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## **Wayfinding and decolonising time: Talanoa, activism, and critical autoethnography**

Katarina Tuinamuana and Joanne Yoo

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### **Wayfinding time**

*We are hostages of clock time, slaves*

*defining our every move by the clock, obediently*

*marching forward with time*

*structuring our lives around timetables*

*diaries, to-do-lists, school bells, appointments, opening hours, closing times.*

*If time were a cult, we would be honorary members*

*invited in by our exemplary daily practice of acquiescence*

*to the tick-tock of the clock.*

*Shut out from the wayfaring journey of the blessed non-believers.*

How do we make sense of time? How might we conceptualise it so that we can loosen its grasp on us, and reposition narrow performances of time in a less dominant location? In this chapter we critique narratives of our everyday social practices of academic time. These stories are carried by a mix of Indigenous Fijian *Talanoa* ways of knowing, of time, and of critical autoethnography.

There is a strong activist dimension to *talanoa*. *Talanoa*, as we understand it (and as will be elaborated upon later in this chapter) is about positioning and connecting through culturally based social interaction. Importantly, we see *talanoa* as a way to question pseudo-objective approaches to knowing, and advocate alternative ways of occupying academia. *Talanoa* endorses the activist nature of research by framing autoethnographic writing as an “interpretive, critical, performative qualitative research method and way of being and doing. . . in the lives of those who daily experience social inequities and injustices” (Holman Jones, 2019, p. 527). We are mindful that as we engage in critical autoethnography that rests within a rich Indigenous Fijian and broader Pacific heritage, we are engaging in research as an “ethical praxis” (Holman Jones, 2016, p. 228). Our *talanoa* is always a value-laden act, and as we engage in relationship building, we make a statement about ourselves and what we regard as significant.

We (the authors) are academics in Australian higher education, both occupying the margins of a system that has in recent decades become more regulated, and tightly controlled in a neoliberal system of governance (Davies and Bansell, 2005). Katarina draws on her heritage as an Indigenous Fijian to share *talanoa* as a counter to colonial time, and Joanne engages with this *talanoa* and enriches it with her experiences of autoethnography as a way to reposition self and institution in their work as university educators.

We use critical autoethnography as it allows us to write about personal experience to critique broader cultural ones (Ellis, Adams & Bochner, 2011). We find resonance between

*talanoa* and autoethnography as we believe that each involves embracing vulnerability to explore our embodied responses to autoethnographic writing, and to our academic work.

In relating stories, and using *talanoa*, we are not absolving structural institutional discourses that impact on our practice or the technologies of control and surveillance that keep us in line as good ‘neoliberal subjects’ (Davies & Bansell, 2005). Rather, our position on time, and on how it manifests itself today in predominantly linear formats, is that it is a *colonial construct* that remains embedded in present day practices through structural/cultural discourses of the enterprise university (Marginson & Considine, 2000; Shahjahan, 2015).

Our aim is to show the lived everyday experiences of academic work, and how we wayfind to produce meanings and discourses about time through these practices. If we can understand how time is constructed in these experiences, perhaps we begin to consider the question: Is there a better way to approach time? If so, what constitutes time well-spent? And to what ends do we want to live with time well-spent, what purposes are we striving for as academic workers? Our paper addresses these questions by first exploring understandings of work intensification in the enterprise university ((Marginson & Considine, 2000), time as a colonial construct, and *talanoa* as an Indigenous ontology. We then offer a set of stories about our experience with *talanoa*, drawing on our wayfaring through time and space, and in our work as writers and academics, pointing to issues of difference, connection, and relationality.

### **Time and work intensification: the ‘heavy hour’**

*We fret about time*

*as if it were a finite, tangible resource.*

*Epistemologies embedded in our language about time*

*We don't have enough time; we need more time; we have run out of time.*

Like other academic workers around us, we often have trouble locating enough time to publish, to write grants, to mark assignments, to speak with worried students, indeed, to keep up with the intensification of work that is common across universities today (Gill & Donaghue, 2016; Boje & Tyler, 2019). What, we wonder, can we do differently? What can we give up? How can we squeeze more hours into the day?

