2005 Award Winner

William B. Gartner's Contributions to Entrepreneurship and Small Business Research[1]

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ABSTRACT

This article takes the awarding of William B. Gartner as a winner of the FSF-Nutek Award (in 2005) as a reason to engage more thoroughly with his production. From the perspective of a European School of Entrepreneurship, we focus in particular on the hermeneutic/phenomenological side of Gartner's research output and seek to operate as inspired readers of this work as we identify its central tendencies (presence of organization theory and literary inspiration). The aim is thus to situate Gartner's influence on the entrepreneurship research community based on the lead provided by these tendencies, and from there provide a vision of a future of entrepreneurship research.

Introduction

William B. Gartner received the FSF-Nutek Award (*The International Award for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Research*) in 2005 for his highly influential contributions to entrepreneurship research and education. Not the least Gartner's innovative quest for gaining new knowledge of entrepreneurship, as well as his questioning of how to research entrepreneurship have always been, and still is, a distinguishing mark of his work. Here we would like to operate as inspired readers of professor Gartner's work and move along what we find to be central lines in his thinking. We do not want to limit this to a reporting on his writings, but instead also suggest some implications from our reading for ideas of where entrepreneurship research might be going. Thereby we also acknowledge what Gartner seems to epitomize: that (academic) life itself is a learning process – and that learning is about practicing entrepreneurship (Hjorth and Johannisson 2007).

Let us make clear already upfront that we do not aspire to provide

a full overview of Gartner's work. Rather, and in his own spirit, we opt for roads less traveled by and explore some of the inspiring themes of his great and still on-going work that we find particularly pertinent. Accordingly, this article aims at introducing its readers to a more in-depth acquaintance with the genesis of Gartner's influence on the entrepreneurship-research community, and suggests that the presence of organization theory (and a subsequent focus on emergence and process) and literary inspirations (to narratives and the poetic) in his work is not only part of the force of this influence, but represent tendencies that have grown stronger in his more recent work. The relevance of such an aim is to be found in that we arguably can expect this tendency – especially the 'literary turn' – to grow stronger in Gartner's work and that this introduction, therefore, will have the effect of contextualizing this for future readers. Those who know Gartner as a dedicated producer and analyzer of quantitative data are perhaps to some extent surprised by this focus (on organization, emergence/process, narratives, and the poetic). However, based on the fact that they are co-authored papers, also his more positivistic writings bear witness of poetic sensibilities gently concealed. However, we think that this introduction is needed as a contextualization that makes intelligible how Gartner's work function as a bridge-builder between, as the Prize Committee puts it, positivistic and hermeneutic entrepreneurship research and, therefore, with some arguable consistency, between North-American and European traditions.

We approach this challenge by drawing selectively on several of Gartner's articles and book chapters substantiating the suggested tendency in his scientific production to find inspiration and conceptual basis in organization studies and narrative-poetic approaches. We work towards that aim via the following structure: after these introductory words, we next (section two) elaborate upon those central tendencies in Gartner's writings, based on some articles and books of his, indicating how imagination, attention to process, and

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a conceptual engagement with organization studies influences his work; in a third section we then consider the growing interest in a narrative and literary form of knowledge, the 'science of imagination' that was recently envisioned by Gartner; finally, in the fourth section, we conclude by clarifying what we suggest are pivotal in the impact Gartner's work so far has had on entrepreneurship research, and take inspiration from that in formulating a vision for future entrepreneurship research. In order to stay true to the most recent arguments for a narrative approach in entrepreneurship studies, e.g., the special issue of the *Journal of Business Venturing* 22(5), with Gartner as guest editor, this article proceeds in a more essayistic style, thereby preventing to lose its case by performative contradiction.

