An academic challenge to the entrepreneurial university: The spatial power of the 'Slow Swimming Club'

Abstract

The entrepreneurial university is a vague notion that has evolved by applying the concepts of enterprise and entrepreneurship to a university context. The blurring of enterprise with entrepreneurship has allowed the entrepreneurial university to be increasingly underpinned by a managerialist discourse, typified by functionalization and marketization, culminating in academic disempowerment, dissatisfaction and, subsequent, disengagement. In response to this dissatisfaction, this paper reflects on a playful space, called the Slow Swimming Club (SSC), produced by several academics. The research takes a collective auto-ethnographic approach and employs Foucault's heterotopology, as a conceptual frame, to understand the collective impact of this SSC entrepreneuring space. We relate the disconnection of the SSC to the process of critically connecting academics, back to their universities and consider whether such academic resistance, rooted in play, corporeal sensibility and emancipation, has the potential to enact social change.

Introduction

> *'A cynic might appropriately name the 21st century university the earning university, as opposed to the learning university.' (Duke 2002, 34)*

This paper contributes to a reframing of entrepreneurship practice into a more critical and reflexive mode (Goss et al. 2011). We are particularly interested in how the process of entrepreneurship practice within a university context, could deviate from a functionalist and positivistic direction that is focused upon economic activity involving market opportunity-spotting and new venture creation (Goss 2005). Following critical discourse around entrepreneurship, such as that of Calás et al. (2009, 553), we concur that entrepreneurship needs to move away from being framed as 'an economic activity with possible social change outcomes to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes'. This discourse is also developed as a reaction to the entrepreneurial university, a phenomena that has evolved over the last two decades and has become the dogma for institutions, with a promise to reduce bureacracy and increase efficiency and control to try to come to terms with a challenging operating environment (Middlehurst 2013). This is typified by reduced government funding, increased international competition, student demographic changes and the ensuing multitude of accountability metrics and league tables. While changing environmental circumstances may well require universities to evolve new strategies, we contend these are not being developed from an entrepreneurial perspective, rather they are embedded within a managerial discourse that is inappropriate (Marginson 2013) and can actually raise barriers to entrepreneurship (Armbruster 2008). This managerial discourse has led to the establishment of key performance indicators that prioritise outputs at the expense of idea generation and effectively limit the opportunities of space and time that underpin the creative entrepreneurial process. This follows the findings of Gonzales et al. (2014), Ylijoki (2013) in this journal, along with Walker (2009) who emphasised the increased pressure placed upon academic time and space.

In contrast, this paper frames entrepreneurship as multiple forms of social creativity without scripted ends (Hjorth and Holt 2016), which challenges norms in a transformative way, leading to novel solutions and potential value-creation. We illustrate this through a process by which academic actors are developing their own collective entrepreneurial spacing, or 'entrepreneuring', highlighting the potential for entrepreneurship within universities to be a practice which constructs 'entrepreneuring-as-emancipation' (Rindova et al. 2009). This view of entrepreneurship as a verb rather than noun – as 'entrepreneuring'– emphasises the potential for academic agency (Gonzales et al 2014), enacting their 'wishes for autonomy, expression of personal values, and making a difference in the world' (Rindova et al. 2009, 478). More specifically, Rindova (2009, 477) defines entrepreneuring as 'efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals'.

The focus on emancipation here taps into concerns about the role of university organizing processes in the (re)production of, and resistance to, inequalities of power (Clegg et al. 2006; Fleming and Spicer 2007; Thomas et al. 2010). Emancipation centres on, the act of academics co-producing an external university space to free them from 'the power of another'- overcoming the institutional constraints of the entrepreneurial university, with its allegiance to the functionalist and marketized entrepreneurship perspective. Furthermore, could such freedom, provide the impetus for these academics to seek the disruption of the status quo of the entrepreneurial university and thereby change their position in this social order. As Rindova et al. 2009, 479) point out this 'change creation through removal of constraints' is a defining principle of entrepreneuring. Therefore, following Goss et al. (2011) this paper explores the process through which individual academics strive to remove the constraints of the entrepreneurial university.

In order to achieve this processual focus, this paper follows Hjorth (2005) and uses the generative concept of heterotopic space from Foucault (1984), to focus on the significance of 'other' spaces for taking passions, the body, and the playful into account in entrepreneuring. Heterotopias are pertinent here as they have the property of opening up to positive, emancipatory power, where surprising things may happen, rather than closed down by negative, top-down control (Kornberger and Clegg 2004). Ryan (2011) is a particular inspiration, with her focus on heterotopic space within an educational context. The term heterotopias originally comes from anatomy, where it is used to refer to parts of the body that are out of place, missing, extra, or like a tumour, alien. As Foucault (1997, 265) points out, heterotopias 'have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror or reflect'. He moves on, 'it exerts a sort of counteraction on the position that I occupy' (Foucault 1997, 266).