Although understandable, the trouble with asking these questions is that they may pathologise and individualise what is likely to be a more structurally induced experience, one that implicates the cultural dimensions of work intensification in universities. This pathologising response to exhaustion manifests itself in the form of, for example, exhortations to attend time-management workshops, and well-intentioned advice from others to ‘work smarter not harder’. But as argued by Davies and Bansel (2005):

Academics are ... dramatically reducing the quality of their lives in order to make the time to do all that has to be done, and over and above that to find time for

quality, creative, innovative research. Some ... let go of the possibility of that creative work, becoming instead good neoliberal subjects who focus on the products the system demands of them. (p. 54)

A pathologising view of time-poverty also misses the point about work intensification. Intensification is not necessarily about the number of hours that we now work, nor is it primarily about what we actually do in those hours. It is in how we *experience* those hours. That actual experience is not limited to the 'present' moment, to the experiencing of that moment; rather, it is the manifestation of a conglomeration of experiences, past-present-future. Beck (2017) researches work intensification amongst teachers and uses the phrase 'heavy hour' to better characterise this manifestation of 'intensification'. His study suggests three ways in which the 'heavy hour' is seen: "rapid professional decision making in the midst of complexity; the reality of being pulled in multiple directions, too many to turn to in an hour; and the residue that lingers long after the hour is over" (p. 623). The residue of the hour is poignantly expressed by a participant in Beck's (2017) study:

Serena articulated how adding another heavy hour is significant not just because it means more preparation and evaluation, but significant because, by the end of each day, Serena did not have the time or capacity to process another heavy hour. The weight lingers. (p. 628)

This lingering 'weight' is evocative of the long-term effects of work intensification, effects that Gill and Donaghue (2016) call the 'hidden' injuries of academia, increasingly manifesting themselves in academia as "chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion, insomnia and spiralling rates of physical and mental illness" (p. 91).

In this intensified and accelerated time structure, research and teaching schedules are governed by tight timelines (Banks, 2014; Garey, Hertz, & Nelson, 2014) and there is a diminishing of integrity and agency as academics become governed by the pressure to publish (Bullough, 2014). Work demands become debilitating as in the experience of Pelias (2016) who relates how he once nodded off to sleep when reviewing a student's doctoral dissertation because of the unspoken mandate to 'mark and judge,' feeling the "weight of the critical enterprise, the never-ending assessment" (p. 28).

An academic's value thus becomes tightly bound to their measured levels of performance, and their ability to accumulate achievements and successes. Ellis (2011) suggests that people who are attracted to academia are "ambitious, tenacious, and energetic. We seek external approval. We feel we are good at what we do and care about doing it well" (p. 160). Academic work is thus not bounded by workload: there is no limit to the number of articles that we can read, the conference abstracts and journal articles that we write, or the grant applications that we can submit. In another example, Boje and Tyler (2009) reflect on the similarly endless possibilities for work, where a career becomes the endless procurement of badges, the "prizes, accomplishments, responsibilities," which end up weighing him down so heavily that he can barely move (Boje & Tyler, 2009, p. 183). The knowledge that he

cannot take these badges with him after he leaves academia leaves him questioning their worth. He asks himself whether he is spending his valuable time 'well' and begins to wonder about the purpose behind his relentless workaholism. Ball (2012) identifies this anxiety over purpose as a "growing sense of ontological insecurity . . . [from] a loss of sense of meaning in what we do and of what is important in what we do" (p. 20). He leads us to ask: how ought we to assess and evaluate the value of our work when our measurable achievements no longer hold value to us?

