
Editorial Epilogue: Daniel Hjorth in conversation with Nada Endrissat and Claus Noppeney

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1 The field of entrepreneurship¹

“How to best start a conversation about entrepreneurship? Maybe you could tell us about how the field emerged and how it looks today? Including how you would position the ‘European School of Entrepreneurship’² within it?”

In 1979, Western economies were facing decreasing or at least stagnated economic growth and increasing unemployment rates as a result of the oil embargo period from the mid 1970s. The UK, as one example, suffered high inflation from mid 1970s until mid 1980s. Birch (1979) then published the *Job Generation Process*. He basically argues that 70% of all new jobs are generated by small medium-sized enterprises that grow. This kicks off the entrepreneurialisation that we saw in the ‘80s and ‘90s to follow. Up to that point, most politicians had been oriented towards large multinational corporations. The focus was firmly on the existing firms, not on the becoming ones. The same is true for business education. You had to look hard in order to find a course in entrepreneurship in a business school until 1995, at least in Europe, and certainly in Scandinavia. In the 1980s, they started to grow in the Anglo-American context, mainly in the USA, Katz (1998) has shown this in a meritorious 1998-paper on this chronology, and they entered early ‘90s in Scandinavia and Finland and Sweden and Norway in that order.

This change co-incided with the so-called Thatcherism and Reaganism of the 1980s, and so there was a time of enterprise culture, well studied and analysed by people like Miller (Burchell et al., 1991) and du Gay (1997). This, as Robin Holt and I have argued, is not entrepreneurship, but enterprise (Hjorth and Holt, 2016). The best way to understand this is to describe it as an enterprise ship sailing under entrepreneurship flag. But of course, entrepreneurship also ‘happened’ during this time. The rise of entrepreneurship has transformed fundamental concepts in Western Europe. In its enterprise form it meant that henceforth, we do not speak about unemployed people anymore, but job seekers. In England, some told me, and this resonates well with their accelerated fixation with the commercial, that you do not talk about homeless people but about rough sleepers. So the whole individualisation of responsibility and responsabilisation of the individual that is beneficial to a governmental policy of the enterprise entered around this time. Again, this only means that it becomes important to make the distinction between enterprise and entrepreneurship. For me, enterprise is a managerial governmentality; it is managerial entrepreneurship. Whereas entrepreneurship, which I today describe as the process of creating organisation, now needs to be stressed as entrepreneurial entrepreneurship, which is a tautological way of putting it, sure, but a result of management’s preferential right of interpretation. Entrepreneurship is still an important concept, an entre-concept as Steyaert (2000) has written, and one that still describes well the in-between and the grasping (prendre) of incipient newness. Again, what seemed important to me is to save the entrepreneurial element in entrepreneurship because mainstream entrepreneurship has made it into part of management. You can think of the entrepreneurial as the limit of the managerial. Entrepreneurship is what does not allow itself to become fully managed, without becoming management. Every entre-concept resists the dogmatic stifling that seeks the structural order of that which stays in its proper place. Entre- makes us move, forces us to grasp what is underway, the already more in the actual, the nextness in there.

So enterprise is just a slight variation on the dominant mode of thinking that came out of the business school and still comes out of the business school, namely management.

Nothing strange with this. We need management, but its attempt to grasp entrepreneurship has also made manifest the limit of that grip – manus, the hand of management. Management is set on control which is contra + rotulus, set against what is rolling. So, we have to invent, create counter-concepts that can make space for thought to move more freely. So I have proposed we think entrepreneurship as a prorolling force, a force that makes things roll, move, take flight. So, society’s entrepreneurialisation has brought a focus on entrepreneurship, at times more properly described as enterprise, with implications for how we educate young people, how we formulate policies for economic growth, and how we approach, relate to and call upon citizens. For the business school, somewhat ironically, because of this happening so late, this has meant that we are interested in how firms achieve being and not only how the existing ones are well-managed. Firming can describe the organisation-creation process that is entrepreneurship, also in its social and cultural forms.

“Could you illustrate, visually (with paper and pen) the field of entrepreneurship as you see it?”

