Reimagining the Academy

ShiFting Towards Kindness, Connection, and an Ethics of Care

Edited by
Alison L Black · Rachael Dwyer

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Preface

Acknowledgement of Country

We, as editors, acknowledge and honour the Gubbi Gubbi people, on whose land we live and work every day. We pay our respects to elders—past, present and emerging—and acknowledge that our livelihood is earned on land that was never ceded. We acknowledge the traditional custodians who continue to care for the land, skies and waterways. Their stories, knowledge and learning have been shared here for thousands of years. It always was, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We acknowledge that the work represented in this book was written on lands with a colonial legacy and recognise that many of us have benefitted from the privilege bestowed by the colonial apparatus of the academy. We acknowledge that this privilege has been afforded at the expense of Black, Brown and First Nations people. We seek to listen, hold space and stand in solidarity.

We acknowledge the scholarly contributions to this book by Black, Brown and First Nations women. This volume is richer for your knowledge and wisdom.

Academic life is changing—with neoliberal agendas and ways of working and counting driving much of what we do, demanding so much of us. The academy compels us to compete, to work on our own, to over-work, to count narrowly. This book pushes back.

With this book we are imagining and holding space for a different way of being in academia. We are *shiFting* the conversation towards a future that is hopeful, kind and inclusive. Using an expansive lens, we are valuing and exploring women's ways of knowing and being, and bringing women's voices to discussions about academic experiences, workplaces and cultures. Please note, we are using an inclusive definition of 'women', 'woman' and 'female' to recognise trans-women, genderqueer women and non-binary people. We also want to avoid essentialising, homogenising or erasing differences in relation to women's experiences knowing that, even when cisgendered, women's experiences are radically different across social class, race, geography and disability.

The words between these covers make space for the stories and experiences of 44 women from eight countries and a wide range of disciplines— women academics engaging with creative and personalised research processes and using storied, aesthetic and autoethnographic assemblages to draw attention to what is possible when we privilege conversation, ethics of care (including self-care), contribution, connection, collaboration, creativity and community. These are women academics who are engaging with each other through collaborative research, mentoring, networking and thought leadership—women academics committed to enacting and envisioning revolutionary change and care in their workplaces and world.

The seeds of this book began as co-editors Ali and Rachael created and enacted *Making shiFt Happen*—a playfully named, pre-COVID fully virtual conference that sought to create a welcoming and caring space for *F*eminist lenses, methodologies and ways of knowing, and a supportive space for women in academia. The conference focused on building cultures of listening to and learning from women's lived experience through conversation and collaboration, and reimagining academic experiences and futures.

Making shiFt Happen emerged from our lived experiences, from our conversations and observations of how women are typically positioned within contemporary academia. It was, as this book continues to be, a place of gathering together, a place and space intentionally created and underpinned by an ethic of caring and care. Ideas of slow scholarship permeated, both then and now, our conceptions of what *shiFting* entails: taking time to think and contemplate, building communities of kindness

and care, honouring the lived experiences of women, and reimagining broader conceptions of and for an academic life.

We believe there is great value in giving time to creating caring and supportive gathering spaces, global spaces, spaces for women to talk about what matters, about what inspires them and about what might be possible. Our personal and professional lives are changed as we gather together through words and conversations across pages and time zones, and as we create and generate new ideas through being with each other in ways that are not normally possible in academe. We believe that through these kinds of thoughtful gatherings—through our caring interactions, our meaningful and enterprising non-traditional and traditional research contributions, our creative works and collaborative writing projects—we can *shiFt* the academy towards kindness, connection and possibility.

In our early thinking, we played with 'definitions', creatively identifying meaningful phrases—phrases that captured our longings to 'do academia differently', phrases that felt spacious and offered us life-giving options. In too many institutions, women continue to be an underused and undervalued knowledge resource. So many precariously juggle family/carer/career responsibilities at the expense of their own wellbeing and advancement. This knowledge infused our thoughts and feelings about what transformative *shiFt in* the academy might involve.

ShiFt

1. a new beginning
2. to create, to transform, to transport, to delight
3. to take care of oneself and others, to flourish and to engage in slow scholarship
4. promoting ideas, sharing stories, finding connection, collaboration and friendship
5. creating meaning together, supporting and celebrating each other, lifting each other up
6. like [the pleasure of wearing] a loose-fitting garment—finding liberating and enabling ways to wear an academic life
7. activating personal and professional alchemy, kindness, movement and change in the academy

Inspired by connection and activism, the authors in this book have engaged in reflection and research, many with a trusted circle of writers, to explore some of these resonating ideas and 'definitions', locate possibilities in their personal and professional contexts, articulate hopes and dreams, and activate desired ways of being and becoming in academia.

The original research we present in this book discusses, and is informed by, a collective desire for *shiFt* and by relevant scholarly and theoretical literature which has advanced our philosophical pondering, positioning and practices. Chapter authors attend to 'conceptual and philosophical sparks', to ideas connected to contemporary methodologies and scholarship, such as '*F*eminist, contemplative and autoethnographic research approaches', 'slow scholarship and acts of resistance', 'ethics of care' and 'the infinite game' (see Chap. 1 for more).

These sparks support authors' conceptualisation, communication and application of core values and commitments—such as kindness, care and self-care in the academy—imbuing our collective work in the academy with revolutionary potential.

Alchemic potential is also released through our research and writing—research that has storied, creative, responsive, personal, poetic, contemplative and aesthetic elements, and writing that responds to the symbolic nature of '*shiFt*'. These autoethnographic and arts-based approaches provide evocative conceptual content which recognises and values the experiences, differences, multiplicity and subjectivities of women academics.

And so, throughout this book we use our stories to call out intensified work cultures, harmful workloads and the competitive working conditions and games that jeopardise our personal health, wellbeing, family lives, collegiality, connection and pleasure in the academy. Our contemporary and relational ways of understanding academia are used to create research which disrupts the patriarchal structures defining many women's lives and work in the academy. All too familiar with how neoliberalism and neoliberal agendas position knowledge production and exclude women, the research we present *shiFts* the focus to champion women's perspectives and to explore what care and kindness can mean and how they can be used to resist and reject neoliberal academia and more than this—to offer renewal, regeneration and radical hope.

Core Themes

Core themes facilitate the book's primary narrative of activating positive change in the academy:

- Theme I: Holding space for story, struggle and possibility
- Theme II: Building caring communities and enacting an ethics of care
- Theme III: *ShiFting*, renewing and reimagining the academy.

In the first chapter, 'Reimagining the Academy: Conceptual, Theoretical, Philosophical, and Methodological Sparks', we make clear the book's intentions: the building of a kinder values-driven academy—a kinder and inclusive academy that is responsive to women's knowledges, ways of working, and experiences. We use this introductory chapter to explore the conceptual frame and foundations for our valuing of women's lived experiences and lived visions, our drawing on the work of feminist scholars, our emphasis on ethics of care and the core ideas and concepts we have found helpful in supporting both the reimagining of the academy and our imagining of revolutionary futures. Identifying the foundational theoretical, philosophical and methodological underpinnings of our research collection, and using aesthetic and responding highlighter poems, we foreground in this chapter the 'conceptual sparks' our chapter authors are exploring and describe how these situate and support feminist efforts to inhabit the academy differently—to move the academy closer to the one we want, rather than the one we have.

Theme I: Holding Space for Story, Struggle and Possibility

This scene-setting theme offers an invitation to readers to remember and connect to 'the beginning' of knowledge and story. We seek here to honour the lived experience and wisdom so often silenced in academia, to respect and privilege the knowledge, contribution and struggle of First Nations women academics and women from marginalised groups— women who are given a seat at the leadership table. We hold and create

space for their experiences, stories and voices, recognising that care-full listening is needed if we are to reimagine the academy in ethical and meaningful ways.

Tracey Bunda, Kathryn Gilbey and 'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela are generous scholars who, in responding to this first theme, use their chapter to invite contemplation and connection. In 'Black Warrior Women Scholars Speak' they consider that contemplative beginnings—with First Nations peoples, knowledge systems, and through relation-ships—promise hopeful possibilities. If these possibilities are to be realised, however, there are complexities to be untangled, tight hard knots to be undone, a rawness to be exposed. This chapter—an open letter to white women in the academy—commences a dialogue that speaks into some of these complexities by drawing on the lived experiences of First Nations and black academic women. Tracey and Kathryn as Aboriginal scholars in Australia and 'Mabokang, a South African scholar, speak to the realities of being black women in the academy. This is a dialogue for and with white women—those who would collectively locate themselves through platforms of ally-ship. Tracey, Kathryn and 'Mabokang consider that solutions may not be easily found, but that efforts to find solutions should remain and that we must respond.

'Mabokang continues this conversation in 'My Journey of a Thousand Miles', writing reflectively about her journey and interrogating her thoughts and feelings about her academic life, decades of discrimination and her hopes for the future. Exploring values, upbringing, learning and mentorship, 'Mabokang highlights how essential it is to find oneself, to find one's voice and to defy the boundaries that others construct for women, and black women. She reminds us that moving beyond 'long-established comfort zones' does not happen by default, but by design, and often as part of a lengthy, carefully crafted journey.

Ruth Behar's autoethnographic essay 'How Does a Woman Find Her Voice and Not Lose Her Soul in Academia?' explores how she has worked to answer this question. Carving out a space of freedom within academia, Ruth's aim has been both to feel fulfilled and to produce writing that is evocative and inspiring. Sharing her lived experiences as an immigrant, anthropologist, poet, creative writer, mother and professor, Ruth describes how she drew upon her personal history to carry out meaningful

scholarly writing that provided both self-knowledge and knowledge of the communities she studied ethnographically. Ruth explores how as an immigrant and first-generation scholar she had to struggle against patriarchal limitations to obtain a college education and how the intersectionality of her life and work led her to find ways to weave the two together in her writing. Noting that we are living and working in a time of extreme uncertainty, Ruth implores us to 'find our voices and hold on to our souls', to 'do the work we care about' because 'every moment counts'!

These chapters highlight why it is important to shed light on women's lived experiences, to talk about what it has felt like, and feels like, to be an academic woman. They ask us to reflect on the complexity and uncertainty of women's academic work/lives. We ask readers to take these messages of vulnerable and powerful selves and sit awhile, bear witness and hold space and souls.

Theme II: Building Caring Communities and Enacting an Ethics of Care

With this theme we consider what it means to build caring academic communities, and we look to the ways those among us are building a kinder culture of possibilities that allow us not only to do our best work, but to be our best selves. We use this theme to explore what it might mean to live/work well and to contemplate where women academics need support and might give support. In this section, authors share stories from their lived lives and trouble the intensification of academic work by corporate techniques and finite games. Authors also remember the importance of relational and heart-spirit-mind-body connections, ethics and values—they remember 'the infinite game'. Notions of care (including self-care), slow scholarship, flourishing and community permeate the chapters in this theme, and the next, with authors sharing methodologies, possibilities and imaginings for enriching academic work.

In 'Mentoring Beyond the Finite Games: Creating Time and Space for Connection, Collaboration and Friendship', Vicki Schriever, Sandie Elsom and Ali Black share autoethnographic accounts as they describe how they are rewriting the rules of the finite career games that permeate

the academy. At different points in their academic careers, Vicki, Sandi and Ali are reimagining academia through their relationships with one another and speaking back to the mentoring discourses and career games that objectify outputs and outcomes and magnify hierarchical power differences. Through the cultivation of their co-mentoring relationship as 'a time of friendship' Vicki, Sandie and Ali are disrupting the hierarchy of 'mentor' and 'mentee' and creating a shared space for authentic connection, vulnerable conversation and collaboration. Their chapter shows how academic companionship offers sustenance, inspiration, care and strength.

Katarina Tuinamuana and Joanne Yoo's chapter, 'A Collective Feminist Ethics of Care with *Talanoa*: Embodied Time in the *ShiFting* Spaces of Women's Academic Work', considers the institutional structures of Australian universities—structures increasingly characterised by unsustainable practices of accelerated time and work intensification. Katarina and Joanne use their chapter to locate and analyse what a collective 'ethics of care' might look like as a response to these practices. They do this by narrating micro-stories of the embodied social practices of women-academic workers, drawing on experiences of time spent at an off-site group retreat. The stories within the chapter are carried by Indigenous Fijian *talanoa* ways of knowing and critical autoethnography. The use of *talanoa* brings a relationality to 'self-care', *shiFting* it away from the individual experience towards a more collective movement. Doing this recaptures the pleasure and purpose of 'timeless time', positively influencing everyday cultures and practices in higher education.

'Emotional Labour Pains: Rebirth of the Good Girl' is written from the perspective of three women who share a past, present and future within and without academia. Brought together through the experiences of motherhood, study, career and mentorship, Marguerite Westacott, Claire Green and Sandie Elsom are working as early-career academics in the enabling sector of higher education. Their roles demand a high level of emotional labour. Compassion and empathy guide their practice yet are rarely extended into their own self-care. Through contemplative writing processes, Marguerite, Sandie and Claire meet the 'good girl' they each embody and realise her influence on their attitudes and behaviours. Through their collaborative writing they recontextualise what it means to

be good and reject the assumption that caring work is feminine. They call for the academy to value a pedagogy of care.

In 'More than Tolerance: A Call to *ShiFt* the Ableist Academy Towards Equity' Melissa Cain and Melissa Fanshawe consider the juggle of balancing the mothering of a child with a disability and an academic career. Their work requires long days teaching, marking and preparing content, and nights answering emails, researching and connecting with online students. Amongst this intense schedule there must be time for attention to a partner, children and friends—and ideally recreation and self-care. Melissa and Melissa examine their personal and professional identities and share their stories of straddling worlds of academia and disability, the unpredictable nature of disability and the unforgiving expectations of the university. These intersecting autoethnographies highlight that the academy requires not just a *shiFt* but a 'shove' into the realities of ableism.

Academics face many challenges throughout their careers and ongoing reflection is crucial. In 'Arts-Based Reflection for Care of Self and Others in the Academy: A Collaged Rhizomatic Journey', Marthy Watson and Georgina Barton share their use of arts-based practices to create spaces for reflection and exploration of the competitive and demanding cultures they experience as female academics in higher education. Engaging in 'embodied living inquiry', Marthy and Georgina make a collaged artwork and write poetry and show how reflective artmaking supports reflection on academic challenges and successes, enhancing mindfulness, contemplation and feelings of stability in academy.

The notion of slow scholarship is gathering momentum as educators look to counter the influences of increasing surveillance and control, not only in tertiary institutions, but also across the education sector. These influences impact what may be accomplished by academics in their teaching roles. In 'Slow Pedagogies and Care-Full, Deep Learning in Preservice Teacher Education', Joanne Ailwood and Margot Ford explore how slow, care-full and deep pedagogies can create caring pedagogical communities for academics and preservice teachers. Rather than focusing on ways of resisting the diminishing of their work, Joanne and Margot use their chapter to re-focus on slowing down, being care-full, practising slow pedagogy and creating deep learning opportunities. They intersect ideas of slow scholarship with ideas of feminist ethics of care, valuing a relational

ontology and deep and lasting *shiFts* in professional identities not only for academic staff, but for preservice teachers' experiences and students' experiences of learning.

In 'Women Navigating the "Academic Olympics": Achieving Activism Through Collaborative Autoethnography', Susanne Garvis, Heidi Harju-Luukkainen, Anne Keary and Tina Yngvesson draw upon game-related metaphors and share how they have sought to create supportive spaces for women in the academy. Engaging in activism through collaborative auto-ethnography, they reflect on their personal stories and struggles through four vignettes of being academic women located in different countries. Susie, Heidi, Anne and Tina propose that through respecting and valuing the diversity that women bring to their work in the academy, universities can be nudged towards infinite possibilities: valuing connection and collaboration and creating networks that foster the creation of supportive cultures.

Madeleine Dobson and Samantha Owen, in 'Envisioning Caring Communities in Initial Teacher Education', use autoethnographic reflection, their own and their colleagues', to explore how academics in initial teacher education envision care in the neoliberal university. Attending to attitudes, behaviours and strategies for teaching and relationship-building in university contexts, Madeleine, Samantha and fellow academics consider questions about how academics create caring communities, experience recognition for their caring work and resist the individualising impulses of a neoliberal society.

Yuwei Gou, Corinna Di Niro, Elena Spasovska, Rebekah Clarkson, Chloe Cannell, Nadine Levy, Alice Nilsson and Amelia Walker use their chapter, 'Writing, Playing, Transforming: A Collaborative Inquiry into Neoliberalism's Effects on Academia, and the Scope for Changing the Game', to engage in a collaborative creative writing–based inquiry. Together they explore problems of injustice in neoliberal academia, especially injustices based on gender and intersecting axes of marginalisation/privilege. Asserting that change is both necessary and possible, their game-themed excerpts of creative writing create spaces for reflecting on ways to resist and remake unliveable scenarios of the neoliberal academy and highlight the value of connecting and imagining alternatives with others.

Theme III: *ShiFting*, Renewing and Reimagining the Academy

The final theme draws upon all that has gone before—our own stories and struggles as women in academia, our heart for kindness, care, inclusion and hope, and our efforts and dreams to realise our potential as connected people living and working together in and beyond the academy. This final theme calls readers to join with us as we organise ourselves and our research methodologies towards reimagining and recreating a kinder more connected academy, a kinder more connected world.

Exploring this final theme, readers are invited to make room for imagining, planning and enacting small creative acts of kindness, care, hope and disruption of neoliberal agendas, and to discuss and enact these in the company of others. Let us each commit to finding and practising ways of keeping the infinite game in play.

Helen Grimmett and Rachel Forgasz's chapter, 'The In/finite Game of Life: Playing in the Academy in the Face of Life and Death', serves to wake us from our slumber to remember the 'the infinite game'—in the end—is the only one that matters. Helen and Rachel utilise drama improv games as both a structural device and a methodological approach for narrative reflection on personal catalysts that have caused *shiFts* in the way they are choosing to play the games of life/work. As in most improv games, their aim is to take joy in the process of playing and creating 'together' rather than in point scoring or knocking each other out. Helen and Rachel's improvised product unfolds through this collaborative work and is presented as a potential catalyst for others to consider their own engagement in sustaining the ultimate infinite game—the only one that really matters.

In 'Beyond Survival: The *ShiFt* to Aesthetic Writing', Cecile Badenhorst and Heather McLeod offer their strategies for engaging in practices of renewal—practices that offer freedom from, and run counter to, neoliberal discourses. Their chapter writing takes place during their travels to academic conferences in Hiroshima, Japan. Cecile and Heather understand that conferences are pockets of mobile identity-formation occurring outside the normal life of universities; they can perpetuate discourses,

particularly hierarchies and power-plays. Conferences can also provide the opportunity to break free of the neoliberal university and for academics to see themselves with fresh eyes. Describing their experience of the latter, Cecile and Heather show how identities are open to decomposition and re-composition through activities and connections. They use *renga* poetry and *miksang* photography as a methodology for noticing experiences in a new culture and for cultivating slow tiny acts of resistance and renewal.

Susan Walsh and Barbara Bickel are Canadian-born female professors of European settler heritage living on the traditional lands of the Indigenous peoples of Treaty 6 and 7, and Metis Region 3 and 4. Susan and Barbara have been living/working in the transitional spaces of leaving the academy for the past two years. Their chapter, 'The Gift of Wit(h) nessing Transitional Moments Through a Contemplative Arts Co-inquiry', focuses on their personal and social commitment to engaging with contemplative arts practices in relational ways in their daily lives, as well as in their teaching and research. The purpose of their co-inquiry was to wit(h) ness one another as they reimagined their lives and work. In their chapter, Susan and Barbara create and share visual and textual offerings that embody wit(h)nessing as a creative, contemplative, relational and reciprocal act—showing how contemplative arts inquiry practices can lead us 'towards a greater sense of connectedness in our lives, to one another, to nature, and to the cosmos'.

Catherine Manathunga and Agnes Bosanquet, two feminist scholars, use their chapter, 'Remaking Academic Garments', to reflect upon the ways they have remade academia into a comfortable garment. Academic garments have, for centuries, privileged white, male, able, cisgender, middle-class bodies—the mortar board, floppy PhD hat and cape, the suit and tie, the tweed jacket with elbow patches all designed with the white male body in mind. Catherine and Agnes offer a collective autoethnography of the ways they wear academic life and engage in collective activism. They argue that remaking an academic life creates the conditions for 'radical hope' in the academy for women and members of intersectional groups.

In 'Canon, Legacy or Imprint: A Feminist Reframing of Intellectual Contribution', Trina Hamilton, Roberta Hawkins and Margaret

Walton-Roberts reflect on the origins, inspirations and outcomes of their collective work on 'slow scholarship'. Four years ago, they, with eight other women, collaborated on a paper advocating for collective, feminist engagement with the pressures and consequences of the neoliberal academy. Inspired by that work and now as mid-career scholars, Trina, Roberta and Margaret are increasingly thinking about how to create lasting imprints for a better future inside and outside the academy. They ask what difference a *shiFt* in thinking towards 'imprints' and away from 'canons' and 'legacies' can make? They imagine future retirements from the academy not in terms of ratified inclusion in the canon and its individualistic and patrimonial inferences, but in terms of imprint, and the idea of leaving a lasting impression on other scholars and scholarly communities through 'being-in-relation' with others and a diverse set of scholarship.

Our book, our stories, highlight all too clearly that universities are overrun with competitive finite games, games that can obscure possibilities for transformation. These games draw academic players into an oscillation between pride and shame and encourage them/us to mistake winning the game at hand for a more radical challenge to the competition itself. Niki Harré's essay is a fitting final chapter. In 'Beyond Shame and Pride: The University as a Game of Love', Niki reminds us that the 'infinite game' is a metaphor for an alternative playing field in which players/we occupy a hermeneutics of love. As a would-be infinite player, Niki encourages us to create a university network with love at its centre. She challenges us to consider what might happen if academics tried, or at least pretended it was possible, to stay true to love.

Reimagine with Us

Dear reader,

Thank you for joining this journey of reimagination and hope. As you engage closely with the chapters that follow, we invite you to reflect on the symbolic nature of *shiFt* for you, your relationships, your research and your workplace. We invite you to listen care-fully to yourself and your own longings. We encourage you to think about your own lived

experiences, the lived experiences of your colleagues. How might you elevate, amplify and make space for your voice, and the voices of all women, in the academy? How might you use research methodologies in deliberate, activist and celebratory ways to unearth and raise individual and collective voices and stories? How might you change your work situations and workplaces to support an ethics of care and caring and infuse your research and scholarly contributions with imagination, hope and inclusion?

We believe that our work in the university can be reimagined through a feminist politics, where together, we #ChooseToChallenge and move the academy towards kindness, connection and an ethics of care.

In solidarity, Ali and Rachael.

A Thank You to Reviewers

Each chapter of this unique collection of new, creative knowledge and research has been subject to thorough editorial scrutiny and extensive double-blind peer review processes. We thank the reviewers for valuing creative forms of research that contain aesthetic and evocative descriptions of experiences, feelings, stories and meanings—and for recognising the importance of contemplative, creative and new methodologies focused on privileging multifaceted stories of experiences. Reviewers' provision of considered and scholarly feedback has extended the quality and rigour of author contributions and supported chapter authors' grounding of their ideas in the work of relevant authorities, scholarship, theories and theorists. Narrow, limiting and patriarchal way of understanding research tends to prevail in academia. However, through their collegial assistance, generosity of time, thoughtful critique and recognition of alternative approaches, reviewers have enabled high-quality, useful and meaningful research processes and products to be brought into being.

Maroochydore, QLD	Alison L Black
Maroochydore, QLD	Rachael Dwyer

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Joanne Ailwood is an associate professor at The University of Newcastle, Australia. She has published in the fields of history and policies of education, early childhood education and teacher education. Joanne's research is qualitative and is underpinned by the theoretical perspectives of Michel Foucault and Rosi Braidotti, making use of document analyses, case studies and ethnographies.

Cecile Badenhorst is a full professor in the Adult Education/Post-Secondary programme in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, Newfoundland, Canada. She engages in qualitative, arts-based and post-structural research methodologies. She values collaborative writing projects that include art elements, and compassion in the academy.

Georgina Barton is Professor of Literacies and Pedagogy at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. She is Associate Head of School—Research. Her areas of research are English and literacy education and the Arts. She has over 120 publications including her latest book: *Developing Literacy and the Arts in Schools.*

Ruth Behar is an acclaimed scholar and writer of ethnography, memoir, poetry and children's fiction. Born in Havana, Cuba, she grew up in New York. She has lived in Spain and Mexico and returns often to Cuba.

Her pioneering books explore vulnerability and the search for home. She is the recipient of a MacArthur "Genius" Grant and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship and was named a "Great Immigrant" by the Carnegie Corporation. She is an anthropology professor at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (USA).

Barbara Bickel is an artist, researcher, writer and educator, and is Associate Professor of Art Education, Emerita at Southern Illinois University, USA. She co-founded Studio M*: A Collaborative Research Creation Lab Intersecting Arts, Culture and Healing in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. Her research interests include arts-based inquiry methods, a/r/tography, collaboration, socially engaged art, connective aesthetics, matrixial theory, feminist art and pedagogy, and restorative and transformative learning. To assist *shiFt* to happen, her work strives to create pathways for a compassionate relational paradigm.

Alison L Black is a narrative, arts-based and educational researcher at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Her research and scholarly work fosters connectedness, community, wellbeing and meaning-making through the building of reflective and creative lives and identities. Her storied and visual research re-presents the lived life and highlights the transformative power of collaborative and relational knowledge construction.

Agnes Bosanquet is Director, Learning and Teaching Staff Development at Macquarie University, Australia. Her research focus is critical university studies and changing academic roles and identities. She blogs about academia; raising children, one with a chronic illness; and reading dystopian fiction at *The Slow Academic*.

Tracey Bunda is a Ngugi Wakka Wakka woman, mother, educator, professor and Academic Director/Director Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit at The University of Queensland, Australia. Her career in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander higher education has occurred over three decades. Tracey's most recent publication *Seeing the Aboriginal Sovereign Warrior Woman* can be found at https://www.thelift-edbrow.com/current-issue/. Tracey desires to have acknowledged the double labours sweated by Aboriginal peoples in being in the academy, in

the forever educating of white people and in our agentic efforts for systemic change.

Melissa Cain is Lecturer in Education at the Australian Catholic University in Brisbane, Australia. Her research covers inclusive education and creative arts education with a focus on hearing the voices of students with vision impairment in mainstream schools. Melissa was a schoolteacher and Head of Department for 22 years and has received several higher education teaching awards and the Callaway Doctoral Award.

Chloe Cannell is a writer and PhD candidate at the University of South Australia. Chloe writes and researches on queer young adult literature, collaborative writing and researcher wellbeing. From 2018 to 2020 she worked on the organising committee for the South Australian Gender, Sex and Sexualities Postgraduate and ECR Conference.

Rebekah Clarkson is the author of *Barking Dogs* (2017). Her short stories have appeared in publications including *Griffith Review, Best Australian Stories* and *Something Special, Something Rare: Outstanding Short Stories by Australian Women*. She coordinates the Writing Centre at The University of Adelaide and teaches fiction writing in Australia and overseas.

Corinna Di Niro has been performing and teaching theatre internationally since 2004. Corinna completed her PhD in Commedia dell'Arte in 2016 and became a TEDx Speaker in 2019 for her innovative research into VR in theatre. Corinna is co-editing a forthcoming volume on Commedia in the Asia-Pacific.

Madeleine Dobson is early career academic, senior lecturer, Director of Student Experience & Community Engagement, School of Education, Curtin University, Australia. Her research interests include social justice, children's rights, digital technologies and resilience and wellbeing within educational contexts. Her teaching focuses on social justice with a vision of educators as advocates and activists.

Rachael Dwyer is Lecturer in Curriculum and Pedagogy in the School of Education and Tertiary Access, University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Prior to entering academia, Rachael was a music specialist

teacher in primary and secondary schools and is a strong advocate for music and the arts as part of the educational entitlement for all children. Rachael's research interests include teacher education, music and arts education, critical pedagogy and narrative inquiry.

Sandra Elsom is a lecturer who teaches ICT and other foundational learning skills in the School of Education and Tertiary Access at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. Her research focuses on the integration of games into the higher education curriculum. She is interested in the potential for alternate reality games to create an engaging and effective social learning experience.

Melissa Fanshawe has 20 years' experience in schools as a teacher, advisory teacher, deputy and principal. Melissa is a trained teacher for students with vision impairment. She is completing her PhD in the field of vision impairment and enjoys her volunteer roles in the blind and low-vision community.

Margot Ford is a senior lecturer at The University of Newcastle, Australia. She has published in the areas of race and racism, Indigenous education, early childhood and tertiary teacher education. She specialises in qualitative research methods drawing on case study, narrative inquiry and ethnography. She is interested in cross-disciplinary research in racial, ethnic and cultural diversity as they intersect with class in the contemporary educational Australian landscape.

Rachel Forgasz works at Monash University, Australia, where her teaching and research about teacher professional learning focus on the influence of emotion, agency and embodiment. Rachel's latest project, Climate7.com, is a framework to support climate change education and activism in school and community contexts.

Susanne Garvis is Professor of Education (Early Childhood) and Chair of the Department of Education at Swinburne University of Technology, Australia. Her research has made significant contributions to policy and quality improvement work within early childhood education and care.

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Queensland, Australia. Kathryn is a Fulbright Scholar and her forthcoming book, *A Living Mudmap: Beyond Borders and Binaries*, is a gathering of stories from Australian and American First Nations women and radical women of colour who live and work at a grassroots level. The book is born 'of a politics of necessity' and the elder knowledge within models and gives guidance for the change we want to happen and become.

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The Gift of Wit(h)nessing Transitional Moments Through a Contemplative Arts Co-inquiry

Canon, Legacy or Imprint: A Feminist Reframing of Intellectual Contribution

Reimagining the Academy: Conceptual, Theoretical, Philosophical, and Methodological Sparks

Rachael Dwyer and Alison L Black

Introduction

How do we move the academy closer to the one we want, rather than the one we have? What can we learn by listening to stories about what women think, know, and experience in the academy? Rosalind Gill (2009) wondered what would it mean, and what would we find, if we turned our lens and our gaze upon our own experiences, on the practices, experiences and feelings, and the secrets and silences within our own work/lives and workplaces? Exploring the hidden injuries of neoliberal academia, Gill's (2009) research connected academic life, emotion, and neoliberalism and was formulated as a 'demand for change'. In many ways, our book continues this demand. Spiriting the theme for International Women's Day 2021, we are embracing the hashtag #ChooseToChallenge and

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challenging and changing the movement of the academy towards kindness, connection, and an ethics of care.

In these times where economic justifications—rather than ethics and values—dominate, we need to act purposefully and intentionally to reclaim and reimagine the spaces we wish to inhabit. We need to make *shiFt* happen! The impacts of capitalism, neoliberalism, and patriarchy can be seen everywhere: in systemic inequalities of income, wealth, gender, and race, in climate inaction, in access to quality healthcare, and more. Too often, the importance of human connections and relationships is overlooked. Yet, we see that valuing people and their lived lives, engaging, and practising empathy provide a pathway to addressing so many of these challenges. We know from personal experience how a sense of powerlessness and overwhelm can challenge our capacity to hope. This book has been written in the year of a global pandemic, a year of bushfires, loss of all kinds, intense emotions, and bone deep exhaustion.

And yet, we seek to remain hopeful and focused on enacting positive changes, on reimagining the academy we want for ourselves, our colleagues, and our students, and on building the kinds of communities of which we wish to be a part.

This introductory chapter foregrounds our deep commitments and provides a conceptual foundation for the book and the chapters it contains. We use this chapter to introduce the core philosophical sparks and threads interwoven across the book, ideas that connect us in terms of histories, beliefs, values, hopes, and methodologies, and ideas that point us towards what matters.

In writing this chapter, we make use of aesthetic and creative writing to foreground the scholarly ideas we have found powerful and meaningful—text to savour, read slowly, and enjoy. Each section begins with a 'highlighter poem',[1] which serves to elucidate and synthesise ideas from the important scholarly work that is 'sparking' something in us.

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[1] Also known as erasure poems.

Not Afraid of the F-Word: Living Feminist Academic Lives

The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house
For women, the need to desire and nurture each other:
Redemptive
Interdependency between women
Difference, a fund of necessary polarities
Creativity can spark
The power to seek new ways of being in the world
Our personal power is forged
Without community there is no liberation
Seek a world in which we can all flourish
Take our differences and make them strengths.
For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.
            (Responding to Audre Lorde, 1984)

We see feminist values as fundamental to our work as academics. We gather great inspiration from our colleague and friend, Elizabeth Mackinlay, as she writes and draws about teaching and learning like a feminist (2016). In the opening three pages of her text, Mackinlay makes three points that resonate deeply with us. First, she points to the problems with feminism in terms of representation and inclusion.

> … feminism in and of itself holds no claims to innocence. It has a particular kind of historical reputation and contemporary habit of excluding those who are not white, middle-class, educated, cis-gendered, able-bodied and/or heterosexual from its dialogic doors. Feminism might like to think itself a disobedient daughter but its perceived inability to move with the times … works against it. (Mackinlay, 2016, pp. 2–3)

Feminism has a long history of exclusion. Middle-class white women have written about their experiences of the patriarchy, without attending to the voices of women of colour, poor women, trans women, and queer women. The work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) on intersectional feminism, now considered a landmark, took ten years to be widely taken up. Audre Lorde's vast body of work (e.g. 1978, 1984, 1988) and Aileen

Moreton-Robinson's (2000/2020) *Talkin' Up to the White Woman* are powerful examples of the labour and of the risks undertaken by Black women to courageously call for their inclusion by white/straight/cis-feminists. As Bunda, Gilbey, and Monnapula-Mapesela (this volume) suggest, the relevance of these works today is striking: so little has actually changed.

 Second, Mackinlay points to the inherent risks of proclaiming oneself or one's work as 'feminist'.

> The epistemological, ontological and material danger of being a feminist in higher education hangs ominously in the air, a constant hum, low and foreboding. Staying alert and awake, all the while muffling and muzzling our voices as feminists, is a lonely and exhausting place to be. The kind of self-surveillance necessary is a day-in-day-out non-stop process of assessing the safety of the spaces, situations and scenarios we find ourselves in. (Mackinlay, 2016, p. 3)

Declaring oneself a feminist is dangerous. We see the risks of being a 'willful feminist' explained so well by Sara Ahmed in *Living a Feminist Life*: 'to become feminist is to kill other people's joy; to get in the way of other people's investments' (2016, p. 65). As Sarah Burton (2018) points out, within the neoliberal university, the intellectual positions that feminists occupy are seen as illegitimate. The feminist academic is seen as a troublemaker, unsettling the neoliberal order and hierarchy.

 Third, Mackinlay speaks aloud one of our deepest fears in writing this chapter and editing this book: the risk of being judged 'not feminist enough'.

> For those of us in Women's and Gender Studies, the feminist identity stakes seem particularly high—and the accusations of being 'unfeminist', 'not feminist enough' or a 'bad feminist' come just as fast, thick and painfully from within as they do from outside. There is an unsaid expectation that being a Women's and Gender Studies academic means that you will necessarily speak, teach and learn like a feminist. (Mackinlay, 2016, p. 3)

We feel this deeply that because we write about women in academia, we must wear a particular kind of feminist garment, conforming to particular feminist discourses. As we have described earlier, we don't shy away from the need for critique within feminist communities—especially around intersectionality. But we know that, because of the themes and focus of this book, there may be feminist readers who do not feel that their feminism is represented here. We hope that there is space enough for us all.

Reclaiming Care

> *Care*
> *The very Being of human life*
> *A connection of encounter between two human beings*
> *Really hear, see, or feel what it is the other tries to convey*
> *Carer and cared-for, a way of being in relation.*
> *An ethic of care*
> *An ethic of relation*
> (Responding to Noddings, 1992)

As articulated in *The Feminine Mystique* (Friedan, 1963), care work has been essentialised as 'women's work', equated with 'feminine' practices of homemaking, domesticity, and mothering. We understand the concern that any emphasis on care and caring may support the ongoing exploitation of women. We also acknowledge that we are not all equally burdened with the work of care. In the contemporary academy, pastoral care work—supporting and advising students—disproportionately falls on the workloads of women (Thornton, 2013; Wallace et al., 2017). This invisible labour is compounded for BIPOC women (Magoqwana et al., 2019), who are viewed as role models for students and peers, seen as 'the *academic housekeepers*—forced to care generously with few resources or reward' (p. 6).

However, in other literature care has been foregrounded as a foundation for feminist work. Carol Gilligan (1982) and Nel Noddings (1984, 1992) write of an 'ethics of care', which has an emphasis 'on living

together, on creating, on maintaining, and enhancing positive relations' (Noddings, 1992, p. 21). The concept of caring in an ethics of care is focused on how we treat others and ourselves. We seek to reclaim this 'values-driven' accentuation of 'care' and 'caring' as 'ethical ways of being' in the academy and as underlying values that push back against the neoliberal agenda of individualism, meritocracy, comparison, and competitiveness. Theorising care, thinking about care, writing about care, or recognising that the practice of care is essential to developing an ethic of care is a political project that helps us think and do. Across this book, authors are pondering on notions of 'care' towards self and others, on the role kindness might play in effecting mutuality, transformation, and wellbeing, in assisting us to 'do academia differently'. Collectively, our care ethics cause us to question neoliberal principles of individualism, efficiency, and competition, and connect us to a preference for the infinite game (Carse, 1986; Harré et al., 2017; Harré, 2018), where the focus is not on winning but on continuing the game-play where care is embedded in *all* of our encounters and interactions, and central to our individual and collective survival (Lawson, 2007).

Playing the Infinite Game

> *The infinite game*
> *Keep the game in play*
> *Open and inclusive,*
> *Helps us flourish.*
> *Heartfelt, deep listening,*
> *Create and recreate our institutions.*
>
> *Finite games,*
> *Bound by rules,*
> *Pulling us apart.*
> *Taken too seriously.*
> *Winner is declared.*
> *Rendering the community spellbound.*
> *A distraction from what really matters.*
>   (Responding to Harré et al., 2017)

We have found Harré et al.'s (2017) metaphor of 'the university as an infinite game' and their call to keep 'the infinite game alive' to be a 'much needed form of academic activism' (p. 5) incredibly motivating and inspiring. So much of neoliberal academia stunts life and growth, forgets the potential of people, and forgets the importance of taking our 'intuitions, lived experience and observations of injustice and exclusion seriously' (p. 5). For Harré et al., and for us, a feminist positioning informs our valuing of the infinite game metaphor, a metaphor focused on inclusivity, openness, relationship, deep listening, careful observation, and thought, and a metaphor that strengthens through an ethics of care, connection, and community. In this book, we are seeking to consider those bodies, those values, those ethical ways of being and working and feeling that neoliberalism does not welcome and that without our activism 'sit outside the dominant finite games of the university' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 6). Too often the academy's finite games of winners and losers and counting and rules distract us from what really matters—distract us from playing 'the infinite game'.

With this book, we are using our voices, research, and lives as *#CredibleWomen* and fighting the creeping inhumanity of our institutions. We are doing this with creativity and solidarity and enacting alternative ways of 'working together, being together and thinking together' (Nixon, 2016). Sharing stories of our embodied and affective experiences, we are cultivating awareness, hope, and space for the infinite. Of course, the academy lures us seductively and repeatedly into its career games and images of success and strategy. Deeply ethical ways of working, imagination, and possibility thinking take time and effort, and they require us to play 'the long game', a game 'as long as an academic life, perhaps' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 12). And so, a long game is also a slow game.

Slow Scholarship as Resistance to Fast Academia

> *The neoliberal university*
> *High productivity*
> *Compressed time*

Isolating
Increasing demands
Too rarely discussed

Feminist ethics of care
Collective action
Good scholarship requires time
Think, write, read, research
Resist
Disrupt

Slowing down
Collaborative, collective, communal ways forward.
(Responding to Alison Mountz et al., 2015)

What we are advocating for are cultural *shiFts*. Slow scholarship supports our feminist politics of resistance helping us to question and undo structures of power and inequality and the accelerated timelines and ever-increasing demands of neoliberal governance. Alison Mountz et al. (2015, p. 1238) call for slow scholarship focused on 'cultivating caring academic cultures and processes' and remind these are determined by how '*we*' 'work and interact with one another'. It is 'we' who can create possibilities for a more just university and world. We can create *shiFt* and can focus on quality and depth, reflection, relationship, and community. We can count differently.

Counting culture leads to intense, insidious forms of institutional shaming, subject-making, and self-surveillance. It compels us to enumerate and self-audit, rather than listen and converse, engage with colleagues, students, friends and family, or involve ourselves in the meaningful and time-consuming work that supports and engages our research and broader communities. …What if we counted differently? Instead of articles published or grants applied for, what if we accounted for thank you notes received, friendships formed, collaborations forged? (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1243)

And when Mountz et al. (2015) talk of slow, they talk of 're-making the university', of building a 'culture of possibilities' that 'allows creative

people to do their best work' (2015, p. 1238). They draw on Victoria Lawson's (2007) writing about 'geographies of care' and in so doing 'inject a feminist ethics of care into the notion of slow scholarship' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1239). The focus here is about creating an ethics of care—bringing attention to how we work and interact with one another, and who we are as we are doing it. Society's current focus seems to be on 'emergency response' or 'single-issue strategies for dealing with disasters', rather than on 'long-term approaches of mutual learning that involve building a sense of attachment rather than disconnection' (Lawson, 2007, p. 8). Building 'long-term, enduring relationships with people and places' can happen in our teaching and our research (Lawson, 2007, p. 8). Caring research can take many forms, it 'suggests a broad range of methods' and 'an expansion of what counts as evidence in our work' (Lawson, 2007, p. 9). We have sought to privilege these many forms and possibilities here, to build open, storied, and aesthetic dialogue, and to contemplatively consider our roles in making the world a better place.

This book has been written by women who want to do academia differently and who are engaged in imagining together; we are embracing non-metric ways of supporting each other and providing encouragement, friendship, and connection. We are embracing the values of 'slow'—the 'slow movement' (Parkins & Craig, 2006)—'slow scholarship' (Mountz et al., 2015; O'Neill, 2014)—and the focus of 'the slow professor' (Berg & Seeber, 2016). Through our sharing, listening, and connecting with each other, we are establishing value in each other and ourselves; we are recognising a different value to the metrics and measures that are being held to us as incentives and punishment. And something fundamental is *shiFting*. We are establishing for ourselves a firm set of values and alternative guides for our academic and non-academic practice. We are discarding and challenging the bounds of what is permissible and possible in academia. In writing and researching ourselves, our visions, our hopes, and our workplaces, we are creating for ourselves caring and care-full collaborations which are undoing the damage of our highly managed and intensified work environments. We are fuelling our creative and collective capacities in ways that are expansive, collaborative, pleasurable, and collectively advantageous.

Arts-Based and Autoethnographic Methods: Alternatives to the Masters' Tools

Audre Lorde's words used earlier in this chapter have prompted us to think about the tools we may want to use to begin the work of dismantling that master's house. Writing our own experiences of academia into existence and using aesthetic methods/tools—poetry, art, story, reflective writing—provide us with spaces to reimagine ourselves within academia, and in turn, to reimagine the academy itself.

Contemplative, arts-based, and storied methodologies inform our work and support the creation of 'caring research', our 'expanding of what counts as evidence' in the academy (Lawson, 2007). These methodologies help us understand and see different points of view, connect, and feel. And as woman academics, we want to dismantle the idea that our personal and professional identities are separate from one another. Our lives are intricately entangled with our work.

Arts-Based Research

Art
Both immediate and lasting
Grab hold of our attention
Provoke us
Transport us

Arts-based researchers
Engaging in art making as a way of knowing
A novel worldview
Aesthetic knowing
Fostering reflexivity
Empathy
Advancing care and compassion
           (Responding to Patricia Leavy, 2017)

Like Leavy, we find synergies between artistic practice and research and see their potential to provide new insights, to explore and discover, to

evoke and provoke, to foster empathy, and to engage those who sit outside of traditional audiences (Leavy, 2017). As Barone and Eisner explain, 'arts based research is a heuristic through which we deepen and make more complex our understanding of some aspect of the world' (2011, p. 3). It is a way of researching that inspires 'imagination and possibility' and that helps us 'change, reframe things', and it 'open[s] inquiry through different ways of being and knowing' (Walsh, 2017, p. 6).

Arts-based research and writing as inquiry creates contemplative and responsive space for participation, particularly for those whose voices are often excluded, allowing different images and stories to be seen and heard (O'Neill et al., 2017). It opens space for 'women's words, voices, and often their difficult experiences' and helps us 'make sense of experience as something shaped at the intersecting axes of gender and class (for example), something wrought in particular socio-historical, cultural, and political contexts—and therefore something shiftable' (Walsh, 2017, p. 12). Ah, something '*shiFtable*'.

Given the significant challenges facing our world, we see the arts and 'artful openings' as providing enormous opportunities for creating powerful research texts—texts that engage us with the world, and with others, that elicit emotional responses, and help us 'breathe with impermanence', 'everchangingness', and 'interconnectedness' (Walsh, 2017, p. 12). We see engagement, empathy, and emotion as the most likely ways we can facilitate movement and change and make *shiFt* happen. So, our caring research and stories of experience hold much promise.

Autoethnography

Autoethnographers'
Personal experience
Infusing with political/cultural
Rigorous self reflection
Reflexivity
Show people in the process
The meaning of their struggles
            (Responding to Adams, Ellis, & Holman Jones, 2017)

We are drawn to autoethnography and to its capacity to reveal powerful, embodied, and evocative stories about life in academia—the lives that we have ourselves experienced. Autoethnography provides opportunities for accounts that challenge the dominant and taken-for-granted (Adams, Ellis, & Holman Jones, 2017) opportunities to write in between the spaces left in existing research. As Harris (2017) explains, 'autoethnography's power' comes from 'its coconstitutive nature', and it is 'through this shared research/creative activity, social change is enacted' (p. 26).

Further, our autoethnographic writing and research invites relationships with our work that are characterised by reciprocity. As Clark (2010) reminds, storying or narrating our experiences is how we make sense of our lives. We learn about ourselves through this work; and, the work gives us something back.

Autoethnography, according to Holman Jones et al. (2016), is distinguished by four characteristics: 'purposefully commenting on/critiquing culture and cultural practices, ... making contributions to existing research, ... embracing vulnerability with purpose, and creating a reciprocal relationship with audiences in order to compel a response' (p. 22, italics in original). We consider each of these in turn.

Autoethnographers use their stories not only as an exploration of themselves, but because their stories illuminate something about the broader world. They interrogate the personal, social, and cultural nuances of the experiences, going beyond autobiographical accounts in the way they highlight the relationships 'between' the stories and the cultural practices in which they are situated.

Autoethnographies make contributions to existing research. While different approaches to research seek to understand trends and make generalisations about the lives of large groups of people, autoethnography focuses on the 'why and how and the so what of those lives' (Holman Jones, 2016).

Autoethnography requires a vulnerability, as the researcher opens up their personal experiences for others to see. This vulnerability is not without risk, particularly when, as is the case with the work in this volume, the cultural practices being critiqued relate to the author's work and livelihood.

Autoethnographies create reciprocal relationships with readers. There is an expectation that the reader is an active participant in meaning-making and that they read with a sense of responsibility.

Ultimately, important knowledge is passed through stories. The stories in this collection offer a sense of what is possible, the writing of them supporting the finding of ourselves (our voices, souls, bodies, rhythms, drives, yearnings, ways of knowing and being), supporting the finding of resources and relationships, and the values we might call upon—kindness, connection, and an ethics of care. Our stories shine a light on our capacities to resist, reimagine, and replenish, together.

Looking Ahead

This chapter began by posing the question: How do we move the academy closer to the one we want, rather than the one we have? Reflection on this question shapes all of the contributions found in this book, connecting us to our shared intentions to build a kinder, more inclusive, values-informed academy—and one that is responsive to women's knowledges, ways of being, ways of working, and experiences. This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the concepts, theories, and methods that we find enabling, that help us to reimagine the university and support our moving forward. We have outlined our valuing of women's lived experiences and lived visions, our drawing on the work of feminist scholars, our emphasis on an ethics of care, and the core ideas and concepts we have found helpful in supporting both the reimagining of the academy and our imagining of revolutionary futures. The metaphor of the infinite game welcomes our hopefulness and our ethical ways of being and working in academe; and our attention to slow scholarship reminds us we *can* create possibilities for a more just university and world. Our arts-based and autoethnographic methods open us to inquiry, supporting our contemplation and fresh ways of seeing, feeling, and relating.

We, and the authors who have contributed to this volume, are leaning into these nourishing ideas and approaches. We are listening generously and allowing the stories we are living and reading and writing to guide our thinking, our actions, our teaching, service, and research. This

attuning to our guiding commitments, ethical responsibilities, and artful openings in our everyday living and working offers hope. We recognise that it is these kinds of long-term approaches of mutual learning that build connection, and which help us do our collective and individual part to bring wholeness, integrity, potential, and possibility into the academy and beyond.

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Theme 1:

**Holding Space for Story, Struggle
and Possibility**

Black Warrior Women Scholars Speak

**Tracey Bunda, Kathryn Gilbey,
and 'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela**

Introduction

We are three First Nations/Indigenous/Women of Colour (from South Africa and Australia) who work within academia. We came together to write across continents and with purpose. It was Kathryn's suggestion to write an Open Letter to white women in the Academy, emulating Audre Lorde but with our own flavour. As First Nations Women, we represent different contextual realities and physical and professional positionings in our respective universities.

Our methodology has been to write our experiences separately but to also respond to each other's words collectively as a strategy of shared

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affirmation so that our words speak a truth that is not often heard—or if heard, not acknowledged and too often silenced in the full weight of what counts as important university business. In writing this Open Letter, we engage a dialogic that is seeking a response from white women of the academy. We see potential in creating spaces where truths can be spoken, for it is within such spaces that we deepen and enrich our theoretical and everyday lives—and can make *shiFt* happen.

An Open Letter to White Women in the Academy

This is an open letter that sits a little differently from others. It is not a single author call to a specific person or instance. Rather, it is a call and hopeful response from the three of us, to many of you. We are three First Nations/Indigenous/Women of Colour (from South Africa and Australia) who work within academia. Ours is not a single unified voice but a melding of voices around shockingly similar experiences. We speak not to a single incidence of racism or a single perpetrator of aggression but rather to a series of aggressions that happen often with a fierce repercussion despite sometimes no fierce intent.

These are hard conversations. We seek to engage you gently in mutually beneficial constructive conversations that might lead to places/spaces of movement or liberation for us all. Within our letter, there is no didactic hammering, no positioning of good or bad, just a series of questions and a rare opportunity for us three women to say, for just a moment, what it feels like to be excluded, included, diversified, ignored, disempowered, stereotyped, and helped. The tip of the benevolent sword is piercing, the thud of being ignored is aching. But, the pain of low expectation and stereotyping, of enduring ignorance and a continued investment in not seeing us, our histories, our strengths, our power, is palatable and sometimes choking. As warrior women within academia, this is a blow and pain that strengthens our resolve to have these conversations, to continue when we are weary and beaten down, for our ancestors, for the

next generations, for our peers. This is important work that we do, and we would like to share some of it with you.

You will hear our three distinct voices throughout this open letter as we don't presume to speak for each other or to 'know' each other's real and lived experiences. So, this letter may well break with conventions around a single authored or voiced text. It may be jarring to read. So be it. We ask that you persevere.

We take our lead from the historical document 'An Open Letter to Mary Daly' by Audre Lord written on 6 May 1979. We are disturbed by its relevance today.

http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/lordeopenlettertomary-daly.html

This letter has been delayed because of my grave reluctance to reach out to you, for what I want us to chew upon here is neither easy nor simple. The history of white women who are unable to hear Black women's words, or to maintain dialogue with us, is long and discouraging. But for me to assume that you will not hear me represents not only history, perhaps, but an old pattern of relating, sometimes protective and sometimes dysfunctional, which we, as women shaping our future, are in the process of shattering and passing beyond, I hope. (Audre Lorde "An Open Letter to Mary Daly")

'Mabokang

No one can refute the fact that the transition and journey of growth for Black women academics in South Africa and perhaps elsewhere is often riddled with obstacles and is never easy. I talk from my own experience and the experiences of others with whom I have worked closely, watched, or mentored during my 20 years as an academic in what we in South Africa call Historically White Universities (HWUs). These universities were open only to white students during the apartheid years. Since 1994 they have been accessible to all races. Although structures for change have been availed to support transition, these were not designed for blacks and in particular Black women. Furthermore, these structures on their own, without the willingness of our white counterparts and mentors (who were and still are celebrated as original inhabitants/occupants of these

universities), are still futile in many cases. The culture is still constraining at best even today, with most cultural undertones being subtle and hard to change.

Tracey

Working as a senior Aboriginal warrior woman in the academy holds many challenges (and privileges). I have a location that allows me to clearly see white race privilege and its operations at individual, institutional, and ideological levels. And while I see myself firmly located in theoretical work that is critical, working to interrogate the intersectionality of race and power, I remain constantly aggravated, frustrated, dismayed, and disappointed at the little change that has occurred in the academy. Why is this so?

Kathryn

Fredericks and White (2018) tell us the first recorded Aboriginal person to graduate from any Australian university was Aboriginal woman Dr Margaret Williams-Weir in 1959 (Melbourne University, 2018) with a Diploma of Physical Education.

This is an incredible accomplishment as citizenship wasn't given to Aboriginal people until 1967. I acknowledge that I walk on the shoulders of giants as an Aboriginal woman within the academy. I am of the second generation of women to participate within the academy. This gives me comfort in times when I am despairing, when I feel worn down from having to educate those around me, as well as the students. Because what this says to me is there exists a generation before me who succeeded in making it, much more alone than I am, without any of the scholarship that I have to call on. I also draw on international women warriors and First Nations scholars who have written about the 'Eurocentrism' of the academy. So, when I feel like who I am, what I believe to be true, what I know to be true, is questioned or ignored, when I feel like I have been through a sieve, like weevil filled flour, to separate the good from the bad,

I take comfort in the fact that I am not alone. I also despair that the similarities of experiences are so universal and are as a result of colonialism. The academy is conditioned to behave this way. Ignorance is structured and ingrained in Australian society. And, the tools and recognition that I desire are designed to denigrate me and my culture more broadly.

'Mabokang

In South Africa, the realities are that attempts to provide Black women with equitable opportunities are still marred by many contradictions and discrepancies: (1) Black women are often undermined directly and through mediocre support offered, uneven distribution, or a scuffle for resources with those who are perceived as legitimate occupants of these universities (HWUs); (2) there are taken-for-granted assumptions and perceptions by our counterparts that we Black women academics are voiceless, passive, invisible, inarticulate, and do not take initiative for our own development; (3) policy rhetoric still gives the impression that all is fine while the reality is contrary (just a broken promise); and (4) there are unequal power relations and cultural stereotypes according to race, gender, identity, and language.

Tracey

In wanting to bring about change, I acknowledge the double labour associated with being Black and in the academy. The double is found in not only undertaking the work and duties of our job—teaching students, marking, developing and implementing curriculum, research, writing grants, developing publications, supporting other Aboriginal staff, attending meetings and events, and so on—but the double is in another unspoken and hidden labour in which we engage: educating the white people who we work with, sometimes, unbelievably, at the point which allows a basic engagement to occur. When you comprise the minority of the workforce and labour in this unacknowledged way in the academy for the majority, who surround you, then the energy expended is exhausting.

I also acknowledge that this hidden labour and the engagement—the bridge building—is very much tangled up with ignorance, fetishising, assimilation, the colonial desire to correct, tokenise, and punish as well as an honesty/integrity to connect. As an educator, if I were to assess the plethora of experiences known and lived through in my three-decade career, I would consistently rate the academy very low and slow in its ability to be able to hear the First Nations voice, to see the First Nations, to have confidence and competency in engaging with First Nations, and to enact First Nations agendas.

Kathryn

As I read 'Mabokang's words, I am struck by a knowing, a recognising of the issues—a sad and slow realisation that she has written what I feel (voiceless, passive, invisible, and inarticulate) and that this happens in a climate of unequal power relations. This is the space that I want to acknowledge. When you under-resource a project because it will operate from an Aboriginal space, you are saying many things to us. So even with the best of budget or project intentions, you are saying we are less trustworthy than the white space, that we should work harder for less, that you are setting us up to fail, and that success can only happen under white leadership. Even if these are not intended, they are felt. In a climate and context where you have taken everything from us, we are made to feel grateful for scraps, and we are portrayed as angry when we possessively guard our stories and our dignity, when we fight, with a smile, so that we can hold our heads up high. We enact our sovereignty daily, and it is just that it happens out of your sight, out of your worldview, and out of your capacity sometimes to see. If you can't see it, it doesn't mean it's not happening.

'Mabokang

While I see our universities as spaces created for all those who reside in this country, and as learning spaces which must emancipate all without any favour or prejudice, for the time that I have been in academia, I have

come to realise that these places/spaces also have a potential to break our spirits as Black women academics. For too long, South Africa has suffered a dearth of Black female professors, and it is still finding it difficult to change. In 2014, there were only 34 Black female professors in the whole country. In a university I called my own, there were two in 2017 and four in 2019. At one point in this institution, I was the only Black female professor, and this came with its own benefits and challenges. While I was celebrated as a role model by aspiring Black females, oftentimes I was made to doubt myself and my hard-earned success as a Black warrior scholar.

I had to get in touch with my conscious self, to keep dreaming, to ground myself in my values, and to discover my inner powers in order to turn the tide of disadvantage in my favour. I did not define myself and my identity through the lenses of others.

Tracey

'Mabokang speaks words that I know in my spirit, in my blood—keep dreaming, to ground myself in my values, discover and bring to the surface (my words) my inner powers in order to turn the tide of disadvantage in my favour, to see the emancipatory platforms of the university and to disrupt boundaries. Can we maintain this agency when the coloniser remains non-hearing, non-seeing, not confident, incompetent, and indifferent? And when systemic and ideological constraints disavow our contribution to the academy? There is exhaustion in finding the resources to build the bridge, to hold up the bridge, straining under the weight/ wait for the other half of the bridge to be built. Why do I work in the academy? I am a First Nations warrior woman and come from people who are the first educators. At point of colonisation, First Nations were denied an education. But, education and specifically a higher education is our right, a sovereign right. My work in the academy is to ensure that all generations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples can exercise that sovereign right. This work is fraught, delightful, anxiety producing, celebratory, demanding, demeaning, and yet also liberating. The

work of de-colonisation is perhaps a forever becoming. So, what can white women learn from the First Nations experience? Let us have this 'neither easy nor simple' dialogue that Lorde raises.

'Mabokang

I constantly reminded myself not to see these beautiful spaces (our universities) through social constructions of oppression, disadvantage, and deficiency, but as emancipatory platforms where individually and collectively we can work with our colleagues of other races, to disrupt boundaries that constrain Black women's growth in academia.

Tracey

Our experiences in the academy resonate with each other. As Kathryn notes, there is *a universality in the similarities*. Each of us is situated in colonised countries and where the university is a bastion of that colonisation—White, patriarchal, and hetero-normative. As 'Mabokang rightfully attests these places *are not designed for Blacks*. Hence, our work has been to push back on *the contradictions and discrepancies* as 'Mabokang notes, and where naturally First Nations and Black women experience *frustration and aggravation and disappointment at the little change* with regular occurrence. Kathryn's critical analysis of the academy as *being conditioned to behave in this way* and that the colonial *Master's tool design* is for *the purpose of denigration* easily situates with '*Mabokang's* observation that the university works *to break the spirit of the Black academic woman*. Together, Kathryn's and 'Mabokang's voices speak a powerful commentary.

We call for the university to correct the injustice by distributing power between the races equally and for lasting change. *De-colonisation* feels as *forever becoming,* but as Black warrior women scholars, we stand on our lands, the same lands which have been appropriated without consent by the coloniser. We stand committed to our dreamings of a future where white women hear us and want a different relationship than the one

history has offered. To raise again the words of Audrey Lorde: *Let us pass beyond these old shapings. We hope.*

   Professor Tracey Bunda,
   Associate Professor Kathryn Gilbey
   Associate Professor 'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela
   31 January 2019–September 2020

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My Journey of a Thousand Miles

'Mabokang Monnapula-Mapesela

Introduction

I am a black African woman who dares to revoke and invalidate boundaries, a woman who is not scared by change of any sort. I see challenges and problems as opportunities. I am a woman from very humble rural beginnings—beginnings which others may perceive from a deficit, lack, deficiency, disadvantaged perspective. I am forever proud of my roots for from their wisdom I am today. My roots have grounded me for today and tomorrow's trials. I am the last born of six children, two boys and four girls. I am told that I started school at a much earlier age than is usual because I could already read and write. I am a mother of two grown-up boys, Tumi and Bokang.

This important conversation is not just a narration of my experiences to others, but a chance to listen to my own voice. It is also a dialogue with myself as I bring to the surface not only what others think I am, but also

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my own fears, insecurities, and the pain I have endured throughout my journey to the promised land of academia. I have allowed my feelings about this journey to inform my growth. They have become my trusted path to becoming a knowledgeable person. As I start to write this piece, I begin with a deep reflection on the genesis of this journey, and I interrogate my thoughts about how it all began: what my role has been (or could have been), what I bargained for or wished I did, and my experiences of being part of an 'acclaimed' academic community which is finding it hard to free itself from the imperfections caused by decades of discrimination.

It has been an arduous two-decade-long journey better described by Lenning et al. (2011, p. 1) as a road trip with many detours and 'a journey of a thousand miles' (Lao Tzu) worth completing in baby step. It has also been an uneven playground to uncover the conspiracies of those who have full ownership rights within universities that are undergoing transformation—a rare occasion for a black woman from a disadvantaged background to defy the odds. It has also been the most fulfilling passage into academia, which has undoubtedly culminated in a full basket of opportunities and achievements which entail among other things: changing the lives of the many students who crossed my path, progressing through the academic ranks, assuming significant leadership positions in Higher Education, participating in key national Higher Education policy structures, receiving invitations for guest speaking, and this chance and others for ally-ship and sisterhood with scholars beyond the borders of my country. All these mark academic rites of passage, which unfortunately have come at no cheap price, but rather with so much pain and resilience at the prime of my academic career. I have had to make hard choices to endure the pain, and out of 'free will' I toiled, for I knew this would give me 'freedom to be happy' (Ahmed, 2019, p. 4) and to live my life as an academic.

I am filled with complete awe and appreciation, first for my patience, resilience, and tenacity, and then for the 'gifts of grace' I have received in this profession—opportunities of direct and indirect mentorship, collaboration, friendships, networks, and sisterhood that have carried me through this journey and brought me to this platform where I contemplate with other black women warrior scholars from outside the borders

of my country. We contemplate not only history and what has been, but the future and what should be for us and many other black women in this profession.

As I lament and shed tears for constantly being subjected to tests, to microscopic analyses questioning my integrity as a black woman, I also cry for my country and its persisting challenges and 'gross inequities in access, opportunities, participation and outcomes especially for blacks—students and women academics' (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2019). A strong expectation now lies upon me to contribute to building a better academia—one that I have always contemplated and longed for. I share with my sisters the strategies I have used to navigate the difficult journey. I share values that have grounded my own career path when all else seemed bleak. As I narrate these storied accounts, I hope readers, especially young upcoming academics, will take the cue and draw from my lived experiences, and those of others, ideas about what might possibly work for them.