### **The heaviness of time: Time as a colonial construct**

Linear clock time revolves around chronological or scheduled time, and is the dominant framework in today's 'modern' society. Here "all time must be consumed, marketed, put to use; it is offensive for the labour force merely to 'pass the time'" (Thompson, 1965, p. 91). Time is divided up and managed as an economic commodity where 'time is money', and the hours we spend are measured in the language of the production line - inputs, outputs, efficiencies, and costs. In contexts of higher education, this linear and quantitative approach to time, although dominant, is largely invisible and ignored, cloaked as the norm in our work practices (Shahjahan, 2015).

In this paper we suggest that this clock time is a colonial remnant that manifests itself today in predominantly linear, rationalistic formats through work intensification. Although initially introduced into the Pacific Islands as part of 18th and 19th century European and British exploration/colonisation and industrialisation, this construct continues to embed itself into our bodies and cultural practices as academic workers. The idea that the colonial era is somehow over is negated in this view of time. As Tuhiwai argues, we are not in some sort of 'postcolonial' space where colonising ideas have been displaced by new age thinking. Rather, she says:

In Africa, the Americas and the Pacific, Western observers were struck by the contrast in the way time was used (or rather, not used or organized) by Indigenous peoples. Representations of 'native life' as being devoid of work habits, and of native people being lazy, indolent, with low attention spans, is part of a colonial discourse that continues to this day. (2012, p. 56)

Our embodied experiences of time and work in universities are informed by a mix of Indigenous Fijian *talanoa* ways of knowing, and critical autoethnography, both of which can be connected to storytelling and embodiment. This way of approaching time, embodied in *talanoa*, reflects the idea of being with each other in time through time shared. Through the relationships established through open conversation, we were able to inhabit time in different ways and to reconstruct our notions of 'time well spent.' Our aim here is to think more ontologically about time using the Indigenous framework of *talanoa*, as a way to disrupt the persistence of clock time, and indeed of socially constructed time and temporalities of the higher education sector. We also draw on the thinking of Tongan historian, Okusitina Mahina, who has theorised an Indigenous notion of time-space that he refers to as *tā-vā* (2008).

## Talanoa

Talanoa means different things to different groups of Pacific people (Farelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2019; Tunufa'i, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006). It can have multiple meanings depending on context, but the focus is on making connections through social interaction. There is a deceptive lack of function or overtly stated purpose to *talanoa*, and it can be interpreted to mean 'talking about nothing in particular'. The term is widely used across the Pacific Islands both colloquially to refer to informal conversations, and more formally to describe more structured conversations and exchanges. In academic circles, there are also multiple uses and interpretations of *talanoa*. There is some debate about whether *talanoa* can be seen as a pan-Pacific idea, or whether it should be localised. Naepi (2019) suggests that *talanoa* is a "research methodology and method that shows how a method can be both Pan-Pacific and regionally specific", arguing that *talanoa* is a cultural practice that is "first and foremost a relational exercise" (p. 236). It is this characteristic of *talanoa*, Naepi suggests, that enables it to become 'pan-Pacific' in nature, transcending regional, geographical and cultural boundaries.

In the Fijian sense, *talanoa* is seen by Nabobo-Baba (2008) as "the process where two or more people talk together or when one person is the storyteller and has an audience who largely are listeners" (p. 148). In research settings, however, Nabobo-Baba goes on to emphasise that *talanoa*, as an approach to research, is socially situated using complex cultural protocols that should be followed. This is less of a recipe for doing research, but more of an insightful articulation of the underlying epistemologies underpinning social practice.

Other Pacific writers differentiate between *talanoa* as method and *talanoa* as methodology (Vaioleti, 2006; Fa'avae, 2016). Alternatively, Tunufa'i (2016) has questioned whether *talanoa* can be engaged as a methodology saying that it does not have the conceptual strength of other Pacific research methodologies, such as *Kaupapa Maori*, *Kakala*, and *Vanua* research. Tunufa'i (2016) concludes that *talanoa* "remains a useful research tool that is similar to, if not a translation of, other methods such as focus group discussions and individual interviews" (p. 227). On the other hand, writing from a Fijian perspective, Farelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) see *talanoa* research as a "culturally and emotionally embedded reciprocal exchange between researcher and participants ... [requiring] a deep, interpersonal relationship and emotional sharing between all parties involved" (p. 321). This view brings us closer to seeing *talanoa* as ontology, a position that we take in the current chapter.