There are many images that one could make, of course. So if I do more in the genre of business school images it would be typical to have a diagram with an X and Y axis. On the x-axis, it could be contextual versus a-contextual, or that which is abstracted, outside relations, and on the y-axis it could be economic vs. multi-disciplinary.

Figure 1 Locating entrepreneurship as academic discipline (see online version for colours)

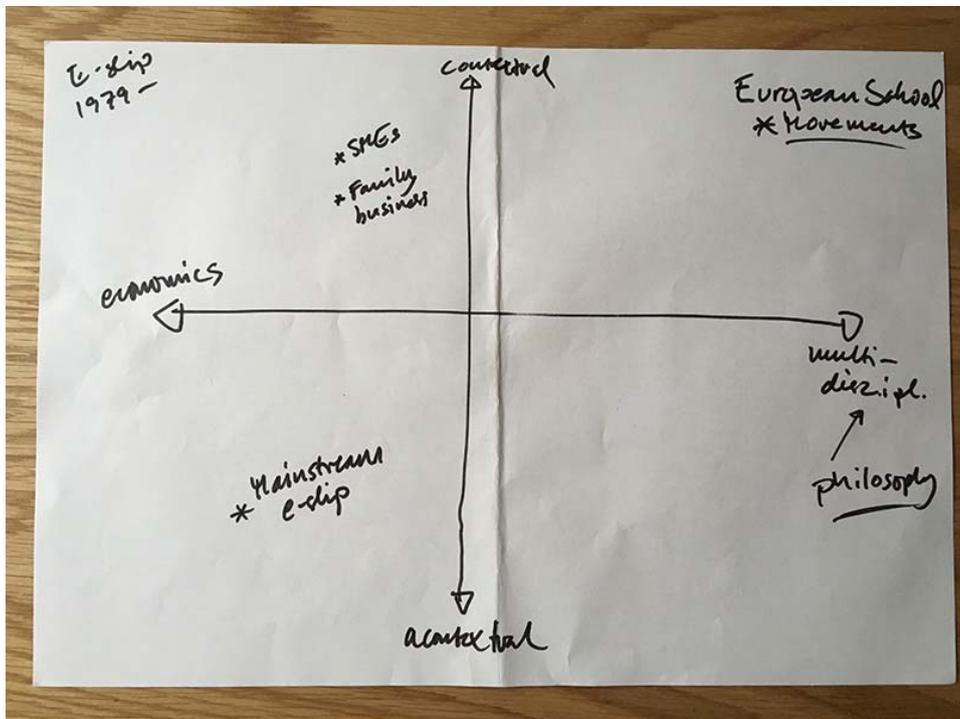


Figure 2 Relating Entrepreneurship, leadership, and management (see online version for colours)

You could then say that the typical, classical approach to entrepreneurship in the discipline of economics is often acontextual. It is always on its way from the extracted data points in which it has contact with life, but which fetters it to the micro, to bodies, to actions, to the mess of culturally reproduced socialities where language carries a weight in sensemaking far beyond what the hard but narrow shoulders of numbers can handle. It works not so much with empirical material, it does not bother so much about who people are, where they are, how they express themselves, and – in particular – how they are made individuals socially, how they relationally become. As a discipline, it is mostly interested in the regularities that algorithms, set to serve statistical curiosity in predictive potentials, can distil. What can be predicted can be controlled, and what can be controlled can be bound to a law that enables further calculation. For this to make sense, the concept of a homo oeconomicus had to be invented as a model-proximation to a human of a rationality that simultaneously is described as economy. Economy has a monopoly on rationality. But economists do not like monopolies, so there is hope. And of course most of the business school material that we have been exposed to as students in business schools is not so dominated by economics as a discipline but management, this curious mix of economics and psychology, biology and mathematics. Often, though, due to management sharing some DNA with economics, it is still very ‘low’ on the contextual. There is a strong tradition in the intellectual history of Europe, perhaps it has something to do with the heterogeneity of languages and cultures, that everything changes when you move a few miles in one direction, a tradition that has become stronger as we see xenophobic imbecility grow, to contextualise research questions and empirical material. Together with a growing inter- and multi-disciplinary approach in research, there is hope

