

MORE THAN SPACE:

Rethinking Island Temporalities in Island Studies¹

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This article addresses the issue of temporality within Island Studies and examines the potential for integrating a temporal dimension into the predominantly spatial framework, which currently shapes much of island scholarship. The first section engages with key theories and authors in time studies, exploring opportunities for Island Studies arising from the temporal turn. The second section draws on interdisciplinary research that problematises temporalities in island-based investigations. The final section critically examines the problem of temporality in Island Studies through the concept of *rogue viewpoints*. Through this lens, temporality is reconceptualised as marginal, disruptive, and nonlinear, thereby enhancing the understanding of islands *on their own terms* and expanding their epistemic potential. The article contends that supplementing the field's spatial orientation with temporal perspectives offers significant epistemological and practical implications for future research in Island Studies.

Key words: temporality, Island Studies, rogue viewpoints, temporal attunements, island temporalities

Sommarøy Island: Social Media Buzz on *Island Without Time*

In 2019, social media exploded with news that the Norwegian island of Sommarøy had abolished time. This small island, with approximately 350 residents, located in the Arctic Circle east of Tromsø, was reported to have decided to break with conventional timekeeping and become the world's first time-free zone. The islanders advocated for suspending the idea of a clock-structured day each year between 16 May and 26 July, a period marked by continuous daylight.

Living primarily from fishing and tourism, Sommarøy residents expressed their sentiments on the Facebook page *Time-Free Zone* through short videos in which they articulated feelings of being trapped by the clock. In these symbolic gestures, clocks were placed in drawers or physically broken in an attempt to escape what was framed as the tyranny of time. The project's logo—a clock shattered into pieces—visually encapsulated a vision of life lived in freedom, captured by the slogan, “We do what we want, and when we want.” Whether painting a house at 2 a.m., cutting grass at midnight, or swimming at 4 a.m., islanders claimed that, for these seventy days, time would simply cease to matter. This initiative, functioning primarily as a PR stunt, quickly caught the attention of social media and spread

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virally through countless shares. The idea of freedom, combined with the notion of an island free of temporal constraints, sparked widespread reactions and revived familiar narratives of the islands as places frozen in time. Framed as either without time or set back in time, why do islands so readily invite fantasies of timelessness?

Tomorrow Island and Yesterday Island: *Islands Divided in Time*

Big and Little Diomedé — Ostrov Ratmanova and Little Diomedé Island — Imaqliq and Inaliq — Tomorrow Island and Yesterday Island

In the beginning, there were Imaqliq and Inaliq. These tiny islands in the Bering Strait were home to Indigenous communities for whom the sea—frozen or liquid—connected rather than divided. For them, the sea was a continuous social space, and kinship ties were tight. In 1728, the islands lay on the route of Vitus Bering’s expedition, during which, on St. Diomedé’s Day they were named Big and Little Diomedé. The imperial naming practice was only the first in a series of re-namings. By 1820, Big Diomedé had become Ostrov Ratmanova, and Little Diomedé, Ostrov Kruzenshterna.

With the sale of Alaska to the United States, questions arose about political borders. These soon intersected with the establishment of the International Date Line in 1884. The islands, less than two and a half miles apart, suddenly became separated not only by an international border but also by time, falling on opposite sides of the Date Line. During the Cold War, this boundary earned the evocative nickname the “Ice Curtain.” It was a line that could melt or freeze depending on season and politics, sometimes allowing closeness but more often enforcing distance. For islanders living on these islands, separation was always relative, experienced by season and by sea conditions, which froze in winter and opened passages in summer. Colonial projects, territorial transfers, the introduction of time zones, and Cold War ideologies profoundly reshaped island life. Today, the communities remain divided—between Little Diomedé, now U.S. territory, and Chukotka on the Russian mainland, where residents were relocated when the USSR established a military base. The paradox of spatial closeness yet a vast temporal gap—twenty to twenty-one hours, depending on the season—shows how closely space and time are intertwined. The geopolitical and historical carving of the sea has left lasting marks on local communities: disrupting cultural rhythms, splitting kinship and social networks, and leaving deep scars that remain unhealed to this day. Divided by time or divided in time, islands once again emerge as sites where temporal, spatial, and geopolitical faultlines intersect.

Hvar: *The Dragging of Time* on Dalmatian Island

For a stroller walking through the narrow, maze-like, stone-paved streets of Stari Grad on the island of Hvar, one word can be heard echoing again and again in the everyday communication of islanders: *pomalo*. The mere translation of *pomalo* into English—“take it slowly,” “maybe now, maybe later,” “take your time,” “from time to time,” “take it easy,” “bit by bit”—fails to capture the subtle difference of meanings the term encapsulates. As the narrow streets of Dalmatian towns always *rendezvous* at a small central square, the word echoes even more insistently. *Pomalo* often concludes brief encounters and everyday conversations. Functioning as a cultural code, *pomalo* is more than a word: it imbues social life well beyond language itself. It serves as personal encouragement, particularly during the

tourist season, when life can become overly hectic. In such moments, *pomalo* reminds everyone to pause, to slow down, to believe that everything will resolve itself, and to trust that there is no need to chase time (Oroz 2020).

Today, this culturally rooted idea, similar to the ancient principle *festina lente*—“make haste slowly”—is especially intriguing on the island of Hvar, known for its long history dating back to Greek colonisation of the Adriatic. The *pomalo* attitude is increasingly branded as a tourist asset, appearing on coffee mugs, in local shops and newspapers, and even in the names of local political initiatives. In the summer of 2024, the artistic collective Starving Artist launched *Clever Island*, a project connecting rural libraries across eleven villages on the island of Hvar through book-exchange mailboxes and *pomalo o'clock*—a QR-linked digital clock running 33 per cent slower than standard time, conceived as part of a triptych merging analogue books, digital access, and a deliberately slower mode of living. Serving to decelerate and recalibrate time in accordance with island life, *pomalo* introduces temporal elasticity into everyday rhythms, precisely when time seems pressing. On Hvar, time drags gently in the shadow of its performers, the islanders whose daily rhythms unfold with an easy sway and slow pace beneath the Mediterranean sun.

