

Enterprise, Entrepreneurship and Ethics - understanding Ai Weiwei as an entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes*

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Enterprise

Encomiums to enterprise have never been more fulsome and frequent than present; the baleful economic effects of financial crisis will be countered by the rise of new ventures, energetic, virtuous even. In the UK Prime Minister David Cameron has been especially enthusiastic. In his 2011 Conservative Party speech he was asserting "At its beating heart this is still a party of start-ups, go-getters, risk-takers", going on to argue that, with the public purse empty, the only strategy for recovery were policies that release the ingenuity and persistence of the small firm sector, allowing entrepreneurs to "roll up their sleeves" and help restore economic fortunes. The speech is interesting because, throughout, Cameron finds "enterprise is not just about markets, it's about morals too". The financial crisis revealed a profound slackening in the association of economic and social good, and any recovery must acknowledge this; creating environments in which smaller businesses can start, invest, innovate and grow stimulates a rebalancing of an economy weaned on complex debt and avaricious short-term investment cycles. Small is beautiful once more.

Our paper investigates this renewed association of enterprise, entrepreneurship and ethics. On the surface come obvious objections to the association of enterprise and economic and social recovery. Was it not precisely enterprise and risk-taking that initiated the crisis? Yet as with Cameron's agenda, Kenny and Scriver (2012) note how Eire, a country scoured by its almost hubristic enthusiasm for structured finance, is also invoking an enterprise agenda to effect almost saviour-like recovery; with politicians promoting the country as a place where 'innovation comes naturally', where entrepreneurial capacity to absorb and relish ambiguity and complexity, to be curious and create connexions, is touted as part of the nation's zeitgeist. This irony of this 'get

go' spirit being claimed as a common national trait of both the Irish and British is lessened when we look elsewhere across Europe and find similar eulogies for enterprise-led recovery in Denmark (Sørensen (2008), Finland (Erkkila, 1996), Norway (Ure, 2010), and Sweden (Hjorth, 2003).

Enterprise recommends variants of a specific organizational form (the commercial venture) and associated human qualities (risk taking, boldness, self-reliance) (Burchell, Gordon and Miller, 1991; du Gay, 1996; Keat, 1990; Miller and Rose, 1990; 1992). This organization of affective force through enterprise finds individuals 'in business for themselves within the company' (Kanter, 1983; 1985). Exponents become their own ventures, conscious of themselves as both brand and desiring subjects ordered through performance measurement and strategic goals; they are flesh-and-blood opportunities emerging within a complex and changeful environment of economic, social and cultural forces (Storey et al, 2005). This pervasiveness has found studies conceptualising enterprise as a discourse; a symbolic structuring of logics, institutional forms and identities in which various distinct phenomena (people, groups, habits, material objects) are brought into coherent, stabilising order of symbols, evaluations and purposes. The much-vaunted freedom of self-government extolled in enterprise is warranted by wider discursive logics of efficient and effective (purposeful) production and consumption (cf. McNay, 2009) in which entrepreneurial behaviours are configured as means of creating material wealth and transmitting desirable values (autonomy, flexibility of thought and movement, and material desire) across different workforces and other social groupings (Parker, 2007), unfettered by government interference. An array of different and often disparate signifiers - excellence, freedom, commerce, venture, efficiency, innovation, self-confidence, distinction, community spirit, creativity - have connected as equivalences under the gathering, gluttonous signifier: 'enterprise' (Kenny and Scriver, 2012). Even consumption becomes an activity of enterprise by which consumers undertake to produce their own satisfaction, to become involved through feedback, choice agendas, bespoke goods.

From within such discursive alignments organization becomes flatter, leaner and less bureaucratic, better able to hug close to free market winds; and agency becomes independent, empowered, singular in its pursuit of more using less. Producers and consumers alike are implicated as responsibility morphs into an ability to respond and

respond anew (Grey and Fournier, 1999; Sturdy and Grey, 2003; Sturdy and Wright, 2008). All sectors of society are touched: fire-service to hedge fund trading; foreign aid to marketing Easter eggs; higher education to organic farming. Enterprise is a form of structured independence by which commercial ventures and technological innovation are underscored by logics of de-regulation, competitive performance and economic and social de-regulation couched in a language of material resuscitation and growth that, following Marlow's Faustus, makes gain into a deity.

This discourse is so institutionalized even the financial crisis has left it unscathed. Enterprise and the entrepreneurial seem immune from opprobrium. Perhaps because it is hard to define what these phenomena actually are. Entrepreneurship studies have for years attempted to define what is meant by an entrepreneur (Gartner, 1989), to explain entrepreneurial activity (Schumpeter, 1934), to theorise entrepreneurship as enterprise (Shane, 2003), and failed. It is hard to criticise what cannot be identified. Jones and Spicer (2005: 235) suggest this inability is inevitable because entrepreneurial concepts exist to "structure phantasmic attachment". The failure to explain the character of the entrepreneur or the structural causes of entrepreneurial behaviour reveals a deeper truth that entrepreneurship research has stumbled upon: the enterprise discourse is shredded with absence and girded by an impossible and incomprehensible subject, and this is its force. The only sense in which enterprise exists is in the desire for desire, the desire configured in envisaging that which is not yet within grasp (the object of desire) *and* in experiencing an inevitable rent or lack in the symbolic order of the discourse itself. So the emptiness is twofold. First in the subject's attempts to accede to the symbolic idea of ideal subjectivity (to become an entrepreneur, the irony being entrepreneurs, by definition, can never attain a restful threshold of identity without upsetting that identity); second, in the symbolic order by which this idealized other is presented, which, being opportunistic, is always in the thrall of incompleteness, going beyond itself. Lack is in the DNA of the entrepreneur, and in the enterprise discourse, both in a striving towards something complete (as enterprising selves), and also, always, in uncovering absence, gaps in the signification, stumbling into silences. It is this stumbling that elicits the striving, keeping the recursive cycle active, and keeping researchers searching after the embodiment of an enterprising subject, like the Nietzschean lightning behind the flash.

