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The keynote-as-storied-discussion: A Pacific departure

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It is a rare event when senior scholars and actors in a field come together; more so when that takes place in the company of new and emerging scholars. Even rarer are such occasions in the Oceania region, where distance can mediate against key players coming together in time and space. When the stars align, the opportunity must be seized. This article portrays aspects of an event when, due to otherwise unfortunate circumstances, three senior Pacific educators, scholars, and leaders offered glimpses of their experiential learning and leadership by presenting a storied discussion of leadership. The account given here discusses ideas derived from that storying. It is an examination of the form used to enact the educators' pedagogical purpose; keynote-as-storied-discussion. This innovative way of delivering a keynote leverages the intersectional value of the tone-setting intent of a keynote, the emotional and experiential layering of storying, the pedagogical potential of woven narrative strands, and the discursive exchange of ideas.

Keywords: keynote-as-storied-discussion; Pacific leadership; Pacific learning

INTRODUCTION

Of keynotes

The term 'keynote' originated from the *a capella* style of unaccompanied music (Marshall, 2011). In this, a singer sets a note before the group sings. The keynote works to coordinate, align, and make beautiful what follows. It is a solo moment that simultaneously acknowledges the significance of the group. *A capella*, an Italian term, means music in the style of the chapel (Singleton, n.d.). When voices were the prime instruments of worship, the keynote set the frame for harmony to the glory of God. Over time, although its core meaning remains, the application of the term 'keynote' has shifted. It now refers to an opening presentation that is longer than others at a

conference, out of the competition of parallel streams. A keynote has become a prepared performance, generally attracting remuneration for the speaker (Hourigan, 2019). However, the aim has remained: to galvanize, focus and "tune" the gathering.

This article discusses a variation on the conference keynote tradition by exploring the "keynote-as-storied-discussion" in a Pacific context. This format steps away from conference tradition in several ways. First, a discussion involves more than one voice. Second, it cannot be fully prepared; discussion is dialogical, created in the moment. Third, a discursive keynote is relational, involving multiple speakers, listeners, *and* their relationships. What follows is an exploratory discursive account of a keynote-as-storied-discussion that took place in Lautoka, Fiji. The keynote-as-storied discussion in question aimed to set a tone of collaboration to draw attention to leadership as relational influence.

The occasion

It is important here to pay respect to those who died, suffered, and continue to grieve as a result of the 2019 Samoa measles epidemic. This sad event led to the postponement of the Oceania Comparative and International Education Society's (OCIES) 2019 conference in Apia, a much-anticipated event to be hosted at the National University of Samoa. Relationships of trust and dependence built over decades by Pacific leaders support us as we pray and mourn with Samoa. These relationships also create new opportunities for those involved in the "fallout".

As an immediate consequence of the OCIES conference postponement, a Pacific academic event took place at Lautoka, Fiji. This was hastily organized but made possible because of the long-standing relationships between the Pacific leaders spearheading the get together, as well as functioning relationships on the ground in the host Lautoka Campus. A symposium was an opportunity for academics from the region to mourn Samoa's suffering together, and to share warmth and respect in concert with local Fijian students, scholars, and others. Thus, the DelaiNatabua Navuku seminar series came to host "A Talanoa with Oceanian Educators: Post-Colonial Education and Research in the Pacific Talanoa/Tok Stori" at Natabua Campus of Fiji National University on 25–26 November 2019. This opened with a keynote-as-storied-discussion constructed by central figures in the field for an interactive audience of new, emerging, and established Pacific scholars.

Keynote panels—keynotes to which several people contribute—are an accepted conference form. However, the literature suggests that when conference organizers draw on a keynote panel, discussion is constructed through difference, either by the deliberate presentation of a range of views on a single issue (Calvani et al., 2015) or through selecting speakers with opposite views (Carney et al., 2010). In such combative environments, criticality is not guaranteed, nor are the reciprocal benefits that are generally valued in Pacific academic encounters (Airini et al., 2010; Mila-Schaaf, 2006; Sanga et al., 2018; Vaioleti, 2006).