that economy is kept in its place rather than monopolistically appropriate space (intellectually and in practice) as a strategic rationalisation through which society becomes an epiphenomenon to the economic, the latter, again, which through this owns the strategically appropriated place as one belonging to the homo oeconomicus. One does not necessarily start in the right place when economy is your ‘square one’ in processes of grasping what results in economic forms such as new firms. Economy is for sure part of it, but not necessarily the start. Economy has to learn its place. But this is critique, according to Foucault (Foucault 2008); learning to know one’s knowledge. The gluttonous tendency in economy as discourse, and here I speak with de Certeau’s (1997) tongue, means it has become an obese science. It has all the concepts necessary for re-presenting a problem in economic terms, and so it can devour it and spit out the lifeless model as a solution. Again, economy is not wrong, and it is tremendously important for understanding also entrepreneurship, but it should not be ‘all over’ and is often quite weak as an explanation of the start and the creation of something.

2 The European School of Entrepreneurship

Here, again, to the extent that a European approach in entrepreneurship research represents a stronger tendency to contextualise, a stronger tendency to work in inter- and multi-disciplinary ways, and a stronger tendency, finally, to be attentive to history – and Europe is of course drenched in history – that all helps to progress in a more nuanced and reflexive manner in the great quest for making entrepreneurship better known, understood, and practiced. This is why, in the so-called European School of Entrepreneurship research, we approach entrepreneurship like we do, stressing the need to contextualise, welcoming the multi-disciplinary, and attend to history.

So you could say that the four movements’ books (see footnote 2) and the following special issues and conferences that all contributed to the development of an alternative approach in entrepreneurship research, are very much about placing entrepreneurship in the multidisciplinary/contextual quadrant. Hesitantly, we gestured towards ‘European’ as a surely somewhat ‘mal placé’ label that still said something about what we were after. Each of the books and special issues, with Chris Steyaert, Robin Holt and many others addressed a different focus. We did four elements: Water for movement the first time, and then wind about the narratives and discourses through which we grasp the phenomenon, further on to grounding it in society by asking what is social with social entrepreneurship, and then, finally, to address the politics and aesthetics - fire, the passion in the entrepreneurial. By then we were done in the sense that we had done the four elements, in the sense that we had covered what to us was and is important for any discipline that seeks to mature without losing its adolescence – a grounding in society, a methodologically reflexive discourse on its study, a capacity to move on, and an awareness of its performative potential, how it contributes to world-making (if ever so little). In other words; to problematise the way it develops in movement, to problematise how it is talked about, written, discoursed; how it is grounded in society; and, fourthly, what it desires, what forces it is up against, and how it performs as a world-making practice.

3 Multiplying the concept of entrepreneurship

We labelled our approach European entrepreneurship school to establish a reference point, to signal our contextual, multi-disciplinary approach to entrepreneurship compared to the traditional economic understanding of entrepreneurship that is mostly acontextual and uni-disciplinary. We wanted to stress the need to multiply the concept of entrepreneurship, to highlight that it is not a ‘hostage’ to the economic sphere alone, that it does not start, but rather ends, in business. Because even if you focus on the business of making a mobile phone, you have to admit that the mobile phone changed the way people communicate, interact and plan their lives. This desire to actualise new possibilities for communicating and living is a strong driver in the process we retrospectively can describe as a creation of a new company. Limiting entrepreneurship to the economy of business-creation misses the drama, the aesthetic, the ethical, the social, the political that makes such creations entrepreneurially necessary.

Multiplying entrepreneurship thus means that we welcome social entrepreneurship, public entrepreneurship, cultural entrepreneurship, and so on. So even if we do not have the homogeneity of a ‘regular’ school, we typically stress the creative, the contextual, and the multi-disciplinary. And we also try to ask ‘what is the entrepreneurial in entrepreneurship research?’ How can it treat itself in a reflexive manner? How can it scrutinise its own performance? If we study entrepreneurship could not that also be an entrepreneurial part of the business school? Could we also be more creative, experimental, in our reviews of the tools that we have learnt as scholars? Beyes and Steyaert (2012) have done great work on performative theory, performative research. Chris and I spent several years developing a performative practice around our own research; performing it rather than presenting it (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2002). Robin Holt and I are working with writing in a similar vein; we use literature and explore writing as a creative form of doing research.