Introduction: Island Space and Time

The relationship between space and time, seemingly straightforward and natural, is often imagined as existing independently of human experience. Yet such assumptions reflect only a partial perspective that frequently overlooks the complexity of cultural, social, class, gender, political, and economic factors shaping our temporal and spatial engagements. Despite the richness of temporal experiences symbolically embedded in everyday practices—what Nancy Munn describes as the problem of temporalisation (Munn 1992, p. 116)—the vocabulary of many disciplines struggles to convey something so quotidian and mundane. Still, the frameworks through which we perceive, inhabit, and shape time cannot be reduced to mere measurability or abstraction, no matter how convincingly the clock- and calendar-driven rituals of daily life suggest otherwise (cf. Dohrn-Van Rossum 1996; Ogle, 2015). Any attempt to privilege either space or time risks omitting the fact that the temporal dimension is always interwoven with our spatial understanding, the two being inextricably linked (Massey, 1994, p. 264). Therefore, it becomes misleading to treat time as a separate realm; instead, time and space should be understood as relational phenomena that fold and unfold in myriad ways, articulating differently along routes that traverse diverse cultural, historical, and social contexts (Oroz, 2024, p. 154). This entanglement of space and time becomes particularly intriguing in the case of islands, whose unique appeal is often associated with the popular idea of being “out of time” or ‘backward’ (Gillis, 2001; Ronström, 2021, p. 277), a perception that both objectifies islands and frames them as helpless entities in need of rescue by external actors (Baldacchino, 2008, p. 39; Pugh and Chandler, 2021, p. 3).

The three opening stories from the beginning of this paper are just some of the many examples that illustrate how time is shaped, perceived, and lived when culture, space, society, (geo)politics, and tourism overlap. They show what happens when culturally rooted understandings of temporality probe island space; when marketing strategies capitalise on the notion of freedom and associate it with the midnight sun; or when geopolitical re-drawings and date lines carve into what was previously functioning as a coherent social and cultural landscape. Building on the examples provoked by these stories, this paper seeks to explore and deepen the understanding of multiple, overlapping, and sometimes even conflicting temporalities, and the possible directions they could steer island research. By

pointing to different epistemologies that emerge at the intersections of diverse disciplines and research traditions, this paper argues that islands should not be approached merely as sites trapped in the limbo of (self-)imposed exoticism—an enduring mythology that, as Baldacchino (2008, p. 40) observes, is often refreshed, perpetrated, and encouraged through local branding practices and economic dependency—nor reduced solely to their spatial constraints that perpetuate the trope of isolation and nurture “fantasies of remoteness” (Ronström, 2021, p. 271).

This reflective essay is not an attempt to deny the significance of space, nor to reduce the complex lived experiences of island communities to abstract debates that could be easily dismissed. On the contrary, it is conceived as an attempt to cast doubt on the ways we think about islands beyond the power of spatial dichotomies and the way they structure discussions about islands. If islanders construct their own spatiality and rhythms that suit them best (Baldacchino, 2012, p. 57), it raises the question how temporal processes might complement and reshape spatial ones. How engaging with diverse temporalities can become an epistemic force that reveals blind spots in existing, primarily spatial, knowledge of islands. Opening a space for critically examining island temporalities may unleash an emancipatory potential to rethink dominant temporal regimes and, consequently, to imagine islands differently. In this way, islands would not be passively bound to the rhythm of the mainland, nor to the tyranny of acceleration and the spectacle of the “now”; rather, these temporal tensions might be reclaimed as a generative possibility—to think with islands, rather than about them. Ultimately, island temporalities are approached not as passive phenomena, but as processes and forms of epistemological resistance to knowledge production that privileges space without accounting for island rhythms.

Time and Space: Entangled Experiences

Interest in time and temporality in the humanities and social sciences is inseparable from the renewed concern with space that emerged through the spatial turn in the late 1970s (McKeon 1974). Foucault’s characterisation of the 19th century as an epoch marked by history and by a hegemonic notion of a linear and accumulative conception of time (Foucault, 1986, p. 22) may be read as an alignment with Nietzsche’s critique of progress and of “historical fever” (Nietzsche, 1997, p. 57). In this context, Foucault anticipates key elements of the spatial turn and argues that the present may be understood as an epoch of space yet remains inseparable from time. The re-problematisation of time and temporality, which should not be confused with history as such (Ingold, 1993), can therefore be understood as a critical response to chronometric hegemony (cf. Aveni, 1989; Dohrn-Van Rossum, 1996; Ogle, 2015). Within this intellectual climate and in the context of what Graeme Davison calls a “clockwise society” (1993), temporality remains implicitly present and closely intertwined with diverse spatial configurations. Whether addressing historically produced and technologically compressed spaces and the power asymmetries introduced by colonialism (Davison, 1993; Nanni, 2012), social spaces linked to time through rhythms (Lefebvre, 1990), multiple spatio-temporal forms entangled in the dialectics of the local and the global and in gendered social relations (Massey, 1984; 1994), or the concept of *thirdspace*, which integrates spatio-temporal, political, and representational dimensions (Soja, 1996), the question of time and temporality emerged as a relevant field of research in the 1990s, anticipating what Hassan identifies as the “salient contours of the temporal turn” (2010, p. 90). During this period, which cannot be attributed to a single author or origin, time and temporality began to be examined across multiple disciplines, moving beyond the idea of time as external to human experience.