Contextual Contradictions

In their ideology of a layered reality and the long-researched framework of structure, culture, and agency, great scholars and social theorists Roy Bhaskar (1989) and Margaret Archer (1995, 1996) argue that without an enabling environment, supportive culture(s), and people with agency, change is reduced to a futile exercise. In the past, many areas of work in South Africa, including universities, sequestered blacks to spaces devoid of lucrative opportunities for personal and professional development (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2017a, p. 2). In universities—especially historically white universities—black academics were seen as 'illegitimate, alien occupants', visitors, or intruders (Mabokela, 2012; Mabokela & Magubane, 2004). Certainly not much learning could take place in these spaces where people were subjugated to areas of no worth (Naicker, 2013). This was a deliberate strategy by the apartheid government meant to keep the 'clever blacks' on the back pews with as little opportunity for educational and economic emancipation as possible. Although today the democratic government has achieved significant milestones in

transforming the higher education system (CHE, 2019), there are recurring problems with ensuring 'access with success'. The system struggles to achieve equity in outcomes for among others, black children who access higher education, and struggle to complete their studies on time or altogether. It struggles with equitable representation and participation of black women scholars in academia (CHE, 2019; Makhubu, 1998). The numbers of black women professoriate and women in higher echelons are still very low regardless of the many redress strategies put in place by government and by individual institutions (CHE, 2019). Although government through the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has recently started financing several capacity development programmes at all universities, attempts to provide black women with equitable opportunities are still marred by many contradictions and discrepancies. Too often, black women are undermined directly. When mediocre support is offered, or distributed unevenly by those perceived as the rightful occupants of these universities (historically white universities), black women are undermined. Black women are undermined by taken-for-granted assumptions and perceptions that they are voiceless, passive, invisible, inarticulate, and lacking agency. Policy rhetoric continues to convey that all is fine—when it is far from so. Black women are impacted by unequal power relations and cultural stereotypes about race, gender, identity, and language. Enormous challenges continue to exist in terms of the scalability of these capacity development programmes. Turning the tide of inequity around is no easy feat.

The system's progress is constrained largely by institutional environments (cultures and histories), uneven distribution of resources, and lack of willingness by those who claim they are natural inhabitants of these institutions to exercise their agency towards developing newcomers, especially blacks who are often perceived as outsiders. This resistance and indifference which stem from un-researched, unscientific reasons such as arguments about encroachment of 'personal spaces', 'fears of losing jobs', or 'fears that the quality of education will suffer in the hands of the other', have come to form new acceptable sub-cultures.

Many universities in South Africa, especially historically white universities (HWUs), have been and continue to undergo metamorphosis, and

are in continuous transformation to truly redeem and reclaim themselves from discriminatory historical legacies and cultures that still manifest in subtle debilitating formations. The luxury of enjoying a normal academic growth and trajectory is therefore hard to come by. We would agree that naturally, one's intrinsic energies, power, and agency function at the maximum if the environment is nurturing, trusting, and enabling, rather than untrusting, passive, and condescending. This is where mentoring, sisterhood, collaboration, and working together could turn the tide around. Contrary to this wish for ideal spaces, however, there is always a dearth of not only willing mentors, but those who truly understand the shortcomings of Blacks (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2017a, p. 12).

The idea of joining a place that was previously reserved for a certain group of people in a country with a history of discrimination, a system that is still fraught with imperfections that throttle people's souls, is bound to give you chills no matter how assertive and brave you may be. Having to strive to be like the other, to be trusted for your brains (not favours), or to become a respected academic is even more nerve-racking. This is a feeling that only those who go through this journey can understand. As you work yourself up the ranks, you are filled with fear and doubt about whether you are good enough, and whether you will disappoint yourself and others who have bequeathed trust upon you. You are challenged to deal with your own insecurities, as well as the doubts of those who perceive blackness as a 'lack'; as poor quality and a lowering of standards. The absurdity of those who bear assumptions that discrimination has dissipated into thin air, while such appellations thrive, leaves many black academics having to navigate difficult academic spaces on their own. Becoming intentionally oblivious to the noise(s) and becoming resolute not to wear the victimhood mantle over my head have required much strength. Denialism by perpetrators has done nothing, but propagate subtle acts of discrimination, while countenancing their arguments has stalled progress in achieving equity in academia. Making a success of one's career is the only way to disprove the myths that abound in such unsupportive environments.

The Pains and Gains of an Academic Journey

The pain of having to scrape the surface to make headway in what would otherwise be available to all can only be understood by those who go through the same experience. If the past painful history of our country had not been, I guess there could have been equity of opportunity and outcomes for all. These narratives are not easily believed or understood by those who have not been in similar situations.

I joined academia in 2000 as an intern in research management at a Centre for Higher Education Studies at a well-known historically white Afrikaans speaking university. A shift from being a high school biology and chemistry teacher to be an academic in a transforming University was bold: first, the change of discipline, second, change of career, and third, joining a previously white institution at a time when the country was undergoing massive transformation. The bold step gives me chills today as I look back at all the struggles I endured to 'fit', to 'survive', and to prove my credibility (Shackleton, 2007) , but also as I look at all the achievements and celebrations I enjoyed to this end, albeit with little freedom as these were viewed with scepticism by those who claim to be legitimate knowledge holders (Maton, 2014; Mainah, 2016; Mabokela, 2012). I am also not surprised by my achievements because I have been a big dreamer from childhood. My heart yearned to be a medical doctor— a passion that still burns inside me for my late father nourished it well. Against my wishes, I found myself in a teaching career following in my mother's and big sister's footsteps. Although this was by default and not by design, I was not going to let that stop me from becoming a 'doctor' one day, and ironically, I became one in higher education. This account is therefore facing backwards into my lived experiences, inwards into self, and outwards into my environment, but most importantly it looks forward into the future that we can create for ourselves and others who join the academy.

My academic life, and my life in general, has been values-driven. I come from a family that possessed strong values and work ethic. My dear mother who was a primary school teacher and principal modelled many values that helped through tough times, and which underpin my life

today. Among them I can mention resilience, assertiveness, dependability and trustworthiness, respect for self and others, hard work, and her amazing resolve to provide for her family. Nothing surpasses consistent hard work and conviction to a worthwhile course—these do not escape the eyes of those with a similar conviction, and perhaps power and interest to forge relationships and become your allies/associates in the academic journey. The strength of my oral tradition upbringing has been to learn by listening to those with wisdom, observe, and watch, act, and emulate them. It was easy for me to translate these teachings into the academic environment and to grow my profession by paying attention to what academia and the university stand for.

Never in my academic journey have I enjoyed a day or holiday/vacation without working on building my profession. I remember all my working holidays and forfeited leave with fond memories—for in them I made a lifetime investment, learning and catching up on scholarly work, reading, writing, mentoring others, and supervising postgraduate students. All these investments and achievements would not have been possible without this huge sacrifice of setting time aside every day to build this career.

I have spent almost two decades working in historically white Afrikaans Universities, and I am currently working in a historically white liberal university. I have spent this time learning and unlearning cultures. As a black woman, I have met many challenges, but yes, there have also been many opportunities which I have intentionally embraced. My motto all these years has been to see challenges as opportunities and not to expend much energy lamenting these as constraints. I have not had any formal mentors by my side, but I have always imposed myself in a very subtle but respectful way on those who exuded wisdom and knowledge of higher education. I have not been scared to work hard for things I wanted, to sacrifice sleep, to ask questions when I did not know, and to learn from the work of others. I have found worrying about what other people should do for me or for other black colleagues not too useful, because oftentimes we fail to support each other, even though charity is argued as beginning at home.

Mentorship for me is two-fold, it is direct and indirect. Subtle imposition, observation, and emulation without impersonation or cloning

oneself all fall in the latter category. Direct mentorship usually is more formal, involving someone who is more experienced in helping you learn the ropes of the profession. In my earlier career at a historically white university, I benefitted from the wisdom of a white male who created many learning opportunities for me. He supported my understanding of higher education structures nationally and internationally, making strategies for mastering the academic enterprise transparent for me. My most memorable learning, however, came indirectly. I observed the strategies and approaches my experienced and learned colleagues employed and learned from everyone who surrounded me. This way of learning saw me grow in academia in a short space of time.

More than ever before, many academics are inundated with their own work (teaching, research, community engagement, institutional contribution, and developing themselves professionally). Institutions have also massified, while cohorts of learners have changed drastically. All these aspects are demanding much more from those with power and experience. My advice to newcomers is to value indirect learning opportunities, as not everyone may be privileged to have a mentor.

I am also worried by expectations that those who are alleged to have 'arrived' or 'made it' in academia should mentor others single-handedly. This expectation can serve to stifle the growth of those who give hope to others. As we argue for the building of a kinder values-driven academy, we should be sensitive to the changing nature of academia, and the huge expectations on those academics who could serve as potential mentors, advisors, collaborators, and sisters to create an ideal future—one that is hopeful, kind, and truly inclusive.

I have chosen to model good academic business conduct and acumen, and I create opportunities for others seeking to transform themselves, inviting them into working spaces. Hard work, consistency, and dependability have become requisite attributes and criteria that I use as a basis for sharing my knowledge, energy, and time with others. I believe these traits are a foundation for a successful academic career.

I must hasten to warn my sisters that modelling alone is not enough. It is incumbent on new academics to understand the goals of academia, what the profession stands for, and the skill sets required for mastery. They should develop and hone these. Finding yourself, your space, and

your voice in academia does not happen by default, but by design. It is not a big bang, but a long carefully crafted journey. In my unpublished book, 'Turning the Tide of Disadvantage in My Favour' (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2017b), I narrate my lived experiences in the form of aphorisms. I defy constraining scholarly works of writing (Mays, 2018, p. 4) as I decode myths about disadvantage, lack, and deficiency that many people associate with singleness, with women, and with black women academics in particular! In that work I conclude,

> …if only we could stop dwelling on polarised dimensions that the world has constructed for us as women, and as black women, but rather set our minds on what these connotations can turn into if we listen carefully to their cues, and if we make informed decisions to always turn the tide of disadvantage into opportunities, then a lot more women can become what they have always dreamed and aspired for South Africa has many opportunities and possibilities to offer and all we have to do as black women is to have an appetite for moving beyond long-established comfort zones and boundaries defined for us by others who because of their own selfishness, insecurities and lack of trust would rather see us occupy positions of no power forever (Monnapula-Mapesela, 2017b, pp. 33–34).

I am still on this journey of defying these boundaries, *shiFting* them out of my path. As I continue on this journey of a thousand miles, the world of growth continues to await me!

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How Does a Woman Find Her Voice and Not Lose Her Soul in Academia?

Ruth Behar

Many of us women, after we manage to survive graduate school and the excruciating process of attaining a job in academia as researchers and professors, end up discovering that we have to make a huge sacrifice to hold on to our positions, to be allowed to stay in academia.

That sacrifice: We silence our voices and feel that we lose our souls. We do the work we think we are expected to do, instead of pursuing the work we want to do. We speak in ways that don't feel authentic to who we are, how we feel, and how we envision repairing the world.

But does it have to be this way?

I don't think so. I believe the academy can be a place for us to do our most meaningful work, our most joyful work, and our most soulful work.

This is a process that can take an entire career to work through. It is an evolution and takes place slowly. There are obstacles along the way, including frequent disillusionment. But I believe we can find enough light at the end of the tunnel to make the journey worthwhile.

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Our academic work is born from the complex entanglement of our personal stories and the intellectual subjects that move us. The spark for learning is lit in our childhoods. We are driven later as adults to find the tools to articulate what we felt when we were young and make the feelings burn brighter and with more clarity, through the use of concepts, interpretations, and storytelling. As scholars, our aim is to learn all we can about a subject. The pleasure of learning, and coming to an understanding of a problem, is what motivates us to sit at our desks for hours at a time writing down, word by word, what we wish to share of the knowledge we've gained.

When I entered academia, it was unusual, if not taboo, for a woman to speak about her own life in the context of her research and academic writing. To mix the personal with the academic was improper conduct. But I felt compelled to pinpoint the connections between how I'd come to be an educated woman and the work I was doing as an anthropologist. This need to address who I was as a woman in the academy stemmed from my realisation that it was a privilege to be in the academy. I felt it important to name how I'd attained the privilege of being allowed into the academy as a woman who arrived in the United States as an immigrant child from Cuba and was positioned ambivalently in American society as a woman of colour.

My being born in Cuba was the result of the immigrant journeys taken by my four Jewish grandparents, each of them fleeing poverty and suffering in Poland and Russia, on my mother's side, and Turkey, on my father's side. Arriving in Cuba, they found themselves in a tropical island that both welcomed them and made them aware of their outsider status as Jews. They became part of a thriving Jewish community in Havana, where my parents met and married. Their relationship was viewed as a kind of "intermarriage" because their Jewish identities were so foreign to one another. Their families spoke different Jewish languages, Yiddish on my mother's side and Ladino on my father's side. They had different food and liturgical traditions. Their ancestors had spent centuries as minorities in contrasting majority cultures, Christian and Islamic. But they found unity in sharing a love for Cuba, the island that had given them refuge and which they expected would be their homeland for many generations to come.

The hope of permanence faded after the Cuban revolution of 1959. Social and economic changes threatened their livelihoods and religious and cultural identities. I was a small child, about to turn five, as I was swept up in these historical transformations that I couldn't understand but which were etched into my psyche. Our extended family decided to leave Cuba, carrying little more than suitcases filled with photographs and memories. My parents, brother, and I, along with my grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins on both sides, fled to New York. Abandoning our home in Cuba, and having to learn how to adapt to a new language and a new culture, taught us about the fragility of life and the need to be resilient.

Though I had trouble learning English, once I learned it, I served as a translator for my parents. They didn't have any schooling in English, and they learned the language piecemeal, by talking to people they encountered in their daily life. They held on to Spanish, always speaking it at home and with family and friends, so I never lost my mother tongue. And we also wove together the Jewish and Cuban and American parts of our identity through food customs, storytelling, and religious traditions.

Watching as my parents struggled financially, my father taking on three jobs, while my mother fell into spells of nostalgic sorrow, I realised as a child immigrant that things could change overnight. And if that lesson wasn't hammered into me by our sudden departure from a beloved island, it was reinforced when, soon after our arrival, we were in a terrible car accident, in which I suffered a bad fracture to my right leg and was immobilised in bed for a year. The immigrant experience, topped off by the sudden inability to move, made me acutely aware of catastrophes. After I came out of the cast, having spent most of the year in bed discovering a new love of books and reading, I became quiet, shy, withdrawn, and unsure of my body. In that period too, I believe, a desire to travel, to leave my bed, was also nurtured, creating the mix of interests that would lead me to want to fuse the professions of literature and anthropology.

But I would never have made it to college and graduate school and a career in academia if not for two devoted high school teachers. Mrs Weinstein, a Jewish history teacher, and Mrs Rodriguez, a Cuban teacher of Spanish and Latin American literature, encouraged me to study further. Mrs Rodriguez had been a university professor in Cuba, but after

emigrating to the United States, she had to acquire a second PhD to be able to teach on the college level. She took college courses at night and taught high school by day. Her commitment to scholarship made a strong impression on me, and I was determined to spend my life immersed in books and ideas.

I faced a major challenge to achieving my dream—my father. He disapproved of my desire to study and said I couldn't go to college. He demanded I stay home and wait for a man to come and marry me. I remember how shocked I felt that my own father didn't want his daughter to obtain an education. I applied to colleges secretly, with my mother sneaking money out of my father's chequebook to pay application fees. I was convinced that when the acceptances came, my father would change his mind. But instead, even though I was offered not only acceptances but scholarships, he became furious with me and said he would not let me go.

After much weeping and begging at the dinner table, he finally gave me permission, but with little good will. I decided then and there that I would never depend on a man for anything. Sadly, once in college, I felt totally out of place among fellow students who'd gone to private schools and learned Ancient Greek and Latin and travelled to Paris to see great works of art. I worked out a way to graduate in three rather than four years to bring down the cost of my living expenses, and so I would not feel too indebted to my father. I then applied to graduate school and was fortunate enough to be offered a scholarship and stipend for five years. The scholarship was the best gift. I finally broke free and was on the road to becoming financially independent.

It wasn't just my father's sexist attitudes that I had to fight against to gain an education, I also had to stand up to sexual harassment from male professors. There was a renowned professor who seemed very encouraging of my interests in Spanish literature and invited me to speak to him during his office hours about my thoughts on Cervantes. I remember he shut the door and asked if I'd go to a motel with him. He distinctly said "motel" rather than "hotel," since in the small town where the college was located, there weren't any hotels. The motels were the kind that had a square of individual rooms that opened up onto the parking lot. I was so naïve I didn't understand what he wanted to do at a motel. Couldn't we

talk in his office? He put his arms around me and then I understood what he wanted. I was disgusted and pushed past him and ran out of his office. Later, I was always embarrassed when I'd see him, as though his horrible behaviour had somehow been my fault.

As I approached my last year of college, I imagined I'd graduate and go back to New York and work as a secretary by day and try to write a novel by night. I was an excellent typist and had worked summer jobs to earn spending money. My father was proud that I could type a hundred words a minute, and he thought I'd make a good secretary. But then I stumbled into an anthropology class. The male professor genuinely encouraged me and urged me to apply to graduate school in anthropology. I applied to just two schools. One rejected me, and the other one, Princeton, accepted me, so off I went.

I had a quirky graduate school experience that completely suited me. I mostly worked with two professors, one male, James W. Fernandez, and one female, Hilly Geertz, and mostly took tutorials, creating my own syllabi for self-invented courses and engaging in weekly one-on-one discussions with them. Both these professors were interested in symbolic anthropology and the study of literature and the arts, so our sensibilities matched. But I wasn't allowed to spend all my time inside this intellectual bubble. I needed to take several required classes from traditional anthropologists who were appalled by my efforts to bridge anthropology and the humanities and arts. Threatening me with low grades and even the possibility that I'd flunk out of graduate school, they pressured me to think and write in the cold and distancing way they believed would give our discipline the status of a true social science.

I might have given up then. What kept me from doing so was the experience of fieldwork. Jim Fernandez had a grant that allowed him to support the fieldwork of several graduate students in northern Spain, and he asked me to do research in Santa María del Monte, a rural village near the city of León. I had been in Madrid and other large cities, but had never set foot in a village of small farmers who lived in adobe houses, raised cows, sheep, pigs, and other animals that resided with them, and worked the land with tools that had been in use since medieval times. It was an inspiring experience getting to observe Spain from the perspective of those who'd been left behind by children and grandchildren seeking a

better, more "modern" life in the city. People described themselves as "brutos," as brutes, for continuing to work the land. They were astounded I was interested in their lives and took me in as a kind of wandering granddaughter. By being willing to talk to me and sharing stories about their sorrows, hopes, and dreams, these strangers set me on the path to becoming an anthropologist. Relationships with people, I realised, were at the heart of this profession I'd chosen, and I wasn't going to let any professors who thought otherwise take that discovery away from me.

I soon came to understand that anthropology was a delicate juggling act between being out in the field connecting with people, who usually weren't academics, and being in the academy, attempting to impress and be accepted by other academics. My dissertation turned out to be a mix, or perhaps a mishmash, of distant academic writing and a few stories told to me by the people I got to know. My professors were pleased with my work, and I earned my PhD. They urged me to publish the dissertation, which I did. That was my first book, *The Presence of the Past in a Spanish Village*, which was released the same year I gave birth to my son. But I was unhappy with the book, even ashamed. I felt the writing was inadequate. I wanted stories to touch readers in the way they had touched me. I told myself: You have to be able to write better than this. You have to find another way to be analytical and interpretive and not put yourself at such a distance. My success felt like a failure. I promised myself that, going forward in academia, I wouldn't let my soul be lost again.

Soon after, I went for my first job interview at a prestigious college in New England, and it was a total disaster. Graduate students today at places like the University of Michigan, where I teach, are very professionalised; they practice their job talks and are well-prepared for their interviews. But I was given no pointers or guidance. I attempted to read a fifty-page paper in a forty-five-minute time slot. It would have made for a great comedy act, but I was pathetically earnest. Smirks and outright scorn were directed at me as soon as I finished racing through my lecture. And still, I foolishly believed I had a chance at getting the job. By then, I had moved to Mexico, to a small town in San Luis Potosí, with my husband, who planned to carry out his dissertation research there, also in anthropology. After a lapse of time, I took a trip to the city to call the professor who was chairing the job search. He laughed outright into the

phone and said that of course I hadn't gotten the job. "What you need is a speech coach," he said, and hung up.

I was twenty-six, with a PhD, and not sure what to do next. I was convinced I'd never return to academia. I decided we should stay in Mexico. Living on study grants, we stretched our small income to last for three years. And in those three years, though I wasn't aware of it at the time, I was nurturing my voice, not by finding a speech coach, as the cruel professor had suggested, but by doing more fieldwork and taking time to think and reflect on my research.

I had become interested in the debates around feminist ethnography and wanted to do research on Mexican women. I started by doing historical research through inquisition records about witchcraft, looking at how women were accused of being witches in colonial Mexico if they confessed to using magic against their husbands in rebellion against abuses in their marriages. While immersing myself in the lives of women in the past, I was living in the small town in San Luis Potosí, meeting women and getting to know their life stories. Then I met a street peddler, Esperanza Hernández, who was considered a witch in the town. She was very assertive. Most of the women were quiet and polite. On the Day of the Dead, she was in the cemetery, carrying a big bouquet of calla lilies to lay on the grave of an ancestor, and I asked if I could photograph her. She said, "What for?" In other words, she was asking, "What does she want from me, this anthropologist?" She allowed me to take the picture, but it was the last image on my roll of analogue film, and it didn't come out. We will have to struggle not to allow ignorance, greed, and cold-heartedness to become entrenched among us. I feared she wouldn't have anything to do with me, but fortunately, she took a liking to me and over several conversations told me her life story. She had suffered from child abuse and domestic violence. She was ostracised by the town, because after her husband had left her for another woman, she had then left him, and he went blind. People in the town thought she had used witchcraft to make him go blind.

Listening to Esperanza's story, and figuring out how to tell her story, and what her story might mean within an academic setting, was fundamental to my quest to find the voice I was seeking as a woman intellectual. I struggled with uncertainties about how to write about another

woman without "othering." I asked myself over and over if I had the right to be telling her story. I reflected on how I came to be the woman who was recording her story and bringing her story across the border to circulate in an academic context. I explored the journey that had led me, an immigrant Cuban girl, to come to my education and my privilege as an adult woman. All of this thinking found its way to my next book, *Translated Woman: Crossing the Border with Esperanza's Story*. It also inspired an anthology I co-edited, *Women Writing Culture*, focusing on the canon of women's writing in anthropology and the search for feminist and women-of-colour intellectual genealogies that were not taught in graduate school and needed to be unearthed to expand our understanding of the women who paved the way for our presence in academia.

When I returned to the United States, I received two postdoctoral fellowships that together gave me four years of funding, with a light teaching load and time to keep writing. I became a mother, something I hadn't been expecting but welcomed, and started a new life as a woman in academia. I remember teaching and rushing home to breastfeed, being a mother and a professor, barely sleeping, forging another relationship between my body and my mind.

When my son was almost a year old, I decided to again visit the village in Spain. I was going to be on a conference panel about death customs and wanted to interview people about deaths in their own families, how they grieved, and what burial traditions they followed. It so happened that during this time, my beloved grandfather was dying in Miami. I wanted to stay with him, care for him, but my family said I should go to Spain, that it was wrong to be waiting for him to die. Doing fieldwork in the time frame of his dying established a counterpoint in my thinking. My grandfather died while I was still in Spain, and I rushed back, but missed the funeral. I realised that the two stories were inseparable and needed to be woven together. I had to write in a way that would show the intersection between what was going on in my life and in the life of the people I was observing. The essay I produced, "Death and Memory," became the anchor for my thinking about vulnerability and what eventually turned into a collection of differently personal essays, *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*.

I was extremely nervous about letting this book out into the world with its emotionally resonant title. I imagined I might even be expelled from academia for writing it. While I did receive criticism, the writing proved liberating to me. I had found a voice that sounded genuine to me, and I felt I had reclaimed my soul. I returned to the form of the personal essay again in a much later book, *Traveling Heavy: A Memoir in Between Journeys*, where I explored in depth the entangled relationship, for me, between being an immigrant and a traveller.

I had been back to Cuba once when I was a student but had hoped to one day be able to return to do fieldwork. I started returning to Cuba in the early 1990s, travelling back and forth, having flashbacks of visceral memories, and crying as I walked on certain streets, unsure of myself and at the same time feeling compelled to keep going back. The experience was so wrenching that I found I couldn't be the anthropologist in Cuba. Another side of me insisted on speaking: the poet. My family was vehemently against my trips. They didn't think I should support a regime that we left under so much duress. Going to Cuba, I was taking a position against my family and against many in the Cuban-American community who viewed themselves as exiles who'd never return to the island until the political system changed.

But in Cuba, I wasn't among strangers. I re-encountered people who knew me as a child, among them the woman who was my nanny, and our old neighbours in the apartment where we had lived until the day we left. Trying to articulate everything I was witnessing and feeling led me back to poetry. I had cast poetry aside in order to become an anthropologist. And suddenly I found the only voice through which I could speak was poetry.

I met a lot of Cubans of my generation, writers and artists who had stayed on the island, and among them was a brilliant Cuban bookmaker, Rolando Estévez, who became a close friend. He was working at the time with a publishing cooperative, Ediciones Vigía, in Matanzas, two hours away from Havana, and making gorgeous handmade books. I told him about the poems I was writing, and he said I'd have to translate them into Spanish so he could read them. That was the beginning of a long, and still ongoing, artistic and poetic collaboration. My bilingual poems found their way into stunning handmade books he produced, and I found

myself becoming a poet in the land where I was born. Later, in *Everything I Kept/Todo lo que guardé*, I published a selection of those bilingual poems in the United States that had found their first home in Cuba, and recently I have co-edited a volume about my friend's bookmaking work entitled *Handmade in Cuba: Rolando Estévez and the Beautiful Books of Ediciones Vigía.*

After years of back and forth trips, I found my voice again as an anthropologist in Cuba and embarked on research about the Jews of Cuba. I travelled all over the island, meeting with people of Jewish heritage, as well as people who had converted to Judaism, and worked with a Cuban photographer to document the stories with pictures. Visual ethnography had long fascinated me, and it was exciting to mesh poetic texts with images to tell more complex and evocative stories in my book, *An Island Called Home: Returning to Jewish Cuba*. This project was emotionally powerful, forcing me to think about the parallel life I might have led in Cuba had my parents chosen to stay rather than to leave. Each person I met offered a different kind of mirror, another way to be Jewish in Cuba, challenging the idea that there is only one way to be "Jewish" or "Cuban," while at the same time giving me a clear sense of the shared history that united us. Anthropology gave me a passport to return to Cuba and do diasporic ethnography that reconnected me with a community I still belonged to, even though I no longer lived full-time on the island. I found it strange but also fascinating how I became an expert on the Jewish Cuban community through this work, turning into an ethnographer who was excavating the idea of home in the course of researching a place that had once been home.

You might wonder how I've been able to write in these different genres while remaining in an academic job, teaching full-time, advising graduate students on dissertations, younger colleagues, attending academic conferences, and being evaluated yearly on my academic contributions. During my harshest self-critical moments, I wonder if I've taken on too much and not done anything well. Yet in my positive moments, I am glad for all that I've attempted and thankful that I've fed my restless desire to explore different ways of speaking and being soulful.

Perhaps the biggest surprise of my career has been my turn to writing fiction for young people. As I was approaching the age of sixty, I started

thinking about that time in my life when I was immobile in bed in the body cast. Someone had urged me to tell the story from the ten-year-old girl's perspective. I didn't think I could do it, but I tried anyway, and my first novel emerged, *Lucky Broken Girl*, which combines an immigrant story with a story of overcoming adversity. I marvel at the fact that I was able to write this book, and now can speak to children about my life, my writing, about Cuba, about anthropology, about being an immigrant, and so much more. I marvel again that in the midst of teaching and university obligations, I was able to write *Letters from Cuba*, my second novel, about a Polish Jewish girl escaping to Cuba to help her father bring over the rest of the family on the eve of WWII, which focuses on the intersection of Afro-Cuban, Chinese-Cuban, and Jewish-Cuban identities. Here again, my life in anthropology merges with my love of storytelling and my desire to bring the knowledge I have gained to young people. After spending a lifetime teaching on the university level, struggling to write in sophisticated academic language, to be able to communicate with kids is an amazing thing. As an educator, I relish the idea of being able to speak to people of all ages. I plan to continue writing for young people in the future. Speaking to children allows me to speak to the child in me and to heal the things that are broken in that child as well as in the adult woman.

In sharing my story, I hope I've given a view of the journey I've made within academia, one among many journeys that are possible. I strongly believe that we all have to do the work that is meaningful to us. Sometimes we try too hard to impress others; we must do the work that makes us happy and fulfilled, that balances self-knowledge with knowledge of others. This requires pushing at boundaries, overturning paradigms, and enduring criticism, but I believe it is worth it to produce work that is evocative, and memorable, and multidimensional, and lasting, and also more accurate, more real, more grounded in lived experience. Taking risks is the only way to make discoveries. Of course, as serious scholars and writers, we need to be rigorous, carry out the research, ask the questions, do the background reading, know the scholarship, and be part of the academic conversation. But we also must give ourselves permission to find our voices so our souls aren't compromised.

Competitiveness and hierarchic structures make the academy a frightening and alienating place. We forget that we are on a shared journey of learning, of gaining wisdom, and of repairing the world. All our contributions are valuable. I am glad there are people adept at statistical analysis who can tell us how many people are trying to cross borders, just as I am glad there are people adept at humanistic research who talk to the border crossers and find out why they sacrifice their lives to make dangerous crossings. We need both perspectives, and many others as well, to understand such complex situations and enact policies to resolve them humanely.

Some of us might choose to become a "scholartist," mixing scholarship with the arts, perhaps compartmentalising different forms of expression, one day being the scholar and another day being the poet, or perhaps weaving the scholarship and the poem together into a tapestry. And others of us might decide to cite a few lines from a poem in an academic essay, and this can be enough. There is no "correct" way to find one's voice, to regain one's soul.

In conclusion, I want to acknowledge that this essay is based on a presentation I gave at the Making *shiFt* Happen virtual conference (see preface, this volume), but the words are finding their way to the page during the time of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. It is a time of extreme uncertainty for the entire world. We are learning that science and humanism, and medical knowledge and personal stories, must come together to bring us out of this terrible crisis. We can't know at this moment how exactly our lives will be changed. We can't know how universities will function in the near future. Many say that the ideal of a university education might already be shattered. We will have to struggle not to allow ignorance, greed, and cold-heartedness to become entrenched among us. We must hope for, and work towards, a future educational system that will move us towards an age of enlightenment that is welcoming to all. More than ever, we need to find our voices and hold on to our souls. In this sacred moment of global fragility, every moment counts, so let's do the work we care about.

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Theme 2:

Building Caring Communities and Enacting an Ethics of Care

Mentoring Beyond the Finite Games: Creating Time and Space for Connection, Collaboration and Friendship

Vicki Schriever, Sandra Elsom, and Alison L Black

Introduction

We are three women academics working at the same university. Over the last two years, we have been working together closely and giving time to intentionally supporting each other. We are using our chapter to think more 'care-fully' (Hawkins, 2019, p. 821) about the nature of academic work and what our 'working together, being together and thinking together' (Nixon, 2016, p. 169) has created for us. Our chapter is set in the context of the metric-oriented neoliberal university. It is focused on our stories of academia and our stories of mentoring. We use our chapter to explore how our relationships together are entangled amongst structural determinations about academic trajectories, about what is expected or desirable in the academy and amongst readily accepted views of academic hierarchy, time and success. We also use our chapter to consider the value of

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academics giving time to friendship and working in ways that enable experiences of slow scholarship, as characterised by Mountz et al. (2015): experiences that are 'collaborative, collective, communal' (p. 1237).

Mentoring Beginnings

Sandie: The concept of trust seems to be central

The word 'mentor' originates from Greek mythology and the story of Homer's Odyssey. Mentor, an old friend of Odysseus, was entrusted with the care of Odysseus' son to be a guardian and guide. Like many mentoring stories, it didn't quite work out as planned, and Mentor didn't quite live up to his 'wise advisor' or 'trusted friend' status. Today, the concept of mentoring still feels a bit mythical. It has varying boundaries and limitations that include/exclude particular relationship types (Gregoric & Wilson, 2015) with no single agreed definition (Meschitti & Lawton Smith, 2017). It is generally understood that mentoring involves a top-down framework largely based on a one-way flow of information, and a focus on goals and skills (Cleary et al., 2016). Usually mentoring happens as 'a more experienced mentor act[s] as a guide and teacher for a less experienced mentee by providing him or her career relevant support and advice' (Muschallik & Pull, 2016, p. 210). The role of the mentor is often defined as an 'individualised, personalised effort to assist someone in achieving their goals, reaching their objectives, and/or becoming successful' (Landefeld, 2010, p. 11). In this respect, mentors are viewed as role models, and the relationship between mentor and mentee is primarily based on sharing knowledge, expertise and professional experience (Cleary et al., 2016). The value of friendship in a mentoring relationship is rarely acknowledged.

Our story of mentoring began mid-2018 when our faculty emailed Level C/D/E academics calling for expressions of interest to act as mentors, and emailed Level A/B academics inviting them to be mentees. Staff were advised that a mentorship programme would soon commence 'to develop the faculty's teaching and research academic staff (Level A/B) to *become top researchers*'.

Mentoring effectiveness is usually viewed in this way—focused on helping staff to *become top researchers*, become productive, become successful—with notions of success located in objective measurable outputs and outcomes such as increased publications, grant income and career advancement (Muschallik & Pull, 2016). Subjective outcomes occur too, such as enhanced feelings of support or contentment with one's career progression (Bielczyk et al., 2018). Career progression is something we think about as women academics. It is well-reported women encounter more barriers than men in advancing their careers and so mentor support is perceived as assisting women's professional development, enabling a 'smoother' career path (Tharenou, 2005; Meschitti & Lawton Smith, 2017).

The presence of a mentor was a desire Ali (still only 'Level C') had felt across her academic life.

Ali: *I have held an idealistic view of what mentoring was/is, believing my career would have progressed further if I'd had a 'proper' mentor. When I entered academia more than twenty-five years ago, I didn't know how it worked. I had been a classroom teacher and was unfamiliar with the everyday norms of an academic life. I had to learn the very basics of how the system worked, its expectations and values.*

 During my PhD, my principal supervisor served as a research mentor. However, she retired just before my doctorate was awarded and just before I took leave to have my first child. Returning from maternity leave I felt alone and adrift. My research methodology wasn't typical, and my research tribe was still unmet, and as the youngest academic in my school I was the only staff member with a baby.

 I learned about the culture and expectations of academia through observation and trial and error. I saw people get promoted whose work was lacklustre and I saw amazing people persecuted to the point of mental breakdown. I saw women bully other women and I saw women care. The caring ones rarely rose beyond Lecturer or Senior Lecturer—perhaps they found their identities 'beyond' the academy, or were unwilling to play in ways that 'get you up the ladder'?

 Ten years later, as part of a School mentoring initiative, I was assigned to a male professor as his 'mentee'. We were meant to meet

regularly via video-conferencing. He was always "very busy" and never got around to reading the work I sent him. There was little recognition of the knowledge, interests or skills I brought with me. There was no listening, no relationship, no interest, no support and certainly no friendship. He occupied a place of power in the School, power (and workload) to facilitate my academic journey, yet he abused this power through his distance and disinterest.

Ali completed the *mentor* registration form. Vicki and Sandi as Level A academics expressed their interest in being assigned a mentor, completing the *mentee* registration form. They too had particular reasons for seeking a mentoring relationship.

Vicki: *When I received the invitation from Faculty to join a mentoring program I was on maternity leave and in the final stages of completing my PhD. I saw it as imperative to create a support system that would enable me to successfully navigate the changes I was facing. I believed the mentoring program would help me traverse the dual transitions I was contending with. I was transitioning from being on maternity leave to returning to academia fulltime and moving from being a doctoral student undertaking a PhD to becoming an Early Career Researcher. I wanted to navigate these transitions as smoothly and successfully as possible. It seemed important to find a mentor who could provide guidance and support.*

Sandie: *Coming to academia in middle-age, after a long career in the corporate sector, I found the workplace culture and practices to be somewhat abstruse. I had been comfortable with the business world, but I did not speak the language of the academic world, nor did I understand what it valued. However, I was familiar with business idioms such as "Key Performance Indicators" and could transfer those understandings into my new role and "tick the boxes" that mattered to the academy. I joined the mentoring program because I was hoping to reach the "making it" stage before anyone discovered I was faking it.*

As is common in many mentoring beginnings, a third party did the matching of mentor with mentee (Wanberg et al., 2003; Bielczyk et al., 2018). Members from the faculty research committee aligned mentor areas of expertise with areas mentees wanted to grow. Mentors were supplied with names of potential mentees and asked if they had any objections to the matchmaking. The mentee was then encouraged to contact their preferred mentor, and together mentor and mentee were to meet, agree on the aims, scope and nature of the mentoring relationship, and begin.

What Are the Aims, Scope and Nature of Mentoring Relationships?

The 'matchmaking' could quite easily have been unsuccessful, just as Ali had experienced when she as 'mentee' had been allocated to the male professor for 'mentoring'. We wonder about the variables that supported our successful mentor–mentee matching. Perhaps success lies in the usefulness of the expression of interest form, the wisdom of the committee and the opportunity mentees/mentors had to choose potential mentors/mentees? The mix of admin-matching and self-matching gave mentors/mentees a say in the process. Having a say is important because a good personal and professional fit between mentor and mentee supports the likelihood of the mentoring experience working and continuing (Carmel & Paul, 2015). Even with self-matching/self-selected mentoring arrangements, there is no guarantee mentoring relationships will develop.

Sandie: I don't think we could have planned our relationship in advance.

Soon after, our faculty was disbanded, and with it the mentoring 'programme'. However, we had already embarked on our mentoring journey. Had the faculty remained intact, it may have provided a structured programme with training, resources, goals and guidelines. Some believe more formal mentoring structures make for more impactful relationships and outcomes in the long term (Levy-Tzedek et al., 2018). The subsequent absence of a mentoring programme and lack of institutional guidance could well have hindered our processes. Instead, the freedom of 'no

programme' and 'no structure' enabled us to cultivate our own way of mentoring centred on what *we* found useful and of value—friendship, deep listening and slow scholarship.

At Ali's suggestion, we immediately unravelled the top-down hierarchical perspectives of mentoring which pervade academia and embraced a co-mentoring approach. This *shiFt*ed the typical mentoring relationship to one that was shared and collaborative, 'reciprocal and mutual', and a 'way of being together', where the creation of 'a safe space for vulnerability' was valued (Kroll, 2016, p. 49).

So, what began as an employer-sponsored programme for *top research* evolved quickly into the ongoing gathering of a supportive group of equals—of friends—interested in 'doing mentoring and academia differently', and 'infinitely'. We give time now to reflecting on the nature of the mentoring relationship we have forged and the aims and scope that have emerged for us.

Harré et al. (2017) propose there are two kinds of games: 'Finite games', common among universities and capitalist cultures, where the purpose is to produce, compete and win; and 'the infinite game' which symbolises our potential as people who might listen deeply to one another, observe and think carefully about life/work/growth, and find ways to flourish together. Odell (2019) considers the latter is no easy task. Resisting neoliberal and capitalist lenses of what is useful or of value takes energy, commitment, discipline and will.

We bring this commitment and wilfulness to our collaboration. Our co-mentoring relationship is focused on reframing and reimagining academia. It is focused on deepening our attention to our work, ourselves, our interactions and what is meaningful (Mountz et al., 2015). We are valuing and allowing slow-moving conversations and cultivating space and time to collectively reflect on the nature of our academic work and its impact on our lived lives. We are interested in the roles friendship and care can play in our academic development, and we position our relationship as a 'deeply pedagogical friendship' where we each learn from and teach each other through sustained and 'continuing dialogue', a willingness for 'open and generous responding', 'honesty', 'respect' and 'acts of kindness' (Nixon, 2016, p. 163).

Ali: *I want to thank you both for your generosity and willingness to let this mentoring process unfold. As I indicated, I wasn't sure about the 'nature of the mentoring' you might want, or I could give. It has been a relief to have you both reassure our gathering together to engage in conversations is of value to you, is supporting you.*

I love that it has become about sharing ourselves and our lives, our stories of weddings and husbands and children and hopes and heartaches and challenges and disappointments and grumbling and encouragement and friendship. Whilst we are still learning about one another and still building our relationship it feels important that we are making time to continue meeting together. We often have a plan and an agenda of things to discuss but then we let that fall away and sit responding to each other as we are, and where we are.

Belonging, Being and Becoming

We came to our place of co-mentoring with different circumstances, histories, identities and expectations. As we developed trust in one another, we vulnerably shared our hopes, frustrations, career stories and goals. As we read over the ways we write about ourselves and our work, we recognise the way career games and timelines too often serve to reduce us and unsettle us.

Vicki is 36 years old and has been an Associate Lecturer at our university for ten years. Her children aged 5 and 3 years old are both 'PhD babies'. Vicki has had an 'interrupted career'. In 2018, she submitted her PhD on her first day back at work from 20 months of maternity leave. Yes, she was writing while on leave. Her PhD was conferred in April 2019. (A little over a year after our co-mentoring relationship had begun, in December 2019, she was promoted to Lecturer.)

Vicki: *It was nearing the end of the year when Ali, Sandie and I had our first mentoring meeting. I had only been back at work for two weeks having just returned from maternity leave. (I have had two periods of maternity leave in the past four years). I was also in a strange post-submission space, where I was excited that I had sub-*

mitted my PhD (just two weeks prior) but anxious to learn the result. I shared my hopes for my career with Ali and Sandie, revealing I wanted to pass my PhD and then achieve promotion. With my return to academia, managing the 'juggle' of teaching responsibilities, publication and research project pressures, and significant caring responsibilities for my young family required intentionality, resourcefulness and collaboration. I wanted to not just survive but to thrive as an early career academic.

Sandie is 51 years old, and her children are aged 24 and 19. She has recently remarried. Sandie has had teaching roles in academia for ten years (initially in casual and contract positions). She completed her Master of Education five years ago and recently enrolled in her PhD (part-time) following our early meetings together. Sandie has a tenured position, and when we began writing, she was an Associate Lecturer in enabling education. (A little over a year after our co-mentoring relationship had begun, in December 2019, she was promoted to Lecturer.) As a new researcher, Sandie is negotiating the expectations of PhD candidature and approaching the first milestone of confirmation.

Sandie: *I had been teaching for eight years when I joined the mentor program, but I still felt like the new girl. A few weeks into our co-mentoring I arrived at our meeting upset. I had recently started a new role and a colleague had criticised my approach.*

A mentoring meeting did not seem the appropriate place to share my frustrations but (as these things inevitably do) it came out. The support I received from Ali and Vicki was incredibly uplifting. These were two academics, experienced teachers, who did not know me well at all, but who were able to objectively assess the work I had done and reassure me of its quality. This was the start of an ongoing process of believing in my own abilities, accepting feedback and recognising the impact of academic cultures where competitiveness is so common.

Academia is my second career, and I face it as a very different person than I did my first. As a young woman, I prioritised my

husband's job over my own, took maternity leave twice and worked part-time in low level roles for nearly two decades.

I commenced full time work in academia when that marriage ended, and my children were no longer children. With hindsight I see the impact the traditional wife and mother role had on my career, and I am torn between regret for what I might have been able to achieve (at work) and gratitude for what I did achieve (at home). Consequently, I am loath to squander this second chance at a respected, worthwhile and satisfying career. I am active in my quest to make this second half of my working life more meaningful than the first. Our co-mentoring is part of that.

Ali is 52 years old and has been in academia for more than two and a half decades. She is a Senior Lecturer who has held tenured positions at three universities. She completed her PhD 20 years ago. Her children from her second marriage are aged 19 and 17, and her step-children are aged 38 and 31. Carer responsibilities for her parents (now both deceased) and children have led to multiple 'career interruptions' across Ali's academic work history. (A little over a year after our co-mentoring relationship had begun, in December 2019, she received a letter to say the promotion committee had determined her application to Associate Professor was unsuccessful.)

Ali: *I felt uncertain being positioned as 'experienced' by Sandie and Vicki. There is always a sense (given how long I have worked in academia) that I have not made it very far. I carry a sense of shame, I think, about my 'slow career'. Perhaps grief and loss too? I have given so much of myself and my time to the academy alongside considerable personal/family responsibilities. There has been a lot to juggle, and multiple career breaks have impacted academic networks and networking. Academia has often felt lonely.*

I have found solace, support and sustenance writing with other women, and this has brought life-giving aspects to my academic work. My writing has become a guide and a compass. Through my writing as research I have found my voice and my convictions. I bring these to our mentoring relationship. I also bring my desire for integrity, openness and authenticity—for I want what we do to be

> *meaningful and deeply felt. I want our work to be about more than technique, success, or outputs.*
>
> *I want us to create time and space for care and mutual support. I am glad Vicki and Sandie want this too.*

In our early conversations, we found ourselves discussing what 'belonging', 'being' and 'becoming' in academia entail—becoming successful, becoming a researcher, becoming a writer, becoming a mentor, becoming more ourselves. Ali had (with others) been exploring ideas around 'becoming' and '(un)becoming' academic and engaging with processes and practices that value lived experiences and the unveiling of our vulnerable and embodied selves in our work and research through storied, collaborative and kind processes (Black et al., 2018). Troubling neoliberal notions of becoming and exploring collaborative and kind processes unsurprisingly carried over into *our* conversations too.

Vicki and Ali are both Early Childhood researchers. As Vicki and Ali listened to Sandie talk about her desire for her students to experience belonging, they thought of the early childhood framework *'Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia'* which guides early childhood educators, and which their pre-service teachers drew upon in their studies (DEEWR, 2009). Fundamental to this early childhood policy document is a view of children's lives characterised by belonging, being and becoming. These three interconnected words and experiences seemed really important for *our* work together. We began to bend and refocus the original purposes of this policy, utilising it for our own imaginative retellings of our own belonging, being and becoming in academia.

We created a collaborative Dropbox folder 'becoming researchers' and folders within that to hold our writing and reflections: becoming PhD student_Sandie; becoming ECR_Vicki; becoming mentor_Ali. These words—*belonging*, *being*, *becoming*—have subsequently woven themselves into our co-mentoring relationship, our writing and our lives in and beyond academia. They permeate our heartfelt questions and discussions.

Where/how do we belong in the academy?
How do we be ourselves?
How do we write ourselves, our work, our lives?
What do we want our becoming researcher/becoming academic to entail?

Belonging

Experiencing *belonging* and connection is vital for us all. We know from Maslow's hierarchy and our own life experiences that feelings of belonging shape who we are and who we might become. Yet, institutions like to separate 'personal' from 'professional', and workplace structures repeatedly communicate (often by their lack of acknowledgement of human experience) such separation is appropriate (Black et al., 2017). Conversely, author of *The Courage to Teach*, Parker Palmer (2007) describes the value of standing 'where the personal and public meet' and leaning into vulnerable connections and relationships with one another.

Sandie: *What I bring with me to our co-mentoring circle is celebrated, and my 'not-knowing' is not something to feel ashamed about. We recognise and affirm each other's worth.*

Relationships and interactions are crucial to a sense of belonging. They require time and commitment and holistic approaches that recognise personal, social, emotional, spiritual and intellectual dimensions. Neoliberal institutions forget how essential relationships are to staff wellbeing and 'productivity' and the quality and nature of time that is needed. Instead, institutions value short-term outputs (usually of a numbered and monetary kind) rather than 'long term purposes' (Nixon, 2016, p. 161). Time is 'constructed as a continual efficient progress from the past into the future' and meant to be used 'to accumulate grants', 'and publications' and 'improve teaching evaluations' (Shahjahan, 2014, p. 492).

However, we are choosing to focus on *more-than* short-term outputs. Our focus on long-term relationship-building and our 'giving time to friendship' facilitates for us a sense of belonging and offers us hope for our future becoming. We are inspired by stories of other academics, such as Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers, and how essential friendship was to their life and work (Nixon, 2016). Their friendship, based on equality

and reciprocity, reminds us that the quality of the human relationships that comprise an institution is what really matters, not pre-specified targets, or output-driven goals and objectives, but people, people 'working together, being together and thinking together' and 'in the spirit and practice of mutual trust' (Nixon, 2016, p. 169). *Our* 'time of friendship' is a way of remembering who we are, even as the institution tries to categorise us through narrow lenses of performativity.

Vicki: *Women supporting and encouraging women—being strong and awesome. That is what we are doing, who we are being.*

Our co-mentoring is friendship 'in-the-making' supported by 'ongoing dialogue about ideas and events and continually reinforced by the routines and activities of friendship' (Nixon, 2016, p. 169). We give time to friendship by meeting regularly, setting aside two hours or more for conversation and often the sharing of a meal. We meet fortnightly or monthly depending on our commitments. But we make time to meet and then protect the time we have scheduled. We face ever-present pressures and deadlines, but this time together connects us in deep ways, supporting our sense of belonging. We protect it.

This Space by Vicki Schriever

We have created this space
A space where we come together to connect, listen and learn from one another.
This space is a place to be authentic,
To drop the academic mask and share our truths, hopes, ambitions, hurts, failings and challenges.
Here, we are ourselves.

We hold this space for each other,
Value it and shelter it from the endless onslaught of academic demands that threaten to encroach and take over.

Yes, we hold tight and protect this space.

Sandie: *That's lovely, Vicki, and upon seeing your diary, I felt proud to be a part of creating this space.*

The experience of COVID-19 and our workplace's communication stream of dysfunction and change have intensified our collective longing to share our lives. Our experiences of our workplace, and of this pandemic, have heightened our intimacy and care for each other. With COVID-19, we have been connecting virtually by email and by video conference and sending each other inspirational images, ideas, links and messages in between our meetings. With these care-full, relational and everyday practices, we unplug from the busyness and the craziness and connect slowly to what matters. Our 'labours of caring' involve caring for each other as individuals, and also 'care-full negotiations' which help us 'combat the debilitating effects' of the 'bureaucratic practices that reduce' our 'bodies' and 'lives' to 'data' and 'metrics' (Hawkins, 2019, p. 821). We use our conversations and interactions to check in together and find sustenance and deep relatedness. With our care-work, we are enacting an ethics of care and attending to an ethics of belonging (Fig. 1).
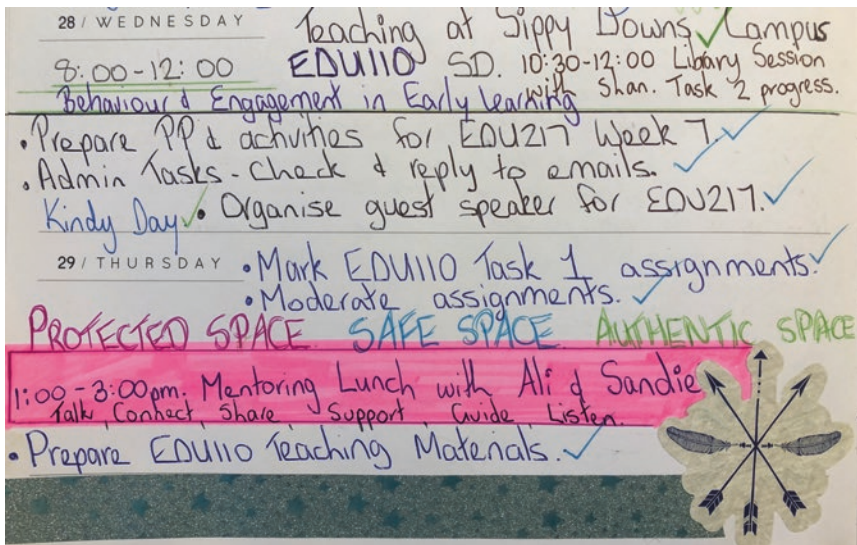
Fig. 1   Protected space, safe space, authentic space—Vicki's diary excerpt

Ali: *I love our gatherings so much. They are uplifting, inspiring, life-giving.*

          I like we can be a sounding board, a 'posse of support' as Vicki says.

The mentoring relationships we have formed with one another are a combination of organic growth and intentional cultivation (Carmel & Paul, 2015; Schriever & Grainger, 2019). We have created a 'safe space'. There are no academic masks. We reveal the flawed, messy, worried, trying-our-best versions of ourselves. Bringing our authentic selves to the workplace and appreciating and recognising all the non-work dimensions (emotional, social, cultural, spiritual, political, etc.) that make up our lives and identities support our sense of belonging (Mountz et al., 2015).

Vicki: *There is a very high degree of trust within our mentoring circle of three. Trust has been built to the point where truths can be spoken, hurts can be shared, and failings can be voiced. This bond of trust allows confidential issues, personal challenges and concerns with colleagues to be revealed and we know what is spoken will not be relayed to anyone else. Together we have created a space that goes beyond professional mentoring to encompass connection, friendship and genuine care for one another. If there was only ever talk of publications, grant applications or our h-indexes I would not reveal my truths, my struggles and my successes. It is through Ali's leadership and her authenticity that I feel I too can be who I am within this co-mentoring relationship.*

Our experiences of friendship and belonging are opening alternatives and showing us what fruitful engagement looks like and feels like. Together, we are rekindling hope during these times of uncertainty.

Being

Being recognises the importance of knowing ourselves, of making meaning and of engaging with the joys, complexities and challenges of everyday life and work. Our work isn't only about the future, it is about the present, about being ourselves while being in relationship with other

people, ideas and imagination. It is also about being well and being comfortable in our own skins.

Ali: *So, in terms of our mentoring together I am thinking about why it is working. It is working because we have come together open to being ourselves, to being vulnerable, to saying we don't know it all. We are being curious, and not needing prescription. We are being flexible, having mini goals, but valuing care and laughter, recognising our 'outputs' don't have to be the standard outputs. It is working because we are not letting meeting times slide. We make the next appointment each time. We are letting each other know this is doing something good for us—it is encouraging us, is our safe little haven, and our slow tiny act of resistance. I think we are all a bit activist, don't you? Not good little girls who do what they are told, but women who have had hard knocks and who have had to persevere, had to find strength they didn't have, had to endure. We also recognise through all of this we can't take life too seriously. It will soon be over. So, we need to laugh and celebrate the small stuff. And we do!*

Our giving time to friendship rearranges neoliberal frames of reference about what is useful and productive. Tired of the university's preoccupation with numerical evaluations, deliverables and productivity, we intentionally bring our focus to 'being'—'being present', 'being authentic', 'being in relation'. We talk about who we are, what we are interested in reading, our relationships with writing, our writing rituals and how we overcome self-doubt. Our meeting and writing together is a way of contesting how the neoliberal university determines our value.

We are mindful of the finite games, of 'things that can be counted', and we do talk about activities that might strengthen or challenge our careers. But, we use our time together to look after ourselves and each other, to build a broader sense of care that has the capacity to hold us in this diminishing devaluing neoliberal landscape (Mountz et al., 2015; Odell, 2019; Black et al., 2017).

Sandie: *Why do I feel guilty when I try to keep my work to work time? When I told a senior colleague that I didn't want to work week-*

> *ends, she replied "oh, so you don't want to be a real academic?"*
> *She wasn't being mean; she was simply sharing her belief that*
> *those who take academia seriously need to take it seriously seven*
> *days a week.*

We are fuelled by the ideas of slow scholarship and the infinite game (Mountz et al., 2015; Harré et al., 2017; Shahjahan, 2014). These ideas offer us alternative ways of being academic: to choose an ethic of care and an ethic of time for slow and caring work, to not shy away from talking about life, or how intertwined life and work are.

Together, we are fashioning safe spaces in which to be authentic, to share our hopes and dreams, as well as our dilemmas, challenges and failings. As we encounter difficulties or obstacles within our professional/personal lives, we share them, hold them and draw strength from one another. This safe space of being who we are and being cared for is an empowering space. It reminds us of our agentic capacities to remake the university.

This time of being ourselves and being together helps us listen and hear in embodied ways the 'internal' and 'external rhythms' of our lives (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 19). It is as Papastephanou (2015, p. 178) describes an 'offering [of] one's time to the other as a gift…living one's time as a shared experience'. It is a way of reclaiming a different tempo for our work, something slower, suspended, more organic, contemplative, yet something very deliberate.

Becoming

Becoming recognises organisations and people change, as do our identities, understandings and priorities. While the university is interested in us becoming *top researchers* and using our time efficiently and productively, we are thinking carefully about what becoming in academia means for *us*. We are thinking carefully about *our* academic identities and priorities.

Michelle Obama in her memoir *Becoming* (2018, p. 419) reminds us becoming 'isn't about arriving' or 'achieving', but rather is 'forward

motion, a means of evolving, a way to reach continuously toward a better self', and it requires 'equal parts patience and rigor', 'never giving up on the idea there's more growing to be done'.

Our co-mentoring relationship is focused on growing this patience and rigour through growing friendship, growing slow time and growing values. Through our conversations, we are growing our understandings of academia and how we are experiencing it. We know we have been disadvantaged by university structures. Our own stories of 'interrupted', 'late' and 'slow' careers show this all too plainly. Sharing our lives is a way of challenging the dehumanising effects of quantifying productive time through narrow metrics, finite games, output counting and career games. Through giving time to friendship, we are dismantling the idea our personal and professional identities are separate from one another—because our lives and work are intricately entangled. Acknowledging this entanglement is nourishing.

We have spent time discussing and debating workloads, exploring interests and priorities, and making conscious decisions about how we want to engage and what we want to give our time to. We have learned how to consider opportunities, and we have practised refusing them. Saying no to unrealistic expectations of productivity is helping us construct healthier goals. It is helping us stay true to our personal priorities, and we are becoming more attuned to the dangers and dangerous effects of overwork—and to the pressure we feel to 'do it all'. Our co-mentoring processes and practices remind us to keep making time for ourselves and our own scholarship.

Sandie: Hi Ali, in case you were feeling obliged to respond to the request for your participation in the HEA support roles, I'm just pointing out we don't have time and it's not on our lists of priorities. I've just given myself the talking-to and thought you might need a reminder as well.

Yet, we cannot completely escape the demands of the university. Academia requires we attend to the finite games. However, we are learning what Harré et al. (2017) declare, the university's finite game of *the career* 'can and must be played with, in an effort to bring alive the infinite spaces that

lie between' (p. 8). Engaged in processes of mutual care, we are finding our time of friendship is a way of clarifying, connecting and staying whole, while interacting with the finite games. Even finite games like academic promotion.

We know the career game is fraught and promotion is a particularly competitive and potentially harrowing finite game that pits individuals against one another. But we decided to engage with the process collaboratively, and to each apply in the 2019 round. We talked through strategies, formats and ideas, shared and read each other's drafts and final applications, provided honest feedback and spoke words of encouragement and strength when self-doubt threatened to take hold. It was 'a deliberate move away from an individualising, hidden, and competitive exercise' to a 'transparent and collective process' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1243).

Vicki: *Our group gave me the confidence and support to turn my professional hopes and dreams into realities and I am incredibly grateful to my mentoring team for their encouragement during this critical period.*

Sandie: *My reticence about applying stood out to me and I realised I have been guilty in the past of waiting until everything is 'perfect' before putting myself out there.*

          I knew promotion was a long shot as my PhD is still in progress, but I workshopped the application with Ali and Vicki till I felt confident about meeting the criteria.

          I needed an extra nudge to take the risk.

Ali: *We knew we were all worthy, but we also knew the risks. We talked through the 'what if one of us doesn't get promoted' scenarios and explored sensations of possible pain. I knew women are underrepresented in this professorial rank, that education and arts-based research are not valued or well understood in our university. But I had worked with sustained excellence and intensity and leaned too far into hope. I believed I had met the metrics and measures; others (seven professors) believed I had too. I wanted to be the proof you could do academia differently and still find academic recognition. I didn't expect the grieving to be so intense, to*

feel so exhausted, wounded or ashamed. Vicki and Sandie have offered me such care and safety. They have let me cry and they have comforted me. With compassion they are helping me recover and recalibrate. This time of friendship offers healing. It reminds me failure brings important lessons. The academy presents such a seductive image of success. And despite everything, we want to be winners. But friendship and failure have reminded me I am not here to further my career, or to win. I was never here for that.

And so, our co-mentoring relationship helps us resituate ourselves and remember our shared values. Winners or not we are creating a culture of possibilities that allows us to do our best work and be our best selves, to think about how we work, why we work and who we are as we do this work. Like Harré et al. (2017, p. 9), we say with solidarity and pride that the co-mentoring relationship we have nurtured is 'not defined by being strategic' but instead by 'a deeply ethical and caring mode of academic friendship'.

Sandie: I like the analogy of taking someone under one's wing; it feels very feminine to me. Our friendship has made me think about the importance of being there for others.

Our co-mentoring relationship has provided a feminine wing, a place to shelter, connect and renew. It is here we can lament the 'pervasiveness of neoliberal logics', the 'counting culture' that seeks to inform 'our identities and interactions' and leave us open to 'institutional shaming' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1243). For even though we can become undone by the demands, comparison and competition, we are *more-than* our outputs and research production, we are *more-than* our h-indexes, publication numbers, grant income receipt amounts, PhD completion rates and statistics, and we are *more-than* our promotion successes or failures. While it could be considered that our time of friendship didn't help 'Ali's' career trajectory, or circumvent the painfulness or the pulling apart that she experienced within herself at not being promoted, it did offer something essential and important: it helped Ali to remember, helped each of us remember, 'why we are here'—and it is *not* to 'further our careers' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9).

This trusting, caring place that supports our 'forward motion', our 'evolving' and 'becoming' is a place where we engage with the wonderful (as well as the terrible) and advocate for *what we love*, for what *really matters to us*. It is a place where we are developing our resilience and engaging in ways that sustain us. Our care-fully cultivated academic friendship supports us as we live through frustration and disappointment as well as through times of inspiration and celebration. We are imagining together and developing our sense of desire and delight for meaningful lives, work and contributions—for lives and work that are relationship-focused. And we are counting differently, engaging with generosity and care—while also reviewing each other's drafts, submissions, papers and applications.

Our co-mentoring relationship has supported our moving forward in the academy in finite and infinite ways. We have been awarded teacher fellowships, and we have experimented with collaborative writing techniques, increasing our research outputs in the process. Importantly, however, we have selected and worked towards these activities thoughtfully and care-fully.

Vicki: *I gained so much more than I first anticipated. Our co-mentoring friendship is a launching point for our continued writing and sharing with one another. In this safe space I am able to connect, learn and grow from my experiences.*

The richness of our relationship is not easily quantifiable, but it speaks to the importance of academics giving time to sharing experiences and how being authentic, open and responsive, and seeing the interconnections of personal and professional growth might help us all to flourish. The contemporary academy's reward structures seductively invite us to play the finite games. But we are all *more-than* our careers. Our time of friendship has helped us do 'activism on ourselves' and helped us 'remember why we are here in the academy'—that *we* are here to 'keep alive that which expands our corner of the "infinite game"' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9).

Conclusion

We are three women academics who have cultivated 'a time of friendship' through a co-mentoring relationship. Our 'working together, being together, and thinking together' in a spirit of slow scholarship has been incredibly life-giving. It has promoted openness, care and thoughtfulness in our work and the living of our lives. As a result, we believe there is great value in building 'collaborative, collective and communal' connections in academia. This does require a willingness and a wilfulness to concentrate on the 'infinite game'. It does ask of academics a commitment to giving themselves over to cultivating genuine and sometimes vulnerable relationships and directing individual and collective goals towards ethics of care, ethics of time and ethics of belonging and friendship rather than the high productivity favoured by the neoliberal university.