4 Entrepreneurship as ‘coming into being’

“To come back to your differentiation among management and entrepreneurship, could you elaborate on what makes entrepreneurship entrepreneurial?”

To ask ‘what would we need to take out of entrepreneurship to prevent it from being entrepreneurship?’ begs an interesting answer. One answer could be that it would probably be the creative, the experimental, that through which it cracks open, where it leaks passion into the world and where it resists appropriation from economic discourse alone. Because what else is there that distinguishes it from management of the small firm or management of the new firm? Notice that when we operate acontextually, when we seek to abstract from data points in order to formulate laws, our capacity to distinguish it from management diminishes. But if we stay in the empirical long enough to move with processes, it becomes apparent that it is a quite different becoming. Our efforts in process thinking (see Oxford University Press Handbook of Process Philosophy and Organization Studies, 2014) make this even more evident. So this means that we also said, in the ‘European School’, that what is important about entrepreneurship is the entrepreneurial in entrepreneurship. Early on I think I had a paper (with Chris Steyaert) called Entrepreneurship is not part of management, Thank God! Just to emphasise, a bit

polemically, and with a tint of emotional engagement, that there is no evident continuity between finance and marketing and accounting and entrepreneurship. They are not on the same scale. Entrepreneurship is different. Of course the others are also different, but entrepreneurship comes before, it is firming, it places new firms into the world. The others work on such firms having come into the world. Entrepreneurship is the ‘coming into being’ of what the manager then occupy themselves with. It is the birth of that which we at some point hand over to the manager as someone who should take care of it efficiently and effectively. But bringing it into existence is not part, historically, of what management does. Witnessed by the fact that up to 1995, no one in a business was asked to know how to create a businesses.

5 Entrepreneurship and creativity

“If creativity is a central element of entrepreneurship, the pro-roll or bringing it into being as you said earlier – how would you say that entrepreneurship and creativity relate to each other? Is entrepreneurship creativity and all creativity entrepreneurial?”

They are always related. And therefore they cannot be the same. The point is exactly that they are related, in various ways, for different reasons, in different parts of the entrepreneurial process. There are many ways of tying the specific expression of creativity that we call entrepreneurship to firming as previously described. Entrepreneurship’s creativity is at other times more tied to enhancing the possibilities for living, when citizens rather than consumers are in focus, such as in social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship is not art. But we can perhaps say that it is the poetry of business. Never mind rolling eyes here. If ‘romantic’ means there is a child-like belief in people, romantic it is. Art does not necessarily direct its creation towards some need in relation to which new or superior value can be created. Yet, and this can be one of the wonders of art, value, not reducible to economic value, is often overwhelming in the experience of art. We might use ‘sublime’ to describe this; the pulling in of us into a more intimate relationship with the world. Nor is entrepreneurship innovation, or invention. But I cannot see how invention can become innovation (invention with a market) without entrepreneurship operating in that in-between, creating organisation needed for the virtuality – the idea of the new, the invention – to become actual (value experienced by the other). So, there is another little formula that one can draw that might be informative. This is the only formula I have made perhaps; $\text{Invention} \times \text{Entrepreneurship} = \text{Innovation}$. Entrepreneurship makes incipient newness press so heavily on the perforable membrane between the virtual and the actual that the new sifters through.

So, if we think innovation as an invention with a market, this means this new actuality (concretely experienced new value) can again be made to play with the virtual, with whatever entrepreneurial imagination relates it to, in order to open up new opportunities. What was made actual is just one of the virtualities that could have achieved being. The virtual and the actual are always related and feed off each other. If an actual value potential resonates with a desire, this can make people into customers. They do pay for something, and so there is a transaction, and we are then in the realm of commerce, the social dealings between people that, in the dawn of industrialisation was promoted as governmental strategy for keeping people out of misbehaviour (as

Hirschman has shown in his wonderful book *The Passions and the Interests* from 1977). And, again, entrepreneurship in this process of making virtualities actual, is organisation-creation. I say this also to emphasise my affinity with organisation studies, but I get this actually from Schumpeter (1947) and his ‘The creative response in economic history’. He says that what distinguishes the entrepreneurial from the managerial might be many things but maybe to put a new organisation into the world is the most characteristic, to organise things in a new way that he called the ‘outside the pale of routine’-way. He stressed that entrepreneurship is a creative response, not an adaptive one, which is important as we can see homo oeconomicus, as Foucault (2008) has pointed out, precisely as this model of an actor that all the times adjust to the changing circumstances so as to perfectly adapt.

