# Traversing Doctoral Borderlands: Black doctoral students' experiences of identity construction in South Africa

**A thesis submitted in full fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Studies**

By Rudo Fortunate Hwami

Supervised by Professor Louise Vincent

March 2021

# Abstract

Doctoral studies are described as a process of formation and becoming. This is an in-between space between unknowing and knowing, within and without the ivory tower of academia. In this in-between space the doctoral candidate takes the role of a novice and apprentice unlearning the student/unknowing past and learning to become a professional in academia. This project utilises the borderlands theory to understand the experiences of doctoral students as they undergo the process of becoming and intellectual identity formation. Whilst 'journey' and other metaphors that have been used to understand doctoral student experiences capture the process of becoming as a progression through the liminal stages – proposal, literature review, context, writing, reading etc. These stages presuppose temporality of being leading to stasis/completion. I argue that such conceptualisation of doctoral studies, although useful, depict one side of the story and provide a limited, monolithic, and homogenising understanding of the spatial configurations of doctoral space and intellectual identity formation. The dominant discourses of doctoral conceived and perceived space, liminal stages and understanding of doctoral student experiences, mask the more latent and intimate liminal stages of intellectual identity formation. Drawing from borderlands theory, I firstly argue for a holistic approach to understanding the spatiality of doctorate studies. Secondly, I argue that liminality is an everyday process integral to human existence where one is always in a state of ideological transition. An important state of liminality is the awareness of 'Self' in perpetual motion, caught between two worlds dominated/dominator and two ideologies of oppression/resistance. If this side of liminality is not made visible, institutional spaces, such as the doctorate, privileged with the power to disseminate and position onto-epistemologies as universal can be used to reproduce and reinforce exclusionary onto-epistemologies that subsequently impact intellectual identity formation. Using Lefebvre's (1991) rhythmanalysis method, I use student experiences not as mere data for analysis, but as an act of envisioning, reinventing and co-knowledge production to propose borderlands as a new metaphor to study doctoral spatial realities and the experiences of the students that traverse through it.

# List of acronyms and abbreviations

CHE: Council on Higher Education

CHET: Centre for Higher Education Transformation

DHET: Department of Higher Education and Training

DoE: Department of Education

HE: Higher Education

HBU: Historically Black Universities

HWU: Historically White Universities

MoE: Ministry of Education

MHE: Minister of Higher Education

NCHE: National Commission on Higher Education

NPHE: National Plan for Higher Education

NQF: National Qualifications Framework

# List of figures

# List of Tables

# Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Prof. Louise Vincent, for her patience, advice, and valuable input. I am humbled by the experience that you have given me. From my Honours degree to my Doctorate, you have always encouraged me even in times I had lost all hope. Thank you for believing in my capabilities and for helping me develop them.

To my parents: my mother Patricia Mashoro, you are my rock and I thank you for helping me remove all fears and doubts. I see your hand in everything I do and although it is sometimes hard to see, your way is and will always be for my betterment. My stepfather, your pride in my achievements has never gone unnoticed and your beaconing has helped me in times I have wanted to give up. I love you both eternally.

I would like to thank everyone who encouraged me along the way and gave me the strength not to give up. To Lutho, I cannot describe how much you have been a pillar of strength. You are a sister and a friend, and I am grateful for your presence in my life. To my best friend, Chipo Jakachira, although you are miles away, you have always managed to remind me that I am not alone in all my struggles. You have become a sister in the seventeen years that I have known you, I love you and cherish you beyond words can express. To Chipo Munyuki, I couldn't have asked for a better friend. Thank you for the support and love throughout the journey.

To Pule, my love this journey would have been a little lonelier if I had to traverse it alone, your presence filled an otherwise toilsome experience with surprises and laughter and for that I am grateful.

I would also want to give a standing ovation to my little sister Ruvimbo, for being herself. Through all my mistakes and shortcomings, you have managed to always see inspiration within me. You have never ceased idolising me and this encourages me to become what you see in me. Always with positive and encouraging words, you are a shining star in my life and irreplaceable. To my younger brother Enock, thank you for always adding humour to my life and advising me when times were hard for me along the way.