We have benefitted greatly from attending to relationship and to these ethics. This focus has connected us to the infinite game from which we are drawing hope, inspiration and strength (Harré et al., 2017). The infinite game is a long game, however, as is building trust and spaces of safety. It is a slow game too, requiring us to keep alive values of inclusion and possibility. Belonging, being and becoming in the academy require time and imagination. Our work continues, but it is worthwhile work. In such work lies a different, kinder, more hopeful culture and world for us all.

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A Collective Feminist Ethics of Care with *Talanoa*: Embodied Time in the *ShiFting* Spaces of Women's Academic Work

Katarina Tuinamuana and Joanne Yoo

Feminist Performances of Collective Self-Care

Our worlds comprise multiple spaces. These spaces constantly shift to mingle and separate, collide and integrate, and assimilate and destroy. In this movement, how do we, as women-academics, negotiate the demands of work and family, of research and teaching, and of partners and children? Moreover, how do we do this in university workspaces increasingly weighed down by performance pressures and expectations imposed on us by the 'intensification of time' (Ylijoki & Mäntylä, 2003; Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020) and via audit cultures and their

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attendant practices of narrow, techno-rational accountability (Tuinamuana, 2011)? This dense mass of weight carries within it the debilitating injuries of academia, 'chronic stress, anxiety, exhaustion, insomnia and spiralling rates of physical and mental illness' (Gill & Donaghue, 2016, p. 91).

In this chapter, we draw on feminist understandings of self-care to address these questions. We examine in particular the 'ethics of care' as articulated by Mountz et al. (2015). Our position is that self-care is not only about the individual looking after themselves through the usual self-care avenues such as meditation and relaxation techniques, but must also be strengthened through a collective ethics of care. We see *talanoa* (explained fully later in this chapter but seen as *collective/connected story-ing*) as a way into this collective action. A collective ethics of care encompasses what Mountz et al. (2015) refer to as a 'slow' scholarship that is 'not just about time, but about structures of power and inequality', a slow scholarship that is about 'cultivating caring academic cultures and processes' (p. 1238).

We have chosen to write in a narrative style, using micro-stories to explore these questions that have had a persistent impact on who we are, and how we perform our 'selves' as women in time-poor and intensified academic workplaces.

Our Story

Our story starts in a bistro/pub. The lights are dim, concealing tired eyes and lined faces, faces that are just starting to reassemble themselves in the company of other women-academic colleagues. We laugh a lot and tell funny stories about ourselves, easing our way out of the heavy weight of work and family responsibilities.

Ironically, sharing our stories of exhaustion opens a space of nourishment and release. A random comment about a writing retreat on an exotic island quickly spirals into suggestions for attending a yoga retreat. The idea is savoured by our group, and words carry new possibilities and illuminate the alternatives often difficult to conceive. 'Why hadn't we

thought of it earlier?' we ask ourselves. The answer is evident in the frantic pace of our lives.

We hold varying positions as academics in the university sector, but our identity as female academics bonds us. We share similar pressures of balancing family and work life, and struggle through the conflicts and disconnects of straddling 'two greedy institutions' (Coser, 1974): one with spouses and families who seek attention, and the other with a relentless point allocation system that measures performance. *Are we wedded to our work?* At times it feels this way, as we struggle to conform to notions of the 'ideal' academic worker, one able to devote themselves to 'accumulat[ing] grants, publications … as well as to improv[ing] teaching evaluations, and structure service commitments' (Shahjahan, 2015, p. 492).

By the end of the night, we had planned our escape to a yoga/retreat centre, a two-hour drive out of town, into the mountains. Just two nights away we say, anything longer than this would require multiple negotiations with family and supervisors. It was difficult to find such a space in our everyday work. As women in academia we have too often lost touch with self-care and care for others, being 'infinitely flexible, always on call, de-gendered, de-raced, declassed and careless of [our]selves and others' (Amsler & Motta, 2017, p. 11). The challenge of fulfilling demands and what we often saw as 'failure' to juggle family demands with professional life had made us ponder whether we were unreliable and ill-suited to academic work (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006).

Stories of Escaping the Workspace

Joanne's Story

It's Friday afternoon, I'm dying to get away, to retreat to the retreat. But right now, I'm stuck in a video conference call. *Stop talking!* I telepathically project this message to the face on the screen. The face drones on, 'measurement and impact' the mouth says. But my mind had vacated,

and my body's urge to leave is strong. Before I can stop myself, I find myself springing up and loping towards the door.

Finally. On my way. People make small talk on the train, relieved to wind down for the weekend. There is an opening of space as we break free from the tall city buildings. 'Not much rain', a man says to me. 'No, not much rain', I reflect back to him. The dark cityscape has been replaced by the green, blue, and grey hues of eucalyptus and gum trees. In spite of the dry weather, the wilted leaves are still beautiful. I fight against the pull of the beauty outside the window and pull out my laptop to complete urgent work. Papers need to be revised. Deadlines need to be met. Any free time must be dedicated to work that I have no 'time' for otherwise.

I wonder whether the weekend away for rest will be futile. Our work is never done, our brains always buzzing. It is the conundrum of academic life, a life that merges experiences of space; the personal and professional are indistinguishable.

Katarina's Story: I Am in the Afternoon of My (Life) Career

I like being here, the end is in sight, tranquillity prevails. But still I see the weasel words of corporate managerialism circling overhead. Crows swooping low. *Audit, measure, tally, bring in the money. Standardise, rationalise, neo-liberalise, commercialise, marketise.* I stand outside, looking in. Tired, excluded. On an unending diasporic journey. Moving from one door to another. But still I smile. *Yes, I am happy*, I say. It's easier to smile when it becomes too hard to fight (yet again) the unbounded pressure to narrowly measure performance, stuck in the dystopian world of higher education.

Sometimes a smiling assassin appears in my dreams. *Mow down the weasel words*, she says, *grind them with a hammer, crush them into smithereens*. I break free and smash the weasel words, gently tickling them into submission with a feather duster. I am left empty. Then I seek belongingness through acts of love. Telling stories like this one, finding my tribe

through expressions of grief and sharing of vulnerabilities. Acknowledge the savaging of bodies first. Then smile.

Other Ways of Being: An Ontology of *Talanoa*

Both of us seek to escape the pressures of managing the intensification and unyielding regulation of academic work. We are witness to the contradictions of higher education, a sector that is both 'stratified by and [yet] complicit in entrenched inequalities of access and outcomes among students and staff, with boundaries of who does and does not belong continually drawn, enacted, contested, and redrawn in the spatial and temporal locations of higher education' (Breeze et al., 2019, p. 7). We sense that our load lightens when it is shared. Mutual understanding and a recognition of common struggles lessen our loneliness. One such way of sharing this load through storytelling is by drawing on the Indigenous Pacific socio-cultural practice of 'talanoa'.

Talanoa originates in the Pacific Islands and has been discussed in the literature from several Indigenous perspectives including Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian (Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba, 2014; Nabobo-Baba, 2008; Naepi, 2019; Stewart-Withers et al., 2017; Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020; Tunufa'i, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006). Being of Indigenous Fijian heritage, Katarina recalls the word from her childhood being used in an informal sense to mean 'talking' and 'sharing stories'. More broadly, however, *Talanoa* can be seen to be an encompassing way of *being* that is multifaceted and infused with a historical, cultural, and socio-political heritage inclusive of:

> … kinship, land, tradition/custom, relationships, ancestors, ceremony, cosmology, space, language, ethics…. tolerance, flexibility, silence, humility, generosity, gifting, reciprocity, humour, empowerment, listening, sharing…. compassion, empathy, love …. (Stewart-Withers et al., 2017, p. 59)

In both a metaphorical and material sense then, *talanoa* is more than just the act of talking to other people. With such a broad remit, *talanoa* doesn't necessarily defy definition but is situational in its application. In

the realm of research methodology, it is seen, for example, as a way of generating data via culturally based conversations. Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) argue that research based on understandings of *talanoa* represents 'culturally and emotionally embedded reciprocal exchange between researcher and participants … [requiring] a deep, interpersonal relationship and emotional sharing between all parties involved' (p. 321).

We have previously written about *talanoa* in our work, seeing *talanoa* as 'a cultural practice that is about talking and connecting' (Tuinamuana & Yoo, 2020). Our use of *talanoa* as a guiding philosophy in our work draws on Fijian cultural practices of relationality and ways of being. We accept that in the academic literature, *talanoa* is usually perceived to be a helpful Indigenous community-connected research methodology. However, in our own use of the concept, we choose to frame *talanoa* as an ontology and a way of being. We choose to use *talanoa* in this way for a number of reasons, not least being that we believe it is important to foreground Indigenous socio-cultural practices and knowledge-making that have a rich historical heritage, in this way bringing these discussions to the fore as an act of decolonisation. The primary aim of *talanoa* is not necessarily to establish what is correct or true, in narrowly defined terms, but to recognise and establish good relationships for consultation and decision making. It is non-linear and reciprocal. In this relationship of *talanoa*, dialogue, compromise, and participant positionality are highly valued.

For the purposes of our writing and thinking here, we join Farrelly and Nabobo-Baba (2014) in linking talanoa to discussions of empathy. They argue that empathy is a core dimension of *talanoa* and suggest that we must 'move away from a Western ideology of subjective empathy to an intersubjective empathy' (p. 320). We draw on this idea of intersubjective empathy to enhance understandings of feminist ethics of care as a *collective* practice, one that we highlight in our analysis of our experiences outlined in the current paper.

Opening Circle: What Is Your Intent?

Having arrived at the retreat venue, and after settling into our rooms, we are invited to attend the 'Opening Circle' with the larger group set up in the mountain venue.

Joanne's Story

About 25 women are sitting around a room in loose-fitting clothing, looking around, with bright eyes flickering with interest. The instructor gently asks us: 'What is your intention for this weekend?' We go around the circle, translating intent into words. I scramble about in my mind for mine. It is still fragmented and frazzled, and there is a loud static noise between my ears. I cannot think of anything to say, and mumble weakly about trying to find some time to rest, not wanting to bring negativity into this tranquil space. My instinct is to cover up my fatigue with a bright smile and a joke, but as we go around the room, it seems that everyone shares the dilemma of not having enough time and space. The real challenge, someone noted, was in finding how to realise this intent in the *outside* world.

Katarina's Story

I generally don't like sharing private feelings in a public space. I am not comfortable with the 'circle' around me, some friends and colleagues, but mostly strangers. I am the only Black person in the group. I am worried that the weekend is going to be a self-indulgent, navel-gazing performance. For a brief moment I consider escaping, running out the door, back to the restaurant where we had had lunch (with a bottle of wine). I want that familiarity. Not for me this over sharing, and earnest gentle-toned civility. But hearing Audre Lorde's words in my mind *Caring for myself … is an act of political warfare*, I forge ahead with my 'intention' for the weekend: 'Um … I came up here with friends/colleagues from work … five of us … we thought it would be a good idea to … hang out.

I came with no expectations, I'm just so busy at work I needed a break'. Then I flash a big smile to the circle of women, and feeling uncomfortable, I stop talking.

Realising the Ethics of Care Through the Body

After the opening circle, we find ourselves immersed in an embodied world. Time is emptied of work and family; we consider alternative activities that slow down our pace of life. We lose track of time and our sense of orientation. Rather than being dictated by scheduled time, the focus increasingly gravitates to the body. It is through the body that we become lulled into appreciating the present moment.

Katarina's Story

It's the first yoga session of the weekend. I feel some excitement. Maybe the yoga poses will help settle my mind, I try to be optimistic. It is quiet in the yoga studio. Everyone has the right equipment, sitting on the floor waiting for our instructor to speak. She looks serene, and in my mind a bit dazed. I wonder whether she is 'on' something and decide that whatever it is *I want some of that*. My mind cannot settle. I listen to her voice, issuing gentle commands: *Stand. Sit. Stretch. Be silent. Breathe. Float.* I glance surreptitiously at the woman next to me, and another one across from me. Their eyes are closed, and they look at peace. I wonder what my face looks like, I think with some guilt. Probably all scrunched up, brow furrowed. The instructor speaks again. We are now doing downward dog (I think) and something else that demands a level of energy from me that I do not have. I stop. Sweaty. I want to cry. To sob. I don't know why. But I stay silent. The next morning, I ditch the yoga session and stay in bed, snuggled up with soft blankets. This is my timeless time.

Joanne's Story

There is something strangely compelling in the movements of bodies. I watch my colleague's body bend in exertion to match the instructor's yoga pose. A small line of sweat trickles down her nose and drops to the floor; her body trembles slightly as she seeks to hold her unnatural positions. Arms are contorted in strange directions, and her neck and arm shoot parallel to the sky. Something about this image draws my gaze. It is her body. It is trembling in exertion. She cannot control what it communicates. What was hidden in the backdrop is now foregrounded. Previously I had known of her body through observing the way she strode down corridors, commanding power with each step. I had, however, not heard the body's instinctual and primal voice of survival and strength. It was the voice that was both hidden by and overpowered by the mind's commands. *A flash of insight*. The body strove towards thriving and health. It gravitated towards self-care, even if the mind drove it relentlessly like a machine.

The body speaks what words cannot. I try to lie still with a small cylinder-shaped yoga pillow propping up my back. It opens up my chest and lifts my heart into the air. This pose brings sharp spasms to my lower back, as my body is not familiar with being uncurled. It is more familiar with being hunched over a keyboard. This process of unfurling softens the stiff lines of the body. I hear something cracking open.

When our instructor settles us onto our backs, we are asked to inhale and exhale deeply through our noses. My breaths are shallow and swift, like the heart palpitations of a small child. I am anxious. This anxiety is thankfully diminished by the comically loud breaths of the other bodies in the room. Suppressing my urge to laugh, I allow my breath to merge with this rhythmic sound. I begin to lose consciousness of a separate self as breath follows this steady beat.

I have deliberately chosen a spot next to the window, so that I stare uninterrupted into the sky. Unblocked by the vegetation, the blue appears to stretch forever. It begins to rain. Small trickles of water appear on the windowpane. The world both outside and inside the room seems to reflect the rhythms of unfolding nature. We are creatures existing in

nature, embodied and present in the rhythms that give us life. Time sits still.

Embodiment's Connections to Timeless Time

Engaging in yoga, drumming sessions, and mindful eating within the retreat brings our attention to the body, which lies at the core of our academic identity. Feminist work is embodied. Women draw on their bodies as a form of knowing, acknowledging its inherent wisdom. Such knowledge, however, holds less currency as dominant academic discourses revolve primarily around the intellect and mind. Feminist forms of embodied knowing attempt to break free from the binaries of Cartesian dualism of academia, which separates the body from the mind (Lipton & Mackinlay, 2017). Feminist underpinnings of research and writing assert that both processes are intrinsically related to the body, as 'writing *is* speaking the body and speaking *is* writing the body … the feminine defies all boundaries; it cannot be pinned down or controlled' (Lipton & Mackinlay, pp. 37–38). We cannot write or know without the body, as it is through our bodily senses that we encounter the world. And as women write with and through the body, they can further project themselves into the world in all their fullness, as Cixous writes:

> I shall speak about women's writing: about what it will do. Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies… Woman must put herself into the text—as into the world and into history—by her own movement. (1976, p. 875)

Through writing the body into being, women are able to challenge the dualisms that limit their presence in the academy (Cixous, 1976). This 'thinking-writing-body' of feminist knowing is 'linked to a feminist way of theorising being' (Stanley, 1997, p. 4) that allows individuals to access the alternatives and multiplicities of meaning, as well as the rich daily social practices that construct human experience (Leavy, 2012). The ways

in which we write the body *into being*, and how we engage in the social practice of *talanoa* are presented below.

Talanoa with Timeless Time

'I hope we don't drive each other crazy', Joanne says jokingly to her colleagues, unsure how they would all interact without the common factor of work, living in each other's space even for the shortest time, exposed to each other's rhythms and the day's scheduled activities.

The pace of time at the retreat is slow. There is no rush to get to a class or to get through one load of marking after another. Conversations flow smoothly. The days are structured only by meals, yoga, and meditation sessions. There are no points allocated for having eaten the fastest or finishing the most food, and there is no recognition for completing the more difficult yoga. Quantity does not equate to reward, and the point of each activity is enjoyment and nourishment. Here *talanoa* as a way of being supports the relationality between our bodies and other bodies, and between these bodies and the invisible structures of the retreat. Spaces become expansive with mutual states of understanding. Such understanding is achieved through common experience and purpose that reside in the body. As wayfarers going through a particularly rough patch of terrain, we have come to find rest in a unified rhythm of pace that is slower, more considerate, and caring.

In our little group of five colleagues, time expands as we speak into words the concerns that lie at the forefront of our consciousness. These conversations refuse a formal agenda, but are primarily about seeking connection and developing the relationality that encompasses *talanoa*. We talk about tenure, an often-unreachable goal for many of us in academia, and reflect on how this process can be made more difficult for women due to their care-giving responsibilities. Ylijoki and Mäntylä (2003) define this experience as, 'contracted time', referring to the anxiety of a casualised labour force over their insecure employment. Contracted time is uncertain. There are no promises of future work, which makes long-term planning difficult. As a result, non-tenured workers may feel burdened by a state of continual evaluation and surveillance,

and feel heightened pressure to perform to ensure the likelihood of employment.

In the safety of this group of women, we are able to share our concerns over future career development. There is space to broach the unspoken and silenced. We are confronted with the conundrum pursuing our profession as a 'career', as opposed to merely a job. The latter is what provides a salary, but the former suggests a higher investment in time and resources, which we can ill-afford. White (2012) raises this point, explaining how women occupy the majority of 'teaching-only' contracts, which leaves them vulnerable to ongoing career uncertainty. She depicts female academics as the unwilling 'foot soldiers' of the academy (White, 2012, p. 49). Female academics have also been likened to 'martyr saints', who undertake academic work that holds less currency, and by doing so, compromise their wellbeing and career trajectory (Hey, 2004, p. 35). Women may 'choose' an 'easier' teaching-focused career track to free themselves from constant worry about research output. They may 'choose' teaching-focused work as their workloads rarely permit the time to engage in research (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). These choices, when made under duress, are actually 'non-choices', as Hughes (2002) argues, 'One may feel autonomous and free to choose but the power of regulatory discourses means that such voice is "forced" and of "false appearance"' (p. 101).

Having worked for 15 years in non-continuing work, Joanne understands this desperate pursuit of tenure. Her academic journey has involved unsuccessful attempts to schedule the births of her two children in semester breaks and never taking enough maternity leave due to fears that 'out of sight' meant being 'out of mind'. Saying no to any offer of work had felt like the death knell of her career. She has become accustomed to swallowing up the demands of her body to 'get things done'.

In our conversations at the retreat, our shared experience helped create a common language that allowed empathetic sharing of lived experiences. Engaging in *talanoa* centred us within the present, allowing anger and healing to take place within the same space. It is difficult to understand or to be understood without a shared language. Misunderstandings become rife and relationships are broken. On the other hand, understanding and recognition can illuminate and heal.

Here our time is 'shared', rather than broken up. Without instrumental purpose (or an agenda), fixed time expands into a timeless time,

working through creative, interpersonal, and subjective states as it engages *talanoa* within the group. It is unlike the 'productive time' of the enterprise university (Marginson & Considine, 2000) that 'generates ontological and affective gendered violences in which "feminised" caring relationships of recognition and solidarity are devalued or denied' (Amsler & Motta, 2017, p. 7). Quiet moments of sharing at the retreat generate solidarity as we share career advice and similar concerns of juggling family and work life. Similarly, d'Araújo et al. (2016) write about the 'confidence and complicity' and 'inner empowerment' that comes about when female academics come together to share their stories (p. 115).

The Closing Circle—Has Your Intent Been Realised?

We come to the last session of the retreat, and are asked, *has your intent been realised*? This expectation hangs suspended in the spaces of the opening circle. Had our desires for rest, recentring, and renewal been realised? Was this even possible in the short period of time that was offered?

Joanne's Story

The same women sit around the room in a closing circle, we wait expectantly, sensing a conclusion in the air. It is the last session of the retreat, and there has been a *shiFt* in energies. Bodies seem calmer. The instructor asks us to reflect on the 'intent' of care established at the beginning of the retreat.

It was like taking a walk through a maze in the garden says one woman. She found herself desperately racing to find a way out, only to realise that the experience of walking through the maze was the end goal in itself. The maze was a tool for cultivating contemplating, and like a circle, it had no beginning or end. To be fixated on finding the exit would have defeated the purpose of entering its walls, which was to be in the present moment of walking along the path. This understanding helped her rethink the reason for her fatigue and the way of being that coloured and shaped every part of her life.

The women go around the circle disclosing a hidden pain or fear. Some reveal that the weekend was a step towards regaining wholeness; acknowledging hidden pain was a precursor to healing. A rift had been uncovered, which meant it could be addressed. Is this the power of a feminist ethics of self-care? Can flow and momentum be redirected towards a more expansive understanding of our work and lives? Can we work without a 'productive' agenda, using *talanoa* to stay connected in an arc of relationality?

When it is my turn to speak, I describe the cracking of rigidity and the peace felt in the body. The aching that precipitates in my lower spine has muted, and the heaviness in my forehead diminished. Perhaps the daily stretches had helped increase the flow of blood to neglected parts of the body. There was a greater familiarity of the body's limits as I gently coaxed it into the challenging yoga poses. Through being conscious of breath, I could also confront the moment-by-moment act of respiration that kept me alive.

Katarina's Story

Here we are in the circle again. After two nights and three days at this retreat, had we come full circle? And are we the same or are we different?

At the top of the circle sits my colleague and friend, Anna (a pseudonym). She is the first to speak but, after a few words, starts to cry instead. As I listen to her story, tears flood my own eyes, unbidden in a response of empathy and care for this dear woman, one of the most generous and kindest people I know. She has been through major grief over the past 12 months, and her personal life has been upended, changed forever, while simultaneously working to finish a doctoral degree. Through her tears and with her now hoarse voice, she tells us that she came to the retreat with the burden of the world on her shoulders, and although the burden is still there, the communion she has had with the four colleagues from her workplace has brought her fresh hope and energy. I watch as the women in the group seem to gently gravitate towards her, supporting her with invisible hugs. I watch as my three colleagues struggle to sit still, each one of us wanting to go to her, to comfort her, and yet we

instinctively know that this expression of grief through her body and hope through her words are, at this very moment, not about us. It's about her and the strength that she gains from us as a group. She speaks, she keeps speaking, through her sorrow, her anger, her joy. It is powerful.

And as each of us speak around the circle, the circle of words moves like the tide across the surf. Grief and anger mingle with hope and strength. Strength reveals itself from expressions of vulnerability, our weakness, our fury, and our passion. Our bodies seem small, some women rock back and forth as they speak, others have heads in hands, slowly shrinking inside themselves as they force the words out. Words so important to say, words that must be said, and shared.

It is over now. The last woman has spoken. There is silence. The mood is quiet yet strangely robust, like a puppy taking its first steps. Like a funeral and a birth combined into one, and celebrated. The circle has come full circle. We stand and stretch. We shuffle around in our bare feet, gently speaking with women that up to this point we had only smiled at or said good morning to. We look into each other's faces with a new openness, a nakedness without shame. I silently hug my friend Anna, our bodies settle into new ways of knowing, knowing that comes from vulnerability and from acceptance. I too have come full circle.

Telling Micro-Stories of Everyday Practice as a Collective Feminist Ethic of Care

Writing this chapter has helped us to be brave about being academics, academics engaging in spaces other than the formal academy. This renewed confidence in ourselves and in our relationships with others draws on the material experiences of the retreat, and the metaphorical movements of our bodies across physical spaces. These metaphorical movements manifest themselves largely in the way that we engaged in *talanoa* through timeless time, recounting stories, and building relationships. *Talanoa* helps us to collectively connect. We feel powerful when we relate, and relating thus *becomes* an act of power.

We experienced these stories as relational, in a similar way that *talanoa* is relational. Through our relationships, we were able to find solidarity and to find spaces to express what is often silenced and unspoken. In these spaces, we told stories of our lived experiences and narrated the impact of academia's complexities and tensions on our work. We continue to feel the constraints of accelerated and instrumental time through the wear and tear of our bodies, but are comforted by our experiences of seeking to 'care' for ourselves as a community of women scholars, luxuriating in the temporal states that accommodate the pleasurable, creative, and relational.

As we head back to the city, and to the other spaces of our lives, we know that we will continue to grapple with how we can move these relational stories to impose on the structures of the enterprise university. The retreat is not miracle material as such. But rather than conforming to the external pressures of time, we seek to reframe our perceptions of time through care-giving stories that allow us to pause, to reflect. We contemplate a timeless academia that embodies a 'balanced coexistence of various temporal orders and, particularly, minimise the negative consequence of the pervasiveness of scheduled time and the insecurity of contracted time' (Ylijoki & Mäntylä, 2003, p. 75).

In doing so, we hope to continue to contribute to ongoing debates around slow scholarship that support our *talanoa* through a collective feminist ethics of care, one that 'challenges the accelerated time and elitism of the neoliberal university' generating 'resistance strategies that foreground collaborative, collective, communal ways forward' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1237).

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Emotional Labour Pains: Rebirth of the Good Girl

Marguerite Westacott, Claire Green, and Sandra Elsom

Introduction

Clumsy artefacts of the love of a child whose entire world was her family, emerge from a forgotten biscuit tin. Typical memorabilia of notes, sewing projects and cards are roused, as the life of a family home is contracted and rendered into cardboard boxes. The precise, laboured letter formations of a 6-year-old focused on neatness, are etched on a 50-year-old piece of paper:

'Dear Mummy, I am being a good girl for you….'
(Personal reflection, Marguerite)

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'Good'. A construct that frames the efforts of a childhood, is challenged in adolescence, and revitalised to morph into the disciplinary, internalised voice of motherhood, employment, citizenship, partnership and professionalism. In the formative years, the ambiguous shape of 'good' is assembled, cemented and filtered into the many roles of self: an external cultural and social construct embodied and perpetually measured by feedback received from outside of self.

We are three women who have a past, present and future within and without academia. This collaborative autoethnography is written from our perspectives as early-career academics working predominantly in the enabling education sector of Higher Education at a regional Australian university. Enabling or bridging education programmes are a response to access and equity in Higher Education (Bradley et al., 2008). Our teaching requires the delivery of programmes that prepare students for their further studies and the unknown cultural environment of university. Our students are complex and diverse. Termed in the literature as 'non-traditional students' (Hodges et al., 2013), our cohort encompasses multiple equity groups who often face educational disadvantage or disruption, and academic, social and emotional challenges (Crawford et al., 2018). As such, our roles frequently demand a high level of emotional labour, as we support, guide and accompany our students in their discovery of university culture.

The act and effect of emotional labour in our work seems secondary and elusive, like catching a fleeting glimpse out of the corner of the eye. We realise that we rarely afford it the time or significance to examine its existence and purpose beyond accepting vague narratives of 'pastoral care'. In our work, it is just what we do. A given. A 'good (girl) thing' to do, informed by our internalised constructs of what it is to care. This prompted our decision to use writing as a method of discovery and analysis (Richardson, 1994), a way to understand that elusive 'fleeting glimpse'.

Our autoethnographic data were collected in the form of first-person, author-researcher's reflective writings. We met weekly, over a period of months, in a contemplative and vulnerable space (Behar, 1996; Walsh et al., 2015), to individually respond to stimulus inspired by literature around the theme of 'feminist ethics of care' in academia (Mountz et al., 2015) and self-care. We discussed and contextualised the articles according to our own experiences. Through consensus, we chose a word that resonated and spent thirty minutes free writing independently. We then shared

our responses with one another. We were actively curious to discover what emerged in each other's writing and were intrigued by the synchronicities. We then identified themes to guide collective dialogue on connection, care for others and care for self. Our stories became 'her' story. Through these written conversations, the 'good girl' emerged, encompassed and enriched by her many selves: the student, mother, academic (Gergen, 2000). We noticed that the 'good girl' was generous in her care for others yet rarely considered her own needs. We pondered how this construct has informed our lives as academics in the enabling teaching sector, and we questioned our interpretation of what it means to be 'good', what it means to care, the emotional labour of care and 'who cares anyway?'

> When she was a student, the criteria to reach Good Girl status were explicit, and she measured herself against them carefully. Attend every lecture and tutorial. Allocate time for study. Do the study. Get good grades. Make your family proud. Compliance is simple. As a lecturer, the expectations are less clear, beyond a lifeless job description, and she is unsure about her level of performance. She understands her students rely upon her; they have more confidence in her than she has in herself. She feels so bound up in trying to do everything right that she forgoes being herself in the classroom.

We constitute a 'non-traditional' cohort of academics, having entered academia from practice-based professional lives, diverse backgrounds and now teaching in a sector of tertiary education that holds a low profile in the academy. We also represent the 'non-traditional student' in our own diverse academic experiences, as mature age students, mothers, partners and employees whilst studying. Our 'traditional' careers have been punctuated by these many roles. Thus, our professional responsibilities to our students are experienced intellectually, emotionally and intuitively through lived experience. We relate.

> She did not feel so vulnerable as a parent, despite her lack of formal training. In those first weeks of looking after brand-new babies, she felt overwhelmed as she found herself unable to attend to her basic needs due to the all-consuming nature of motherhood. But she never doubted that she could manage. Where was the self-efficacy that supported her as a new parent now? Why was the imposter syndrome so overwhelming? She wonders how she would feel in the classroom if her upbringing had prepared her for the role of academic, rather than, or as well as, that of mother.

Over several months of research and writing, we discovered the good girls we have embodied. We examined their growth and recontextualised their embedded constructs. We identified the ways in which our pedagogical practice has been influenced by how we have been socialised into being 'good'. We witnessed the maturation, the *shiFt*, of the 'good girl' and reconstructed our understanding of her behaviour in the context of the academy. This chapter shares the recalibrated guide to being a 'good girl' that emerged from our collaborative process and from research exploring the praxis of care.

The Context for Care

The students we are working with have frequently experienced exclusion, marginalisation, trauma and misrecognition in formal systems of education. They often enter the university environment with lower self-efficacy than traditional students. For this reason, we are vigilant in creating positive interactions between ourselves and our students; we know the profound effect a simple conversation and authentic listening can have on their sense of belonging within the institution (Pearce & Down, 2011). Approximately half of our students are the first in their family to participate in tertiary education. O'Shea (2016) uses Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital to explain how, initially, these students can find university overwhelming as their learning includes acquiring the requisite cultural codes, language and social expectations associated with academia. Additional complications for this cohort include managing family responsibilities and work pressures, on top of studies. There is also an emotional toll as students grow beyond their peer group, family and sometimes their values. Equally, university can be an exciting, anticipatory space as new futures are imagined and realised. Therefore, it is not only academic transition that we support as our students strive to navigate the system. We are also supporting their emotional, social and cultural transition, as once our students feel part of their academic community, they are more likely to persist with their academic goals (Morison & Cowley, 2017). Thus, our work demands more than simply delivering an educational package.

Pedagogies of Care

We found in our reflections, common stories of care informed by recognition of the diverse backgrounds and lived experiences of our students. We also found shared, deliberate applications of care intended to consciously decrease the impact of our students' negative educational histories, and enable students to reconstruct their identities as learners (Motta & Bennett, 2018).

Rule 1: Good Girls Listen

Definition*: Pay attention; take heed; to give something thoughtful attention, to consider.*

> *She counts her words, subconsciously. A good girl knows when to be quiet, to be seen and not heard. She fears being typecast as a "chatterbox", but she also doesn't want to be perceived as disengaged. Her role at home has long been that of the listener, first for her parents (be seen and not heard), now for her husband and children, and then again for her mother as she subtly takes her place as the carer. She doesn't argue, she allows them all to be strong, angry, enthusiastic, excited. She is calm and supportive, as her role requires.*

As tertiary educators working in the enabling sector, we celebrate care as one of the essential skills in our pedagogical toolbox. Indeed, pedagogies of care characterise the tertiary enabling education sector where care is vital, rather than dependent on the individual educator's disposition (Motta & Bennett, 2018). We purposefully build the foundations of care and respect to improve students' self-efficacy, sense of belonging and their emotional wellbeing, all of which contribute towards student engagement (Bennett et al., 2017). Our collective pedagogical practice values students' embodied wisdom and considers how they contribute to the educational spaces that we share. One of the ways we do this is by acknowledging what the student brings to the learning environment. We attempt to draw from the complexities of each individual, thereby promoting agency and empowerment. Explicitly valuing the students'

affective, intellectual, experience and practical skills is one of the core principles of andragogy (Knowles et al., 2005). Moreover, this strengths-based approach enables us to actively demonstrate our positive regard for our students and assists to engage them with the learning. This is care as recognition (Motta & Bennett, 2018) and leads to pedagogy and a philosophical stance that embraces collaboration with the students and their lived experiences. For the demographic that many of our enabling education students represent, this acknowledgement of what they bring to the learning space is particularly significant because it serves to offset the tendency for tertiary institutions to view those who belong to equity groups through a deficit lens (Thomas, 2014; O'Shea, 2016).

> She'd noticed an intensity on his face when she mentioned the name of the town in the documentary that they'd be watching an excerpt from. And as it played, emptying its misery of poverty, addiction, and homelessness into the classroom, she watched him closely; when it ended, she asked for his thoughts. "This is about my suburb", he replied. "That's where I grew up." She validated his knowledge. It was a tentative moment: "Well, you're the expert in this situation, would like you to teach us about it?" He did.

The Labour of Care

Teaching effectively is about authentic relationships, and as such, we engage in emotional labour to connect with students. The performance of emotional labour is related to our professional and philosophical stance about the role of caring in teaching and learning as we aim to create a culture and pedagogy of care in the learning environment (Nias, 1999). Hochschild (1983) defines emotional labour as what employees perform when they are required to feel, or at least project the appearance of feeling, certain emotions as they engage in job-relevant interactions. It takes a significant amount of intra- and interpersonal identification, management and regulation of emotions (Goleman, 1996; Hargreaves, 1998). For example, controlling negative emotions or displaying positive ones is a professional expectation for educators (in all contexts).

Rule 2: Good Girls Are Nice

Definition: *being generous, caring for others, not upsetting anyone, being pleasant; be appropriate; fitting to the circumstances.*

> *In the beginning, she tried to conform. She searched through unfamiliar territory for the implicit rules of the culture, observed her colleagues and tried to emulate them. It felt uncomfortable, but she had little else to guide her. She traded her authenticity for the security of another's style. The language sat strangely in her mouth: too many 'me's and 'my' and 'I did this'. But fear and embarrassment of getting it wrong lingered. She spent too much time worrying about whether her approach was right or wrong.*

Care for Others

The individual and collective student experience is inherently emotional (Christie et al., 2008) and oscillates in response to the ebb and flow of the semester, life events, self-perceptions and self-efficacy. To consistently meet each person where they are at, at any given time throughout the semester, takes 'huge capacity of mental energy … to deal with complex social interactions and, requires teachers to draw on their intellectual and emotional resources' (Chang, 2009, p. 204). It demands the ability to be self-reflective and reflexive in practice in order to identify, regulate and manage the appropriate emotional response. Each response is tailored to the specific characteristics of the student within the unique (and public) dynamic of each class. Emotional labour entails the editing and manicuring of what we are feeling and what we express and, whilst not disingenuous, it can be incongruent with what we feel. It is a constant process of spontaneous trial and adaption. We are also acutely aware of having an audience of students who are observing how we respond and using these observations to confirm they are in a learning environment that will encourage them to emerge rather than submerge.

We work with our students for short and intense periods of time, and our focus is to develop an emotionally safe and positive learning community. Some of our students are deconstructing deeply held beliefs as

they begin to view the world through a new and often challenging lens. We might suppress showing surprise, disbelief, annoyance or frustration and filter our emotions to display acceptance of who they are. We take on a responsibility to introduce students to an experience of learning that will encourage them to be vulnerable, take risks and ask questions. This can include exhausting power struggles at times, where our verbal and non-verbal reactions are being monitored by our students. So, we role model control of self, inclusivity, respect and responses that are mindful of meeting the student where they are at. This permeates the myriad of interactions we have with our students that we know, or sense, have the potential to leave them vulnerable to judgement, such as classroom discussions, grading, feedback and emails. It is a professional stance that considers the mental wellbeing of the people in our care, and therefore, caring is not just about feeling concern for the wellbeing of students, but it requires an emotional investment that is relevant to our philosophical and professional frameworks of practice.

> *Each semester brings familiar stories but different faces. She spends more time with her students than she does with her family. Many of them self-disclose vulnerabilities; they reach out to her for validation of their emotions as well as their academic abilities. Others slip away, both literally and metaphorically, when her back is turned. She shares their frustrations as they attempt to navigate the university systems and the disappointment of less-than-hoped for assessment results, but she also shares their delight in their new understandings and their satisfaction as they reconstruct their academic identities.*

Enabling educators recognise the diversity of emotional labour involved in their roles (Crawford et al., 2018) and the potential negative, and equally the positive, effects of emotional labour. Being reflexive and reflective requires us to continuously strive to achieve a delicate balance with shifting variables. It takes effort. At its worst, it can lead to burnout (Chang, 2009). At its best, it is invigorating, creative and satisfying. Enabling educators recognise the rewards and fulfilment of teaching in this sector (Crawford et al., 2018), which has a reputation in the academy of being difficult in its accommodation of diverse learners. Both positive and negative emotional labours are not separate from caring and are an

important aspect of the reality of teaching in any sector (Isenbarger & Zembylas, 2006). This is exemplified in our collegial conversations which are peppered with stories of the privilege of witnessing the re-emergence of students' belief in themselves as learners as they discard long-held deficit narratives. Adults often give immediate feedback and many are appreciative of the chance to attend university. The enjoyment expressed by students of finding passion in learning is inextricably linked to our identity as educators—in this sense we can enjoy and, at times, predict the emotional labour it will involve.

> *I don't feel so dumb anymore. (Student feedback)*

Emotional labour is also a feature of our work in our interactions with colleagues and the institution. We are often placed in a position of advocacy for our students by their desire to self-disclose personal circumstances and aspirations. Emotional labour can function as an effort to suppress and dismiss feelings of frustration in dealing with the disappointment of colleagues who stereotype students, withhold empathy or demonstrate a lack of awareness of their own privilege and power. These feelings are downplayed in front of colleagues who may think of us as a 'soft touch' or who have a different philosophical stance on teaching and learning. The emotional cost of repressing these feelings is high, as they can result in becoming alienated from colleagues who perpetuate negative assumptions of students, or beliefs of teaching positioned in power and control, commonly justified by the catchcry: 'this is what they can expect in their undergraduate program'. We saw the good girl in our tendency to acquiesce to those who project confidence.

Rule 3: Good Girls Are Obedient

Definition: *Willing to comply with an order or request; submissive to another's authority*

> *In class, a visibly distraught student apologised for submitting his assignment late. He explained that he had been involved in a car crash that week.*

Fortunately, no-one was badly hurt, but the student and his children were in shock and the car was written off, meaning they had no access to transport. The next day, the same student was told his father had cancer. As she listened, she observed that he had brought his private troubles into the public forum of the university, to her. In talking to her about his concerns about the safety and health of his family, he was vulnerable, and she was meeting him in that place, allowing him to be vulnerable, and for that moment, safe. As she listened, she felt the urge to remove the student teacher barrier and share a human to human moment by disclosing that her daughter had also been in a car crash that week. She wanted to tell him her empathy was not out of duty, it was real. Instead, she maintained her professional identity and recommended he make an appointment with one of the university counsellors, explaining the importance of getting support. She left the room wondering why she did not listen to her own advice.

Care for Self?

Work regularly encroaches on our private lives. Our concern for the welfare of students means we frequently respond to their needs when we could be spending time with our families. As the semester progresses, resolutions of self-care fade and familial relations and commitments are put 'on hold'.

She has high expectations of her resilience, deceiving herself that it is like an enormous elastic band that can keep stretching. She assigns self-care to the intermittent times that she joins a gym or yoga class, cleanses her diet or does some art. But suddenly, her elastic band retreats and real self-care is the last thing on her list.

One of the main issues that arise in our experience of academia is the ill-defined workload. We have a commitment to both research and engagement work on top of our teaching loads, but the work itself is hard to quantify. It is tempting to say yes to interesting opportunities which leave us wondering whether self-care means saying no, or if it is just accepting that there will never be a day when the 'to-do' list is done.

Accessibility is another issue with which we struggle. We firmly believe that a good teacher is accessible to her students, which means we consciously invite our students into that space through explicit and implicit invitations. The explicit is stated clearly, and often, the implicit is driven by conversations, our language and our interest in them. We consciously chip away at the perceived divide between us to offer the implicit invitation. This is a deliberate breaking of barriers and a release from the uncomfortable labels of 'academic' or 'teacher'. Yet, when we receive a student's email during the weekend or at that point in the evening when we have decided to stop work and go to bed, we question how accessible we should make ourselves.

> *Her pedagogy is all about the people. She wants to share with them the richness of the material and have them feel the joy of discovery that she felt when the pieces fell into place for her. She has noticed how the class engages when she shares her own personal experiences. They respond best when she lets them into her life a little. She wonders, where is the boundary? She didn't really want to keep her students at a distance. She preferred to lift herself off the imagined pedestal that they may have her on and meet them on common ground. "See?" she tells them, "we are all learners."*

The pastoral aspects of teaching are acknowledged as being draining and unsustainable (Crabtree & Shiel, 2019), yet the labour of care is accepted as an integral part of the enabling educator's practice. The tertiary enabling sector has high enrolments and equally high attrition rates (Hodges et al., 2013); therefore, care is valuable. It increases student engagement and the formation of positive relationships, which in turn promotes student retention (Walker & Gleaves, 2016; Eddy & Ward, 2015). For us, at a regional university, the lion's share of funding comes from teaching, as compared to the more research-intensive Group of Eight universities in Australia (Universities Australia, 2017).

Who Cares Anyway?

The relational work that is good for students will help institutions meet their outcome targets (Eddy & Ward, 2015); however, there are gendered

discrepancies within academia regarding who is expected to provide care. Students tend to project expectations of accessibility and concern for their welfare onto female academics, rather than their male counterparts (Basow, 2018). This means in addition to having the same competencies and knowledge as their male colleagues, female academics are also required to be caring and nurturing. Whilst these attributes are undoubtedly desirable in male academics, the absence of them does not undermine perceptions of their competence. In contrast, female academics who are perceived by students as not being warm and nurturing are known to receive lower ratings in student surveys, particularly by male students (Meltzer & McNulty, 2011).

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a gendered assumption that pedagogies of care are feminised. Therefore, female academics are assigned to work in more pastoral and service-related positions within universities, the expectation being that they conduct the relational or 'smile' work within the institution (Eddy & Ward, 2015). It is important to note this is not necessarily through choice (Basow, 2018). However, the research does suggest that women feel they must do this work under a moral imperative that ties them to caring (O'Brien, 2008). The problem is that pastoral duties cannot be neatly scheduled into a timetable, therefore administering care conflicts with the academic's capacity to deliver their contractional commitments such as research and publications, thereby limiting their opportunities for promotion. This conflict is not acknowledged by the institution which fails to sufficiently value or reward the work which is associated with caring (Crabtree & Shiel, 2019). Yet 'care work is work' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1238), but unlike research, publications and grants, it is difficult to quantify, which means it does not fit neatly within the parameters of the observable. Instead, 'care is both invisibilised and feminised as secondary to what is represented as the important and essential labour of teaching' (Motta & Bennett, 2018, p. 643).

Our understanding of what care is and how it should be provided is informed by the cultural and social construct of motherhood and the expectation that women should be consistently emotionally available to care for others, regardless of the context (O'Brien, 2008). Within that construct lies the incorrect belief that care is an innate quality assigned to women rather than a skill which must be learned, honed and perfected

(Tracy, 2008). Indeed, because care is still considered to be natural and instinctual, it is poorly rewarded in the world of work, whereas masculine skills have historically been assigned greater value (England & Folbre, 1999). This discrepancy is reflected within higher education institutions, which appear to conveniently ignore the evidence showing that women have been socialised into the role of carer (Motta & Bennett, 2018; Askins & Blazek, 2017).

> *In the aftermath of her father's death, when the world was busy with well wishes and grief, she felt the weight of expectations. When the last mourner walked down her mother's garden pathway, when all the decisions that needed to be made were made, she realised what she had been holding. Holding space for her crumbling mother, confused children and grieving relatives. Being the good girl and addressing physical practicalities: how to fit another sponge cake in the freezer, placing another bunch of flowers out of reach of the cat and 'where does your mother keep the towels…?'*
>
> *Why is it always the daughter?*

Though poorly rewarded and largely unrecognised, the expectation that we provide care is explicit. Yet, in our experience, the term remains nebulous, subject to the individual educator's interpretation of what care is and how it should be applied. There is no legitimate support structure around being this kind of educator in the form of guidance or professional development, and it is not reflected in our workloads or recognised in performance reviews. In this way, the skill of the carer is once again undermined, and the student is potentially short-changed as care is interpreted and applied in an inconsistent way.

Therein lies our conflict: intellectually, we know we have been socialised into the role of carers, putting the needs of others before our own. As good girls, we grew up to be good mothers who feel an obligation to be emotionally available for our students, regardless of our own wellbeing and other demands on our time. We also know the skill of care is not adequately valued in our workplace, and we are expected to accept that intrinsic rewards which come from the knowledge that we have helped our students should be considered enough. Yet, as professional educators, we still celebrate the power of care and concur with Mountz et al.

([2015](#)) that it should 'come out of hiding' (p. 1247). Furthermore, we emphasise it is a skill, not a personality trait, and therefore we object to its devaluation. Whilst this model of care has traditionally applied to mothers, we do not suggest that men do not care, but rather argue that they are subject to a different set of cultural and moral rules in relation to care. Therefore, we object, also, on behalf of our male colleagues, or those others who were not socialised into caring roles, but who have adopted care as part of a compassionate, inclusive teaching practice.

> *She wishes she could attend her own funeral to hear the eulogies. What would her friends and colleagues say about her? Did they even know who she was? Her identity centres around her role as "mother", so how can she have a full picture of herself without knowing what it was to be her child? That's something she'd like to listen to.*

It is easy enough to see the crossover between parenting and pedagogy, but it should not be assumed we are simply transferring existing skills, developed through our socialisation into motherhood, to our teaching. We do not act the way we do because it comes 'naturally' to us, but because we are trained and dedicated professionals, applying the best practice to our work. In fact, we have studied, read, researched, experimented, sought feedback and practised to become caring and compassionate educators. A pedagogy of care and the prioritising of relationships within the learning context is more than instinctual, and it is informed by the literature which tells us that intrinsic motivation to engage in learning is increased when a caring and respectful learning community is established and when students are cognisant that their wellbeing is prioritised (Wlodkowski, [2008](#)). We question discourse that intrinsic reward which comes from the knowledge that we have helped our students should be enough, regardless of the toll it takes on our own wellbeing (England & Folbre, [1999](#)). Instead, we hold that care should be celebrated by the institution as being essential to good practice. Indeed, care should be central to the institution's wider social responsibility and, as such, should be incentivised (Tracy, [2008](#)) and valued.

Our work is a constant space of revision and authentic critical reflection, discussion and debriefing. It is perpetually present in our

interactions with students and their work. We care because we care about outcomes for our students. We care about people and the social justice of access to education. Care is what we do, and it is who we are, ethically and philosophically.

> *She recognises that she has internalised the need to be a good girl. However, she remembers learning, through being a parent, that rules are context-bound and can flex and bend. So now she re-examines the rules and expectations as she intuits them. She evaluates, selecting, adapting until the final list frames her practice as genuine, authentic and personal. The good girl is reborn.*

Rewriting the Rules

As newcomers to the world of academia, we tried to follow the rules, to conform and play the finite games (Harré et al., 2017). We realised that the standards and restrictions that society places on women have inhibited our professional growth and limited our vision. We measured our 'good girl' status against outdated norms and expectations, but the rules are implicit; thus, we can challenge our own interpretations of them. We now rewrite them as a 'small creative act of activist subversion' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 12).

> *She sees now that being quiet is more than simply a passive absence of chatter. Listening is an active contribution that enables deep connection, understanding, empathy. She resolves to be authentic, speaking up when something is wrong and offering feedback when change is required. She accepts frank and honest feedback when that's what she needs to hear. And she also values, without resentment, the time she spent learning to listen.*

Our process of recontextualising the good girl illuminates for us the imperative of embracing the value of care rather than resenting care as both necessary and underappreciated. Firstly, we recognise care as a practice that is both validated and valued within the literature on effective teaching and learning in higher education (Mountz et al., 2015). In this circumstance, we as educators are working in ways required by the

demands of a diverse student body, and the fact that university policies and procedures are yet to acknowledge its importance is a failure of the system, not of those of us who work within it. Rather than accepting that care for our students is treated as peripheral, we intend to advocate for care, to make space for it, in our writing and other dissemination of our work as we do for any other evidence-based pedagogy.

Secondly, we intend to extend that care to ourselves and our colleagues. We join a growing number of academics who support a feminist ethic of care and slow scholarship, where care permeates all aspects of academic culture and processes (Mountz et al., 2015). We resolve to place as much emphasis on our own wellbeing as we do for our students. We discard the deficit discourse for ourselves and re-narrativise the life experiences that contribute to who we are as teachers. Just as we value the contribution of our students, we recognise through this process the need to authentically value what our diverse lives bring to the academy. As agents of self-care, we *shiFt* the position of authority to the work that is needed in our unique field—we position ourselves as 'experts' of our experience—just as we position our students as experts of theirs.

And finally, we endeavour to provide the support and validation of care-full practice (Motta & Bennett, 2018) that we feel the absence of. As members of the academy, we have agency in deciding what the academy looks and feels like, and we choose to celebrate care. In our collegial relationships, we demonstrate the recognition of the practice and feminist ethic of care. We continue to meet and write together enabling a deeper 'academic friendship that is found in and through the collective' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9). We practise 'strategies of refusal' (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1252) that can help us resist overwork, and we extend the same courtesy to those whose work environment is under our influence. The action of debriefing and receiving validation by and amongst colleagues is care in itself. Debriefing can be planned or unplanned, but the individual and their experience are considered important (Hail et al., 2011). Equally important to us is a philosophical stance on the culture of care. When we discover commonalities, and avoid competition and shame (Motta & Bennett, 2018), we become more accepting of self.

A co-worker apologised for some offensive behaviour, and, she noted with satis-
faction, when she accepted the apology, she did not include the usual reassuring
"it's fine". It wasn't fine; the event had been very upsetting and caused her much
distress and she told him so.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, we have shared the process by which we, three women who met outside of academia but now work together within it, identified shared confusion and frustration towards the expectations of academic work. Through reflective writing, discussion and research, we established that the emotional labour that is a substantial aspect of teaching non-traditional learners in the field of enabling education is largely unappreciated by the academy, but required regardless. We each recognised that we were limited by lingering cultural and social expectations. We discovered that our embodied 'good girls' were the catalyst for unwelcome pressure and a devaluation of our professional practice. We saw the effects of our socialisation into mothering roles, but we rejected the concept that our work as teachers is an extension of our roles as mothers. Rather, we examined the literature relating to andragogy, evaluated it against our practice and reframed the laborious care demanded by our roles as best practice in teaching adults. We did not develop these skills incidentally as a result of parenting; we cultivated them based on careful research and deliberate practice.

She remembers her daughter coming home from the first day of prep. She dem-
onstrated how she and the other little girls had been taught to sit with their
dresses draped in their laps so as not to inadvertently display their underwear.
Now, years later, she wonders about the management decisions that chose every
year, every class, to instruct the girls on how to sit rather than simply allowing
them to wear shorts.

As good girls, we embodied a set of rules. Previously we saw 'good' as being deserving of external approval. As professional women, we now recontextualise 'good' as having the required qualities to meet a high standard. We are active agents in determining those standards. To this end, we rewrite the rules:

Rule 1: Good Girls Listen—To Their Own Instincts

We were told to be quiet. As good girls, we understood that our voices were not as important as others'. As professional women, we reframe that rule to emphasise the importance of listening. We no longer listen to people telling us what to do; we instead listen to ourselves, our values and each other.

Rule 2: Good Girls Are Nice—To Themselves

We were told to be nice. As good girls, we understood that nice involved looking after the needs of others. As professional women, we extend that care to ourselves, which is more than appropriate.

Rule 3: Good Girls ~~Are Obedient~~ Respect Their Own Authority

We were expected to be obedient. As good girls, we understood obedience as a willingness to comply and be submissively dutiful, wrapped in the desire and obligation to please a real or imagined higher authority. We reframe that rule to adhere to evidence-based practices that value care. We choose to evaluate and select from external authorities before we comply. We value and respect our own authority.

A good woman she may be, but as she completes this chapter, she finds herself running out of time. She is recovering from surgery; she has an assignment; she is in desperate need of a holiday and has spotted an opportunity, but it clashes with the deadline.
She panics.
Colleagues are called.
From them she receives the care she affords others,
(Of course!)
And smiles at the irony.

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More than Tolerance: A Call to *ShiFt* the Ableist Academy Towards Equity

Melissa Cain and Melissa Fanshawe

Introduction

Welcome to Holland (Kingsley, 1987) is a poignant tale of a mother's attempt to explain what it is like to have a child with a disability. Kingsley likens this to boarding a plane for Italy and landing in Holland. The poem explains the sense of loss and the struggle to adapt to the non-finite grief of living with her child's needs. She shares her acceptance of her new identity on this alternative path. Like Kingsley, we have been on a journey—a journey that was somewhat predictable and satisfying, until the unexpected. Although we had not met each other until our third children were born, we may have. We were both teachers moving from decades in

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the classroom to the world of academia. We walked on similar paths, until the time our journeys were jolted off course and our paths crossed, again and again.

In documenting our experiences, we found a fitting method in duoethnography, allowing us to meaningfully examine our personal and professional identities (Breault, 2016) and see ourselves reflected in each other's story. The use of this methodology challenges researchers to "dig deeply into the past for personal stories that inform their understandings of their topics" (Bodle et al., 2017, p. 8). These "intersecting authoethographies" (Breault, 2016, p. 778) walk together on a journey that is "mutual and reciprocal" (Norris & Sawyer, 2012, p. 13) and, it is hoped, invite others to share the experience. This chapter is written from two perspectives, singular stories, and then a common voice at the points we share. The emphasis is on a transformative narrative, more than merely documenting events. We have used the analogy of a ladder to signify the two parallel journeys with the rungs as meeting points. What we share is the delicate and often uneasy balance between achieving in the academic world and caring for our children with severe vision impairments. We discovered that our familiarity with each other did not mean familiarity with each other's story or personal experiences, and as such, we learnt a lot from each other and about each other.

As our journey aligns almost perfectly with Kingsley's, we have adopted her milestones. We both met on the tarmac in Holland but had planned to go to Italy. We had read the guidebooks, packed the right clothes, and were ready to visit the well-known sites we had each experienced twice before. We weren't ready for the unexpected change of destination, but our lives have become richer; we are better mothers, teachers, and researchers because of it. And we have come to know *Holland* as a truly beautiful place.

Preamble to the journey

No matter how hard we plan, we cannot predict where our lives will take us, how we will get there, or who we will have with us along the way. As we journey, we grow and mature and see things differently. A lack of knowing keeps us cautious, and an "openness to experience" keeps us moving forward. Whilst we can now look ahead with the end in mind, when we began our journeys, we concentrated on goals and outputs. We didn't forecast what it might feel like to be fulfilled as an educator or academic. We thought we knew what mattered, but we really didn't. Had we asked some important questions, we might have tried life differently. If we had hindsight into the gifts received when life violently tosses you off the anticipated path, we would have been better prepared, and possibly more at peace. Only now, a little wiser and a whole lot older, we ask these questions to make sense of the remaining journey.

To begin, we take our cue from Gert Biesta (2019) and ask "what is education *for*?" and thus, "what is a *good* education?" Conscious that we as educators are "under a relentless pressure to perform and the standards for such performance are increasingly being set by the global education measurement industry" (2019, p. 657), we should also ask "what counts *as* education and what counts *in* education" (2019, p. 657). Reflecting on the past and the unknowing that is to come, we look to the work of Black et al. (2017) who suggest that asking the right questions of education directs us towards "agency, purpose, pleasure, fulfilment and self-care/caring relationships" (p. 143). It is these questions that prompt the *shiFt* and permit us to discover how academia can be a place of compassion and support for the other layers of our lives as parents, partners, and friends. Finding answers allows work and family to intersect, and finally settle with meaning and purpose, to become a stable platform for approaching the future.

The setting

Melissa Cain

As most academics, I write two ways. Most commonly churning out papers according to a formula someone, somewhere, has decided is correct, in order to fulfil the expectations and parameters of my career path. Indeed, some good stuff has come out of this, but in this way, I have little time to think with any depth. Rarely do I have time or space to talk, question, and debate. But as a promise to myself, once a year, after marking is complete, grades are submitted, and students are made course complete, I luxuriate in the thinking, reading, contemplating, questioning, formulating, and revising that should happen every time I write. There is no set timeframe, no set formula, no concerns about what may eventuate, and no one to answer to.

Just as important as time is the space in which we write. I have waited to write this chapter in the only place that I feel content and relaxed. It's always a treat to make this journey, and my mind is freed as soon as it starts. As we drive up the mountain two hours from home and the temperature begins to drop, I feel the same wonder at being able to visit this place amongst the trees. Rainforest sounds—parrots, cockatoos, and the familiar whip-bird, and pademelons by the side of the road. My eyes darting to spot the highly elusive lyrebird. Here, I am given permission to take part in what our work should really be about. To value the unintentional knowledge—that is, what we find when we are not looking (Alves, 2013)—and to purposefully "claim time for slow scholarship" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1236). For reflection and open-ended inquiry "is not a luxury, but is crucial to what we do" (Berg & Seeber, 2016, p. xviii). I hold onto that thought.

Melissa Fanshawe

I have recently entered academia, after many years as an administrator in a busy primary school. My job focused on solving problems, quickly and efficiently, with pressing time constraints. My day was dictated by a bell, advising where I should be and what I should be doing. Conversely, upon starting work at the university, no bells felt quieter, calmer. I immediately felt less pressured and had more time to focus on my teaching. I was quick to find that an essential element of success in higher education is tied to outputs, as "productive academics" (Honan et al., 2015, p. 45). I began looking for a niche, embarking on a PhD, all the things required as an academic (Henderson et al., 2016). I found it hard to self-motivate and became withdrawn from others as I struggled to find time to meet self-prescribed deadlines and produce the number of papers required for research outputs.

It was not until my third year, through conversations with Melissa C, connecting our personal and professional identities, that I found a purpose to my research. I felt very much a desire to work together, to share our common stories, and research ways to support our children succeed in education. This desire to connect was also highlighted by Black et al. (2019), as they searched for "ways of doing research that is about relationships and a search for connection…a spilling over of multiple voices, multiple storylines, and multiple connections" (p. 534). I found myself enjoying our conversations about our research possibilities, which caused me to focus on finding time to read, research, and write. I found a reason to ponder, question, and revise my thoughts, before our next conversation, and engage in what Black et al. (2017) describe as "reducing the drag" of academia. I also knew Melissa would understand the days that I had to pull out of a scheduled meeting, as one of my children were in hospital, or needed me urgently, my erratic working hours and my apparent distraction at times as I concentrated on my family. After all, our stories are interconnected and strikingly similar.

Before. On the predictable path

Melissa Cain	Melissa Fanshawe
I wanted to make a move from school teaching to Higher Education. After consulting with those in the know, I made a list: PhD (check), publications (check), conference presentations (check), a range of sessional work as lecturer and tutor (check), research project management (check). I was managing family and a change of career pretty well. A third child was on the way. Not a problem; I would fit him into the schedule. Six weeks of maternity leave didn't seem enough, but I'd done it twice before. Besides, I couldn't let up on attending to the list of requirements to be checked off. Keeping focused on the academic goal, it all seemed possible. At times I was even enjoying the journey. The destination, a continuing position in a stimulating environment, researching, and teaching with knowledgeable and creative colleagues. It was stacking up nicely.	I would have been happy to stay as a classroom teacher until I retired, but in rural schools, when people live there longer than a few years, they are usually called upon for promotional positions. This is how I obtained my first Advisory Teacher role for adaptive technology. I had taught a student with a vision impairment, so I must have been qualified?! It suited me, as by then, I had two children and working part-time was a wonderful opportunity. I was able to learn so much and had wonderful guides and mentors. As my children became older, I was able to take on more responsibility, eventually as Principal of a school. However, my husband had received a transfer back to Brisbane, and we decided it was a good time to have a third child, as we settled our children into a new town and new schools.

Landing in a new destination. Emotional crises

Melissa Cain

One foot in front of the other.

Since the caesarean, it's been a blur. Seriously. Confusing, even terrifying at times. I should still be in bed recovering and getting to know my new baby, but the minute I left the hospital, I set in motion the application for an emergency passport and found myself on a plane to Australia to meet a doctor about a transplant. My son, only weeks old. He can't see. My researcher instincts kick in. What were the options? What was the timeline? It worries me that I can't connect with him the way I did with his sisters. That mother–child eye contact that is so crucial to initial bonding. On the flight we experience quite a bit of turbulence, but it subsides, and I manage to balance the dinner tray on my seat and get the bassinet set up. My son screams when I put the blanket on him. He doesn't know it's a fluffy blanket, he doesn't know it's not an animal. This is hard work. The turbulence starts up again, and I take him out of the bassinet and try to comfort him. My stomach is painful, and I am very, very tired.

Reality—the waiting room

I find myself in the waiting room of the doctor's surgery. Looking around—other mothers with toddlers, or school aged children with glasses. They look like they have it all together and have been through this for a while. Only one other mother with a baby. I am very reluctant to speak to anyone else, working more on hiding the dark bags under my eyes. She introduces herself and her baby. We talk about our journey thus far. Sorry? He has what? The same extremely rare condition my son has? He is the third child, born only three weeks before my son. She is an educator and has the same name as mine. Perhaps I'm losing it. Perhaps I'm creating a mirror image of myself to cope. Or maybe this is a wonderful coincidence. A special support from someone who does know my story and is navigating the same rough waters and uncertain future. Thank goodness. I am not alone.

Melissa Fanshawe

When my third child was born, I remember everyone standing around the baby, silent. My husband looked incredibly stressed and was holding his head. Having had a caesarean, I laid there, unable to move, calling "what is wrong with my baby?". The paediatrician told me that they would bring my child over for me to see for myself. Fearing the worst, I pleaded, "You need to tell me what is wrong with my baby". "Your son seems to have no visual reflexes. He cannot see", the doctor said.

Telling friends and family that your child has a major disability met with their grief, disappointment, empathy, and blame, spoiling the excitement of having a new baby. Rather than the first few days being about bonding, bathing, and breastfeeding, it was medical appointments, meetings, and MRIs. I wished for the normality of motherhood that I experienced with the other two.