Driving Tendencies: Imagination, Process, Organization

What obviously is distinguishing about Gartner's work is that it spans over more than one research tradition, i.e., that he, as the Prize Committee emphasized in their motivation, combines an Anglo-American positivist tradition with a European hermeneutic one. For sure, this polyglot capacity is a central element in explanations of why he has such a great-sized audience. This Janus-like quality of his scholarly attention to problems and approaches provides entries for both communities (positivist and non-positivist) and help otherwise unlikely conversations to take place. This is a great achievement *per se*. What we want to focus on in this article, though, is *firstly* his original openings towards organization theory via an emphasis on entrepreneurship as organization creation, and *secondly* his passionate turn towards narrative and literary-poetic forms of knowledge.

The bridging ambition, which in itself is of great importance, is something Gartner has emphasized both in his 'Is There an Elephant in Entrepreneurship Research'-article (2001), and in heading a special issue on this theme in *Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice* (May 2006; Gartner, Davidsson and Zahra 2006). These articles emphasize the need to develop communities of understanding in entrepreneurship research, as well as the need to bridge between these communities by developing 'conversational skills'. Beyond this bridging nature of Gartner's work, as we have indicated above, we find that its clearing and road-building efforts are what make it prominent and stand out. Confronted by challenges and dilemmas, which are often cleverly diagnosed by him, Gartner clearly displays a taste for creating opportunities rather than scan his surroundings for existing ones. Metaphorising this by the help of the great Robert Frost poem, we have hinted already in the title that he is not only a friend of the roads less traveled by, but that he also builds roads where he believes they are needed. Importantly, it is not merely about searching the brushy woods for a choice of path that can make a difference, which in itself resonates well with a North American community (if not communitarian) spirit, that Frost's poem captures so well. The core element of his scholarship is rather this visionary quality of using ones compass to say where a road should be built in order for new travels to be actualized, i.e., to create opportunities, to explore with fellow researchers.

What seems to drive this building is a central element in all research and in all great intellectual oeuvres – curiosity. But curiosity is not fallen from the skies. It is the fruit of the greatest resource in all forms of entrepreneurship: the faculty of imagination. Imagina-

tion makes us curious, makes us wonder 'what if?' Imagination also nourishes the stamina characteristic of this mode of going about captured by 'acting as if', a philosophical posture dear to Gartner. For when imagination provides the images for how something could be done, the element of risk is severely reduced for the one grasped by the promise of getting to perform the deeds that until then has emerged as words, and the urge to try it out, to practice it, is then all the greater. Not because it then becomes less risky *per se*, but because of the attractiveness of the creative tension that characterizes the equivocal or, more precisely, open nature of play in processes of actualizing what could become. The deeds to-be-done are framed by a future past tense of thinking in which the doer is one that has already seen (the vision) her/his words actualized in practice. This explains why it is 'self-evident' for the entrepreneur that things will happen the way they are envisioned, and why the child impatiently yearns for 'doing it' (playing) as soon as the idea is thought and articulated.

The vision, as Deleuze (1988) has pointed out, relates to its future practices like the virtual relates to the actual: by imagination. This is not *the possible*, i.e., one of the different form-content arrangements that could be made. Nor is it *the potential*, i.e., the tension between what our experiences of the concrete suggest as possibilities and the advent of the new (Massumi 2002). The *virtual* is instead the swarming of incipiencies or tendencies; the power to become. This attention to the relationship between the virtual and actual, and to actualization as a process of creation, implies a priority of becoming over being. It is, in turn, characteristic of processual philosophy and thinking (Whitehead 1929; Bergson 1946; Deleuze 1988; and in organization studies, e.g. Tsoukas and Chia 2002), where movement/force and becoming are pivotal concepts. It is, however, also central to pragmatism as developed by William James, stating that "What really *exists* is not things made but things in the making" (1909/1996, p. 263, emphasis in James' text).

