck (1995) – although she doesn’t use concept of imaginary—her use of imagenation – merits some short comment

**Variations in terminology**

Imaginaries

technoscientific imaginaries (Marcus)

scientific imaginaries (Marcus)

sociotechnic imaginaries

national sociotechnic imaginaries (Jasanoff and Kim)

geographical imaginaries (Smith)

future imaginaries (Fujimara ??)

practice-bound imaginaries (Hyysalo)

**Themes and versions**

imaginaries and knowledge production – different accounts and versions

imaginary as ideal or mental /intellectual vision

imaginary as norms

imaginary as vision of the future

imaginaries as or in relation to modes of governance - Jasanoff and Kim; Smith

technoscientific imaginary in relation to (in coproduction with) imaginary of the nation (state) - Jasanoff and Kim

technoscientific imaginary in relation to other global entities (transnational, etc.) and agencies – Smith

imaginaries and practices (of scientists) – Hyysalo, Fortun and Fortun; (of others ?)

imaginaries and storytelling - Haraway, Verran

imaginaries and vision - Haraway, Verran

imaginary as distorted vision (ideology) – Barbrook

imaginary and subjectivity – of scientists (Fortun and Fortun) [vs Haraway – subjectivity and interpellation of wider population] ; who they work for, on and who do they help ‘construct’

imaginary and fantasy – linked (Haraway and others?) ; opposites (Fujimura?)

**Practices of STS and imaginaries**

1. Different methods **–** textual analysis (Jasanoff and Kim); ethnography (Fortun and Fortun; others?)
2. Bringing STS into dialogue with other disciplines and intellectual/political traditions

Cultural Studies and Anthropology – Marcus

Postcolonial Studies - Verran

Symbolic interactionism

Psychoanalysis

Marxism – ideological critique

1. Identifying ‘imaginaries’ as project for STS – in face of widespread denial in Western culture/science (Verran); as a mode of critique (Barbrook); in ‘friendship’ with scientists in reformist project for some technosciences (Fortun and Fortun on toxicology); to enable comparisons of national cultures and modes of governance (Jasanoff and Kim)

**The ‘canon’ of sources on imaginaries**

* See Jasanoff and Kim - Taylor, Castoriodas, Anderson, Appadurai, Said, Foucault, Bowker and Starr and what is Scott 1998?
* Note that in our original survey, we did not include Said, Bowker and Starr, Scott ?
* What is Sarewitz (1996)?