Landing in a new destination. Emotional crises	
I am staggered by the contrast between the stark reality I find myself in, and the imagined destination. I have no idea where we are going or what will await us. It seems ridiculous, but the reading I have brought with me on this harried trip is for a journal article I am writing. But I am in no condition to think, let alone write. Already caught up in the "counting culture" of academia I am yet to hear or heed Mountz et al.'s (2015) warning that this will lead to "intense, insidious forms of institutional shaming, subject-making, and self-surveillance" compelling us to "enumerate and self-audit, rather than listen and converse" (p. 1243). I should put the paper away, but I feel the guilt of not adhering to the academic checklist. And the guilt of leaving two children at home. And the guilt that I know nothing of vision impairment or how to be a parent of a child with a disability. I do know that we need to try something within the first six months of my son's life in order for him to have some chance of seeing. The pressure of getting this right, and the impact of getting it wrong, is immense.	When Leyser et al. (1996) asked parents of children with vision impairments what their greatest concerns were, 96.5% of parents reported that they were most worried about their children's future. Similar results were replicated by Tröster (2001), with other parents reporting concerns about satisfactorily meeting their children's needs, financial worries, and not having sufficient time for themselves and their partners. As a teacher of students with vision impairment, I felt quite confident to deal with the practical realities, and my children, but initially found it difficult to allow myself to take care of myself. In retrospect, part of this was identifying myself as a mother first; my "job" being that I needed to take care of my child/ren. However, I needed to take care of myself. Tröster (2001) found that when "mothers of children with disabilities use the support potential in their social networks…the social support functions as a buffer that fends off the negative impact of the stressful demands the mothers face" (p. 625). After a while, and by pure necessity, I came to rely on my friends to help me. I had to trust that they could look after my son so that I could take my other kids to the park, go to the movies with my husband, or go to the gym by myself. I also met other mothers in the same position as myself; a place where they were struggling with uncertainty and juggling their own roles. I was not alone.

The literature tells us that coming to terms with learning that a child has a disability makes an indelible and lifelong impact on parents and carers and has a significant effect on the caregiver's quality of life. Sakkalou et al. (2018) note that infant disability is a risk factor for "elevated parenting stress, depression, and anxiety" (p. 290), and Benzies et al. (2011) further describe that "childhood disability often imposes a social and emotional burden for children and their families" (p. 508). Parents of children with a vision impairment experience concerns about their child's future and frustration over the lack of "helpful information, social isolation, and inadequate support from school and community" (Lee et al., 2014, p. 414). This is because children with vision impairment, in addition to experiencing particular barriers in education, also face difficulties in adapting and adjusting academically and behaviourally, and are more likely to be at risk of social exclusion (Cain & Fanshawe, 2020). At this time, the immediate stresses for both of us are very much emotional, with serious concern for how we might support our families should we need to stop working to become full-time carers. Costantino speaks of events that "erupt in an instant and change the course of one's life" and "inevitably require people to make unwanted changes as they struggle to cope with new realities" (2010, p. 87). That was now.

Discovering the new destination. Learning to cope

Melissa Cain

After the initial shock, I managed to gain some stability and clarity. Initially, it felt like the first time any child successfully rides a bike. Slow and wobbly at first with endless potential to come crashing to the ground, but then gathering momentum and a smile as all the hard work pays off and the bike moves forward. It was most definitely a struggle. Was it ok to struggle? Do successful people struggle? Will employers be interested in anyone that struggles? What about someone who needs to attend multiple medical appointments a week for three hours each time?

I read of other mothers navigating through "storms" of medical crises admitting that these always generate "feelings of helplessness and fear" (Benzies et al., 2011, pp. 87–88). Costantino too notes that when medical crises occur, "all my feelings of anxiety, sadness, and fear resurface, and I temporarily lose some measure of stability" (2010 p. 88). The problem is, it would seem, to admit to struggle "undermines our professorial identity" (Berg & Seeber, 2016, p. 2), primarily because "we are expected to 'rise above' whatever is ailing us'" (p. 72).

I feel the need to try to balance my life by living two personas. The academic who is on top of everything, who smiles, looks (and genuinely is) engaged and enthusiastic, supportive, reliable, moves forward with writing, gets good teaching results; and the private person overwhelmed by the unknown, vulnerable, and only just holding it together. Everyone has their shit, of course. I could see no advantage to advertising mine. I became acutely aware that it would be best to balance work and mothering in secret. I understand now that this response is aligned to the medical model of disability, that my son was something to be fixed or changed, and our troubles to be kept out of the way. I did not yet understand that it is society that needs to make changes to accommodate my son and remove barriers to his inclusion. I was not yet aware that the future Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNGA, 2008) was to prompt a shift in attitudes towards people with disability and approaches to disability concerns. There was much to learn. I was not yet thriving, but I was surviving. It had to be good enough for now.

Melissa Fanshawe

Even with experience of vision impairment, nothing prepares you for the hours of work associated with teaching a child to interact in a world that was designed for those who could see. I spent hours creating resources, interacting and motivating my child to move, whilst juggling therapy, medical appointments, and a family. I extended my maternity leave and passed on promotional opportunities. The burden of care (Kuriakose et al., 2017) was high, both emotionally and financially, and I felt a loss of self. Although I was a resilient person, I felt resentment at times.

I found medical appointments difficult to cope with emotionally. The words of Margaret Costantino (2010) resonated with me when she said "When medical crises occur, all my feelings of anxiety, sadness, and fear resurface, and I temporarily lose some measure of stability" (p. 88). The day-to-day therapy was planned, I was in control, and I knew what to do. Medical appointments meant asking others to help with my other children, feeling guilty I wasn't there with them. My husband could not attend as he had already had so much time off work, and the Doctors' words were too soon forgotten. Had someone else come with me, I may have remembered. Other people's opinions also had a huge impact on me. In the park or playground, my son would accidentally bang into children, and mothers would think he was a bully. They did not have the knowledge that he could not see their child. At the local playground, I listened to the mothers complaining that their child could not sit or stand, (all within normal milestones) and I had to repress myself from yelling "you think that matters". I spent my time trying to help my family and others through navigating a vision impairment, and really had no time for my own processing of grief.

Holland as home. Coming to terms with how things will be

Melissa Cain	Melissa Fanshawe
As it happened, I learnt a lot about disability and I balanced life as a sessional academic with looking after my family as the sole caregiver. With information and support, I became more confident to make decisions both as an advocate for my son and in the workplace. Support from other parents with children with a vision impairment was paramount. They understood that apart from the regular time-consuming responsibilities of bringing up a young child, there were also physiotherapy and occupational therapy appointments, ophthalmologist appointments, orientation and mobility classes, braille lessons, learning about the latest adaptive technology, and then advocating to have my son accepted at daycare and at the local primary school. This was to be an important part of our lives and our "new normal".	I became networked into a playgroup for vision-impaired children, which we attended for two hours, twice a week. The teachers and therapists would work with the babies and parents and provide activities and exercises to support development. We developed a close network of mothers. The mothers with older children would give advice, and the ones with children of similar ages would help me feel that I was not alone. I could ask these mothers anything, and they understood the hours spent at appointments: physio, occupational therapy, orientation and mobility, speech (I didn't even realise that you can't form words properly if you don't see the shape of someone's mouth), and ophthalmologists. These mums understood me and what I was going through as a mother.

Becoming a tour guide. Helping others and leading the way

Melissa Cain

Work and life overlap and inform each other. In advocating for our sons, Melissa F and I begin to focus our research on their experiences in mainstream education. We aim for a more informed, efficient, agentic, and respectful education for students with a vision impairment and are aligning our work with others passionate about this area. Our networks in the low vision community, already well established, further expand, and we find increased support and interest in our research. We are able to share rich stories with our university students that provide a realistic picture of what teaching in an inclusive manner might look like. Our sons gain confidence and independence through sports and through watching their unofficial mentors take the lead, demonstrating that disability does not stop one from having an education, employment, families, and travelling to exciting destinations.

We still worry daily about the unknown, but are now more comfortable in our new destination and keen to become a tour guide for others. In some respects, we are leading the way, and highlighting the positive tangents our lives have taken since being jolted off the predictable path. What a gift that has been. New friends, new opportunities, and a swag full of unintentional knowledge. And through this I am supported by colleagues who care and are patient and demonstrate empathy and understanding. I do not yet feel a comfortable fit for the Academy. "Tolerant" has always been my least favourite word. My situation is tolerated, and I am still apologising.

Melissa Fanshawe

When my child was about three, I started back at work part-time. The local daycare did not think they could provide "adequate care". I managed to work one day a week by having a respite carer. Work did actually feel like respite. Eventually, I found a daycare mum who felt comfortable and I increased my time at work, then becoming Deputy Principal in a school with a number of students with vision impairment. Working part-time was the only way I could manage all the appointments. When my son was of school age, I completed my Masters' degree in Special Education. Through learning this information, I felt a call to make a difference in how teachers perceive disability and include students within the classroom and was fortunate to be offered a full time, continuing role in a university. The change of pace was difficult at first, but I found meaning; being able to talk to preservice teachers about inclusion of students with disabilities. Melissa and I started researching the education of students with vision impairment through the voice of the student, the parent, their teachers, and publishing this work to assist others.

My son is now a teenager and still my hours at work are often erratic. Sometimes I don't get to work at all, as I sit in a waiting room, or beside him in a braille lesson. I spend hours on NDIS (a disability funding agency), organising appointments, and payments. I have more meetings at schools than other mothers and know I spend more time in hospitals than most of my colleagues. However, academia seems to tolerate this. As long as I can complete my workload, which means many late nights.

Selling the destination. Gaining empowerment and making the *shiFt*

Apparently, Harry Truman said: "It's amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit". That's an interesting statement to ponder for those caught up in the counting culture that Eileen Honan describes so accurately:

> *We relish in the praise and reward system, we panic in the failed state of non-funded grants, we envy those successful, we delight in the inner glow shining from the Google citations on our screens. We are drawn to the clickbait of messages, 'someone just searched for you on Google', we boast on Facebook and Twitter of our 'h-indexes' and latest publications, we moan about long hours, time away from families, piles of marking.* (2017, p. 6)

And so, reflecting on the unimagined journey to Kingsley's *Holland* and the *shiFt* that is taking place, it is time we re-examine "what counts *in* education" (Biesta, 2019, p. 657). Yes, we can't put a comforting conversation with a colleague on our resumes and can't claim this as evidence in our performance reviews, but we wonder. What if we placed human relationships over scholarship, grant funding, and metrics? What if we counted connection, collegiality, and compassion as more valuable than our citations? Like Biesta (2019), we would like to argue for "a more patient society" (p. 657), giving value to what is not normally measured.

Although we are still answering the question—"what is education for?"—we have come to realise that education is about the *whole* person and that we are *one* person. We are not fragmented and separate selves responding in different ways in different contexts, dependent on set expectations. We now recognise that "the workplace is populated by people who have social and emotional needs both outside of work and *during* work hours" (Wright, 2005, p. 140), just like us. We may not climb the ladder as fast, but we will do it in our own time, sensing achievement in what we consider worthy, not what has been claimed as countable or valued by the institution. And not shackled by guilt or shame for first being mothers, carers, and friends. We acknowledge that the institution is, by and large, ableist. Not just for the student who may be differently abled, but also for those who care and struggle to bring the parts of the self together, and work towards a different type of quality. Universities are primarily places of human interaction. We can have satisfying personal relationships with our students but also with our partners and children when they need us. And now we have the opportunity to "teach the university" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 6) by creating and promoting a "deeply ethical and caring mode of academic friendship" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9).

Looking Backward and Looking Forward. Concluding Thoughts

Although the journey has not been easy, it has been illuminating and powerful. We allowed ourselves to pause with curiosity, follow tangents, and get lost (with purpose) along the way. We found the unintentional knowledge we didn't know we needed, developing what Aristotle terms phronesis or "practical wisdom". This is wisdom based on practical action and concerned with all things human; the type of knowledge that counts *as* education. We have made a sincere effort at melding work, family, disability, and truth. We know it's okay to struggle, and that struggle does not equal a lack of competence and should not be seen to undermine professionalism, but is an important and productive part of learning. We aim to demonstrate this to our students.

We ask "where does disability fit within academia"? Working in this area, what springs immediately to mind for us are the terms "disability support", "disability compliance", disability justice, and "disability discrimination". And policies listing politically correct responses to avoid costly retribution. Yes, a supportive response is needed, but this must come with the understanding of the unique characteristics of every individual living with the label: "disabled". Indeed, some disabilities are overt (even the use of a white cane can change perceptions and responses) and others are hidden away. Some are the priority of research and receive weekly attention in the media. Whilst others are surrounded in mystery, significantly misunderstood, and talked about in hushed tones. We can talk about vision impairment in a positive manner, and people might even tend to feel empathy, but we have also heard the corridor conversations about students with mental health concerns. Some chronic and severe enough to require extended hospitalisation. The suggestions that maybe these students are not cut out for their course or degree, are seeking attention, or just can't cut the realities of life; perhaps using the policies to their advantage.

So what do we ask of the Academy? At the very least, we demand a light be shone on the systemic inequities that make it too difficult for students with a disability to continue their studies, and too difficult for

carers to continue their work as academics. Something shouldn't have to give: not work, not family, and not social responsibility. We don't shy away from struggle, but truly, it shouldn't have to be this hard. We may have succeeded, but that doesn't mean we don't mourn what could have been. It's been a fight and much of it has been accompanied by shame, panic, and guilt. Over this journey, we have asked "what do we risk in making this *shiFt?*", but also, what do we risk in *not* making this *shiFt?* Disability is part of humanity and part of our society. It is one of many social identities and is a rich, challenging, and essential part of education. Engagement with disability helps us to challenge our norms, and be aware of how we take these norms for granted. Ableism, suggests Evans et al. (2017), operates on multiple levels, but mostly by privileging essential abilities as normal. We want to see disability as more than ramps, braille trails, and captioning. We want to see recognition that "certain forms of assistance are stigmatized" (p. 1). We have found this to be true as carers of our sons and our other children with disabilities. We all rely on each other for assistance, and there is no escaping that.

Finally, what we want is what Black et al. describe as "life affirming, joyous, meaningful, collaborative and celebratory work" (2017, p. 143) with care and wellbeing at the centre. Care is work. Care is not self-indulgence (Mountz et al., 2015). Isolation, competitiveness, and fear help no one. Support, collegiality, patience, compassion, sharing, and honesty are needed in the workplace. We are working to have the roadblocks to an authentic and multifaceted life dismantled. Now we have arrived in *Holland*. Yes, it's a beautiful place, but there is much work to do.

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Arts-Based Reflection for Care of Self and Others in the Academy: A Collaged Rhizomatic Journey

Marthy Watson and Georgina Barton

Introduction

It is important for academics to bring high degrees of self-awareness to their work as they strive to experience balance between their work and personal lives (Rendón, 2009). Working in the academy can be both challenging and rewarding—as change can occur daily (Englund, 2018). In this competitive and demanding culture, academics can be particularly vulnerable when subjected to critical feedback, scrutiny from many sources on their performance and pressure for greater accountability. Compounding factors such as a struggle to find ongoing employment, unsuccessful funding applications and rejection letters from academic journals can result in experiences of stress and uncertainty, regardless of where academics are in their career journeys (Berg et al., 2016; Edwards & Ashkanasy, 2018). Such stress and uncertainty can lead to a decrease in performance and, in some cases, reduced physical and emotional health

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and wellbeing (Poalses & Bezuidenhout, 2018). We acknowledge that not all experiences in the academy are negative and unpleasant. However, in this chapter, we seek to reflect on self-care and on how we have engaged creatively together in ways that have supported our health and wellbeing. We have come to understand that collaboration, listening and care enable the sharing of our lived experience and create a kinder academy. In our chapter, we show how we have used three arts-based practices—storying, poetry and the making of a collaborative artwork—to map our journey in the academy and how engaging together in collaborative reflective practice has enhanced 'mindfulness, contemplation and feelings of stability in work and personal lives' (Beer et al., 2015, p. 162).

As colleagues, we have worked together over the past six years in higher education in Queensland, Australia. Initially, we worked together as colleagues at a metropolitan university, as a casual tutor and an early career academic, and then moving to a regional university where we now work as a lecturer and a professor. Throughout our careers, we have felt the pressures of the university workplace, but we have supported each other through many of the challenges we have faced. Reflecting on some of these challenges and experiences again here enables us to expose our inner selves through the process of creativity in the hope that this can provoke positive change (Leitch, 2006).

Collaborative Reflective Practice

Existing research acknowledges the importance of reflective practice for helping staff face challenges and subsequently find solutions to these challenges in the workplace (Aldridge, 2015; Börjesson et al., 2015). Workplaces rarely nurture or support time for reflection, but reflection can support self-care, and refection for academics in higher education is critical (Barton, 2019; Warren, 2017; Webster-Wright, 2013). Sengers et al. (2005) state that reflection is not

> a purely cognitive activity, but is folded into all our ways of seeing and experiencing the world. Similarly, critical reflection does not just provide

new facts; it opens opportunities to experience the world and oneself in a fundamentally different way. (p. 50)

Reflection can take many forms including through writing, speaking and other multimodal practices including drawing, dramatisation, performance and other arts-based practices (Barton & Ryan, 2014). As creative practitioners, we have during our processes of writing and reflection created a collaged artwork—a recollage (Barton, 2019) to contemplate and represent our experiences in the academy.

As a way of seeing the world differently, we collaborated on this artwork and used it to guide and deepen our reflection. We used the 4Rs Model of Reflection (Ryan & Ryan, 2013) as an approach for reflecting on our experiences as employees in higher education. The 4Rs Model works in a cyclical rather than a linear manner and processes of exploring Reporting and responding, Relating, Reasoning and Reconstructing. These levels increase in complexity, encouraging one to address reflection from cognitive, emotional and ethical standpoints. This four-level process allowed us to first report on our experiences in the academy by providing descriptive accounts of our journey. Here, we responded to questions such as 'what is my experience in academy?' and 'how do I feel about it?'

Next, reflecting on a deeper level, we related our experience in the academy by making connections to our past to reflect on prior individual and collective experiences. We asked questions such as: 'have I experienced this before?' and 'how can I use my learnings from the past to assist me in moving forward?'

Thirdly, we explored significant factors underlying our experiences of the academy and how different perspectives, such as our personal perspective, affect the way we understand the academy. We reasoned about the context in which we worked by asking: 'why is it necessary to analyse my experiences and emotions?' And 'how does the literature explain these experiences?'

Lastly, we reconstructed our views of the academy and considered what these views mean for the future by asking 'what can I do next time to increase my self-care and care for others?' For us, it has been essential to be able to reflect creatively using arts-making as we believe through

such practice intrinsic emotions become extrinsic, enabling us to recognise areas or issues needing further reflection (Moffatt, 2014).

We sought to reflect deeply and effectively to enact change. We tended to each other as we engaged with these questions and reflected on our journeys. We sat together to listen to each other's stories, to bear witness, respond and hold space (Hervey, 2012). We used an 'evolution of questions' that represented our journey in a 'rhizomatic way' (Irwin et al., 2006). Thus, engaging various methods to articulate our individual and collective paths in academia, we resist methodology in the traditional sense to break open the hegemonic spaces of academy (Black et al., 2019). This chapter, consequently, shares this process and journey in reflecting on the rhizomatic nature of our academic working lives through arts-based practice.

Sharing Stories Through a Rhizomatic Lens

Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) work shows how arts-based practice can be a powerful form of representing meaning that may transform our belief systems. Using reflective storying, poetry and art, we wove a rhizomatic path to record our collective journey in the academy. Deleuze et al., (1987) described a 'rhizomatic path' as connections from 'any point to another point while growing in all directions' (p. 21). This means that we view ideas in the world, not as a 'taproot' expressed in a linear of singular way, but as 'rhizome roots' where there is a multiplicity of possibilities to think about the world (Deleuze et al., 1987).

Irwin et al. (2006) explained the rhizomatic process as an 'embodied living inquiry' involving art and writing where the space for creating is in a constant state of becoming (p. 5). This idea informed the rhizomatic approach we took in creating our artwork, poetry and narrative text. We avoided reducing our art-making process to a formula where the focus was on the end product. Instead, we invested in creating a process of making marks on the canvas that spoke to our stories and poetry (MacDonald, 2014). This practice created a rhizomatic, non-linear account that required internal observation, self-reflection and moments of intimate conversations (Barton et al., 2020). Such a state of becoming

disrupts binaries as it indicates that our stories are not yet finished and are continually *shiFting* and emerging.

Lived Experiences Through Arts-Making

The narrative constructed in our collaboration sessions focused around the concepts of 'belonging, being and becoming' (Australian Government, 2018), a framework we often use in our teaching for preservice teachers. Belonging to the educational tribe (Becher & Trowler, 2001), our stories revolve around where we worked before venturing into academia. Being a PhD student/early career researcher and professor respectively, we created our work through positive and reflective affirmations within a view of self-care (Moffatt et al., 2016). While there are many stories to be told about journeys in academia, this account is seen through our eyes, and it reflects our voice as we recount our stories. These stories are not always straightforward but are fraught with tensions and tangled relationships and silences. The telling of our stories and the process of the creation of the artwork are interwoven and expose the rhizomatic nature of the narrative. These stories are shifting and merging, interrogating fractures and divisions, entangled in telling of things past and present as well as in dreams of the future (Black et al., 2019).

Belonging: Building Community

A sense of belonging is described as knowing where and with whom you belong and the satisfaction with social connections (Allen et al., 2018). Belonging shapes who we are and who we can become and is part of our sense of happiness and wellbeing. Although we belong to particular groups at some point in our lives, we shift into spaces where we do not belong or where we feel uneasy. In our collaborative conversations, we asked questions about our sense of belonging (van Herpen et al., 2019), where we felt we belong/ed in relation to our individual lived experience in education, as teachers, before working in academia.

The first glimpse of the existence of our individual and collective experiences started to appear as rough drawings on pieces of paper, iPads and whiteboards in our university offices. A collection of materials such as photos, scraps of paper, paint, paintbrushes, glue and a canvas completed the assemblage. The initial markings on the canvas started as four circles placed on the canvas, interlinked with pathways connecting the circles. These circles were built up with different coloured tissue paper. The enclosed circles in our artwork represent our individual experiences in education before we met at university. Two circles represent us, one represents the university environment and the fourth circle represents the outside world (Fig. 1).

Our lived experiences were connected clearly to the field of education. No paint was used at this point as layers of tissue paper provided colour and texture. The layers of paper represented our individual and educational life experiences. We used photos and various materials to represent

Fig. 1   Initial markings on canvas

significant moments in our lives including writing theses, lesson planning and creative practice. These materials were pasted down with glue and gesso. Our conversations explored the sense of belonging we had experienced as we travelled the various pathways of our careers.

The space between the circles became important. We used threaded and frayed pieces of material to symbolise the fragility of our existence through a rhizomatic articulation. Tillett and Wong (2018) theorise how a sense of belonging needs to support inclusion for learning. We drew on this concept as we reflected upon how we continue to learn and negotiate complex spaces in education.

Marthy: *I must step back into the past to explain my commitment to teaching. This is the place I belonged and felt safe. As a 5-year-old, I played teacher-students with my sister. She had to write her name neatly on the paper and count loudly to infinity under my strict to-be-teacher's eye. These teacher traits followed me into primary and high school where I loved to stand in front of an audience—reciting poems, acting out and owning the space. Pursuing an education degree was a no-brainer after school, and four years later I was awarded a degree in education. I belonged here and consequently I spent the next 23 years in a classroom and loved it.*

Georgina: *I was so excited to finally have a continuing position (10 years post-PhD). I remember the first day walking around the uni and even though I had been teaching there for quite some time as a casual staff member I said to myself "This is the first time I can actually say I really belong here." It didn't take me long to experience the stressors of academia. I found myself teaching across a couple of summer semesters (where I wasn't even meant to be teaching) because someone had said to me "I'm really stressing a lot, can you do it?" And of course you say, "Yes" because you have only started working there. I wanted to help, I wasn't meant to be doing these classes and it put a lot of pressure on me relatively quickly.*

Interestingly, pastel colours in the first layering of the work represented our belonging phases on the canvas. To us, this belonging phase felt like a safe and loved place due to the support we showed each other but also as we recognised the importance of self-care. This layer also represented our commitment to education and learning. Our conversations, however, started shifting away from the place of belonging into being in a different place (Thwaites & Pressland, 2016). The evolution of our questioning was reflected on our canvas as we considered how being in the new place influenced us. The questions became more confronting.

Being: Lived Visions

In a discussion about obstacles we encountered through our academic journeys, it became apparent that there was an undercurrent at work that is not visible, the demand for achievement and success (Weisshaar, 2017). We described this like a snake acting as an undercurrent, penetrating goals, achievements and desires. Therefore, we created a curved line across the canvas, and instead of starting again, we decided that this undercurrent will surface and appear on top of the circles as if pushing through to reveal itself: not taking away from the belonging we felt in the representation of the circles but exposing the deeply inner self that only becomes tacit with reflection. Red lines became visible and forced their way into the artwork, laying bare the undercurrent of our feelings and aspirations. We both felt that the lines represented the ebb and flow of life, like blood flowing. These were inextricably linked to our experiences in academia.

The pastel coloured circles disappeared under layers of paint and patterns as conversations turned and became more complicated. We started to reflect on how this new space affected our personal lives. These complicated conversations manifested themselves as the lines in-between, coming up in the middle, going over, ending and disappearing, showing the multiplicity of events in our life. These symbolised various flights we had had to undertake for both ourselves and others. We used our conversation to unlock these events by practising 'creative movement forward [the kind] that gives rise to things, to the improvisation of being, to the

unfolding of becoming' (Irwin, 2013, p. 207). The red lines we were making represented being *in situ* and told our stories—as becoming:

> *is not defined by the points it connects,*
> *or by the points that compose it;*
> *on the contrary, it passes between points,*
> *it comes up through the middle…*
> *a becoming is neither one nor two,*
> *nor the relations of the two; it is the*
> *in between, the…line of flight…running perpendicular to both.*

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2004, p. 323; as cited in Irwin, 2013, p. 207)

The lines crisscrossed the canvas, and we filled it with colour and texture, using gesso to build up the raised areas (Fig. 2). The images on the canvas began to match experiences from our individual and collective stories (Fig. 3).

Fig. 2   Heaviness, layered lines and textures

Fig. 3   The un/final product

Marthy:	*I think the painting is representative of our bodies. We can use the embodied present process to undo the stress and imbalances and connect to the intelligence of our bodies. We put that into the artwork—to bring body and mind together. It reminds me of moving blood and cells. When you are healthy your body energy is flowing well and you are happy, but there are times where it is not like that and your body tells you, "This is where you have got to slow down and stop. This is where you must make yourself do some creative activity because it is just so critical for self-care".*
Georgina:	*Yes, I agree. Without creative practice, I feel lost and overwhelmed sometimes. But stepping back and breathing, while being creative, is so important. I experience both absolute joy with my job and also stress. But when it is flowing like the veins*

> *on this image I get excited about possibilities. But, I also know where they are blocked or stopped, and that can be quite stressful. You can see a section that is 'sickly' black and sort of smudged.*

Marthy: *It is as if you want to go through there, break through, but it is blocked. It is almost like there is a lack of oxygen and you cannot breathe. I wrote a poem about coagulation, and I think that is an underlying theme in both of our stories—negotiating blockage in our lives. It is marking, administrative pressure, answering students' emails, going to meetings, trying to publish, those different things which make up an academic's role. I think you have got to learn how to prioritise and need to know what it is that actually counts. It is just so tricky.*

Georgina: *Yes, I think as an early career academic particularly, you never say no, or you feel like you cannot say no. It is difficult to know which things count and also how to navigate the workplace in making it work for you.*

Marthy: *I was feeling like that when I could not access my workload and I could not check it and I knew that I was teaching four classes and I am just thinking, "This does not feel right." I was looking at other people's loads and I thought—they teach only two classes… You know, I realised that something had to shift, and I knew that if you truly want to understand something you have to try and change it.*

Georgina: *It is like you're a duck on the surface of the water and your legs are just going really fast.*

Marthy: *Meanwhile I am smiling and saying to others: "Yeah, everything is fine".*

Marthy's Visions Stepping up to the challenge of being an academic, at times I felt out of place, a beginner and someone who 'knew very little'—even though I had been a deputy head of a school for many years and had never lacked confidence. Suddenly, it felt like I had to think twice before I uttered a sentence and make sure my opinions sounded valid and intelligent. I succumbed to 'imposter syndrome'. But I needed money, and as a seasoned teacher, I became a 'sessional' very quickly. Eager to impress and gain some experience, I took on all the work I could get. Becher and

Trowler (2001) write about the pressure of being part of the academic tribe and how stress and anxiety are accompanied by self-doubt and angst. Working at two universities, teaching an array of educational subjects, I did not complain because I was in the 'system'. Sensing the pressure of earning my place within the academic tribe, the uncertainty of getting regular work added to the stress. Juggling my PhD research, teaching and my personal life—there was no social life—I found myself working 12-hour days. Feeling guilty and time-poor due to academic expectations disrupted my identity and sense of self (Carter et al., 2013).

This disruption of my identity was not noticed immediately but was felt through small changes. My time was split between my family and my new career. Academic work impeded other activities I deemed valuable in my life. The time I used to spend nurturing my creativity was the first to go. Spending time in my small art studio became more infrequent, and dust was gathering on my paintbrushes. Incomplete drawings sat on the table longing to be finished, and the shift in my attention and energy was driven towards my PhD study and teaching. Without warning, my identity was reimaged (Brown & Watson, 2010; Leonard, 2006).

In our conversations together, I contemplated my new image.

Marthy: *Okay, I got the job, everything is rosy, yes, I am good. And then it hits, because that two week intensive course, teaching every day from 9:00am–3pm, juggling new course material, managing sessional staff, became so constricting.… It is like when you cut your blood supply and the vein starts bulging.*

My words and thoughts were translated into red lines on the artwork where the ruptures and blockages communicated the challenge of my lived experience. That night I wrote:

Coagulation
Pushed up against a solid structure
interrogating ruptured vessels
bled out as lifeblood gasped
How many heartbeats until it is finally over?

The pressure of academic writing, 'publish or perish', became another stressor in my life (Weisshaar, 2017). Looking at the many drafts of chapters, summaries of ideas and articles to-be in my study, I felt the urge to shred them all into paper mâché clay. I wanted to make a colourful vase to display fake flowers—thinking that at least then my words might have a purpose! I read the blogs and Facebook posts of PhD students and found solace in words of people that I do not even know. 'Yes, I agree with you', I shouted after reading a post where the writer claims she 'feels sick at the idea of writing or reading anything to do with my PhD'. Where did it all go wrong?

It is called self-doubt

The clicking of my fingers on the keyboard is hypnotic
my eyes drink the words that appear on the screen
learning over to check the word count
yes, I am almost there

Where did I read that quote?
did I reference it correctly?
Maybe I should have used my own ideas
No – quote the famous
That will bring you there

The white paper stacks glare at me
Chaos erupts as words clamber to be acknowledged
Under my pink highlighter
All taken in to feed the pool of knowledge.

My inner critic observes the dance
My words seem dry, broken before the end
Earthbound and imposter-ish
Truly the voice of doubt

But I firmly closed the draw
and peace assumes
for now

The gulf between working 'piecemeal' at two universities, working on my PhD at ungodly hours and juggling family life between these inconstant junctures became a weight. I was longing for something to be permanent and enduring, trying to find a sense of purpose. I was questioning where I belonged and with whom I belong. I realised that something had to shift. I had to flow into just *being*. Lewin (1946) wrote that if you truly want to understand something, you have to 'try and change it'. I was finding myself in a life space where motions of activity bled into each other without a horizon to fix my position.

> *Life space*
>
> *Waking up to another day*
> *Treadmilling the same space*
> *Behind my computer to make sense of my world*
>
> *I need energy to tip me into action*
> *A caffeine kick or a change of luck*
>
> *By gods this stasis is seeping into my bones*
> *I need to run…*

Georgina's Visions I have recently experienced a positive change in my career—I was promoted to Professor. To me, this achievement is recognition of the hard work I have done over the past 15 years in academia. I finished my PhD in 2004 and found it really challenging to find a continuing role in academia. My doctorate was in education and musicology and given that the Arts were constantly being cut in universities (Smith, 2016), there were very few arts jobs to apply for. I therefore took on multiple research assistant and project management jobs (which at times felt like much more than a full-time job alongside parenting two young children). I also got offered a post-doctoral fellowship in my second teaching areas—English and literacy. I acknowledge that during this time I learnt so much more about research than would ever have been possible had I gone straight into an academic teaching role post PhD. In 2012, I was offered a full-time contract for 12 months at the university

where I had done a lot of casual tutoring. I was employed in a continuing position in English and literacy education in 2013. I am grateful for my previous research experiences and know they have contributed to my success in reaching Professor in seven years.

The panel all peer at the potential job application:

> *"She's had a meteoric rise!"*
> *"She's too young and inexperienced"*
> *I often wonder how these judgements are made*
> *I mean, I know I have been a teacher for over 30 years in schools*
> *I have led many educational programs and*
> *I am an artist and a researcher*
> *I always have been.*

Even though I know my promotion was well-deserved, I sadly had some doubts about my success. Initially, I was shocked that I even got promoted and swiftly thought, 'Have I peaked too soon!?' These self-doubts, I believe, are a result of constant expectations and biases in the academy, particularly for women. I have written about this before (Barton, 2014, 2019) noting as an early career researcher I was constantly wondering if I was doing the right thing, who to ask for help, and saying 'yes' to everything that passed my way.

But distinct *shiFts* have recently happened in my working and personal life. I was accepted into a 'women in leadership' programme which involved professional coaching. Up until this point, I thought coaching was too egocentric to try, but I learnt so much through this process. Most notably, I realised I was much harder on myself than others. I did not recognise the high-level leadership skills I had already possessed, and I started to engage with the literature on creative leadership (Mainemelis et al., 2018; Mitchell & Reiter-Palmon, 2017). What I liked about this approach was the fact that it was not a top-down approach but rather one that embraced innovation and valued each person's contribution to a task. It is about a shared ambition towards a goal that makes a difference (Basadur, 2004; Gornall & Bickerton, 2018). I also went through a relationship breakdown; this was both expected and a shock. In positive ways, this experience has made me realise how important it is to focus on

what you love professionally and personally. I was also made aware of slow scholarship (Berg & Seeber, 2016) as I just did not have the cognitive capacity to keep pressing on as I had through my early career. We are very blessed to be able to have the flexibility to engage in slow scholarship. For me, mentoring and using arts-based approaches to support others are my passions, and these now filter into my everyday work.

Becoming: Reimagining Futures

Becoming something means to emerge into the world. We began to understand that becoming makes one conscious of new ideas and validations that offer new pathways for thought and action (Semetsky, 2006). Together, we realised throughout our reflective process that there will be more times of stress and overwhelm, but we can overcome them through self-care (Moffatt et al., 2016). For us, this means being there for one another but also doing activities we enjoy individually such as making art, music and sport and yoga. We learnt that our resilient and compassionate natures are positive tools to utilise during challenging times (MacDonald & Hunter, 2018).

Georgina: *I think the layering, talking about the layering is really important because that is where our mood changes. You know, often when I'm getting overloaded I'll get a migraine and I'm feeling stressed and then I start to feel down, that I cannot actually do everything. So that would be one of my many layers. But what I like in the image, is the white curvy tail part. It stands out to me as there are some words underneath here. It makes this feel a bit playful, that white tail part.*

Marthy: *The white tail is part of you. And there is lots of other stuff underneath that you cannot see. But it is still part of your life. There are also holes on the canvas, but they are covered up, underneath the surface. You cannot see them unless you turn the canvas around. Nobody will ever turn this painting around and look at the back and find any meaning, but it is there. Those*

holes are indicative of pain that we feel but we cannot really show it to the world. It is like a mask.

Georgina: *Yeah, but to me it means light can flow in. There is still that aspect to us that it's tangled a bit, but it is still there and it is still quite powerful because that bit stands out to me the most. To me it is also like networking, so it can be seen in a positive way. And that dark part is really an important part of us or our lives or our working lives or whatever it is. But we can transform it into something beautiful. A lot of people say you cannot know joy or happiness unless you've experienced sorrow.*

Marthy: *Yes. It is very true. I think we must look back to look forward— learn from the past, to see where we come from, to see where we are going. Many times, when you look back, you tend not to see the good things that have happened to you, but you see those bad and hurtful things that influenced your life. But we have to learn from both, bad and good. We have to learn from the past to negotiate the future.*

Concluding Thoughts

Reflection should be ongoing and valued in the academy so that academics' self-care is prioritised and maintained (O'Dwyer et al., 2018). As creative practitioners and people who value the power of the Arts as a transformative practice, we know that multimodal reflection is an effective way to contemplate happenings in the academy. With heavy workloads, high expectations and a continually changing environment, arts-based practice can assist us in processes of self-care and care for others, ensuring positive health and wellbeing during times of stress.

Through processes of collaboration, listening and care, we were able to share our lived experiences and move closer towards a kinder academy for ourselves and for others. Using the 4Rs Model of Reflection, we found it was important to name and experience our challenges, and to identify our visions. As artists and educators, we know the importance of reflection, but especially creative reflection. Without regular reflection and

support of each other, we acknowledge that our work experiences might look and feel very different. As such, we are committed to arts-based approaches to reflect on who we are and where we belong, how we are being, where we are going and who we are becoming.

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Slow Pedagogies and Care-Full, Deep Learning in Preservice Teacher Education

Joanne Ailwood and Margot Ford

Education is an encounter between interconnected, fragile, and complex humans. The pedagogical work of being a teacher has always been entangled with care, but in contexts of increasing surveillance and control, the difficult and complex work of care-full pedagogies is readily diminished. In this chapter, we are '*shiFting*' our attention from ways of resisting this diminishing of our work, to refocus on slowing down, being care-full, aiming to create deep learning opportunities. This '*shiFt*' in our attention is political, pushing back against the 'neoliberal cascade' (Connell, 2013) in education replete with regulation, accreditation, and performativity.

Mountz et al. (2015) recognise the need for care in universities to be broadly understood. To build on this, we argue that slow pedagogies as well as care-full and deep learning should be included in our university teaching, especially in those degrees where students are preparing for a future in a caring profession such as teaching. Universities, after all, are not just about academics; students are central to the work and life of

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universities. We agree with Ball (2003, p. 224) when he suggests that 'performance has no room for caring'. Instead, performativity and accounting for oneself feed reductionism and competition. Therefore, our '*shiFt*' in this chapter is to reflect on our work towards building slow pedagogies that enable opportunities for care-full and deep learning. These learning opportunities are potentially just as valuable for us as teachers as they are for those who are learners.

We write as academics in a large, regional, Australian university. Our university is multi-campus. The two campuses we teach on are located in Awabakal and Darkinjung areas. The University has a diverse student population. In 2019, the postcode for our university was listed as one of the most disadvantaged in Australia, pointing towards high numbers of university students living on campus or close by who might be struggling financially. In our initial teacher education degrees, we have many preservice teachers who are not school leavers. In other words, they have taken a year or more post-school to make their way to our degree programme. In what follows, we explore our teaching across three university courses, all three delivered in different ways, but all holding a commitment to slowing down, being care-full, and valuing deep learning.

Slow Scholarship and Slow Pedagogy

Slow scholarship is a term used in the university sector to explain shifts in ways of doing teaching and research in that space (Mountz et al., 2015; Hartman & Darab, 2012), as resistance against the increasing accountability and regulation of the neoliberal university. Teacher education is heavily regulated across Australia by both the state and the federal governments. In our early childhood and primary degree programme, graduates of which can then teach children from birth to 12 years old, there are at least three sets of regulatory requirements: University regulations, the State's primary education regulations, and Federal early childhood regulations. In this context, teacher education becomes tightly bound within the complexities of this sticky net of accountability and meeting of graduate outcomes. In this chapter, we mobilise the ideas of slow pedagogy to reflect upon our work with final fourth year preservice teachers with

whom we aim to practice slow pedagogy. We encourage preservice teachers to consider the ways these ideas can be used in their own teaching practices in early childhood and primary education (Collett et al., 2018; Berg & Seeber, 2016).

We argue that slowing down pedagogy provides space to *shiFt* into thinking deeply and opportunities to understand and articulate new knowledge more competently and confidently. We model slowing down and taking care in our university teaching so that preservice teachers have alternative ways of doing and being once in schools and child care centres. Much is made of the lack of time in school curricula. So, at first glance, the notion of slowing down is at odds with an already overloaded curriculum. An overcrowded curriculum appears to be a prevalent concern in many countries. For example, Mitton-Kükner and Murray-Orr (2018) reporting on secondary preservice teachers in Canada who were attempting to include literacy practices in science classes cited a lack of time as a significant aspect prohibiting such work. This resonates with our experience in Australia. The National Curriculum introduced into Australian schools in the first decade of the century was an attempt to develop more consistent content across States and Territories. In order to cover curriculum content and competing interests, three Cross Curriculum Priorities in addition to the seven Key Learning Areas (KLAs) were introduced. One of these was Indigenous Histories and Cultures, to be embedded across all KLAs. However, early criticisms emerged that the curriculum remained overloaded with little time to cover all the recommended content (Brennan, 2011). This is tangentially referenced by Doherty (2014) in her analysis of discourses surrounding debates of the History curriculum. There is similar sentiment expressed by teachers when trying to cover Indigenous content. Baynes (2016) found that time constraints were one reason that teachers found it challenging to include Indigenous perspectives in their practices.

Perhaps the most critical aspect in terms of time management in Australian schools has been the introduction of national testing in literacy and numeracy (NAPLAN) every two years from Year 3 to Year 9. National test results of each school are available on a government website (myschool.com) and increasing pressure to teach to the test has narrowed curriculum content (Hardy, 2015). Furthermore, it is claimed that

national testing has created an environment of increased superficial learning. Teachers have less time to engage in inquiry learning, learning that leads to deeper understandings (Thompson, 2013).

Whilst a dearth of time to cover the curriculum has been a consistent theme for teachers over time, attention to the benefits of slow pedagogy, slowing things down to allow a deeper understanding of concepts to emerge, has only recently begun to gather momentum. Reference to slow pedagogy and its association with deep learning are more common in environmental and outdoor education fields (Witt, 2017; Coxon, 2011; Payne & Wattchow, 2008). For example, Tooth and Renshaw (2009), taking their lead from Greenwood's (2008) ideas about pedagogies of place, argue that linking pedagogies of place with a slowing down in open natural environments and using narrative formats to record experiences enables deep reflection and learning.

Against this backdrop of growing awareness about slow pedagogies, care-full scholarship, and the need to firmly connect learners to deep learning, it is important for beginning teachers to recognise there are different ways to teach and learn. In the fourth and final year of our early childhood and primary teacher education degree programme, across the three courses we teach, we have now developed a sequence of teaching and learning based on ideas of slow pedagogy. First, early in the academic year, preservice teachers engage with philosophy in their early childhood education and care course. Here, the students witness what it feels like to engage in slow pedagogy. Second, in a capstone course about teaching literacy, one requirement is to develop an integrated unit of work for use in primary school teaching. Through this unit of work, preservice teachers are encouraged to plan care-full, slow, and meaningful lessons and activities to ensure heightened opportunities for successful outcomes for students. Third, in the final semester of their degree, preservice teachers design and implement a small, independent research project. What follows is an exploration of these three courses and our reflections on the experience of attempting to slow down and be care-full in a university context.

Working Towards Slow Pedagogy in Teacher Education

The philosophy of early childhood education and care course is offered in both full semester and condensed delivery modes. A majority of preservice teachers choose the condensed delivery mode, where students attend in a week-long, nine-to-five format. This is popular with students as many are juggling work commitments with home care responsibilities alongside their studies. Historically, this course has been organised as a content heavy course, with several weekly readings accompanied by a significant workload.

Margot: I had an epiphany about this course several years ago as I struggled to reconcile the intensive format with the large number of suggested readings. It occurred to me that for the previous three years preservice teachers have been bombarded with content, with little time to absorb information before producing assignments, and quickly moving onto the next one. The philosophy course should be different. It was redesigned so there were only three key readings that were discussed at the intensive; the emphasis of two of the three assignments were shifted to allow preservice teachers voices to be legitimated, and the intensive itself was organised differently.

Reducing the number of readings meant that preservice teachers had to rely on their own accumulated understandings of educational, philosophical and curriculum concepts. The key readings could be unpacked carefully, and collective discussion revealed growing understandings of sometimes complex theories. One assignment allowed for no reading (therefore no referencing) as students chose their own critical incident to describe, analyse, create philosophical positions about, and relate to educational theories. The requirement of the final assignment was to create their own philosophical principles about their teaching practices, but this was linked to other theoretical and philosophical understandings.

Finally, the traditional lecture/tutorial format was ignored. Seventy-nine preservice teachers were in one large room reconfigured into circle groups of six to eight desks. Time was 'saved' as there was no need for students to move into other tutorial rooms for smaller discussions. Instead seamless transitions from a large lecture style format to small group discussion and back again took seconds. It was simply a matter of the preservice teachers turning from looking to the

front of the room, to looking into a circle of desks facing each other. The last hour of each day was when preservice teachers could work on their first assignment and engage in one-on-one discussion about their work with one of the two lecturers in the course.

It seems counter-intuitive that a one-week intensive class could encompass slow pedagogy and deep thinking, but the organisational steps taken worked to slow things down. According to Martell (2014, in Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1248), 'The issue is not speed, but control over speed. … because it changes the crux of the matter from slow to self-determination over being able to go slow'. An intensive class has a level of flexibility that our usual weekly 'one-hour lecture/two-hour tutorial' delivery format does not have. If there are struggles and difficulties, more time can be taken to discuss ideas slowly, care-fully, and in-depth because we are there for the whole day. A lunchbreak can be half an hour later or a morning tea can be 5 minutes, not 15—the preservice teachers themselves can decide on the spot. The structure of the intensive means there is routinely very high attendance: It is easier for preservice teachers to organise a free week to attend, and it is a format they prefer. This supports collective and shared commitments and understandings and ensures higher levels of engagement because students are listening to the same information, discussing ideas at the same time, and then listening to each other's views and ideas.

Time was spent on several ethical dilemmas to illustrate how complex creating a set of philosophical principles might be when examined in practice. Complexities led to rethinking, reconfiguring, and more nuanced shared philosophical statements. The room configuration meant that all preservice teachers could hear all the feedback from the discussion groups. This supported collective understandings that are not always possible in separate tutorial groups, and these could then be written up and posted at the end of each day. It was in the collaborative space of a large number of preservice teachers, in the evolving and shared knowledge of the group, that deep learning was made possible. This resonates with feminist notions of slow scholarship that are synonymous with collaborative action (Black et al., 2017; Mountz et al., 2015). However, here, rather than the focus being about collaborations between academics,

what was encouraged, valued, and heard in these teaching and learning spaces was collaboration between preservice teachers.

The second course we discuss, the literacy learning course, is a highly technical course with added pressures linked to students' upcoming final professional experience which takes place in schools and then in early childhood centres. It follows directly on from the intensive teaching session discussed above, early in the academic year. It is the last of a suite of four courses focused on language and literacy, spanning both early childhood and primary education. There is therefore an expectation of assumed knowledge built up over the previous three years, which encompasses linguistic knowledge about the English language, early literacy skills as well as knowledge of the school-based English curriculum. The content of this course has been increasingly surveilled by the government bodies that accredit our degree programmes because of the increased focus on literacy teaching, driven by public demand and the perennial cry for a back to basics approach (Australian Government Department of Education, 2014). There has been some push back from literacy academics highlighting inconsistencies and tensions in the approach to literacy teaching (Mackenzie, 2015; Lu & Cross, 2014), but in the ongoing climate of neoliberal ideologies, this has led to little flexibility in course content. This makes creating spaces for slow pedagogy much more of a challenge.

In this more traditional course, across the semester the main challenge is ensuring that attendance remains high as well as aiming for deep learning whilst slowing down. In the final five weeks, the preservice teachers are tasked with developing a school-based unit of work, targeting a socially significant picture book of their choice as the foundation. In keeping with an Outcomes-Based Education approach (Killen, 2015), students begin by developing assessment tasks and choosing English KLA learning outcomes. The unit of work can be as long as is needed to ensure new concepts are carefully scaffolded, and backward mapped from the summative assessment task. Each week a new element is added so that eventually the unit of work has to have elements of meaningful assessment, critical literacy, and integration beyond the English Key Learning Area as well as reflecting transformational pedagogy. This unit of work is not an assessable item in itself; instead, there is an exam where students

answer questions about the unit of work elements and then draw on their unit of work to demonstrate how these worked in practice. The unit of work can be taken into the exam and attached to their exam paper.

> Margot: It was interesting that in the beginning of the five weeks where preservice teachers developed their unit of work, there were many mechanistic questions; how many English Textual Concepts; how many Learning Outcomes; how many assessment tasks; how many lessons? Each time I repeated that it was their unit of work and they needed to design it accordingly. There was a high level of frustration, but gradually many of them understood what I was trying to do. After all, within six months they were going on their final practicum and then into classrooms as fully qualified educators.
>
> The other point worth noting was many preservice teachers wanted students to write a completed narrative or a persuasive text after the first lesson. We explored what this would mean for students and if they would they have the skills set to complete the task after only one lesson? As they designed their Unit of Work, I encouraged the preservice teachers to take their time and consider introducing end points after several weeks of work as part of targeted assessment criteria.
>
> In tutorials over five weeks I provided space for one on one consultation within the tutorial as others worked on their own unit of work. Teaching moments became more student driven and organic as I could point out ways to improve units of work for the whole class, as I looked at and responded to individual samples. Taking it slow with one-on-one consultations was something the students had appreciated in their philosophy course and this approach had helped them retain focus. There was one major discursive shift I encouraged during these consultations. I wanted them to avoid questions like, "is this right?" and "can you check it?". Rather, I wanted them to take ownership over their work and instead say, for example, "I have chosen four learning outcomes, because I think these can be met in the assessment items; I would really like your input about this".

The teaching and learning techniques we employed helped to model keeping it slow, but also emphasised the need for a unit of work to slow down; school students need to have time to explore new concepts and practice new concepts, and each outcome and assessment item has to carefully align with lesson content. Preservice teachers asking *how many* questions reflects a superficial understanding of creating units of work,

and a tick-box mentality that has become all too familiar in our time-poor universities. It is so much easier for a tutor to answer with a number than encourage students to think beyond the mechanistic. Tutors are likely to get better feedback on teaching surveys, because students themselves are also time-poor and reward straight answers, rather than being encouraged to think more deeply. This is a deeply embedded systemic problem of increased casualisation and a precarious work environment (Thomas et al., 2020; McCarthy et al., 2017).

In this instance, however, the preservice teachers took ownership of their work as they became more confident to make their own decisions about planning and stopped thinking about ticking a box. Gradually, they were able to ask their own questions about their own unit of work. For example, preservice teachers reflected on questions such as the following: would the students be able to complete the set task? Was there enough variety during the unit of work to keep students engaged? Could all learning outcomes be met or were some adjustments necessary? The preservice teachers also began to realise how complex narrative writing is for school students and the need for careful guidance in order for students to have successful outcomes.

Not all preservice teachers were on board. Some remained very reliant on the lecturer for affirmation, and some continued to feel frustrated when not provided with the magic number of things. The reliance on ticking boxes and/or filling spaces on a developed lesson plan format is a powerful phenomenon. It is much less likely to lead to deep learning because once a box is ticked, they can move on, asking no more questions of their work. In some ways, it would be difficult and risky to ask a casual tutor to persist in this slow and deep approach, whereas an experienced and tenured lecturer may be prepared to take short-term risks for long-term gains.

In other words, to ensure learning success, slowing down can be very helpful and produce higher quality work. However, schools as sites for neoliberal incursions of compliance and accountability, especially in literacy and numeracy in the form of national testing, means that the urge to tick a box and move on is strong (Thompson, 2013). Preservice teachers in schools will have to push back to create spaces of slow pedagogy in the same ways we have to do in universities. There is certainly some

anecdotal evidence from preservice teachers who did try slow and deep pedagogy in classrooms on their professional experience. Whilst results of deeper understandings and better learning outcomes were apparent, classroom teachers felt that pressures to get through curriculum requirements would prevent any uptake of such approaches.

'ShiFting' the Ending

Henderson, Honan, and Loch (2016, p. 6) suggest that 'it is only endings that matter in the neoliberal university'. The focus on outcomes and endings in neoliberal universities can also be seen amongst the preservice teachers. It can take some time for students to understand, accept, and importantly enact an emphasis on process rather than end-product that we are aiming for in the final year of their degree. This is understandable, given that the preservice teachers have been taught to aim for end-products since their own school days. They have become calculable (Rose, 1999). Taking a different approach and foregrounding thinking-as-process, asks a lot of students. It asks them trust, take a risk, and loosen their grip on outcomes and endings.

> *Jo: In their final semester, at the same time they are on their final placements, preservice teachers are also doing a small, independent teacher research project. This research project is designed, developed, and implemented by the preservice teachers across several months. Within the course, I explain the broad parameters and boundaries placed around the projects, for example, their research question must make use of publicly available data and not require ethical clearance (e.g. no interviews), but can be broadly about any topic of interest to do with teaching, children, early childhood education, schooling, children's culture and the like. Aside from an introductory lecture, and a series of workshops on specific skills such as writing literature reviews and data analysis, there are no content delivery classes per se or set readings. Class time is taken up with the processes of writing, reading, thinking, and analytical work necessary to produce the two final outcomes: a written research report and a research poster to be shared on a conference day with peers.*
>
> *Once preservice teachers' projects are approved through the evaluation of a proposal task, they are supported via individual or small group meetings and*

whole group class time to do the research. Class time is scheduled in blocks of three hours or more, that are compressed and timetabled around the placement dates. At the beginning of each class we discussed what is of most benefit for the group. For example, there is often a 'talking room' and a 'shut up and write' room. Those in the 'talking room' will be there to meet with the academic staff, debrief about their work with their friends, or because they just prefer a more bustling working space. Those in the 'shut up and write' room are there to do their work in a quiet space. Some preservice teachers prefer to branch off to the library, with drop-ins back to the group when they have questions.

To conclude the course, we hold a conference day. On this day preservice teachers share their research posters and talk about their research with academic staff and their peers. The conference day is scheduled towards the end of the semester, after the preservice teachers have completed their final professional experience placement, and in most cases, this is the final time they come together on campus for their degree. To celebrate we have a pizza party to conclude the day. We share pizza, and reflect on and savour this moment of ending, celebration, and congratulation for the preservice teachers' achievements.

This small teacher research project, whilst an individual and independent piece of work for each preservice teacher, is also a 'weave of collective labour' (Connell, 2019, p. 171). It is in some ways a microcosm of the wider work of universities, undertaking a research project that is full of independent decision-making and self-direction, that requires creativity, attention, and critical thinking, hopefully leading to an encounter with something new. Students and staff in this course work alongside each other, sharing and solving problems together, holding and supporting space and time for independent thinking and working. The collective labour is woven through our process of undertaking deep, sustained, and care-full thinking in time and place that is both together and apart.

To make space for this collective labour of care-full thinking, the standard university semester timetable is actively and deliberately resisted. Classes are specifically timetabled to support the progression of the course, as opposed to the internal logic and structure of the university timetable system. In the first years of delivery, this was quite a battle. As Shahjahan (2015, p. 491) argues in the context of academic careers, 'Neoliberal technologies of surveillance, management, measurement, and control are underpinned by linear notions of time that structure or

colonize one's career'. The timetable at our university is directly connected to the workload system that turns teaching hours into workload hours. Indeed, how those hours are named (lecture, workshop, tutorial, etc.) also flows through the system to indicate the kind and value of that workload. For example, a tutorial is 'worth' more than a workshop, and this flows on to the payment systems for casual staff and the workload systems for full-time staff. Putting more than one name beside a single event on the timetable also causes problems, for the system does not understand why any form of delivery would require more than one staff member. Our concluding activity of a conference day, our moment of celebration where we all come together, requires active management around the standard system, and every year supporting documentation needs to be filed in order for casual staff to be paid appropriately. Course delivery that does not fit neatly into the existing systems causes conniptions. The system twitches. Soothing the system to enable the course to be timetabled as necessary now only requires an annual nudge.

Time, therefore, is yet another set of numbers that regulate, manage, and make calculable our work as teachers. In early childhood education and care, as in other sectors, the work of teachers is bound and regulated by time and timetables. In working through this research project experience together, we also aim to demonstrate to preservice teachers that time and timetables can be actively and consciously resisted, that as historical artefacts they are not fixed. Deep, care-full thinking about a single topic over an extended period of time is not only of value, but possible. Our discussions about time range from how we use it to think carefully and deeply about the research each preservice teacher is doing, to how it can be resisted to create opportunities for deep learning with children, to how it is used differently in school settings versus settings for birth—five-year-olds.

Given that a Euro-Western idea of a slow movement began in Italy with food, it seems fitting that the process of our research project ends with pizza. (Although I doubt any Italian would agree that what we eat is actually pizza!) Food brings people together, to share a sensory experience that supports storytelling and relationship building. We gather with friends and family to eat and share stories and sustain our relationships. In this case, we gather as a community of preservice teachers and

academic staff, to say farewell, marking the final moments of a significant shared experience.

Being Care-Full

The kind of teaching work we are describing here begins with a relational ontology. And it is this relational ontology that is one of the points at which the ideas of slow pedagogy and an ethics of care can be connected. Slowing down, holding space for a learning community focused on consolidation and exploration, rather than a constant and rapid acquisition of knowledge and skills, is contrary to much of the teaching and learning usually experienced at university. Care is vital to us all, but at university, care is not overtly part of the performance package. As noted earlier, care and performativity are incompatible (Ball, 2003). This silencing of care leaves us personally and professionally diminished. But it is also in this moment of evanescence that an idea can become thinkable. In other words, as care seems to disappear from view, it becomes a matter of concern. It is through the silencing of a language of care, reducing care to the routine and everyday management of messy bodies, that we find we are also grasping for an ethics of care to be opened up as a new opportunity to critically re-engage with the idea of care in a robust and defensible way (Ailwood, 2019; Aslanian, 2018).

Part of being robust and defensible about our reassertion of the centrality of an ethics of care is a reassertion that care should not be reduced to only positive or happy emotions (Hobart & Kneese, 2020; Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017; Ailwood, 2019). An ethics of care begins with relationships, and beginning with relationships requires a broadening of thinking about care to include politics, struggles, power, judgement, and control, and what these might mean within democratic citizenship (Sevenhuijsen, 1998; Mountz et al., 2015). As Hobart and Kneese (2020, p. 1) argue, 'care has reentered the zeitgeist'. Ahmed (2014) has also reflected upon 'selfcare is warfare' in her exploration of Audre Lorde's famous statement. So thinking with care has a long feminist history and a long history of political engagement. There is some traction to be had then, in thinking

through resistance in a neoliberal academic environment from a perspective of care, especially within the field of teacher education.

For those of us who predominantly work within an early childhood education space, this thinking with care holds layers of significance. Gibbons (2007, p. 123) argues that early childhood education is in the ruins of care, where 'education's assimilation of care disrupts a knowledge of who cares, how they care, where they care and why'. Finding ways to express the importance of care in our work, in all its complexity and specificity is vital in our current environment of isolationist, individualising neoliberalism. For those of us in early childhood education and teacher education, this potentially entails a non-intuitive disentangling of education and care to highlight the ways in which care has been diminished, made invisible, and become taken-for-granted in our work. While at the same time we are also re-entangling, exploring the significant levels of professional knowledge, decision-making, and ongoing reflection required for the building and sustenance of both caring *and* pedagogical relationships with colleagues, families, and children—or in the case of this chapter, preservice teachers.

Thinking with ethics of care is inherently messy and context-dependent, as Puig de la Bellacasa points out, care is '…unthinkable as something abstracted from its situatedness' (2017, p. 7). The care with which we do our work as teachers in a university is specific to the context of working alongside adults. There is, as Arndt and Tesar (2019) suggest, a need for a humble and care-full 'ethics of unknowing'. Such a position reminds us that while the potential for messiness in the lives of preservice teachers is often unknown to us, it is inherently contributing to the context of the learning—just as our own messiness contributes to our teaching. Slowing down, being care-full, and holding space for deep learning are valuable components of this unknowing.

Conclusion

Through our reflections about working towards slow, care-full, and deep learning with preservice teachers, we have argued that slow and care-full thinking in universities is not only for academic staff to consider, it is also

important to preservice teachers' experiences and students' experiences of learning. Mountz et al. (p. 1254) explain, 'Slow scholarship has value in itself, in the quality of research and writing produced, and also enables us to create a humane and sustainable work environment and professional community that allows more of us to thrive within academia and beyond'. We would argue that this is especially so in teacher education, where preservice teachers are learning to become part of a caring profession. Opening up discussion with preservice teachers about the need for slowness and care in their work as educators seems vital to us as a point of resistance in current educational environments.

Engaging with preservice teachers in this way during their final year is messy, complex, and time consuming. It is not always successful. We hope our legacy in the early childhood and primary teacher education degree is one of students experiencing a slow, care-full, and deep approach to their learning. We also hope that this is an approach that one day they might experiment with themselves as they transition into and move through their teaching careers. The '*shiFt*' for us is in this pushing back against that 'neoliberal cascade' (Connell, 2013) of regulation and control, to instead build slow, care-full, and deep pedagogical opportunities within our university.

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Women Navigating the 'Academic Olympics': Achieving Activism Through Collaborative Autoethnography

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Introduction

The idea for this chapter came after participating in the Making *shiFt* Happen conference that brought together many voices of women in academia and provided opportunities for connection and collaboration. The conference drew upon key papers that we read and re-read to develop deeper meaning about ourselves and the nature of our work in the academy. In particular, 'the University as an infinite game' (Harré et al., 2017) caused us to explore academia as a kind of 'Academic Olympics' and to

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consider our daily dealings with 'finite' games and the 'infinite game'. We see the Academic Olympics at play in the higher institutions we work in, and we now recognise the different 'games' that we are asked to play on a daily basis. In their paper, Harré et al. (2017, p. 5) describe the infinite game as 'a symbol of our potential as people living together to be open and inclusive and to promote the life and growth, that helps us flourish as individuals and communities'. The 'finite games' are described as

> bound by rules that must be followed until a winner is declared. You must be selected to play and if you lose, you are knocked out or have to play the round again. Finite games can be useful, indeed are essential to organise ourselves and to train people for valuable roles. And they can promote self-development. But if they are taken too seriously, they render the infinite game obscure. (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5)

This call for activism and commitment to the 'infinite game' has prompted us to reflect and write. 'Academic activism aims to document, subvert and ultimately rewrite the rules of the finite games we currently live by, so that they make more sense to us as people' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5). In our chapter, our activism revolves around the concept of '*achievement relative to opportunity*'—a notion that is often used in academic institutions for promotion, probation and grant submissions. As women, we have all read or heard about this category and discussed the term with others. We have also seen ethical dilemmas produced and reproduced within academic institutions around this concept when players focus exclusively on the 'finite' games. The intention of the concept is to provide support for people who may have parental leave, caring duties, disabilities or other factors that contribute to performance. While the concept is used to advertise 'equal opportunity for all', we know from our experiences in the 'Academic Olympics', a different reality exists. For us, inclusion means actively creating collaborations, peer networks and mentoring to support women throughout all phases of their career, to share strategies, to understand the importance of each other's work and to know they/we have 'earned their/our place' at the Academic Olympics.

Within academia, women represent a considerable part of the workforce worldwide (Johansson & Sliwa, 2014). While women are 'allowed'

to be part of the academy (or, as we call it, the 'Academic Olympics'), they are not represented equally within their fields of expertise and they are less likely to be promoted or paid as much as male colleagues (Savigny, 2014). Isgro and Castañeda (2015) describe the heavy domination of men at the professor level and subsequent leadership levels as a 'chilly climate' for women. Moreover, Misra et al. (2011) suggest that regardless of academic discipline, there appear consistent barriers to women's leadership and professorial breakthrough in academia. Women are more likely to be represented at less prestigious institutions and in less secure employment (Mason et al., 2013). In recent COVID-19 times, the academic media has reported that women have been submitting fewer articles to journals because of other commitments, including carer roles, again highlighting the barriers and challenges women in academia face.