One of the first to examine this issue, E. P. Thompson (1967), in *Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism*, showed how industrial capitalism transformed temporal experience. He contrasted the task-oriented temporalities of pre-industrial societies, shaped by environmental, seasonal, and social rhythms, with the abstract, linear temporality of industrial capitalism. In pre-industrial contexts, work unfolded according to “different work-situations and their relation to ‘natural’ rhythms” (Thompson, 1967, p. 59), producing diverse temporalities. Industrial society, however, imposed a uniform temporal order, detaching time from lived and natural rhythms and redefining it as an economic resource. Standardised factory shifts governed by clock-time replaced these heterogeneous temporalities, collapsing multiple experiences of time into a singular, efficiency-oriented framework (Thompson, 1967, p. 90). Thompson’s work thus anticipated the temporal turn in the social sciences, highlighting time as historically contingent and socially regulated. Thompson’s examples also opened new ways of thinking about time in relation to space, class, gender, and culture. Norbert Elias (1992), in *An essay on time*, emphasised that time is a socially constructed symbol emerging from the civilising process. Its meanings depend on context, reflecting the interplay of individual, social, and natural temporalities, which together form a single human temporal perspective (Elias, 1992, pp. 29, 46). This understanding moves beyond abstract notions of time reduced to clocks and calendars, framing it instead as historically produced, socially enforced, and culturally experienced, and helping pave the way for the emergence of the temporal turn.

The emphasis on the processual nature of time, its multidimensionality, and its rhythmic organisation can be read as an attempt to move beyond the predominantly spatial approach that dominated research since the 1970s (Hassan, 2010, p. 83). This social understanding of time closely aligns with Henri Lefebvre’s approach, elaborated in his posthumously published *Rhythmanalysis* (1992). Lefebvre first explored rhythm in the 1960s, when, in the final chapter of *Critique of everyday life*, he refers to moments of transcendence in whose passing power and potential could be perceived (Lyon, 2019, p. 19; Elden, 2004, p. x). In *Rhythmanalysis*, he recognises such temporal moments as rhythms, showing how rhythm is inseparable from the understanding of time. These rhythms are historical, yet they emerge in the present and include temporal rhythms of the body that “cross and recross, superimposing themselves upon each other, always bound to space” (Lefebvre, 1992, p. 205). As both a theory and method, *Rhythmanalysis* highlights diverse practices and forms of knowledge that produce a multiplicity of rhythms, both cyclical and linear, that shape everyday life. Lefebvre argues that the social sciences have traditionally separated time from space, analysing forms of time including lived, measured, historical, work, or everyday time outside their spatial context. For Lefebvre, however, all concrete times are inherently rhythmic and inseparable from space, linking temporal experience to specific places and movements (Lefebvre, 1992, p. 89).

Time has been a sustained focus of sociological inquiry, with Barbara Adam occupying a central position among scholars who theorise it as a relational and socially embedded phenomenon. Throughout her career, Adam developed concepts that situate time in relation to environment, society, and technology, challenging linear and homogeneous understandings of temporality. By distinguishing human time from industrial time, she showed how modern conceptions of time function not merely as a neutral backdrop to social relations but as an active organising principle shaped by Newtonian logic and industrial modernity (Adam, 1990). One of her most influential contributions, the concept of timescapes, synthesises analyses of temporal discipline, distributed throughout institutional regimes of control, with an understanding of time as biologically, socially, and

technologically entangled (Adam, 2005). Adam emphasises the plurality of time, highlighting the coexistence and interaction of multiple temporalities. This perspective is particularly productive for environmental and spatial analyses, where temporal regimes intersect unevenly and futures are actively produced, governed, and colonised. She further elaborates the timescapes through seven constitutive elements (Adam, 2008): time frames, temporality, timing, tempo, duration, sequence, and temporal modality. These elements enable nuanced analysis of duration, cyclicity, rhythm, embodiment, and synchronisation, foregrounding temporal asymmetries and misalignments across domains.

The theorists mentioned above each helped lay the foundation for the temporal turn, opening new ways of thinking about time and sparking debates among postcolonial, feminist, and, more recently, environmental scholars in the 2000s. Across disciplines such as anthropology, political science, history, geography, and the environmental humanities, numerous authors have built on these insights, deepening our understanding not only of space but also of the social, historical, and cultural contours of time. This research highlights how time structures social life, operates within power relations (Bastian et al., 2020, p. 291), and is shaped by time-blind Eurocentric frameworks. Whether examined through postcolonial critiques of temporal singularity and Western temporal hegemony (Davison, 1993; Nanni, 2012; Barak, 2013; Ogle, 2015), processes of temporal standardisation and universalisation at the dawn of modernity (Aveni, 1989; Davison, 1993; Birth, 2017; Griffiths, 2004), ethnographically grounded analyses of cultural temporalities (Birth, 1999; Munn, 1992; Gell, 2021; Oroz, 2022; Čuka & Oroz, 2024), or revisited readings of time in the Anthropocene (Gomez, 2024; Ialenti, 2020; Pugh, 2018), time emerges as inseparable from the diverse relations with which it is entangled. Despite its fleeting nature, time cannot be reduced to a singular or exclusively human perspective. Emphasising the multiplicity and relationality of time provides a productive framework for Island Studies, particularly in cases where uneven social, ecological, economic, and developmental rhythms cannot be understood solely through a spatial lens that reinforces an island-versus-mainland dichotomy. Approaching islands through theoretical lenses inspired by the temporal turn can offer fresh perspectives. It opens possibilities for moving beyond simplistic or romanticised notions of islands as “timeless” or isolated and for examining how island communities, their futures, and multiple temporal experiences are produced, negotiated, and contested across local, regional, and global scales.

Islands and Time: (Un)timely Reflections or Spatial Oversight?

In 2019, at MuCEM² in Marseille, the exhibition *Le temps de l'île* brought the question of *island time* to the fore. Through a series of video installations, island maps, diverse objects associated with islands, and drawings, curators Jean-Marc Besse and Guillaume Monsaingeon explored islands not merely as locations, but as philosophical, literary, historical, artistic, social, and cultural inventions entangled with time. However, according to Besse and Monsaingeon, the notion of *island time* is neither plain nor unproblematic. This concept frequently mirrors spatial exoticism, grounded in imperial and colonial legacies and sustaining Western notions of temporal otherness. The exhibition thus sought to examine the different ways in which “island experience stretches time and space” or “dilutes the physical realities affirmed by atlases” (Besse & Monsaingeon, 2019, p. 13), challenging the

² Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilisations in Marseille

common assumption of islands as “a mode of isolation” (Besse & Monsaingeon, 2019, p. 15). In other words, by contrasting the expected associations of island time with those revealed through closer inquiry, the exhibition exposed the conceptual foundations of what is perceived as island time, examined it through notions of distance and proximity, and revealed the epistemic violence enacted through the naturalisation of time. The Museum of Mediterranean and European Civilizations, even in its name, might have suggested that the exhibition would cater to or flatter the temporal otherness that often deepens the image of “islands and islanders as threatened exotic curiosa in the grand museum of civilization” (Baldacchino, 2008, p. 46). Yet its location in Marseille—a kind of “second city” in the French context (cf. Baldacchino, Oroz, & Čuka, 2024, pp. 239–240)—and the provocative curatorial approach make clear that such implications are unfounded. The perspectives the exhibition brought to light, along with the broader epistemic disruptions it enacted, revealed that island time is not a site for celebrating otherness but a point of entry into the complex entanglements of time, space, and power, exposing the cracks and fragility of the epistemologies that produce such notions.