To my son, Ethan, thank you for being.

Lastly, thank you to Mr. Chingombe for helping me believe in myself. It was you who first saw potential in me and groomed me. I have never forgotten how you told me I was the best until I became the best. Although I doubt myself at times, it is within contact with educators like you that young minds are encouraged to grow. Thank you for the personal relationship you afforded me.

To my participants, your stories made this thesis possible.

# Table of Contents

# Introduction

"Knowledge is as old as humanity, but the act of conceptualizing knowledge is not really so old" (Stricklin 2000, 2). At surface level, this statement by Stricklin is benign and uncontested. However, ideological questions of what knowledge and the genealogy of knowledge conceptualisation reveal that our taken for granted definitions are ideological boundaries. In this case, for instance, Stricklin goes on to say:

> *We are the fruit of only some 2500 years of Western intellect and so we can easily trace our knowledge of knowledge from Plato, to William of Ocham, to Aquinas, to Newton, to Kant, to Hegel, to Marx, to Einstein, to Wittgenstein and so forth down to the present day (Stricklin 2000, 2).*

He shifts the conversation from knowledge being a planetary pursuit and locates it in the geo-body of the Caucasian Self. This ideological position is monolithic and forecloses on the possibility of alternative genealogies of knowledge. The view of the author is a reproduction of normalised ontological choices that grants "[W]estern invention of universal history the status of truth without parenthesis" (Mignolo 2012: ix). I do not attempt to make a claim about the intentions of the author, but to highlight that our definitions and conceptual framings are ideological positions. Furthermore, when these ideological positions are institutionalised, they reproduce and weave themselves into the culture and practices of academic institutions. Hence the use of conceptual tools, such as metaphors, can manifest as onto-epistemological boundaries which in turn delineate the parameters of how we conceive, perceive, and live-in space. Drawing from Lefebvre's arguments about the production of space, far from being a neutral and empty canvas that is acted upon, space – material or abstract – is a political and social construct informed and structured by hegemonic imaginaries (1991). Traversing through space is thus a process of co-creation – bodies impact on space whilst, in turn, our identities are co-created by spatial realities.

Various spatial metaphors and conceptual metaphors have been applied to both higher education (HE) as a whole, and doctoral studies. Higher education has been defined as a field, landscape, site etc. Such metaphors are meant to conceptualise the role of higher education and doctoral studies (Kehm 2015; Stein 2019; Marginson 2009; Mmeje et al. 2009; McAlpine,

Paré, and Starke-Meyerring 2011; Walker 2006; Marginson et al. 2015). Conceptual metaphors such as racialised, marginalised and exclusionary space have also been applied to higher education (Tumubweinee and Luescher 2019b; Hendricks 2018; Jackson and Mazzei 2013; Kruss, Haupt, and Visser 2016; Akala 2018). Tumubweinee and Luescher argue that in "geographical regions with a colonial history… space, language and identity" are intricately connected, particularly in higher education (2019a, v). They further argue that space is a co-producer of the everyday, and our conception of space frames how we perceive and conceptualise space. In higher education, and specifically doctoral studies, the everyday is linked to knowledge production which is a social product. As argued by Lefebvre (2001), social processes are the actual content of life and they occur in space, making our conceptualisation of space critical in both the rationalisation for how space is used, and our understanding of bodies in space.

## Rationale

In what has come to be known as the 'knowledge society', the university is seen as the hub of knowledge production and doctoral education as a key producer of scholars and innovators. This makes the doctoral space one of the most important sites of knowledge production for the content produced, and the quality of future knowledge creators produced. In post-apartheid South Africa, higher education continues to grapple with the impact of 50 years of structural and systematic racial discrimination. The contours of higher education landscape can be understood against the backdrop of the national (political and social) changes post 1994. Previously, apartheid as a regime co-opted space as a tool of control and subjugation. Physical space was conceived through racial modalities and ideologies of the apartheid system. Higher education institutions were not immune to policy driven discrimination and segregation. The built environment of higher education institutions mirrored and continues to mirror the apartheid and colonial conceptions of space (Badat, 2008). As fencing, brick, and mortar acted as a safeguard against trespassers and undesirables, hegemonic ideologies acted, and continue to act, as foreclosure to alternative ways of knowing and being. Thus, the pre-1994 system was an apartheid of both physical and abstract space.