We see *talanoa* as a cultural practice that is about talking and connecting. This connection relates to Indigenous notions of relationality and positioning (Fa'avae, 2016). In our own work as academics, each time we met to talk, to *talanoa*, we also brought our bodies and collective cultural histories into the meeting. In this view *talanoa*, and a critical application of *talanoa*, is a way of being, not only a method of research data generation, analysis or interpretation. The aim of *talanoa* is not necessarily to establish what is correct or true, in narrow terms, but to recognise and establish good relationships. It is non-linear and

reciprocal. In this relationship of *talanoa*, dialogue, compromise, and participant positionality are highly valued.

Of value to an understanding of the power of *talanoa* is the time-space or *tā-vā* theorisation offered by Tongan historian Okusitina Mahina (2008). In this approach to time-space, our realities of experience and relationalities are woven together through *tā-vā*. Mahina (2008) argues that in Pacific Island cultures *ta* and *va* (i.e. time and space) and *fuo* and *uho* (form and content of things) are “arranged in plural, collectivistic, holistic and circular ways, as opposed to the singular, individualistic, analytical and linear manner in which they are organised in the West” (p. 79). Ontologically, this Pacific Indigenous understanding of time-space or *tā-vā* centres on the present, on the here and now, on being. This can be better understood through an appreciation of Mahina’s explanation of ‘being’ in the Pacific sense of existence:

In the Moana [Pacific Islands] generally, and in Tonga specifically, it is thought that, in a circular style, people walk forward into the past, and walk backward into the future, both in the present, where the seemingly fixed past and elusively, yet-to-take-place future are constantly mediated in the conflicting, ever-changing present. It is, paradoxically yet philosophically, like looking forward into the past, and looking backward into the future. Given that the past has stood the test of time, it must, therefore, be positioned in front of people as guidance for them, in the present, and because the future is yet to happen, it must be brought to bear on the past behind people, in the present. By implication, there is, in Moana thinking, really no future, only past and present. (Mahina, 2008, p. 79)

In this understanding, space becomes a place of connection, rather than an empty void, with *talanoa* affecting these connections through past-present-future positionalities and interactions. An analysis of the language of ‘past’ and ‘future’ also adds to this theorisation of *tā-vā*. As explained by Tongan-Fijian anthropologist, Epeli Hau’ofa:

We can see our traditional nonlinear emphasis in the languages of Austronesian-speaking peoples, which locate the past in front and ahead of us and the future behind, following after us. In the Fijian and Tongan languages, the terms for past are *gauna i liu* and *kuonga mu ‘a*, respectively; *gauna* and *kuonga* meaning ‘time’ or ‘age’ or ‘era’; and *liu* and *mu ‘a* meaning ‘front’ or ‘ahead’.... The past then is going ahead of us, leading into the future, which is behind us.... (Hau’ofa, 2000, p. 459-60).

This suggests a particular circularity to time within these Indigenous understandings, and as articulated by Mahina (2008), “in a circular style, people walk forward into the past, and walk backward into the future” (p. 79). Importantly though, in this circularity the ‘walking’ is done in the present.

With these understandings about time, *tā-vā*, and *talanoa* in mind, we now present the *talanoa* that we (the two authors) experienced, and how this experience might have helped us to reconceptualise our work as academics in the enterprise university.

### **How *talanoa* begins. Drawn to ‘difference’**

A conversation is a droplet in the ocean of a lifetime. It forms a pattern and then it re-groups, attaching itself to the rich tapestry of life. Here we begin to re-imagine what space is, what location is, and how with time we re-imagine what ‘is’. Using the *tā-vā* philosophy we experience the present; at the same time we are ensconced in our past, looking behind us to the future. Our interest in *talanoa* is derived from our ethnic and cultural heritage, and a growing awareness of the limitations of modernist forms of ontology with the associated discourses of technical-rationalist progress and continual improvement, often narrowly measured (Tuinamuana, 2007).