A focus on process is present also in Gartner's attention to emergence and the becoming of the entrepreneurial organization (Katz and Gartner 1988; Gartner, Bird and Starr 1992; Gartner 1993; Liao and Gartner 2006). It is a process focus closer to the one we find in James, rather than the one we find in Bergson, but sharing with them both the double interest in matter and spirit, in fact and creation. Gartner's interest in entrepreneurship as a process, however, seems also to share with Bergson the conviction that the force and point with the created organization is not to be found in the pieces put together but in the process of creation. That is, that we cannot, in cases of creation, seek knowledge of the whole via analysis of the parts. The creative process of entrepreneurship is indivisible, Bergson would say, and so what is important about it is not to be found in the assembled parts, but in the process, the unitary, creative and organizing force through which, for instance, a firm achieves being. This suggests that a story or a poem, rather than an analytical structuring of the more typical scientific answer, would be a more accurate representation of entrepreneurship as process. This puts both Bergson and Gartner on a more time-sensitive form of knowledge – the narrative (as in Gartner 2007).

To have thinking survive as an art is the result of resisting the overtaking of it by 'scientized' styles (such as logic). Logic pulls in the direction of generalization as it seeks to establish laws that presumably reflect reality and therefore should guide the art/practice. What one wins is the possibility to apply a law, principle, logic,

model to a vast number of, in the best case new contexts, in the worst case new decontextualised data. However, the price for such strive towards generalization is the loss of intensity of a context, what makes it into a situation (Massumi 2002), unique, resonant with and real to human experience. One could in this sense say that decontextualised thinking, that is, generalized thinking, supports a stewardship of keeping laws in order, which in turn increases efficiency in dealing with thoughts/principles, such as those applied in a decision making situation. This is management or managerialism operating in scholarship (Hjorth 2003), which is also why management theory eagerly seeks to achieve being as science. Entrepreneurship is contextually sensible (Hjorth, Jones and Gartner 2008), brings passion and affect into contexts and establishes the event, creates the situation, where we recognize life through experience. Precision in theorizing is here mainly about keeping the intensity of the situation. Generalizations bring about a loss in this respect. These contrasting modes of creating knowledge about entrepreneurship are clearly visible in Gartner's publications. He has also provided insight into this struggle (Gartner 2004) where the 'enemies' seem to dominate at least by number. These insights provide important learning of how creative application of the art of tactics – building alliances, understanding the strategy that you are up against, refining argument – is an entrepreneurial way to create space for innovation (Hjorth 2005).

There is a break in the genesis of Gartner's thinking on process and emergence. From around 1994 until 2004, he is engaged in studies of new venture creation, growth, and nascent entrepreneurs, and the so-called PSED (Panel Study of Entrepreneurial Dynamics; e.g. Gartner, Shaver, Carter, Reynolds 2004) consumes much time and effort in this period. Characteristic of this research is that it is animated by a 'scientized' style where generalization (and thus decontextualization and quantification) takes priority. In contrast, Gartner's more recent re-focusing on language and a concern for narration as a mode of knowledge creation in the field of entrepreneurship studies seems to indicate an interest in contextualization and intensity of experience. This is also how the power of becoming – virtuality – and thus processes of creation (actualizing the virtually real) can re-enter the centre stage of his research.

Gartner received his PhD from the University of Washington in 1982. At this time Karl Weick had made a central theoretical contribution to organization studies, built on a number of highly influential publications in *Administrative Science Quarterly* and *Academy of Management Review* (e.g. Weick 1976; 1977). Weick broke through the massive positivism dominating almost totally at the time, and made a strong contribution from a phenomenological-hermeneutic approach. Indeed, the quality of his scholarship has since maintained for him a central role in the development of organizational behavior and organization studies at large ever since. We understand Gartner's orientation towards organization studies in perspective of Weick's influence, well established already in the 1970s (as his highly influential *A Social Psychology of Organizing* originally was published in 1969). Gartner had already in his 1982 PhD thesis (*An Empirical Model of the Business Start-up, and Eight Entrepreneurial Archetypes*) and beyond planted and grown his interest for organizational issues. And it is significant that the phenomenological-hermeneutic approach headed by Karl Weick that is taken to the heart by Gartner. In the seminal articles "A Framework for Describing and Classifying the Phenomenon of New Venture Creation" (*Aca-*