6 Entrepreneurship as creativity, creating new value

So it is in a way consistent with the Schumpeterian, understanding of entrepreneurship that stresses innovation (Schumpeter, 1947). It means that entrepreneurship is not any kind of creativity, it is creativity that aims at providing a new value for a paying customer, or new value for a citizen. Since Schumpeter, entrepreneurship is the creative response in economic history. But as numerous studies of motivation of entrepreneurs have shown, creating value for a customer is not the point. This is the receipt that proves that it was possible to actualise the virtual. This is the important feedback that says the dream of making something new was indeed doable. When the new firm is formed, making it grow can take over as motivation; satisfying customers can take over as motivation. But the motivation to create a new firm is often secondary to exercising freedom to create, prove to oneself that there was a way to materialise the poem in a sustainable business prose.

7 Studying entrepreneurship from a multi-disciplinary perspective

“The idea of our special issue was also to move entrepreneurship research forward by taking more unorthodox research approaches into consideration. What would you say, what are promising ways to study entrepreneurship from a multi-disciplinary and context-sensitive position?”

We have already many good leads. One lead is Gartner’s (1988) ‘‘Who is an entrepreneur’ is the wrong question’, which we can use to instead study how becoming entrepreneur is a fascinating process. Individuation or subjectification does happen, of course. The becoming of the entrepreneurial subject in various contexts of organisation, is indeed an area where we lack research. I believe we can learn much more about entrepreneurship should we focus on those processes of becoming, those organisation-creation processes, or the narratives weaved to make yourself become an entrepreneur in relationship to others (Hjorth, 2015). What styles, stories, plots, genres, metaphors, convincing improvisations, and so on, characterise entrepreneurship processes? The idea that you are born an entrepreneur or we study entrepreneurs when we study entrepreneurship is a bit of an odd one. As Deleuze (1992) has stressed, we are rather individuals as default, and in-dividualisation is an achievement. We become individuals socially, but only as an ephemeral construct. Every individual is a socially realised

temporary achievement that is always de-individualisable. The individual is our ground. We can and do become in multiple ways. Becoming-entrepreneur answers to a specific desire, one that has become a social desire during a fairly short time (and of 1970s as we talked about above). This desire will surely vanish or transform and we will look back upon the era of entrepreneurship with awe or indifference. Also when you look into Schumpeter's writings he says that the entrepreneurial function is most often filled not by an individual but by a team. And he talks about a cluster of companies being 'the entrepreneur' in an economy. In other words, he emphasises the collective nature of entrepreneurship, the social relationships or set of relationships that together bring the emergence of a new organisation into place for which the subject-position of entrepreneur is very important. But this, how we become, and how we create firms, and how we talk, make stories, produce visions, and so on while making the entrepreneurship process progress, this is something we can grasp with much greater precision using philosophy, process philosophy, and literature to do so. Part of the multi-disciplinary I encourage is thus to make use of philosophy's capacity to move thinking, as Massumi (2002) says, to the virtual fringe of things, to rig thinking to make new connections in fictional anticipation of creation. This [and I have published a sketch for a philosophy of entrepreneurship in Hjorth (2015)] is like a method of entrepreneurship, which can be seen to move action to the virtual fringe of things, and to fabulate, to narratively perform an image-making that draws attention and directs desires that assemble people and resources into proto-organisational forms. This can be described as firm-ing underway, firms becoming (as Christ Steyaert, Robin Holt and I have written elsewhere). Understanding the power of fiction, of the literary, and learning from literature is relevant for a student of entrepreneurship and its anticipatory story-making, so central to making anything new happen.