In line with our *tā-vā* approach, we first explain here our positionality and relationality in this work. Katarina is of Fijian descent from the province of Tailevu on the island of Viti Levu, with Indigenous maternal links to the eastern coastline, and paternal links further inland to the mountains. She grew up in Fiji and the United Kingdom, and currently resides in Sydney, Australia. Katarina has only recently started making links between Indigenous ways of knowing and critical autoethnography. Joanne is of Korean heritage and considers herself new to this wayfaring journey, which began when she started to explore notions of ‘voice,’ ‘value’ and ‘worth.’ The precariousness of her employment in academia, left her questioning the dominant discourses and norms surrounding academic practices. She seeks to unlearn and to break down dominant academic discourses that do not encompass peripheral ways of perceiving and being. By doing so, she hopes to learn a new poetic language that creates a timeless space.

We (the two authors of this chapter) once had a conversation that made us think about what ‘is’ is, what ‘being’ is, and how voyaging through the ocean of our separate lives we came upon each other in a moment, in a droplet of ocean, in a moment of time and being. This single conversation took us into other difficult conversations about our work, why we were here as academics, what we wanted, what we thought we lacked, and what we wanted to achieve. Emerging from this conversation, and as we continued on our separate ways as academics responding to institutional pressures to perform seemingly in narrow measurable ways (Ball, 2012), we knew that something significant had happened in that one conversation. We had many more conversations, and as we did so we realised that we were on a voyage within that single moment in time. We were wayfarers across time and space using *talanoa* and autoethnography to find our tribe in what, in our darker moments, we saw as the ruins of Australian academia.

Our snapshots of daily practice come from this work of *talanoa*. The extracts below relate our first encounters, the similarities we sensed in our ‘differences,’ which allowed us to engage in *talanoa*. Our stories are a mix of poetic, narrative, and creative non-fiction prose.



They document how we believe *talanoa* has impacted our academic practices and engagement with time.

***First meetings (Katarina)***

One morning as I walked across the university lawn towards the cafeteria, I spotted Jo our new member of staff, sitting at an outdoor table with about five other staff members from our faculty. There was something about the positioning of Jo's body, the way she held her head, and the fixed smile on her face that made me look twice in recognition. I didn't know Jo, but I knew her in another way in that she reminded me of me. I was Jo when I first started working at the university seven years ago. I was the new outsider, the 'other'. Different. Although people were welcoming it took me a while to settle in. New, feeling a little overwhelmed, not quite at home in this new country, this new cultural setting. I resolved to catch up with Jo later that week. We met with hot drinks in hand. We talked about ourselves and our research, finding joy in shared interests and experiences. Talking became the beginning of our work together.

***First meetings (Jo)***

*No agenda*

*No framework*

*Meet for coffee?*

*'Why does she want to see me?'*

*'What have I got to offer?'*

*Unscripted, unexpected, generous*

*Time displaced to expanding time*

*Talanoa*

Jo: Katarina was right, I felt 'different,' I have always felt this way in the academy. At my previous university I was the only non-Caucasian member of staff for a long time. I was young, Asian and female, and this made me different to the norm. I felt that everyone was aware of this difference, and some would ask the 'innocent' question of 'how long have you been involved in this work?' Which seemed to contain the deeper question of 'how can someone like you be in such a position?' I am an anomaly, so they dig for evidence of legitimacy and worth. So when Katarina asked to see me I felt surprised. What could I possibly offer her? But then perhaps our notions of value were different. Maybe she just wanted to talk, and to engage in conversation, without seeking any instrumental gain. Looking back now I can see that this point of 'no value' helped value emerge. Our meeting was not transactional or associated with preconceived notions of 'value.' Through such meetings the kinship of *talanoa* could emerge.