During apartheid, the Master's degree enjoyed the same ranking as that of the doctorate internationally i.e., highly educated South Africans held Master's degrees, while academics

elsewhere held doctorates. This meant that, by international standards, higher education in South Africa pre-1994 was lagging (Bunting 2006). Thus, as part of the eradication of the apartheid legacy, increasing doctoral participation became one of the key higher education restructuring policies within the broader higher education policy framework post-1994. Various policies were enacted to address and reconfigure higher education spatial issues. Tumubweinee and Luescher highlight some of the key policies addressing spatial issues, for an example:

> *The White Paper on Higher Education (1997), which built on the recommendations of the National Commission for Higher Education (1996), starts out by referencing space primarily in terms of access to higher education in three distinct senses. Firstly, it considers space in terms of "spatial and geographic barriers to access" (DoE, 1997, Section 1.11 [our emphasis]). Secondly, it uses the term 'space' to refer to (funded) student places in various programmes and qualifications, and in terms of overall institutional and system enrolment plans. Thirdly, space is alluded to in the White Paper's reference to the transformation of institutional cultures (2019b).*

In the summary given by the authors, the White Paper commits to transformation of physical, abstract, and lived space. Since the end of the apartheid era in 1994, higher education institutions were forced to undergo restructuring to "forge a new identity to cope with the pressures of globalization" (Mokadi 2004, 1). To achieve this aim, institutions of higher education went through a process of physical and social restructuring through initiatives such as institutional mergers, increased funding, and transformation of institutional cultures (Jansen 2003).

In relation to the doctorate, running parallel attempts to increase quantity and diversity are concerns about quality. The National Doctoral Standard of 2018 states that quality in doctoral studies can be judged by:

> *The quality of the candidate at entry level (commonly dealt with by means of screening and selection processes, and also pre-registration preparedness programmes);*
>
> *the quality of the doctoral programme (including standards for acceptance of the proposal and progress monitoring);*
>
> *the quality of the supervisor (qualifications and experience), and the supervisory process;*

*the quality of the doctoral graduate at exit level (including but not confined to employability);*

*the quality of the thesis (quality of examiners and their reports);*

*the quality of any outputs for the PhD (journal articles and citation rates) (CHE, 2018: 9-10).*

As highlighted above, one of the main intellectual requirements in doctoral studies is a 'significant and original academic contribution to the discipline' (Baptista et al. 2015; Kamler and Thomson 2006). This requirement functions as a universalised cultural value delineating what can and cannot be researched within doctoral standards. Attaining this originality epoch marks coming into being of a doctoral candidate, from novice to expert. However, McDowall and Ramos (2017, 60) argue that doctoral writing often involves "writing from a universal standpoint" where "the type of writing prescribed in theses formats, research methods and 'proper' academic writing has been instrumental in promoting the zero-point epistemologies that prevail through Northern artefacts of knowledge". In the creation of new knowledge, a PhD draws from curricula: methodological, theoretical, and writing tools, which choices are not benign but grounded in particular ideological assumptions and, in turn, impact on and shape intellectual identity formation of a scholar (Hubbard and Kitchin 2011).

The onto-epistemological tools assimilated during the doctoral process, in varying degrees, will be translated into their onto-epistemological choices as future knowledge creators and disseminators. The spatial practices and onto-epistemological choices become the legacy of the scholar through publishing and knowledge assimilation by forthcoming PhD scholars years later. Knowledge and creation of knowledge is not disembodied and dislocated from space and the tools of research: methods, theories, data, articles, and statistics are all a reproduction of onto-epistemological ideologies and normalised spatial practices. This makes PhD studies, and the doctoral student, critical sites of study because they can systematically reinforce colonising and hegemonic ideologies through theoretical, methodological, and linguistic biases. It is from this departure point that doctoral spaces and those that traverse through them became the focus of this study.