For all this talk of emptiness, lack and desire, however, enterprise still carries the ideals of the so-called Ordoliberal economists that Michel Foucault analyses in his study of governmentality (1984) and the enterprising self as part of *The Birth of Biopolitics* (2008; Miller and Rose, 1990). For Foucault enterprise has presence. This view is sustained by Ciborra's (2004: 23-24) study of the widespread adoption of enterprise resource planning systems during the 1990's. Persistent and explicitly organized investment in enterprise encouraged orderly, scaled-up and homogenized activity conducted in explicitly managed physical and discursive spaces (cf. Hirschman, 1977). The space for drifting (the patching, hacking, bricolage that conjours moments of *dérive*) was strangled: unemployed became job seekers, homeless became rough-sleepers. Enterprise became something heavily managed, and enterprising selves were understood as information processors; they would perceive an external environment, analyse relevant details and act rationally in response. The ensuing individualism confined the locus of curiosity and inquiry to the regular and linear piston strokes of explicit pursuit and calculated returns. Jones and Spicer are too uncritical in their declension of lack and desire. These are highly managed states. What kind of mythical origin is being referred to, asks Massumi (2002), when we are invited to imagine a bunch of *homo oeconomicus* people living in competition-based individuality, deciding, on a basis of a normative recognition of shared needs, to build relationships with one another? Quite. How can there be societies in such a world, where economy is primary and the social its epiphenomenon? Studies like Ciborra's show enterprise is a present presence, confirming what Foucault earlier identified as being the core of an idealized *homo oeconomicus* – a constantly adjusting individual able to correct behaviours to better approximate the demands of changing circumstances. Such an individual accepts its environment as it is, and innovates adaptively (cf. Schumpeter's 'adaptive response', describing a non-entrepreneurial approach to change; Schumpeter, 1947). Enterprise and the enterprising self, in this tradition of thought, perhaps culminating in the Chicago school of economics (with Gary Becker and Milton Friedman as figureheads), is synonymous with a self-defined entirely by competitors (Donzelot, 2008: 129-30). In this neo-liberal reinvention of *homo oeconomicus* (Gordon, 1991; Hjorth, 2003), we find an eminently adjustable, i.e., governable, *homo oeconomicus*, becoming a solution to the awkwardly untouchable *homo oeconomicus* of classical liberalism. "Any ambiguity in ordoliberal thought about the compatibility of market principles with solidaristic social relations and collective values is subsequently lost in neo-liberalism, which represents a more 'complete and

exhaustive' generalization of the market form throughout society" (McNay, 2009: 59).

If enterprise discourse is predicated on the management of desire, then what of the possibility for resistance, for spontaneity or raw expression, for unplanned utterance, for the experience of doing less with more that is the defining feature of all experiment and hence of opportunity creation? Is, we ask, enterprise all there is? The managed emptiness of enterprise discourse leaves us with no capacity to explain how opportunities are created, only pursued, nor how the process of becoming-opportune, of making oneself available for opportunity is organized. There might be daylight between enterprise (as managed desire) and entrepreneurship (as creative expression).

Thus here we bring to questionability the persistent association of enterprise and entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship has been corralled into the discourse, almost becoming a synonym for enterprise (du Gay, 2004; Jones and Spicer, 2005; Kenny and Scriver, 2012). For example, we have du Gay (1996: 185) suggesting "the entrepreneurial project is precisely concerned with diffusing the enterprise form throughout the social body, making it its 'generalized principle of functioning'". This association is shared by Fournier and Grey (1999: 133), for whom, whilst criticising du Gay's association of enterprise and the institutional impress of modern management techniques, "entrepreneurial businessmen ... constitute part of enterprise discourse". We wish to understand entrepreneurship as something rather different from enterprise; where the creative, playful, passionate, affective and poetic nature of entrepreneurial processes is given light (Hjorth, 2003).

Entrepreneurship

The American novelist Edith Wharton said the imagination of business people is often greater than that of poets. Well, certain business people, those sensitive to the whole always being less than the parts (to paraphrase Bruno Latour). For these poetic business people what is already completed is dead, free from opportunity, whereas fragments, emergences and parts are inherently mobile, their adjustability carrying great capacity for expression, encouraging a greed for discovery irrespective of potential earning power. This greed is far from self-centred, indeed it is inherently social and often public, a showing of possibility in company, prompted by company. Where the enterprise

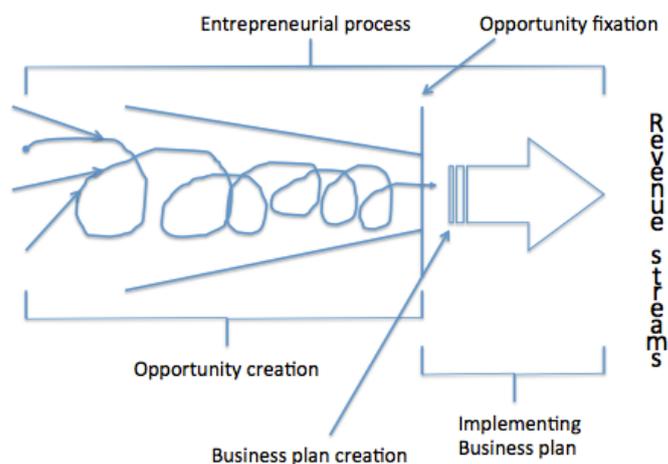
agenda is structured by rounded business and economic reasons (the ends in whose thrall individuals are encouraged to innovate with means), the entrepreneurial condition is animated by a desire to create, by a greed for knowing whether 'what could become' can achieve being. There is a sense of absence here, as Jones and Spicer remind us, a striving, yet we will argue it is not an unconscious lack (for how in Lacanian terms would we make it conscious, explicit?) Rather it is the experience of creative expression. Here we find agency, a sense of individuality, arising *in relation to* community and opportunities as incipient creations (such as businesses) configured socially. Is there a unity at all, a distinct resourceful, evaluative, maximising agent? No. The entrepreneur is mobile, restless, striving, gathering experience, and all the while loosening, while still centre of a turning world.

Here we acknowledge and then diverge from social entrepreneurship studies in which the social is configured as an additional element, a prefix and even constraint that burdens the entrepreneur (Bjerke and Karlsson, 2013; Ziegler, 2011; Mair, Robinson and Hockerts, 2006; Steyaert and Hjorth, 2006). Social entrepreneurship studies, for example, often talk of double bottom lines, social and economic, and the possibility of an optimal composition whereby market-governed activity is used to address persistent and often pressing social issues. In other words, social entrepreneurship studies associate the social as an additive rather than grounding condition. Miller et al (2012: 630), for example, talk of compassion as being an additional quality driving and legitimating the affective and cognitive processes associated with successful entrepreneurial behaviour (integrative thinking, commitment, etc.). We find it artificial to try to understand entrepreneurship when the social is *added*. We seek to understand the immanently social nature of entrepreneurship

In this sense we conceptualize the entrepreneurial condition as those moments or spans of creative, collectively woven expression that, *ipso facto*, broach the singular pursuit of economic returns, and which find those working in ventures reaching out with acute awareness of being-with-others; of belonging. This belonging has two aspects. *First*, entrepreneurs are ever conscious that the expression of ideas requires an audience, uses collective resources, and that any actualization of new value is an organizational process (Hjorth, 2012) requiring an intensification of the social side of business-making. Indeed, the capacity to acknowledge the varying needs of multiple

audiences, multiplying and enriching the stories used to explain and expand upon the venture accordingly (Gartner, 2007; O'Connor, 2002), as well as becoming alive to the potentials offered by others, finds entrepreneurial activity inherently social (Johannisson, 2000; Hjorth and Steyaert, 2006; Clarke and Holt, 2010). *Second*, to make the association between the organization-creation that actualizes new business ideas, new ventures and the social (including the ethics and politics of entrepreneurial creation) involves commercial acts that, to some extent, stand in their own constituting atmosphere of simply being expressed, without external rationale; entrepreneurship is expressive, an adventuring, out of which arises potentiality, newness, difference.