Accordingly, entrepreneurship has to be tied to value creation, which is a popular discourse also in entrepreneurship research to say that entrepreneurship somehow creates new value for someone. This also means that in principle, every definition of entrepreneurship has to acknowledge its contextual-relational nature.

8 Putting cultural entrepreneurship in context

For example, if you talk about cultural entrepreneurship it has to include cultural institutions or the production or creation of culture somehow. Cultural entrepreneurship, a discourse opened by DiMaggio (1982), would then typically focus on either cultural institutions, or everyday practices of story-making (as in Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). And we all know that answering that question 'what is culture' is really difficult. What is not culture? Every business is an expression of a business culture. So it has to be a question of studying the entrepreneurial process in its context and understand how value becomes concrete in those relational settings. And I would argue that the same entrepreneurial process that is an example of a classical case of entrepreneurship that wants to see whether firming a new firm is indeed doable, is also, at the same time, an example of a social entrepreneurial process that changes the conditions for citizens in the society of living and working, and an example of cultural entrepreneurship that transforms the relational conditions for what images, languages and stories we use to make sense of the world and dream about its futures. Such embracing of multiplicity goes

back to process thinking where Bergson (1889) says that the same arrow is multiple. The arrow at the bow is one, the arrow in the air is the second one, the arrow that has reached the target is the third one. And we live in a world where we have reduced them all in this ‘misplaced concreteness’ to one and the same. But ontologically we cannot understand them if we do not see that they are multiple. The meaning of the arrow, in addition, is stabilised relationally, in specific contexts. If I find a kitchen knife on my doorstep one morning, I make sense of this as a threat, the knife has become a weapon. If I find it by the bread basket on the kitchen table, I make sense of this as a lucky coincidence, that someone has started to prepare breakfast. The knife is then a bread knife. It is about the potentiality to become something. The arrow in flight is one flying, going away from us or going towards us. The arrow having been shot can have become a success or a failure, depending on where in the target it has stopped, and depending on whether target shooting is the context. So I think this is important for any process thinker but perhaps not so important for a classical non-processual thought where you fixate on the entity or the object rather than the process by which it is becoming, transforming, making sense.

9 An illustrative example

“Could you think of an example from the business world to illustrate the idea?”

Nokia is a great illustration of an artistic project, the birth of the cultural object mobile phone in its designed form. Before, Nokia phones were mainly functional objects. Yet, Nokia proposed that the phone as cultural object could be an extension of your clothes and thus accompany your identity-forming processes. So we open up the phenomena of the well-designed mobile phone. And it was a very experimental and very brave attempt. It lasted for a decade before it was gone.

Nokia is thus a typical example of an ephemeral installation, if you like, but on a gigantic scale. But you could also study it as a perfect commercial case of rapid growth, profit maximisation, of missing the innovative edge, and dying. As a case of a company and nothing else. And thirdly you could study it as a case of social entrepreneurship where you ‘released’ an object from being something that belonged to the sphere of engineering to become available for a broader mass and also transforming everyday people’s lives by differentiating it into a low cost version, a high designed version and a high tech version and so on. Nokia, as a case of social entrepreneurship, would then represent the process by which Finish people on a broad scale inscribed themselves in an innovation-nation, which of course has effects far beyond the life of a company. Like a Redwood tree, Nokia has of course left rings around the stem, new trees that shoot out from the rhizome of Nokiastic activities. And at some point, having more than 40% of the total mobile phone market in the world, this also meant they had some kind of social responsibility, and had to struggle with the burden of expectations on them as leaders: an expectation that they would generate qualitative difference because of being quantitatively more.

10 Summarising the idea of cultural entrepreneurship

So to summarise, the cultural element I think has to be a question of your approach and what language you want to use to grasp the entrepreneurial. It is not a question of a particular sector or product/service per se. Every entrepreneurial process can be studied as multiple ‘things’, the cultural is just one. Of course, for historical reasons, certain spheres in human activity are labelled cultural such as art and music and so on that belong to cultural expressions such as they are defined. And obviously some cases lend themselves more readily to a language of culture than others, because of explicit ambitions and desires. So intention and agency are, of course, interesting and important as much for the processual thinker as for the non-processual. Subjectivities are interesting because subject-positions are their results; relations are interesting because of what gets related; passages are interesting rather than merely than positions...for the process thinker. This does not mean that subjects, what gets related, and positions are not interesting. It merely means they as secondary to how they become; that how something becomes determines what it is. It is the firm firming that orients us towards the entrepreneurial. The firm then, as such, becomes the domain where management reigns.