In Pacific forums, a "safe space" approach to collaboration through storying has sometimes been adopted. Virtual trans-Pacific *talanoa* (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2015) and conference panel presentations (Wolfgramm-Foliaki et al., 2018) have been staged that benefit from space configured in this way. In addition, *tok stori* has been used as a discursive methodology in conference break outs (Fasavalu & Reynolds, 2019; Sanga et al., 2018). However, to our knowledge, the DelaiNatabua Navuku seminar series

keynote-as-storied-discussion is original in the way the keynote was configured to highlight discussion, inter-personal dialogue, and warm relationships. These combine as elements in a woven narrative to deliver a storied legacy of learning about leadership focussed on the experiential learning of Drs Seu'ula Johansson Fua and Kabini Sanga, woven together by the contributions of Dr Unaisi Nabobo-Baba and supported here through analysis from a listener's point of view by Dr Martyn Reynolds.

Seu'ula Johansson Fua is a Tongan academic and educational researcher. Her career began as a teacher in Tonga prior to joining the University of the South Pacific as a Fellow at the Institute in Education where she is currently the Director. Seu'ula's research and advisory work sees her working with Pacific Islands governments, Pacific regional organizations and international organizations and donors. Seu'ula travels extensively around the Pacific in her role as a researcher and the Institute of Education (IOE) Director. She opened the speaking at the Lautoka session.

Kabini Sanga is an Oceanic thought leader, mentor and educator and a consultant to Pacific Islands governments and donors in areas including leadership, international development and education. With Pacific Islands colleagues, he co-founded a number of cause movements including the Re-Thinking Pacific Education Initiative for and by Pacific Peoples, Leadership Pacific, Leadership Solomons, The Re-thinking Vanuatu Education, Re-thinking Micronesian Education movement and others. Kabini, together with Seu'ula, was a joint presenter at the Lautoka keynote.

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba is the first indigenous Fijian woman to be appointed a university professor, initially at the University of Guam and now at the Fiji National University, where she is the Dean of the College of Humanities and Education. Unaisi began her teaching career as a high school teacher and, later, a teacher educator in Fiji and at the University of the South Pacific.

Dr Martyn Reynolds came to the Pacific region from London with Anglo-Welsh heritage. He seeks to learn from the thought leaders of the region in order to contribute support for the Pacific people with whom he is connected.

METHODOLOGY

As an approach, we develop a methodology to relate positionality, context ,and analysis. Positionality is a matter of taking account of where researchers see themselves in relation to the research context. It can be understood relationally (Crossa, 2012), but even when positionality is understood through a blunt insider/outsider dichotomy, writers suggest that there is "a good bit of slippage and fluidity between these two states" (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 409). In a keynote-as-storied-discussion, the flows of power and speaker/listener roles normally assigned during a keynote are adjusted. When compared to a solo keynote, in a discursive event there are fairly porous role boundaries and the consequent potential to be relatively inclusive. In this case, the authors were initially involved in the keynote-as-storied-discussion as presenters, chair, or listener. However, as the event progressed, these roles were eroded. As a result, the autoethnographic sensibility of "recognizing that clear-cut distinctions among researchers, research subjects and the objects of research are illusory, and that what we call the research field occupies a space between these overlapping categories" (Butz & Besio, 2009, p. 1664) becomes relevant. Speaking is validated by listening, since

dialogue is predicated on a two-way process of meaning constructions. Thus, our positionality involves researching ourselves as a group of two speakers, one chair, and one listener involved in appreciating the keynote-as-storied-discussion in a Pacific research context.

The context, "A Talanoa with Oceanian Educators: Post-Colonial Education and Research in the Pacific Talanoa/Tok Stori", pays attention to the discursive construction of meaning. *Talanoa*, as a Pacific orality, involves discussion (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Vaka et al., 2016). In *talanoa*, safe relational space is constructed (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 2014) so that information can be freely shared or exchanged. Similarly, the term *tok stori* invokes a space of safety for revelation by storying (Sanga & Reynolds, 2019; Vella & Maebuta, 2018) in which narrative intersections produce a joint account of the world. As a methodological consideration, we pay attention to the contributions of individuals to the keynote-as-storied-discussion, but also to the weaving of meaning between individual stories and, through the structure created as a consequence of analytical processes, the shaping provided by listeners.