As women in academia, we begin to also ponder the question 'why are women perceived as less successful than men' in the Academic Olympics? Henley's (2015) research suggests the issue is connected to lack of productivity, lack of institutional support, challenges with motherhood and lack of visibility, with all of these related to the competitive nature of the academy. A strong focus on quality and output has also been linked to being able to move forward in the university setting (see Henley, 2015) but again this is dependent on what opportunities and support for women have been available and are available at the time.

One suggestion for supporting women has been the development of peer networks (Castañeda & Isgro, 2013; Macoun & Miller, 2014). Macoun and Miller (2014, p. 299) see peer networks as important, as these 'may offer critical political resources for resisting and responding to the ways that women's bodies and feminist concerns are made marginal in universities engaged in creating and disciplining compliant workforces in an increasingly competitive and corporatised environment'. Peer networks and collaborations also allow the possibility for mentoring that provides spaces for women to affirm each other's work while also fostering more collegial work environments overall (Goeke et al., 2011).

As such, we begin this chapter with a short overview of our method. We then engage in collective autoethnography to share vignettes of our

own lived realities. In doing so, we align with the ideas of this book, of reimagining and *shiFting* towards a kinder and more connected academy, where we experience and create spaces for women to be heard and to share their stories—stories that often go untold within the walls of academia. We share our lived experience around this notion of 'achievement relative to opportunity' and our academic performance. This sharing of our '*shiFting*' invites opportunities for other women to share, come together and create their own understanding of academic activism and to share experiences and observations of justice/injustice and inclusion/exclusion. We end with critical reflections on moving forward and the importance of the infinite game which allows women to flourish by implementing 'achievement relative to opportunity' across all our work environments beyond academic performance.

Method

This collection of collaborative autoethnography (Hernandez et al., 2015) focuses on the finite games/infinite game we have played daily as female academics in the 'Academic Olympics'. A particular focus is given to 'achievement relative to opportunity' and what this means within our lived experience. Some of us have engaged with this notion, while others are yet to engage with this concept within the academy. As such, a particular focus is made on sharing vignettes from our own lives that can create possibilities for others and serve as units or case studies of analysis.

The sharing of autoethnographic research is growing within academia (see Black & Garvis, 2018), with a specific focus on sharing personal testimonies as an approach for opening up spaces for social justice agendas. Resistance narratives and collective action also allow the safeguarding of public space from the extremes of neoliberalism (Giroux, 2015). According to Delgado Bernal et al. (2012):

> [S]cholars are increasingly taking up *testimonio* as a pedagogical, methodological and activist approach to social justice that transgresses traditional paradigms in academia. Unlike the more common training of researchers

> to produce unbiased knowledge, *testimonio* challenges objectivity by situating the individual in communion with a collective experienced marked by marginalisation, oppression, or resistance. These approaches have resulted in new understandings about how marginalised communities build solidarity and respond to and resist dominant culture, laws and policies that perpetuate inequity. (p. 363)

We believe that sharing experiences allows us to witness the multiple lived realities of each other in the 'Academic Olympics'. We are colleagues and friends, and we are interested in supporting each other within the academy. We share the voices of a dean, lecturer, HDR student and two young professors who have worked in many different academic institutions across the globe. Our backgrounds and context are Australian, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian. As such, we transcend culture and context as we write as a community of women from different countries and universities, bound by a common desire to create common spaces for women to write around 'care' issues such as parental leave, carer leave and personal circumstances. We believe that by sharing our experience, we can support each other to compete in the 'Academic Olympics'.

Our approach to autoethnographic sharing allows our lived experience to be at the forefront and does not generate a distant, third-person objective voice (Tynan & Garbett, 2007). Rather, our voices are heard and presented to allow deeper connections and meanings with the reader (Garvis, 2014). Striking a balance between theory and practice can be difficult, however. Garvis (2014) has suggested that reviewers often find it difficult to find the right balance, asking for either more theory or explanation at the cost of lived experience as data. As such, we have chosen carefully the vignettes we share to allow connection between theory and practice. This also allows the creative and analytical to come together and be 'fully wide awake' (Greene, 1994, p. 122) to the complexities and ethical dilemmas of working in the 'academic Olympics'. This approach also allows us to transform critical ideas and meanings into democratic practice (Giroux, 2015). Each author voice is presented below as an episode event, and followed by our concluding thoughts.

Episode I

The notion of 'achievement relative to opportunity' or as it is known in other higher education settings 'opportunity to achievement' (OTA) is underpinned by the recognition that the traditional norm of full-time work and uninterrupted linear career trajectory no longer matches the profile of many academics. OTA reflects a Human Resource fuelled process which allows for the re-calibration of assessment of achievement on an individual basis (not comparative basis with other individuals). OTA is an aspect of the Academic Olympics and that I have learned and am still learning to navigate in more vocal and agentic ways.

In this reflection on 'OTA', I tell a personal as well as a political story. In 1969, during the era of second-wave feminism, Carol Hanisch coined the phrase 'the personal is political' as a response to the radical women's movement's struggles. She took up the notion of '"therapy" vs "therapy and politics" or in other words, the "personal" vs "political"' (p. 1). Hanisch was not putting down 'the method of analysing from personal experiences' but attempting to 'figure out what can be done to make it work' (p. 2), that is, how to politicise it. She argued that women need to be part of changing the conditions of their lives rather than bending to them. Like the radical women's therapy meetings of the 1960s, through my ensuing discussion, the intent is not to solve personal issues but rather to politicise them. Like Hanisch, I take a feminist political perspective to consider the 'OTA' process.

'OTA' draws on the past to make sense of the present. Weeks (2007) contends that knowing about the past assists us to hold 'the present to account, denaturalizing and relativizing it, demonstrating that it is a historical creation, suggesting its contingency' (p. 3). By revisiting my own memories and experiences as an Australian Anglo-European woman, teacher, academic and researcher, I situate past and present stories that are tied together by personal and political undercurrents. My own life history, in its social situatedness, serves as a point of departure and connection for this discussion of how I view 'OTA' at the age of 60 and after an interrupted career in the field of education.

When I interviewed my two sisters in 2016 for the second phase of my PhD research on the mother-daughter relationship (https://mothersand-daughterbook.com), my older sister reflected on our upbringing.

> Oh, I think we were taught resilience from an early age, because of Mum's illness; that disrupted the dynamics of our family immensely. Well, for me as a teenager to suddenly come home and your mother's in some sort of hospital having shock treatment; your lives turned upside down from that day … your security was changed after that.

My younger sister responded:

> I would echo what [you just] said, the situation growing up with Mum's illness, I think that we in a sense had a lot of security. I think in one sense we were a very close family, we had a lot of structure, but we also had to all pitch in and we had to face things that were out of our control. I think that builds resilience…

As my sisters noted we were shattered by my mother's illness, but our family structure provided us with a sense of security and resilience.

My mother's mental illness was not explicitly raised when reporting on the mother-daughter research. Perhaps, I was unsure how to sensitively and considerately engage with the subject matter. I was also reluctant to discuss it in a public forum. As a daughter, I relate closely to Drusilla Modjeska's (1990) book *Poppy* which tells the story of her mother's mental illness. Modjeska wrote about the impact Poppy's [her mother's] breakdown had on her own life. She spoke of her own fears of having a breakdown like her mother's, 'as if such things are part of our inheritance. The fear that we will follow the patterns laid down by our mothers seem deeply embedded in the female psyche' (p. 77). Modjeska's fears were realised for me as, like my mother, I experienced depression at a similar age—in my late 30s post my PhD. After I recovered from my illness, I pondered over whether this mental state was 'part of my inheritance' or was there other ways to explain it? This story of mental wellbeing across generations is unfinished business and I, as a daughter and researcher, continue to patch together reconstructions and versions of events from

different perspectives and engage with commentary on the aftermath of this shared mother-daughter experience.

The fragility yet resilience associated with this story of wellbeing is about the '"tenuousness" of selves and selfhood, the ways in which powerful discourses shape what is felt to be permissible to say (when) and what remains unspoken…' (Modjeska, p. 300). The accrual and intertwining of personal and relational experiences are a political act. Hanisch (2006) contends that revealing a personal struggle can be seen as 'navelgazing' and 'personal therapy' nevertheless 'individual struggle does sometimes get us some things', and 'we need to always be pushing the envelope' (p. 2). I remain unsure about how and when to discuss issues such as this and push the envelope, particularly in a high stakes work environment, even when there is a process called 'OTA'.

The issue with making the personal political is that we never leave our social world and when to start and 'when to stop' revealing one's strengths and vulnerabilities is a nebulous question. Silence is part of memory, and memory maybe a prompt, a cue to think about something that would rather be forgotten… (Hodgkin & Radstone, 2003). Passerini (2003) contends that 'silence can nourish a story and establish a communication to be patiently saved in periods of darkness until it is able to come to light in a new and enriched form' (p. 238). I suppose it is this new enriched form of memory that I seek in telling this story of depression. Modjeska observed that 'it is with difficulty that I come to the point where I can respect [my mother's] silence on this episode [of depression] and accept the limitations of what I know' (p. 84). This silence in its many shades and hues represents the nuances of this mother-daughter story of mental wellbeing that I never until now have disclosed in a public work-related forum. Perhaps it is what my sisters' name 'resilience' which has been the strength of my silence and now my voice on the topic.

Nonetheless, I still remain perplexed about 'OTA' and the opportunities and (hidden) costs it may incur as I, as a female academic, work within the bounds of the finite games of the academy. The Academic Olympics involves a complex and at times, vexed set of games which at different points in my life and at various stages of my career I have navigated better than at other times. Being part of a collegial culture where people are open and inclusive, I believe like Harré et al. (2017), promotes

growth in a range of ways. In the very act of contributing to this chapter, I feel that I am part of a supportive network of female academics who through sharing their experiences recognise the importance of each other's personal as well as professional and political lives. This act of writing individually yet collectively is a form of academic activism providing a space to affirm each other's work and allowing opportunities for developing communities of practice and the infinite game.

Episode II

After reading a systematic literature review of metrics and models of researcher achievement and impact (Braithwaite et al., 2019), my mind races to my own performance and how it is measured within the academy. Moreover, the authors propose a comprehensive research achievement model to access the key characteristics that influence performance, before also suggesting there is no ideal model or metric by which to assess individual researcher achievement. Rather a holistic judgement of many different approaches is needed (Cabezas-Clavijo & Delgado-Lopez-Cozar, 2013). Does this suit me, given my time on parental leave and not being as active as a researcher? Where do life circumstances fit into these criteria? Some people would argue that this is why the 'research to achievement' concept is important in the academy. But what does this actually mean? How many papers should I be writing when I am a mother of a young child? The thinking implies I should be playing a 'finite game' in the academy to succeed. Moreover, studies have shown that there is a limited relationship between having children and a woman's academic performance (see Bentley, 2009).

In trying to provide better opportunities for women in the academy, Klocker and Drozdzewski (2012) conducted a study on women's opinions of the phrase 'achievement relative to opportunity' and how it was used in their working lives. Klocker and Drozdzewski (2012) caused controversy by asking female researchers how many papers they felt a child was worth, even though some women chose to answer with one to four papers per year on average. The authors found the notion of 'achievement relative to opportunity' was 'largely perceived as a tokenistic gesture put

on forms and never taken into account by the people who make decisions and evaluate work' (Klocker & Drozdzewski, 2012, p. 1275). If this perspective is true, I begin to wonder if the support for being a working mother in the academy is just rhetoric where actually understanding the infinite game is not possible.

The way I play the infinite game amidst the finite ones however is to reject the prejudices against working mothers and to be surrounded by like-minded females in the academy (both before and after parental leave). I have established connections and networks which continue even when I may not be able to be 'in the moment', and these allow me to contribute and lead when I am available. The power of connections and networking for women with regard to 'opportunity to achievement' has been recognised in many studies as the main strategy supporting academic women's success (Hunter & Leahey, 2010; Sewell & Barnett, 2019). There have been calls for universities to provide more opportunities for women to connect, collaborate and network. I suggest that this advocacy also starts at the ground level, with women learning to support each other and create their own forms of mentoring circles to allow networking opportunities and collaboration. While the value of these relationships cannot be easily measured, they provide opportunities for women to play the 'infinite game' through endless possibilities. Such a caring and collaborative approach also creates a more collegial work environment for all (Goeke et al., 2011). Castañeda and Isgro (2013) showed the power of women as peer mentors to each other and the strong support culture subsequently created. This included valuing concepts of noticing, connecting and responding to the various needs of people on campus (Miller, 2007), or 'infinite' ways of working. Thus, I advocate and model a relational approach to overcome barriers and perspectives about the performance of working women and to openly discuss notions of 'OTA'.

Episode III

During the first week of my second master's degree, I read an article titled *Invited to Academia, Recruited for Science or Teaching in Education Sciences* written by Petra Angervall and Jan-Erik Gustafsson (2016). I had

interviewed Gustafsson during my bachelor's degree at the same university, and I had sat for an hour listening to his fascinating journey through life, from childhood to senior professor. I found myself wondering how I could become one of the 'invited'. The authors questioned how 'academics gain career capital and symbolic value in career and use it to gain recognition' (Angervall & Gustafsson, 2016) and identified three possible career paths. These were *the invited, the useful* and *the uninvited*. I was 40 years old, married and mother of two preschool aged children and had two degrees already in my backpack and a 15-year-long career in management behind me. This, coupled with extensive travel experience, made me feel that I had at least something of value to bring to the table, but the question was, in which category would I fit? That first week I started identifying my strengths, not in relation to myself as an individual, but in relation to my perception of what academia needed. According to Henley (2015), women's choices in society are often times of a narrow nature, meaning the options due to traditional social restraints are fewer than in the case of men. From this 'opportunities' perspective, Hanisch (1969) argued that if the conditions for women are to evolve, it is the women who must alter the conditions to suit their post-modern needs, rather than entertaining old traditions and habits. The 'infinite' game in a feminist perspective is thus an eternal machine of renewed knowledge produced through female solidarity and multi-directional relationships within the academy.

Educated in the Norwegian, English and Australian educational systems, the casual Swedish approach baffled me. Perhaps due to the absolute saturation of ageism that I was met with at every turn? Here I was, mid-life, with a husband and two kids, working full-time as a teacher and in addition to that, pursuing a career in academia—not exactly the norm. While my peers formed groups and enjoyed nights of drinking and partying, I went home, put my children to bed and studied. I always arrived at class very well prepared and would actively engage and participate. This high level of participation was my 'sliding door' and five weeks into the programme a door was opened as my name was put forward for a research assistant position. I was in effect recruited for academia (Angervall & Gustafsson, 2016). The professor who recruited me, a mother herself, was Australian, and although I am Norwegian, I felt at home with her

attitude to academia since that is where I did my first master's degree, my past laying the path for my future (Weeks, 2007). Her earnestness and non-competitive nature were compelling, but above all she inspired me to strive to be better, to produce more and to earn my place in hers and her colleagues' forum. Very soon, I started developing that side of me that I needed for a possible career in academia, and contrary to Isgro and Castañeda's (2015) chilly climate for women, I encountered instead an open and inclusive environment born from a will to promote growth and development (Harré et al., 2017), specifically feminine development. This OTA represented itself first through what I assumed to be my finite game playing, and my master's degree; however, my motivations evolved slowly into an infinite one, the goal becoming a place at the table of global educational research. That I should be less successful than men (Henley, 2015) during this OTA journey was not on the horizon.

Negotiating meaning from a reflective perspective both as a mother and as a scholar has been imperative in finding my base and being accepted among more seasoned and well-connected academics. There is no tabula rasa; there is no being without knowing, no learning without contributing. In life, there is only participation, or non-participation (Wenger, 2018). I chose to participate. Personal evolution is not linear; feelings matter in the university (Beard et al., 2007), and after having returned to academia after 16 years away, I was reluctant to ascribe to the idea that opportunity precedes achievement and that when that achievement is inequitable, or lower than what was expected, opportunities become limited as a consequence.

I am not a seasoned academic, nor do I have a large network or 'selection' of players upon whom I can call in order to start, develop or complete a task. However, I am not alone in my OTA experience, and writing this is a testament perhaps to the support I have found in this network of female academics (Castañeda & Isgro, 2013; Macoun & Miller, 2014), where having a personal life, a family and sometimes shortness of time, is okay. I am aware that I do belong to a circle of female academics who consciously try to use what they have learned to further support fellow early years researchers while braving the dialogues regarding working and learning conditions 'so that we may collectively build a socially just university' (Mountz et al., 2015). In doing that, I feel valued for bringing to

the metaphorical table many years of growth and stretched bones, but above all I believe that these stretched bones are what have laid the foundation for my personal evolution as an aspiring researcher and which has allowed me to understand that practice is being alive in a world where I am active, and contribute to the learning (or working) situations in which I find myself.

It is through participating, and by being active in an environment, community or group, that I am able to engage with my environment in a meaningful way. This in turn may lead me to increase my knowledge and broaden my perspectives. Through this broadening, I build trust, connections, networks and critical friends—components that I need to continue my role as 'the invited'. Meaning, feelings and the embodiment of the self as a non-linear evolutionary being are imperative for my personal wellbeing, and I believe that herein lies my greatest strength: the knowledge that I have evolved into who I am in the academic rhetoric today through being absent from the academy. I have not had time to make enemies, nor suffered under Henley's (2015) lack of productivity, lack of institutional support, challenges with motherhood and lack of visibility. Upon returning to the academy, I have enjoyed tremendous feminine support through the development of peer support networks (Castañeda & Isgro, 2013; Macoun & Miller, 2014) and been given a seat at the table of sisterhood where my questions and curiosities are met with both respect and support.

Episode IV

In my 20 years in academia, I have had the opportunity to work in four countries, ten universities, visit several universities and work on multiple international projects. With each project and new academic environment, I have gained new competencies and skills and, most importantly, connections. I have discovered we are all closely and in complex ways connected within our academic working environment (Harju-Luukkainen, 2018). The connections in our networks are developed

along our career paths, and some of them can be considered stronger than others. At the beginning of my career when I was working in Finland, I had very little connection. I had to figure out how things were 'done' in academia on my own. I did not understand the Academic Olympics and the finite games that needed to be played in order to be successful. I also did not have an academic mentor or peers to seek guidance from. I was always the youngest one in my academic community with a PhD, and I had often the feeling that I was not necessarily taken seriously. I sometimes thought that it was contradictory that the academic career should be started early in order to be able to get a full professorship. I wondered at the limited support available in terms of knowing how to navigate academia and how to successfully develop one's career. I did not understand that as a working mother I might be positioned differently in the academia, compared to others, and become horizontally and vertically invisible in the academic context (see Angervall & Gustafsson, 2016). I did however understand that I had to keep on moving to new academic environments in order to gain connections and to position myself in the Academic Olympics.

Now, after decades in academia, my networks are worldwide, and working has become easier due to these connections and my deeper understanding of the finite games surrounding me. I have received mentoring and support from many women on many occasions. At different times people need different types of support from individuals or networks in order to be academically successful (Harju-Luukkainen, 2018). Macoun and Miller (2014) describe, in universities, peer support networks represent a crucial strategy for those attempting to survive and thrive in academia (see also Johansson & Sliwa, 2014). My networks work for me as a 'toolbox'. Different people have different skills and competencies that are crucial, for example, in writing a paper. From my toolbox of connections, I can seek out those people who can help me finish a task. I have found that the strongest connections I have are with similar-minded female academics who are in the same phase with their career. These are women who understand the 'academic game'. They are also mothers with young children who are struggling with similar issues, such

as visibility in the academy (see Angervall & Gustafsson, 2016). As we connect, we share our stories of the academic pressures we feel and our struggles about how to combine our family and work lives. I feel that without these connections, I would not have continued in the academy. I also would argue that it is because of these connections and the mentoring and support received through them that I have been successful in my career.

According to Savigny (2014), women are not equally represented within their fields of expertise, and women are less likely to be promoted or paid as much as their male colleagues. After I gave birth to our third child, I was told that I had now made my choice (referring to the number of children I had) and that I would never make it in academia. At the time I was shocked and hurt. Also, a part of me believed it was true, that I had chosen my 'destiny'—chosen to be the 'uninvited' in the academic context (Angervall & Gustafsson, 2016). Now, looking back at that time, I can see this perception was ridiculous. However, I do better understand it. The women who thought I wouldn't make it was an elderly female academic, and she had struggled throughout her career, familiar with the finite games of the Academic Olympics ahead of me.

Academia has a merit-based system, and it plays finite games that you need to understand in order to be successful. Higher education has faced policy changes that have affected the field of education sciences as well, and these have led to increased competition and competitiveness in academic circles. This has natural implications for women's career development and their future prospects in academia, especially when the quality and quantity of publications are relevant for moving forward in university settings (see Henley, 2015). However, different countries have developed their own academic assessment systems, something that I did not understand early in my career. In each of the countries I have worked in, the academic 'game' has looked a bit different. I agree with Henley (2015) that the issues connected to success in academia for women are connected to lack of productivity, lack of institutional support, challenges with motherhood and lack of visibility locally and internationally.

Concluding Thoughts

In our collective autoethnographic reflections, we have shared our personal stories and experiences around the term 'achievement relative to opportunity' or 'opportunity to achievement'. We have considered the impact of the finite games that have been present in our careers to such an extent it has seemed like we are part of an Academic Olympics. We are all at different stages of our academic careers, but we have each experienced the importance of supporting each other through connection and active engagement with networks and mentoring. We do not see 'opportunity to achievement' as merely a term used for promotion, but rather it is a prompt for us to develop and enact strategies to support each other and to help each other play at the Academic Olympics—valuing the playing of the infinite game where we can *all* achieve. We believe that through our focus on connection and teamwork and coming together to form collectives of academic women, we can provide opportunities for women to achieve and support to help them overcome potential barriers. We also understand that for us to be savvy players of finite games within the Academic Olympics, collaboration is key. We are navigating our country-specific institutions and the international academic world. We are also playing our own personal game, a game of connection and growth and relationship building, providing formal and informal networking possibilities in workplaces, professional organisations and through social media where our experiences are shared and reflected upon. Through such revisioning of how we work, we believe that we are expanding opportunities that allow us all to grow and succeed in our academic work. This chapter, for instance, has been a way of working in academia that has met the metrics of academia's finite games while allowing us to sit together with the value of the infinite game.

Like Angervall and Gustafsson (2016), we recognise that academic research careers seem to be linked to an institutional gender structure, and to academics' abilities to engage with wider networks. In our reflections, we understand that not all women are collaborative or supportive of each other (as seen in some of our episode encounters). Sometimes women can be the biggest critics of each other's performance. We, however, have chosen to connect and to engage in network building and

mentoring. We try to stay alert to the subconscious biases and gendered institutional processes that promote inequality—because in the end we *all* are affected negatively by them. As such, we recommend that women collaborate with each other, developing their networks and mentoring opportunities from early in their career, and then mentoring women as they reach the senior stages of their career. The challenges of the 'Academic Olympics' are likely to remain, but informed by the infinite game, we can choose how we will play the finite games, and we can play as a team.

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Envisioning Caring Communities in Initial Teacher Education

Madeleine Dobson and Samantha Owen

Introduction: A Feminist Ethic of Care

In 2019 we—Madeleine and Samantha—came together with a few invited colleagues to workshop and discuss the relationship between care and initial teacher education (ITE). Our colleagues participated to support our research project, for which we had set the questions: What work are universities and their academics doing to care for their students and to prepare graduates to contribute meaningfully to caring cultures? What is the value—actual and ongoing—to universities in having staff who create communities of care? To workshop these questions, we arranged tea, coffee, and biscuits and invited our colleagues to share with us their experiences of joining an academic community, teaching in the

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The authors would like to note that they are co-authors of this chapter. As fits the project they are not first and second authors as they have worked together and supported each other.

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university, and the hopes and expectations they had for university students as they entered classrooms as graduate teachers. We were interested in how these academics expressed care in their professional roles, their thoughts on the impact of caring, and how they and other academics in ITE envision/ed. cultures of care. We wondered, are we as academics cared for and do we experience that care? To all of our questions and provocations we asked our colleagues to respond reflectively and with a consciousness of the space and place from which they were speaking, judging, teaching, and observing. We did this by introducing and using autoethnographic journaling.

Our chapter focuses on the interactions and contributions of two participants, Ruth and Isabel. Both participants defined care as an expression connected to action and which is embedded in pedagogy and both were aware of a tension around care and care practices as it impacted them in their job roles in the university. This tension meant that in their efforts to build caring communities they may do so at a cost to themselves. This compromise left them feeling conflicted: they were drawn to their work by the potential of the infinite game, but, in their roles they were required to play finite games (Harré et al., 2017). The tension was not productive. It was limiting. Thus, in this chapter we explore: is there space to care in the modern, transactional, university (Bretag et al., 2019)? What needs to *shiFt* to enable us to care and create communities of care without tension and compromise? How do academics in ITE envision cultures of care in the university?

Our Context: Transactional Bodies

The starting point for our project was our consideration of the results of a large-scale survey on cheating funded by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training and conducted at twelve Australian institutions (eight universities) (Bretag & Harper, 2017a; b). Bretag and Harper (2017a) found that students are less likely to cheat when university environments are such that "staff can be approached for assistance when needed". The impetus for their study were the media reports on cheating scandals, to which the Tertiary Education Quality

and Standards Agency (TEQSA) asked universities to respond (Bretag et al. 2019; Harper et al. 2019) . In their study, Bretag et al. (2019) found that the neoliberal university had laid the groundwork for systemic contract cheating because staff were no longer present—a result of casualisation, outsourcing, reduction in student-academic contact, as well as shifting student attitudes about learning, which they defined as transactional. They agreed with the orthodoxy that opportunities to cheat could be minimised through the effective design of authentic assessments. However, they returned to the findings of their earlier study, and repeated their assertion in stronger terms: the real shift would come only when academics were afforded the capacity to "nurture strong student-teacher relationships" (Bretag et al. 2019; Harper et al., 2019) . The need for focus to be placed on relationships was echoed by Abrahams (2019), the national president of the Council of Australian Postgraduate Associations, in her response to the release for comment of the Draft Bill Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services. Abrahams' view was that the legislation as applied to students is largely ineffective as students who cheat are most likely to use assessments obtained from peers rather than from paid contract cheating services (Higher Education Standards Panel, 2018). Abrahams (2019) proposed that if universities were interested in preventing cheating then measures such as independent student advocacy services that provide opportunities for open communication would positively affect relationships and counter the machinations of the "production-line university", which tills fertile soil for germinating cheating behaviours.

The implications that Abrahams makes about the transactional effect raised important questions for our context as employees in the Curtin University School of Education in Western Australia. The core values of our University are Integrity, Respect, Courage, Excellence, and Impact. Our School's vision is to lead in research and teaching, to enable educators to drive excellence and social justice, and to facilitate better educational outcomes globally. The leadership team focuses on building and sustaining relationships with students, addressing questions such as: How can we foster a sense of belonging to enhance learning and achievement? What care can we offer to students to minimise cheating and other misconduct? At the time of writing, our School faces new challenges

surrounding COVID-19, with many staff grappling with unprecedented complexities that call into question how we care for students, colleagues, and ourselves.

The School has dedicated roles for a Director of Student Experience and Community Engagement, a First Year Coordinator, an International Student Coordinator and an Academic Representative to the Student Council. With the Course Coordinators, these academics support and extend students' learning experiences. Specifically, and in line with Abrahams' (2019) recommendations, the Academic Representative to the Student Council advocates for students who put forward issues to raise with the School Executive. Our students are local to Perth, in regional and remote Western Australia, other Australian states and other countries, including at our offshore campuses. Aware of the many distances between us and our students—geographical, linguistic, social and societal, cultural, generational, economic—much work is done to bridge the gap and create community. New students are engaged in mentoring programmes and afforded opportunities to connect socially by the Student Council. Physically, the students are also given a space to belong: on Level 2 the internal piazza space in our building has a sink area and café tables, providing a comfortable on-campus setting. It is adjoined by the TechHub, where Learning Technologies staff share educational technologies and run workshops. The Student Council office is directly opposite. As students enter Level 2 they pass the piano, situated as a continuous reminder to share and engage.

While much work has gone into creating a thriving hub for students on campus, the School has equally invested in off-campus engagement. A Virtual Reality portal takes students into the School where they can meet academic staff who offer guidance regarding learning and wellbeing (Curtin HIVE Summer Internship Program, 2020). These supports umbrella the work of our academics, who have extensive experience in teaching across modes. Students have the choice to study online or face-to-face. Those who engage asynchronously can access recorded sessions, complete activities, and engage with peers via discussion forums. Academics engage responsively and innovatively, and students are supported to respond in modes that best suit their needs and capabilities. These mechanisms within our School provide a scaffolding for care and connection with students, but do not speak to the actual practice of care

or to the tensions staff identify. Has space been made, and time given institutionally so that "staff can be approached for assistance when needed" (Bretag & Harper, 2017a)? How are staff cared for?

Care: A Precious Pedagogy?

Discussions of what care is, and the space it occupies in classrooms and pedagogy, emerged in the Western and English-speaking world in the 1990s in the context of the Culture Wars and neoliberal reforms of economies and education systems (Alter, 1995; Damarin, 1994; Lamme & McKinley, 1992; Prillaman et al., 1994; Rogers & Webb, 1991; Rosiek, 1994; Sickle & Spector, 1996). Although already a consistent trope in educational literature, in the 1990s attention turned to understanding care as a concept and a deliberate decision and action, rather than instinctual, incidental, or affective. In their Introduction to *The Phi Delta Kappan* Special Issue on Youth and Caring, Chaskin and Rauner (1995, p. 668) proposed a definition of care which is "grounded in relationships and action" and which is responsive to basic psychosocial needs such as connection, belonging, safety, support, and individual and social competency. Hence, care is intrinsic to any social system, meaning that in educational contexts "caring is not a curricular objective, but rather an ethic that requires commitment and continuity" (Chaskin & Rauner, 1995, p. 674). However, as the studies in their special edition demonstrated, space in schools to exercise that commitment was limited because care was not a curricular objective and, as such, was often squeezed out of the classroom.

Included in the issue was an article by Noddings (1995, p. 674), who considered how educators could bring care to their curriculum "in the absence of radical structural change". Noddings suggested theming work around care and creating curriculum space responding to issues of immediate and local importance. Her most significant suggestion was to include the "perspective of caring in the training of teachers", thus making it something that must be done despite structural and systemic conditions. Goldstein (1997, 1998a, 1998b, 2002) also found that care happened in spite of the system and that acts of care could "lead to a great

deal of emotional strain, anger, and alienation for the teacher" (Goldstein, 1998a, p. 17). This was because care was not reciprocal, the end result being that caring could negatively impact the educator's wellbeing. These relationships were further explored in Goldstein's (1998b) triangular theory of love as expressed by teachers in the classroom. Research into care and love created a space for more intimate consideration of the role of the educator and their lived experiences in the classroom (Goldstein, 1998b, 2002; Ritchie & Rigano, 2002; Owens & Ennis, 2005; Hatt, 2005).

Goldstein's work raised questions for us about the role of care in pedagogy and ITE if there was no change in the system, and the tertiary educator did not feel cared for or have space to self-care. Howard and Johnson's (2004) findings regarding teacher burnout and stress were similar: they indicated that positive learning environments were created when leadership addressed stress as a whole-school issue and implemented peer-support programmes and behaviour management strategies that supported teachers holistically. Isenbarger and Zembylas (2006) also raised questions of institutional responsibility by defining care as work which needed to be recognised, as the demand to care for all students in all circumstances was often at the expense of teacher wellbeing (see also Fives et al., 2007). Caldwell and Sholtis (2008) developed an ethic of care as a form of labour by identifying four types: student-oriented, work-oriented, engaging students, and active. Similarly, Cloninger (2008, p. 200) wondered—if care was the ability to "create … a safe environment, where students feel that they are both listened to and listening to others"—was care a skill? Could it be learned and taught? If so, how were "these traits initiated, cultivated, and supported in teachers?" (Cloninger, 2008, p. 204). Thus, a case is made for understanding care as labour which should not be assumed or given despite the structural and institutional conditions but *because* they allow for it. Moreover, the importance of this was made clear through research which indicated the benefits of positive, supportive, and trauma-informed learning environments that hinge on care (Fielding, 2012; Golami & Tirri, 2012; Noddings, 2013).

These known benefits of care raised the possibility that, if classified as a skill rather than as an innate action, there could be recognition that "care work is work" and valuable work at that (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1238). Mountz et al. make this observation in their article on slow

scholarship, which elaborates a feminist, collective model of producing research work which resists the "isolating, embodied effects of neoliberal temporal regimes" while taking into account power structures and gendered contexts (p. 1238). Mountz et al. seek out spaces and time to care so that all people "can collectively and collaboratively thrive" (p. 1240).

In his work on policy and Early Childhood Education, Moss (2017, p. 265) lamented that the reclassification of care and the resultant benefits was unlikely: "'care' as a descriptor applied to services and workers invariably becomes synonymous with gendered work that has low status, qualifications and pay" (see also Honan, 2017; Flanagan, 2017). In the academy, an indisputable indication of this is that success indicators relate to research output rather than teaching input. The impact of this important dimension of academic work being devalued is that for tertiary educators it can lead to emotional strain or academic anxiety (O'Neill, 2014), very similar to that felt by classroom teachers, especially as workload is allocated to content creation and delivery rather than the building of caring student-teacher relationships (Souza et al., 2018). The effect of this—as Abrahams (2019) remarked—is that all interactions are transactional, with students classified as customers in a knowledge exchange for money. Akhtar (2019), a postgraduate student, argued that this is damaging universities, one outcome being the higher incidence of contract cheating noted by Bretag and Harper (2018). Akhtar suggests that universities shift their reward culture from research measures and invest more in, and privilege, teaching to ensure a care-driven learning environment in which all can flourish.

Visions of Care

Ruth and Isabel (pseudonyms, with details anonymised) are our colleagues in the School of Education. Ruth is a member of our School leadership and has a background as a Secondary teacher. She is a mid-career academic in her late forties with a young family. Ruth's leadership role means she does more administration than teaching. She still maintains a research presence and could be described as a "top girl" (see Harré et al., 2017). Isabel, also a mid-career academic, is in her mid-forties and

has a young family. She comes from a pedagogical leadership background and works in Early Childhood Education in our School. Isabel has built a strong research profile.

Our chapter focuses on the responses of Ruth and Isabel as we discuss the first phase of our project. The aim of the first project phase was to develop an understanding with our participants of how they define care in ITE. We selected autoethnography as our methodology as it is commonly applied in research examining the expectations of working in academia, the toll those expectations take, the management of trauma in university classrooms, and the ways care can be implemented in academic work (Barlow & Becker-Blease, 2012; Ellis et al., 2011; Ellis, 1999; Black et al., 2019; Metta, 2010). Asking our participants to write their experiences from an autoethnographic perspective also allowed us to take a holistic approach and to access embodied experiences of care (Cloninger, 2008) while connecting participants to each other.

Hence in our workshops we sought to model the ways Black et al. (2019) use collaborative, reflexive self-writing to connect lived experiences to feminist theory, thus using women's storytelling as a tool to challenge power structures and inequalities within academia and everyday life. This type of research methodology resists tendencies in the neoliberal university to devalue personal emotions and experience and provides a means to self-care—to reflect on our own experiences—and care for our university community by "cultivating space to care for ourselves, our colleagues, and our students", thereby "building a broader sense of care" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1239).

With these methodological aims established, to critically and reflexively connect our participants with their practices of care, we asked them to engage with autoethnographic exercises and journaling. Following an introduction to autoethnography in the first workshop, we engaged in autoethnographic writing guided by the prompt "My name is …" We specifically asked our participants to focus in their writing how they felt themselves into their identity, their name (Metta, 2010). We then invited participants to share:

Isabel: *I really had to think. Maybe I do know myself a bit. But it was not an exercise in trying to think I was someone else, someone*

other than who I actually am. I wrote about who I am and the connections that make me me.

Samantha: *Did you go to a memory or did you just sort of write…?*

Isabel: *No, I just sort of wrote where I am now and who I am and where I've come from and what that could mean for later. My family and the places that I belong to and the places that care for me and the people that I care for. I think obviously care was at the forefront of my mind. But it was more about who I am starting from my name. And then I thought that I could have had a very different name. I have to be very grateful to a compassionate midwife. I did see my mother's list of names that she wanted to give to me, and I could have been Ileana.*

Samantha: *[referring to her own mother's list of names] I was Bambi.*

Isabel: *Ileana could have had a very different life. Who knows if she would have ended up here, but that's the thing, you know, if I had a different name, perhaps I might have had a different life and made different choices? I'm grateful for the name I ended up with.*

Soon after, Ruth reflected:

[my] acceptance of myself is linked to acceptance of my name. That is because of the broader context of being named after people within the family and then accepting that perhaps my values were different than the people I have been named after, but then coming to understand I'm very fortunate to be where I am. I now understand the contributions they made to who I am as opposed to wanting to distance myself from them.

Throughout this conversation, issues of care arose: care for self, in terms of how the participants engage with and nurture their identities and histories, and care for each other, in terms of the compassionate relational space that emerged within the group. We were continually mindful of the value of this, of how critical it is, as an act of caring and an act of resistance, to commit to community and connectedness (Black et al., 2017) and to deeply ethical, caring connections (Harré et al., 2017). Our

discussions around perceptions of care in education highlighted some of the perceived challenges of care.

The purpose of the next workshop was to understand the connections our colleagues made between care and their professional identities. We asked them to use the fortnight between the workshops to journal in response to: "When I work as an educator, my name is …". To guide their journaling, we asked them to reflect on: where their name meets with their professional identity, teaching philosophy, pedagogy; how their vulnerability manifests in the university classroom; and how this informs their care for that classroom. We also asked them to critically reflect on the selves they take into this context, and how they negotiate the transition of self from personal/private to professional—if at all (Black et al., 2017). We discussed with them forms of writing, reassuring them that "messy writing" or doodle writing was also reflective and that the exercise was as much about process as product. Our aim was for the participants to use their journal entries as a starting point for developing their own "Pedagogy of Care" and we provided an excerpt from Metta's autoethnographic text as scaffolding (2010, p. 65).

Identifying the Self

"Ruth Rogers
Ruth P Rogers
Ruth
Dr Rogers
Miss Rogers
Mrs Rogers
Miss
Ma'am
You
She
Her
Mum
Friend
Aunty

Mate
B__ch
F__ing b__ch
C__t
F__ing c__t
D__kh__d
Nothing
Mrs
Ms"
(Ruth's Journal Response: "When I am working as an educator, my name is …")

Insegnante Ricercatrice. Teacher. Researcher. Italian. American. Australian. Reggio Emilie. My name is homes and people. My name is beliefs. My name is culture. My name is mother mamma. Wife. Academic. Public speaker. Thinker. Carer. Friend. Advocate. I come from the places that are dear to my heart, and I feel at home in the places that care for me and my family. My name is teacher of young children, close to them always, close to teachers and families, ethically bound to their lives and stories. My name is activist, I believe in the political power, agency and intelligence of children and teachers. I am a listener and choreographer of research. I am a contester of conformity and the dominant discourses. I am a voice amongst many. I am a colleague. My name is joy— nothing without joy for children. My name is hope. (Isabel's Journal Response: "When I am working as an educator, my name is …")

In these journal excerpts the authors are responding to a simple sentence used to introduce an autoethnography exercise: "When I am working as an educator, my name is …". For both, the personal is the professional. Their writing captures roles and positions and the dis/connections that impact their identities as academics. In Ruth's writing, the naming of self moves her into anguished emotions and expression. Why would she as university academic express herself in such a way? Do Ruth's students refer to her in this way or is this a way of expressing her discomfort with some of the roles she performs? What are the tensions she perceives regarding acts of care—giving comfort but also feeling the restricting, disciplining, performing actions which reject her efforts?

The excerpt from Isabel also transports us into the intimate life of the academic, into her multiple and complex roles, her pedagogical choices, and her habitus as an academic (Bourdieu, 1977). However, Isabel explicitly situates herself as someone who inspires, creates wonder, and is a part of her students' and their families' lives. She is assured that her pedagogy creates community. The latter is the difference between the two excerpts. Both are situated—submerged—in their community, but Ruth's writing captures the tension she feels.

Ruth subsequently conveyed she often felt in conflict with her professional role, that it wasn't an expression of who she was or how she wanted to enact care. In Ruth's initial response to "My name is …" and to the journaling exercise, her intuitive inclination towards caring is evident. However, in the transition from personal to professional, conflicted identities emerged—Ruth would later articulate these were born from necessity and linked to pressures for her to perform in a particular way to fulfil the expectations of her leadership role. We wonder, for Ruth and other academics experiencing these tensions in relation to care and caring, how feelings of conflict can be negotiated or resolved, and how cultures of care-lessness can be resisted (Black et al., 2017).

For Isabel, feelings of conflict are not present because, to her, care is "never simple, and is always multilayered, always contested". She is speaking almost precisely to the social and historical conditions for the emergence of Reggio Emilia as an educational philosophy. She is at ease with her professional identity and purpose.

These journal entries were not shared by or between the participants and so they came to our second workshop informed only by their "own" reflections and writing. In this next workshop we embarked on a group task focused on developing a collective mind map about "care" (see Fig. 1). Samantha wrote on a whiteboard the key words called out by the participants. The whiteboard was soon covered! We began with positive associations (e.g. compassion, tenderness, solidarity) and then found ourselves exploring the limitations or conflicts related to care and acts of caring—sacrifice, underpaid, undervalued. At this point Isabel began to discuss care strategies for when personal values are compromised and the roles of care in a neoliberal system. For her the resolution came from pedagogy but she recognised that the situation was not the same for all
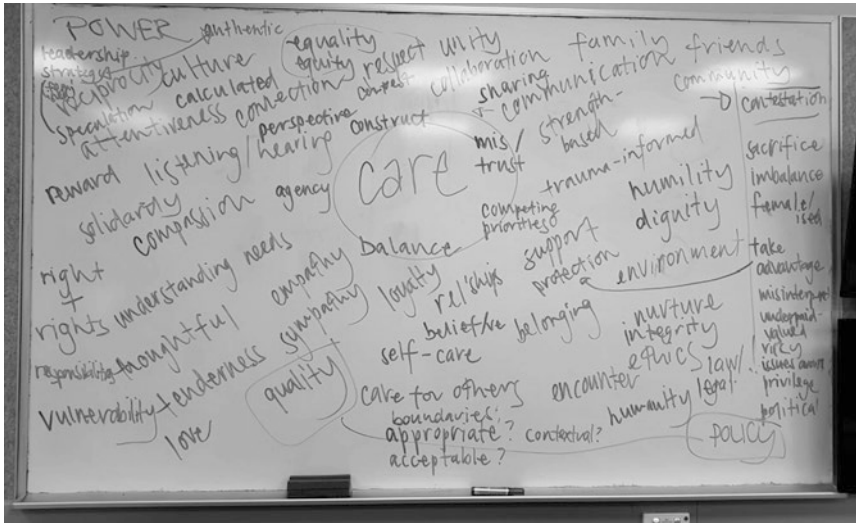
Fig. 1   Care mind map

and that her choices limited her "success" criteria recognition in the transactional university. We then moved to discuss agency and personal actions to circumvent these limits on care, questioning our roles and what was situated as "authentic" care. Reflecting deeply, Ruth raised the "internal struggle" she had recognised in her journal entries around matters of policy, boundaries, and balance, and that care sometimes meant making decisions that came across as uncaring as it was tightly bound with equity and procedural fairness. Ruth described the weight of her leadership position, which was often in conflict with her intuition and instinct—her desire to care and to let caring guide her decisions. As Black, Crimmins, and Jones recognised in their meditations on how to do slow scholarship and resist (p. 537):

> These are traditions and conditions that have a bias against selfhood and which focus on objectivity and the disconnection of heart. These are traditions and conditions that need to be disrupted and troubled. Applying penalties to … academics who transgress the golden academic rule of maintaining an objective stance in research, sends a clear message through-

out the academy that a person's beliefs, values and richly experienced lives must remain separate.

 Up to this point we had focused on the participants' perspectives and experiences of care as academics, with some mention of students but with an absence of their voice and views. As we wanted to ask our participants to use their journal entries to produce student-centred Pedagogy of Care statements, we introduced a new exercise which asked participants to respond to a selection of student responses about a perceived lack of care in the university. We did so through a gallery walk of tweets selected through a search of publicly available Twitter posts and authored by students from a range of institutions:

No matter how good you are in teaching, if you don't care about your students' mental health and capacity to absorb the loads of information, I assure you, your way of teaching is INEFFECTIVE. (Lustre, 2019)

Students with past trauma are incredible assets to any university or org, but sometimes they require special consideration because spaces like universities weren't made for them, don't think about them, and don't want to hear about them. I wish everyone involved remembered that. (@p_zippers, 2019)

This goes to show that students DON'T FUCKING MATTER. Universities care more about the money they make off us than they do about our wellbeing and about our comfort. We aren't just some check. We're people who deserve classroom settings and professors that won't harm us. (@guatezaddy, 2019)

Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you
Universities do not care about you. (McIntyre, 2019)

As our colleagues toured the Twitter gallery, Ruth had a sudden and strong reaction:

> *I don't know if I'm in the right headspace to do this because of some of the … I'm just a bit worried. Given what my role is, I deal with the other side of a lot of these things. I'm feeling a little frustrated by reading some of them. So, I think it best if I just let people group them rather than impart my, perhaps, negativity, in this situation. I'm normally very caring, it's just this time of year. I don't want to impact my current perception in what I'm dealing with into this.*

As facilitators we decided not to ask the group to engage with Ruth's discomfort at this point. We left Ruth to reflect on her reaction in an individual writing task while the other participants continued. Our initial intent was that the participants would theme the tweets and then respond to one, but they soon arrived at an understanding that they would not pursue this. Isabel reflected:

> *It's very hard to categorise I think, because there is so much here that is actually around perceptions of what university is for, what it means to be a student, what it means to be an academic, and how that intersects with your cultural perspectives on care. For you as an individual, in the institution, the exercise of categorising seems almost reductive.*

This sparked dialogue around issues of equity, trust, self-care or lack thereof, and the surrounding tensions. When another participant raised ideas around perceived lack of care, Isabel observed that "the undercurrent is that you do not believe and do not care". Ruth returned to the group to respond to this point. She reiterated that she feared her perspectives would sway the conversation but was asked to carry on:

> *In these tweets, I can only see the "inaccuracies" because of my experiences … I cannot undertake the activity without bias. I feel for the universities, academics, other students, and workplaces that the students are describing in a negative manner. They [the students] have not mentioned any impact of their behaviour on others. These others can be greatly impacted. Having said all of that, I always want to display care to others. It is a continuous push-pull.*

Isabel responded to this by going back to the exercise:

Overall, the tweets identify a discourse of absence of care in policy and organ-isational values—do we only talk about care after we suffer an absence of care? Is inequity perpetuated by a lack of care, by care not being foregrounded in our policies and discourse?

The conversation turned from here to the ways in which the transactional university constructs students as customers. An important dialogue emerged:

Isabel: *Care as a human construct, as a relational construct is always risky. The problem is that institutions are risk-averse, and produc-tivity frameworks, market frameworks are inherently risk-averse, from a legal point of view in particular. That defies the entire notion of being caring. Because you don't want to take risks.*

Samantha: *And that is the role of speculation, we speculate the extent to which we want to risk that caring relationship.*

Ruth: *It's very different to what I am internally. It's always an internal conflict of wanting to care for everyone and not being able to or caring for them and working out they've taken me for a complete ride, or, you know, completely bad mouthing somebody else. You'll find me quite unbelieving.*

Isabel: *Leadership is really hard. It's really tough because you're con-stantly making difficult decisions which are being perceived as uncaring decisions. So, care and leadership. It's really constantly a need to assess—because it's the power and all sorts of imbal-ances that are already inherent in leadership and making deci-sions about others and for others.*

Ruth: *It's really hard.*

Isabel: *Whether you come from a human point of view or a market, there are always difficult decisions.*

Ruth: *And I hate having to come from a market point of view, FYI.*

Here Isabel discerns for Ruth the difference between the "finite games" of the neoliberal university and the "infinite game" which drew Ruth to

work for the university in the first place (Harré et al., 2017). The dialogue between Ruth and Isabel indicates, again, the respective tensions and comfort they experience around matters of care in the neoliberal university. Their perspectives are theoretically and pedagogically informed, but their stances differ. When reflecting on the tensions and demands raised in their dialogue, we were reminded of the issues raised by Mountz et al. (2015) around the "isolating psychic and physical toll" that results from the intense demands of academic life. We also noticed, and appreciated, how Ruth and Isabel engaged in this dialogue—in ways that we were also committed to, and which were reminiscent of Black et al.'s (2017, p. 14) writings about "keeping sight of each other" and "listening with deep attentiveness".

The Transactional Circumvented? Care Envisioned?

Through this deep listening, we came to discern how our colleagues defined care and the place it held in their work. Ruth stated:

> *Even though I am in the [leadership] position I am, I still believe a foundation of care is needed in any interaction. This is so important. I acknowledge that this perspective can be challenged with students who I believe are taking advantage/unwilling to work together/blame everyone and take no personal responsibility. This is something I continue to work on.*

Ruth is committed to retaining care as the foundation of her work and delivering what is demanded of her. As a "top girl" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 8) Ruth is at times consumed by her duty to serve—the institution that employs her, and the students and staff members she is charged with. However, through reflection she recognised that in some ways performing her role distanced her from what had drawn her to the university— the "radical possibility" it offered, the capacity for her to play the "infinite game", to engage seriously with "injustice and exclusion" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5). Harré et al. (2017, p. 7) remind Ruth, remind us, that "we must call out the finite plays that pull us apart from ourselves" and they

provoke us to wonder how Ruth's conflict can be better understood and negotiated so that she and others like her can pursue the acts of care and caring that they value so much.

Here Isabel provides guidance. For Isabel the conflict is not of concern as she inhabits her pedagogy of care continuously, across her roles and contexts, the seamlessness of which speaks to her engagement with philosophy and her dedication as a Reggio Emilia practitioner. Isabel is comfortable with the tension—her pedagogy, born of a struggle and from a moment of resistance, is not conflicted by it. To her care is not foundational but holistic: political, personal, ethical, and "essential to our collective doings". Her relationship to students is multifaceted, encompassing concepts of ethics, advocacy, and optimism:

> *As an educator my name is hope—belief in a strong image of my students as capable thinkers, hope for their profession as theorists and activists, hope for the children and families they encounter, that they be loved and honoured and educated in care and joy. Hope for a profession that believes in alternatives, that is not suffocated by the mundane, undermined by conformity and melancholy.*

Isabel urges us, as Donna Haraway (2013) has also, to "stay with the trouble". The goal is not to resolve the in/finite game tensions, but to find ways of being comfortable in the unresolved divide between the personal and the professional.

We began with questions and we end with more: What does it say about the contemporary university context, that Ruth feels such conflict in her leadership role? What is the impact on Ruth as an individual, experiencing this pronounced sense of internal conflict? We wonder: had she not had such a visceral reaction during the workshops, would we as her colleagues have recognised the conflicted position she inhabits? How does this impact students? How connected do they feel in a system which continually speculates on worth? How do we empower students, tertiary educators, and teachers to demand recognition for their caring work and thereby resist the individualising impulses of transactional neoliberal systems? We believe it all comes down to care: how it is expressed in educational spaces, how it is interpreted, and the names we attribute to it.

There remains a need to examine how pre-service teachers experience and are taught about care; this is the next phase of our research. We seek to create *shiFt* here, with a mind towards enhancing pre-service teachers' experiences in the university context and preparing them to engage in the teaching profession in ways which are caring, kind, ethical, and compassionate. By doing so, we hope to contribute to their understanding of our shared context and the need for resistance and reconfiguration (Harré et al., 2017). These efforts must be premised on opportunities for open communication and relationship building between academics and between academics and students (Black et al., 2017). Such opportunities can prevent problematic behaviours in the university context such as incidences of misconduct (Abrahams, 2019). Our research points to complexities that may challenge these opportunities, and which merit further exploration so that we might navigate and work alongside these tensions and persist in enacting our envisioning of caring communities. After all, it is within ITE that pre-service teachers develop their understanding of what it means to care in the teaching profession. We will continue to explore the care work done in universities and in ITE, with an emphasis on creating a *shiFt* in how graduates are prepared to envision, contribute to, and create caring cultures in education: all with the name of hope.

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Writing, Playing, Transforming: A Collaborative Inquiry into Neoliberalism's Effects on Academia, and the Scope for Changing the Game

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Introduction

> No one can play who is forced to play … whoever plays, plays freely. Whoever *must* play, cannot *play*. (Carse, 1986, p. 2, original emphasis)

Here's a clue: it happened between the walls of the academic institution itself, in a classroom filled with small desks that were—later inspection revealed—pushed together, forming one large table around which the suspects sat, spoke and even laughed. In this space, quietly procured through the university staff online portal, a style of assault occurred both

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on and through the scholarly system. We could call it an autoimmune reaction: a mutiny, a murder from within.

The crime's location known, at least three questions remain. *Whodunnit? With what? And Why?*

Was it the Anne Enright scholar, gun loaded with literary theory of the French feminist variety (Gou)? Or the theatre-maker, researcher, and educator already on record for thrusting arts research–based spanners into academia's science-driven works (Di Niro)? Perhaps the international relations expert on women's agency and nonviolent peace strategies (Spasovska)? The short story writer and novelist whose published PhD artefact, *Barking Dogs* (2017), subversively blurred conventional boundaries of literary forms (Clarkson)? The young adult fiction writer and PhD candidate investigating literary representations of intersectionality in LGBTQIA+ communities (Cannell)? The philosopher self-described as an "Orthodox Marxist-following-Lukacs" (Nilsson[1])? The sociology lecturer studying women, emotions, and discourse (Levy)? Or the not-so-secretly anarchist poet curious about co-authoring as mutual aid (Walker)?

Answer: it was all of us, with all these things, and more. We are eight female academics whose differing personal, professional and disciplinary backgrounds collectively reflect axes of privilege and marginality including but exceeding race, nationality, social class, ability, sexuality, employment status, and more. Having each experienced injustice in and beyond academia, we came together to raise problems of universities today, and

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[1] Nilsson had to withdraw partway through the project, due to conflicting responsibilities. This is why Nilsson's writings and reflections are not explicitly presented in this chapter. Nilsson nonetheless contributed richly and the author listing acknowledges this valuable labour.

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to pursue change. We share recognition of how globalised neoliberalism exacerbates inequalities across academia and broader societies (Mountz et al., 2015). Neoliberalism's assaults on scholarship include ongoing corporatisation, funding slashes, workforce reductions, workload increases, endemic staff casualisation, dismantling of student unions, and research evaluation protocols that privilege quantifiable products or "outputs" over caring processes and intangible modes of value (Mountz et al., 2015). Our shared work in response to this situation aimed to witness academia's problems and imagine things otherwise.

This chapter's three main sections describe our processes and share our findings. Section one explains how we took up Harré et al.'s (2017) case for activism through playing the "infinite game" in academia, and why collaborative writing–based research suits activism of this kind. Section two discusses a "Jenga"-based writing exercise through which relentless time pressures and bodily strains emerged as themes signalling academia's need for change. Section three discusses, first, writings employing games as metaphors for academia and, second, writings about games beyond academia. These writings show how social inequalities are normalised in and beyond academia, which indicates complex challenges entailed in redressing these injustices. Nonetheless, we maintain change is possible: our concluding thoughts section emphasises the need for spaces in which academics from multiple backgrounds can connect, share, collaborate, and reimagine a kinder academy.

In/Finite Games in the Neoliberal Academy: Activism Through Creative Writing Research and Intersectional Analysis

Our project took up Harré et al.'s (2017) offering of Carse's (1986) "infinite game" as a metaphor for heartfelt, engaged ways of being in academia that keep alive "our potential as people living together to be open and inclusive and to promote the life, and growth, that helps us flourish as individuals and communities" (2017, p. 5). The infinite game is one in which the purpose is to continue the play (Harré, 2018). This differs from finite games, where the purpose is to win—although the in/finite

relationship is not an oppositional binary pairing: the infinite game sometimes contains finite ones, and finite games may be played in an infinite way. The infinite game encourages sharing and cooperation *with* fellow players—enjoyment of playing for playing's sake—rather than competing *against* one another for limited spoils, as finite games typically promote. Finite games are not intrinsically detrimental: they "can be useful" for organisation and training purposes. However, taken too seriously or at the expense of the infinite game, they tend to render players "spellbound—unable to articulate their sense that the current rules are misaligned, harmful or a distraction from what really matters" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5).

Harré, Grant, Locke, and Sturm observe the pressures academics face to play finite games such as tallying publications and competing for grants to improve chances of re-employment and promotion (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5). As Montgomery points out, quantitative-based academic analytics "decenter or outright *ignore the personal visions of success* that individual scholars bring to their positions in the academy", overlooking "social justice", "community-centred initiatives", and collegial knowledge-sharing (in Mayuzumi, 2017, n.p.). Gill similarly describes how academia's "counting culture" disregards "aspects of academic labour that are not amenable to measurement" (2018, p. 97), deeming this scenario "profoundly marked by gender" (p. 106) and reflective of the "corrosive march of neoliberalism, as it disseminates the model of market competition to every sphere of life" (p. 102). Mountz et al. (2015) also critique neoliberalism's gendered impact, defining neoliberalism as "a contextually contingent articulation of free market governmental practices with varied and often quite illiberal forms of social and political rule" (Sparke in Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1238). For instance, systematic marginalisation of care work especially disadvantages women with mothering or caring responsibilities (pp. 1247, 1253).

Recognising the problems noted above, Harré, Grant, Locke and Sturm posit activism via the infinite game that honours "our intuitions, lived experience and observations of injustice and exclusion" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5). Our research was activism of this kind. Inspired by Garvis et al. (2012), Muflichah et al. (2018), Bunda et al. (2019), and Henderson, Black, and Srinivasan (2020), we bore witness to academia's injustices via

collaborative creative writing–based inquiry, drawing on multiple established methodologies including duoethnography (Norris et al., 2012), poetic inquiry (Sameshima & Prendergast, 2009), narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2004), collective biography (Davies & Gannon, 2006) and "writing as a process of discovery" (Richardson, 1997, p. 2). Similarities and differences between these approaches, while beyond the scope of this chapter, are discussed in an open-access article by members of our team (Walker & Di Niro, 2019). Key points about the listed methodologies include: one, they all in differing ways treat writing based on lived experience as research data that is analysed to enrich knowledges about a given scenario; and two, all strive towards social justice via use of writing to raise issues subjugated in more mainstream academic and non-academic discourses (Richardson, 1997, pp. 155–156). Writing thereby suited the "activism" we sought to undertake, enabling us to "document, subvert and ultimately rewrite the rules of the finite games we currently live by" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5).

We undertook three formal workshops across three months. In between workshops and for six months following them, we collaborated via email, phone, and at impromptu face-to-face meetings. Writing in response to game-themed prompts and from lived experience, we allowed room for fictional and poetic as well as autobiographical writings. Fiction and poetry still reflect the writer's subjective shaping in their socio-historic context, as Hecq's work on *nachträglichkeit* shows (2015, p. 183). To analyse themes, we incorporated techniques of narrative coding (Bold, 2012, p. 141), sharing and rewriting (Davies & Gannon, 2006, pp. 10–14) and close reading of one another's work to recognise elements not consciously considered during composition, because creative writing knowledges often arise "after the fact" (Hecq, 2015, p. 183). Ultimately, our most valuable insights arose through informal interactions that fused realisations of the differing formalised approaches.

Another analytic focus was intersecting axes of privilege and marginality, as discussed in the rich body of feminist writings around intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989; Carbado et al., 2013; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016). Intersectionality recognises the shortcomings of "single-axis" approaches that examine, for instance, only gender, only race, or only social class, without considering their interactions (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 139). Early

intersectional work emphasised "the multidimensionality of Black women's experience", revealing how single-axis analysis erases complexity by "limiting inquiry to the experiences of otherwise-privileged members of the group" (pp. 139–140). Contemporary intersectional scholarship encompasses age, indigeneity, sexuality, ability, nationality, and more (Carbado et al., 2013, pp. 304–306).

Intersectional analysis helps demonstrate how neoliberalism reinstates scenarios of privilege and marginality (Gill, 2018, pp. 99–105) and is fitting for groups like ours. Though all currently resident in Australia, our racial and cultural backgrounds are multiple, entailing vast-ranging experiences of privilege and marginality; while six members of our team enjoy privileges of Australian citizenship, two negotiate precarities of temporary visas; some of us identify as bisexual, asexual and/or queer, and some as heterosexual; some of us have children and caring responsibilities to juggle with academic work, while others remain childless; several of us struggle with ongoing mental and/or physical health complications; we also bear ranging degrees of job security, from unemployed or working outside academia, to casually employed, to contract employment (at the time of writing, the luckiest of us held twelve-month contracts, which reflects how precarious employment in neoliberal academia is). Our second workshop included a privilege-mapping exercise through which we considered our positionings "above" and "below" various axes (McIntosh, 1989). Due to privilege-mapping's personal nature, the exercise's outcomes are not explicitly reported here, but implicitly inform our analysis, contributing strongly to our concluding recommendations.

The Inspiration Game: A Writing Activity Incorporating "Jenga"

In workshop one, we conducted a writing exercise involving "Jenga", a game where players take turns removing one block at a time from a stacked tower, aiming not to topple it. We altered the standard "Jenga" set by dividing the blocks between us and inscribing them with words we associated with academia. This in itself revealed telling themes: the word "coffee" appeared multiple times, as did "snacks" and "alcohol"—measures for enduring long workdays or winding down

afterwards. There were also prolific references to back troubles, repetitive strain injury, loneliness, and confusion. As Clarkson later observed, these words signified "exhaustion, wear and tear on our physical bodies and minds, financial insecurity, ethical struggles, feelings and realities of exploitation, and lack perhaps of genuine self-care". When we played our customised "Jenga", we challenged ourselves to each include all the words that came up in a poem or story. Here are two examples:

"This Academic Body" by Nadine Levy

Sometimes I worry the passion
has been gobbled up by countless days of email
and the square-eyed-fear of rejection
that it has been contorted and squeezed out
of my furrowed brows that never relax.

I imagine myself from above:
Sitting at the desk like a cog
—with bulging disc and bung shoulder—
Answering email after email. Call after call. Student after student. Worry after worry.

I have stopped the noticing
the afternoon light pouring through the window.
Yet my body knows it continues to flow freely, on-time, every day.

Out of conscious awareness, my back smiles as the sun dances and tickles.
I avoid calling the Soul Doctor.
Out of fear she will restrict the coffee and alcohol
and caution me against 'selling my soul'
And scarier still, offer a glimpse of the 'land of the free'—
a yearning for which I can't quite admit to myself.

Instead, I stick to what I can feel in my hands:
the books, the snacks and the coffee
Though they aren't really great company if I am honest.
The books are needy, the snacks are lonely and the coffee is confused.
And my body is nowhere to be seen.

"The Machine" by Amelia Walker

*A free afternoon to sit in the light
and indulge my passions
—what a dream that would be.*

*Instead I am sitting, swimming—doxa
flooding my veins like coffee, like alcohol.
(I recall Alice and her mushrooms:
one to grow huge; another to shrink down)
These different syrups switch us on
and shut us off—or at least switch us
to low power mode, ready
to resume fast where You left off …*

*There are discs bulging in my spine,
a million student emails waiting.
I'm selling my soul for library access
and snacks at those research presentations
where lonely thinkers gather
to whinge about how there's no wine now
since the cuts
(but the professors still get it
at their presentations)*

*I'm confused
—in need of a coffee
to figure out the latest adjustment
in my nebulous scholarship hours.*

*The centrally-controlled heating is turned too high
again, making me long for the cool breeze
beyond these windows, but they're all locked.
No keys. It's the fifth floor, after all,
and the institution knows
how conflicted we all are.*

Disembodiment is evident in the first poem's closing statement, "my body is nowhere to be seen", and in the second poem's sense of being a machine that can be switched to "low power mode, ready to resume fast". Dehumanising machine allusions also arise in Levy's "cog" allusion. Neither of the words "disembodiment" nor "machine" was explicitly written on our "Jenga" blocks. Their appearance suggests shared subconscious sentiments latently present, but not explicitly declared. This exemplifies *nachträglichkeit*—creative writing research knowledges produced "after the fact" (Hecq, 2015, p. 183). In collaborative projects, recognition of factors appearing across pieces can bring attention to issues that would be less obvious if considering each piece in isolation.