Thus entrepreneurship, as differentiated from enterprise, is characterized by experiences of social and expressive opportunity creation. Entrepreneurship creates its opportunities through enticement of the other, and enticement is achieved by expressive means: storytelling (Gartner, 2007; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Aldrich and Fiol, 1994), provocation (Hjorth, 2011), excitement or puzzlement. This way we get access to the time of opportunity creation, most often black-boxed in entrepreneurship research (Gartner, Carter and Hills, 2003; Hjorth, 2003; Dimov, 2011):



What's important here is the time of creation as one where intensified engagement with the world, efficacy of action, imagination, timing, and connective capacity play a role in mustering the forces of the world favourably (Chia and Holt, 2009). Having explicated the condition by which any entrepreneur might find the world opportune through an experience of belonging (being social and being expressive), we now turn to

an empirical illustration that will exemplify how the social and expressive is immanent to entrepreneurial organization of opportunity, namely: the case of art-becoming-entrepreneurship, or entrepreneurship-becoming-art, that is, Ai Weiwei's *Sunflower Seeds* project.

Ai Weiwei: *Sunflower Seeds*

Ai Weiwei dissident, activist, artist, venture creator, a flesh and blood gathering place for expressive engagement with one's found condition. Ai Weiwei finds himself the child of parents who had been courted and then persecuted under the rise of Mao and his ensuing cultural revolution, his family ending up living in a hole in the ground on the edge of the Gobi Desert, his father, the poet Ai Qing, now working as a toilet cleaner, always assiduous about his tasks. He finds himself an art student and disillusioned with the capacity to create in China, moving to New York and remaining an unknown artist in thrall to the readymades of Duchamp and Warhol. He finds himself back in China on news of a serious illness affecting his father whose poetic words no longer passed over the lips of Chinese leaders. He finds himself more confident, experienced in democracy and bricolage, a self-centred translator of ideas between east and west, bringing western conceptual art to Chinese consciousness through the underground publications *Black* (1994), *White* (1995) and *Grey* (1997) Cover Books. He finds himself increasingly at odds with the Chinese Communist Party's continued hegemony over political and social life sustained, cleverly, by a palliative policy of economic liberalization. As protests at arbitrary detention, restrictions on travel, and party and government corruption grow, so Ai Weiwei finds himself an artist mired in projects in which there is little distinction between creative expression, craft, tradition, free speech, all of which is co-ordinated by an often free-forming organization of researchers, artisans, advisors, gallerists, commentators and assistants working from a self-designed studio and living space in Caochangdi, Beijing (Louisiana Talks, 15-19mins). This is where he finds himself now, asking questions of a country, his country, that constrains what he finds integral to life: "Can a nation that denies fundamental fact, conceals and evades information, possibly renew itself? What kind of foundation must an organizational system lacking an ethical conscience be built on? And what kind of price will we pay for it? [...] Philosophy, science, literature, art, and politics are only meant to help these possibilities [respect,

simple pleasures, rationale, and basic freedom] flourish.” (blog posted July 12th, 2006, in Weiwei, 2011: 74-75)

He has organized multiple expressions of discontent and possibility, some directly confrontational such as the millennial ‘Fuck Off’ exhibition, and others increasingly subtle and reflective, culminating, argues Barnaby Martin (2013: 107) in the installation of over 100m handmade porcelain sunflower seeds spread neatly over the floor of the turbine hall in Tate Modern, London opening on October 12th, 2010. The Tate makes a short film showing how the seeds came to end up in their massive building:

-“Thanks for painting so many seeds,” Ai Weiwei says to a young woman passing on the street of Jingdezhen, the small town 1000 kilometres from Beijing that in the old days made all the porcelain for the emperors.

-“No need to thank me,” she replies, and adds, “After all I did earn some money from it.” (12.20mins). Another person chips in: ‘brings business’ which is good since ‘there is nothing much to do here anymore. Basically a lot of people have gone bankrupt.’ (6.30min)

-“How much effort did you put in?”, Ai continues his questions to the young woman.

-“How much effort?”, she starts, and then continues, after some thinking, “After all I have earned about 2000 to 3000 RMB”

I 600 people or more have been involved in the project in the town. Everyone knows someone that in some form is part of making sunflower seeds. The large, water-powered hammers crushing the stone into fine powder make a rhythmic background sound, somewhat of a heartbeat for Jingdezhen. Ai Weiwei says the ‘language’ of making porcelain is very old, and that he has tried to find out a possibility to employ this old technique of making porcelain to modern contemporary language, to re-invigorate a place through an artistic venture: “I want people that don’t understand art to understand what I am doing” (1.45min).

He walks around the town, looking at some of the 30 stages involved in making porcelain. He talks with the people, photographs them with his mobile phone camera and asks an old lady how long she has been doing this. “More than 30 years,” she replies.

-“Did you also paint Mao Zedong?”, Ai asks.

-“I was working when Mao Zedong was still alive, “ she says, and adds “But I never painted him.”(9.25min)

Ai Weiwei comments how whenever Chairman Mao is portrayed there are sunflowers around him. Mao is the sun, the giver of life, and ordinary people, loyally feeding off his warmth, are the sunflowers, naturally bending and attending to the sun. In Ai's porcelain versions, however, they are not opening up at all. They remain resistant to the sun, they face and follow no one. They are all individually hand painted and remain individuals that form part of a multitude, a 100 tonne multitude of millions individual seeds, each a self-sufficient life, distinct amongst myriad self-similar lives.