The analytical aspect of our methodology assumes that analysis provides insight by peeling back layers of meaning (Rutherford, 2011) to reveal greater depth of experience. We adopt an approach that owes much to Informed Grounded Theory (IGT) (Thornberg, 2012). In this, sensitizing concepts are used as analytical tools around which patterns of meaning coalesce, much as stories are made sense of by listeners through their previous knowledge and experiences. The sensitizing concept used for analysis of data in this case was leadership. This was further developed by iterative practice into nodes of leadership development, leadership challenges, leadership legacy and so on. In addition, through IGT we employed the sensitizing concept of weaving to acknowledge the innovative keynote-as-storied-discussion form.

As a result of the analysis, we came to approach leadership from a constructionist perspective (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014) that focuses on leadership as a process. In this understanding, followers and leaders are inextricably linked because they share a social context (Oc & Bashshur, 2013). In addition, leadership and followership are related dialogically as balanced aspects of a relational self (Ketokivi, 2010; Vaai & Nabobo-Baba, 2017). In this way, leadership as service (Strachan et al., 2010) and leadership as influence (Evans et al., 2017) are linked. In the context of the DelaiNatabua Navuku seminar series, the presence of senior Pacific academics in close contact with emergent Pacific academics and Pacific—particularly local Fijian—students gives life to this approach to leadership. This is because the symposium presented an opportunity, rare in a widespread region, for intergenerational academic relationships to develop, and for leadership stories of an established generation to be heard and appreciated by an ensuing generation.

The DelaiNatabua Navuku keynote-as-storied-discussion was recorded and transcribed with permission of the speakers. A chronological account replicating delivery could be given. However, we seek to add critical value by adding thematic analysis that both honours the storied nature of the material and sharpens the learning available. In effect, this account continues the discussion of the day, honouring the way that Pacific oralities, such as *talanoa* and *tok stori*, although located in time and space, can be woven into other occasions and forms, and permeate other relationships. The bulk of analysis was performed by a listener on the day, Martyn, who was able to use first-hand

experience of his own learning from the keynote-as-storied-discussion experience for interpretation of the transcription. The analysis was member-checked by all concerned.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

In this section, we present a thematic analysis of the DelaiNatabua Navuku keynote-as-storied-discussion. This is structured to reflect the contributions of multiple voices, the dialogic weaving of ideas, and the relationalities involved. Attention is also drawn to the relationships between the innovative form of the presentation, leadership stories of the discussants, the portrayal of leadership, and the context. In this way, form, function and purpose are in a unity that points to the potential of the keynote-as-storied-discussion in other Pacific contexts.

Leadership as influence

In the opening section of the DelaiNatabua Navuku keynote-as-storied-discussion, the two named speakers, Dr Seu'ula Johansson Fua and Dr Kabini Sanga, were invited by the chair, Dr Unaisi (Una) Nabobo-Baba to story about key moments in their leadership journey. Her overall aim, in keeping with a keynote, was to prompt the discussants to set the tone and focus for the two-day seminar.

Influential experiences

To commence her leadership story, Seu'ula explained how two early moments directed her life path as a Pacific educational leader:

> I came to my 300 level courses, and I took an educational research course, and my professor came in one day with her big charts, data that she had collected and also some sticky notes and she was showing us how she was coding the data . . . I was absolutely amazed. I was, like, wow, this is so cool; that she could take the data, and she could code it, she could chunk it and reorganize it; so she was showing us how to analyse clustered data and right there in that—in that lecture room, I wanted to be an educational researcher.
>
> A few years back, I was teaching in Tonga . . . I was running between one high school and another . . . The one school that I'd go to, I would always come back crying, because my photocopied materials were never produced on time and I would turn up, they'd change the timetable that morning without telling me . . . One school was run like a well worked machine, timetable remains the same every week. Everything worked well. . . . It got me thinking about "What is it about these two schools?" and that's how I ended up looking into leadership. So, I then did my masters and PhD on leadership because I think leadership makes a difference for children and for students.