I was surprised to realise that it was my difference, the very quality that I try to hide and disown, that caught Katarina's interest. She was interested in how she could connect with this difference. *Talanoa* was an important coming together process for us because we did not have spaces to speak about our differences in mainstream academic circles. Such conversations did not fit in.

### ***Talanoa-infused writing***

Our encounters through *talanoa* enriched our work and we went on to co-write a paper called *Autoethnography as inquiry, experiencing impact through the body* (Tuinamuana & Jo, 2020). In retrospect, we realised that it embodied the relationality of *talanoa*, and we decided to engage in more writing based in this understanding. It was different to collaborative writing we had done previously. Past experiences had taught us that co-writing meant individually written papers with two names on them, but the way we wrote our paper was different. We didn't use track changes. Rather, there was a process of passing the paper back and forth several times, traversing space-time constructions, until we were happy with it. These were, in a sense, mini voyages built on a trust that had developed through the everyday *talanoa* relationship that we had built. We were both surprised by the spiralling nature of this wayfinding process, and yet were pleased as we saw our writing transform, becoming sharper, more vulnerable and evocative.

### ***Writing with Katarina (Jo)***

Writing with Katarina taught me to be bolder about displaying vulnerability through language, to play with structure. She broke up the writing and segmented sections for stylistic effect. In one session she suggested that we follow the conventions of a play script, so that the readers could also observe our performance unfold in their mind's eye. In a recent paper (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020) we engage in *talanoa*, sharing our experiences of encountering autoethnography, and the bodily impact that it had as we read and talked through five samples of autoethnographic writing. To start this discussion, we met in the staff kitchen/meeting room:

We meet in the staff kitchen. We close the door, seeking to separate ourselves from the daily hubbub. Settling our thoughts is rather more difficult. This is a slow process and begins with a ritual of unpacking books and papers, symbolising the emptying of noise that preoccupies us. At the table, Katarina shuffles through the articles they had chosen to discuss. Where to start, she wonders? We discuss the difficulties of prioritising writing and research amongst our teaching and administrative responsibilities. We are present yet we struggle for a while to immerse ourselves in the moment, separating ourselves from the outside world. Only then can we begin to speak about the stories that had set our imaginations alight. (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020, forthcoming)

Later on, as we wrote about our kitchen meeting Katarina writes:

... the large empty spaces of the kitchen seem to engulf their two bodies. The broader spaces of the buildings, the classrooms, the lecture halls, rise up, massive floodwaters around them. Their conversation falters as they begin to feel increasingly lost in these physical structures. (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020, forthcoming)

Not only was I (Jo) able to see a powerful example of evocative writing emerging from our *talanoa*, but through the richly detailed and embodied lens of this writing, time stood still. And I was there in the room with Katarina, feeling the immensity of the space. I feel the cold. I hear the rain. I sense the struggles taking place within her.

### ***Afternoon of my life (Jo)***

*I am in the afternoon of my academic life.* As my colleague speaks these words, my mind catches them in its net. The words are held there by an invisible and mystical thread; I behold them. ‘The afternoon,’ I thought, how wonderful. I toss her words back and forth in my mind all day, thinking about how the syllables roll off my tongue. I repeat the words, morning, afternoon and night, but return to the word ‘afternoon’. Why? What was the attraction? It was one of the many simple words I often repeated to my child to teach him how to speak. Afternoon, afternoon, afternoon. Soft, smooth and serene. I retreat into what the word signifies, evoking the personal and unconscious through its repeated telling. The word stirs up sensations of rest, winding down, saying farewell and retreating from the outside world. The door has closed but not quite; there is that delightful anticipation of rest, the last lingering moments before the sunlight completely fades. Before being completely overtaken by darkness, there is time to pause and reflect. There is a sense of spaciousness, of expanding and suspended time. (Yoo, 2017, p. 192).

As our *talanoa* further expanded onto the written page, we were able to express our worldviews writing vulnerably about our lives. Katarina found herself writing about the embodied experiences of waiting to catch a flight to be at the bedside of her dying father.