The paper paradoxically focuses on what could be construed as a novel entrepreneurial, local, tactical reaction from academics to the aforementioned institutionalized form of managerial entrepreneurship, called the entrepreneurial university. The initial part of the paper duly critiques this entrepreneurial form and the extent to which it is associated with increasing managerialism, within the sector (Mautner 2005; Kolsaker 2008; Bacon 2014) and reflects on the impact that such an approach is having over the process of academic entrepreneurship. The next part of the paper critically focuses upon 'The Slow Swimming Club' (SSC), an initiative co-

developed by eleven academics colleagues, representing a local, spatial, micro response to the entrepreneurial university. As a self-forming, generative cross-institutional social group, its members are creating their own play space, external to their universities. This focus on play reminds us of the critical perspective of entrepreneurship as a form of social creativity, as a tactical art of creating space for play and/or invention within an established order, to actualize new practices. Could the SSC offer an aesthetic dynamic and creative play context, which Hjorth et al. (2015) suspect that we are missing in organizational entrepreneurship?

Moreover, the paper then moves on to explore how this play space informs and enacts alternative entrepreneurial, quotidian practices back in the academics' universities i.e. a entrepreneurial continuum of experience back into the entrepreneurial university. In other words, following De Certeau (1997), this paper is occupied with surfacing and unmasking gaps between the managerial, enterprise orientated discourse of the prescribed place, the entrepreneurial university, and how academic actors react with an alternative, everyday entrepreneurial spatial enactment (Ward 2000). As De Certeau (1997) urges us to listen to what is silenced, could the SSC represent academic entrepreneurship beyond the deafening popular tune of enterprise?

The paper centrally aims to critically unmask the wider entrepreneurial academic journey of the SSC members, exploring the extent to which Foucault's (1984) six heterotopic principles are enacted over time and space. Heterotopic principles are pertinent in the context of the dominant managerial, institutional pressures on universities, as they represent an organising frame to point to different, other spaces that contest the space we live in, whilst providing a context for action (Steyaert, 2006). These heterotopic principles are as follows:

1. Heterotopias have systems of opening and closing.
2. Heterotopias are linked to 'slices of time'.
3. The function of a heterotopia may change over time.
4. Heterotopias may be either based on crises or deviance.
5. Heterotopias function in relation to all remaining space.
6. Several spaces may be juxtaposed in a single heterotopia.

Following Beyes and Michels (2011), this paper is guided by the extent to which academics in the SSC can conceive, appropriate and socially produce heterotopic or 'other spaces', based on these six principles. The main section of the paper will thereby use these six different principles as an analytical framework to understand the different narratives emerging from the SSC.

Theoretical Context: From the Entrepreneurial University towards Entrepreneuring Spaces

The entrepreneurial university was first identified by Etzkowitz (1983) and has come to signify a wide range of activities, some specifically to increase funding and income and others, in the light of environmental challenges, to increase flexibility and adaptability. As such it is not a clearly articulated term but a vague concept arrived at by engineering the concepts of enterprise and entrepreneurship to apply to a university context (Williams and Kitaev 2005). The need for the concept, its attributes and objectives to evolve, in response to significant challenges that universities have faced since it was first posited, has contributed to the ambiguity in the

definition. The original focus of an entrepreneurial university was to promote wealth creation, identified as the 'third mission', alongside teaching and research.

It is increasingly perceived as the method by which limitations with existing organisational structures and management styles can be corrected enabling environmental challenges to be addressed (Mautner 2005; Armbruster 2008). In particular, managerialism typifies the implementationof the entrepreneurial university,from a functionalist and marketized perspective, demonstrated by a drive towards greater accountability of academics through performance management, teaching and research quality inspection, and target setting (Kolsaker 2008; Kelly and Burrows 2012). Holmwood (2013) notes, as in 'many other countries, higher education in the UK has been subject to various measures designed to increase transparency and replace collegial decision-making with managerial hierarchies and market-based performance indicators'. As Kolsaker (2008) argues, managerialist practices represent a distinctive discourse based upon a set of values that justify the assumed right of one group to monitor and control the activities of others. Kolsaker (2008) notes that, while some academics appear to accept managerialism as a facilitator of enhanced performance, professionalism and status, others emphasise the negative impact that such control mechanisms impact upon. These range from having a detrimental effect on the primary tasks of university (Teelken, 2012) to limiting the notion of academic freedom and the emancipating process of ideas generation that facilitates entrepreneurship.