-“They are all nice people,” Ai remarks, referring to the inhabitants of Jingdezhen, “you feel like you might have to make some more or make some other kind of project which can meet their needs.”¹(12.48)

The seeds arrive at the Tate the culmination of an artistic venture. Yet the venture does not stop there. Ai has made 8m spare seeds for the gallery to replace those that are inevitably taken away in the pockets and bags of visitors, the artistic expression overflowing the gallery walls and working its way into people's homes there to be subject to conversation, the occasional glance, indifference even, their possibility entirely in tact, the venture keeps rolling, an ad-venture. What is intriguing with the artistic/entrepreneurial life of Ai Weiwei's in which the Sunflower Seeds forms a significant intervention is the manner in which it continually seeks to give form to the social and expressive in a way that provokes societal transformation by speaking out, by brave-speaking or truth-speaking: “Evading anything touching on the fundamental elements and contradictions that make up the present situation, or avoiding responsibility, are ostensibly meant to benefit those in control. However, this is obviously contradictory to reason, because only after the truth of a situation is exposed completely can effective solutions naturally emerge.” (blog posted July 10th, 2008, in Weiwei, 2011: 167).

Art and entrepreneurship, particularly in the *Sunflower Seeds* project, blur; the artist as an individual creator, material things and a host of others embroiled in the project gather publicly; and value becomes irreducible to economic value. Ai Weiwei creates jobs for those helping to execute his art, not just those in his studio, but artisans like

¹ He did, commissioning 10000 porcelain He Yie (river crabs, but also a homophone for harmony as in the Communist Party slogan “the realization of a harmonious society”), to be feasted on by 800 supporters on the eve of the state sanctioned destruction of his Shanghai studio in his absence (under house arrest) in protest at internet censorship.

those in Jingdezhen, transport workers, gallery owners, commentators and visitors. All are brought together in commercial bonds. This economic value and material gain are certainly an important element of his projects, as the short extracts quoted from The Tate's film make clear. In addition, however, there are expressions of truth, the socially engaged need to reveal events and make comment in ways that potentially transform those pulled into the work: "Finding hope in society is an affirmation of life. [...] When a people reject truth, they have already chosen death." (Interview, posted March 24th, 2009, in Weiwei, 2011: 218) Such transformative force is an indispensable component of *Sunflower Seeds*. It is here, we argue, in truth telling, that we find what we call the social and expressive belonging that we have characterized as entrepreneurial, as distinct from enterprise. Moving back from the empirics to theory awhile, we find a concept that describes this experiential act of truth telling – *parrhesia*.

Parrhesia

Parrhesia was hauled from textual obscurity by Michel Foucault in a series of lectures at the University of California in 1983 going by the title 'Discourse and Truth.' *Parrhesia* has its Greek roots in the political field of questioning and bringing into questionability established and well-legitimated institutions. Its function is not factual, it does not demonstrate truth, but, as Foucault points out (2001: 17), is critical; *parrhesia* brings truths to light that disturb the established order in some way. Exponents of *parrhesia*: talk the truth carefully and clearly rather than employing sophistry; they carry commitment, believing what they are saying rather than reporting what others have said and saying it fully rather than half-heartedly; they experience a sense of exposure when telling the truth, that it can be uncomfortable or risky; and finally, they are in unequal relations of power, often speaking in the face of far larger vested interests for whom/which the truth being spoken might be considered a threat, but for whom such truth, if acknowledged, might be transformative. Foucault summarises thus: "... *parrhesia* is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty." (2001: 19). The activity is experienced around three poles of orientation: the rhetorical production of truth; the

political exercise of power; and the ethical formation of self (cf. Weiskopf and Willmott, 2013).

Rhetoric

Parrhesia finds a speaker compelled to talk openly about what she believes, irrespective of the audience, yet in expectation of a possible bond between: what is spoken of (opinions she holds to be true); herself as a being for whom the truth is compelling; and her audience for whom the truth is efficacious were they to absorb the often difficult things being addressed (Foucault, 2011b: 14). Such a dialogue is polemical, the occupying of positions, whereby truth emerges from (self) inquiry, at the end of which the speaker and interlocutors alike find a truth that 'hits home'. As rhetorical, such inquiry relies on the appeal of plain speaking and conveying the sense of a truth that matters to others with passion and open heart. There is no room for doubt - the modern worry cultured by Descartes – making the convictions of *parrhesiastes* feel antique, without need of tortuous, verifiable proof. They are not facts, or falsifiable hypotheses, but truth dealing with right and wrong, and beauty, in all their various and often deeply quotidian expressions.

In an entrepreneurial setting, such rhetoric is experienced in relating to an audience; speaking, urging others, often excitedly and with commitment, in ways that seek to tender the pre-opportunity elements into ripeness. When they become so, they form an opportunity. However, this tendering is a relational achievement (something that Foucault recognizes as separating the *parrhesiastes* from the cynic, the latter being solely concerned with the promotion of self-interest); it emerges from within a collective that is held together by the passionate spillover compelling the speaker to speak.

Entrepreneurially, there has to be a dynamic between one's power to affect and one's power to be affected (Deleuze, 1988), for it is this passion that enrolls the ones that are addressed, implicates them. Entrepreneurship relies on the rhetorical to make space for the new, i.e., to publicly bring an audience to the limit of practice, to make them aware of what Schumpeter called the 'pale of routine', and so see what might lie beyond the boundary that is new, provocative. It is making the move toward boundaries attractive enough that is the social and expressive work of rhetoric.

Politics

To talk the truth commences with a right to take the floor, to publicly address citizens, as a citizen, in public space (Foucault, 2001: 22). The so-called Arabic spring of 2011 (and onwards) yet again (we had seen it e.g. in Paris in 1789, in Prague in 1968, and in Beijing in 1989) reminds us of the importance of the public space, the city square, for the citizen's capacity to identify as belonging to one another and expressing freedom through presence in an open, physical commons. What defines the alien, and remains their maddening curse, is the inability to be heard within the polis, to be excluded from public spaces. This civic role of speaking out, the giving of speeches concerning things and events that matter to the flourishing of peoples' lives, and ascent or disapproval to such, becomes attenuated not only with forcible restrictions on access or the provision of space, but also with what Foucault (2011b: 45-49) remarks is the problematic and corrosive rise of chatter. In chatter open talk becomes synonymous with saying what you want, encouraging a prolixity that debases debate. It also exposes the governance to sophistic cleverness, as people are wont to follow those with gilded tongues whose seductions turn the audience toward surfaces, and away from the often difficult encounter with truths of consequence, thus threatening civic health. Brave speech is forfeit to blackmail, challenge and flattery because there are no institutional mechanisms to distinguish good from bad speakers; the good, inadequate and mad are given equal voice. Assembly errs toward gossip, exploitation, or flattery (where you say only what the people, the *demos*, wants to hear).