demy of Management Review 1985) and "Properties of Emerging Organizations" (with Jerome Katz, *Academy of Management Review* 1988) Gartner's attention to organization is clear. There are evident inspirations to such a theoretical substantiation of entrepreneurship research as closely related to organization studies to be found also in e.g. Karl Vesper's (1980) and Howard Aldrich's (1999) work. For Gartner, though, we would say that what is distinguishing about his anchoring of entrepreneurship in organization theoretical banks is precisely the influence from Karl Weick (e.g. Gartner, Bird and Starr 1992, which draws heavily on Weick 1979) and the consequent but somewhat unarticulated interest in processual thinking that we previously have noted. It is plainly stated in Gartner *et al.* (1992), that via attention to organization, entrepreneurship can be understood as a process of organization creation (p. 15).

From Weick, who in his articulation of a processual approach to organizing himself draws on William James' pragmatism, we learn that 'organizing can be thought of as a set of recipes for connecting episodes of social interaction in an orderly manner' (1979, p. 45). Episodes 'constitute the ingredients that are made orderly by organizing recipes', Weick continues, and exemplifies with the three recipes; enactment, selection, and retention (p. 45). These, what Weick calls 'three processes' (*ibid.*), comprise for him the bulk of organizing activity, ideas which have also inspired European researchers (cf. Johannisson 1988). In Weick's texts, being not only eloquently told, but also full of illustrative stories, we find a basis for this reflection on central elements in attention both to organization as process and to narration,. For, 'episodes of social interaction' are of course primarily achieving being in social practices of narration (Fisher 1984; Weick 1995; Czarniawska 1997). Now, for Gartner it then seem plausible to conclude that the inspiration from Weick, which also is (directly and indirectly) an inspiration from James and Fisher, has meant that his research on organizational emergence was set on a path that brought him to a stronger focus on how 'episodes of social interaction', contextualizing organization creation, are narratively accomplished. And how organization creation, i.e., creating the receipts for connecting episodes of social interaction, evolves in narrated form, via narrative knowledge. This becomes especially evident if entrepreneurship is associated with ongoing creative organizing of spontaneously and deliberately enacted events which emerge out of equivocal episodes.

Weick's theorizing of organization, as it developed in the 1990s (Weick 1995) towards an interest in sense-making, is based primarily on his attention to organizational behavior and the analysis of organizing (as a process) via an elaboration of the concepts of enactment, sense-making, and 'loose coupling'. Weick's work is distinguished by taking inspiration and lead from thinkers such as Jerome Bruner, Harold Garfinkel, Erwin Goffman, William James, Richard Rorty, and Alfred Schutz. In the 'Words lead to deeds'-article (1993) Gartner firmly establishes his organizational approach to entrepreneurship by stressing that "New venture creation is the organizing (in the Weickian sense) of new organizations" (1993, p. 232). The ontological status of organizations in-between initiation and take-off, is here described as 'emergent'. And emerging organizations, as Gartner had already suggested (Gartner *et al.* 1992, p. 17), are 'elaborate fictions of proposed possible future states of existence'. Thus, entrepreneurs are said to 'act as if' when they reduce equivocality by plausible actions (including stories). We here find a clear inspiration from Hans Vaihinger's philosophy of 'As if' (1952/1911, curiously

enough originally published the same year as Schumpeter's *The Theory of Economic Development*, and Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management)*, and an anticipation of the turn towards narratives and the poetic. This was envisioned by Gartner (*et al.*) one-and-a-half decades before the 2007 special issue in the *Journal of Business Venturing*: "Our current methodologies do not lead us explore very much of the 'reality' [quotation marks in original] of emergence. For example, we need to legitimate the use of oral histories as a way of gathering information on the nature of entrepreneurial activities" (Gartner *et al.* 1992, p. 27).