This latter perspective has some support from Morris and Kuratko (2002) who suggest that, for entrepreneurship to prosper, control systems need to be informal, decentralized, flexible and loose. Morris et al., (2006) indicate that entrepreneurship may well be more consistent with an environment that encourages the management of uncertainty, promotes risk tolerance, encourages focused experimentation, and empowers employees. The findings of Philpott et al. (2011) offer empirical support to these arguments, highlighting that academics appear more supportive of the concept of an entrepreneurial university, when it was allowed to emerge organically, through a bottom-up approach, in contrast to when it is promoted through a structured top-down push by university management. This preference, it is argued, relates to a reaction to the continual 'busyness' within the work environment around complying with 'top-down' measures, which has led to a deterioration to self-determined, subjective time and undermined the morale, motivation and goodwill of academics (Vostal 2015). In these contexts, academics report feeling disempowered, fostering disengagement from their institution and its mission and negatively impacting upon academic citizenship, collegiality and collaborative decision making (Macfarlane 2005; Sparkes 2007; Bacon 2014). Armbruster (2008) goes further and suggests that universities that 'go entrepreneurial' ultimately destroy the creative commons; that essential sharing of knowledge that underpins original thinking and idea generation.

Responding to this disengagement and loss in collegiality, O'Neil (2014) posits that the success and wellbeing of the modern university is intimately connected to providing opportunities for more dialogue and what she describes as restoring a diminishing 'mental space' (Sparkes 2007; Gill 2009; Vostal 2014). 'Mental space, according to psychoanalyst Young (2005), is the space for reflection, for feeling, for relating to others, for being open to experience and experimentation. Such a space mirrors the alternative entrepreneurial definition around the tactical art of creating space for play and/or invention within an established order. As O'Neil

(2014) argues, it is time to pause, reflect upon and resist the relentless managed, performative entrepreneurship and the 'co-construction of academic life through myriad measures' that are 'recursively defining the practices and subjects of university life' (Kelly and Burrows 2012, 130).

The SSC represents such a potential pause. However, rather than dismiss entrepreneurship due to its institutional failings, could academics who are producing this external space, offer a pathway to develop entrepreneuring spaces back in the university? Could the entrepreneurial university need this entrepreneuring space for its own success? We will now turn to how this research was conducted so that we could explore these questions.

Empirical Context and Methodological Framing

The research approach focuses on an auto-ethnographic account of the SSC initiative, developed over a period of six years by university academics. It was initiated by the first author in September 2009, as a reaction to the many unproductive, tick-box meetings on campus within a university where he has was previously employed. This emerged as a search for times and social spaces which fostered a much more critical, self-reflective and playful dialogue with academic colleagues. Initially the original four members of the SSC all met at a local private leisure club and developed a particular type of swimming - called 'slow swimming'. Slow swimming was an attempt to counter the multiple fast-lane, competitive 'spaghetti-junction', swimming culture of leisure clubs. Slow swimming focused on developing and enjoying the swimming stroke in itself, an awareness of one's breathing and the feel of the water flow around the body, with the goal of a greater sense of embodiment and aesthetic sensibility. It is related to the Shaw Method for swimming, which aims to improve an individual's relationship with the water (Purdy, 2011) and emphasises the quality of experience rather than distance or speed (Derry, 2013). The club has grown steadily to include eleven academics from local universities, drawn from diverse disciplines (such as business, engineering, geography, politics, chemistry, the arts and architecture) and different levels of career progression (from one new lecturer to two professors with over 20 years of experience). Their universities exhibit many of the attributes which are core to the entrepreneurial university: increased marketization, managerial hierarchies and market-based performance indicators, systems and audits.

An auto-ethnographic approach was used, as it develops 'theoretically relevant descriptions of a group to which one belongs, based on a structured analysis of one's own experience and the experiences of others from one's group' (Karra and Phillips 2008, 547). In terms of entrepreneurship research, Watson (2013) has advocated the significance of researching the entrepreneurial societal context, through a process of everyday ethnographic observation, reading, conversation and on-going analysis. As such this paper focuses on representing personal narratives around key moments that are remembered and perceived to have significantly affected the members of the SSC (both within and beyond the Slow Swim), as individuals and collectively, over the past six years. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998, 139) highlight 'ethnography should draw upon narrative; include the point of view, voice and experience of the author and experiment with ways of telling'. The justification for the approach is that by using your own experience as the object of your inquiry, your observations and conclusions will have a high degree of authenticity (Marvasti, 2004).