These episodes are Seu'ula's description of steps on her leadership journey. She recounts being influenced by the actions of an academic leader who revealed a new layer to the world. Through technique, potentially confusing events are deconstructed and then reconstructed into coherent meaning. As a result, appropriate action can be taken—the point of research. In Seu'ula's account, the revelation of finding something entirely new produced a life-changing inspirational emotional reaction. The story shows that when pedagogic leadership creates a shared learning space, the engagement produced can have profound effects. In addition, the second episode shows the role of

reflection in leadership development. Through reflection, Seu'ula's emotions, such as confusion, were channelled into a desire for explanation. Overall, these storied episodes illustrate how a combination of experience and deliberate reflection can be powerful in setting a person's leaderful direction.

Influential people

Kabini's initial storying also focused on the way meeting a significant person can be influential. What is different here is that he describes not a single action or moment, but the person as a whole. The story points to the relational value of esteem:

> There were only thirty of us in the entire country who were doing sixth form . . . I was given a scholarship to do law in New Zealand but during the sixth form year, I met a friend who became a life friend; I met John and John is my mentor—John Niroa from Vanuatu. I look up to John all the time, whether it was when we were students together or whether we were . . . at USP [University of the South Pacific], or whether we are just mates now as all the people . . . He's the most credible leader, he is the most ethical leader, consistently and throughout his life and that's why I honour my friend John. He came in . . . as a stranger from Vanuatu, just a student, and his life was so different from those of us who were there, and it really changed us . . . it's almost a Damascus experience for me . . . because of the experiences that I was having from my friend, John, it changed my way of understanding entirely. I went to the scholarship committee; I said to them, I'm not interested in the law scholarship, and they said, "You are bound to do law" . . . I said "I want to become a teacher".

In this story, the Biblical reference to St Paul's conversion indicates a life-changing moment that shifted Kabini's orientation and affected his whole-of-life career. The narrative reveals the way the values evident in his friend were influential, eclipsed difference, and were sustained. The account traces a life of friendship to an initial meeting and shows how time adds significance as relationships develop. This suggests that leadership as influence can involve a relationship powerful enough to stop a person in their tracks, overcome the inertia of what is expected, and affect the way that life is appreciated. This storying draws particular attention to relationality as a site of leadership.

Weaving

In a keynote-as-storied-discussion, an opportunity exists for the weaving of narrative strands by people other than the nominated speakers. In this case, Una, denoted as chair but acting as meaning maker, drew out the relevance of the threads so far presented to the DelaiNatabua Navuku seminar, a seminar of Pacific educators:

> [S]ometimes in our lives as educators, there comes a role model, that does not talk about role model or does not read role model from a Webster dictionary; they just live the life that influences [and in] quality education perhaps that the leader does have an impact.

Through her weaving, Una drew relationality to the surface of both stories. She clarified the concept of leadership as influence through the notion of the role model. This is a person who influences through their presence, actions, and example, rather than through management or any other specific techniques. Una also emphasized the potential of leadership to deliver excellence in education through the way others react to the actions of leaders.

Continuing the storying, Una provided coherence to the narrative by re-focusing, speculating on the way leadership roles carry practical and emotional costs.

> So, you are both educational leaders, more so your educational leadership spans the wider Pacific . . . what has been the joy for you . . .what has been a cost to you or challenge for you as a regional Pacific educational leader? Answer it the way you like it.

This intervention steered the storytelling by indicating a further layer of exploration to the discussants.

Leadership benefits and costs

Leadership as relationships

Seu'ula's story picked up the thread offered by Una and first dealt with positive experiential aspects of leadership, beginning with a reflection on her work at the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific:

> I have been with the institute for fifteen years, it has been an absolute joy, a blessing. . . . I've jumped from a big boat to a small boat and coming to an island and then waiting until the wave is big enough so that it takes us over the reef and then . . . we have to get off and walk through water to go where we are going. I've learnt to ride a scooter. The richness and the diversity of our region is just an amazing journey that I feel really, really privileged to have had that opportunity to be in this place. The joy of course is all the people that I've met along the way. The relationships in every single island that I have gone through. The joy of sharing people's lives with you and you can come back five years later, ten years later and just pick up the conversation again.

Seu'ula's account portrayed a world of unique challenges made rewarding by an appreciation of the wealth of the region. The benefits are both personal and relational. Leadership here is recognizing and valuing what one has. This includes allowing the environment to be a positive influence. Seu'ula described relationships with people as a source of reward. This involves shared experiences that support deep and lasting connections. As a consequence, joy is exchanged between people through leadership as service.