The Linguistic Turn towards the Narrative and Poetic

Weick is a scholar that has characterized theory building as 'disciplined imagination' and this is a candidate for a well-found epithet of Gartner's style of thinking and writing. We all know that early inspirations, during the formative years of our PhD studies tend to stay with us and animate our personal styles of thinking. What is specific in this case, though, is the interdisciplinary nature of the influence. When entrepreneurship became institutionalized as a discipline, during the 1980s and 1990s, Gartner makes a number of efforts to provide a solid theoretical context for entrepreneurship studies in organization theory. Inspired by the philosophy of Hans Vaihinger – The Philosophy of 'As if' – Gartner seems early on convinced that 'to know is to work with our favorite metaphors' (Nietzsche 1976). Vaihinger, who concludes his philosophy of 'as if' with an extensive engagement with Nietzsche's work on truth, will and moral, will not, however, follow Nietzsche all the way to the "What, then, is truth? A mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms—in short, a sum of human relations which have been enhanced, transposed, and embellished poetically and rhetorically…" (Nietzsche 1954, p. 46–47). Vaihinger instead seems to maintain the possibility of a stable being behind becoming, and thus a performer behind the performance, while Nietzsche emphasized (in the *The Genealogy of Morals* 2003) that when we maintain a thinking suggesting there is a doer behind the deed, we simply apply a subject-predicate form of grammar in the realm of moral judgment. There is no lightning separate from the flash, Nietzsche explains, as there correspondingly is no doer separate from the deed.

Gartner's work presents a struggle with language. And the 'Words lead to deeds'-article from 1993 is an effort to make sense – in the Weickian, social-constructivist way – of organizational emergence in a way that makes language into our friend. It exemplifies a characteristically Weickian cognition-oriented view on language, in turn rehearsing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis that language provide the roads for thought to travel by, meaning that language-differences also constitute world-differences. Gartner writes, at the end of the 'Words lead to deeds'-article: "Words are windows for seeing what was earlier hidden or missing." (1993, p. 238), providing an exemplary hesitation before the ontological question of reality's relationship to language. 'Hidden' suggests a representationalist (language represents reality) approach, whereas 'missing' suggests a constructivist (language builds reality). Vaihinger's (neo-Kantian pragmatist) philosophy of 'As If' (1935) declared: "It is to the word that the illusion of the existence of a Thing possessing attributes attaches itself, and it is the word that enables the mistake to becomes fixed." (p. 169). Thought and language are fictions for Vaihinger, the value of which is to be found in their practical utility, in how well they

help us to act in the world. Truth is for him not a question, as we cannot know the real; the question is one of practical value, how action is guided, which in turn is a question of how well imagination is creatively put to work (Vaihinger 1935, p. 337). The answer to that is only provided in 'acting as if'. It seems to us that it is by the help of Vaihinger that Gartner makes of Weick's constructivism (cognitively oriented) a more socially based construct*ionism*: "I gravitate towards a social constructionist view…" (Gartner 1993, p. 234). Gartner also voices a protest against the habit of focusing on the doer rather than the deed: "The use of the word 'creation' seems to place undue attention on creators…" (*ibid.*, p. 234).