To achieve representativeness, wider data collection took place around what Cohen et al. (2009) call collaborative auto-ethnography. Such collaborative ethnography develops our understanding of not only our own, but each other's experiences as well. Collective auto-ethnography enabled the members of the Club to understand their own and each-other's experiences, within the research process (Haynes, 2006). It also allows for dialogical inquiry of both the self as other and the self in relation to theory (Cohen, et al. 2009). As Wall (2008, 40) highlight, we continued to 'converse with the literature' throughout the process. We were particularly struck by the relevance of the above heterotopic principles and the emerging impact this dialogical inquiry had upon entrepreneurship literature.

The specific research process for this paper began in August 2014 and lasted over a three month period. Usually, we met immediately following our 'Slow Swim' – lasting approximately one hour, three times per week. In terms of the different research stages, each member of the SSC initially entered into a general discussion around our experience of the Slow Swimming Club which lasted for two weeks. We then wrote and shared short auto-biographical reflective pieces on our experiences, under emergent themes, which we then shared within the third and fourth weeks. At the beginning of the second month, we began to see common thematic areas, which we used to identify and discuss pertinent conceptual frameworks and relationships. One of these was around the relationship between heterotopology and academic entrepreneurship, as the first author was involved in research around this area. It must be stated that other theoretical reflections were introduced by different members and each brought out different perspectives on understanding our collective and differing experiences e.g. the significance of leisure crafting and attention restorative theory. However, the relationship between entrepreneuring and heterotopology seemed to show some traction with the group and this developed into an analytic frame, in which we could share our stories. A crucial part of the process was the way in which we challenged each other through these auto-ethnographic conversations, through probing questions and reflecting on alternative interpretations—engaging in an interactive process of co-authoring our stories (Cohen et al. 2009). This assured reflexivity and to minimize what Bryman and Cassell (2006, 46) argue as our own academic interviewer bias, where we are influenced by our own presuppositions. It was only in the sixth week that we started to collectively discuss which specific vignettes most aptly represented our collective experience. This took a further 2 weeks. Such vignettes are commonly used in exploring aspects of the self in the auto-ethnographical tradition (Boje and Tyler 2008; Ellis 2009; Learmonth and Humphreys 2012). It was only in the last three weeks of the final month that we started to discuss how our experiences and vignettes could be understood more coherently, around each heterotopic principle. This discussion took place quite quickly over a two week period. This prompted more focused debate and reflective discussion of the meaning of the members experiences of the SSC (Ellis, 2004). The final week was spent refining which vignettes were appropriate for each heterotopic principle, in order to reflect the diversity of opinion and experience from the whole group. It must be noted that as many of these stories were culturally and politically sensitive any quotations used in this paper remain anonymous. This was a significant factor in maintaining the mutual trust which has been developed over the six years between this eclectic group of academics.

Viewing the 'Slow Swimming Club' through a Heterotopic Lens

1.Heterotopias have systems of opening and closing.
The original purpose of the SSCwas to derive a degree of respite and disconnect from the encroaching managerialism, within our academic working lives. This need for a disconnect relates to one of Foucault's heterotopic principles, which points at a system of opening and closing that both isolates and disconnect heterotopias and simultaneously makes them accessible in a special way. Of course, the disconnecting aspect of a heterotopia is dependent upon notions of cultural and political distance (Rummler and Brache 1995; Maletz and Nohria 2001), which is a particular challenge if such spacing takes place within the university campus itself. For example, although my own campus provided several designed separate research spaces, such as writing workshops, sandpits, research away-days etc., they all were managed with the use of incentives towards specific outcomes in mind. This bounded form of time and space did not offer the escape many colleagues needed to be openly productive. As one of the academics in the SSC remarked:

> My university couldn't be designed better for squeezing out any remnants of spontaneous, informed interaction from you - they think that research can be achieved by throwing diverse people together and tying them to targets to a project - I use my words wisely here - project rather than research. You get no passion and expertise for a research idea because all they are interested in is to follow the money. It is so frustrating as they waste so much money on this blind hope. What they need to realise is that academics need time and space to breath - only then can people come together on a more willing, reflective and able basis.

Reflecting on the counterproductive nature of such university initiatives, it was clear that we needed to find a time and space (to breath) outside of university, which allowed a freedom to escape the embedded fast, managerial politics and culture and be able to think creatively and to reflect. Could academic actors thereby find such a disconnection away from campus?