Leadership as sacrifice

Because leadership is integrated into life, for leaders there will always be a balance between the sweet and the bitter. Seu'ula's account of the price of leadership touched the personal and the relational:

> The cost, the cost has been my health, my white hair. The cost is missing out on my children's birthdays when you're not home. The cost is personal and my health. It's rough conditions sometimes working in our region, and as a field researcher, I'm out in the field a lot. . . . The challenge is always from our internal organizations. Organizations that are stuck, I think, in a way of thinking that remains perhaps the legacy of colonialism . . . . While the rest of our countries and our people are moving towards a different paradigm, the way our organizations are still structured and the processes . . . [are] yet to fully recognize the diversity and the shifting aspirations of our people. So in between that, I find that we're stuck.

Commitment to leadership can weaken physical health and affect family relationships. However, the subtext of this section of the story is that those unavoidable things are not as eroding as the avoidable issues. Seu'ula's account of obstructive organizational elements points to the inhibiting potential of poorly configured relationships. Where leadership as service meets leadership as inertia, the costs to a responsive leader can be great. Seu'ula's explanation, colonialism, references a relationship of superiority/inferiority. This is premised on priorities that do not respond to local needs, values or understandings. For leadership immersed in and motivated by context, this provides costly impediments.

Weaving

Una, as chair, responded to the strand of organizational leadership in Seu'uala's storying by recasting this as a prompt offered to Kabini. She framed the prompt by reference to Leadership Pacific, a cause movement that has supported conferences and seminars in Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Aotearoa New Zealand (Leadership Pacific, 2019); and to formal institutions. The keynote-as-storied-discussion allowed Una to further recognize context by connecting the joint narrative to the Fijian audience through the late Dr. Donasiano Kalou Ruru, well known and respected in Fijian academic circles, and to the University of the South Pacific, headquartered in Suva, Fiji:

> Kabini is . . . the person that has started Leadership Pacific. Dr. Ruru Donasiano was part of that, a lot of us were part of that. Kabini works at the University of Wellington in New Zealand but I always felt that his patronage spread right across the Pacific . . . Two years ago, USP in council also got Kabini to train the people on SMT [Senior Management Team] in leadership that is ethical, leadership that is thoughtful, leadership that is heart, leadership that is soul . . . Are there joys and costs as well for you?

In the next section of the keynote-as-storied discussion, Kabini built from Una's prompt to story his Island origins and his arrival into the institutional world:

> My university doesn't give me a role to say that I should be working around the region, in one sense . . . my engagement around the Pacific region has more to do with me as opposed to who my employer is. . . . I was born in a Solomon Island village . . . and consequently, a Pacific Islander . . . I cannot deny the fact that I am me and consequently have to be me within my world. Of course, the early exposure I had experienced as a USP student . . . to the wider Pacific, was really catalytic . . . those early experiences also pushed me towards an engagement with and assumption of responsibility for not just my localized territories but my expanding world . . . and hence my understanding and appreciation of what I do, and I am privileged to work in a university context whether or not that university is here or there.

In this section of narrative, Kabini imagined leadership as a journey in which the key reference points involve being true to yourself and recognizing, valuing, and actively responding to privilege. His stance referred back to the institutional thread opened by Seu'ula and amplified by Una by separating positional or role-based leadership from personal responsibility and influence. As Seu'ula indicated, these forms of leadership do not always align, proving costly when this is the case.

Leadership as relationships

As might be expected in a dialogic situation, main themes such as relationships and sacrifice were the subject of iterative development in the DelaiNatabua Navuku keynote-as-storied-discussion. Reconnecting with Seu'ula's storying, Kabini explained his ideas and experiences of leadership joy by discussing relationships and validation:

> Now, like Seu'ula, there has been much joy for me, engaging around the region with our people . . . We appreciate all our people whether . . . they go to school or they just live in their villages or . . . [are] doing what they do in the towns that we have around our region. You begin to appreciate all our people in our diversities, in our differences . . . There are only two key issues for all people. One is to know who you are, and two is to know that your life is actually valid, that there is meaning to your life, and in that sense for me, I think that's my greatest joy, to really just appreciate knowing our people all over the Pacific and knowing myself and also, knowing that, my people have brought value and much meaning to me and in that sense much joy.