### ***How do we know when someone is close to dying? (Katarina)***

My father had been diagnosed with cancer in Fiji, and six months later it was clear that he would soon die. I was bereft, miles away in Sydney, aching to be close to him, to spend whatever time he had left together. I Googled “How do we know when someone is close to dying?”, and “preparing for death”. Their bodies will start to shut down, preparing to die, said one hospice site. Objective statement of fact.

Later I phoned my sister and shared the symptoms of bodies shutting down, bravely being matter-of-fact in my spoken tone, but painfully disintegrating inside. I asked her what signs she could see in my father. How close was he to the end? Very close, she said. You should come now.

The following day was a Monday, and I had a postgraduate class from 6-8pm. I turned up and taught, while my father lay dying thousands of miles away in the special Red Cross bed that helped him to sit upright. The next day I took a flight to Fiji to be with my dying father, I wanted to be with him as he took his last breath, even though his body was already shutting down, closing shop. I still needed that final act of communion. Sydney to Nadi, and then Nadi to Suva my parents' hometown. As I waited for my brother to pick me up from the airport, my phone rang. It was my sister. My father had passed away.

I was still stuck at the airport. Waiting.

Why was this a significant incident for me? And what does it have to do with time? When my father died, I was on a fixed-term contract with no certainty about the future. My partner had lost his job a year before, and was still unemployed. I was desperate to hold on to work, and to increase my chances of tenure I made decisions that at the time I thought were in the best interests of my family. These decisions usually meant that I spent time on things that, in retrospect, were meaningless. But at the time, I felt I had no choice. So, it became more urgent for me to fulfil my commitments to a class, than it was to speak to my father one more time before he died. My sense of time, and what to do with it had become warped. What do we prioritise? What do we feel we are allowed to prioritise? How do the cultures of the enterprise university and its workplace interactions mangle our sense of time? Is there a way to change this?

### **The 'impact' of *talanoa*: *tā-vā*, and time-space compression**

The first time that another person witnessed our *talanoa* was when we asked a close friend Sam (who worked as an editor) to read our paper. Here is his response:

*I was irritated. he wrote. What was this? A piece of dialogue without quote marks. Then a dawning surprise and sense of shock – I was reading someone's direct opinion, unsourced, words not yet located in theory or methodology, and instead talking of immediate surrounds and colleagues. I recall clearly the mild discomfort as I read on, trying hard to suspend my mental editing tools and instead attend to the substance I normally let wash over me until later. Here, the substance was everything – the beginning and end.*

*I read on, finally viscerally understanding autoethnography. I was now drawn into the work, no longer observing, but experiencing – feeling the pain of Katarina, and the hesitance and frustration of Joanne in the identical way the best of any writing affects readers. My deep surprise that this approach was affecting me so deeply, drawing me in, coincided with my growing sensitivity to the beautifully expressed emotions of the authors in their evocative expositions of the original autoethnographies they themselves had read — it was too much. I was startled to find my reading challenged by watering eyes. The unaccustomed rawness and deep empathy their paper evoked was compounded by the rapid realisation I was reading something new—yet now inevitably present—in academic writing: a paper that explained, grounded, explored, while bringing me along on the author's internal journey. I could understand and feel. (Sam)*

Sam's response brought an external recognition to our *talanoa*. He articulated the impact *talanoa* could have on a reader by describing the visceral effect that our writing had on his body. He embodied *the pain of Katarina*. He sensed the *hesitation and frustration of Joanne*. He was able to put words to the deep levels of collaboration and meaning-making that was involved in *talanoa* infused co-writing as he was also made to *understand and feel*. His response gave us a truer understanding of the meaning of 'research impact.' As he follows along on the *author's internal journey*, his awareness of time expands as he enters another person's timescape, and his own experience of 'self-time' momentarily holds still.

Interestingly, Sam's response also embodied the *tā-vā* time-space theorisation (Mahina, 2008). As Sam read, he was drawn into the present, attending to the 'substance' of the writing in the here and now, rather than using his editing tools to mark and assess. *Here*, he writes, *the substance was everything – the beginning and end*.