As an initiative external to the university campus, could the SSC offer this cultural and political distance? In relation to the perspective of entrepreneurship, could the SSC embody such political and cultural disconnection, as it points towards an excess in the notion of play, that defies the organizational demands and not least any firm managerial intent? This opens new possibilities. Csikszentmihalyi and Bennett (1971, 45–46) assess play to be 'grounded in the concept of possibility', by which they mean that play cannot be reduced to this or that function, but continuously produces new possibilities (exiting opportunities as well as potential dangers). Play produces a flow of events that lacks an analytical viewpoint 'outside' the playful activity itself, and thus, appears able to protect itself from becoming completely appropriated by the organization.

Some reflections on how the SSC developed a heterotopic, disconnecting quality are as follows:

> The Club is much more than a swim – it represents a crucial haven amidst the mad dash back in the university. I often have tried to get this free feeling in my work but I am always pulled back by the latest student complaint, meeting request, funding deadline.

> The SSC offered a neutral free zone where I do not have to look over my shoulder - yes, that's what it is; I do not have to show face.

> I needed a place where I could get away from the managerialism which sucks you up and spits you out. I know I am certainly not the only one who needs this breathing space.

2. Heterotopias are linked to 'slices of time'.

The above quotes remind us of Foucault's (1997) principle that heterotopias are linked to "slices of time". He argues that heterotopias are not only special spaces but special slices of time as well, so-called heterochronies, times where people break radically with their traditional time, such as when you enter a cemetery, where time can stand still, or when you enter a library or museum that tries to enclose in one place all times, all forms, an immobile place that is itself outside of time (272). As one academic remarked:

> Time seems to precious when I swim - I savour every minute of it as it stops me from rushing on to the next work issue I am worrying about.

This focus on time slowing down for the eclectic group of academics here relates to the way the SSC offers a special type of play space, in which the non-instrumental, kinaesthetic form of experience is embraced, where they can engage on a greater corporeal level. This kinaesthetic sensibility focus was evident as members became more reflective of their own swimming stroke and began to appreciate the affective impact of swimming as more of an art form in itself. What was a significant factor, not reflected upon initially, was the realisation that people began to help each other in perfecting, each other's, swimming strokes. The other significant impact was this generosity and hospitality did not attempt to develop one perfect universal stroke. Moreover, people began to appreciate and enjoy the differences in each other's swimming strokes through recognition that each represented personalised art forms which represented their own individual wider differences. This reminds us of an empathetic-aesthetic perspective (Gagliardi 1996) which is related to being connected to others, the experience of being part of something bigger than ourselves (Sandelands 1998). What pervaded this aesthetic empathy was a collective mental quiet or cognitive slowness i.e. which in turn developed an apparent temporal slowness. Several swimmers remarked about the corporeality and immersion of such swimming allowing worries from university to fade, enabling them to focus on the present and on themselves and others. As a senior professor remarked:

> This is the first time, I could engage more deeply with fellow academics without thinking about personal agendas, egos and hang-ups.

Other academics expressed similar sentiments:

> The swim gave me time to not think and just to be. This made me appreciate the special time spent at the SWC - it just made me stop.

> The beauty about my slow swimming is that I do not think when I am doing it. It seems to go by so quickly whereas prior to joining you folks, I was always so aware of the time and it dragged on because all I was interested in is everything other than the swimming...my lecture, my promotion, my latest research funding application.

> I never thought how rewarding it would be to just purely focus on something simple like swimming. This simplicity made me get away from my schedule and just live for now ...at least for this precious hour.

Similarly, as a senior lecturer and a new professor respectively retorted:

> The art of swimming is something that I would never have thought would make such a difference in the way I communicate – it made me appreciate that less talking, thinking and doing could help me know myself and other people on a deeper personal and professional level.

> Slow swimming not only gave me a personal meditative space to find myself and to recharge my batteries, it also made me appreciate the impact of something simple like swimming would have on how I relate to other academics. I would have never have talked to these guys on this level, because I always thought that I was the only one searching for something different.

3. The function of a heterotopia may change over time.
What was a significant milestone in the SSC was the way in which the impact of the swim, as a heterotopic space, extended its reach into critical discussions in the café and back into the respective universities. This reminds us of the heterotopic principle which states that the function of a heterotopia may change over time. It also reiterates the other heterotopic principle that identifies them as having a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable. In contrast to the disconnecting nature of the specific Slow Swim, this part of the heterotopic process began to connect and open up this spacing into a dialogical inquiry in the café and then back into the university.