Within Island Studies, the notion of the island as a spatial laboratory has long been criticised for its reductionism, essentialism, and colonial legacy. With the emergence of the relational paradigm, problems of insularity, islandness, and isolation are no longer conceived as fixed givens, but as dynamic processes, thereby challenging the traditionally overly spatialised approach to islands. In the broadly framed and loosely defined field of Island Studies—envisioned as inter-, pluri-, and even transdisciplinary critical inquiry and scholarship (Baldacchino, 2006, pp. 9–10)—the over-privileging of land spaces has been extensively problematised. Scholars have questioned island boundaries, island edges, and the very notion of islands, ultimately arguing that, in many cases, islands should be treated more as a focus than merely as a locus of study (Ronström, 2009, p. 163). As such, according to some of the most frequently cited authors, they inspire transgression, restlessness, and the breach of barriers (Hay, 2006, p. 23), point to the permeability of boundaries (Baldacchino, 2007, p. 5), and explore the potential of marine-terrestrial aquapelagic assemblages in aquapelagic societies (Hayward, 2012). However, time, which could productively complement spatial analysis, often remains obscured or relegated to the background within an epistemological hierarchy that treats it as secondary to the multiplicity of spatial relations. It would be misleading to claim that Island Studies ignore time or are time-blind. On the contrary, the work of some authors stands out for its sustained engagement with questions of temporality, although in different epistemological frames and sometimes even beyond formal connections with Island Studies.

Phillip Vannini’s work on time anticipated this shift by linking questions of (im)mobility, temporality, and islands. His reflections on temporality gradually developed through the study of waiting as an embodied and infrastructural experience of becoming, approached through the lens of mobility in a globalised world (Vannini, 2002, pp. 193–208), and through the problematisation of the concept of *island time*, which he defines as a socially constructed and highly ritualised rhythm interwoven with space and ferry infrastructure (Hodson & Vannini, 2007). Vannini’s interest in island time culminates in his book *Ferry tales: Mobility, place, and time on Canada’s West Coast* (2012), where he provides an ethnographically grounded exploration of the concept. He examines island time as a specific experience, practice, and representation of time in ferry-dependent communities, which are entangled with the simplifications and dramatisations of spatial rhythms, temporal regimes, schedules, senses of place, mobilities, speed, feeling, and technology (Vannini, 2012). Vannini’s problematisation of temporality opens up space for the exploration of diverse spatial attunements to island time, and in this sense, his work can indeed be considered a stepping

stone in the study of temporality that is neither ensnared in binaries nor hierarchically subordinated to space.

Vannini's interest in island time is not unique. Although often cited as exemplary within Island Studies, it forms part of a broader but still emergent body of scholarship inspired by relational and archipelagic turn that increasingly examines the shifting configurations of space and time that emerge through island–sea relations. In discussions of islands and archipelagos, often fixed as terrestrial masses, watery environments have remained marginal or overlooked (Hayward, 2025, p. 1). In this context, the concept of the aquapelago, introduced by Philip Hayward (2012), opens a productive analytical perspective. By foregrounding the interactions that shape maritime societies, the aquapelago concept challenges rigid distinctions between land and sea and emphasises the relational assemblages that bind marine and terrestrial spaces. However, as is often the fate of widely cited concepts that travel through citation and accumulate new meanings, the aquapelago is frequently invoked in spatial terms that remain detached from its temporal dimension. As a social unit and performed entity entangled with senses of identity and belonging, aquapelagos, according to Hayward, “come into being and wax and wane as climate patterns alter and as human socioeconomic organisations, technologies, and/or the resources and trade systems they rely on change and develop in these contexts” (2012, p. 6). In this sense, the processual and performative nature of the aquapelago points to a temporal dimension that often remains obscured by interpretations focused primarily on its spatial configuration, despite the fact that aquapelagic formations unfold through time and shape present configurations. The temporal aspect of the aquapelago comes more explicitly to the fore in Hayward's later work. His research on overlapping and often conflicting temporalities in the Whitsundays (2022) seeks to move beyond the tensions produced by the predominantly spatial and ahistorical orientations of Island Studies, as well as by geographically dominant approaches to islands that privilege spatiality. Situating his analysis within the context of temporal extremes and climatic changes associated with the Anthropocene, Indigenous and colonial encounters, infrastructures of time, and the temporal logics of tourism, Hayward conceptualises the Whitsundays through multiple speeds, trajectories, and senses of time that condition both development and decay (2022, p. 93). Through successive aquapelagic assemblages that wax and wane over time—from Indigenous Ngaro presence to colonial temporal hegemony and contemporary tourism dynamics—the Whitsundays emerge as a temporally constituted formation, materialising unevenly through overlapping regimes of acceleration and persistence that expose the ethical stakes of the Anthropocene.