The two sample poems also reflect problems of neoliberal academia described by Mountz et al. (2015), Gill (2018), and Montgomery (in Mayuzumi, 2017, n.p.)—namely, temporal pressures towards productivity and quantifiable results, for instance, valuing workers for their speed at answering emails, with seemingly little emphasis on quality or nuanced interpersonal complexities. Clarkson considered the "Jenga" exercise an "intimate and authentic" revelation of neoliberalism's exploitations of casual academics especially:

> *Casual academia is isolating; there is no time or space for collegiality. You run from paid work to other paid work to all the unpaid work and back. There is no space to share and reflect and the sense of isolation leads to feelings of shame. I felt that buried shame reveal itself within me and unravel a little as I heard others share their words, watched the Jenga blocks stack precariously and saw the patterns and themes begin to emerge.*

The "Jenga" exercise thus revealed that the pressures we experience as female academics are neither isolated nor because of individual failings—myths commonly perpetuated by global neoliberalism's individualist and competitive ideologies (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1244). The system is unliveable, and there is a pressing need for change.

Games as Metaphors for Academia and Normalisers of Injustice in Society Broadly

We began our second workshop by sharing metaphors for academia. Levy considered this especially powerful:

> *I could relate to most of the metaphors and I can now see how fluid and changing they are. Collaborators described being a pawn in a chess game, a scrabble player, walking a labyrinth, jumping on a skipping rope and contorting their bodies on a twister-board. I had been in all of those positions and I expect I will continue to encounter new games (and metaphors) the longer I stay in academia.*

Levy's metaphor was an "infinite marathon" of "seeking a fixed-term contract without success". This, alongside the "Chess", "Scrabble", jump-rope, and "Twister" examples, enables observation that the majority of our game metaphors for academia were finite games where players vie to win or lose, succeed or fail, or stay in the game rather than drop out (as with jump-rope, "Twister", and marathons, where contenders fight fatigue and loss of form). Even a labyrinth entails the goal-orientated quest of reaching and returning from the labyrinth's centre, much as a pawn crosses the chessboard to become queened—which in academia might suggest promotion or increased job security. Other goal-oriented or win/lose games that came up included "Mah Jong", "The Game of Life", "Snakes and Ladders", reality television shows where people are voted out weekly, and—most common across all our writings—"Monopoly".

That "Monopoly" was so common indicates neoliberalism's overwhelming influence on academia, reinforcing the findings of the "Jenga" exercise discussed earlier. Neoliberalism's brutalities against workers are evident in the following excerpt from Di Niro:

Excerpt from "Playing the 'Game' of Academia" by Corinna Di Niro

> *My work has become a game. But who am I on the board?*
> *If this were Chess, I'd certainly be a pawn. A little insignificant pawn. 'It historically represents infantry, or more particularly, armed peasants' (Titanic,*

2006). Fitting because a casual is a peasant in academia, but I am not armed with anything. Like a pawn I stand there on the front-line. The first to be sent out and the first to face the chance of death. All this in an effort to protect the King and Queen.

If this were Monopoly, I'd most certainly be stuck in jail—jail being the place of casual academics. It's cutthroat, it's gang-like, and it's dangerous. Who knows how long my prison sentence will be?

If this were Survivor, I'd have no alliance; I'd be on my own. I'd be doing whatever I needed to do to win immunity, just to survive until the next day, the next challenge, and—more importantly—the next tribal council.

In a game it is hard to make a "big move" when you have little power. You can't blindside the top dog in Survivor if you don't have the voting numbers. In Monopoly, you can't buy up property until you're out of jail and you can't get out of jail if you don't roll two dice with the same number. As for Chess, only when a 'pawn reaches the other end of the board can it be promoted to any other piece', but to reach the other side, the pawn must survive all attacks and outwit and kill off its opponents in order to reach the end (Just & Burg, 2003).

Like most academics, I have accepted this game. I have signed up to a career of exploitation in hopes of career advancement. I have bought the 'Game of Life—Academia edition', and despite the depression, the heartache, the tears, the sadness, the lies, and the crushing blows, I still get up and play it every day.

Beyond reflecting problems within academia, our writings about "Monopoly" and similar games also revealed to us how academia's issues connect with a broader culture encouraging individual competition for supposedly limited spoils. The "close relation" between "Monopoly" and "the real world" is reflected in the following piece by Clarkson:

Excerpt from "Games" by Rebekah Clarkson

As a rule, I don't play Monopoly. It's the only game I know that either ends in literal tears or actual hurt feelings—not feigned—that can take hours or even days to heal. I don't even like being in the same house as a group of people playing Monopoly. Is it the paper money, I wonder, that gets people so fired up, so desperate to have it? Its close relation to accumulation of wealth via property in the real world—the real places represented on the Board? The brutality of capitalism?

How quickly siblings turn on each other playing Monopoly. Friends, lovers. All bets are off, real world allegiances discarded. I played it as a child and apart from the intensity, I also remember boredom. Bored of the relentlessness, laboriousness nature of the game. How long it took to resolve. When will this end? How long will it take? Can't we just count the money and call it quits? Must there be a single winner?

A similar point arises in Spasovska's account of childhood games, including "Monopoly", which indicates how "Monopoly" and similar games in state cultural training via which young and older players learn or are reminded of normative social ideals. In the story Spasovska tells, this includes neoliberal celebration of wealth-gathering as a marker of success. It also includes the normalisation of work and personal relationships involving imbalances of power where some people enjoy greater privilege or authority, and some are marginalised and/or made to serve:

Excerpt from "Monopoly" by Elena Spasovska

When I was young, I used to always play Monopoly with my cousin. I am not sure what's the problem with this game, but every time I'd play, I'd lose. My cousin is three and a half years older than me and he has always had a very entrepreneurial, money-driven attitude in life. He always wanted to be 'the boss'. All of our role plays were firmly grounded in a relationships of power imbalance. He would be the king and I would be the servant; he would be the Director and I would be the employee; he would be the teacher and I would be the student. I always complained and rebelled against it, but mostly with little to no success. He was older, a boy and he had the privilege to decide when to come to my house to play, and when not to. In addition, many of the toys we played with, including the Monopoly box, were his.

As Spasovska's piece continues, the narrator relates tricks their cousin used to gain advantage, including bending the rules by setting up an illicit borrowing scheme. Ultimately, childhood game strategies are mirrored in life outcomes:

Today he is still money oriented, bearing an entrepreneurial spirit that thrives in capitalistic (and in his case, post-socialist) transitional markets. He owns several properties. Interestingly enough, his first wife was the only child and heiress of a hotel business at the Black Sea coast. That was a good draw of the chance card. He did not play it right though. Nevertheless, in many ways, he sees himself as the boss he always dreamed of becoming.

Games like "Monopoly" thereby reflect and reinstate norms encouraging belief in success as good, hierarchies as natural, and exploitation as justifiable. This appears to occur even in nominally non-capitalist societies. For instance, a poem by Gou describes "Mah Jong" instilling cultural values and reinforcing covert hierarchies of "power" and "brutality" in the People's Republic of China:

"Mah Jong" by Yuwei Gou

Do you think it's just a game for fun?
people from all walks of life, from professors to peasants, from bankers to housewives,
Everyone fritters their time away by sitting around the table, from broad daylight to the deep midnight

No, it's not just about fun
underneath the table
Hierarchy and power are reinforced
Sex and desire are traded
Money is circulating from today's winner to tomorrow's loser
Hypocrites, fawners, flatterers,
Seducers, traitors, cowards, bigots,
the nuances of most hideous and hidden human nature are running around that small squared table

That's not a game for fun
it's a maelstrom of threads of relationships that are fighting, negotiating, surrendering, or revenging.
You don't want to play that game
But who want?

You feel like you are an outsider
But who is really the insider?
Those who are in that game have long been lost in it
Or, some might have long been crystal-clear of the mist
some might have been seen through the brutality, and living beyond it already
But they still choose to stay in that game

You said you don't like the game
But you are not the only one
Finally, you decided to escape, maybe you are the only loser.

The capacity of games to normalise unequal power-relations is also evident in remarks from Walker regarding "Snakes and Ladders", a game conventionally used to instruct children about actions and consequences (Rao, 2008). Recalling the "Snakes and Ladders" set she grew up with in 1980s Australia, Walker relayed:

At the bottom of the ladder there'd be a person studying or working hard. At the top, they'd have their degree, or lots of money. The people at the top of the snakes were doing bad things like stealing, eating too much, or being idle. At the bottom they were in jail, or had no money, or were ill from indulgence. I now realise how these ableist, classist and body-shaming images fed a myth that effort equals success, eclipsing how not everybody gets the same opportunities.

In other words, the mini-narratives visually depicted through images at either end of each snake and each ladder simplistically reinforce ideas about failure and success as pure reflections of effort or lack thereof. This affirms neoliberal myths about life as an even playing field where those with wealth deserve the rewards of their hard work while those lacking wealth should have worked harder (Mountz et al., 2015, pp. 1238–9). This myth fails to encompass variables including birthplace; family background; initial wealth; access to education; access to healthcare; visible and invisible abilities and disabilities; neurodiversity; experiences of acceptance or discrimination in social, educational and professional contexts, and more. Games like "Snakes and Ladders" thereby reinstate neoliberal mindsets that erase these vast disparities in the levels of opportunity available to different people. Such games and mindsets support

maintenance of injustice and exploitation in academic workplaces by training people to docilely accept rampant inequalities of gender, race, class, and more as inevitable facts of life in and beyond the academic system.

Games also train people in normative social roles and associated power-relations. For example, the following description of the common teenage party game "Never Have I Ever …" shows how such games reinstate normative limits of gender and sexuality, for example, heteronormative and male-centric assumptions that girls who publicly kiss other girls do so because they are drunk and/or seeking attention—implicitly, the attention of on looking boys who flatter themselves that they are being enticed:

Excerpt from "Never Have I Ever" by Chloe Cannell

'Never have I ever I kissed a girl,' Jack begins. Unoriginal. Uninspired. Unintelligent. I still watch intrigued to see which girls raise their cups while my cup of cordial sits on the table. Most members of the table drink from their red cups. It should be exciting. I imagine boys whooping and cheering in a macho fashion. The girls winking with cheeky grins or blushing red when they know their kisses are more than small pecks. It's not exciting though. Everyone knows what the kisses are. I think it is best described as 'drunk girl kisses'. And only by the straight girls. Some girls call them attention seeking. They are just a mouth to kiss when you're drunk, and you can trust your female friend to feel the same.

While our "Jenga" exercise and use of games as metaphors for academia showed us that the struggles we face in academia result not from our own shortcomings but from those of neoliberal academia, our writings about games in our lives beyond academia reminded us of how academia's injustices reflect those of global neoliberalism. The "Jenga" and metaphors writing highlighted the pressing need for academia to change. Writing about games in our lives reminded us that this change cannot be broached solely within academia; we must also go beyond it, recognising how contemporary universities' problems exist in complex interplay with neoliberalism's broader socio-historic, economic, cultural, and

ideological forces. The concluding thoughts of this chapter's next and final section broach the possibilities of affecting such change—a task we acknowledge as formidable, but which, following Harré et al. (2017), we nonetheless believe possible through playful and creative strategies of connection, collaboration, and imagination.

Changing the Game? Concluding Thoughts

This chapter has described a collaborative writing–based research project in which eight female academics took up Harré et al.'s (2017) concept of infinite gaming as activism to redress neoliberalism's crushing effects on academia. The three main sections of this chapter have in turn described, first, the infinite game concept and the problems of the neoliberal academy; second, the ways in which our early "Jenga" exercise revealed for us that the overwhelming feelings of failure we commonly experience reflect not individual shortcomings but those of an academic system in desperate need of change; and, third, how current problems in academia are intricately interwoven with problems beyond academia, indicating that efforts towards change must confront neoliberalism's operations both in and beyond universities themselves. This third point signals the formidable nature of the tasks entailed in creating a kinder, more liveable academy in service of a kinder, more liveable world. Nonetheless, like Harré et al. (2017) we believe transformation *is* possible.

In the final stage of our collaboration, each of us penned a reflective account of what we learned, including our visions for transforming academia. Across these, a recurrent theme was *space*—the need for literal as well as figurative spaces, such as the one our collaboration enabled, for academics to gather, share, reflect, and support one another in realising the cultures necessary to support more holistic ways of teaching and researching. This notion of space entails a need for less-pressured, less-productivity-oriented relationships to time. It is also a space created through community, connection, collaboration, and the freedom to share creative work, whether face-to-face or via other means. Levy wrote:

what is needed are alternative, renegade intellectual spaces, where we can really flourish and be ourselves. I imagined creating our own small educational institutions, with our own curriculum and working entirely to our strengths. Amongst us, we had poets, actors, philosophers, fiction writers, social scientists, to name a few. Such a group could offer an exciting creative space for others to learn and grow. Sometimes, I think we all have Stockholm syndrome and that if we broke free from the shackles of public universities something unexpected and beautiful could manifest.

Reflecting on the benefits of such spaces, Gou described how "we came from different backgrounds" yet "sympathetically and slowly worked out to transgress our differences":

As Grosz calls for us to find the 'finest gradations' rather than clearly-cut demarcations in difference (Grosz, 2011, p. 17), we embraced our 'finest gradations' in our shared pains and struggles, faith and hopes in our life. The hierarchy blurred, throughout our workshops, I never felt any gaps between lecturers and students, between migrants and citizens.

Clarkson similarly wrote of how our playful work offered scope "to be the child, to name the nonsense, to point to the naked Emperor", while Spasovska explicitly declared that "creating such spaces" to be "crucially important for challenging the established rules within academia":

For a long time, I didn't think much about all the things that are wrong about today's academia and what can be done about it. I was thinking: 'that's the way it goes'… I have to play the game if I want to get somewhere. I never used to complain or speak out, I was just trying to do my best to fit in and succeed within the system because I didn't think I could change anything. I was happy to be a casual academic and just go along until something more secure arose. Being part of this group helped me find words to express my concerns and frustrations.

While Levy's account describes the kinds of spaces that are needed, and accounts by Gou, Clarkson and Spasovska describe benefits arising from the space our project created, the accounts of Walker and Di Niro signal strategies for transforming academia to make such spaces more common

and more widely accessible. Walker wrote of "the power creative arts research bears for promoting change", posing that "one *shiFt* leads to another—and another" and Cannell envisaged creative writing research contributing towards "a kinder academic culture that prioritises marginalised voices". In Di Niro's words:

> Sometimes it takes an experience like this—writing collaboratively—to know that you are not alone … I'm learning more and more that being silent achieves nothing. I've been taught/conditioned for some time now to 'not rock the boat', but this I'm learning is just to benefit the patriarchy. Collaborating in this way has given me the confidence to speak up more, and hearing others do the same is empowering.

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Theme 3:

ShiFting, Renewing and Reimagining the Academy

The In/Finite Game of Life: Playing in the Academy in the Face of Life and Death

Helen Grimmett and Rachel Forgasz

Introduction

… let's generate and enact slow, tiny acts of resistance in the company of others whom we enjoy and whose thinking and conduct can teach us. Their companionship will comfort and sustain us. (Harré et al., 2017, p. 12)

Shifts
  Shift in location
  Shift in perspective
  Shift in mindset
  Earlier this year I shifted office. My new office window looks out into the same area of the campus grounds, but rotated by 90 degrees. I used to look South West, but now I look South East. I see the same trees, the same areas of grass and pathways, the same people entering the main door of the building, but I see them all from a different angle. The late afternoon sunlight hits different

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trees from this angle. I see a different section of sky that often gives warning of storms brewing that I just didn't see coming from my old office window. Everything is the same but slightly different, mirroring how I feel about my life post-BC. It appears to everyone else that my life has gone back to normal, but something has definitely shifted for me and nothing is viewed from quite the same perspective as before.

I'm slowly settling into my new office, making it mine, fixing the broken blind so that I can easily open it right up to view my new angle on the world. It takes time to adjust and feel at home, but the shift in location brings new possibilities too. Likewise, I have been allowing myself time to settle into the shift in perspective on my life that has brought a shift in mindset about what is important in my work. Maybe this writing game I am about to play with Rachel will help me find a new way forward? (Excerpt from Helen's writing journal, 22 July 2019)

Our chapter stems from playfully exploring the notions of *shiFt* (see preface, this volume) and the 'infinite game' (Harré et al., 2017) as we sought to make sense of recent significant personal experiences. These experiences occurred in each of our lives beyond the academy, but continue to have substantial impacts on our feelings about our work within the academy. Helen's experience was diagnosis and surgery for early-stage breast cancer at the end of 2018. The unexpectedness of a cancer diagnosis forced Helen's mindset to shift suddenly and unwittingly. At around the same time, Rachel's experience was waking up to the extent of the global climate and biodiversity crisis. This prompted questions about how to consciously support a shift in mindset. Outwardly, these experiences may appear completely different in substance and in scale. And yet, for each of us, our experience has had a similarly unsettling effect. It has shaken our sense of who we are and who we want to be in the face of a less certain future, and it has shifted our perspectives on the roles we play as academics within the larger game of life.

There is arguably something vaguely absurd, if not offensively glib, about using the metaphor of 'the game' to frame these experiences which confronted us with matters of life and death. We do so inspired by the work of Harré et al. (2017), whose finite and infinite games metaphor provided a way to understand and describe how these existential experiences *shiFted* our perspectives on our work as academics.

Building on Carse's (1986) infinite/finite game metaphor, Harré et al. (2017) develop the proposition that 'in the university, as in life, there are two kinds of games. One is the infinite game, the purpose of which is to keep the game in play and invite others in; the other is finite games, in which the purpose is to win' (p. 5). In the neoliberal university, finite games abound. They are the competitive games that produce institutional rankings, student satisfaction scores, productivity measures and performance standards. Like Harré et al., we find that in our work as academics, 'finite games often serve to distract us from all that initially attracted us to the academy as a place of radical possibility' (p. 8). In other words, they distract us from the infinite game, described by Harré et al. as a game that:

> imagines a world in which our heartfelt, personal response to life, our deep listening to others (especially those who don't fit in), and our careful observations and thought about the social, natural and physical world come together to create and recreate our institutions. (p. 5)

Worse still, the finite games we are obliged to play can be so powerful as to 'render the infinite game obscure and the community spellbound' such that we are unable to recognise or articulate the sense in which the rules of the finite game are in fact 'misaligned, harmful or a distraction from what really matters' (p. 5).

Approach

As we both have backgrounds in arts education, the infinite game metaphor also reminded us of drama improv games. These would be familiar to viewers of television shows like 'Whose line is it anyway?' and 'Thank God, you're here' or to Australian comedy festival-goers of the 1980s who packed cheap theatres to catch Minties flung to the crowd during Theatresports events. For those who are not familiar with the concept, improv games are chiefly designed to sharpen the improvisational skills of a small group of actors.

Just like Harré et al.'s (2017) infinite game, 'the purpose of which is to keep the game in play and invite others in' (p. 5), the aim of improv games is for actors to work together to produce cohesive and successful scenes, rather than trying to score points or knock each other out, as one would when playing finite games, 'in which the purpose is to win' (p. 5). Enthused by this conceptual resonance, we wanted to find a way to use improv games as both a reflective and a structural device to metaphorically explore each of our current grapplings with playing the game of life. Doing so would encourage us to write with the life-affirming and cooperative intent of the infinite game, rather than the self-aggrandising and competitive games of so much academic work.

The idea was sound, but we did not quite know how we would enact it. Rather than preplanning our approach entirely, we improvised instead. Helen began by selecting an improv game and adapting it to suit a written form, using 'We will rebuild!' as the title for her scene. She 'played' her turn, added a reflective commentary and then sent it on to Rachel to do the same.

Instead of playing her turn at Helen's game, Rachel responded from a reflective-analytical standpoint. Drawing together her insights from Helen's creative game play and subsequent narrative reflection, Rachel offered Helen an additional perspective on her situation before inviting Helen to play another turn at her own game. Continuing to improvise their method, Rachel then selected a completely different improv game as the narrative device to reflectively explore her own situation, using Helen's scene title, 'We will rebuild!' Following Helen's approach, Rachel played her turn, provided a reflective commentary, and then passed the whole lot back to Helen.

Helen read Rachel's reflective analysis and then responded to Rachel's invitation to play another turn at her own game, finishing with a final reflection. She then followed the same approach to Rachel's game play: reading, analysing and reflecting, and then inviting Rachel to complete another round. Rachel did so, following the same approach in order to complete the game.

Our writing in this chapter resists the 'point-first' approach of much academic writing (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9). Instead, writing through improvisation games encouraged a genuinely reflective 'point-last'

approach in which we each deepened our self-understanding through the engagement of the other with our game play. Like the 'critical-creative experiments' of Sturm's teaching (Harré et al., 2017), our 'turn to creativity and possibility' in writing this chapter was the enactment of activism 'as an underground current that slowly shifts the rules of the academic game' (p. 10). And not just any academic game. Our activism was enacted through our writing for research, 'the most prestigious finite game played by and at universities' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 10).

Helen's Game: *Fast Forward*

An actor or group of players improvise a short scene based on a title or theme ('We will rebuild!'). At any point, the director can call out to fast forward or rewind the scene to a different point in time and the actors have to pick up the scene from that new time.

Action!
   Helen is sitting on a beach. She suddenly notices the seawater rapidly disappearing, being sucked out towards the horizon. She stands up, curious about what is going on, and then with increasing horror, realises that a huge wave is forming far out at sea. Expletives fill the air as she turns her back on the ocean and runs for higher ground….
   Helen decides to fast forward! (to a few hours later).
   …Helen is picking her way through rubble and debris, lifting sheets of metal, climbing over piles of vegetation. No one else seems to be around. She sits down amidst the ruins of the village, thankful to be ok, but shaken to her core. In the distance she hears the rumble of trucks. Help is arriving, but looking around she realises that rebuilding will be a long, slow process…

Helen's Reflection

A few months after returning to work after surgery, I was bemoaning to my boss that I still did not feel I was able to work at full steam. He generously gifted me the metaphor of the tsunami: The wave crashes in but

doesn't just recede and leave everything the same as it was before. The village has been decimated.

The point of his metaphor was that no one expected me to be back to normal immediately. But it also got me thinking further about what happens in the aftermath of a tsunami, that is, lots of help comes in during the early stages to quickly get the most crucial needs met and the villagers up on their feet, but real permanent rebuilding takes time—a long time. There is also an opportunity to rebuild things in a better, stronger way that not only might be better able to withstand another tsunami in the future but may also provide a better way of living for the villagers even in the good times. Such rebuilding requires thoughtful planning, thorough research and careful selection and gathering of the best resources and materials before actual work starts. Rushing in to rebuild without those steps is likely to leave the village in a vulnerable state.

My initial reaction to the tsunami metaphor was to send up the rally cry of 'We will rebuild!' with a fist pump in the air. But I have realised that haphazard patching up of the immediately obvious damage is not the type of rebuilding that sustains a good quality of life in the long term. Taking time for clearing away debris, consulting with engineers and architects, and laying firm foundations for strong, stable structures to be built with quality materials are all important steps of any rebuilding process, but most important is to first ask the villagers what they want and listen to their hopes and dreams for their future lives. The early days in the aftermath of disaster are not necessarily the best time to do that. But once initial survival needs have been met and the throngs of emergency support workers have moved out and back to their own lives or on to the next disaster, there is time for the community to gather together and decide what they want their newly rebuilt village to look like. The community must be strong and proactive or run the risk of either being forgotten and abandoned to live with the haphazard emergency patch up job forever, or being overrun by government do-gooders forcefully coming in with their premade plans decided from afar on the basis of economic rationalism and what is good for themselves rather than for the village. A strong community will make sure their collective needs are known and met.

Now that my initial crisis is over, it is time for me to gather my internal villagers together and sit down in dialogue that seeks out the voices of all parts of my self. What sort of life do I want to lead? What structures and supports do I need to lead such a life? How do I call on others to help but also withstand the external pressures that could so easily shape things in an undesirable direction while I am still in a vulnerable state? The first step is to know what I really want—to listen to all parts of my self and negotiate a common vision. For too long my health and hobbies have been pushed aside by the noisier demands of work and family, until suddenly health screamed so loudly that work and family were massively inconvenienced. My new common vision needs to hear and respect all parts of my self in balance. Not only so that life can be lived, but so that it is a life worth living. Only then can a new blueprint be laid out and the rebuilding begin.

Rachel's Response

Your extension of the tsunami metaphor articulates so clearly the difference between the high-octane, emergency support that is frequently offered in the immediate face of danger and the slower, thoughtful and ongoing dialogue that is understandably necessary in the longer term but easy to overlook once the immediate danger seems to have passed. And while there is sweetness and strength in the image of you gathering your 'internal villagers' to ensure this longer-term support, I also experience a kind of sadness as I feel into your isolation in attending to that need.

It brings up in me feelings of aloneness and on-my-own-ness that are all too familiar in my working life as an academic. The situation is strangely reminiscent of our annual performance reviews. We are 'supported' by advice from our supervisors about how to meet the various performance standards imposed upon us by the university and then left to draw on our 'internal villagers' in doing that work with no further 'support' except for the end-of-year review comments on our achievements in relation to those goals.

So I'm left wondering about a couple of things: what other forms might that longer term career planning support take? And regardless of

where the planning support comes from, how do you now imagine your long-term career trajectory? What will it look like when you (and your villagers) have, indeed, rebuilt?

Rachel Invites Helen to Fast Forward! (Twenty Years Later)

Action!

Helen opens the door to the village community centre and is immediately swamped by small children clamouring for a hug and a story or song. They have come to know her well through her regular visits to the village school where she has volunteered for the past 10 years since her retirement. Her own grandchildren are amongst the happy throng and she gathers them in for an especially long hug. This is a special gathering in the community centre, marking the 20th anniversary of the tsunami that nearly decimated the village, and the 15th anniversary of the opening of this strong and sturdy building. Helen had been part of the rebuilding committee all those years ago and now looks around with pride at the mix of villagers of all ages who are here to celebrate all that has been achieved since that time. Sure, there have been a couple of setbacks and crises along the way, but the community centre has always offered a place of refuge. The strong foundations that the committee insisted on have been able to withstand the fiercest of storms and have long ago justified the time and care that was taken during that post-tsunami rebuilding phase. Spontaneously, the village begins to sing together. The delicious harmonies have been taught from one generation to the next, blending together to tell the story of rebuilding a village that thrives.

Helen's Reflection

My initial reaction when I read Rachel's invitation to fast forward 20 years was to shake my head and say, 'I've got no idea what I'll be doing in 20 years. I don't want to think that far ahead'. But then I realised that playing the game was not about imagining where actual me will really be in 20 years' time, but where my tsunami survivor character would be if the story continued. The trick was to not overthink it but to let the story tell

itself. As I sat down to write, images of a happy community in which Helen plays a relaxed, yet integral, role came to mind. The presence of children, community involvement and music appeared in the writing, indicating to me the value I place on these in a vision of a life well-lived. How can this vision of what I value help inform the choices I make about my career in the short and long term?

Rachel's empathic noticing of sadness and isolation in my first reflection stands in dramatic contrast to this final scene of community festivity. The question is how to get from one place to the other? Real-life does not magically teleport itself into the future, glossing over the struggles and triumphs lived in between. It has to be lived one day at a time, making the most of the opportunities and resources that present themselves along the way. However, although my improvised scene reminds me that life is indeed an 'ensemble—not a solo—performance' (Holzman, 2009, p. 19), in real-life I seem to have been thinking I am attempting this rebuilding process alone.

Rachel's description of the annual performance review process definitely echoes my own experiences of working as an academic. While I value the autonomy given to me, I do often feel on-my-own and unsupported in trying to play to the rules of the 'finite' games valued by the university. I have made a deliberate choice this year (2019) to not buy into the rules of these games and instead have spent time thinking, writing and talking in different ways, with different people, about different topics to create and play games that sustain me even if they do not appear to sustain my career trajectory. At first I thought this choice was just about giving me time to work out what changes I wanted to make to my career goals and that I would then step back onto the relentless hamster wheel going in my new direction. However, as this year comes to a close, I have realised I'm just not interested in playing finite hamster wheel games anymore.

The time I have spent this year working on writing that 'does not count' in the university has counted a lot to me personally. This writing has come about through ensemble playing with wise women who have pushed me to think differently about what gets valued. Although many of these women do manage to successfully play the finite games, while sustaining themselves through the infinite game on the side, I find myself

in a position of not wanting to run the personal risk of re-entering the university sanctioned games. I am well aware that taking such a stance will pose an enormous professional risk, but if I want to be able to eventually lead a good life in retirement I need to ensure my health and family are still intact when I get there. In the next decade or so until I retire, I hope to continue playing games that I value with wise women and caring deeply about the students I teach. This is still hard work, but it is work that sustains me rather than depletes me, and it is work that connects me with others instead of isolating me. If this work 'doesn't count' then I will probably remain at my current Level B status for the remainder of my career, but I can live with that. Live being the operative word. That's what 'really counts' to me.

Rachel's Game: *Genre Replay*

The actor(s) performs a short scene based on a given title or theme (We will rebuild!). Then, the director calls out a genre and the actor(s) replays the same scene but with the characters, action and mood all influenced by the nominated genre. They repeat this process several times.

> *Action!*
> *Rachel is staring at the blank page and blinking cursor of her newly registered website. She has been typing and deleting, typing and deleting for hours on end, trying to articulate a new vision for schooling in the age of climate crisis. She struggles to capture her sense of both urgency and aspiration as potential drivers for the major rebuilding of our entire education system…*
> *Rachel calls for a Genre Replay! (in the style of dystopian young adult fiction).*
> *…Kit and Rover try the on switch. They look on, trembling, as the dinosaur of a machine sputters and whirs. Maybe this one holds 'The Answer'? The screen lights up. Colours flash across their faces as programs and documents reboot. And then all is black and silent once more. 'Oh well,' Kit sighs. She smashes the screen with a tiny hammer as Rover expertly strips the wires. 'We should get something for parts, at least.'*

Rachel's Reflection

I still remember the conversation with my partner's daughter when she first told us she was into 'dystopian young adult fiction'. God, I felt old. What even was this?! I've since watched the rise of the genre with interest, and am reminded of a proposition made during my undergraduate film studies that popular culture villains are a reflection of the political fears of the populace at particular points in time.

The villains of dystopian fantasies (especially those of the young adult persuasion) are the authoritarian rulers of a devastated world who govern through systems designed to maintain their privilege at the expense of the people who are pitted against one another in order to distract them from their true enemy. Who are these villains if not reflections of our political leaders and corporate CEOs, determined to maintain their power and their privilege even if they have to bring down the entire human species to do it?

I watched young people take to the streets, urging the adults in their lives to take a stand for them, and I stood up. I just assumed we all would. In the past ten months, I have turned all my attention to teaching for climate consciousness. I started out with a focus on children, but I quickly saw that the greatest obstacle to evolving the consciousness of children is often us: the adults from whom they learn tacit and explicit lessons about how to be human. And most of us have turned out to be the ineffectual parents of dystopian fantasy, so hopelessly, helplessly ground down by the system that we cannot even stir ourselves to rise and protect our own children from certain danger.

Helen's Response

I've often worried that so much young fiction available today is built around dystopian worlds that send a bleak message to children about the future. But you are absolutely right that they are merely projecting society's here-and-now fears into an imaginary situation that allows readers some emotional safety. In effect, these dystopian stories are the modern equivalent of Grimm's fairy tales, which are well known for doing

important psychological work by allowing children to face their fears and overcome the scary monsters hiding in the woods.

Your willingness to stand up and support young people facing very real fears and threats has been inspiring to me. Your actions this year have roused me to listen to my own children's fears and stirred me to show them that I am taking them seriously. Our conversations have encouraged me to challenge our preservice teachers to think about the purposes of education in a threatened world. Little by little, these actions and conversations are *shiFting* consciousness. It is important work and you have demonstrated how it must be undertaken with a sense of possibility rather than hopelessness.

So, here's what your 'We will rebuild!' story leaves me wondering … How do we reframe the story in different ways to engage different audiences? While the apocalyptic dystopian vision of the future has roused many to action, it has equally caused others to either bury their heads in fright, or to fight back and loudly deny that the apocalypse is real. Is there another genre of storytelling that might provide a more accessible entry point for either of these groups?

Helen Invites Rachel to Replay! (in the Style of a Reality Home Renovation Show)

Action!

[Slow-motion footage of highlights from last week's episode].

Voiceover: Last week, on We Will Rebuild!… With their planning permits approved, Clive, Gina, and Guatam jostled for position at the top of the leader board, leaving Rachel devastated by the judges' rejection of her radical rebuilding plans. Scotty dismissed her proposal altogether, on the basis of its 'shaky foundations.' And while Mark was willing to back Rachel's project in principle, he refused to give it the green light until Rachel responded to his concerns that demolition plans alone would blow her entire budget before any rebuilding had even begun.

[Close up of Rachel in the Diary Room].

Rachel: Initially—I'm not going to lie to you—I was really pissed. But then I thought to myself, 'Yeah, fair enough. I'm asking for a total overhaul of

everything we've ever assumed about how to build a better world. That's scary stuff. So, yeah… they're scared. Fair enough'. Now? I'm just thinking about the Round Table. If I can show them that I understand their fears, maybe they'll be a bit less scared of me and who knows what might open up from there.

[Long shot of Rachel, Scotty, Mark, and Jarrod sitting at the Round Table].

Jarrod: Rachel, Scotty, Mark, welcome to the Round Table. As you all know, Round Table meetings are called when a contestant hasn't met the requirements of the previous week's challenge. Scotty, Mark, what will you need to see from Rachel this week in order to convince you that she should be allowed to stay in the competition?

[Extreme close-up of Scotty].

Scotty: Look, to be quite honest, I don't think there's anything that will convince me. Call me old school, but, Rachel, I just find everything about you dangerous and untrustworthy.

[Close-up of Rachel nodding, her eyes downcast].

Jarrod: Mark?

[Close-up of Mark. He is shaking his head in disbelief].

Mark: Jarrod, it's times like these that I thank goodness for the commonsense rules we have on this program. I simply cannot understand Scotty's refusal to revisit our existing codes and practices when they are clearly not working in the interests of everyday Australians trying to build a future for themselves and for their kids. But, as I said last week, Rachel's radicalism is not going to fly either. Rachel, I'm giving you 7 days to show me—and the everyday Australians who watch this program—that your vision to rebuild our education system is not only necessary, but that it is desirable and that it is achievable. Do that, and not only will you have my backing to stay on in this competition, I'd say you'll be odds-on favourite to win it.

Rachel's Reflection

When I first read Helen's response, it brought me to tears. As I write this, I am reminded this was not the first time Helen's writing in this chapter provoked strong emotions in me. Previously, I had cried tears of sadness and quiet admiration for Helen's poise in the unsettled aftermath of cancer. Here, I welled up with a kind of wonder—could I really take in that I had inspired Helen's thinking about climate action? Could it really be

true that her subsequent decisions and actions were making a difference to Helen's own lived experience with her children and her students?

Noticing how difficult it is for me to take in this possibility, I am not surprised, but I am affected. This is emerging as a bit of a pattern for me: my deep desire to make a difference and simultaneous struggle to really see and feel it when I do. No doubt there are some very old fears and feelings at play here, ones that I suspect are exacerbated by the competitive games of academia and the relentless emphasis on performance and achievement. I am getting better at recognising my contribution though, especially since making the decision to abandon my existing research program and focus all my energies and attention on educating for climate consciousness.

In the year since making this commitment, I have developed a framework—Climate 7—and I have built a website, written a book chapter and two blogs, and presented lectures for schools and facilitated workshops for community groups free of charge. None of these count for anything according to the metrics that define my research achievements, but I am quite sure they are the most meaningful kinds of contribution I can hope to make as an education scholar in this particular historical moment. The satisfaction and confidence I derive from doing this work are resonant with the feelings Niki Harré describes about having written a book motivated by 'infinite values' that has no 'worth' when defined by the finite games of research audit culture. Like Harré, I find that:

> [w]hen I am in the spaces my [work] has opened up—spaces filled with people in the real world who are looking for ways to create positive change, I feel light, engaged, responsive, free, and as if I am playing a game in which I belong. (Harré et al., 2017, p. 11)

In her response to my game play, Helen identified 'fight and flight' as people's typical fear-based responses to climate crisis. This is certainly consistent with my own observations and experiences, and with my research and teaching about the negative influence of fear on our capacity for learning and change. Climate 7 is deeply informed by my understanding of this elusive space between safety and challenge as the place where transformational learning becomes possible. Helen's genre replay

provocation reminded me of the need to engage differently with different audiences in order to find this sweet-spot when talking about climate crisis.

As the writing poured out of me, I considered the gross distortions of Reality TV. As with the villains of dystopian fantasy, we are reflected back to our selves in the crude caricatures of Reality TV contestants (Rachel the radical activist) and judges (Mark the liberal pragmatist and Scotty the staunch conservative). I used the genre replay to deliberately explore fear as their common motivation: Mark's fear of cost and consequence, Scotty's fear of obsolescence, Rachel's fear of death and defeat. As a genre, Reality TV thrives on fear. Premised on the triumph of winner over loser, its structural logic in fact relies on fear, its flames incessantly fanned by manufactured alliances and snap eliminations. In this sense, Reality TV is also a tragically realistic reflection of our broken political system.

Through the voices of my characters, I intentionally conjured various positions being taken on climate change. The process reminded me that whichever position we take, being extreme only serves to amplify its reverberation in our own echo chambers, making it harder and harder to hear, or to be heard by, those with different perspectives from our own. It was helpful to be re-reminded of this point when I returned to the draft of our manuscript in the weeks following the unprecedented Australian bushfires of New Year's Eve, 2020, a time when I had been struggling enormously to maintain relationships with family and friends whose responses and perspectives differed so vastly from my own.

Making Sense of our Game Play

Although the infinite nature of these improv games could see us continuing our writing play forever, we call a halt here (at least temporarily) to engage in some theorising and to bring in the voices of other writers to help us make sense of our improvisations, responses and reflections.

We are certainly not the first academics to bemoan the dehumanising machine that is modern academia in a neoliberal world (see for example, Berg & Seeber, 2016; Black, 2018; Black et al., 2017; Henderson et al., 2016). Like Crimmins (2018), each of us has come to understand that

playing the [finite] game, keeping my head down, being compliant has not served me, or our academic community, well. It has only served to financially support the institution/s for which I/we work, and has fed a culture of competition, fear and insecurity which leads to (self)exploitation. (p. 186)

We had also both experienced early inklings that the game was somehow rigged when, in 2017, we were unceremoniously dismissed from administrative roles that we had initially taken on out of a sense of obligation, of wanting to be 'good girls'. Rather than being unwittingly seduced into finite games that would hold us captive, exhausting our bodies and imagination (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9), we had each managed to capitalise on our respective roles as opportunities to carve out new research interests. Dismissal from our roles therefore not only brought about the fear that we would 'lose our colleagues' approval and slip into invisibility' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 9), but also the very real and abrupt end to related research programs into which we had poured significant time and energy.

Ultimately, though, the bigger fears and insecurities about our future existence experienced by each of us in 2018 were the catalysts that really shook us out of compliance mentality, to realise that life was too precious to waste feeding ourselves into the culture of competition. Instead of us *being* the fuel that feeds and maintains the system, we now seek the fuel that feeds *us* as academics to care about each other, our students, our communities and our planet. We are actively searching for ways of working that support us to challenge the system that we are expected to buy into and to hold true to our beliefs instead. Our infinite game playing for this chapter provided some of this fuel.

Vulnerably sharing our personal stories felt like we were standing up and asserting the presence of our selves as real people with real fears in a system that would prefer to just roll right over the top of us and carry on. Through our improv writing games, we were both intentional and playful in making an 'ethical shift from the neoliberal individual competing against colleagues to the collective subject finding ways of being otherwise' (Henderson et al., 2016, p. 13). Despite the riskiness of this endeavour, and although it had to fit into spaces carved out between other more pressing and immediate tasks, we both found writing this manuscript

highly enjoyable (dare we even say… fun?). We experienced what Honan (2017) describes as 'the joy of community, of collaboration, not collaboration because we have to do it, or it's strategic, or important for our careers' (p. 21). More than this, our improv game methodology offered an 'activist' approach to research writing, one which values 'inclusion, imagination and possibility' while simultaneously 'resisting or subverting the "finite games" of the university that do not serve these values' (Harré et al., 2017, p. 11).

In playing our games, we held each other's fears and stories gently and kindly. We also pushed each other to step into the unknown. We challenged one another to examine our personal situations anew, by embracing the improv devices of our games to provoke *shiFt*s in our thinking. For Helen, *Fast Forward* provided an alternative approach to 'career planning' that enabled her to push past pragmatic concerns about meeting targets, achieving standards, and getting ahead. Instead, the imaginative act of inhabiting a role and writing a vision for the character's future created the distance that Helen needed to be able to observe herself through the lens of her values and ideals. For Rachel, *Genre Replay* offered multiple reflective mirrors through which to observe the challenges of climate change education. Drawing on the narrative tropes and characters of familiar genres to reframe the problem supported Rachel to see with greater depth and clarity than she could previously.

(In)Conclusion

We began this chapter with a journal excerpt in which Helen reflected on changes in her perspective provoked by shifting offices. She described looking out her new window to see familiar things from a completely different angle. In the improv games that followed, imagination and playfulness were the windows through which we could safely observe and make sense of experiences that had so fundamentally shifted our perspectives on our working lives as academics. Helen grappled with the lingering uncertainties and ongoing implications of a personal crisis that others assume has 'been and gone'. Rachel wondered how to awaken action in response to a global crisis misrecognised as a future threat but which is

already having detrimental effects, right here and now. Through our game play, we responded as Henderson et al.'s (2016) 'collective subject', engaging in the improvised experiment of 'being otherwise' together in order to refocus our attention and our energies on playing the infinite game. It has been life-affirming work in the face of life-threatening events.

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Beyond Survival: The *ShiFt* to Aesthetic Writing

Cecile Badenhorst and Heather McLeod

Introduction

In academic landscapes our identities are in constant negotiation as we strive to create legitimacy and respond to contextual challenges (Davies & Gannon, 2006; Gannon et al., 2018; Hartman & Darab, 2012; Teelken, 2011). In this chapter we take an arts-based research approach to challenging neoliberalist ideals of efficient outputs and outcomes. That is, we explore the social and institutional pressures of maintaining a one-dimensional identity in academia and use our integration of creative practices to subvert these pressures through reflecting on our travel to two back-to-back academic conferences in Hiroshima, Japan. We ask: How do we contribute to the construction of our identities when we deliberately focus on resistance to neoliberal discourses, and engage in practices of renewal?

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Conferences are pockets of mobile identity-formation which occur outside the normal life of universities while at the same time perpetuating discourses, particularly the hierarchies and power-plays, that academics experience at home (Henderson, 2018). Conferences, however, can also provide opportunities to break free of the neoliberal university and for academics to see themselves with fresh eyes. In this landscape our identities are open to decomposition and re-composition through our activities and connections. We, two women academics from a mid-sized public university in Eastern Canada, inquire into a conference trip using *renga* poetry and *miksang* photography as a methodology (see Richardson & Walsh, 2018) for noticing our experiences in a culture that was new to both of us, and actively cultivating slow tiny acts of resistance and renewal. We identified three significant *shiFt*s (see preface, this volume) that happened. The first *shiFt* was that we engaged in practices to re-position ourselves in academia. The second was that we wove contemplation into our relational world and the final *shiFt* is the importance of aesthetics and the necessity for an aesthetics of care.

We draw the reader's attention to the fact that our writing becomes more personal and lyrical throughout the course of the chapter. In this way we demonstrate that through contemplating the craft of *renga* and *miksang*, we open up and give ourselves permission to write in a more aesthetic form. The lyrical writing is maintained till the end, even when the narrative of the conference ends.

Our Context: The Neoliberal University and Conferences

Although universities have always been capitalist organisations, market-driven models of management have made strong in-roads into universities worldwide over the past twenty years. In Canada, particularly in our context, neoliberalism has come much later, largely because of strong faculty associations. Recently, however, even our relatively remote shores have experienced a barrage of neoliberal strategies. Government disinvestment and resultant commercialisation of research have resulted in a

leaning towards corporatised governance of the university coupled with managerialist practices. Under managerialism, with the rise of administrative levels that determine university goals and strategies, individuals and units are ruthlessly moved and restructured to pursue these strategic goals. Academics are positioned only in terms of success and value which are defined by administrative imperatives and always framed by budget constraint narratives. We are now subject to an increasingly demanding audit culture that requires large amounts of measuring and reporting on almost all aspects of our working lives (Hartman & Darab, 2012; Teelken, 2011).

Alongside these trends are structural transformations of increasing precarity and insecurity of academic labour (Breeze et al., 2019). The consequences of these trends are fewer full-time faculty, fewer support staff, and more contractual staff. Workload expectations from administrative levels far exceed the practicalities of individuals achieving these goals. More administrative tasks coupled with shorter times to complete teaching commitments and research projects plus fewer support staff create conditions where faculty are always underachieving and always falling short of the mark (Bottrell & Manathunga, 2019). The accelerated pace of academic work (Gill, 2010) has resulted in increasing stress, anxiety, and exhaustion (Widerberg, 2006). There is a substantial literature on academic overwork and distress (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Barcan, 2018; Brunila & Valero, 2018; Gill, 2010, 2014; Menzies & Newson, 2007; Mountz et al., 2015). The principles of free market capitalism—the logics of profit, individualism, and competition—prevail (Breeze et al., 2019). This reigning ideology, as Metcalf (2017) suggests, strips away the things that make us human. In the hard-pressed, time-pressured "money-time" in academic contexts, it is difficult to find the unstructured, open-ended slow "thought-time" academics need to produce meaningful scholarly work (Noonan, 2015).

Henderson suggests, "Conferences are interruptions perhaps disruptions to academic lives" (2017, p. 68), and for us, our venture to Japan to participate in these two conferences was a welcome disruption. In the twelve months leading up to our departure, our university had experienced increasingly harsh austerity measures. The budget had been slashed and the administration began rolling out severe cutbacks and reductions,

initiating a voluntary retirement programme on top of a hiring freeze. This meant that many faculty positions were lost to retirements, and not replaced. In the end, our faculty was given only one replacement position and the atmosphere changed from one of mostly friendship and collegiality to bitter rivalry and competition as resources diminished. What resulted were months of stressful, unpleasant, and exhausting discussions about which programme in the faculty would secure the position. At the same time, the faculty collective agreement was overdue and our faculty association struggled to get administration to turn up to the bargaining table. When negotiations finally began, administration insisted on a post-tenure review clause to be added to the agreement. Bringing post-tenure review into our collective agreement would severely undermine job security for faculty in a context where faculty autonomy in university decision-making had been already ruthlessly curtailed. As we packed our bags for Japan, our faculty association representatives were putting into place the necessary organisational structures for a strike, something that had happened only once before in the university's history.

In the year leading up to our departure we had actively been engaged in overt resistance to these intrusions through meetings, letters, and discussions. Harré et al. (2017) highlight the neoliberal-infused committee room as a site of resistance. Complaining and criticising, while often appearing petty and trivial, can make large strides in fighting back. We had also engaged with some weapons of the "weak"; drawing on Anderson (2008), Bottrell and Manathunga (2019) pose resistance in terms of refusing excess managerialism through non-compliance, slow work, and non-implementation of the continual stream of policies. These subtle, often unnoticed, forms of resistance have a long history in successfully thwarting the micro-aggressions from neoliberal managers. For us, some of these measures were successful in the end but the costs were high. Resisting particular constructions of academic identity and refusing erosions to academic autonomy can lead to burnout, fatigue, and exhaustion. Leaving for the conferences was a relief but we were aware that our subject positioning now reflected austerity, insecurity, and anxiety.

A conference is a "formal meeting based on intellectual communication" (Nicolson, 2017, p. 6). How these meetings are delivered encompasses a variety of modalities. The two conferences we attended were

interdisciplinary with a higher education focus yet were relatively small and intimate. Conferences play an important role in academic life (Henderson, 2019). As Henderson (2018) suggests, the conference is one of the numerous sites where academic work takes place. Many want to get feedback on their research, to meet the researchers whose work they read, to become inspired by new ideas, to form new collaborative projects, or importantly to add another line to their CVs. For us, attending conferences provides important evidence of being research active, a requirement for promotion and tenure. While some conferences are friendly and welcoming, many are competitive spaces.

Despite the seemingly stimulating nature of conferences, the research literature highlights multiple challenges and problems. There are many barriers to an academic travelling to a conference including distance and financing (Nicolson, 2017). We were able to attend these conferences in Japan only because we were on leave. Heather was on administrative leave and Cecile on sabbatical. Although we each received some funding, it was partial and we had to subsidise the shortfall. Yet, we recognise our position of privilege and acknowledge that those who are in part-time or per-course teaching positions may not have the time or the money to attend, which means a growing number in the academic workforce are excluded from conferences.

Although conferences are generally held away from where presenters work, academic norms and discourses move with them. Attendees meet new people and catch up with others they may know. Implicit observations of how others behave, what is valued, and what is accepted are messages that get passed along in a process of socialisation. We have attended many conferences in our careers and note the key role conference attendance has played in our academic socialisation. Yet, we recognise that this socialisation does not happen for all attendees. Marginalities that exist in the academic home base are often carried over to the conference. Academics experience conferences differently according to physical ability, culture, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, and class (Henderson, 2016; Jackson, 2017; Jones et al., 2014; Lipton, 2019).

Both of us acknowledge that we enjoy the stimulation of conferences and meeting colleagues one has only read about, but as Nicolson (2017) argues, conferences also require a certain amount of stoicism and

endurance. Jet lag, long hours of sitting, too much food and caffeine, the intensity of the socialisation, and the packed programmes where attendees spend most of their time passively listening can be exhausting and overwhelming (Bell & King, 2010). Ravn's (2007) study which shows a conference day consisting of six hours of presentations with only twenty-five minutes of interaction is a common experience for many and certainly for us.

Under the grip of neoliberalism, higher education conferences have undergone a fundamental change and represent current trends: globalisation, technologisation, professionalisation, and marketisation (Henderson, 2018). Conferences have become money-making entities generating large profits. Shifting from the intellectual traditions that originally defined them, conferences are now a marketplace to promote research and sell university brands. The "power-play and hierarchical practices of universities" are reproduced (Henderson, 2018, p. 38) in these "temporary institutions" and the competitive, hierarchical inclusions and exclusions of universities are replicated (Lewis, 2013, p. 881). Consequently, a conference can sometimes feel alienating: "Academics are fond of cliques, and if you are not from the same university, share the same academic beliefs or interests, or don't have super-good social and communication skills, then the conference can be a lonely place" (Nicolson, 2017, p. 54). Conferences are also not places where academics can speak freely; indeed, as Williams (2016) suggests, they are spaces that are possibly more constraining than home institutions. At a conference, one engages in performing expected identities. Performing the "good researcher" usually involves conformity and consensus rather than dissension and resistance (Konzett, 2012, p. 392). Showing how well-read and how well-connected one is with the current thinking in one's discipline is a key component of performing the good academic. Going against the grain can be isolating.

Our two conferences were planned to resist the large neoliberal competitive conferences. They were organised around a small number of participants, with an emphasis on collegiality. The focus of one conference was peace in higher education. Yet, even within these spaces, competition exists, bragging happens, and arrogance appears. Both of us felt the tension, the silencing, and the rivalry. The AcademicConferenceMachine

(Benozzo et al., 2018) with discourses of academic values migrates all too easily from home-bases to conferences-on-the-road (Lipton, 2019). Is it possible to do conferences differently? Can we be different academics in these spaces? Henderson (2018) suggests that at conferences because "professional relationships and hierarchies become tangled up with toilets, meals, and discos" (p. 354), there is room to disentangle ourselves.

Resistance

Recently, more academics are suggesting ways of resisting the neoliberal machinery. One clear call is for slow scholarship as a form of resistance. Mountz et al. (2015) argue that good scholarship requires time—to think, to fail, to rework. The acceleration of pace, the increasing demands, and the steady stream of never-ending tasks are unsustainable. They suggest that "slowing down represents both a commitment to good scholarship and a feminist politics of resistance to the accelerated timelines of the neoliberal university" (Mountz et al., p. 1238). Slowing down is an act of resistance. Ulmer (2017) argues that it's not about doing but being. Finding a slower way of being is how we resist. She suggests we engage with writing modes that are differently productive through a slow approach. Finding a more organic rhythm of writing and writing on/with/through/in aspects of nature are her suggestions for slowing down. Slow writing, she adds, leads to "more joyful, productive writings" but also to responsive scholarship (Ulmer, 2017, p. 208). O'Neill (2014) notes that slow thinking is resistance because that's how we think against the grain. She argues that we need an ethic of slowness to combat the tumble-dryer, caught-in the-middle feelings of fear, anxiety, and guilt that neoliberalism generates.

Mountz et al. (2015) also argue for a feminist ethics of care as a form of resistance. A feminist ethics of care includes self-care, particularly in environments where the self is under attack but also extends to cultivating the space to care for our colleagues, our students, and others. Indeed, it also extends to care-full research—engaging in research that is contrary to what administrators think is important. A feminist ethics of care can only work collectively since this is not about personal, individualised

adjustments but about structural, institutional resistance. Black et al. (2017) suggest that reclaiming care through recognising the pleasure of care of self and others is a way of subverting the productivity machine and changing what it means to be productive. Recognising the affective body in the academy is also a form of resistance. Harré et al. (2017) advocate for a feminist approach that calls us to witness and note the affective body "that works and suffers in the academy" (p. 6). This includes resisting the individualisation of the body. There is strength in working together and in establishing collective modes of thinking and being (Mountz et al., 2015).

Before we left for Japan, we decided to collaboratively engage in slow scholarship, an ethic of care, and a recognition of the affective body. We did this through *renga* poetry and *miksang* photography.

Collaborative Poetry and *Miksang* Photography

Since we were to visit Hiroshima, with its devastating history of the consequences of war and its current messages of peace, we decided to engage in a collaborative inquiry process of linked verse poetry, originally derived from Japanese *renga* poetry, and *miksang* or contemplative photography (see Richardson & Walsh, 2018). We felt that using the two would amplify the interpretive possibilities beyond what either mode could do alone. This process helped disrupt what was happening in our home context and to the corporeal reality of our subject positioning—our bodies.

In its lived language poetry expresses everyday life, and Boughn (2013) considers poetry as knowledge in a linguistic mode in which knowing is multitudinous, stratified, varied, and vigorous all at the same time. Poetic inquiry is an innovative and creative form of qualitative research that incorporates poetry as an aspect of an investigation (Prendergast, 2009), enabling us to apprehend selfhood and the world. Poetic inquiry can slow us down. It can allow us to explore and express the "feel" and the complexity of human experience including ambiguity, nuance, and tension, in ways that other research tools cannot (Faulkner, 2018; Wiebe & Snowber, 2011). Prendergast (2009) categorises poetic inquiries according to the voice that is employed and our inquiry is Vox Autobiographia/

Autoethnographia: researcher-voiced poems in which the data source consists of reflective/creative/autobiographical/autoethnographical writing (our writing about our experiences).

The details of our collaborative form of poetry are as follows: *renga* is traditionally composed by two or more poets. One poet composes a verse which consists of a tercet (7–5–7 syllables), followed by a couplet (7–7 syllables). A second poet then writes a verse in which their tercet is a response to the initial poet's couplet. And so the process continues. "As the *renga* unfolds, various topics emerge and dissolve; there is no attempt to create a unified whole. Rather, the *renga* is like a cascade of images and feelings. This creates an experience of shifting meanings and relational movement" (Richardson & Walsh, 2018, p. 155). Our phases of research involved first composing our verses on a daily basis while we were in Japan. After writing a verse we exchanged our work and then created a response to the other person's poetry usually on the same day.

In Japan, we also engaged in *miksang* photography by attuning to the world with the cameras in our digital devices. *Miksang* is a contemplative form of photography where the photographer notices the impermanence of life through small concrete details. *Miksang* was a further method of slowing down and physically participating in our surroundings. We consciously discerned features of our experience. We perceived "flashes" of insight from a place of tender open-heartedness (McQuade & Hall, 2015). In this form of photography technical details are less significant; what was important was that we were present, noticing and listening to the environment around us.

Back in Canada, in a later research phase we lightly edited the poetry. We found that on reflection it was hard to tell which of us had written each verse. Indeed, it was as if a third voice had emerged (Wolff, 2008 in Richardson & Walsh, 2018). Writing *renga* reduced our individualism and helped create beauty. It revealed the value of collaborative voice. This was an act of resistance and sharing the poetry is an act of collaborative meaning creation. Our writing is dialogic and discursive. For this chapter we selected from our long poem certain verses which are appropriate to the specific themes we discuss. Finally, we linked our selected verses to some of the *miksang* photographs we had spontaneously snapped throughout our journey (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1 Noticing impermanence through small concrete details. (Photograph: Cecile Badenhorst)

Arriving in Hiroshima

Despite the fact that we've flown half way around the world to Hiroshima, in our bodies we still carry the stress and conflict of our recent past. We take a few days before the first conference to visit tourist sites. The stark skeleton of the Atomic Dome shocks us out of our preoccupations with work. While we are there, busloads of school children arrive to pay tribute at the children's memorial across from the Dome. We listen as they sing, and watch as they hang hundreds of carefully folded origami peace-cranes. We feel ourselves becoming more present.

On our way back from the Atomic Dome, we notice a nondescript sign on an empty bank building indicating a museum in the basement vaults. We open the heavy doors to see early twentieth-century high

ceilings and teller windows left open. The air is cool and old. The walls are solid and we notice the peeling paint. We wander around, our footsteps loud in the emptiness. The mustiness of the building makes us feel like we are the only people in the world. We walk across the floor, our shoes echoing in the empty chamber and down the stairs. There, as if unbolted by some ghost-hand, the doors are ajar. On the walls hang simple artworks by survivors who were in the vicinity of the bank when the A-bomb struck. Each has visually described what they saw and felt. These are ordinary people, not skilled artists, yet they've powerfully captured the devastation of the bomb and the trauma that followed.

> All their stories and images recount what happened that day in front of the bank. I feel my throat close. This feels so personal. They are talking to me, urging me to witness what their eyes saw, what their bodies felt and what their minds could not grasp. They talk about the black rain that fell and how thirsty they were but if anyone drank, they died. (Cecile)

> A delivery horse dead and disintegrating in a pool of liquid. The image sears my mind's eye. One person recounts their truth of what happened here. The drawing is simple but I feel the immense sadness and fear. (Heather)

We emerge from the empty building into a busy shopping area, a little shell-shocked and definitely fragile.

Walking from Hiroshima Castle to the Hiroshima Gokoku Shrine, we pass two trees that survived the A-bomb blast. One, a willow, hangs over the moat. Its large trunk is covered in a supportive bandage and its distorted arms are propped up by stilts. It looks old, damaged, and worn. The eucalyptus tree opposite is also twisted and gnarled and carefully propped up. Like wounded old people both trees are dressed, supported, and caresd for. Here again, we feel emotional. We notice the ethic of care. It would have been easy enough to remove the injured trees and plant new ones. But these trees were carefully braced, nurtured, and cherished to live on and tell their tale (Fig. 2).

A little more each day, we feel ourselves *shiFting* away from the intensity of our faculty conflict. We write poetry and take photographs trying to capture the care and connection we have gradually begun to notice in the environment around us.

Fig. 2 We notice the ethic of care. (Photograph: Heather McLeod)

The preciousness of real peace
Heads down low, drooping
Then we simply couldn't leave

And yet people continue
To talk past each other.

Pain echoes in photographs
Vaults of memory
Bank of Japan dark, empty

Child, horse, woman, man suffer
stories sacred to us now.

Wrapped still in bandages
Willow tree survivor
Cared for and nurtured

A colleague touches my arm
And looks at me with warm eyes.

On a nearby island at the Itsukushima Shrine, large canvasses of deities and gods hang from the rafters. The paint in some is worn away, but in others the colours are still true, creating washing lines of spectacular imagery. At the entrance, we take off our shoes and it is strange to walk barefoot on thick planks polished by monks walking and kneeling hundreds of years before us. As we sit on the balcony on this hot and sometimes showery day, a cool breeze drifts off the water and up the hill, a large butterfly floats by and we feel quite connected, indeed protected by the gods represented in the paintings. This, along with a later visit to a Tokyo gallery to see ancient ink wash paintings, leaves us relaxed yet enthusiastic about our role as artist poets.

Chattering voices 'round us
Whooping cicada
Wet now with humidity

Linking our thoughts and ideas
As autumn air rolls on in.

Boy and monk astonished joy
Pointing at the moon
Brushwork so simple, so free

Satiated, joyful life
As with them, so now with us.

Days of indulgence and tea
We view an artist
Life of paper and ink, love

See the monkey and the moon
Filling our minds with poetry.

Into Conference-Mode

After a few days of slowing down, feeling connected to Japan, to poetry, to our bodies, to the natural beauty, and to an ethics of care for ourselves and each other, conferencing with its busyness, intensity, and networking is jarring.

I notice myself watching what I say. I start to feel inadequate even though I don't know many of these people. My instinct is to retreat. (Cecile)
    Aside from Cecile, everyone is new to me, and thus discussion is initially awkward. (Heather)

As the conference progresses and we get to know people, we begin to make connections. Talk becomes meaningful.

Soon one of our papers is met with enthusiasm and conversations are warmer. (Heather).

Strangely, unusually for me, I begin to feel like I belong. (Cecile)

The time spent together is intense (breakfast, tea, lunch, supper). We wonder how much our *renga* and *miksang* has allowed us to be open, humble, and compassionate. Does it change the way we interact with other conference-goers? We enthusiastically join a public table to paint good luck talismans—papier mâché *maneki-neko* "beckoning cats". We notice many others do not. Are we more open to vulnerability now? Have we shaken off our austerity minds? Do we exhibit kindness and compassion? Both of us note how much we enjoy the conference and how fulfilling it seems. We are able to bypass the usual competition and academic arrogance. Our discourse of pleasure helps us to thrive and to work with our colleagues in non-competitive ways (Fig. 3).

Tropical rain falls softly
Leaving me cleansed
Washing my toes in gravel

Fig. 3   Food is more than food. (Photograph: Heather McLeod)

Splashing into deep puddles
We laugh as we (net)work-talk

Sketch a cat likeness, people
Paint butter yellow
Conversations bubble up

We hope to find feline luck,
Brush body curve, flat colour

The need to create draws us
A small space opens
Talking heads smile with pleasure

Lucky cats and new colleagues
Eyes connect with mirthful glances.

Wrapped and tied for delight
Bento box lunch feast
Sharing yellowfish sushi

Squash cut to resemble leaf
Gelatinous bean paste treat

Tiny exquisite artwork
Food is more than food
A fine feast for eye and soul

Enchanted we wield chopsticks
Enthusiastically.

When the conference ends, it ends suddenly. Now it seems terribly sad to say goodbye to all the new people we have met.