Some indicative quotes around these emergent changes are as follows:

> Slow swimming gave me a break but more and more it has become a meeting place for ideas and discussion.

> The SSC has become so crucial as it moves so far beyond research seminars and departmental meetings as it really has morphed into a way of thinking and sharing, without being judged.

> I actually look forward to the meeting after the swim more than the swim now as I know that something happens within the swim that levels the egos of people.

> Don't get me wrong our discussions do not stop when we leave the café - in fact we try to capture the free flowing nature of these discussions into our universities. We almost feel like it is our responsibility to share this with other people in the university.

4. Heterotopias may be either based on crises or deviance.
It is pertinent to note that this opening up of heterotopic spacing, starting with café discussions and moving into the university, gradually became representative of a particular form of resistance, a slow, ethico-politics of resistance, in contrast to the original intention of managerial respite. Following Pullen and Rhodes (2013), the collective spacing fostered out of affective and corporeal encounters with other academics began to offer this slow, ethico-politics of resistance. Such resistance is derived from a 'passionate politics that works through generosity for a justice that is yet to arrive' (194). This aligns with another heterotopic principle around heterotopias being based either on crises or deviance. Moreover, the SSC represented a deviant attempt to counter what was perceived as a failure of creative organization by the entrepreneurial university. Academics continually expressed their frustrations with the administration and the

sheer volume of bureaucracy within their institutions. As one lecturer and a professor pointed out:

> If I do have a good idea, I keep it myself as the system would try to pin it down, measure it and spit it out.

> All I hear all the time is KPIs, accreditations, league tables, research excellence and teaching frameworks which seem to drive my university now. It is almost like a picture by numbers they all want us all to paint - we all have to appear that we are painting crap but we all know that it demeans us. There is no room (or at least I thought so) for creativity as by its very nature it is about celebrating the mistakes along the way

As Foucault (1997) points out, this is when an individual's behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm. From an entrepreneurial play perspective, the extended SSC points towards a particular perspective on organizational play, where people can not only break free from but contest the fast pace of the entrepreneurial university, one which is defined by its 'autotelic' nature (Csikszentmihalyi 1975), which is to say that it contains its own *telos* and its own rewards. This suggests that play is a much richer phenomenon than functional analyses of play have suggested: play creates a world of its own by 'doubling' the actual world (Andersen 2009). Following Sørensen and Spoelstra (2012), the study of organizational play here is analysed on its own terms; so the question we ask here is not, 'Under what conditions may play benefit the entrepreneurial university?' but 'What does play do in relation to the entrepreneurial university?' This paper particularly draws on Sørensen and Spoelstra's findings on the way in which play can usurp work, exposing particular inabilities of the university. Playing here actually performs a measured amount of what would traditionally be considered the task of the entrepreneurial university, which is to develop a context for entrepreneurship, without the organization's consent. As Sorensen (2012, 92) points out 'play again comes to appear 'functional' to the organization, but now the logic of what happens is play's own; play usurps work at the limit of work's ability to organize the life of the company.'

The following quote reflects the way in which deviance for the academic concerned represents a recapturing of the entrepreneurial value of freedom to think, in line with their lost professional identity:

> You know, I felt trapped for years in an endless circle of pretence around portraying myself as incredibly efficient all of the time- you know answering emails in the early hours of the morning, going to meetings which to be honest did not add anything to the university.... I could go on. It increasingly made me feel like an administrator rather than a research professor. What the SSC did for me was to keep me sane as it provided a retreat from this daily grind and provided a freedom to think and feel about being truly a researcher again. I feel like my professional identity has been restored with what initially seemed like a deviant act – to have the audacity to get in touch with myself.... shocking I know.

The academic members discussed why they felt the SCC was so significant for the above creative resistance in a special session in April 2010:

> It provided an antidote to my frustration back in my university that I was not being myself, going to endless, pointless meetings about justifying and dressing-up research and teaching of my department rather than actually wholeheartedly engaging in research and teaching – my creative, reflective passion seemed to have been overtaken by the paranoid mad dash to tick some boxes.

> It allowed me to share my dissatisfaction and frustration with other academics rather than with my wife all the time - I was always moaning about the managerial game I was part of to her and finally I could voice my opinions and try to move forwards constructively.

What is really quite an indictment is that the SSC offered more of a creative environment to the academics than their universities - it is a testament to the academics here that we almost have created our own university outside of the university, so to speak.