The thematic issue of the journal *Narodna umjetnost* titled ‘Islands and Time: Island Temporalities in the Context of Island Research’ represents only one aspect of my longstanding interest in island temporalities (Oroz, 2020, 2022, 2024; Čuka and Oroz, 2024; Oroz, 2026). Studies examining the above-mentioned temporalities of the Whitsundays (Hayward, 2022), the connection between different experiences of time and tourism-driven seasonality on the island of Hvar (Čapo, 2022), the mobility practices and temporalities emerging from Armenians commuting to the Princes' Islands (Öztürk, 2022), and the spatialisation of time on the island of Dugi otok in Dalmatia—arising from the intertwined experiences of fishers, factory workers, and tourism (Oroz, 2022)—illustrate how temporality can be analysed through the intersecting lenses of space, labour, gender, and class, revealing how multiple temporal regimes inform island rhythms and shape contemporary island life. Recently, the issue of temporality has emerged in the context of exploring contested spatio-temporalities on Penan Island, Malaysia, and the islanders' rights to an alternative future beyond the development project-imposed timetables (De Giosa, 2024). This body of literature on temporalities should also be expanded to include scholars who are only loosely

associated with Island Studies, but whose work offers fruitful perspectives for understanding island temporalities. Such contributions often emerge from more location-specific contexts, yet their insights sometimes remain confined by disciplinary boundaries and the epistemic cultures of their respective fields—each cultivating its own norms of inquiry, evidentiary standards, and temporal horizons (Knorr Cetina, 1999). As a result, these studies rarely position themselves within Island Studies and often circulate without being recognised as contributing to it, revealing a broader epistemic gap between disciplinary conversations. Island Studies, in turn, risks overlooking temporal complexity as a central dimension of its otherwise loosely defined analytical framework.

Kevin Birth's *Any time is Trinidad time: Social meanings and temporal consciousness* similarly provides an ethnographic insight into the social and cultural construction of time in rural Trinidad, in the village of Anamat (a pseudonym), where diverse and often conflicting temporalities intertwine and overlap. Through an analysis of highly metaphorical expressions and the language in which different temporal markers are animated, Birth highlights generational, class, ethnic, kinship, and gender relations that both emerge into view and negotiate diverse temporal frameworks. Different strategies for coordinating time diffuse and circulate through social networks (Birth, 1999, p. 167). Such phenomena cannot be fully understood without considering the Caribbean context, in which the plantation era, the post-emancipation transformation of the plantation system, World War II, the late colonial era of patronage, national independence, and the oil boom shape these temporal orientations. Of particular interest is his analysis of the practice of *liming*—hanging out at gas stations, in front of the school, by the road, or in rum shops—which Birth interprets as a cultural form of resistance to the clock-wise orientation of time, a cultural expression through which the island's diverse rhythms and temporalities are enacted (Birth, 1999, p. 82).

Building on the idea of socially and culturally constructed temporalities in rural Trinidad, Swanston Baker (2024) extends the ethnographic exploration of island time to the Caribbean, focusing on St. Kitts and Nevis, and examining how temporal rhythms are entangled with music, speed, and cultural resistance. She engages with these deeply rooted imaginaries, thereby opening space for more nuanced, complex, and multilayered realities. Swanston Baker grounds her research in an ethnomusicological approach and in her intimate connections with the islands and uses the concept of island time to map Caribbean music and juxtapose it with speed (Swanston Baker, 2024, p. 7). Speed promises rapid forward movement, but it also marginalises, generating intergenerational anxieties and what Swanston Baker sees as cultural resistance to dominant Western pathways to modernity through dance, which entangles gender, class, race, and time. In her account, island time explores the temporalities of postcolonial island worlds entangled in archipelagic networks and shows how historical, social, and cultural strands weave together temporal experiences and embodied practices of resistance.

The idea of stunted temporality and spatial isolation from the perspective of affect theory is central to Yael Navaro-Yashin's (2012) ethnographic research on the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Situating herself between the phantasmatic and the materially tangible, she explores affective attunements to island space entangled with diverse temporalities. Interested in the stunted temporality that marks everyday life in the aftermath of the political partition of Cyprus, Navaro-Yashin examines the spatial qualities of temporality emerging from assemblages of political phantasmatic workings in progress. Through an analysis of methodologies used to assign value to distinct properties—such as cartographic tools, title documents like passports and ownership papers, the borders between political entities, and

the office spaces of a Maps Department—she investigates stunted temporality as a “historically referenced account of being spatially enclosed and temporally in limbo for an indefinite period” (Navaro-Yashin, 2012, p. 7). This interrupted temporality, which unfolds through networks connecting people, materialities, and environments, is enforced by the phantomic yet affectively present, discharging into and being charged by the environment. Although Navaro-Yashin does not prioritise temporality as a distinct characteristic of island space, it permeates her work on multiple levels and emerges as an analytically compelling approach that foregrounds affect as socially and politically charged, offering insights into the temporalities of everyday life. In her own way, she complements similar studies by showing that island time is a complex, multilayered phenomenon rather than a singular, linear framework.

Borut Telban’s work in Papua New Guinea offers a productive example of how temporality can be theorised in archipelagic contexts outside the explicit framework of Island Studies. His concept of egalitarian temporality examines the dynamic interplay between time, environment, and social relations (Telban, 2017, p. 1–21). Among the Ambonwari people, temporality is not organised through abstract, metric units characteristic of Western time-reckoning but through named locations in the landscape that encode clan affiliation (Telban, 2017, p. 3–5). The multiplicity of times inherent in egalitarian temporality entails a rejection of singular authority (Telban, 2017, p. 6) and privileges relational, embodied, and sensory forms of knowledge. Chronology, when it emerges in narrative, is inseparable from spatial movement rather than detached linear succession (Telban, 2017, p. 7). Time is thus never empty or homogeneous but a coexistence of oscillating temporalities (Telban, 2017, p. 13), filled with heterogeneity and change (Telban, 2017, p. 14). Although Telban’s ethnography builds on earlier anthropological scholarship in the broader Melanesian context, his analysis of temporality unsettles binary temporal models and reveals the enduring epistemological constraints that shape both classical anthropology and contemporary island-oriented frameworks, where spatialisation often takes precedence over temporal complexity.