ShiFting Thoughts

We have been writing together for eight years. We have an organic, stress-free writing partnership. We begin our research, not by collecting data or seeking funding, but through coffee and conversations. We talk about ourselves, our hopes, our dreams, and our artistic way of viewing the world. Through those conversations, we solidify ideas, include others, perhaps seek funding, and eventually collect "data". We write about subjects that are essential to our natures: imagination, art, and writing. During our stay in Japan and for many hours afterwards, we discussed our experiences of the conferences, writing *renga* and taking *miksang* photographs. A feminist ethic of care (Mountz et al., 2015) within our constructions of identity, as well as our cultural and gendered backgrounds drew us to resist neoliberalism using these forms. This way of knowing shapes our identities. We discussed the healing that happened as we slowed down and became present to our bodies and environment. We noted how the atomic bomb sites shifted our feelings of anger and marginalisation as we gained perspective, insight, and renewed priorities. We reviewed our feelings of inadequacy as the conferences began and the

value of companionship and poetry as a way of countering the move into deficit-thinking.

In the end, we identified three significant *shiFt*s that happened during our travels to Japan. The first *shiFt* was that we deliberately engaged in practices to re-position ourselves in academia. This was a disruption and a resistance to the way we had been positioned in the year leading up to the conferences. We had been placed in competition with one another, fighting for resources under conditions of severe austerity. We actively decided to reject the competition and to engage in practices that required co-operation and vulnerability. Writing *renga* reduced the individualism between us and allowed us to see the value and beauty of a collaborative voice. We began to see that our writing partnership was not just a matter of like personalities finding each other, but a deliberate resistance to the crushing neoliberal context we found ourselves in. At the conference and in talking to others, we began to realise how often we make the deliberate choice to disrupt and resist—especially through our writing. We write about re-purposing other people's throw-aways, home décor, making paper dolls and glue-books (see Badenhorst et al., 2018; McLeod et al., 2018). This knowledge perhaps had been in our peripheral vision, but through our practices at this conference, it became sharply in focus and we realised that we needed to recognise this *shiFt* more fully and to act on it more deliberately. Although we are appropriated academic beings, we can disrupt this appropriation because we are speaking/writing subjects who can move beyond our own subjection. We realise that we cannot separate ourselves from the AcademicNeoliberalMachine because we are an integral part of the assemblage. Yet, we also recognise that "we are part of many other assemblages of other people's (academic) lives" (Henderson et al., 2016, p. 14).

The second *shiFt* was to incorporate contemplation in our relational world. This involved being mindful of our bodies and our ways of being in the world. *Miksang* was particularly helpful in this *shiFt* because we began to notice the smallest things like drops of water on blades of grass, the rain on our feet, and the food we ate. We found our eyes opening, our bodies relaxing, and feelings of connection to the world that we had not felt in a long time. *Miksang* carried us through the conference where we took photos of the shadows of leaves in a conference room, the beauty in

Fig. 4   Noticing the smallest things. (Photograph: Cecile Badenhorst)

a line of orange plastic university chairs, and our feet side-by-side on various floors. *Miksang* reminded us to stay grounded, to move out of our heads, and to observe. As Richardson and Walsh (2018) note: "*miksang* can teach us about living with awareness and appreciation for ourselves and our conditions—such sensibilities are enhanced when working collaboratively with intention about compassion and kindness and healing/restoration" (p. 161) (Fig. 4).

The final *shiFt* we feel is worth mentioning is the importance of aesthetics and the need for an aesthetics of care. We recognise the value of resistance and slowing down. Yet as Black et al. (2017) ask, while it's important to turn up to the fight and to find ways to survive, is it possible to have something more? How do we thrive under these conditions? How do we take back the joy in writing? How do we focus on what gives us meaning? For us, this is where aesthetics come in. This is our resistance and our joy. Harré et al. (2017) urge us to become stubborn scholars through these slow, tiny, acts of resistance because activism is "an underground current that slowly shifts the rules of the academic game" (p. 10).

We want to engage in aesthetic modes of representing our experiences and explore how this can open spaces to let us breathe again (Black & Loch, 2014). We want to re-centre discourses of pleasure (Johnson et al., 2017), both the pleasure of writing and the pleasure of working with colleagues in non-competitive ways. Paying attention to aesthetics is how we thrive. We need to write about subjects that are essential to our way of being in the world, that is, imagination. We believe, as Ingold so aptly suggests, that the imagination opens "the mind to inner truths that are ontologically prior to the outward forms of things" (Ingold, 2010, p. 21). Noticing the aesthetics—the colours, shapes, patterns, and textures of life—however this is individually defined, fashions us as academics. How we feel as we respond to the aesthetics of life is important to who we are and for this we need to rely on emotional and sensory language.

These three *shiFt*s helped us to answer our initial question of how we might contribute to the construction of our identities when we deliberately focus on resistance to neoliberal discourses and engage in practices of renewal. We think these *shiFt*s are significant. They help us reconsider conferences and the work we do at them (or the work they do to us). Further, while the conference setting was important to these moves, we believe that these *shiFt*s are more broadly applicable to academic work. What we learned from our conference trip to Japan is that it is not enough for us to merely survive the neoliberal university; instead, we want to create "joyful, productive writings" and responsive scholarship (Ulmer, 2017, p. 208). To achieve that, we believe it is necessary to explore more deeply our practices from Japan within the context of our home turf.

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The Gift of Wit(h)nessing Transitional Moments Through a Contemplative Arts Co-inquiry

Susan Walsh and Barbara Bickel

I arrive walk campus inside
out for two full days before
the course begins skin slippery breezeless
air unseasonably hot humid I reacquaint
myself with the east coast my colleagues
attend to a tangle of thoughts feelings
pray set intentions attune to energies
in the space where
the course will manifest

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may this course unfold in spacious and
organic ways for the benefit
of all involved and beyond

may we re-member to open to life
energy moment by moment

on our first day together twenty graduate
students and I ponder our collective
intentions what do we aspire to in working together?
how do we co-create a compassionate
respectful space for learning?

and then through textures pieces of fabric lace yarn we etch
personal intentions what do I wish for
through this experience? what does my heart want?
what do I bring to this work
in community? textile squares strung together like
prayer flags send aspirations with the wind

teardrops fall
into open space
eye of diamond
crystal clear

A receptacle of threads spun in collaborative ways with tenderness and compassion, this article is a labour of love stitched into each page with poetic, visual, performative, expository prose, and reflective writing that offers glimpses of a contemplative arts co-inquiry that we recently undertook (Fig. 1). Our overall aspiration was to wit(h)ness one another as we move with-and-in transitional spaces and re-member and re-imagine our lives and work. Acknowledging that the experience of collaboration is greater than each of us as individuals, we invite you, as readers/viewers, into an open textual-image space that is porous and relational and that allows experience to steep, breathe, and hold different, evolving meanings for each of us. Welcome.
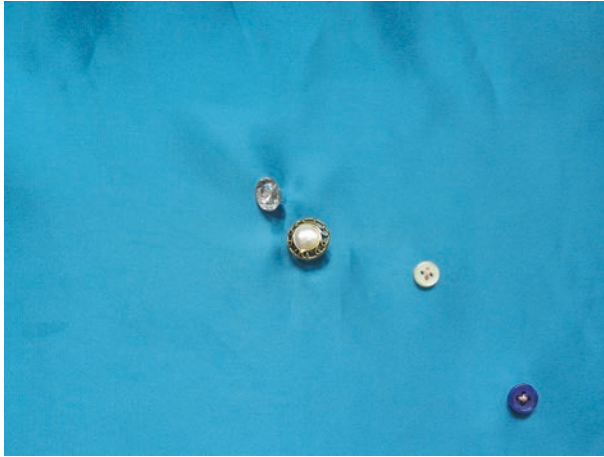
Fig. 1 Materializing intentions. (Photograph: S. Walsh)

To briefly share our historic and lived locations, we are white, Canadian-born female professors of European settler heritage, currently residing as visitors in the Province of Alberta on the traditional Indigenous lands of Treaties 6 and 7 and Métis Regions 3 and 4. Now resettled in two different prairie cities, each of us has been living into the transitional spaces of leaving the academy for the past two years. We share a deep personal and social commitment to engaging with contemplative arts practices in relational ways in our daily lives, as well as in our teaching, writing, and research. As one of our last institutionally offered courses (at least in our current academic incarnations), we planned and taught parallel intensive summer courses in the area of arts-based, holistic, and contemplative education in Faculties of Education at two Canadian universities. We structured the parallel courses loosely as contemplative arts retreats; we planned the courses in collaborative ways over approximately six months and then taught our individual iterations of the summer courses over less than two weeks. In our initial debriefing after completing the courses, we each independently described our teaching experiences as healing: healing of the accumulated trauma we have both experienced as spiritual feminists working in the isolating patriarchal neoliberal institution of higher education. We became interested in wit(h)

nessing one another as we explored more deeply the transitional spaces we now occupy. Thus, our co-inquiry embodies wit(h)nessing as a creative and contemplative act: intentionally experiencing moments of relationality and reciprocity, something we see as imperative in broader social contexts.

Through our interconnected wit(h)nessing processes, we engage with what artist, writer, and art critic Suzi Gablik (1992) calls "connective aesthetics"—a paradigmatic shift from modern consumer-based aesthetics, to that of an ethical socially based aesthetic that is concerned with "[m]aintaining a deeply connected relationship with society," each other, and the other-than-human world (p. 2). Connective aesthetics is porous and relational, moving beyond what is solid and individual; it includes listening and viewing and calls us to attend to both self and other with respect, compassion, and care. As a form of inquiry, we engage an expanded practice of witnessing, or what Bracha Ettinger (1999) names *wit(h)nessing,* as an approach to inquiry that involves the intentional creation of space for deep listening, compassionate conjoinment, and artistic artworkings. Ettinger (1999) extends understandings of connective aesthetics with her matrixial articulation of the eros-agape infused event of art-making and art-encounters. The art event holds the potential for the healing of conscious and non-conscious trauma through wit(h)nessing the other. Ettinger opens pathways through matrixial theory for what can take place in the liminal zone of art and encourages each of us to engage the world as a "woman artist," attuned to connective aesthetics as the precedent to political and ethical acts in the world. She writes, "In the matrixial borderspace, the artist as a partial subject takes part and testifies to/for an unknown other or rather, it is the matrixial threads of the artwork which testify to the traumas of an-other in wit(h)ness" (pp. 93–94).

Although our own relationships with teaching—and the shape of our lives in general—is more fluid and shifting than usual at present, throughout our co-inquiry, we held clear intentions for co-creating an open and connective space for wit(h)nessing one another. We held one another's offerings in open spaces of deep listening and care, and responded to one another and ourselves through a range of contemplative arts practices. In this way, the form of our co-inquiry complements the focus of the parallel courses and also our pedagogical and personal commitments. We drew

on our previous research experiences with women in collective contexts, on our personal arts and spiritual practices, and also on our teaching experiences. We met at a distance through video conferencing over the course of several months and engaged with contemplative arts practices such as writing, visual art, sewing, movement, and vocal improvisation: bringing ourselves always back—and back again—to trusting the wisdom of whatever arose through our creative processing, as stories, feelings, insights, and associations emerged. Our online meetings included Indigenous land acknowledgements and the creation of ritual space, as well as cycles of free writing, sharing, and art-making, all of which are ways of wit(h)nessing—attending to the other and to the self—as self-other co-evolve and shift in a shared space-time. At times, we also considered artefacts from our courses (i.e. teaching plans, journal entries, artwork that emerged during the courses, etc.).

Further, the writing of this article brings us to another dimension of creative processing that yields even deeper insights. We engage the layout of the page metaphorically in a hand-over-hand stitching practice, aligning the text and images left and right on the page,[1] thus manifesting a visual space-between that highlights the fluid relationality of our co-labour and its rich generativity: a space that tenderly holds our intentions of listening deeply and wit(h)nessing.[2] We gift one another through our co-labour. We do this with a spirit of gratitude, humbly acknowledging the source as from a place greater than our individual selves (Hyde, 2007) (Figs. 2, 3).

We begin with simple ritual …

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[1] In the poetic writing throughout the text, Susan's writing is left justified, and Barbara's writing is right justified.

[2] Susan acknowledges with gratitude the influences of her previous writing with Heesoon Bai, a writing-witnessing process whereby two researchers shared and contemplated pieces of writing through deep, intentional, care-filled listening and meditation that involved being still and open to the fresh images and words that arose in textual spaces-between (Walsh & Bai, 2015, 2017). The writing-witnessing process in the 2015 work also included a left and right justified structure, a textual representation of the container we co-created for holding one another's words.

Fig. 2   Art and ritual. (Photograph: S. Walsh)

Fig. 3   Barbara candle lighting. (Photograph: B. Bickel)

Embodying Wit(h)nessing Practice

candles connected flames
awareness of fields tuning into energy fields prayers
setting intentions coming back to
the ground spiritual teachings
co-creating a healing restorative space
collaborative open flexible respectful feeling loss grief
co-inquiry witnessing intentions
what do we need?

I need structure
I want to perform this
I want to physically move with through it
I want to be wit(h)nessed
I hold so much
I keep so much in my body
I can share what is in my body
I can share what I carry
"carriance"[3]
I am carried
I carry others
part of the grief
is the loss of relationships
with students
not sustaining relationships
I came
I carried
I put them down
left them to return
to their own lives
I offered
ongoing communication
but none took my offer
the institutional

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[3] See Bracha Ettinger (2014) video. "The world is gone, I must carry you": Daring the shock of *emun* (trust), on the transjective subreal in art and psychoanalysis. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A3hbixTlncU

teacher-student pattern
I had as a student
 now live
as a teacher
the disconnection
of connection is painful
how to bring closure to what was opened
all the teaching learning
the good
the bad
with my entire body
I can perform grief
I can perform grief
with my entire body
my body performs
to un-perform itself
through what it has carried
I feel sadness
heavy on my face
holding my neck
compressing my chest
letting down (Fig. 4)

tension and release clarity things held tightly
in the body breath shallow face clenched
breath opening exhaling opening release hand
on the side of the belly inward outward various directions
generational layers stitching across mother grandmother
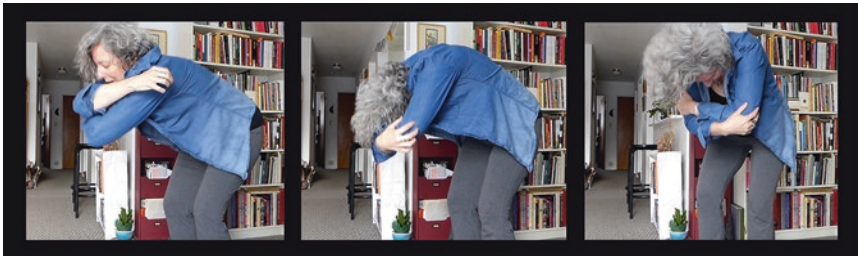
Fig. 4   Barbara in movement I. (Photograph: B. Bickel)

daughter granddaughter small stitches so neat
and tidy exactness feeling the harshness of
doing things right fear not feeling safe
directions of my stitches so tight orderly
an overcast stitch a mistake a misstep noticing
tension and a memory of my mom frozen solid unable
to put a pencil line on a piece of paper (Fig. 5)

    Barbara moving freely her body expressive releasing
    what is held was held we are attending to wounds scars
    a memory of me watching a dance class peeking
    under the door seeing girls moving freely joyously feeling
    I was not allowed had to
    do more structured forms of dance compete
    it's either right or wrong how do we work through
    untraining body mind spirit unhinging
    harshness from structure

body
body wrapping
body carrying
body holding

Fig. 5   Sewing across generations. (Photograph: S. Walsh)

Fig. 6 Barbara in movement II. (Photograph: B. Bickel)

body caring
body remembering
body training
body releasing
body managing
body disciplining (Fig. 6)

body good and harsh
body speaking
out
loud
body freeing
body supporting
bodies being
bodies together

generationally reworking stitches across
time
so many stitches still connected
not cut
to cut now
with intentional com/passion

Threads of Our Colleagues in Our Co-inquiry

We gratefully acknowledge the co-labour of our colleagues and the conscious and non-conscious threads of their intellectual and creative gifts, threads that interweave lovingly throughout our co-inquiry. "The labour of gratitude accomplishes the transformation that a gift promises …. The gifted become one with their gifts" (Hyde, 2007, p. 71). Our work as teacher educators and researchers has grown through years of engagement with spiritual practices that serve to situate our co-inquiry within holistic and contemplative education. In particular, we have worked within feminist, earth-based, and Tibetan Buddhist traditions personally and professionally (e.g. Brown, 2001; Cixous, 1993, 1997; Ettinger, 1999; Fernandes, 2003; Gradle, 2006; Klein, 1995; Lange, 2004; Mattis-Namgyel, 2010; Starhawk, 1989). Intuitive and holistic (nondual, embodied) being, knowing, and not-knowing as well as intentional, respectful engagement with the Earth and all sentient beings form the ground for our pedagogy, research, and ways of being in the world; respect, relationality, reciprocity, and co-emergence are central.

We also acknowledge the influences of our colleagues who work in holistic and contemplative education (e.g. Bai et al., 2009; Bai & Scott, 2011; Binder, 2016; Eppert et al., 2015; Eppert & Wang, 2008; Gunnlagson et al., 2017; Kumar, 2013; Miller, 2013; Palmer et al., 2010; Seidel & Jardine, 2014; Smith, 2014; Zajonc, 2003, 2009). More specifically, we desire to foreground the work of colleagues who engage with arts-based practices (e.g. dance, movement, contemplative photography, visual art, vocal improvisation, poetry) as forms of contemplation that are holistic, intuitive, embodied, and relational forms of inquiry and teaching (Bhattacharya & Payne, 2016; Binder, 2016; Fisher, 2017; Franklin, 2017; Jordan, 2013; Kelly, 2015; Irwin & de Cosson, 2004; Neilsen, 2004; Snowber, 2016). Many of the contemplative practices taken up in the above teaching and research contexts—and in the broader social context—draw upon practices derived from diverse ancient wisdom traditions and worldviews, practices through which people connect energetically with the natural-spiritual worlds (e.g. puja ceremony, labyrinth walking, Indigenous creative apprenticeships, and contemplative arts practices such as *miksang*/contemplative photography).

As we pull ourselves through the needle of our co-inquiry, we feel deeply the gifts of learning we have been given in the academy—a whole range of human experiences—we also send love and gratitude to all of the women and men with whom we have worked in previous research and teaching contexts over many years, cited and not cited below; their influences resonate in this relational space and shape our co-inquiry and everyday being in the world (see, for example, Bickel et al., 2015, 2018; Bickel & Hugill, 2011; Bickel & Sims, 2014; Bickel & Wendt, 2015; CORE, 2006; Counternormativity Discourse Group, 2005; Fisher & Bickel, 2015; Gannon et al., 2014; Gradle & Bickel, 2010; Irwin et al., 2009; Jordan et al., 2016; Luce-Kapler & Walsh, 1996; Richardson & Walsh, 2018; Snowber & Bickel, 2015; Walsh & Bai, 2015, 2017; Walsh, 2018; Walsh et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2007; Walsh et al., 2014; Women Writing Women Collective, 2014) (Figs. 7, 8, and 9).

> what wants to emerge today?
> staying in the moment
> with each other a gift to be
> in a new fresh moment

Fig. 7 Receiving, opening, surrendering. (Photograph: S. Walsh)

Fig. 8   Susan in prayer. (Photograph: B. Bickel)

Fig. 9   Visual reflections on the journey home. (Photograph: B. Bickel)

teaching the summer course
I was in such a contemplative focused space for/with the students
my self in relations
the *I* and the *we* and the *it* of
the experience

this day meeting
in the space of the moon eclipse

moon energy
moon insights
spirit world attunement
cosmos/celestial
surrender
fully receiving ourselves

a hovering doorway
stretch and loss
we over extended our capacity

what feels like it wants to emerge today?
profound gratitude and love and
tiredness old wounds what wants to step
forward be acknowledged in this space today?
flame of the candle smell of sage
my body heavy and light ready
and also not ready

the breath the healing scent of sage its
power to purify remove obstacles
the presence of the moon approach of
the lunar new year voices chanting together

taking my seat feeling my power as
a mother female warrior writer
artist someone who communicates
with the spirit world holding my
seat with dignity surrender
receiving opening the heart
trust in life energy
a baby teacher

waterpaint blue baby water
fluid surrender to spirit realm trust
receiving whatever arises
middle spiral painting with my
fingers water paint on my hands

a peaceful baby content breathing
trust relaxing with life energy
healing watery blue (Fig. 7)

hovering at doorways being stretched
thin also stretching swirling
students changing landscapes loss grief
small pieces of nourishment with others

what wants to emerge today?
working to stay in the moment with each other
a gift to be
in a new fresh moment
with another

what do *we* need today?
deep wounds of inadequacy arise want to be
acknowledged holding in sometimes
watching as in a dream
what do *we* need? a thin wispy trail
of sweetgrass smoke in the air healing
opening to the space-between
resting in the space-between with
confidence candles burning across space-time (Fig. 8)

what do *we* need?
connected in the electromagnetic field of the internet and zoom
waiting for Susan to accept
my invitation
I go to the kitchen make tea
walk back to my desk and
she is there
she dropped into my house
a sensory hit floods me
"oh Susan has arrived from next door,
coming through my open door"

we invite Carl into our co-inquiry
in spirit form
having left this world
his energy still vibrating in the electromagnetic fields
interconnecting with our *we*
Carl, the third editor of
our course textbook[4]
now present in our third co-inquiry
a meeting of three
a solid base
a strong triangular foundation
we have heart

we invite Carl in to the space his openness
willingness to follow energy be
vulnerable the unconditional love he
represents to so many (Fig. 9)

re-reading my final writing to students
so grateful this is a pass fail model
and I do not have to assign grades
to what is unmarkable
dwelling with vivid memories
of the course on the 10 hour drive
home sitting in my backyard
writing wit(h)ness consciousness
I was in such a contemplative focused space for/with them
similar to the co-inquiry space with Susan now
I feel relief to be in the conjoined *I* and *we* of
co-shared living learning experiences
reflecting each other

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[4] Carl Leggo co-edited *Arts-Based and Contemplative Practices in Research and Teaching: Honoring Presence*, with Barbara and Susan (Walsh, Bickel, & Leggo, 2015), and co-facilitated a retreat with them for the Arts Researchers and Teachers Society (ARTS) preconference event in advance of the Canadian Society for the Study of Education (CSSE) conference in 2017. Carl passed from his life on earth in March 2019 while we worked on this chapter.

What Is the Gift Created by Our Stitching?

As we reflect on wit(h)nessing our transitional spaces through this co-inquiry, we acknowledge too the threads of our labour over many years in the academy: the ways we have arrived as women artists in this space-time, this now. The electromagnetic fields transmuted through our computers create a shared healing space for our weary spirits, offering a mutual restorative and reflexive lacuna. Through the co-writing process and the co-wit(h)nessing experience in real-time-writing we walk through the passageway of a hovering door together. The passageway marks a fare-well—a leave-taking. In that leave-taking we leave behind part of ourselves and carry forward with us many gifts. Collegially imbued gifts that we have stitched into and will continue to stitch into. In our transitional passage that this co-inquiry has honoured and cared for, we deeply recognize the gift as a living entity still alive and being passed on and shared forward by many in the academy.

In the process of our co-writing discussions, those that have gifted us have shone through. In our still recovering and overextended lives, we gift each other with remembering; remembering the gift of teaching and learning has not been completely usurped by the scarcity-based neoliberal exchange economy. The twenty-first-century academy has been compromised and beaten down but it is still gifting—circulating and extending itself through us and others. The blanket we have stitched in this contemplative arts co-inquiry holds us and others and the academy in its embrace. Its stitches re-tell omitted lines of the story, holds the wisdom of restoring the powerful interrelationships between art, contemplation, research, teaching, and learning that challenges the perceived risk often engendered by such connections in the academy and other settings, while also highlighting the value of arts practices in holistic education. Our commitment to contemplative arts inquiry practices has led us towards a greater sense of connectedness in our lives, to one another, to nature, and to the cosmos. Strengthening education's potential for restorative and transformative experiences in the classroom, community, and world is the gift that we have been returned to through writing wit(h)ness consciousness with each other in this contemplative arts co-inquiry.

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Remaking Academic Garments

Catherine Manathunga and Agnes Bosanquet

Introduction

Wearing academia as a garment is sometimes literal—mortar board or doctoral velvet tam and academic gown or, for everyday attire, a tweed jacket with elbow patches. These garments have, for centuries, adorned white, male, able, cisgender, middle class bodies and do not readily fit "unruly" and disruptive bodies (Grosz, 1994). Wearing academia is also experienced metaphorically, with academic work not always an easy fit for women and intersectional others. In this chapter, we use women as an inclusive term to recognise trans and genderqueer women. Thornton

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(2013) writes eloquently about the ideal academic: "Anglo-Australian, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle class, not elderly … When women and Others are measured against Benchmark Men they are invariably found wanting" (p. 128). Occupying a body that does not measure up to a normative benchmark can be an uncomfortable experience in the neoliberal academy. Universities are increasingly competitive and managerial, marked by output-driven, highly regulated audit practices, keenly felt at an individual level. As Thwaites and Pressland (2017) argue, "the neoliberalisation of academia demands a particular kind of academic subject and particular temporality: self-motivated, enterprising, highly-productive, competitive, always-available, and able to withstand precarity" (p. 24).

Feminist academics are resisting "benchmark man" by demonstrating that bodies, clothing and makeup are worthy of intellectual attention, discussing ethics, performance, power, and identity politics. This is especially the case on social media (see, for example, *Thesis Whisperer*, *Tenure, She Wrote*, The Professor Is In's *Makeup Monday*, *Stylish Academic*, and *Women, Wardrobes and Leadership* which look at the clothing choices of school leaders). Scholarly perspectives on clothing and academic life are fewer and tend to focus on students' perceptions of teachers (see, for example, Chatelain, 2015). Notable exceptions include Kelly (2018), who thoughtfully articulates an "academic life, in textiles", sharing four vignettes of garments that represent points of transition in her academic life—being a PhD candidate (a neo-Victorian skirt), becoming a mother (a brown apron), teaching (a long dress with sleeves, fitted waist and full skirt) and promotion to senior lecturer (a blue woven shirt with threads of black and white). In an autoethnographic account as a Ghanaian-Cameroonian-American Black woman, Osei (2019) shares "freedom rooted in the act of allowing myself as a young Black girl to exist out loud and boldly. With the handy assistance of glitter, sequins, and rhinestones, I was able to be without the imminent threat of behavioural discipline that followed me at school" (p. 734). She describes her experiences as an academic, including racism in the classroom and her practice of "using academia as a space for healing" (p. 738). In an empirical article published as we edited the final version of this chapter, Lipton (2020) links women academics' professional dress to career progression, noting the

gendered, classed, raced and heteronormative impact of dress as "aesthetic labour" (p. 2).

Underscoring discussions of clothing in academia is the way in which garments are interconnected with academic identity, and representative of the conditions of work in the neoliberal university. Samek and Donofrio's (2013) use of the term "academic drag" in their discussion of conditions for queer theory and politics in the academy is illustrative. Ahmed (2015) expands the notion:

> Maybe an institution is like an old garment: if it has acquired the shape of those who tend to wear it, then it becomes easier to wear if you have that shape. The ease of movement, the lack of a stress might describe not only the habits of a body that has incorporated things, but also how an institution takes shape *around a body*. If a body is oriented *toward* things, an institution might be orientated *around* that body. We might be thinking of this bodily inhabitance as "fit". (n.p.)

In this chapter, two feminist scholars offer an autoethnographic account that explores how we have *shiFted* (see preface, this volume) academia away from dominant neoliberal logics towards a generous alternative that fits like a comfortable garment. We describe the ways in which we have let out the seams of academic life, lifted its hems, changed its colour, its shape and texture. Underpinning the notion of remaking and wearing differently the garments of academic life is an emphasis on the ways in which embodiment impacts work and identities. Embodiment, as defined by corporeal feminists, foregrounds the body in subjective experiences. In *Volatile Bodies*, Grosz (1994) challenges social and theoretical constructions that privilege the life of the mind, and assume a universal (male) experience, by examining gendered bodily experiences. As she puts it: "The subject, recognised as a corporeal being, can no longer readily succumb to the neutralisation and neutering of its specificity which has occurred to women as a consequence of women's submersion under male definition" (p. ix). These reflections were written in response to a call to reimagine academia "like [the pleasure of wearing] a loose-fitting garment—finding liberating and enabling ways to wear an academic life".

This is a feminist injunction to recognise the specific ways in which women embody academia.

In our reflections, we are following Ellis's (1999) illustrative injunction to write "he*art*ful" autoethnography:

> to develop an ethnography that includes researchers' vulnerable selves, emotions, bodies, and spirits; produces evocative stories that create the effect of reality; celebrates concrete experience and intimate detail; examines how human experience is endowed with meaning; is concerned with moral, ethical, and political consequences; encourages compassion and empathy; helps us know how to live and cope. (p. 669)

The aim of autoethnography is to move beyond the personal to locate individual experience within a wider context. McKinley (2019), using words from Virginia Woolf, suggests autoethnography "holds the potential to uncover the 'heart of the world', if only for a moment" (p. 211). As Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) put it: "The questions most important to autoethnographers are: Who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going?" (n.p.) In this chapter, we argue that remaking an academic life creates the conditions for radical hope (Lear, 2006) in the academy. We advocate for an academic life with the freedom to design academic garments decorated with individual's own cultural knowledge and symbols, vibrant colours and stunning brilliance. In these ways, we encourage all academics to engage in collective activism to remake academic life.

A Long Line of Strong, Feisty and Inspirational Women (Catherine)

I am writing this piece on Kabi-Kabi Country, which has been known, since British invasion, as the Sunshine Coast in Queensland, Australia. First of all, I'm going to locate my Irish-Australian feminist standpoint. I am an Irish-Australian woman whose ancestors arrived in Australia from the west coast of Ireland in 1834 and 1858 fleeing colonialism, oppression and famine. I usually introduce myself by way of three cultural

symbols—the Celtic Knot which symbolises eternity and the interconnectedness of all peoples and represents my cultural heritage; Māori knowledge stones to represent my birth as a Pākeha in Aotearoa NZ and the Turrbal word for speak, *Yärï,* to represent my quest to learn from and about the First Nations history, culture and language from the North side of the Brisbane River where I grew up. In Australia, it is an important sign of respect to seek the permission of the relevant Elders for the correct word. When I sought this permission, I was doing a curriculum review and requested permission to use the Turrbal word for "teach" or "learn". Instead, the Turrbal Elders asked me to use the word for speak—*Yärï.* These symbols represent my lifelong attempt to decolonise myself and to acknowledge First Nations sovereignty over the land that I have had the privilege to live upon.

Manathunga is my first married name which comes most recently from Sri Lanka but many centuries ago was an African name. I have two Sri Lankan-Irish-Australian sons, a Colombian daughter-in-law and an English-Australian, Chipewa First Nations American daughter-in-law. So, my little granddaughter encompasses a rich array of cultural backgrounds.

I am the first generation in my family on my mother's and the second generation in my father's family to go to university. I am the only person in my extended family with a doctorate. I come from a long line of strong, feisty and inspirational women, who often made do under challenging circumstances. Today, as I write this piece, it is seven years since my mother passed away. Echoing through my head is the 2018 National Aboriginal and Islander Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week theme honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women—"Because of her, we can". It is especially because of my women ancestors, that I can.

I have been an academic for nearly 30 years at a range of universities in Australia and Aotearoa NZ. As an historian and education researcher, I have been endlessly fascinated by people's histories, cultures and diverse knowledge systems, and have been an academic activist seeking a range of social justice goals such as Aboriginal land rights and decolonised higher education. I resonate very strongly with the comment made in Harré et al.'s (2017) paper that what "initially attracted us to the academy …

[was a sense that it can be] a place of radical possibility" (p. 8). For me, being an academic is the way I enact my political activism and seek to make a difference. I love the freedom I have as an academic to grapple with ideas and issues and to teach and research and engage with the communities that we serve. Although I have been an academic my whole professional life, I challenge the stereotype that I have only ever worked in an "ivory tower" or, some might say, a "sheltered workshop", because this assumes that academics are not people who have lives that intersect daily with a vast array of communities and peoples.

I have spent my career trying to find "liberating and enabling ways to wear an academic life" as the Making *shiFt* Happen conference urged us to do (see preface and *shiFt* definition, this volume). As a woman and mother, I have had to redesign the academic garment we were given by the old white men who first fashioned the university. My short woman's body, thin at first, pregnant twice, now thickening in the afternoon of my life, has never fitted. Today I'm wearing a bright red, white and black flowing dress and a cardigan festooned on the front with colourful sequins in the shape of flowers. The silky fabric floats around my body falling in a soft feminine line. I resonate with Osei's (2019) desire for "glitter [and] sequins" (p. 734). I go for bright colours and sparkly materials, particularly when attending high level, senior academic meetings, running counter, like Agnes, to Kelly's (2018) principles for her wardrobe— "Nothing is bright, colourful, shiny or lacy" (p. 28). I am still routinely asked if I'm doing my PhD, although it's now nearly 30 years since I was a PhD student. I was recently introduced to my professorial colleagues by a well-meaning senior male colleague through a reference to my dress colour rather than my research areas.

Continuously, I have received messages that my woman's body is not academic. I have been told many times, mostly by people outside academe, that I do not look like an academic. Many are visibly shocked when I admit that I'm a professor. While this has been and continues to be a struggle, I have redesigned my academic garment—let out its seams, lifted its hems to fit my short stature, changed its colour—yes to purple (my favourite colour and one of the key feminist colours)—changed its shape and texture. I'm committed to handing on my colourful, liberating academic garment to the women that follow me in academic

careers—some of them are older than me, others decades younger. I really want to be a figure for "kindness, movement and change in the academy" a person who helps *shiFt* happen. I seek to be a strong and kind role model and mentor to my women colleagues both within my own institution and throughout my national and international networks. In this work I am inspired by my own experience of having wonderful women mentors throughout my career that have forged a path for me and my generation of academic women.

I don't want academic women to necessarily wear the same garment as me but to have the freedom to design their own academic garment and decorate it with their own cultural knowledge and symbols, their own vibrant colours, their own stunning brilliance.

I am also often told that my academic career and preferences are not how an academic career *should* be structured. I am an interdisciplinary butterfly who has flitted her colourful and gossamer-thin wings over the disciplines of History, Higher Education and Academic Development and Education. These disciplinary reformations have been challenging. They were largely a product of a tenacious desire to stay in academia at a time when Arts Faculties were being downsized, causing me to spend four years as a casual academic. I sought reinvention and more secure employment in the field of Higher Education and Academic Development. I then faced a second crossroads when I recognised that, in order to apply for more senior leadership roles and stay true to my activist desires, I would need to move into a faculty. I explored options in Cultural Studies or returning to History but decided upon Education as more likely to provide me with intellectual freedom *and* a secure job. I am a poststructural and postcolonial/decolonial theorist (yes, I like living on the hyphen) who researches doctoral education, academic identities, critical university studies and university histories. I am often called upon to speak about decolonising education, most recently in South Africa and Rwanda, which is a great privilege, especially as an Irish-Australian white woman.

I am an academic mother and now grandmother. I had an honours thesis baby and a PhD thesis baby so being an academic and a mother is entirely and complexly entangled for me, and for my two sons.

My Academic Work Has Been Interrupted (Agnes)

I am writing this on the land of the Wattamattagal clan of the Darug nation. This acknowledgement is fundamental for contextualising the university as an uneasy place to occupy.

I am the first women in my immediate family to attend university, and the first woman in my extended family to receive a doctorate. My paternal grandmother did not attend school past 12 years of age. As family lore has it, her teachers cried at the loss of such cleverness from the classroom. My maternal grandmother was a dressmaker who created garments for my mother and her three sisters from images in magazines. Her legacy is that her granddaughters and great-granddaughters share an abiding interest in fashion design, fabrics, accessories and the indefinable elements of style—and always alter shop-bought clothing in some way. Today I am wearing a dress that always makes me think of a childhood neighbour, Mrs Canning—a blue floral linen shift with pockets. It somehow evokes my memories of the pinny (or apron) Mrs Canning wore, and her delicious lamingtons. It feels both utilitarian (linen, pockets) and frivolous (bright floral). Like Catherine's wardrobe, it runs counter to Kelly's (2018) Senior Lecturer wardrobe: "Definitely no florals" (p. 23).

The guidelines to the first graduates from my university, written in 1970, read: "it is usual for women to wear a white frock with white gloves, while men wear a dark suit and a dark tie". Now, anything goes, and the only white gloves visible are worn by the bearer of the ceremonial mace. I celebrated my first graduation, in black rather than white—from a Bachelor of Arts—in 1999. I first participated in an academic procession in September 2012. I enjoy the pomp of graduation: winged gowns, polyester mimicking the textures of velvet and silk, the ceremonial mace, graduands' inappropriate shoes for cobblestones, an operatic intermission, the occasional celebrity speaker, fairy lights in the trees, and champagne and canapes at the end. And I love the liminality of the word graduand—a person about to receive a degree—that is only in use for an hour or so.

Each time I attend a graduation, I recapture something of the nervousness and pride of graduating with my PhD when my daughter was three years old. My daughter was born during my (slow) PhD. As a result of placental abruption during birth, she had insufficient oxygen for a time. After repeated life-threatening seizures, she was diagnosed with epilepsy at the age of two. With the onset of puberty ("Mum, don't say that word") her seizures worsened until she was unable to attend school for eight months and required lengthy hospitalisations. We have found a good balance of medications that keep the seizures controlled, but continue to live with the consequences of her illness daily.

I also live with a chronic pain condition, following complications during surgery for an ectopic pregnancy. By then a part-time lecturer, I was meant to be teaching my first class of the semester on the night I was hospitalised. The surgery to remove my right fallopian tube was complicated. My uterus was perforated and I suffered extensive nerve damage. I now have a neurostimulator implanted in my abdomen, which runs an electric current alongside the damaged nerve. I have it on 24/7 and it manages my once constant and immobilising pain. After several years of secondary infertility, my son was born less than a year after the neurostimulator was implanted.

Like my grandmother's schooling due to poverty, and my daughter's schooling due to illness, my academic work has been interrupted. Through my experiences as a PhD candidate and an early career academic, I have been primed to notice care, or its absence, in the academy. At times, I wasn't sure that I could remain in academia, but I have altered the garments of academia to fit and they suit me well enough most of the time. Shaping academia to fit has enabled me to navigate uncomfortable periods of illness and university restructures. My strategies have been as simple (and as difficult) as: getting support from others (colleagues, managers, HR, union, family, friends, health workers); taking the pressure off work by taking leave, making apologies, negotiating responsibilities; prioritising one task per day and focussing on shallow work. In practical terms, it meant I worked part-time while my daughter slept on a beanbag in my office or I used a laptop in hospital. I shared the load with my partner, family, friends, manager and colleagues, who variously attended meetings on my behalf; drafted articles, applications and reports; made

dinner; and stayed overnight in hospital. Combined, this mob made up my shortfalls, eased my load, offered an opportunity to vent, managed administrative tasks and put dinner on the table.

The care I received has driven me to pay it forward and resist undercare in the academy. The scholarly work that has helped along the way includes Gill's (2009) *Breaking the Silence: The Hidden Injuries of Neoliberal Academia*, Lynch's (2010) *Carelessness: A Hidden Doxa of Higher Education*, Mountz et al.'s (2015) *For Slow Scholarship: A Feminist Politics of Resistance Through Collective Action in the Neoliberal University* and Harré et al.'s (2017) *The University as Infinite Game: Revitalising Activism in the Academy*.

Following an organisational change process which saw many valued colleagues leave the university, I started a blog called *The Slow Academic*. Not coincidentally, I started blogging once I had secure work, when I had time and space and energy to write. I had been an avid blog reader for many years, and was searching for a blog that explored difficult questions about slow academia in relation to the politics of higher education, university governance, academic roles and identities, and academic activism. Activism, particularly in relation to the operations of the higher education sector and the organisation itself, has been nourishing to me. Much of it is ordinary work: participating in scholarship, academic governance, teaching and union activities, what Gill (2009) calls "small-scale micro-negotiations of power in the academy" (p. 231).

Four years on, blogging has provided an opportunity to think through writing and reflect-in-action (Schön, 1987). Thomson and Kamler (2010) call it "writing along the way"—"writing that is intended to sort out what we think, why, and what the implications of a line of thought might be" (p. 149). Blogging is incredibly freeing for an academic writer constrained by the conventions, requirements and expectations of research and publishing. (All too often, I have to delete a sentence to appease a reviewer; I've learnt to hold words loosely, and let them go without regret.) In a blog post, words follow my whims, and I can write about dystopian fiction, porridge, trees and family outings. The pleasures of writing the quotidian run deep. Most of all, blogging has provided a means to resist a particular style of academia: idealised academic superheroes, quantified measures of productivity, contagious anxiety, a finite game.

Calling myself a slow academic is a way of wearing academia like a loose-fitting garment.

Neoliberal Conditions and the Necessity for Freedom to Remake Academic Garments

In our reflections, we introduced our vulnerable selves, located in specific places and identifications, and shared everyday experiences, including an emphasis on clothing, assumptions about seniority, and care in the academy. In a similar way, Shipley (2018) describes the experiences of women in academia "as 'less than' males, assumed administrators, infantilised for their views or commonly assumed to be students (thereby not being recognised as 'real' academics)" (p. 28). Our reflections also show profound shifts in our physicality—pregnancy, pain, ageing—that brought attention to the ways in which our bodies differed from academia's normative expectations. These expectations align with Thornton's (2013) "benchmark man", against whose measure everyone else is found to be deficient. Similarly, Hey and Bradford (2004) write about the ways in which the managerialist-audit gaze of the university privileges male subjectivities. While the focus of our reflections is our experiences as women in the academy, other intersections reinforce academia as a "poor fit", including class, race, ethnicity, and physical or mental ill health or disability.

Our universities construct academic work in particular ways: individual, competitive, standardised, audited and output-driven. These are the characteristics of neoliberalism, the economic ideals of which have meshed with and influenced higher education and knowledge production. Shahjahan (2015) describes the colonising affects of neoliberalism on academic bodies; academics "enact certain postures, language, and gestures that increasingly manifest neoliberal subjectivity" and their bodies become "mobile devices" for conducting neoliberal work (pp. 493–494). This colonisation is experienced differently by women and intersectional others, as demonstrated by specific studies of imbalances in senior and executive roles; concentration at lower levels and in casual and contract positions; inequitable teaching workloads; impacts of

interruptions on career advancement; and, on average, lower citation rates and grant funding (Hey & Bradford, 2004; Probert, 2005; Thornton, 2013).

Evident in our reflections is how we have resisted a model of academia that holds us to a standard set by and for the establishment. We have focussed on academic work that enables political activism and working with and creating communities. We described ourselves as "feminist academics", a positioning that Taylor and Lahad (2018) call "inherently problematic" entangled as we are within academic structures (p. 5). Hey and Bradford (2004) make a point about being "inscribed within … many of the forces that … we desire to contest" (p. 692). We experience this complicity within a system that we are simultaneously resisting. While this positioning can be uncomfortable, our reflections focus on the creative and collaborative possibilities of remaking academia to create conditions for hope for ourselves and others.

Slow Tiny Acts of Resistance (STARs): Playing the Infinite Game

Our work has been inspired by Harré et al.'s (2017) article on Slow Tiny Acts of Resistance (STARs) that enable us to play the infinite game that we signed up to when we became academics. Harré et al. (2017) define the infinite game as "a symbol of our potential as people living together to be open and inclusive, and to promote the life, and growth, that helps us flourish as individuals and communities" (p. 5). This includes goals such as social justice, cultural democracy and inclusion. Meanwhile, our universities are embroiled in endless and stricter rule-bound finite games where the goal is to win, where not all academics are selected to play and where losing is always possible. Under neoliberalism, the university becomes obsessed with "competitive finite games that pit individuals against each other" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 6).

STARs enable academics to quietly, and often with a great deal of humour, undermine or refuse finite academic games. STARs are about prioritising collegiality, friendship and solidarity and playing the "long

game" (Harré et al., 2017). Some of the STARs Catherine and her colleagues have been engaged in include:

- Starting the research part of our School Retreat with a meditation guided by Aboriginal elder Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr's powerful and slow articulation of *dadirri* or deep listening;
- Random acts of kindness to colleagues (coffee vouchers, pigeonhole notes/lollies/rocks/goodies/thank you notes);
- Setting up deck chairs on the grass between the university buildings and at conferences and encouraging students, staff and random passers-by to join us in sitting and thinking;
- Working on a "Stupidity index" which people can use to rate the stupidity of the latest edicts from university management or government (e.g. setting "sales targets" otherwise known as Research Performance measures that no one can possibly reach);
- Singing together in the staff room as we prepare ourselves for meetings and random singing in our Head of School's office to show our support for her brave efforts to protect our engagement in the infinite game of the university.

For Agnes, blogging as *The Slow Academic* has become a way of thinking through and enacting STARs and connecting with like-minded souls across the world. These STARs have included:

- Intentionally citing feminist scholars, women of colour and writers from non-Western countries;
- Focusing on affective experiences, and emphasising care (for self and others) and reflective practice;
- Blogging about non-academic topics in a scholarly way including reading, holidays, events, bushwalks and parenting;
- Emphasising learning in progress (for example, participating in a MOOC on Aboriginal Sydney);
- Exploring measures of success and productivity that resist the values of neoliberal academia;
- Sharing photographs that show the university in ways that are different from marketing materials;

- Reporting on collegial gatherings in higher education, with a focus on relationships rather than achievements.

STARs enable us to engage in academic activism that "take our intuitions, lived experience and observations of injustice and exclusion seriously" (Harré et al., 2017, p. 5).

Conditions for Radical Hope

STARs offer a means to create the conditions for *radical hope* in universities (Manathunga & Bottrell, 2019b). Lear (2006) developed the concept of radical hope in his imaginative psychoanalysis of the actions of Plenty Coups, a powerful chief of the First Nations American Indian Crow Nation, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Plenty Coups was a courageous leader at a time of immeasurable cultural devastation as white men and women with their "Spotted Buffalo" took over the prairies and mountains of North America. He was witness to the collapse not only of life and civilisation but of the very meanings and concepts by which a "good life" could be lived. This was a time of "radical discontinuity with the past and also a rip in the fabric of the self" (Lear, 2006, p. 32). The words of the Crow woman elder, Pretty Shield, epitomise this—"I am trying to live a life I do not understand" (cited in Lear, 2006, p. 62).

The most challenging aspect for Plenty Coups was to somehow create "hope in the face of an abyss where no one can really know what survival means" (Lear, 2006, p. 96). As Lear (2006) powerfully argues, the Crow people were confronted with a life where all "the concepts with which I would otherwise have understood myself … have gone out of existence" (p. 46). Plenty Coups narrates this to his white friend, Frank Linderman, who he asked to record his story, as "after this, nothing happened" (Lear, 2006, p. 50). After this, words fail.

When Catherine was on holidays in Northern Canada and Alaska last year while visiting her newborn granddaughter, she was told tales of great acts of radical hope by First Nations Canadian and Alaskan chiefs and tribes. For example, the Hān Chief Isaac of the Tr'ondēk Hwēch' in First

Nation in Dawson Canada, when faced with a gold rush and invasion by Europeans, decided to travel to a Northern tribe in Alaska (not named by the storyteller or in any records accessible from Australia) to teach them their language, songs, ceremonies and rituals and entrust them into this tribe's care. Descendants of this remote Alaskan tribe are re-teaching these songs, ceremonies, rituals and language to descendants of the Tr'ondēk Hwēch' in First Nations peoples, who would have lost them without this example of radical hope and activism. We draw in this chapter on Lear's psychoanalysis of Plenty Coup's words and deeds to seek strength and hope in our current university context. We were seeking to learn from Plenty Coup's wisdom, refracted as it is across time, space and cultures.

We argue that remaking an academic life creates the conditions for radical hope (Lear 2006) in the academy for women and intersectional others. Radical hope allows us to connect the Slow Tiny Acts of Resistance (Harré et al., 2017) we can engage in everyday as academics to a powerful and critical theoretical framework for resisting the overwhelming focus on finite games in universities. Radical hope is a way of keeping the infinite game of "critical" research going and inviting in as many people as possible to continue playing. We suggest that radical hope supports our ceaseless quest to promote the infinite game, cultural democracy, decolonisation and social justice in our universities. These ideas help us to "enact small creative acts of kindness, collective care, hope, disruption, … and deep listening in the company of others", they make *shiFt* happen.

In discussing the idea of radical hope, we are drawing on the writing of Manathunga and Bottrell (2019a, 2019b) from their edited collection *Resisting Neoliberalism in Higher Education: Prising Open the Cracks*. The introductory chapter made the point that there are important links between anger and hope, emotions not usually put together (Manathunga and Bottrell, 2019a). At present, there is a great deal of anger amongst university staff and students. As Ball (2013) argues, "the mundane force, brute logic and stunning triviality of performance individualism" provokes a lot of this anger (p. 258). Inspired by Stengers and Despret (2014), we are cranky women who are determined to make a fuss and, like Taylor (2013), we are "angry, emotional feminist academics who will not be silenced" (p. 51). We suggest, however, that anger is not always a

negative emotion. As Barcan (2013) powerfully argues, without rage we are not galvanised into action to provoke change. Without hope, we cannot believe that change is even possible. Barcan (2013) suggests that "critique and resistance find their affective counterparts in rage and hope, which are needed in equal measure" (p. 143). Indeed, as Schudson (1999) writes, "hope is undaunted by statistics" which is a particularly important counter-move in a university world driven by measurement (p. 628).

The kind of hope we are recommending here is both personal and social or collective. It is different from naïve optimism or Berlant's (2011) "cruel optimism" where people remain attached to fantasies like upward mobility and job security in a system designed to rarely allow this. Barcan (2013) suggests that this form of hope includes "openness, possibility and generosity" and enables us to "name social problems" and "permit disagreement" (pp. 148, 169). We also perceive hope as a radical agenda for change in universities. Indeed, as Williams and Gable (1989) argued, "to be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing" (p. 118). Kenway et al. (2014) also suggest that we could access "resources of hope" in the neoliberal university (p. 259). They quote Henry Giroux's (2012) argument that educated hope:

> is also a pedagogical and performative practice that provides the foundation for enabling human beings to learn about their potential as moral and civic agents … Educated hope is a subversive force when it pluralises politics by opening up a space for dissent, making authority accountable and becoming an activating presence in promoting social transformation. (p. 38)

In writing about resistance, anger and hope, it is important to acknowledge our privilege as white cisgender women academics in Australia, and recognise intersectionality and, relevant to the theory we have worked with in this chapter, the differential barriers to fitting into academic institutions and expectations felt by those marginalised by race in particular. Writing specifically of the uncomfortable fit of academia, Yancy (2017) says: "as a Black body, my body becomes stressed within those conference spaces and those white academic spaces. White bodies move through those spaces habitually" (p. 9).

Conclusion

As feminist scholars engaging in vulnerable and heartful autoethnography (Ellis, 1999), we have remade academic life by reflecting upon the ways in which our women's bodies do not fit the contours of traditional academic garb or the straitjacket of neoliberal "benchmark man". We have sought to trace, through our personal stories, the colonising effects of neoliberalism on academic women's bodies. We have shown how our ongoing anger at being marginalised, misrepresented and misheard has become a powerful prompt towards political action and ultimately hope for change. In seeking to let out the seams, lift the hems and change the colour, shape and texture of academic clothing, we are seeking to create space in the academy for the bodies of women and intersectional others. Our ever-changing women's bodies challenge constructions of the academy as only a life of the mind and draw attention to the fact that academic work and life is profoundly located in specific places and is complexly entangled with shifting and bodily identity work.

We argue that our analysis of clothing, inspired by Kelly's (2018) insightful chapter on an "academic life, in textiles", and our own stories of academic life allow us to locate our personal experiences in the wider social and political context of the academy (McKinley, 2019). This autoethnographic work also illustrates how our enactment of Slow Tiny Acts of Resistance (STARs) (Harré et al., 2017) can be a slow, often humorous way to undermine or refuse the finite academic games required of us in neoliberal universities so that we might continue to focus on the infinite game of collegiality, friendship and solidarity. Meditating on deep, slow time with Aboriginal Elder, Miriam Rose Ungunmerr instead of counting research outputs and outcomes at a research meeting, enacting random acts of kindness with colleagues, engaging in deck chair philosophy with colleagues and students in the university grounds, singing together before meetings are all STARs that bring us together, lift our spirits and remind us of why we joined the academy in the first place.

Engaging in STARs enables us to create the conditions for radical hope in the academy. As a strategy originally designed to resist the horrors of colonisation in North America designed by Plenty Coups, chief of the

First Nations American Crow Nation, creating radical hope in the academy is key decolonial move. Ensuring that universities continue their efforts towards the infinite game of decolonisation, social justice and cultural democracy is vital in our academy that has become gripped in the finite games of neoliberalism (Harré et al., 2017). The university is, as Giroux states (2012) a "democratic public space" dedicated to "critique, dialogue, critical theory and informed judgement constituted as a pedagogical necessity" (p. 113). This is the university that many women and intersectional others signed up for and hope to change from within.

Remaking academia is not an individual effort; rather, the intention is to make structural, cultural and systemic changes that shape the future of universities. By producing the conditions for radical hope in the academy, our stories open up creative and collaborative possibilities for remaking academic life so that it fits the bodies, commitments, concerns and passions of women and intersectional others. We encourage you to design your own academic garment and decorate it with your own cultural knowledge and symbols, your own vibrant colours and your own stunning brilliance. This lays the groundwork for ongoing collective activism in the academy. Collective academic activism involves, as Harré et al. (2017) suggest, foregrounding our lived experiences and intuitive understandings of the world, learning from (rather than denying) the messy, bodily displays of our *shiFting* academic identities as mirrored in our comfortable, colourful and beautiful academic garments, and naming and actively fighting against any instances of injustice and exclusion in the university and in the wider world.

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Canon, Legacy or Imprint: A Feminist Reframing of Intellectual Contribution

**Trina Hamilton, Roberta Hawkins,
and Margaret Walton-Roberts**

Introduction

When we were invited to discuss the origins, inspirations and outcomes of our collective work on slow scholarship (Mountz et al., 2015) for the Making *shiFt* Happen virtual conference (see preface, this volume), our conversations turned to discussions of retired mentors and colleagues and how we recalled and celebrated their contributions to the academy. In

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these discussions we began to reflect on what it means to leave a legacy, and whether we could come up with an alternate, feminist version of legacy——one that wasn't so focused on becoming part of the canon or creating "mini-me" replications in those we mentor. In place of these hierarchical and seemingly egotistical traditions, we considered how the idea of *imprint* rather than legacy might reflect something of the spirit of collective resistance and change we had developed through our earlier conversations.

In this chapter we explore this idea more deeply in an effort to reimagine the kind of affect we produce on those we work with. We use "imprint" here as a verb, "to impress (a quality, character, or distinguishing mark) on or in a person or thing; to communicate, impart … To exist strongly marked in or on a person" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). In this chapter we begin by framing our thinking about imprint and its relationship to other ways of being in the academy by examining the recent literature on the canon and citation practices. We then consider the idea of imprint as one of "being-in-relation"[1] and offer some ideas for moving forward with this effort. While we want to push back against the traditional, masculinist mode of legacy-making, we also want to move beyond thinking about an ethic of care as simply a means of restoring work-life balance and creating a kinder academy. Making space for "an other" academy (Oswin, 2019) requires more than kindness. Our goal here is to reflect on ways to have a lasting scholarly imprint that does not reward the self-centred aggrandisement of the heroic individual.

We are three white, tenured, mid-career female scholars. We are also part of a larger group named the Great Lakes Feminist Geography Collective within which we have been developing our ideas around slow scholarship and mentoring to transform neoliberal institutions (Mountz et al., 2015; Curran et al., 2019). This collective work has acted upon us as a form of imprinting, allowing for peer to peer mentoring and acknowledgement of our privilege and responsibility to enable us to do more to transform the academy. Our effort to reimagine how to be in the academy has encouraged us to think about collective rather

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[1] This term was introduced to one of us by her PhD advisor Dianne Rocheleau, who used it to describe simultaneously being situated in a body and place and being situated within a web of relations (network) (see Rocheleau & Roth, 2007, for more).

than competitive means of practising our craft. We are conscious of our own forms of privilege, and we believe in the need to make space for a new generation of underrepresented scholars and forms of knowledge. Our commitment is both moral and epistemological——our common grounding in feminist theories of situated and embodied knowledge leads us to understand that we cannot transform academic institutions with the same bodies (Haraway, 1988; Harding, 1992; Louis, 2007; Hawthorne & Heitz, 2018; Johnson, 2020). We also understand the contradictory processes we must engage in as mentors to underrepresented students, and that we have to reproduce the academic 'subject' in order for our students to succeed in the interim, but that we need to make the process less destructive, and ultimately transform our institutions. It is to this end that we have engaged in this dialogue on the matter of canon, legacy and what we call imprint.

To develop the outline and shape of this chapter, we engaged in individual reflective writing exercises that we then shared with one another. We then held conference calls, recorded our conversations and identified emerging key themes. We reflected on our experiences and vision as we engaged in conversations about the canon and scholarly legacy. This reflection illuminated how the idea of imprint pushes against long-replicated, exclusionary practices. Although we combine our voices and experiences throughout much of the chapter to reflect the shared vision that emerged from our conversations, we include vignettes and individual reflections (in italics) to illustrate the embodiment of these ideas in our lived experiences. Our discussions have ultimately led to the idea of "being-in-relation" as a model for achieving scholarly imprint, and we end the chapter with examples of how to put this into practice.

Canon, Legacy and Imprint

We see legacy as a precursor to being seen as worthy of inclusion in the canon. As we considered what it meant to leave a legacy, we engaged with the idea of the canon and reflected on our own experiences with "the canon", which is defined as "a body of works, etc., considered to be

established as the most important or significant in a particular field" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

> *I didn't have a word for it then but looking back now I know exactly when I was confronted with the canon. It was within my first few weeks of grad school when everyone in all of my classes—professors and students alike—was talking in a language I didn't understand. They mentioned Foucault (who I called Foocaltt in a class discussion and then was almost incapacitated with embarrassment for the rest of the session). They drew on Marx. They chatted on and on about Harvey and others. It was disorienting and disheartening. I remember feeling like I didn't belong. My solution was to listen and read and try to talk like the rest of them, which, eventually, I think I managed to do. I have no memory at all of ever thinking of the canon as something that was accessible to me or that I wanted to be part of or even to really engage with in any meaningful way.*

As we problematised the idea of the canon, we turned to scholarly debates regarding the canon in our own discipline of geography. In a recent special issue on the canon in geography, Richard Powell (2015) introduces the idea of the canon based on its ancient and ecclesiastical origins. In drawing this line from the past, he makes an important insight: "Ecclesiastical history derives from a tension between the history of the book and the history of its interpretative communities" (Powell, 2015, p. 3). This begins the important focus on the outsized role of the text in terms of generating canonical influence, and informs our interest in questioning how scholarly legacy might be usefully re-examined as one of imprint (perhaps driven by the interests of our "interpretative community"). Careful analysis of what makes up a canon, the pre-eminently textual basis of canon formation, and its highly gendered construction are all highlighted by scholars included in Powell's (2015) special collection.

We reflected on this debate about the canon and its formation in light of our own experiences. The canon is purportedly about greatness, but we are increasingly focused on the work that scholarship does in different settings and in relation to different students:

*Every year I teach a required Human Geography graduate seminar, and it is usually a highly diverse group of students. Some of the students (mostly female non-geographers), had the most powerful response to the works of Doreen Massey (*1991*) and Gillian Rose (*1997*). Reading this work allowed students (especially women of colour) to see a place for themselves in Geography (where they were not sure if they saw one before). One student who was re-entering graduate school after years in the corporate field emailed me and said: "In my paper you asked a question about what 'my failure' was. As I was obsessed with Rose's position in her article, I now see that my power and strength is not a failure. My ability to speak up against unfair treatment or a double standard is where I begin this journey. I start from a choice."* (Graduate student, 2019)

Rose's writing reverberated with this one student, and it effectively imprinted on her in a way that reinforced her own sense of purpose and intention. In that classroom these readings had created an "interpretative community" among the students. Reflecting on this experience, we thought about how we need to include the "more than textual" in how we recount the contribution of scholars, including the visceral, emotional, intellectual and personal imprints that result from engaging with their writing. In wanting to make a change in how the academy works, this conscious production and prioritising of imprint within an interpretative community might be what we are interested in elevating (also see Rice et al., 2021).

Similar reflections are raised by Maddrell (2015), who asks why in the more recent period the canon remains dominated by men. She asks why influential work by women geographers has not made it into the canon. She advocates for a soft canon and encourages more critical reflection on canonisation in sub-disciplines. She states that "Whilst canonization is a social process which needs to be seen in its institutional context, it is often an invisible one" (Maddrell, 2015, p. 33). She notes: "any canon formation represents not only 'a set of texts, but [also] a set of practices attributing value'" (p. 33), and in terms of those practices it is "easier to establish academic authority and 'presence' through an adversarial style rather than a dialogic one" (p. 36).

Looking at the relation of canonical texts to Geography, Maddrell (2015) makes the point that women geographers whose work was important in

their day are often underrepresented in the canon, and only a handful of women are included in canonical texts, and taught in the history and philosophy of geography classes. Maddrell (2015, p. 35) comments on the power of "the three 'Rs': refereeing, reviewing and reputation", and in turn how these rest on factors of "genre, processes of reiterative citation, processes of inclusion-exclusion, engagement and practices of reputational veneration within contemporary geography". These practices might help explain the reproduction of masculinity in the canon. Feminist work to create collaborative and supportive intellectual spaces may not permit the coming into being of the adversarial canonical figure, based on practices that have been the norm until now. Rosenman et al. (2019) examine these issues in terms of the challenges of developing deeper theoretical pluralism within disciplines that are typically dominated by white, male, senior academics. They argue that creating greater pluralism within disciplines dominated by white male scholars demands an active structural agenda of deep engagement with marginalised voices:

> *It follows that engagement is linked to both politics and practices. Performative acts like stating a commitment to broadening the representation of an editorial board or submitting authors must be matched with practices and institutional changes that reinforce and reify those commitments.* (Rosenman et al., 2019, p. 18)

There is also a need to challenge the textual power that until now has obfuscated the actual labour contributing to intellectual developments (e.g. how many authors acknowledge all the contributions made by graduates, research assistants, reviewers and colleagues?). Suggesting that we understand scholars by more than their written words means that we should also understand their biography, how they mentored, collaborated and recognised the contributions of others. Focusing on imprint could lead to acknowledgement of more than the textual, including the methods by which a text was constructed, produced and advanced; the vulnerabilities and discomforts that were exposed; the works plundered or honoured in the process; and the opportunities for, or sacrifices of, mutual development that resulted. This relates strongly to the argument by Mansfield et al. (2019) about wanting to break the myth of separation

between a scholar and their bad behaviour, stating, "Abuse of power is not incidental to these men's 'greatness'; it is central to it" (p. 83). This attention to more than the text exposes how citation practices reproduce power asymmetries because they are gendered male (Mott & Cockayne, 2017) and raced white (Chakravartty et al., 2018), and more broadly how the academy generally resists critical assessment of its own complicity with systems of colonial, capitalist and neoliberal extraction (Oswin, 2019).