We have argued that entrepreneurship is social and expressive, and we learnt from the elaboration of the rhetorical that gathering and implicating an audience in making space for the new is a relational process. The public is important; the fact that one exposes oneself to the polis (the ancient city-state). The *parthesiastes* exposes herself to the public as honesty and directness are central for truth to be spoken. Similarly, the rhetorical element in entrepreneurship would not only seek to convince, but also seek for the right moment at which the convincing story can be spoken. *Kairos* – the right time for something to happen – is a time of the public, a political moment in which the entrepreneur finds space to make speeches, and be heard. The entrepreneurial experience of opportunity becomes personal socially. The *parthesiastes'* entrepreneurship centres on an acknowledgement of this inherently social-relational and indeed public nature of opportunity, and seeks to affirm this collective force rather than appropriate it as an enterprise of managed individuality (cf. Butler, 2005).

Ethics

The game of *parrhesia* demands character; a certain *ethos* from protagonists allows them to be affected by truth, and thus Foucault reaches the third pole around which truth activity orients itself: the ethical. Where *parrhesia* might contain useful civic advice, it remains dependent upon, and grounded in, a primary concern with an individual's *ethos* (character) and so, as a mode of veridiction, its intent is to induce transformations of the self (Foucault, 2011b: 65); the *parrehsia* knows their own genealogy (Foucault, 2001: 18). The truth teller has to be open to the state of her soul, a disclosure through a kind of confession. Foucault discusses the example of a *parrhesiastic* game of Socrates when he is asked to advise men of power how best to educate their sons. Socrates uses the phrase 'take care of oneself' – *epimeleia heautou* – for which Foucault has an enduring fondness. The audience is also led by Socrates' discourse to give an account of himself: "Socrates is inquiring into the way that logos [language, experience, truth] gives form to a person's style of life; for he is interested in discovering whether there is a harmonic relation between the two." (Foucault, 2001: 97). Associating *parrhesia* and care of self finds the *parrhesiastes* dealing with a specific kind of truth: what matters and has consequence for daily conduct. It is not a technical truth of natural science so much as a truth of conduct whereby an *ethos* is nurtured. It is an examined life caring for one's fate – 'Man's character is his fate' - versed in a practical duty towards one's own development. The *parrhesiastes* is here engaged in a game of showing the interlocutor how s/he must change his/her life (cf. Sloterdijk, 2013, who relates this call to Nietzsche). We recognise this game from Christianity that builds this 'theme' into the game the priest plays with his congregation. What emerges here, in early Christianity, is this circle of knowledge that Foucault suggests became an enigma in Western philosophy (in Descartes and in Kant), i.e., that one need to know the truth about oneself in order to know the truth. Foucault investigated this under the theme of a genealogy of the modern self, a hermeneutics of the self realised in techniques of confession and self-examination (Foucault, 2007: 169). What is interesting here is that Foucault suggests the Hellenistic and Roman practices of self-examination are 'quite different' from the modern hermeneutics of the self. The aim of the former, he notes, "...is not, I think, to decipher a hidden truth in the depth of the individual. Their aim is something else. It is to give the individual the force of truth. Their aim is to constitute

the self as the ideal unity of will and truth.” (Ibid., p. 170). Foucault's Nietzschean way of thinking is revealed (once again) in his attentiveness to force and will (to power).

Parrhesia finds this union of will and self occurring through social and expressive power. At root we are beings able to tell the truth, able to transform ourselves by telling the truth publicly, so it is also an interest in asking after the genealogy of the emergence of the critical attitude; the problem of the truth teller, how societies react to the truth teller: Who is qualified as telling the truth? This is Nietzsche's problem, with which social warrant do we issue truths, and why a warrant at all? The entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes*, operating in the public, shaping her speech so as to bring the collective to the limit of habit, to prepare the world for the coming of the new, has to be interested in her own transformation. This is a condition for the passionate: one's power to be affected is related to one's power to affect. The *parrhesiastic* sense of entrepreneurship is thus found in this openness to ad-venture; a preparedness for how we might become different as a necessary condition for the world also to do so with us. How my own transformation - a relational achievement - is necessary for changing the world is part of the ad-venture, part of the opportunistic journey that makes the venture 'creatable'.

Sunflower Seeds.

In light of this term *parrhesia*, how might we then approach Ai Weiwei's project - the *Sunflower Seeds*? The Tate exhibition contained 150 metric tons (100 million) of false seed. Being interviewed *in situ* with his work Ai comments people can't believe that they are fake, “they want to put them in their mouth to try” (Tate film, 0.45min). Somehow, since they are so many, they must be real. The volume *per se* represents a typical impossibility eliciting a basic creative necessity to make them. “The quantity we made for Tate is already beyond imagination. It's going to be some kind of myth for the history of this town.” (Tate film, 13.01 min) He speaks as a manufacturer, proud of having handled the quantitative challenge, and thus shows how the artist-becoming-*parrhesiastes*-becoming-entrepreneur is an undecidability, a wheel that makes Ai roll, staying on the move, a movement protecting his work from being classified as 'this', not 'that'. To make over 100 million fake sunflower seeds it was necessary to employ 1600 denizens of Jingdezhen for years. They were paid slightly above standard rates, converting to around 0.7 Euro an hour. This finds Ai becoming entrepreneurial in the

traditional sense of the word: someone starting a business on the basis of a new idea. We could of course roll with this as a template concept, suggesting this case resonates with others, sharing familiar patterns associated with entrepreneurial start-ups. Ai ventures into this project relying on galleries (like Tate Modern) to provide a 'market' for it and journalists and bloggers to 'market' it. His work as an artist brands him as an entrepreneur, and his work as an entrepreneur anchors him in the society he, as a *parthesiastes*, wants to change; "art is a tool to set up new questions, to create a basic structure which can be open to possibilities" (Tate film, 1.25min)

They took five years to create. Each seed is made from hand-hewn rock pounded into a paste, moulded, fired at around 1300c, then painted, and re-fired at 800c, polished and washed. Ai Weiwei painted only a few, barely touching the process of production, confining himself to the intellectual role of conceptual attractor, like Duchamp a catalyst for execution and subsequent installation in a huge gallery space half way across the world. Ai, like Duchamp, shows art that deals with cultural as well as aesthetic questions; art is as much about "social behaviour" as it is "form" (Louisiana Talks, 19.55mins). Ai is regarding the entire situation in China, the ordinary situation of millions, as a readymade, a found experience that becomes for him, instinctually a work of art. In the best spirit of Duchamp the ordinary becomes provocative, something to which one reacts creatively, rather than complacently. He is allowing himself and others to embroil themselves in art. Most obviously he is allowing artisans to show their craft, revealing a way of life, expressions of moral and aesthetic being. There is a generous, massive beauty to the flow of the seeds as they give way under your feet; these imperishable, hard objects made by the gestures of artisans, become a flow as you walk upon and then within them; they yield and then resist, a crisp sound edging each footprint. Yet each is entirely distinct, hand cast and hand painted, steeped in ancient, rural ways. Politically, China is huge, the seeds are myriad. Productively, China is immense, the seeds are multiple. They convey the sheer weight of the place. The scale. Yet they are also undifferentiated, equal, democratic, millions of individually distinct voices linked virtually, easily, instantaneously, through being in proximity to one another, like so many of us. The public is here in this rhetorical expression, in its raw possibility. There is no message as yet, just a gently undulating grey sea of possibility, a speaking space from which further speech will take place. Grey, the colour of the seeds is uncommitted, neither one nor the other and so potentially either.