Storying as a mode allowed Kabini to present his ideas about the importance of self-identity within a shared narrative that echoed Seu'ula's story regarding relational joy. In his story, as in Seu'ula's, leadership presented opportunities to engage with people in their own context and on their own terms. Kabini also pointed to the value of relationships to tell us who we are and to validate our life journeys. This constructs leadership as sense-making.

Leadership as sacrifice

Again, connecting his story with Seu'ula's, Kabini presented some of the costs of leadership. A common theme is that poorly configured institutional relationships can be more challenging than the unavoidable negative physical effects:

> Seu'ula has rightly said, challenges are numerous, but challenges and costs are necessary part of the joys of life. . . . I think misreading, misunderstanding by organizations of what our priorities are, is an important challenge and consequently if you are above advancing your career in an organization, sometimes the engagement with our people in the region, the service to our people through mentorship [take priority] . . . . [We] were flying over yesterday . . . the people sitting with me, were . . . think[ing] "You're just going out to enjoy the environment" . . . I don't tell them that there are parts of the Pacific after a day of visit . . . I get back to Wellington [and I'm] sick. Colleagues within organizational settings, don't appreciate the priorities you are trying to live out through your scholarship or through your work.

This section of the story shows Kabini's experiential learning of how leadership can be made more difficult when people in general, and colleagues in particular, assume their priorities to be universal. The presence of different understandings of leadership in institutions raises questions of whether to focus inwards by seeking leadership through self-advancement, or outwards by understanding leadership as influence in wider communities. Kabini and Seu'ula's stories show that their leadership agendas are people- not institution-focused.

Strength in leadership

The conversation turned to what it takes to be a leader. Two themes emerged from Seu'ula's Tongan perspective: courage and resilience. Courage is the capacity to face difficulties and challenges without being disabled by fear. In Seu'ula's account, this is not a momentary facility but requires resilience in the face of the long-term challenges afflicting the Pacific region:

> Courage is also being able to sustain that courage over a long, long time. Pacific people are known for our resilience . . . resilience comes from our "lotu", our faith; in knowing that we are part of a bigger plan, in knowing that tomorrow the sun will rise and things will be better . . . Resilience is also from our "kainga" our "matakali" . . . It's in our relationships with the people around us that we have courage to face another day . . . Climate change and health are the two key issues for us . . . We're fully aware of the NCDs and the impact and stealing generations of our people away from our time. Climate change is a reality; we have known it's a reality for a long time. Long droughts, water supplies, systems that we used to trust now running out . . . So what do we need? Leaders who are resilient and courageous because we need some real solutions; and not solutions into the future, it's solutions for today.

Seu'ula story here returned to the motif of constructive relationships. Relationships are the key to courage as well as to joy. She explains that leaders' leadership must confront real problems in realistic ways so that Pacific health is improved, and climate change does not result in annihilation.

Weaving

Through weaving, Una re-contextualized Seu'ula's story. She broke the "fourth wall" of the stage by delving into the audience to acknowledge those in the local community leading responses to climate change. In addition, she referred to another well-known female Pacific leader, Her Excellency Hilda C. Heine, the eighth President of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, an island state facing the immediate effects of climate change:

> [I]'d like to introduce Lia to all of us. Lia, is the best campus' leader for environment, climate. Rajneel of course is Lia's best friend . . . 'Ana is Lia's sidekick as well. . . . Hilda is Hilda to us, 'cause she's a sister that struggled a long time with the three of us . . . [with] the whole timetabling of students, the whole plantations, right across to Palau where the taro plantations of the women of Palau are also getting [covered] in the vindictive sea water.

Through this weaving, Una pointed to leadership as significant at local and international scales: leaders constructively face pervasive problems in their own context.