To address some of these exclusions of certain perspectives and voices, others have proposed a "soft canon" (Kilcup, 1999). As Maddrell (2015, p. 38) notes, the idea of a soft canon can include other forms of influence beyond the textual, including teaching, fieldwork and mentoring. It also encourages each of us to develop our own, individual canons, drawing from official canons where useful, but also spending more time engaging a broader array of scholarship and determining what is most useful for our own work.

And yet, we still have conflicted feelings about the idea of a canon in Geography or the social sciences more broadly. We generally align with those who want to bust open and maybe even destroy the idea of a canon, yet we also worry about whether we are teaching our students enough of "the" canon to prepare them for conversations they might have or questions that might be lobbed at them on the job market, at conferences, or in other seminars. This resonates with our own graduate school experiences, with fellow students throwing around names we were not fully conversant with. Some of us come to graduate school with an eclectic background rather than a cohesive and in-depth engagement with the big names in one discipline. We have come to appreciate that eclecticism (and it is one of the scholarly traits that many of us admire in other colleagues); why shouldn't we feel more confident turning the table and asking what our peers might be missing by grounding everything in a canonical figure's work? On the other hand, we still wrestle with the imposter syndrome that surfaces during those mandatory engagements with the canon. We worry particularly about our students seeking academic jobs in an increasingly poor job market. We worry for first-generation and other already marginalised students who may be excluded from the intellectual peacocking——the performance of showy, rhetorical rituals, that are often necessary to secure the job. We also worry about the role we might play in reproducing this structural problem by deciding we must have

PhDs to mentor in order to be seen as a worthy academic. We continue to question how we might carefully move away from idealising the canon and legacy and open ourselves up to something more.

ShiFting Practices: Imprint as Being-in-Relation

At one of the retirement panels we were a part of, I was struck by the fact that the students assembled to share their experiences were not moulded in her likeness or easily identified as "a [fill in well-known scholar] student," yet we all talked about her scholarly impact on us.[2] It wasn't the warm and fuzzy mentor tribute that is stereotypical for a female academic (although there were certainly personal stories about the care work that she did too), but rather serious reflection about the scholarly approach that she imparted. One person shared that they had learned a lot about how to blend theories to analyze an issue, another reminisced about a framework they still used to examine complex problems and another spoke of the voice in the back of their head saying 'so what?', helping to keep their research relevant. The diverse ways that one person had affected all of us and the lessons we still hung on to years later seemed to be something different from the traditional ideas of what a legacy should be.

Reading reflections on retirement and attending retirement panels at academic meetings for some of our own mentors got us thinking about intellectual lineage——the performance and reproduction of our intellectual roots, in new ways. One of our observations was the overarching importance of relationships. Reflecting on their post-university lives, Ellis et al. (2017) discussed how much they missed students after retiring, both teaching undergraduates and engaging in conversation with graduate students. These relationships with students are central to our vision of scholarly imprint because the goal is not necessarily to cement our scholarly legacy in name, but to train a new generation of scholars to excavate and engage scholarship that has not been canonised, to make time for debate and dialogue and learning that is not rewarded by the neoliberal university, and, in so doing, to increase the likelihood that a broader,

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[2] This is a reflection on the Eclectic Environmental Geographies of Jody Emel panels at the 2019 American Association of Geographers meetings: https://aag.secure-abstracts.com/AAG%20Annual%20Meeting%202019/sessions-gallery/24231

more diverse range of scholarship and scholars will live on and continue to have an impact over time, both within and outside of academic institutions.

> Being-in-relation with others in the academy is a way to prioritise imprint over legacy. Our reading of work on a feminist ethics of care in the academy, focusing on mentoring collaboration, has highlighted the importance of finding people you can have meaningful work relationships and friendships with even in the face of neoliberal institutions and other oppressive structures. Many of the authors we have read emphasise the importance of fostering diverse networks of support including between university faculty and staff (Goerisch et al., 2019; Puāwai Collective, 2019) and engaging in virtual connections (Hudson et al., 2019). This is something we have experienced with the Great Lakes Feminist Geography Collective that led to our Slow Scholarship article among many other projects (Mountz et al., 2015; Parizeau et al., 2016; Curran et al., 2019). The collective and the relationships that emerge (based on research, peer mentoring, and other forms of community) form an important aspect of what we are thinking of as 'imprint'.

The term "imprint" is meant to move us away from linear metaphors altogether. Our own mentors' ideas have circulated in a variety of ways that might not have been expected. We imagine an imprint of a leaf on a piece of paper (Fig. 1).[3] Here we share several examples, including painting around the leaf, relief prints——painting the leaf and applying it to the paper—and leaf rubbings——transferring the texture of the leaf through a piece of paper. All of these processes entail the application of pressure and some medium (paint, charcoal, pastels) to transfer the impression from one material to another. We created these images as a way to reflect on what we mean by imprint. These images are not exact replications of the original form. Some aspects or veins of the leaf are strong and clear, but others fade out and even disappear in places. The colouration and shading are also varied, based upon the type and direction of pressure applied, the receptivity of the material being imprinted upon, and the strength and differentiation of the image in the original

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[3] We tried our hand at some different methods for creating leaf rubbings along with some of our kids who were home with us due to the shift to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
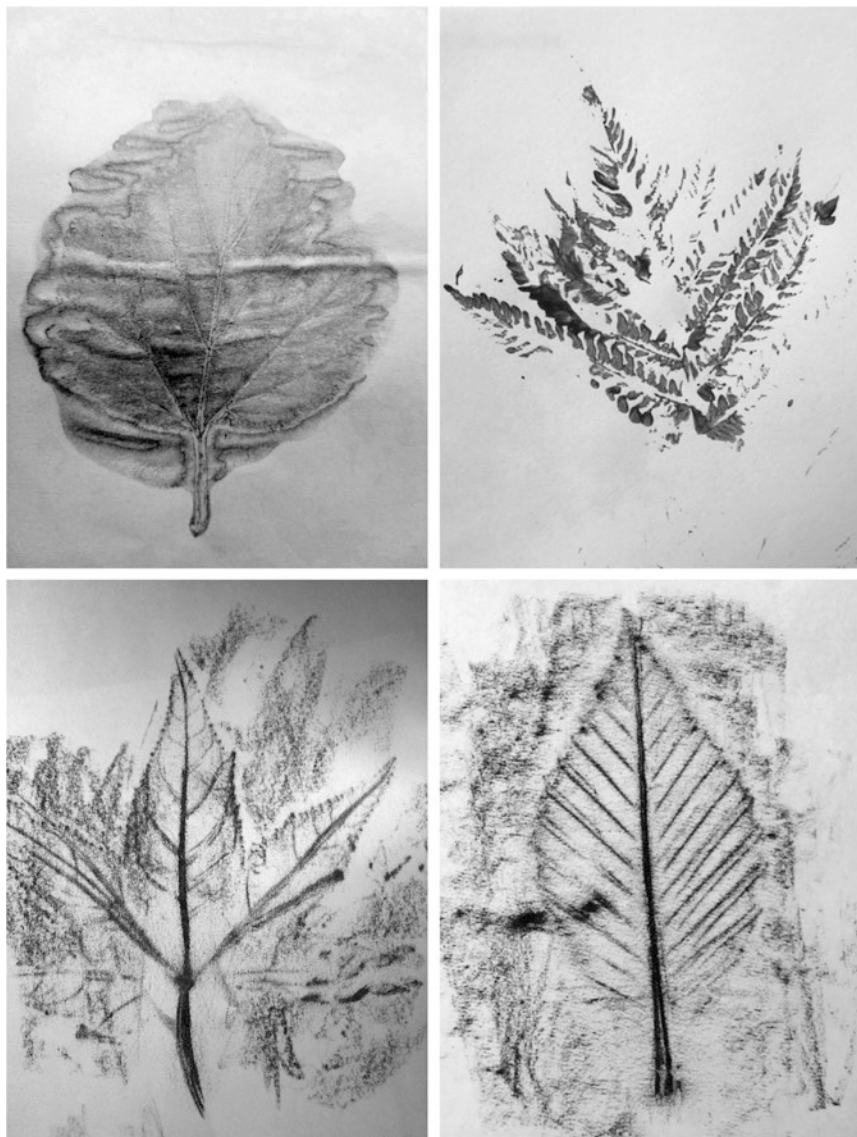
Fig. 1   Leaf imprints as a metaphor for scholarly imprint

material. The process also creates an impression on both participants, in making the imprint paint or charcoal residue is left on our hands; we are changed by the process. The degree of imprint will vary over one's career and with each student and colleague we work with. In some cases the contact is intense and the imprint direct and clear, but in others the connection may allow for a bleeding out or blurring of some aspects of connection, and the imprint that results is quite distinct from another; radically novel and unique productions can potentially be forged through these varying contextual relations.

One of the difficulties of recognising imprint over legacy is that the imprint can leave a far more eclectic trail or variable imprint. Rather than training students to adopt a singular lens or theoretical approach, scholarly impact can also come from imparting an engaged eclecticism (the "soft canon" we discussed earlier), and from developing different types of intellectual collaborations with our students. We can train our students to develop their own unique intellectual foundations, encouraging them to try on different conceptual framings and then to evaluate what they add (or don't) to their understanding of their empirical work, discarding those that don't add much even if they are fashionable. We can model ways of being a scholar by showing them how to engage with (rather than merely reference) work, how to ask interesting and unique questions, how to collaborate, and yes, how to balance work and life so that they maintain the supports they need to thrive personally as well as professionally in roles inside and outside of the academy. The goal is distinctly not to create carbon copies because, as we noted at the beginning of the chapter, we need to make space for new bodies and new knowledge.

In addition to our direct mentoring of students, we can try to impart this sense of curiosity and respect for a broad range of scholarship through our teaching by explaining why we've chosen a particular reading even if we have criticisms of it. It's important to make it clear what conceptual point we want readers to take from it, or what new empirical ground it covers, to instil a new mode of scholarly curiosity and respect that goes beyond citation count. We can also contact scholars (particularly junior scholars) whose work generates important class discussion or is influential to our own research so that they get feedback about their impact beyond traditional metrics and networks. And, we can actively reshape our

teaching and learning to centre community, institutional and political transformation, thereby also transforming how we value and discuss a diverse array of scholarship (Rice et al., 2021).

It's also important to perform these alternate imprints through venues other than publication and teaching, such as conference presentations, panel discussions and workshops. This can add to the possibilities for creating those unexpected circulations of ideas and alternative models of ways of being in the academy.

> *Returning to the American Association of Geographers' conference after a few years away, I noticed a few shifts in practice that seemed to indicate that something different was afoot. First, many of the keynote lectures that previously had featured one well-known scholar giving an hour-long talk had morphed into keynote panels where several scholars had a conversation on a topic. Second, in several sessions I attended, panelists chose to use their allotted time to point audiences towards interesting work in their fields by lesser-known authors (primarily women of colour) with the intention of circulating these ideas and creating more visibility for them. On a digital geography panel, the speakers drew everyone's attention to the work of young, queer and Black geographers instead of talking about their own work. They said that they felt self-conscious about being selected for the panel when others were not. They took the time to spell out names slowly and offer full citations so that we could take notes.*

This felt refreshing considering we see the obsession with and even the attempted manipulation of legacy everywhere. For example, we recently heard about a senior scholar contacting a junior scholar to complain about not finding his name in the index of their book! In many ways it's surprising we haven't heard more of these types of stories. And it's not surprising that the pace of change is slow, that the act of public acknowledgement and naming seemed almost revolutionary——when actually the real change that is needed is for those undervalued and underrepresented scholars to receive the keynote panel invitations!

Despite our commitment to alternative models of the "ideal" scholar and our objection to ossified and narrow versions of the scholarly canon, the reality is that we work in imperfect institutions, so our actions are necessarily contradictory at times. Indeed, the hiring processes for

faculty, tenure and promotion processes, and performance reviews are really all about traditional, masculinist legacy——about showing off the legacy you have had so far and will have (your trajectory, a rising star!). And so, even if we don't value this personally, we have all gone out of our way at times to prove our current and potential legacy using the metrics (e.g. citation counts) that universities and granting agencies value. Moving away from legacy is going to take perseverance and critical questions. It is not that simple to step away from legacy when your whole institutional worth feels built on it——but we want and need to try to add some perspective and offer some balance to accepted processes.

> *I recently had a conversation with a PhD student who will be moving into the job market soon and was seeking advice about the amount of time she was devoting to community activism and non-profit work. This work is directly related to her research and she identifies as a scholar activist, yet she was wrestling with how much time to take away from writing and publishing. I felt it was important to unequivocally support her activism, and yet we also spent a good deal of time strategising article topics and possible journals to submit to because the reality is that publications matter, especially in an increasingly competitive market for tenure-track jobs.*

The struggle to recast ourselves and what we do in the academy through the optics of individualised impact measure is a persistent one. Evans' (2016, p. 219) research on impact and care questions the "impact agenda" as it relates to legacy, but also posits opportunities for imparting a feminist ethics of care. Evans notes how her own research impacts "emerged slowly and incrementally … in an unplanned, serendipitous way", challenging "the neoliberal assumption that a linear model of 'pathways to impact' can be designed from the outset of a large research project".

In other words, research projects can be vehicles for other types of imprint, beyond citation count. Some of this broader impact is already being recognised, and indeed many funding agencies demand that we build it into our projects from the outset, but it is the serendipity and long-term impact that we can't always account for. It's not just about slow scholarship in terms of having the time to do "good" research, but about putting research projects within a broader context and allowing them to

become relational, to meander and weave as we make community connections.

In our own roles on institutional committees, including tenure, promotion and hiring committees, we express support for academics whose careers are not necessarily built on legacy. We speak up for colleagues who have undertaken significant service and community work to the detriment of their research profile. We understand that these individuals have made significant sacrifices to support our institutions and that their community engagement is often an extension of their research. We have found that it is often necessary to explicitly point out the contributions of colleagues that do not fit into the traditional understanding of what a "successful" scholar should do or the usual metrics.

Despite it being difficult to plan or account for, we think we know imprint when we see it. When we attend a retirement celebration for our mentors that focuses on their mentoring, their impacts on all kinds of diverse fields of study and on the institution (e.g. taking unpopular votes, taking on advocacy roles, or administrating for change), we can understand this as imprint. When we see an obituary or attend a memorial session for our colleagues that highlight their influence on the discipline and their department—both in terms of their ideas and in terms of their collegiality, relationship building and so on—we can see that this is imprint. Imprint is about how scholarship is enacted, circulates, attached to that person and their politics and character and then also flows beyond them. Legacy can be measured in citations, in publication numbers, in invited talks and awards. But how can we measure imprint? Or do we want to measure it? Maybe it is better left alone and amorphous?

We suggest a necessary life skill for academics is, wherever possible, to carve out time and space to focus on the work and professional relationships that matter to the imprint we may eventually make. Thinking about imprint as a leaf rubbing is a helpful metaphor for us, because when you are making such an imprint you don't necessarily know how it will look in the end. We see imprint as less controllable and less calculated than legacy. Imprint is far less obvious until there is an occasion to recall it or try to bring it into view. Maybe the best we can do is to aim to "be-in-relation" in ways that produce the imprints we would like celebrated upon our own retirements, rather than the short-term indicators our

institutions are increasingly measuring. It is interesting (and scary!) to think about how you'd want your own imprint described when you retire. What do you think you'd miss? What do you hope others would say about your work? How can we adjust our actions now to work towards imprint and turn away from the canon and legacy?

> *I attended a memorial for a colleague who passed away suddenly. His colleagues and students deeply lamented his loss, noting his important research, but more than this they recalled someone who anonymously paid for departmental lunches, and organised outings for his departmental colleagues and their families. He was remembered for creating a community in the department, and for how he cared about the people he worked with. His traditional, textual scholarly legacy was important, but it was eclipsed by the imprint he had on his students, colleagues, and department peers because he forged community through bonds of support and affection.*
>
> *One of my mentors' lasting imprints was making choices that weren't guided by career ambition in the traditional sense, but by her values and broader purpose of trying to maintain space for marginalised scholars and scholarship. In her case this was enacted by championing and chairing departments (e.g. Women's Studies) that find it harder to maintain their ground in the neoliberal university.*

These choices to create community, to take on administrative roles, to serve as department heads, to create new departments, to serve on search committees, to review tenure files etc. can all lead to a lasting impact on the institution and the types of scholarship and scholars they serve. Making adjustments to boost our capacity for imprint may not be so remote; we may already inhabit such spaces.

> *I attended a professional development session that focused on "peak work experiences" in order to help us home in on what we love about our work. Surprisingly, the peak experiences discussed were not receiving awards or publishing articles but were actually more everyday interactions where we were being-in-relation with others, such as brainstorming a new research project with a colleague, or connecting with a student over a new idea. Moments that felt meaningful were ones where time seemed to slow down and more mindful engagement with ideas and one another were possible.*

These ideas about peak work experiences have been highlighted before (Kern et al., 2014), and we see the focus on making space for the necessary reflexive practice of academic work aligning with our thoughts about imprint and the academic craft (see also O'Neill, 2014; Mountz et al., 2015; Black, 2018; Lemon & McDonough, 2018). We also recognise the need to form collectives, both within and beyond our own institutions, to sustain these commitments, by providing the space to engage with new ideas, the support to enact them in the face of pushback and the power to create broader institutional change. Our own participation in the *Great Lakes Feminist Geography Collective* has been critical to shaping our ideas and scholarly practice, and we are inspired by the many other examples leading geography and other disciplines to change (e.g. the Athena Co-Learning Collective, Black Geographies Specialty Group, Feminist Coven, Puāwai Writing Collective, The Women Who Write).

While we are proposing the concept of imprint as a more expansive and less egotistical version of legacy, we do still think about the direct, current impact of our own research. Doing so can make us sweat and cringe, in particular because we come back to the issue of slow and fast scholarship. But what does this mean now we are living in the digital age? Do we need to be social media mavens and/or train our students to be social media mavens in order to realise these direct scholarly impacts? We hope not, but this new era is also marked by the same power structures that mark the canon debates (Gieseking, 2020). Despite our wariness, we do use Twitter to find new scholarship and, despite our best intentions, we fall into the trap of privileging those who are active on it. The process of ranking is made more blatantly visible in the digital age. Resistance to the psychic damage of evaluation through metrics has become another necessary life skill for academics.

Can we lead by example by imagining what our imprint will be? Can we lead our own lives by prioritising imprint over impact, and can we measure others' work/lives as such? In writing this we acknowledge that there is a danger of romanticising imprint and of framing it as something only accessible to certain groups (e.g. tenured faculty about to retire!). That is not our aim. We emphasise that the system needs to become more humane to allow us to develop a praxis of being-in-relation, and to have this recognised as a way forward for those in the academy, in opposition

to the vexed and exploitative structures some experience today. Especially relevant in the current age is how we might cultivate and recognise imprint with and for scholars in more precarious positions. And so, we're left with questions that we hope will spark continued discussion and action. Must imprint always be converted into the currency of legacy in order to achieve what we know of as success (grants, publications, tenure or a job)? How can we (as adjudicators of these things as well as applicants) turn our attention to imprint in order to better foster it as meaningful in the academy?

Conclusion and a Path Forward

We started this chapter from a point of reflection and recollection. The collective writing of this chapter enhanced our understanding and enactment of what we came to term "imprint" as we learned from one another and reflected together on our careers so far. In our conversations the issue of how we, our colleagues and our mentors made an impression upon us and others became a point of interest. Inspired by retirements and saddened by departures, we engaged with ideas of the canon, legacy and imprint. We considered how the canon is constructed, whose voices are contained within it, and the work of the canon in how we are educated and inculcated into our disciplines. We also thought about the weighty notion of legacy, who has a legacy and why, and what kind of legacy one might create and how. In contrast to the seemingly individualised measures of "a man", we turned our thoughts to the idea of imprint. We see imprint as an active process of influencing and making a meaningful impression on others that is about more than sheer productivity and forceful presence. We thought about how actions create relationships, being-in-relation with others, and the kind of work and engagements that emerge from these practices. We actually see imprint in practice around us when we give ourselves the time and space to appreciate it. The key now is how to allow it to proliferate and become a generative force in places where exhaustion, exploitation and damaging competition have come to reign. In the spirit of forging this path, we want to end our chapter with some reflections that might allow imprint to become praxis.

Being-in-Relation to Other Scholarship

- Think about your scholarly aims (not imposed research and teaching metrics), and how they might affect the work you teach and engage with.
- Rethink the readings you assign in your courses. How are they related to a canon or idea of legacy? Can you engage a more diverse array of people and ideas?
- Reflect on the citations you use in your publications. Whose names are included and why?
- Focus on engaging with texts and not only on referencing them. Make space for more careful reflection and consideration of the text and place it into its context.

Being-in-Relation to Other Scholars

- Learn things about the authors beyond the number of times they are cited.
- Read and evaluate job applications and tenure files with the lens of imprint.
- Raise the profile of scholars who aren't canonised, aren't the most cited, aren't the most followed on social media. Discuss their contributions and what you find important about their work in public (conferences, lectures, etc.) and in publications.
- Contact these scholars to praise their work and explain its influence on you.
- Recommend underrepresented scholars to sit on panels, give lectures or write invited contributions.

Being-in-Relation to Neoliberal Institutions

- Question people who idealise legacy and the canon. Voice these questions to students and colleagues and openly debate how much training one needs in the canon to be "successful".
- Use your privilege to push back on processes that diminish the work of marginalised scholars, call out processes that exploit and undermine some to the benefit of others, and work to actively recruit and retain underrepresented scholars.
- Recognise the necessity of occupying contradictory positions. We need to help students and other scholars survive in neoliberal institutions while also challenging neoliberal practices and modelling alternatives.
- Reflect on what you would want colleagues to say at your own retirement session. What type of imprint do you hope you make?
- Form and join collectives to engage new ideas, find support for alternative ways of being in the academy and create the power to change institutional structures.

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Beyond Shame and Pride:
The University as a Game of Love

Niki Harré

In 1981 I was in my third year at university and required to read Herbert Marcuse's (1964)) book *One-Dimensional Man* for an anthropology course. I still have the book complete with traces of my 20-year-old self; everywhere the title appears I have crossed out "man" and replaced it with "person". Despite my objection to Marcuse's linguistic faux pas, the central thesis of this book wedged inside me and continues to inform how I see social life, now as a 58-year-old academic based in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland. Essentially, Marcuse argues that "advanced industrialised society" has a propensity to absorb critiques, making it extraordinarily difficult to challenge the essential workings of the system itself. If we take this argument seriously, as I do, it suggests that transforming the university requires constant resistance to the system's call to make ourselves comfortable in its arms. It also requires an alternative vision, something sufficiently radical to undermine the competitive logic that underpins modern institutions, and persuasive

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enough to keep us more or less on task. What, then, could be better than love? Love, as Adrienne Rich writes in her poem *Translations*, is "our subject" as women (Rich, 1975, p. 204).

In this chapter I first outline the process by which capitalism absorbs critiques and how this is aided within universities by competitive "finite games" that draw us into an oscillation between pride and shame and encourage us to mistake winning for a more radical challenge to the competition itself. I then discuss the "infinite game" as a metaphor for an alternative playing field in which we occupy a hermeneutics of love. As a would-be infinite player, I follow this with the description of my own attempt to create a university network with love at its centre. I finish by reflecting on what might happen if we tried, or at least pretended it was possible, to stay true to love.

How Capitalism Absorbs Critiques

Here I discuss two of the ways in which capitalism absorbs critiques, which, as we will come to, have particular relevance for universities. First, the absorption happens by offering those who attempt to challenge the system a place within the system, or at least the right to compete for such a place. So, for example, in a book titled *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded* by an activist collective from the USA called INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, one chapter describes how Native Americans are pulled away from their activism when offered jobs delivering social services to those in their community (Hawk, 2007). Another chapter argues that African American activists given donations from private foundations to assist their cause may find themselves helping other African Americans succeed within the system as it stands and no longer challenging the system itself (Allen, 2007). Similarly, as countries pass marriage equality laws those calling for a society that recognises LGBT identities may, as some LGBT activists suggested in an Australian study on the impact of marriage equality, "be content to meander into the suburbs and to live a post-gay existence where a lesbian or gay identity becomes selective, much as an Irish identity may be selective, that is, celebrated on Saint

Patrick's Day, but not thought of much for the rest of the year" (Bernstein et al., 2018, p. 50).

And we all know that feminists are encouraged to frame critiques in terms of "equity", such that progress is measured by the number of women in powerful positions or the money we earn. When the news hit in May 2016 that the number of women CEOs in the 50 largest companies in Aotearoa New Zealand, had reached zero, this was described as "gobsmacking" by Theresa Gutting, a woman who had previously been a CEO of one of these companies (Quinn, 2016). As far as I could tell no one, except me in a blog I wrote at the time, was publicly suggesting that maybe it was *good* news that women weren't playing with the big boys (Harré, 2016). Think about it for a minute: if large companies drive a system that causes untold human suffering and profound damage to the natural environment, *and* we found that women were right alongside men in leading the charge, then where would we be? Stuck up the capitalist creek without much of a paddle, I'd say.

Second, the system absorbs critiques by ignoring those who refuse to play along (see Duckett et al., 2013; Merton, 1965/1979). The INCITE! collective cited earlier decided not to apply for funding because of the limitations it would impose on their practice. Sadly, however, the collective collapsed, which may have been partly due to its unwillingness to seek money in a system that gives money enormous power. More subtly, but just as importantly, those who draw attention to alternatives are often drowned out by the accolades, prizes and appointments given to those who conform (see Carse, 1986; Harré, 2018; Harré, Grant, et al., 2017a). Protesters whose causes are considered settled, say Kate Sheppard or Nelson Mandela, are woven into our cultural narratives, but those beavering away at current problems are rarely as visible as successful conformists. This ignoring may be demoralising for activists and make their work look unappetising to those who glance their way.

The bottom line is that, without missing a beat, capitalism can provide jobs, donations, homes in the suburbs and leadership roles to *some* people who were previously excluded by their gender, ethnicity or sexuality. Capitalism really doesn't care who occupies the prime spots. But what stays stubbornly in place is the assumption that there will be winners and losers. And universities, for all our family-friendly policies and "zero

tolerance for discrimination" posters (as if discrimination is as easy to spot as a joint in a teenager's school bag), are deft perpetuators of the competitive logic that underpins this assumption. It is important, I think, for us as people who desire a kinder and more collaborative academy to notice the atmosphere of win/lose that undermines our radical potential. To make the transformation I am advocating here, we need to recognise, and be wary of, our desire to be counted as winners.

Shame and Pride in Finite Games

At a structural level, and as Barbara Grant, Kirsten Locke, Sean Sturm (2017a) and I have discussed previously, the university channels both staff and students towards finite games. Finite games are available only to select players, have rules that must be maintained for the duration of the game and end when one or more winners are declared. In a conservative system they are then replaced with another iteration of the same game. Finite games require focus, as players who meander off will be overtaken or fail to meet the criteria within the timeframe allowed, and will thus lose. Among the finite games offered to academic staff at universities are the "research funding game", the "publication game", the "citation game", the "student evaluations" game, the "attracting the best and brightest students" game and, most exquisitely personal and divisive of all, the "appointment and promotion" game.

   Now if we were able to float above these games and see them as mere institutional devices, we would be able to go about our transformational work with clear heads. We would still need to play along, writing publications, teaching students and so on, but we would do so in full awareness of what we are doing and why. We would have a keen eye for the useful and worthwhile aspects of these games, discard those aspects we know to be damaging or distracting, and infuse our play with what we know truly matters. Alas, however, as noted by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, "one has certain foolish vanities" (Woolf, 1929/1977, p. 32). As Woolf elaborates further, our actions are easily distorted by the "red light of emotion" (p. 33) that accompanies oppressive conditions and makes resistance not just difficult, but "twisted and deformed" (p. 49). Expecting

us to clear our heads is like asking us to pull ourselves up with our boot straps. Those infuriating finite games get *in*. They become the air we breathe, the lenses we see through, the emotional dance that drives us forward.

Still, a girl's got to try. And in keeping with the spirit of all movements that seek liberation from that which constrains our ability to be ourselves and connect with others, it is useful to try and name what holds us back. Perhaps then, in the glorious rush of relief that comes when we have a new hook on which to hang our woes, we may be inspired to say *to hell with it, I am going to be kind and collaborative and they can take their finite games and swallow them whole*.

So here is the hook. Essentially, I suggest that the academy's finite games entice us to make moves and invest ourselves in outcomes such that we oscillate between pride and shame. While to some extent all finite games deal in these and other self-focused emotions, universities have them down pat.

Pride is experienced as a positive emotion that creates a sense of confidence in ourselves and, as outlined by the psychologist Barbara Fredrickson, "broadens by creating the urge to share news of the achievement with others and to envisage even greater achievements in the future" (Fredrickson, 2001, p. 220). Pride, in a university context, is assumed to be good—plain and simple—as it empowers us to get on with the job. At my university, for example, there are regular email updates to staff that almost always contain news of academics who have won a high-status finite game. As anyone who works in a university will anticipate, these are usually research-related successes, although major teaching awards and appointments to senior managerial roles also qualify. The tone suggests the winners are unequivocally deserving, and so in the very unlikely case (for most of us) that we are one of them, pride is the appropriate response. This push towards pride is assisted by the collective wins that are included in the updates: *our* success in attracting students, *our* rise in this or that international ranking, the philanthropic funding that has come *our* way. Clearly, if the university speaks of its own success without humility or (usually) acknowledgement that the counterbalance to our wins are another's losses, then individual winners should follow suit.

And so staff play the pride card. Winners receive brief emails saying, "congrats!", "go you!", "well deserved!" and so on, and are expected to reply, "thanks!" My own rule in response to another's win is to fire off such an email immediately. If I feel a welling of genuine delight for their success, I attempt to show that I understand and appreciate this *particular* achievement by *them*. I draw the line at "reply all" emails that create a superficial cheeriness, as if a colleague's win is like free ice cream for us all, when it may well be experienced as a humiliating blow for some. Winners mean losers. That's the nature of finite games.

This brings us to shame. In her book *Blush: The Faces of Shame*, Elspeth Probyn describes shame as the "terror of not being equal to the interest of [one's] subject" (Probyn, 2005, p. 130). There is, she suggests, a lack of completion to shame, as if something has been overlooked or left unfinished, a duty abandoned at the crucial moment. At its peak, shame renders our body clumsy, oversized, an affront to all that is decent and good. When she lost the 2016 presidential election to Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton said there were times when she wanted to "never leave the house again" (see Harré, 2017). She had admitted her interest, put herself forward and been revealed as unequal to the task. What could she possibly do or say in response to the resounding "no" from her peers? Could she now underplay her interest as if she was just in it for a lark? Should she admit that her campaign was mistaken—despite her assertions, she was not, in fact, the right person for the job? Or should she turn against those she had been wooing and point out their terrible mistake? Clinton's bind is one we all encounter when we enter finite games that involve constructing a version of ourselves and laying it before an audience for judgement. We must construct an argument that asserts our worthiness as if we *already know* that the only reasonable response to our request is "yes". Simultaneously, if we are rejected, we are supposed to do an instantaneous about-turn, as if our defeat is now, and *always was*, the only sensible outcome. Hidden, then, in the need to silence both the doubts of our worthiness and the shock we feel when our offering is rejected is shame's siren. Why, oh why, did we try? At least, if we'd kept out of it, no one would know it matters to us.

Most of the finite games offered to academics are of this nature. First there is the nauseating manoeuvre of talking up one's worthiness for

funding, promotion, or at a slightly greater remove, the worthiness of one's research for publication. Re-reads of your stack of evidence show, thank goodness, that you *do* know a thing or two and you may allow the occasional delicious daydream about the winning moment. This dance with pride is, however, undermined by the lurking suspicion that you are weaving an elaborate lie which the judgement committee will instantly detect. *Maybe* you'll get away with it. After all, you are part of a long line of lie-weavers, many of whom were funded/promoted/published. So why not? *It's worth a go.* Words tossed about so easily, as if *giving it a go* in an academic context is a doddle that takes no time and bears no consequence. For more on this, see Barbara Grant's wonderfully nuanced and personal account of the academic promotion game. It details her "sticky fragments of longing to attain the highest academic position" and the shame she anticipates if she gets "the slap" (Grant, 2018, p. 132). It also provides an account of her academic "careening" (p. 131) that is in refreshing contrast to the usual self-aggrandising portfolios academics are encouraged to construct. A second subversive play, this time done in company, can be found in an article on slow scholarship by Alison Mountz and others where they outline an academic group's "day-long retreat" in which they "workshopped" each other's portfolios while the "food, wine and music" flowed (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1243).

But back to that self-aggrandising portfolio you have created and now submitted. After a suitable delay, allowing some recovery time in which you get on with real work, you win or you lose. If it is a victory, for a time—a day, a week, a month—you may have the airy feeling of being noticed. You are handed, and step into, the easy pride of winners who can move forward in their work, confident in their voice. Temporarily, you are, to cite Virginia Woolf again, as pure as Shakespeare.

> All desire to protest, to preach, to proclaim an injury to pay off a score, to make the world the witness of some hardship or grievance was fired out of him and consumed. Therefore his poetry flows out of him, unimpeded. (p. 55)

Defeats in most cases are a dismal little secret known only to you, the peers that judged you and those who helped build your, now clearly

absurd, case. So, unlike Clinton, there is no need to physically hide. Your shame can be tucked away, further twisting and deforming you perhaps, but not subject to public scrutiny.

If this was a one-sided and personal matter in which only the shame side of the equation mattered and helping you see through the dark and dreadful fog it creates was the appropriate response, I could direct you to a shame-survival coach such as Brené Brown, or my favourite self-help book *Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway* (seriously, I love that book—read it; Jeffers, 1987). Reading Brown or Jeffers would likely reassure you that we've all been there sister, and you are not the toerag you feel you are. Brush yourself off, take a deep breath and have another go. But this isn't one sided. Pride is also a problem, luring us into an "intensely individualising and calculating" affective cycle that tends to distract us from collective opposition (Grant & Elizabeth, 2014, p. 297). I can, we are tempted to think, use the master's tools to dismantle his house. But what if, as Audre Lorde implied, the master's tools *are* the master's house? What if our successful application of them offers only "a vulnerable and temporary armistice" (Lorde, 1984/1996, p. 159) that further separates us from each other?

Let's go further: what if even those victories that are claimed in the university's equity measures—more women professors, better retention of indigenous students, special funds to assist parents returning from leave get their research back on track and so on—serve to entrench the logic of competition and the finite games it has generated? Marcuse (1964) claimed that this is exactly what capitalism does; it makes room for people from marginalised groups to "succeed" and so dissipates the challenge they pose to capitalism itself. Universities, I think, function similarly. Even my experience of writing the first sentence of this paragraph provides a mini-example. It connects me to the anger and jealousy I've felt when women leapt ahead of me in the promotion game, because in part, of their contribution to these victories or the way in which they have "taken advantage" of their/our new entitlements. I feel disloyal and ungrateful, as if I should "support" the work of my colleagues to achieve these "breakthroughs". I am tempted, when the opportunity arises, to subtly undermine their efforts. (*Hang on… am I doing that right now? Should I cut this paragraph? Does it simply reveal the deformity Woolf*

described?) Mostly I am silent and hold my grudge close. I feel that speaking of my real response would simply reveal me to be a bad loser and a useless ally. And so, the challenge we as women might have posed if we questioned the fact of being ranked in relation to each other, instead of helping (some) women to rise in those ranks, is lost.

Stepping Away

Stepping away from the competitive finite games of the university requires, I suspect, a way to both live in shame and pride and transcend them. There is a scene in the BBC series *The Honourable Woman*, in which the Israeli businesswoman at the centre of the series is face to face with the Palestinian leader of a terrorist group. Both have suffered enormous harm at the hands of the other's people. In her case, the most personal of these harms were ordered by the man before her. He describes the injustices he has suffered with self-righteous fury. He then asks her why she does not pick up the knife on the table between them and kill him. She replies that whenever she experiences yet another loss or humiliation she thinks, "I deserve it."

This confession to a shame so complete that it freezes all other possibilities is shocking (send this woman the link to Brené Brown's TED talk immediately!). But it also serves to break the cycle of retaliation. It is as if she chooses to own whatever humiliating memories lie at the centre of her shame and carry them as her offering to the world. A real-life example now. When, on March 15, 2019, a gunman attacked those worshipping at two mosques in Christchurch killing 51 people, our Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, responded with an extraordinary combination of calm, sadness and warmth. Her words may not have been perfect, but her lack of defensiveness or counter-aggression instantly conveyed that this event should not be read as a threat to our image but as harm-beyond-words to those who had lost their lives and the people who love them. Her reaction seemed to open a sacred space that, along with the heart-breaking graciousness of Muslim elders, held New Zealand safe during that delicate time.

Finally, a small example from my life as an academic. In 2018 my book *The Infinite Game* was published by Auckland University Press. The publisher took it to international book fairs but did not get an overseas contract. I sometimes wonder if part of the reason it did not sell is because it is a sweeping, philosophical book written by a New Zealand woman. While it is widely accepted that New Zealand women can write damn good books about our country and intimate topics such as growing-up-a-girl (think Janet Frame, Keri Hulme or Eleanor Catton), it is, I suspect, difficult for a publisher based in the US or the UK to even orient themselves to a generic book by such an author. I fully accept that my book may have simply not worked for them on its own terms, but the point here is, when I consider that my identity may have contributed to my work being overlooked, I really don't care. Quite frankly, I think it is too much to ask publishers to sift through all the material they get with a neutral eye—and the same applies to journal editors and granting committees. As long as there is a competition there will be winners and losers and the criteria will never, and can never, be "fair". I said what I needed to say, and thank the Lord, the book was published.

What unites these three examples, so vastly different in courage and consequence, is that we all stepped away from the finite game at hand. The Israeli woman did not kill the man who had terrorised her, Jacinda Ardern did not position herself as a leader determined to stamp out mass violence, and I did not feel my failure to score an overseas publisher as an injustice. Going beyond shame and pride is not to cease to feel them, but it is to recognise that they may distract us from what we most care about—including the kind and collaborative university.

One last thing before we move on—it is important to understand that when you do step away from the finite games of the academy, it will probably ignore you. This is not malicious, so much as an inability to see moves that do not fit within the rules provided—a feature inherent to finite games. I've written before about how when I self-published *Psychology for a Better World* in 2011, a book that I consider my most important research contribution to that time, some of those responsible for assessing my work did not know what to think of it (Harré, 2019). It wasn't properly peer reviewed or published by a "reputable" publishing house, and it didn't result in policy change that could be attributed to me.

None of the markers of its influence—downloads of the PDF, views of the related video, invitations to give talks and workshops, emails from people telling me it had changed their practice—resulted in any kind of public acknowledgement by my department that I'd done something pretty cool. The lesson here: your resistance will rarely result in the brownie points you might feel it deserves.

I didn't say it was going to be easy.

The Infinite Game of the University

Once we recognise the oscillation of win/lose that drives so much of university life and the pride/shame that accompanies it, we may be, just *slightly*, better able to keep it in its place. We may then draw closer to an infinite game and the hermeneutics of love that it proposes.

While finite games select players, provide rules and create winners and losers, the infinite game is open to all, revises the rules as needed and has no boundaries (Carse, 1986; Harré, 2018). It is both infinitely small and big, and as long as we don't destroy the ecosystems on which humanity depends, it keeps going. The infinite game cannot be won or lost. In dozens of infinite game research workshops, I have asked participants what they consider of infinite value—that which is sacred, special or precious and makes the world truly alive (Harré, Madden, et al., 2017b). The "stuff", if you like, of the infinite game. Participants say many different things—words eluding to cooperation, fun, laughter, creativity, survival, compassion, beauty, integrity, spirituality, artistic expression, play and the natural world. But the most common offering is "love".

Why do people reach for love, and what do they mean by love? Well, in this context at least, they rarely seem to mean romantic love or even, necessarily, love between people. Often, when we discuss the values offered, those who spoke of love say they mean something boundless and all encompassing. Love in this sense is profound interconnection, a warmth that, while it lasts, generates goodwill towards all life forms and their struggle to be.

A hermeneutics of love, then, is to attempt to hold goodwill towards others as we go about our lives (Robbins, 2016; Selig, 2016). As befits a

game, it does not require us to claim that others *deserve* goodwill, let alone that goodwill is the *right* response. It is simply an interpretation, a decision to act "as if" love flows between us. Performing love in this way, as Jennifer Leigh Selig has discussed, "[puts] love into action for the healing and transformation of the culture" (p. 241).

Importantly, a hermeneutics of love as I mean it here is very different from an us/them game in which we, as women, are positioned as oppressed by men. (Or, for that matter, any game that reifies social groups and classifies members, regardless of their actions and circumstances, as the oppressors or the oppressed.) This is a hermeneutics of suspicion (Robbins, 2016). It encourages us to approach people as categories, and while on the surface it appears radical and may indeed hold some truth, it plays into the competitive logic I am trying to challenge here. That is, a hermeneutics of suspicion claims that meaningful social action happens when we (a) recognise hierarchical divisions between clusters of people and (b) attempt to claim "power" or "justice" for those at the bottom of the hierarchy. A hermeneutics of love, in contrast, does its best to pull the rug from underneath the whole competitive caboodle. It says that the world is best viewed as a place in which all life matters and should be treated with the utmost care. It is a parallel play that offers an alternative to the drama of finite games.

How I've Tried to Play the University in Love

The Belgian philosopher Isabelle Stengers has said that "the question power people always ask so-called intellectuals [is] 'What would you do if you were in our place?'" Her reply is:

> I am not in our place! And that is not by chance. A society where I would occupy any kind of power position and still think and feel as I do would be a completely different society, with different problems and different ways to solve them. (Zournazi, 2002, p. 268)

I know exactly what she means. From what I can see, most managerial positions at universities involve helping colleagues progress their "careers"

and ranking them against each other. I dread these roles and try to avoid them (see also Grant, 2018 for her views on career mentoring). In other words, I am not sure how I could "be me" *and* be a university manager. However, I am interested in the university and deeply respect what I see as our mandate—to build learning communities that allow us to reflect on ourselves, the natural environment and how to live well together. I also have a strong sense of duty: as a "senior" academic I *should* contribute to how our institution operates. For several years, I took on teaching-related service roles. Tucked under the university's less prestigious wing with considerable scope for collaborative creativity, they suited me well.

More recently I worked with the dean of my faculty (Science) to create an environmental sustainability leadership role, which I then filled from 2015 to 2018. My first move was to create a Sustainability Network by visiting each department and inviting professional and academic staff to join. As best I could, I tried to make it a site of deep care, a *kaupapa* (purpose/philosophy) that was quickly embraced and enhanced by the community that grew up around it. It is, I like to think, a modest vision of possibility for the university as a game of love. Below are some of its features (for more on our projects, see Faculty of Science Sustainability Network, n.d.).

1. People select to be part of the network. It is then, inclusive and open, and a break from the application/acceptance-or-rejection process that underpins most university committees. When we meet, people wear name badges that show only their first name.
2. Meetings are held over a provided vegetarian/vegan lunch. They solve a problem for those who come along—today I don't need to bring food to work or buy my own. Someone has cared for me in this simple way. When we eat together we are also reminded of what we share.
3. The meeting begins with a blessing that acknowledges the planet on which we all depend, the food before us, the people in the room and those we support and are supported by. This is followed by a short silence to allow us to reflect on whatever we wish.
4. People form and choose projects that suit them and their role at the university. We do not have shared goals, but rather a shared *kaupapa/*

purpose. No one is expected to tow the party line or participate in actions that don't feel quite right to them.

5. While I led the network, all active members received a thank you letter outlining their contribution. Apart from me wanting to show my gratitude for what they had done, the letter was intended as a tangible sign that they had been noticed. It could be attached to their performance review, providing, I hoped, a moment's relief from the exhausting task of having to talk up one's own achievements.

6. We resist creating competitions that might separate us from each other or anyone else trying to forward sustainability. There are no faculty sustainability prizes or design competitions, even though these have been suggested.

In all this, we focus outwards. We look after *each other* (not *ourselves*) and constantly return to the big picture which for us is environmental flourishing and thriving communities. In doing this, I think we step out of the self-absorbed clutches of pride and shame and return to love, the subject that as women, but often as men too, we know is *ours* to fuss over, plan for, rise to and stick with. It is frustrating of course—we fail in various ways and must work around institutional structures to get things done. But there is a quality to our group, a *kin*dness, a *kin*-ness, a sense that our bonds are more fundamental than those created by the brittle comradery of a collective finite game.

Staying True to Love

Every so often we have the opportunity to create and enter sites within universities that are characterised by love. At one level in fact, the infinite game is always there disrupting the competitive logic that appears to drive university life. Reach in or out and you can feel it—the urge to connect, to rise above one's self, to make a contribution that matters. Our Sustainability Network is a relatively formal example; Alison Black, Gail Crimmins and Janice Jones give a less formal one of a "group of like-minded women" who are "pushing back against invisibility, shame and

metrics to welcome conversation, collaboration, mentoring, and community building" (Black et al., 2017) at their universities in Australia.

Drawing attention to these sites characterised by love is, I think, part of the game. At the same time, I worry that if we try too hard to demonstrate their importance by subjecting them to rigorous analysis or turning them into standardised procedures and goals, they will shy away. Love is, by its very nature, elusive and ephemeral, something that cannot be demanded of us. It is a *practice* not a declaration and is *transmitted* rather than taught. We can never even be sure if, when we speak of love to each other, we are talking of the same thing. But it's a challenge we can set ourselves, a game we can play. And I think, when we try and move away from pride and shame and towards love and other infinite values—including kindness and community—we resist in a way that is truly radical, even if it only lasts a moment.

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Afterword

This book is a compilation of love and hope for the academy. Envisioning wholeness, kindness, integrity and possibility, our autoethnographic research focused on resistance, reimagining, regeneration and renewal holds revolutionary power.

In the preface we shared with you our early thoughts and feelings about what transformative *shiFt in* the academy might involve. We invited you to reimagine with us, to reflect on the symbolic nature of *shiFt* for you, for your relationships, your research and your workplace. We invited you to listen care-fully to yourself and your own longings, to think about your own lived experiences, the lived experiences of your colleagues'.

We asked you questions: How might you elevate, amplify and make space for your voice, and the voices of all women, in the academy? How might you use research methodologies in deliberate, activist and celebratory ways to unearth and raise individual and collective voices and stories? How might you change your work situations and workplaces to support an ethics of care and caring and infuse your research and scholarly contributions with imagination, hope and inclusion?

Our chapter authors have explored the ways they are *shiFting* the academy, holding space for story, struggle and possibility; building caring communities and enacting ethics of care; and renewing and reimagining the academy. What has resonated for you? What transformative *shiFts* have they inspired you to consider and create?

We have left space below for you to add your own meaningful phrases—intentions, visions, feelings and experiences—that capture *your* reimagining of the academy.

ShiFt

1. a new beginning
2. to create, to transform, to transport, to delight
3. to take care of oneself and others, to flourish, and engage in slow scholarship
4. promoting ideas, sharing stories, finding connection, collaboration and friendship
5. creating meaning together, supporting and celebrating each other, lifting each other up
6. like [the pleasure of wearing] a loose-fitting garment—finding liberating and enabling ways to wear an academic life
7. activating personal and professional alchemy, kindness, movement and change in the academy
8.
9.
10.
11.
12.
13.
14.
15.

A Call to Hope, a Call to Action

In our introductory chapter, we included a series of 'highlighter poems'—lines and threads from the scholarly work and conceptual and methodological offerings of others that had 'sparked something' in us and helped us believe in the possibilities of reimagining the academy. We are indebted to those who have gone before, for those who have resisted neoliberal academe and offered thinking and resources that can teach and nourish us.

We are also grateful for those who are currently walking beside us, accompanying us, creating and dreaming and exploring possibilities; supporting and mentoring; documenting, subverting and rewriting the rules of the academy's finite games. You help us stay focused on playing the infinite game, to stay focused on what really matters. Your companionship sustains us. We extend a heartfelt 'thank you' to our chapter authors, for their labour, care and wisdom—it has enriched us and our work.

Susan Walsh and Barbara Bickel (see this volume) describe their writing as a 'receptacle of threads spun in collaborative ways'. We like very much this idea of tenderly stitching together glimpses of contemplative and lived inquiry. And so, as we leave you dear reader to consider how you will make kind, connected and caring *shiFt* happen, we have poetically stitched into an aesthetic collage some glimpses of the stories, ideas and insights that our chapter authors have expressed and explored. We trust it will strengthen and connect you to our collective capacity to reimagine the future and be the change we are waiting for.

Reimagining the academy

How do we move the academy
closer
to the one we want?
We are reading
imagining
dreaming
exploring.
Hopefulness arises
with philosophical 'sparks',

illuminating our lives and stories,
living in relation.

shiFt

We are not afraid
of the *F*-word.
We seek to reclaim
care,
the very being of human life.
Ethical ways of being call to us.
We want to play
the
infinite
game.

shiFt

With our aesthetic
slow
writing
and
creating
we can see that
things are shiftable.
We can make *shiFt* happen.

shiFt

Our caring research is
shiFting us towards something
kinder,
more expansive,
offering alternatives
providing connection
nourishment
integrity
a new beginning…

We are holding space for story, struggle and possibility

engaging
gently
in mutually beneficial
constructive
conversations.
Places/spaces
of movement
listening
liberation
for us all.

shiFt

Can you acknowledge
Can you acknowledge
the double labour
double labour
associated with being Black
and in the academy?
Can you acknowledge
Can you acknowledge
the feelings
feeling voiceless
feeling passive
feeling invisible
feeling inarticulate.
A climate.
of unequal.
power relations.

shiFt

Get in touch with your conscious self, keep dreaming, ground yourself
in your values.
My roots have grounded me for today and tomorrow's trials.

My academic life, and my life in general has been values driven.
Discover your inner powers.

shiFt

This work is
fraught, delightful,
anxiety producing, celebratory,
demanding.
The university is a bastion of colonisation—white,
patriarchal and heteronormative.
De-colonisation feels as forever becoming.
Let us pass beyond
these old shapings.
We hope.

shiFt

Have you made a huge sacrifice?
Silenced your voice?
Do you feel like you are losing your soul?
We do the work we think we are expected to do
instead of
pursuing the work
we want to do.
We speak in ways that don't feel authentic
to who we are
or how we feel
or how we envision repairing the world.
But it doesn't have to be this way!

shiFt

We must do the work
that is meaningful
to us.
We must do the work

that makes
us happy
and fulfilled
that balances
self-knowledge
with
knowledge of others.

shiFt

This requires pushing
at boundaries
overturning paradigms
enduring criticism
but it is worth it
to produce work
that is evocative
and memorable, and multidimensional, and lasting.
We will have to struggle not to allow ignorance, greed and
cold-heartedness
to become entrenched among us.
We must hope.

shiFt

More than ever, we need to find our voices
and hold on to our souls.
In this sacred
moment
of global fragility
Every.
Moment.
Counts.
Let us do the work we care about.

shiFt

Building caring communities and enacting an ethics of care
The concept of trust seems to be central.
There are two kinds of games.
Which kind are you playing?
Finite games
so common among universities
and capitalist cultures
where the purpose is to produce
produce
produce
produce.
Where the purpose is to compete
and win.
The rules are misaligned and harmful
they pull us apart from ourselves and others.
A distraction from what really matters.

shiFt

We want to play the infinite game.
It symbolises our potential
as people who might listen deeply
to one another,
observe and think carefully
about life, work, growth,
and find ways to flourish together.
We are valuing alternative ways of working
together
being together
thinking together
allowing
heartfelt questions
slow-moving conversations
and
cultivating space
and

time
to collectively reflect on the nature of our academic work
and its impact
on our lived lives.
Caring research
Research as friendship
Belonging
Being
Becoming
together.

shiFt

We have chosen to write in a narrative style,
exploring questions
that have a persistent impact
on who we are
and how we perform our 'selves' as women
in time-poor
intensified
academic work-places.
Our load lightens when it is shared.
Storytelling
Talanoa
Deep relationship
Connecting.
Mutual understanding and a recognition
of common struggles
lessens our loneliness.
In the safety of this group of women we are able
to share our concerns.
We slow
down
appreciate
the present moment
feel

our emotions
acknowledge
our bodies.
We write with and through the body
We write ourselves.
Putting ourselves into the text.
Timeless time
Space
to broach the unspoken and silenced.
Renewal comes.
We feel powerful
when we relate.
Relating becomes an act of power.

shiFt

> Fleeting glimpses of emotional labour
> Writing is our method of discovery
> travelling back over our herstories
> the 'good girl' emerges
> generous in her care for others
> her own needs unconsidered.
> Internalised constructs of what it is to care,
> external constructs too
> Who cares anyway?
> Pedagogies of care where Good girls listen and labour
> Good girls are nice
> Good girls are obedient

shiFt

> Care for self?
> Ill-defined workloads
> there will never be a day when the to-do list is done.
> Gendered discrepancies
> smile work

difficult to quantify
care work is work
invisibilised
feminised
socialised
unrecognised

shiFt

Recalibrating!
Rewriting the rules!
Slow scholarship,
a feminist ethics of care
academic friendship
our guide
Good girls listen to their own instincts
Good girls are nice to themselves
Good girls respect their own authority

shiFt

No matter how hard we plan
we cannot predict where our lives will take us.
Have you ever felt the struggle?
Life being different from how you imagined?
Like thinking you were boarding a plane destined for Italy
but finding yourself arriving in Holland instead?
This is what it feels like to have a child with a disability.
Welcome to Holland.

shiFt

Two Melissas, each seeing her story reflected in the other's
Parallel journeys
Intersecting autoethnographies
Journeying

Documenting
A transformative narrative
Milestone tracking
of richer lives
for Holland is a truly beautiful place

shiFt

Work and life overlap and inform each other.
Where does disability fit within academia?
Now we have arrived in Holland.
Yes, it's a beautiful place, but there is much work to do.
We don't shy away from struggle, but truly, it shouldn't have to be
this hard.

shiFt

Academia can be a place of compassion and support when I write in the
mountains among the rainforest sounds, claiming time for slow
scholarship,
when I find myself enjoying our conversations
about our lives and our research possibilities.
But we can't put a comforting conversation with a colleague on
our resumes
and can't claim this as evidence in our performance reviews.
But we wonder.
What if
What if we placed human relationships over grant funding
and metrics?
What if
we counted connection
collegiality
compassion
as more valuable than our citations?
What is education for, if not for life affirming
joyous

<div align="right">
meaningful
collaborative
celebratory work?
</div>

shiFt

We seek to reflect on self-care
on how we have engaged creatively together
in ways that support our health and wellbeing.
Collaboration, listening and care
the sharing of our lived experience
creating a kinder academy.
We use arts-based practices
storying
poetry
collaborative art-making
to map our journey in the academy
to map our friendship over years
our supporting each other through many challenges.

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shiFt
</div>

We have sat together, listening to each other's stories, bearing witness
responding
and holding space
Embodied living inquiry
involving art and writing where the space for creating is in a constant
state
of
becoming.
A sense of belonging
safe and loved places we have created
together
following our passions so they filter
into
our
everyday

work.
We find ourselves, our research
emerging into the world.

shiFt

Education
an encounter between interconnected
fragile
complex humans.
The pedagogical work of being
a teacher
always entangled with care.
Complex
difficult work
pushing back against the neoliberal cascade of
regulation, accreditation, and performativity.
Performance has no room for caring.
We focus on slowing down
we want care-full work
deep learning
deep thinking.

shiFt

A relational ontology
Slow pedagogy
An ethics of care.
An ethics of care begins with relationships.
Beginning with relationships requires a broadening of thinking
A broadening of thinking about care
to include politics, struggles, power, judgement, control.
Important thinking for the field of teacher education.
Important thinking for democratic citizenship.
Finding ways to express the importance of care in our work
in all its complexity

and specificity
is vital
in our current environment.
We must be care-full.

shiFt

The university has so many games
it is like we are competing in an Academic Olympics!
Playing the infinite game takes activism
commitment
creating collaborations
mentoring
supporting one another
affirming each other's work
sharing our stories
taking up testimonio and witnessing our multiple lived realities
across different countries
different universities.

shiFt

Communities of care
creating them with each other
with our students
What is the impact of care?
Care embedded in pedagogy
in curriculum
A guiding feminist ethic
What space does care occupy?
Structural and systemic conditions breed
burnout, stress, risk—
an isolating
psychic
and
physical

toll.
Care work is work.
Care work is valuable work.
Seeking out spaces
and time
to care
so *all* people
can thrive
and flourish.

shiFt

Nurturing conversations
identities
histories
compassionate relational spaces
deeply ethical caring connections.
Care and leadership
keeping sight of each other
listening with deep attentiveness
and with the name of hope.

shiFt

We come together to raise problems of universities today
and to pursue change.
Neoliberalism's assaults are many:
ongoing corporatisation, funding slashes, workforce reductions,
workload increases, endemic staff casualisation, dismantling of student
unions, and research evaluation protocols that privilege quantifiable
products and outputs
over caring processes
over intangible modes of value.
Our academic labour is not amenable to measurement.
We witness academia's problems
and we imagine things otherwise.

shiFt

> We are creating spaces
> where academics
> from multiple backgrounds
> can connect
> share
> collaborate
> and reimagine
> a kinder academy

shiFt

> We will not overlook social justice and exclusion.
> Community-centred initiatives
> collegial knowledge-sharing
> our intuitions
> lived experiences
> they guide us.
> We play with metaphors, game-themed prompts.
> We write to rewrite.
> Poems
> Stories.
> Writing collaboratively
> we learn we are not alone.

shiFt

ShiFting*, renewing and reimagining the academy
Let's generate and enact
Slow
Tiny
Acts of
Resistance—STARs—✰✰✰
in the company of others.
Playfully

creatively
exploring lives and work
Together.

<div align="right">*shiFt*</div>

A drama improv game anyone?
Let us work together
produce something cohesive
and meaningful
I don't want to score points
or knock you out of the game.
I want to work together to reflect and rebuild
and to share our current grapplings with playing the game of life.
Feelings of aloneness
and on-my-own-ness
are all too familiar
in my academic life.
Your kind responding evokes strong emotions, brings tears
brings courage
brings action
brings energy.

<div align="right">*shiFt*</div>

Fast forward.
Fears and insecurities about our future existence are catalysts for shaking
us out of compliance mentality.
Let us hold our fears
our stories
gently
kindly.
Life is too precious to waste.
Life is too precious.
Let us do what feeds us
Let us care about each other

our students
our communities
our planet.

shiFt

We open up
give ourselves permission
to write in more aesthetic form.
To do slow work.
Good scholarship requires time—to think, to fail, to rework.
Finding a more organic
rhythm of writing.
writing
on
with
through
in
aspects
of
nature
and
place.
Slowing down.
Slow writing and
joyful
productive
responsive scholarship.
Care-full research.

shiFt

Being with, recognising, honouring
the affective body in the academy.
Poetry expressing everyday life
Poetic inquiry.

Exploring, expressing
the 'feel'
the ambiguity
nuance
tension
in ways that other research tools cannot.
Contemplative images
Flashes of insight
Attuning to the world.
Imagination
Art
Writing.

shiFt

A receptacle of threads
spun in collaborative ways
with tenderness and compassion,
porous relational spaces
where we can breathe.
Wit(h)nessing processes
Wit(h)nessing intentions
Wit(h)nessing one another.
Engaging connective aesthetics
listening
care
intuition
being
knowing
and not-knowing.

shiFt

We acknowledge the threads of our labour over many years in the academy
In our still recovering and overextended lives, we gift each other with
remembering

Remembering what matters.
The blanket we are stitching holds us
and others
and the academy
in its embrace.

shiFt

We are *shiFting* academia
So that it fits like a comfortable garment.
We have let out the seams of academic life
lifted its hems
changed its colour
its shape and texture.
We are finding liberating and enabling ways to wear an academic life
creating the conditions for radical hope.
Designing our own academic garments
decorating them
with our own cultural knowledge
and symbols
vibrant colours
and stunning brilliance.

shiFt

Calling myself a slow academic
is a way of wearing academia like a loose-fitting garment.
Remaking an academic life creates the conditions for radical hope.
Hope is
undaunted by statistics.
Hope includes openness
possibility
generosity.
Hope is a practice.
It opens up a space for dissent
an activating presence

promoting social transformation.
Our stories open up creative and collaborative possibilities
for remaking academic life
so that it fits the bodies
commitments
concerns
and passions
of women
and intersectional others.

shiFt

How might we leave a lasting scholarly imprint?
An ethics of care
is not simply a matter of work-life balance
or being kind.
Making space for 'an other' academy requires we
make time
for debate and dialogue
and learning,
make time for trying on different conceptual framings
trying on conceptual 'sparks' and methodologies
evaluating what they add (or don't)
to y/our understanding
to y/our research.
Let us breathe in new ways, circulating ideas,
alternative ways of being
in the academy.

shiFt

Your design might emerge slowly
incrementally
serendipitously.
Slow scholarship is allowing y/our research to become relational,
to meander

and weave
as we make connections
and create
community.
Carve out time
and space
to focus on the work
and relationships
that matter.
What imprint will you make?
Be-in-relation

shiFt

We need to form collectives
communities
within and beyond our own institutions.
This will sustain our commitments
provide space to engage with new ideas
support to enact them
in the face of pushback
and the power to create
broader institutional change.
Let us lead by example
by imagining what our imprint will be
Being-in-relation.
Being-in-relation to other scholarship
Being-in-relation to other scholars
Being-in-relation to neoliberal institutions—by voicing questions
resisting,
calling out processes that exploit
and undermine
occupying contradictory positions.
Let us form and join collectives.
Writing, creating, supporting alternative ways of being in the academy

shiFt

Transforming the university
requires constant resistance
to the system's call to make ourselves comfortable
in its arms.
It requires an alternative vision
Something sufficiently radical to undermine the competitive logic
and the finite games the university channels both staff and students
towards:
the research funding game
the publications game
the citation game
the evaluation of our teaching game
the appointment and promotion game.

shiFt

Those infuriating finite games get in.
They become the air we breathe
the lenses we see through
the emotional dance that drives us forward.
They result
too often
in pride
or shame
or woe.
Do you recognise the oscillation of win/lose?
Of pride/shame?
It drives so much of university life?
It drives so much of our lives.

shiFt

Transforming the university requires something persuasive.
Something persuasive to keep us focused

on infusing our play with what we know
truly matters.
What, then, could be better than love?
The infinite game of love cannot be won or lost.
It is open to all.
It is always there.
It has no boundaries.
It is of infinite value
sacred
special
precious
all encompassing.
It is what makes the world truly alive.
Love.

shiFt

Hermeneutics of love
a place where all life matters.
A place where we look after each other
where we constantly return to the big picture
to a bigger purpose,
to flourishing communities.
Stay true to love.

shiFt

Reach in
Reach out
You will feel it.
The urge to connect
to community
to an ethics of care
to kindness
*kin*dness

kin-ness.
Lean in towards infinite values.

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shiFt

</div>

You and I, with this book
we are keeping the infinite game in play
We are reimagining the academy
shiFting towards kindness
connection
and an ethics of care.
Right now, in this moment, and always.

<div align="right">

We are making shiFt happen.

</div>

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*   *   *

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Our afterword concludes with some textual imagery—our collective '*reimagining the academy* word cloud'—a relational and visual representation of the thoughts, ideas, emotions, knowledge, experiences and hopes contained in our book. (And yes, we literally copied and pasted our *entire book* into a word-art-generator, and this is the result!)

We find this textual image compelling knowing that these words capture lived lives, unique and evolving meanings, core values and heartfelt yearnings. As such, this word cloud holds expansive space for ongoing awareness, reflection, action and reimagining.

Fig. 1 A '*reimagining the academy* word cloud':Holding expansive space for academic lives and futures

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