### **Talanoa, embodiment, and time**

We have used *talanoa* to engage micro-stories of our everyday embodied social practices of academic time. *Talanoa* enabled a connectivity through embodied awareness, providing a space in which these stories could be told. In this moment of connection, time appeared to stand still. Embodied awareness resists disembodied, scientific, masculine and Eurocentric ways of knowing epitomised by older white male bodies (Wilcox, 2009). Such forms of knowing have been historically devalued in an academia that prioritises the intellect over the body and regards the body as being both unreliable and unruly (Freedman & Holmes, 2012) or '... [too] personal, immediate and messy' to be considered a site of 'acceptable knowledge' (Tangenberg & Kemp, 2002, p.11). This separation between the mind and body arguably reflects a colonial rationalist view that native races were primitive, instinct-driven, and inferior to their colonisers, who seemingly had superior mental capacities and a firmer control over their senses (Sharp, 2009). By disowning the body, however, we come to write in disembodied ways. As the body is disowned and the act of writing becomes disembodied, the experience of time also becomes controlled and segmented. Rather than experiencing a timeless moment in which the writer and reader enter an encounter and time holds still, they remain separate from it. The connectivity required for a timeless moment eludes.

Time can be experienced in multiple and diverse ways, and these actions of time, of practice make up the timescapes and the landscapes of life itself. In this chapter, we have sought to share other ways of being in time through these micro-stories. Embracing collaboration and relationality, and consciously articulating these practices in a meta-narrative, has helped us to make connections with these alternative ways: ways to tell stories, other ways to voyage, and other ways to 'exist' in time. At the heart of *talanoa* is this relationality. Through connecting with others on this same voyage, we can better understand what it means to exist outside of time or in alternative timescapes. We associate timeless time, or embodied time, as spaces where we can experience intense engagement, pleasure and meaning in our work. This experience of space as pleasure connects with how Ka'ili (2005) characterises the *va* (space) as the "space in between" within Moana (Pacific Island) cultures contrasting it with the "popular Western notion of space as an expanse or an open area" (p. 89).

At the heart of our *talanoa* is beauty and joy. There is a shared appreciation for the aesthetic that binds two or more people to engage in deep relationality with others. Such beauty or aesthetics may be forgotten and dismissed by linear and chronological approaches to time. Linear time seeks to dissect, analyse and measure; it is inherently pragmatic and instrumental in its approach. Here, timeless time eludes.

Finally, we acknowledge the participatory and social justice implications of embodied writing and forms of knowing, as many of our students enter into higher education with embodied ways of sense-making that may not be compatible with the cognitive-based and sometimes technical-rationalistic approaches to knowing prominent in academic cultures of practice. As academics from peripheral backgrounds, we have found embodied knowing helps us to find little pockets of pleasure and connection in our work. We do continue to do other types of research, more mainstream work, but we find that it is in our *talanoa* that connections are strongest with alternative forms of writing and expression. *Talanoa* embodies the power to connect and enact a movement of affect and action, a wayfinding, and an “immanence of movement moving” that will help us to reclaim, own and transform space together (Harris & Holman Jones, 2019, p. 564).

### **Epilogue - An interview with Epeli Hau'ofa (Ellis & Hau'ofa, 2001)**

*We've often put our traditions in cages,  
and so we try to do what we think our elders, the people in the past, did.  
And we trap our traditions there.  
We freeze them.  
Whereas people in the past really lived  
very much like people in the present.  
There were always cultures mixing. Things were fluid, they were not frozen.  
But we froze them. And now we work to release, to free our traditions, and invite them to  
come to our world and teach us, tell us their Oceania.  
We welcome them here.*

*In “A New Oceania” I try to open those cages,  
free culture, let it move,  
so we can come in touch with it in our world.  
Let our ancestors right into our world,  
come and dance with them in our world.*

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