In the 'Words lead to deeds'-article, Vesper and Weick are again with him. Gartner here stresses that the words we use in discussing entrepreneurship act "as an avenue for steering thoughts towards action" (*ibid.*, p. 321), and that: "The words we use to talk about entrepreneurship influence our ability to think about this phenomenon…" (*ibid.*, p. 231) The article is, however, interesting for more reasons than discussed above (providing a neo-Kantian pragmatist approach, influenced by process-focused organization studies). In this article we find T S Eliot's (1943) *The Four Quartets* and the presence of love as central theme. Gartner suggests there is learning to do from exploring the phenomenon of founding an organization via the falling-in-love literature: "An appropriate analogy for comparing organizational emergence to the new organization is to consider the difference between establishing a relationship (e.g., dating) versus being in a relationship (e.g., marriage)" (*ibid.*, p. 235). Gartner here stresses the different ontological status of the emerging organization (or the 'becoming-established' relationship) compared to the new organization (or the new relationship). Again this bare witness of a focus on process that is not expressing a processual thinking. For as we learnt from James above, "What really exists is not things made but things in the making." So, there is only 'organizational becoming' (Tsoukas and Chia, 2002) and not organizations other than as albeit useful a fiction. Tsoukas and Chia (2002, p. 567) go on to clarify that: "…organization is a pattern that is constituted, shaped, and emerging from change. Organization aims at stemming change but, in the process of doing so, it is generated by it." Thus we could conclude, continuing on Gartner's unfinished analogy between entrepreneurship and the 'falling-in-love'-literature, that succeeding with a relationship depends on understanding it as always becoming and thus always in need for dating-activities to maintain its force/movement. Similarly, the force of organizations lies in their embracing of the entrepreneurial 'organization-creation' as a process through which they are continuously founded (i.e., both establishing and failing) (Hjorth 2003). To grasp such processes of becoming, narrative forms of knowledge and poetic sensibilities provide promises of greater precision. Representations, concepts, typologies, structures, categories and institutions are all linguistic and social conventionalizations that have achieved stability via practice. They are not drilled into touchstones of truth according to which they correspond perfectly. They are constructs and, as such, include 'intrinsic indeterminacy when organizational members interact with the world – hence the potential for change.' (Tsoukas and Chia 2002, p. 574). Creative response (to use Schumpeter's concept) thus requires imaginative extension beyond present conventions, which is how organization creation (entrepreneurship) is actualized.

As part of Gartner's PhD-writing process, he learned (Gartner 2004) via a diverse set of stories, that entrepreneurship was 'intrin-

sically about the nature of variation', and that '[T]he variety of their stories was astounding' (p. 246). His way of making sense of the variety and the great disagreement among entrepreneurship scholars as to what we talk about when we talk about entrepreneurship (Gartner 1990, a follow-up article to the 'Who is en Entrepreneur' (1988) article) is to embrace variety and multiplicity, and to turn to fiction as a promising path:

> I have wondered why there are so few fictional accounts of entrepreneurs and their experiences. It would seem that in fiction, one could more fully utilize one's imagination to grasp many of the subtle, internal, and ephemeral qualities that seem to be nearly impossible to write about in any of the scholarly forms available to us. […]It might be that the fictions created by entrepreneurs are more imaginative than what might be created by any authors of fiction, so that a fiction writer's efforts would never seem to ring as true to us as the stories told by these entrepreneurs, themselves. (Gartner 2004, p. 253)

Clearly, then, apart from the interest in process and imagination, the turn towards the narrative is part of Gartner's way of handling the inherent diversity in entrepreneurship as an empirical phenomenon, but also an attempt to deal with the fragmentation among scholars in the field: "The challenge, and the promise of narrative approaches, is this ability to give voice to the uniqueness that is every person's experience, as well as to connect each story to our common humanity" (*ibid.*, p. 254). The literary, rather than only the narrative, is here seen as a way to stay different (part of what entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship scholarship is about) while speaking a uniting language. We would also read this as a suggestion of a methodological kind: imaginative extensions of the world beyond its conventionalized forms requires poetic sensibility and narrative forms for telling it. Gartner's inspiration from a phenomenology-hermeneutics-pragmatism group of thinkers has recently clearly resurfaced (first present in the articles from 1992 and 1993). The gravitation towards the literary and poetic language has grown stronger in the recent turn towards narrative approaches, i.e., what Gartner likes to include under the program of a 'science of imagination' in entrepreneurship studies (Gartner 2007). At the ICSB conference (International Council for Small Business) in 2007, where Gartner was a key note speaker, he declared that his ambition was to read poetry to us rather than to present the conventional key note. In the fourth *Movements in Entrepreneurship* book, *The Politics and Aesthetics of Entrepreneurship* (Hjorth and Steyaert 2008), he contributes with Haiku poems concluding his readings of the chapters, and in the special issue on 'Entrepreneurship Research in Europe', in *Entrepreneurship, Theory & Practice* 32(2), 2008, he provides his comments as a 'hip-hop' driven by rhyme. Again we find both Weick and James in the reference list, but, characteristic of his polyglot skills, also James Joyce and Bruno Latour (the latter being the leading scholar in the field of social studies of science, STS).