Each self-similar seed relies on companions for differentiation, unique because of the company, materially proximate, but also symbolically and temporally kindred. The seeds are *wenwu*, cultural relics, evocative of multiple readings they connote in so many ways. The seeds make history by being historical, they arrest and disturb us, encouraging perhaps revolutionary thoughts by reminding us of ancient methods of production and an era before the revolution. They also point at an established symbolic language. Sunflowers were iconic in Mao Zedong's time, and remain so. Images of the Chairman often redounded with sunflowers, gathered in enveloping swathes around the base of the leader's central image, a sun feeding buoyant plants, a leader feeding his ripening people. Mao's period was one of physical austerity, hunger abounded. Sunflower seeds were sold on streets, shared by people gossiping, creating shared space in public using the only snack food available in near starvation conditions during 1960-70's. The seeds evoke a community as well as loyalty, a sense of belonging heightened by austerity. The sun is still invoked by China's leaders, the centralising motif, though now blackened with smog. Ai Weiwei's seeds testify to this by remaining closed, as a community of individuals they will not open and respond from mere attention.

Hancox (2010) reminds us that *Sunflower Seeds* opens only four days after the incarcerated Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo is awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Ai Weiwei is asked to comment and as always is effusive in support of Liu. A further four days finds the exhibition fenced off on health and safety grounds, the minute ceramic dust generated from walking upon the seeds being deemed a possible health risk from chronic silicosis, an exposure the workers of Jingdezhen seem to have faced continually, for generations. By April 2011 Ai Weiwei is also fenced off, deemed a risk to party, state and country, he is detained for 81 days.

A ton of the seeds were sold at Sotheby's New York in May 2012 for \$782,000.

Analysis: *Parrhesia* and entrepreneurial ad-venture

Rhetoric

In Ai's work there is a clearing of the ground, a bringing toward the limit of habits. His readymades come from within, from a bringing together of artisans, distributors,

materials, researchers, gallerists, viewers, commentators, academics into China itself, and hence the world, as China becomes integrated in world systems of trade and political influence. He acknowledges the risk of not being understood by some: “*I want people that don't understand art to understand what I am doing*”, the rhetoric is concern with taking people into a collective sense of awareness that edges what is comfortable and habitual. Thus with the viewers of his art long used to seeing works framed and roped off as protected objects, he disrupts the expectation by providing the Tate with extra seeds (8m) knowing and even wanting for people to take some away, perhaps against their own inclination not to ‘steal’, breaching their own limits, and in this there is spilling over, a conscious and perhaps difficult bringing of the venture into peoples’ homes in ways hitherto not possible. The Tate Gallery, however, balks at this generosity, tries to stop people removing seeds, a proprietorial spasm, echoed by those visitors who having taken seeds now sell them on ebay; the rhetoric often fails to persuade.

The rhetorical appeal is also symbolic, a plain speaking that redounds with layers of meaning, each indigenously apparent, their resonance comes from the interaction of these layers, the way they talk with one another in the memory and expectation of the Chinese. The *Sunflower Seeds* project holds together the *parrhesiastic* components of clarity/directness, commitment to and belief in truth, exposure/risk, and performance in unequal relations of power: It is clear/direct in the physical sense that we walk on it, directly interacting with its obvious presence, its massiveness, but also because like many of Ai's projects it is brought into being and disseminated through inherently open, visible, social media such as Twitter whose 140 character limit is, in Chinese hanzi, no limit at all. It is also clear symbolically. Ai Weiwei use of the sunflower seed takes a common motif of dependent belonging – the sunflower seed in thrall to the governing sun – and turns it into something unsettling and transformative.

Sunflower Seeds is a story, of traditional craft, current malaise, symbolic resonance - that find an audience compelled by the enthusiasm and curiosity of these commercial wayfarers, ad-venturers, without known destinations. That toward which they travel is irreversible, for as they go they create the conditions into which they travel. The new is an opening out, configured in action and speech that inscribes itself into horizons rather than established patterns. Ai talks of the process as struggle, of not really having clarity until it is made, and even then acknowledging that yet other more compelling

perspectives on what has been created might emerge; effort is made and judged by others in recursive cycles of influence that are always opening out historically (Louisiana Talks, 9.15mins). In this ad-venturing many entrepreneurs are conscious of rhetoric, they rely on it, to persuade others that their project, their ad-venture, is worthwhile, compelling even (Hjorth, 2007). Yet such rhetoric never attains the status of occupant knowledge; entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* like Ai Weiwei deal with grounding yet prosaic opinions (Steyaert, 2004), content to absent themselves from higher realms of law-like generalities (Gartner, 2010). Through attentiveness to the craft and to curiosity Ai Weiwei is qualified to tell the truth, his character is sympathetic with the pathos of those with whom he converses, and more broadly with sensitivity to his place. Tradition matters for transformation: "The whole twentieth century idea is to be new. Philosophically to make anew is to understand the old. To destroy the old means you have to have perfect understanding of it. Otherwise you cannot destroy it." (Louisiana Talks, 10.50mins) He does not come from outside with a universal apparatus of ready-made principles and standards, his readymades do not tell people what to think nor show how to order the world, rather they encourage thought itself, especially on the way in which the prevailing orders of the world compress and skew the capacity to speak out and change things.