A different yet related perspective on temporal plurality emerges in analyses of extractive regimes. The question of mining temporalities in the context of West Papua (Blesia et al., 2023) offers an example of how extractive regimes reorganise temporal horizons in island environments. The authors address this issue through the concept of braided chronology, which they introduce to account for conflicts over mining temporalities and to recognise “the plural nature of circumstances, events and experiences” (Blesia et al., 2023, p. 1). Treating mining as a complex assemblage of temporal processes and competing chronologies, the authors examine tensions between mining companies—supported by the Indonesian government and private military forces operating in West Papua—and the Amungme and Mimika peoples. The latter’s socio-economic and cultural lifeworlds remain deeply entangled with the local landscape. Starting from the assumption that differences in chronologies take the form of a braid—thus implying plural and coexisting temporal perspectives—the authors explore these relations through a braided form of chronologising multiple experiences. While they suggest that such a chronology can “help improve understanding of the transformation any indigenous population anywhere, even in so-called developed countries, can experience” (Blesia et al., 2023, p. 16), the notion of the braided ultimately remains more metaphorically suggestive than analytically generative. It captures the coexistence of perspectives while only partially addressing the asymmetrical power relations that structure them. This limitation becomes particularly evident in the authors’ treatment of the future, which continues to be framed as a domain of potential opportunity and exploitation even when it emerges from conditions of uncertainty and dispossession. In this sense, temporalities appear not merely as sources of misunderstanding between actors

but as an active infrastructure of extractive capitalism that is hardly reconcilable with attempts to understand it. Although the island setting is empirically central to the case, it remains largely under theorised in the analysis, with the island appearing primarily as a spatial backdrop to extractive conflict rather than as a site where the temporal regimes of global extraction become materially and socially condensed.

Despite numerous interventions challenging the popular notion of islands as isolated or static spaces, the discursive geographies shaping these imaginaries continue to operate as underlying, often tacit assumptions, reproducing this image even as spatial distances shrink. As Gillis (2001) has pointed out, time and space are mutually intertwined, yet islands continue to be perceived as remote and anchored in an idea of pastness—regardless of their actual histories—and shaped by historically entrenched mainland imaginaries that produce and sustain this perception, often at the expense of local communities. Such imaginaries frequently rely on temporal markers that frame time through the rhetoric of before and after, past and present, producing what Ronström (2021) terms *allochronism*, a strategy that symbolically maintains stability and continuity in a world increasingly defined by change and mobility (p. 278). This persistent framing of islands as temporally “out of sync” exemplifies how temporal marginalisation functions as a form of epistemic violence and spatial dominance. Alternative temporalities are erased, and local experience is subordinated to dominant, linear narratives of development and modernity. Time, in these frameworks, is drenched in linear progression as the only conceivable mode and reinforced by strategies of temporal alternation.

In the context of the interdisciplinarity of Island Studies, plurality—whether theoretical, methodological, disciplinary, or epistemological—can be seen as a strength (Baldacchino, 2008, p. 50; Grydehøj, 2017, p. 6) that encourages epistemic contamination and the transcendence of the boundaries that constitute well-established disciplines. Consequently, the diversity of disciplines mobilised within Island Studies is often celebrated through the rhetoric of pluralism and interdisciplinary cooperation. However, this frequently comes at the cost of (un)intentional attachments to epistemologies that privilege specific temporal regimes and neglect temporal pluralism. This oversight, which unintentionally disciplines scholars and favours particular approaches to time, shapes how time becomes conceptually legible, comprehended, and articulated.

Drawing on Kant’s notion of critique, Judith Butler introduces the concept of the *rogue viewpoint*, expanding his critique to address the legitimacy of knowledge that remains obscure, implicit, or marginalised within historically arbitrary disciplinary boundaries (2009: 777). While Butler develops this idea in relation to academic freedom, her understanding of what constitutes the *rogue* unsettles the presumed legitimacy of knowledge by exposing it as historically situated, institutionally disciplined, and fundamentally contingent. The rogue viewpoint thus operates not merely as an epistemological provocation but as a critical force that contests the regimes through which knowledge is authorised. In the context of Island Studies, where spatial imaginaries continue to dominate analytical frameworks, rogue viewpoints intervene as both an epistemological warning and a methodological gesture. As such, they enable a re-examination of the conditions under which temporalities are rendered invisible or systematically eclipsed, while also informing new methodological orientations and research approaches. Rogue viewpoints redirect attention toward non-hegemonic modalities of time—such as slowness, duration, idleness, time dragging, boredom, multiplicity, and rhythm—that are routinely disqualified by the imperatives of efficiency, development, and speed. These temporalities are often framed as being “out of time,” an interpretation rooted in historically entrenched Eurocentric temporal imaginaries and

reinforced by the increasingly normalised discipline of project-based research, with its milestones, metrics, and deliverables. What is at stake, then, is not merely the inclusion of alternative temporalities, but a confrontation with the epistemic violence that renders particular ways of inhabiting time illegible within the field—a condition that rogue viewpoints seek to expose.

Although calls for interdisciplinarity in Island Studies are not merely symbolic but actively institutionalised, knowledge produced in island research, when viewed from the perspective of the rogue viewpoint, often functions to discipline and reproduce temporalities in line with institutional expectations of usefulness, manageability, and operability. From this perspective, interdisciplinarity does not automatically unsettle dominant temporal regimes; rather, it may reinforce them by filtering temporal aspects through criteria of productivity and applicability. The question of time in Island Studies is therefore not an untimely concern—to borrow Nietzsche’s metaphor—but a critical question of how, and under what conditions, multiple temporalities emerging in diverse relations to space have been disciplined and stabilised as coherent temporal regimes. In this sense, following Butler (2009), a critique of critique as constitutive of a rogue viewpoint aims to expose what is implicitly known yet remains unexamined, relegated to the margins, and left largely uncriticised (pp. 781–782). Consequentially, the overshadowing of time by space—a recurring syndrome in Island Studies despite repeated assertions of their inseparability—points to an underlying relational structure that can be conceptualised as a *spiral-fractal unfolding of space-time*. Space and time, ambivalent yet intertwined, operate in parallel, generating tensions across scales. Space unfolds through multiplicity and heterogeneity, expanding fractally into zones that exceed deterministic constraints, while time appears to recur in familiar linear progressions yet simultaneously spirals forward, binding continuity and transformation together. Fractal space and spiral time thus coexist, overlap, and intersect, revealing asymmetries and tensions while also opening a generative potential for rethinking islands as analytical foci. Within this paradox, local island phenomena emerge, loops recur, and global processes entangle, intersect, and resonate, enabling us to apprehend specific problems, trace island rhythms on their own terms, and perceive the dynamic choreography of island movement, scale, and temporal depth. Therefore, rogue viewpoints are not merely theoretical abstractions; they reveal a persistent gap created by the asymmetrical power relations permeating spatio-temporal regimes, and their effects are evident in how islands continue to be imagined and narrated, despite interventions challenging static or isolated depictions.