So, when Gartner in his FSF-Nutek Award Winner article (Gartner 2006) quotes Arthur Conan Doyle saying: "It is a capital mistake to theorize before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist the facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts", we have to read this as a theory of Doyle's that is not well based on 'facts'. What Doyle here seems unable or unwilling to realize is that facts are theoretically impregnated and that theory is impregnated with facts.

And, that facts achieve being in language, via concepts, models and theory that in turn are socially constructed, and that without such tools it would not make sense to speak of neither theory nor data. The world, as well as our experiences of it, becomes factual theoretically. Even nature's authority needs to be constituted by thinkers using language (as a social-relational tool) to do so. We believe *this* view (rather than Doyle's) to be pioneered, defended as well as demonstrated in Gartner's work.

Conclusion: Impact and Implications for Entrepreneurship Research

What makes Gartner's work attractive to us, intellectually stimulating and a challenge to engage with is that it is entrepreneurial in the sense; on its way, in spite of his own description of it as a science of imagination (Gartner 2007), towards an art of theorizing (for lack of better word) that allows us to stay with the intensity of the situation. This is of course the purpose with narrative forms of knowledge. This is why literature (experiences from reading) stays with us. It resonates with life and converses our experiences – it brings us in touch with the real.

His emphasis on studying and understanding entrepreneurship as an organizational phenomenon, as organization creation, and the subsequent openings towards a processual approach in entrepreneurship studies, holds much promise. It provides a possibility for students of entrepreneurship to open up that black box in-between initiation and take-off of the firm. It also makes it possible for entrepreneurship scholars to embrace the immanent diversity and multiplicity of entrepreneurship. In addition, it has generated arguments for a more linguistically oriented study of entrepreneurship, where narrative wit and poetic sensibility provide central avenues for increased realism in our stories of entrepreneurship.

The characteristics and tendencies we have identified in Gartner's work (the roles of organization studies, imagination, narration and the poetic) provide stable conversational bridges to a European school of entrepreneurship studies (e.g., Bouchikhi 1993; Steyaert 1997; Hjorth 1999; Ogbor 2000; Landström and Johannisson 2001; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Hjorth 2003, 2005; Steyaert and Hjorth 2003; Ahl 2004; Fletcher 2006; Steyaert 2007; Bjerke 2007; Hjorth, Jones and Gartner 2008) where creativity and contextualization are main features of research. This may provide a source of community-building that Gartner has argued is needed in entrepreneurship studies. What seems certain, though, is that it adds fuel to the becoming of entrepreneurship studies, i.e., to its continuing creation, to the entrepreneurial process of entrepreneurship studies. If we draw upon this approach in an extension that suggests a future of entrepreneurship studies inspired by Gartner's work, we would say that it is from an in-between or relational perspective (entre-perspective) characteristic of process thinking that a relational understanding of emergence emerges. This suggests that the entrepreneur is of course empirically inseparable from the entrepreneurial process. They are simultaneous. They belong in becoming. It is the event-dimension of potential, something the skillfully narrated entrepreneurial vision can bring into a context, that provides the inter-relating dimension to elements (such as resources; cf. Massumi 2002) in the process.

Today we find the skillfully narrated vision of a narrative-poetic sensibility in entrepreneurship studies, significant for the genesis of Gartner's thinking, that provides this inter-relating of element in

entrepreneurship research of his and a European kind. The purpose here is not to use geographical identities to draw boundaries, but to emphasize that there are several entrepreneurship studies, and that this needs to be so if we want to study entrepreneurship entrepreneurially. Gartner has pulled us into a direction where he has been able to show how "[T]he imaginative application of the narrative mode… strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place" (Bruner 1986, p. 13), as he himself quotes (Gartner 2007, p. 622). This intensifies our relationship with experiences of entrepreneurship, with the real, which is of course what 'hip hop' (Gartner 2008) is about: it is narration in the genre of the street.

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