Courageous leadership

Kabini also linked courage, relationships and leadership. In his account, courage may include the capacity to confront the issues of the wider world, but also the willingness to be vulnerable in terms of the inner world:

> We encourage each other as the way with which we fill our gas tank . . . there are those material forces that we see in our face appearing overwhelming as we live our lives . . . if you live on a small island—you can't do anything about the cyclone that's causing all the damage and so I'll probably speak to the softer world that we are probably not paying attention to as much . . . Peoples of the Pacific are

> fundamentally relational people . . . We are people who generally, as a first response, think about the convenience, the happiness of the other first as opposed to our own and in that sense, please let's continue connecting with each other. Let's do so in ways that allow us to have real deep engagement with each other so that… our own vulnerabilities are exposed to each other . . . so that we might allow each other to grow not only in our strength areas but also in our weak areas.

The two worlds described by Kabini are both sites of potential leadership; each requires courage.

Leadership and legacy

The final section of the DelaiNatabua Navuku keynote-as-storied-discussion saw the shared narrative turn to leadership into the future. The two named speakers offered their thoughts on how leaders can come forward to build on legacy, and how new leadership can be built through influence and deliberate action. In the context of the seminar, this section of the storied discussion offered challenge from established educators, scholars and leaders to new and emergent scholars and leaders, as well as to students and community members in attendance.

Seu'ula employed a Tongan metaphor of a mat as an indication of invitation:

> Leadership is a responsibility and it's a service and there are few who want to take it on but in terms of the future, we will continue to—as they say in Tongan—"folahi e fala ka e fai e alea". . . . we'll continue to roll out the mat and we will continue to invite you to come and sit with us on the mat and talanoa . . . because we need to remain hopeful and optimistic that there are leaders being prepared now for tomorrow.

A mat is a space of meeting, where exchanges take place and relationships are enhanced through *talanoa*, safe spaces of interaction (Faleolo, 2019).

In his turn, Kabini pointed to relational ways of learning and deliberateness as a quality for a leader. Acknowledging Seu'ula's comments to be *correct* and *brilliant*, he added:

> I will speak as one educator to another . . . be intentional about mentorship, if you do not have the people who are mentors, please find them. . . . If you are not mentoring the new generation of Pacific educators, please do so, right away . . . intentionally passing on the baton to our next generation of Pacific Islanders, whether it's within your family, or within the classroom, or the institution you are working with . . . The best practice of leadership is often presented as out of context and is always out of date. The right practice of leadership is what Pacific educators need to understand.

In both Kabini and Seu'ula's accounts, efforts to capitalize on leadership legacy are not accidental. An appropriate deliberate action on the part of new leaders is to engage with those who are already leading. In addition, Kabini's comments explain that leadership socialization best takes place in the context of community, specifically positioned in space and time.

CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

The role of a keynote is to galvanize, focus and tune a gathering. In the case of the DelaiNatabua Navuku seminar, "A Talanoa with Oceanian Educators: Post-Colonial Education & Research in the Pacific Talanoa/Tok Stori", the note struck was to galvanize those present to accept the challenges of leadership by: valuing the benefits; embracing the costs; confronting the seemingly intractable issues facing Pacific communities; understanding well-configured relationality as the key of leadership as influence; and appreciating opportunities to engage with current leaders through observation, dialogue, and mentorship. In a context in which students, new and emerging educators, scholars and leaders, and a number of senior Pacific academics and leaders had come together, this was an appropriate note to sound.

A keynote usually draws from the *a capella* tradition through solo performance to guide the harmony that follows. However, the keynote-as-storied-discussion provides its own note about leadership. This note is embodied in the discursive format of the keynote, visible in the way woven stories foreground the value of collaboration and relationality in leadership and reduce the attention on the leader as a solo performer. In addition, the weaving provided by the chair served to connect leadership to context through local Fijian initiatives, references to valued Fijian leaders, and to honoured leaders in the region more generally.

A storied presentation embeds leadership in experiences, actions, emotions and relationships from which theories emerge. The intersections between stories provide a focus on commonalities despite the uniqueness of each of the leaders' experiences. In this way, a woven narrative points to stories as both everyday and transcendent. Thus, the pedagogical potential of constructing leadership as influence, relational, sacrificial, requiring courage and resilience, and an open invitation to all, is grounded for listeners in stories. These may be inspirational but are actually the accounts of those who have reflected and leveraged their leadership potential. The challenge to the audience was to produce harmony by seeking and enacting that potential in themselves.

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