The Time to Come: Island Temporalities and the Possibilities of More-than-Spatial Perspectives

Thinking about temporalities within Island Studies extends beyond critiques of their (in)visibility. This reflective essay calls for re-examining the potential of temporalities across diverse epistemologies, practices, and disciplinary legacies. It also invites exploration of how attention to temporalities could transform island research beyond a predominantly spatial approach—reshaping epistemologies, informing solutions, and in a practical sense, empowering island communities. In this light, should thinking about Island Studies be framed within a future-oriented approach looming over the field, or is it more productive to imagine an open invitation to think *with* islands across the multiplicity of their own temporal horizons? Grydehøj’s claim that there is “no future for Island Studies” points to the impossibility of a single, fixed trajectory for the field. While his reflections resonate with his

inaugural editorial in *Island Studies Journal*, which frames Island Studies as a “scholarly project that is not fixed, fusty, or static” (p. 3), they also gesture toward a profound shift. Rather than envisioning a single future, his conception of the field—as uncertain, fragmented, plural, democratic, inclusive, globally relevant, and unbound by prescriptive canons—anticipates multiple possible futures. Here, ‘futures’ denotes many potential paths for the field, not a fixed trajectory. Such disciplinary reflection on the field of Island Studies can be further extended through Baldacchino and Niles’s concept of “futurability,” understood as the capacity to imagine or create alternatives to existing structures (2017, pp. 2–3), when thinking with islands and their possible futures.

But what kinds of futures—or absences—are at stake here? If we extend this question beyond the future of the discipline itself, is the future the most appropriate framework for thinking about the potential directions of research? When it comes to island future(s), I remain highly critical of the future, not because of its ontological status, but because the cause-and-effect structure of language risks perpetuating a linear, arrow-like temporality that frames scholarship as a field of endless possibilities imbued with progressivist assumptions. Still, I am hopeful that future(s) might allow island scholars and islanders to confront reductive linearism and pursue alternative paths toward what they envision as the future. Yet thinking about the future or its conceptual alternatives is inseparable from today’s academic environment, where precarious work, grant-driven research cycles, and project timelines with milestones and deliverables both limit and shape the temporal horizons of Island Studies within which the field is imagined and practiced.

These temporal tensions are also reflected in the internal dynamics of Island Studies itself. Within the internal tensions that characterise Island Studies—its celebration of plurality on the one hand, and externally imposed pressures for efficiency on the other—the question arises: what does it mean to think about islands “on their own terms” today (McCall, 1994)? This question is further complicated by the context of the Anthropocene and the multiple crises—ecological, political, economic, and public health crises—that mark our time. Crisis, a term that once implied a brief moment of instability between otherwise “stable” periods, has become a permanent condition shaping life in the Anthropocene and increasingly precarious futures (Oroz, 2024, p. 29). Under such conditions, questions of temporality become central to how we understand both the worlds we study and the ways in which research itself is conducted. As Anna Tsing and associates observe, such conditions compel us “to reexamine both our objects of study and the lives of those with whom we work” (Tsing, Mathews, & Bubandt, 2019, p. 187). Therefore, the Anthropocene obliges us to confront the hidden costs of sustaining the current vision of the world and to imagine alternative futures through new ethical and political vocabularies. This calls for a new “ecology of time,” attentive to diverse temporalities and rhythms, that resists reductive understandings of time (Paquot, 2014, p. 34) and opens space for temporalities in which human understandings of time no longer occupy a privileged position (Rose, 2013–2014, p. 207). Such a perspective invites us to reconsider how temporal frameworks shape both the epistemological foundations of research and the practical conditions under which Island Studies is produced. In this context, how might we revisit Grant McCall’s invitation to understand islands as sites for alternative models of development (Baldacchino, 2006, p. 10), when island research—like many other fields—is often guided by agendas that privilege speed, efficiency, and rapid outcomes (Eriksen, 2001), often at the expense of the rhythms and temporalities of those with whom we seek to think islands on their own terms?

Such a reorientation toward an “ecology of time” is already evident in strands of scholarship that draw on postcolonial theory, Indigenous epistemologies, and the environmental

humanities. Some of these ideas appear in the writings of Jonathan Pugh and Elizabeth DeLoughrey, whose scholarship draws on postcolonial theory, Indigenous epistemologies, and environmental humanities to raise critical questions about temporality. Through a critical reading of Braithwaite's concept of tidalectics, DeLoughrey engages with the aquatic metaphors of the Caribbean and the Atlantic, tracing them through the works of Édouard Glissant and Antonio Benítez-Rojo to rethink Caribbean history, migration, and regionalism, bringing to the fore questions of aquatic reterritorialisation, constant flux, and the floating, free-rooted character of the Caribbean (1998, p. 33). Her approach invites us to break with fixed and homogenising discourses of nation and historical events while highlighting the spatio-temporal complexity of these regions, in which time unfolds irregularly and non-linearly through diverse movements and currents (1998, pp. 18, 26). Consequently, islands emerge as spaces of uncharted historiography, absorbed in constant flux and undermining colonial fragmentation (1998, p. 25). The question of temporality becomes especially intriguing in the context of the Anthropocene. DeLoughrey (2019) suggests that mismatches between local perspectives and the global dimensions of planetary crisis can be addressed through allegory as a mode of critical thinking. She frames the planetary crisis as both a spatial and temporal rupture, simultaneously forward-looking and retrospectively anticipatory (DeLoughrey, 2019, p. 4). This perspective—neither a legacy of Eurocentric thought nor defined by a fixed epoch, but shaped by temporal wandering that “engages different modes of temporality such as more-than-human models of history and deep time” (DeLoughrey, 2015, p. 353)—invites a critical examination of how colonial histories and postcolonial cultures shape our understanding of the present and our perception of time (Ganguly, 2004). Within this framework, islands emerge as key sites for rethinking the Anthropocene and its temporal reshuffling. DeLoughrey's reflections align with those of Pugh and Chandler (2021), who argue that the island, rather than being a bounded, isolated space, opens onto a dynamic ontology of spatial and temporal becoming (pp. 7, 9).