5. Heterotopias function in relation to all remaining space.

The impact of the SSC beyond a critical, dialogical process began to become evident in early 2011, in the way academics were changing their ways of working back in their universities, impacting in turn on their university practices. This highlighted another heterotopic principle - heterotopias function in relation to all remaining space. In other words, to what extent is the institutional impact beyond the heterotopic spacing of the SSC? There was a realisation from several of the group that the slow swim, experienced as an aesthetic, playful, non-instrumental space was helping them hone their wider aesthetic, social and cognitive sensibility back in their respective workplaces. This was characterised by a greater socio- spatial sensibility on where, when, how and why research, teaching and professional development are effectively conducted. More specifically, the academics highlighted how slow swimming had helped them back in their universities, in creative problem-solving, leadership and in resisting the bureaucratic dash for being seen to be accountable. Moreover, these impacts reflect that the experiential or aesthetic knowing such as that initiating from the SSC is not only a separate way of knowing, but that other forms of knowing such as those derived from rational thought depend on, and grow out of aesthetic experiences (Dewey 1958; Gagliardi 1996). It acknowledges that such aesthetic experiences are constantly spilling over and being integrated into other activities, enhancing and deepening them (Shusterman 2001). A central concept in Dewey's educational philosophy is the continuum of experience: '… the central problem of an education based on experience is to select the kind of present experiences that live fruitfully and creatively in subsequent experiences' (Dewey 1938, 25–28). Therefore, it conforms to John's (2001) argument that worthwhile aesthetic knowledge must be able to travel a bit beyond its acquisition site, allowing us to build upon that knowledge in other contexts.

Some indicative remarks were:

Slow swimming gave me my freedom back. I see myself as a self-starter but I only regained this sense of freedom to be my own boss so to speak, after being in the club for a good six months. I now am initiating and leading projects but doing it more on my own terms.

Freedom, that is what slow swimming made me think about. I wondered why I wasn't as creative as I wanted to be and started to understand that I did not feel free in my day to day work. It was more a case of showing face and self-promotion around, can I be frank, being a project researcher, following the latest wad of cash, than building up a core research agenda that I am passionate about. Although I am still running after bids, I am carving out time in the day to build up my creative self. This could mean something simple like a choice of where I am going to write or even where I am going to walk in my break that day.... I know it sounds simple but this is what I was missing.

Time and time again, I am now stressing as head of my department that the latent management fad is not the essence of their job to live up to. It is more about their ideas and if some fail then so be it - at least they have contributed in a productive way.

What I try to do now, for what it is worth, is protect my staff as much as I can from this madness. This has made them much more productive not only in terms of research but this year is the best yet for income generation.

It has made me appreciate that the culture here is that appearance is everything - the SSC has provided a much needed antidote to this as it provides a forum to be yourself warts and all. I think this is crucial not only for the SSC but back at my university. In fact I always try to create a non-judgemental, open climate in my department which hopefully mirrors the feel of the SSC.

6. Several spaces may be juxtaposed in a single heterotopia.
Finally, there was an added appreciation around how the different emerging initiatives were connected, arising from academics who were members of the SSC. This embodies the final heterotopic principle - several spaces may be juxtaposed in a single heterotopia. This particularly focuses upon a greater appreciation of interdisciplinary collaboration within and across the academics' respective universities. As several academics pointed out:

> I am not thinking so much about how to fit into research projects in my school with an immediate pay-off. Instead I am focusing more around how I can build research projects across the university, which I am passionate about - this may hit my career as it is much harder and take more time but it is much more satisfying and hopefully will pay-off in the longer term.

> The SSC has initiated several cross-departmental, faculty and cross university research bids for research funding with not only other members but other people who I would never have even thought of before.

> The biggest lesson from the SSC was that it made all of us realise how important such a free space is. I have tried to recreate these spaces with a few others from other local universities, interestingly outside of their university again but these are focused specifically on writing. Interestingly, what we have found is that where we hold these meetings is crucial - it has got to be a target free zone, with no managerial influence and usually has a fair bit of what I call switching off time to be able to switch on.

The above reflections around the emerging interdisciplinary collaboration, both internally and regionally, reminds us of the significance to entrepreneurship of building a self-directed autonomy, which fosters independence from regulatory mechanisms of their own institutions (Shattock 2005, 18-19). As Shattock (2005) points out, such entrepreneurial individuals innovate by challenging bureaucracy and creating successful operations in spite of, rather than in line with, the organisational culture and strategic aims of the organisation. What differentiates this paper is that these individuals have realised the importance of creative commons (Armbruster 2008) of sharing knowledge across disciplines, which they had previously discounted as instrumental to their individual success. The SSC appears to have fostered an epistemological courage within academics (Barnett 2005), to intrinsically open themselves up to the longer-term process of embracing different academic tribes. To realise such reflexivity, it is abundantly clear from the SSC that this requires a common ontological sensibility, where academic identity around intellectual freedom and play is embraced.