11 Implications: what can we learn from cultural entrepreneurship?

“If entrepreneurship can be studied from the economic, social or cultural sphere, what would you say is characteristic for the cultural sphere, what is the interesting aspect about the cultural that we could reflect on to address the guiding question of this special issue: what can the field of entrepreneurship learn from the cultural sphere?”

Every interaction-in-the-making, what Massumi (2002) suggests we name a ‘relation’, takes place as part of an emergence of distinctions, including that between individual and society, and that between a cultural act and nature. Entrepreneurship is always also a cultural act, which is the first important thing to remind oneself of here. Now, if you enter into one of those distinctions that for political, aesthetic, and ethical reasons have differentiated something like a ‘cultural sphere’, this has to be understood – as Rancière (2006) has told us – as a way to legitimise indifference towards the cultural, or to legitimise the cultural’s semi-autonomous status, meaning it should have freedom to operate at arm’s length from political and commercial interests. Process thinkers would be skeptical to any strong separation between nature and culture, individual and society, for they are co-evolutionary, co-emergent. As soon as you start to interest yourself in processes, you focus on relations, force, will, becomings. Bergson’s *élan vital*, Spinoza’s *conatus*, Nietzsche’s will to power, they all reveal the nature-culture continuum. They make analyses of social life impossible without attention to bodies, acts, battles of forces, affect, passions and interests. Of course, when you explicitly operate with generating affects, as in art, when you question or change identities, when you destabilise or deconstruct meaning or established regimes of sense, you can say we are in the sphere of culture (to the extent this is the explicit domain of expression, identity, becomings). Certain institutions and persons might be more inclined to play with their identity and we can call that cultural processes. The fact that ‘the cultural’ is typically amused by its own identity-instability, means that any description of the cultural sphere performatively does culture when it tries to pin it down: it enters a sense-making process of reproducing

differentiating classifications. The sphere of commerce, although archaically this describes adult intercourse, has historically had very little interest in such destabilisations. There is no point with customers not knowing whether this a business or not? Come into my store and you cannot really know what it is. That is not their business...until lately. In the wake of the experience economy, and design as the primary vehicle for producing affects and cater for identity-needs, we have seen a lot of artful business concepts. Indeed, as de Monthoux (2004) and Austin and Devin (2003) have shown, there is a lot for managers to learn from art. But, again, historically, this has been the domain of culture. The typical modern art museum of late, although they are about to collapse under the weight of their enormous 'things'-shops, restaurants and cafés, are precisely in that business, the business of identity destabilisation. 'Who are you?' 'Why do you come here?' 'What is this?' 'You know what?' The more recent development where companies are also starting to be interested in precisely this places additional pressure on 'culture' to renew itself if it wants to maintain a semi-autonomous status. Ironically, that would require their own playing with identity, playing with cultural forms of expression. When famous shoe-brands stage fake protests against themselves in Berlin, so they can preempt the reaction against how their shoes are made, cultural forms of expression need to become more clever, intricate, subtle, transformative, minorising. Again, I believe this is what we see: the cultural and artistic is less and less interested in its semi-autonomous status, this is only important to art- and culture-managers who operate institutions. Artists are crafting viruses that enter parts of the social body and transforms the whole. A virus is a good example of the continuum between nature and culture; it is simultaneously a code and biology, a culture that creates culture in a foreign culture that has immune systems as response.

So you can do a lot by playing with these [possibilities] and of course, more and more businesses look like art projects and vice versa. We live more and more in the grey zone of collapsed distinctions, which is also the yellow light of entrepreneurship; the in-between light where you have to decide, have to propose a difference that makes a difference. Like IKEA has a way of democratising design. It sounds like a social movement. It sounds like they are for the many people. And that might be the most successful commercial slogan, of course, but it is labelling itself as a social project that makes it possible for some to be integrated into the cultural spheres of those who have design objects in their homes, who can afford to surround themselves with beauty. The spheres have permeable boundaries and they are leaking all the time.