Politics

Politically the *parrhesiastes* talks in available public space and is granted audience by others, the citizens or rulers. The entrepreneurial *parrahesiastes* like Ai Weiwei is subtly different for he brings an environment of operation into being as it is being acted and spoken (if an environment was considered as existing separate from their engagement talk would veer toward a technical *logos*, discovering the verities of occupation). There is little to distinguish between the entrepreneur and their environment, they are space-makers (Hjorth, 2005; Beyes and Steyaert, 2012). This is the point Frank Knight was making: risk belongs to the sphere of management, whereas uncertainty, and ambiguity even more so, is incalculable. There is just preference working into the unknown. The madness of decision, when I take the step from A it is only then that I become aware of whether B will perhaps achieve being, since B is a result of moving towards it 'as if' the move bestows upon B a capacity to become. The *parrhesiastes* cannot calculate her risk, speaking out, facing greater powers.

Ai is fearful about the state of things (Louisiana Talks, 27.05mins). He is influenced by his fathers' spirit, people who sacrificed themselves for civic life, he speaks for the people, not with those in power, but equipped with awareness of how civil society functions, and aware of the need to stand up and "speak your mind" (Louisiana Talks: 2.50min). There is a demonstrable asymmetry of power and force. But he is working in that found situation. He does not oppose the dominating power with rival attempts to dominate. The fight is fought blow-by-blow, seed by seed, each a note in the song of truth he is singing, persistently, publicly, trying to connect art to the creation of civil society (Ted Talk: 4.43min). The truth being experienced here is relational, not simply an inner conviction, but something that travels, indeed that is *travelling*, and doing so publicly. There does not have to be visible effect on policy to constitute 'success' (O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008), the transformative influence can remain as potential, inherently open, so long as there is some form of recuperation of the public occurring, a space to create new forms of sociality (Hjorth, 2013). This is the adventure.

Entrepreneurs create what is not yet there, in some way they bring something about, yet only by throwing themselves into what already exists, thus their adventure is one of transformation. Entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* are similarly configured, unaware as they are of whether their truth will land, hit home, become absorbed as truth. The *parrhesiastic* game is played with an ensemble of rules in which the production of truth takes place, but these rules cannot be controlled by the *parrhesiastes*. Many of Ai Weiwei's projects provoke and expose him to official reaction. The open talk has resulted in police beatings, house arrest and incarceration, interspersed with low-level harassment and travel restrictions; "I don't know how you manage to focus on your work in these circumstances, with the police breathing down your neck, all the restrictions, the threats' I say [Barnaby Martin, 2013, 161] 'I see all this as my work'". He is telling uncomfortable truths to authority figures with whom he disagrees, often profoundly, and yet with whose office holders, typically low ranking officials, he often finds sympathy. As with all *parrhesiastic* relationships there is a hierarchy in which he, ostensibly, is dominated, in part because there are no clear rules. Yet the game is being played, the audience is mobilised by Ai as a potent, disturbing, counter-thrust, *Gegen(ent)würfe* to official/formal power structures, endowing his interventions with social-transformative power. Using Twitter, talking to people, dealing with daily events,

“Some times” he suggests “its more or less like a writer, or like a talk show host. Its quite ... broad ... because you don't know what will come out, but at the same time can be very intimate because you are dealing with an individual, you exactly sense the way they talk and the way you talk. Its really attractive.” (Louisiana Talks 25.00mins). Thus “I feel part of their voice. I feel this voice may result in a new China. A new condition. Which most people will be benefited by the condition. And China is going to change. In other words I am take advantage of that. Most people are either scared, or ... are not recognized, or even if they have same idea they cannot be heard. But I can be heard. Very well. Very clearly. Til now. Its quite dangerous. Still I can take advantage to speak for those people who have no voice, for generations.” (Louisiana Talks: 25.30mins) These have to be timely; *kairos*, the decisive moment, is crucial for the *parrhesiastes'* capacity to perform him/her self as truth-speaker with transformative power.

He has contextual knowledge of the old porcelain town, familiar also with the liberatory fervour of the May 4th protestors by whose spirit China was brought away from old dynastic rule. China can do better than merely produce things for the rest of the world; it can experience civic freedom. The failure to acknowledge this among officials is critiqued and this becomes risky, his rhetoric tells uncomfortable truths, exposing history, in public settings. At the same time, this critique also turns against Ai: can you sustain the employment of 1600 workers? Will this have been short flirt with this region? Have you given them false hopes? Recall his reflection: -“*They are all nice people,*” Ai remarks, referring to the inhabitants of Jingdezhen, “*you feel like you might have to make some more or make some other kind of project which can meet their needs.*” Well here he has at least been timely with regard to the town's livelihood; seeking out a living under threat from cheaper foreign goods many of the artisans are welcoming of Ai's endeavour. The seeds were also made in the right time, the traditional rhythms, that are long-standing, and which allow for a flexibility of labour, the making woven into domestic as well as industrial settings. So Ai Weiwei shows the entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* is not just fool who rushes in (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994); *Sunflower Seeds* remains considered in its patient exuberance, its conceiver is familiar with the situation, of the resonance of the adventure, sensitive to *Kairos*, to deal with matters from being “right in the point” (Louisiana Talks: 3:50mins) The risks of intervening at the wrong

time are palpable, and that outside of China he gets reduced to just artist, a gallery trophy and inside China becomes a figure of mockery. The social expressiveness becomes vague, with the effect that the *parthesiastic* quality of any belonging gets lost, more like chattering, and he becomes just another modern artist, albeit from China. He is careful to find his art speaking to reforming China, to a merger of civic, social and aesthetic, Duchamp writ large. "China is fast developing. It has courage. Because it is a very practical society. It does not have much religious or ideology, but at the same time it has little vision. It has its beauty part. It's quite blind. It really reflects the human condition ... there is quite some opportunities there, everyone sees the opportunity, but none sees the danger, the problem, which is much bigger, which is not a Chinese problem, but a world problem, because China is being accepted economically and politically by the world, and the structure is being built into somehow a world common structure ... what can be predicted is there will be a dramatic change, and its going to be very different from now" (Louisiana Talks, 28.30). The seeds attest to this confined force, this compressed spring that will open up.

Ethics

From any distance this distinctiveness of each seed is lost as the mass overwhelms you. You look closer, seeking each seed in its outline, grasp it, and only then are made aware they are fake, too hard somehow. Each seed individual, and false, a guise of something real. Thus is set up a contrast between the potential of individuality and its appearance, a conversation about how individuality is manifest as a collective.