Conclusions

This paper has chosen to explore the apparent paradox that universities wishing to embed entrepreneurship into their organisation, through the notion of the entrepreneurial university, potentially create systems that significantly limit the space, playfulness and experimentation that ultimately underpins the activity they are trying to promote. This paradox is explored through the SSC. The Club represents an external campus initiative that has emerged as a significantspatial context for academic play. This form of disconnected play appears to be not only an escape from the functionalism and (self-) marketization predominating back at the academics' respective

universities, but a way of actually critically connecting them back into the entrepreneurship discourse. Foucault's heterotopology has proved pertinent to provide a reflexive understanding of the way in which disconnection and connection, reflection and agency have played out within what could be construed as an alternative entrepreneuring context and process.

Moreover, it is proposed that this initiative could have significant implications for the organizational resistance literature, as the corporeal, playful, temporal, spatial qualities of the SSC, appear to be offering new hope for contestation and agency, within the notion of the entrepreneurial university. If such playful spaces, disconnected from managerial functionalism, are found to be pertinent for engaging more critically in entrepreneurship practices in Higher Education, this could have significant implications for stemming the neo-liberal expansion within academia. In this way, it contributes to the critical entrepreneurship literature, such as from Calás et al. (2009) and Rindova (2009), by focusing on the process of emancipation, with a view to possible social change outcomes.

As this paper is written, crucial developments are occurring within Higher Education in the UK; institutional audits for teaching (TEF) and research (REF) are being prepared while pressure to cut government funding continues apace. In response, many universities are ramping up their managerialist agenda of individual target setting. As a consequence, the latest strategic zeitgeist pushes research towards a project management activity, focused upon impactful publications, and teaching focused upon student satisfaction and high scores in the National Students Survey (NSS). However, more than ever academics 'wishes for autonomy, expression of personal values, and making a difference in the world' (Rindova et al. 2009, 478), are not diminished. The SSC has recently doubled its membership, not only with early career researchers but with professorial staff, who are feeling anxious, wary and disillusioned with the threat to what one professor called the 'room for playing with ideas and passions'. For this professor, the SSC represents:

> ....playing around with passionate ideas rather than research by dot to dot, following disinterested bids and papers which happens back in my place. If we could only copy the feeling we have in the club, maybe we could actually be more functional in the long-term because we will be doing things, which are drawn from our competence rather than financial expediency.

This of course adds to Sørensen and Spoelstra's (2012, 92) argument that 'play again comes to appear 'functional' to the organization, but now the logic of what happens is play's own; play usurps work at the limit of work's ability to organize...'. In terms of the politics of entrepreneurship, this paper has opened up the significance of embracing academic agency in producing such playful, free spaces, off campus. Such enacted spacing here has increased academics' creative resistance and political leverage back on campus through greater aesthetic sensibility and cross-disciplinary collaboration, back on campus. In other words, the academic political voice has increased through what appears on the surface as a disconnected leisure pursuit. This raising of a collective academic political voice is significant, considering that most sceptical and antagonistic voices around the notion of the entrepreneurial university tend to come from individual academics, who are not in an institutional position of power. As Mautner (2005) highlight, individual academic polemics are generally as passionate as they are inconsequential, making good reading but poor action plans. Similarly, the critical stance prevalent in the HE

research community (such as Hayes & Wynyard 2002; Slaughter & Leslie 1997) appears to create minimal impact outside that community.

However, this research concurs with Mautner (2005, 113) who states that 'the kind of discourse that vice-chancellors, rectors, and deans believe will galvanise faculty into action may in fact alienate them, making it harder to enlist their support, and even harder to garner their active co-operation for institutional reform.' In fact, it is further proposed here that senior management with HE would be wise to embrace the diverse nature of entrepreneurial action, which emerges and even tactically opposes such reforms.

What appears to be crucial here is the unmanaged, autonomous nature of this activity and opens up possibilities to track similar academic driven responses to the managerialism and enterprise pressures of the entrepreneurial university. Of course, it also begs the question: in other sectors, to what extent are actors creatively resisting through such autonomous, tactical entrepreneuring? Future research will explore the relationship between different professional roles and identities and the spatial process of creative resistance.

As this is an on-going process, further research is planned to explore more fully, the individual and collective agency, in terms of the social changes back in the respective universities, arising from the academics' experience and development of the SSC.

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