Conceptualising the Anthropocene requires not only a release from modernist constraints, but also openness to new ontological and onto-epistemological approaches. Islands, rather than being passive settings, provoke new ways of understanding as they unfold through processes of world-making (Pugh & Chandler, 2021, p. 72). Under such circumstances, to think with islands and in their own terms presupposes a kind of “return that moves forward” (Dubey & de Jouvancourt, 2018, p. 125)—entering into experimentation with alternative regimes of temporality and different modes of thought—or, as Dubey and de Jouvancourt (2018) suggest in *Mauvais temps: Anthropocène et numérisation du monde*, opening the possibility of redrawing a different cartography of the possible as a ground for collective action (pp. 26–27). Multiple temporalities, in which the presumed universality of time is suspended, thus become more than a utopian negation of linearity or a detachment from spatiality; they emerge as an analytical and pragmatic practice through which islands might claim greater autonomy over their own rhythms and trajectories of development.

These reflections should not necessarily be read as a “warning” to Island Studies, nor as an attempt to privilege a single discipline—one to which I myself belong—whose epistemologies must be binding on other disciplines or alternative perspectives. The strength of Island Studies lies precisely in its undisciplined character and epistemic playfulness, within which much of its potential resides. Viewed from the perspective of rogue viewpoints, calls for rethinking the future—or futures—become an invitation to epistemological diversity and to the recognition of multiple temporal experiences beyond linear conceptions of time. In this sense, the rogue viewpoint exceeds mere metaphor, functioning instead as an epistemic force that disrupts the spatial binarism animating island-mainland imaginaries and narratives of isolation. At the same time, it calls for epistemological disobedience, as well

as a rejection of temporality reduced to linearity, instrumentalisation, or the managed colonisation of the future. Rogue viewpoints therefore offer a analytical perspective for apprehending space–time as relationally unfolding across islands, fostering diverse modes of spatio-temporal resistance. They do not reanimate parochialism nor naturalise the illusion of autonomous island reclamation; rather, they operate through a critical engagement with relationality, difference, and non-hegemonic temporalities. Seen in this light, rogue viewpoints are not merely critical gestures but invitations to rethink how temporal frameworks shape island research itself. One possible way forward lies in what might be described as temporal attunement.

To move beyond the implicit assumptions about time that have characterised island scholarship, Island Studies can gain new insights by adopting temporal attunement—a framework attentive to uneven and competing temporal processes such as delays, accelerations, suspensions, anticipations, and rhythms that actively shape islands. Temporal attunement does not introduce a new theory of time but proposes an analytical sensitivity attentive to how temporal processes unfold in island contexts. Rather than treating time as monodimensional or detached from space, temporal attunement provides both an epistemological lens and methodological orientation for understanding how spatial formations, ecological transformations, and socio-cultural phenomena are lived, governed, and imagined. This perspective could open new insights into established themes of Island Studies—such as development, mobility, environmental conservation, belonging, tourism, resource management, and resilience—by examining how spatial and temporal processes intersect. It also invites a reconsideration of these dynamics beyond land-centred temporal frameworks privileging linear time, which often sit in tension with the lived experiences of islanders. By foregrounding temporal attunement, Island Studies can generate insights into both long-standing and emerging concerns. Rather than approaching islands as victims of geopolitical carving, as tourism-driven laboratories, or as an exotic temporal “other,” temporal attunement provides a basis for understanding dynamic processes without prioritising space over time or establishing a hierarchy between them. Instead, attention to the dynamic interplay of space and time provides a basis for rethinking seasonality, tensions between social and ecological rhythms, and the diverse temporal regimes shaping island communities. These dynamics become visible in practices as delays, postponements, development planning, migration patterns, and shifting practices of belonging. A temporally attuned perspective also reorients the questions that can be asked, from how development becomes entangled with local temporalities to what conservation means in the context of the Anthropocene and how such temporal framings shape the futures imagined for island communities.

Beyond its analytical potential, a focus on temporal attunement does not confine islands or islanders within stereotypes that cast them as “out of time.” Rather, it empowers them to navigate such conditions in their own terms while opening space for new ethical and political vocabularies about islands and islanders. Emphasising the multiplicity and relationality of time provides a productive framework for Island Studies, where uneven social, ecological, economic, and developmental rhythms cannot be understood solely through a spatial lens reinforcing the island–mainland dichotomy. Approaching islands through the theoretical optics of time allows scholars to move beyond simplistic or romanticised notions of islands as “timeless” or isolated and to examine how island communities, their futures, and the multiplicity of temporal experiences are produced, negotiated, and contested across local, regional, and global scales. Seen from this perspective, the question becomes not only methodological but also epistemological: how might Island Studies itself remain open to such temporal plurality? On the occasion of *Shima*’s first decade of publication, Hayward

(2016, p. 8) recalls that the journal's original intention was not to disrupt Island Studies for its own sake, but to open island debates to other disciplines, communities, and broader conversations. Now, it may be time to revisit Hayward's call to "rattle the cage." Yet perhaps, instead of rattling the cage, we might consider how to unlock it, allowing Island Studies to circulate more freely in the world and, in turn, to reshape it. This is neither an escape nor an act of abandonment, and it is no cause for anxiety. After all, birds often return. And when they do, they return changed, hopefully carrying with them a sense of the world beyond their familiar horizon. Integrating temporality into Island Studies, which are inherently interdisciplinary, may foster greater attentiveness to the need for re-examining our ecology of learning (Geertz 1990, p. 323). In this way, various disciplines might, to paraphrase Geertz, enter one another's territories like migratory geese, fostering more sustained and productive forms of engagement.

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