Ai Weiwei finds individuality demanding, "From a very early age I began to sense that an individual had to set an example in society. Your own acts and behaviour tell the world who you are and, *at the same time*, what kind of society you think it should be". (Weiwei, 2010, our emphasis). Ai is revealing an aesthetic sense of self-transformational *parrahesia*, something which Foucault (perhaps) overlooks. The aesthetics of experiencing is part of the entrepreneurial *parrahesiastes'* performance that remains intimate with public expression, the political is trans-actionally woven with the ethical. His work as an artist generates affect, and affect – in Spinoza's sense – modifies you, i.e. changes you as a mode. He 'sings a refrain', and like the bird in the tree, draws a plastic territory (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987), marking the boundaries of truth and summoning followers in which all understanding, including his own, changes. You already start to

transform, as audience to this rhetoric, publicly articulated, you cannot not self-transform, your power to be affected is raised. That life can change is started with your life changing in the artistico-parrhesiastic moments coming from this ad-venture. Thus Ai talks of how, in struggling with authority, "I think it is... err the political system comes out of Chinese culture and Chinese culture is responsible for what have been there. So that is fascinating. So that means everyone is in it. And also myself. Through the struggle I can learn so much about our weakness and our blindness. In many ways we must try to adjust ourself into the situation." (Louisiana Talks, 24.10mins)

The entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* talks directly, openly and without subterfuge. Ai Weiwei's blog, published in the 2011 volume, provides an abundance of examples of his directness and openness, using technology to open up conversation, to expose power to the inevitable voice of others (Ted Talk: 10.10min). As *parrhesiastes* the speaker emphasizes the fact that she is the subject of the annunciation: "I am the one who thinks that." There is here an immediate expression, a spontaneous, un-designed issuing of what is felt to be truthful which is thereby free of conscious deliberation. Being the subject of annunciation finds a brave speaker willing to go along with truth 'speaking her' – there is an efficacious coming together of self, truth and speaking that resists overt deliberation.

This is the power to be affected by truth, consumed by it, being spoken by truth, through such giving up to 'what is' comes awareness of boundaries, the advent of virtuality. "We all of us" suggests Ai "somehow have to be honest enough to face our condition and of course the artist always, always is the one who recognizes a certain reality kind of reality and tries to announce it They hear a kind of voice or they see some possibilities so clearly. But that all comes from the inner core, from the kind of nature they have. If there is anything valuable then it comes out because their nature perfectly reflects everybody's nature or instinct at that time" (quoted in Martin, 2013: 189). The practice of *parrhesia* is tied to a care of the self, an ethics of self-formation that the artist can excite through the attention and striving of which any art work is just a residue and prompt to others, all the while the artist continues to expend effort in bringing themselves into communion with truth again and again, provoking thought in others. Foucault notes: "We are our own flatterers, and it is in order to disconnect this spontaneous relation we have to ourselves, to rid ourselves of our *philautia* [self-love],

that we need a *parrhesiastes*." (2001: 135, emphasis in original) The ethics of self-production then is experienced entrepreneurially as the beginning of pre-sensing, a bringing of the self to the limits of its present practices, that we take for granted, where newness reveals itself as a potential becoming-other.

Conclusion

Through rhetorical, political and ethical organization an entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* exhibits a power to affect, attempting to persuade others similarly, to direct the power to be affected of others. Here there is incipient creativity pressing itself upon the permeable membrane between virtuality and actuality, and it gives, and thence others are affected with passion, organized to take part in the ad-venture. The entrepreneur needs to make others passionate in order to feed off them, working on their energy and willingness to participate, to further inhabit places, in creating the ad-venture. These are the repeated expressive moments (or simply momentum) of *entre-*, from which is still required *-prendre*, the grasping, the 'stepping up to,' which occurs in sustained belief that is publicly attentive and appropriate and free from shame of engaging in the subterfuge of advancing false character. You are exposed to truth as you expose truth, and in this relational condition belief blossoms or withers. It is through this practice of *parrhesia* the entrepreneur can summon a right or opportune moment, forcing time to start again from a new platform, begin again. *Parhessia* is an eruptive and expressive event, within practices it is a practice of interruption, a disruption of habit that encounters the possibility of dissolution.

Ai Weiwei's ad-venture shows how an opportunity arises in the capacity for brave speech, where talking the truth becomes an open organization of truth taking *prendre* from within (*entre*) evolving transactional arrangements. Ai Weiwei's example is blatant, persistent, an obvious rendition of what Foucault means by *parrhesia* and of what we have called the expressive and social aspects of belonging. Yet for us much of what is entrepreneurial in ventures (as distinct from the enterprise discourse) is *parrhesiastic*, albeit quotidian, small even. Entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* issues truths that are difficult, challenging, critical and transformative, without being considered mad, or gratuitous. Their *ethos* - their rhetorical skill - the audience taking note, aware that something of worth might emerge from the venture to which they too might belong in an ad-

venture. The entrepreneurial *parrhesiastes* has a way of telling a truth that others acknowledge as requiring life be lived differently somehow (cf. Sloterdijk, 2013). Something that needs to change; and they and their audience learn to know a way that can be different, an intimacy and relational unfolding, a schooling of one another in this relationship. They have to say something more than 'You are wrong'. They have to show how to do it differently, i.e. they cannot be stuck with nihilism (as in the case of anti-establishment journalist, or the malcontent working in a large organization), there have to be offerings, undertaken to arrive at other and different modes of living, the way needs to be shown. The critical is there because it offers an alternative to be affirmed. Such *parrhesia* is not fuelled on hope. It is a utopia in the sense that there is an alternative program and the agenda is transformation – a becoming whose value is social and immanent to a new way of living offered up by the telling of uncomfortable truths to the established order, including oneself.

Sunflower Seeds finds Ai Weiwei still in the entrepreneurial setting of contestation and mobilization, but their expressive and public nature give rise to the possibility of transforming the socio-economic and cultural settings upon which they, as a work, rely. In this expressive entrepreneurial act of handing over the work an international art gallery becomes a proto boundary organization, a social a mechanism for plural voices to be heard, in multiple ways, without the dominance of a single perspective. It raises to the interlocutors' consciousness the structures and contradictions by which all these are constituted, what following Foucault we would call *parrhesia's* truths. Who are these interlocutors? The audience of the art (largely 'western'), actual and through media, for whom the gallery space organizes an encounter with contested claims, of them as much as others. As such the gallery provides a durable setting in which divergent and possibly convergent interests are being continually organized through efforts at adaption, a coming together (O'Mahony and Bechky, 2008; 453). We show how such a setting does not simply occur, but emerges through a *parrhesiastic* act, the telling of often uncomfortable but compelling truths in which an audience and entrepreneurial figure remain complicit. We are suggesting the many entrepreneurial ventures act as such a setting. They are a handing over of an idea for which the entrepreneur has a concern and passion; "Take heed of this, my work". The work brings established relationships into questionability – those of global trade, of consumption and of political community, and perhaps most pressing of all, those of enterprise.

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