12 Destabilising as core process of the cultural

So I think this destabilisation is an important element, and indeed a form of cultural entrepreneurship per se. People who can produce art that destabilises, that generates affects that forces us to re-boot ourselves as persons, for example, Ai Weiwei. He would be a good case of someone who can operate as a social, cultural and 'normal' entrepreneur, all at the same time, as he continues to use his art – which is a big business – as a provocation to the Chinese Government simultaneously as a question to the West's perception of what China is and represents. So almost every time he exhibits something it is a large question mark or a big 'fuck you' sign to someone because he wants to change the way something is done in the Chinese/Western societies-relation. He destabilises the order of things, enters like a virus, creates a space for play in places of order, transforms

bodies. Of course, he draws on the fact that he belongs officially to the sphere of art. And in addition, because he has been exposed to disciplinary efforts from the Chinese Government he is also drawing on the identity of the dissident or the exile and so on. And all that adds to his value, of course, that we somehow need to listen to him.

“But couldn’t we also say that culture is the traditional sphere for entrepreneurs and the recent advent of cultural entrepreneurship actually an attempt to get access to this entrepreneurial powerhouse of western societies?”

I think what is new here is the de-dramatisation of the commercial in the cultural sphere and in the sphere of art. If you look into how young artists today can include as part of their resources the commercial sector and the dynamics of the capitalist economy without any bad conscience or regrets, this is quite different from the previous generation which – for ideological reasons or other – was hindered from mingling with the world of commerce because they thought this would contaminate the purity of what they did as art. But now you can start a business, you can use a business, you can play with a business as part of your tool kit as an artist. You have Murakami working with Louis Vuitton³, which sort of really destabilises what the brand is about. And he redesigned the shop, the way we approach the objects, and the bag which normally is just an expensive bag became an object of art, or not, because it’s now somehow slightly altered by this artist who has bestowed upon it the aura of artistry, or made art into merely the promotion of objects.

So it is a good example for an artist who plays with the commercial, who has included the dynamics of capitalism as something that he or she has understood and wants to make use of in a surprising way. And that would historically be defined not as art because it is also commercial, although art has in most cases always also been commercial. What we see is interesting as a destabilising act. There is not that kind of fear anymore for this purity not being present. You could see it as colour and form and line belong to the history of artistic material, which is now also – more explicitly than before – money, commerce, market...these are the new elements in the artistic process. And again that would destabilise. You would have difficulties saying, is this a business? Is this an exhibition? Is it an installation? Is it actually just a shop?

13 The entrepreneurship discourse continues...

What you do is you exemplify the openness, the leaking nature, the fluid nature of what could be understood as entitative; solid and fixed. What is it that defines you as an artist or an entrepreneur? It is difficult to say beyond the intention of someone, the story of someone, the discourse they want to draw upon, or a description of the kind of value that you want to prioritise. You can easily say that some of the artists that work today want to get rich. Some, but rather few, use that as official discourse of what they do. Some of today’s entrepreneurs just want to change the world, just want to solve a societal problem. Profit is just a means. The fact that it is politically smart today to re-describe what used to be labelled culture-worker or artist as instead a form of cultural entrepreneurship only connects us to the opening of our conversation – that we are still in the wave of entrepreneurialisation, meaning the value of what you do is more readily apparent to significant stakeholders to the extent it draws upon entrepreneurship discourses. If this is merely enterprise, there is little new, but if it is entrepreneurship I believe we should legitimately expect transformation.

“Thank you so much for taking the time to share with us your views on cultural entrepreneurship. This has been really entrepreneurial in the sense of finding the cracks, destabilizing established views and exploring something new.....”

Well, thank you for providing the opportunity.

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Notes

- 1 Due to space restrictions, we reproduce a shortened and trimmed version of our conversation.
- 2 European School of Entrepreneurship is a movement that was initiated by Steyaert et al. Exemplary publications include: Hjorth et al. (2008), Hjorth and Steyaert (2004, 2009) and Steyaert and Hjorth (2003, 2006).
- 3 <https://www.artforum.com/news/id=53862> (15 January 2017).