## Personal motivation

From coursework in my Honours degree, I developed a passion for critical theory and knowledge production. This passion resonated with my own intellectual history from my years in high school favouring discourses around liberation and decolonial politics. Later in my studies, I developed an interest in qualitative research. Questions of how we know and what we know became a dominating theme, especially in my theoretical choices. Critical theory gave me awareness of the deep complexities within knowledge production and the need for an alternative. Qualitative research attunes me to the fact that, in search for an alternative one has to be guided by the voices of those she seeks to bridge and make visible. Whilst there is a plethora of literature that speaks to the colonisation of knowledge production spaces (Suárez-Krabbe 2009; Walke 2000; Grosfoguel 2002; Gonzalez 2014; Delanty 2001), most literature fragments the idea of doctoral space either focusing on physical, mental, or lived space. On the other hand, there is a lack of literature on student experience that captures the experiences of the doctoral student as a spatial body – acting on space and in turn being acted on by space. When space is fragmented, only part of the story is told depending on what aspect is given privilege: material, abstract or lived space (Bristow, Robinson, and Ratle 2019; Tumubweinee and Luescher 2019b; Temple 2014). In turn, spatial fragmentation displaces and silences aspects of the lived realities of those that traverse through it.

In her book, *Borderlands* (1987), Anzaldúa writes about her experience as a doctoral candidate in the United States of America (USA) trying to locate herself in Chicano/a studies and write from that locus on enunciation. She was told there were no Chicano/a studies in knowledge conceptualisation. Her story captures the narratives of presumable plethora of undocumented voices of not only Chicano/a, but other under/unrepresented and marginalised experiences of doctoral students. Her story also tells the dark side of statistical representations – statistics are a material representation of spatial practices that lack storytelling, which unearths mental and lived spaces. In this way, the epistemic blindness and institutionalised onto-epistemological biases that foreclose alternative ways of knowing and being will continue to be safeguarded and reified. Most important to this thesis is the way in which Anzaldúa's narrative unearths how the doctoral space – material, abstract and lived can be a site of binaries such as Western/other, assimilation/resistance knower subject/unknowing other. This study attempts to step away from homogenizing the experiences of doctoral students or binarizing them.

## Borderlands Theory

I have come to understand my PhD as follows: I make space and space makes me, when I move, I scar space and I embody the residue that space leaves behind. Self and space are co-creators.

My thesis is a combination and a discussion of three phenomena – space/body/identity: the conceptualisation of space, the understanding of the body in space and the embodied experiences of identity formation in space. Anzaldúa argues that all forms of dualism specifically, those that split between space/body/text are imposed social constructs that act as binary confinements and ideological boundaries. In accordance with Wiederhold, "categories are cultural constructs, supported by imbricated institutions that empower them to make meaning in the world" (2005, 114). The body has been predominantly conceptualised dually – mind/body whilst space has been fragmented – physical/abstract/lived. Such fragmentation causes a disjuncture between one's lived realities and imposed notions of spatiality and identity formation. The idea of border-dwelling encapsulated in Anzaldúa's borderland theory ruptures dualism and binarisation as despotic, imposed, and fictitious categorisation. She asserts that the interplay between space, subject and representation does not happen disconnected from the individual but furthermore, the body is a site of contesting and competing spatial discourses and practices. Understanding the body as a social and spatial construct transcends the restrictive reading of borders as "simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as psychic, social and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us" (back cover of Anzaldúa 2007). Borderlands epistemology was introduced by Anzaldúa, not only to describe a space of intersecting boundaries but as an enactment of living in-between intersecting ideologies.

Borderlands theory not only advocates for a differential 'third space', but also a 'third space subject' unfettered by the constraints of despotic dualism of space, of body and identity. In 1987, in her ground-breaking book *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* Anzaldúa drawing from the areal studies of the Texas-USA border added a conceptual and ideological understanding of borderlands that transcended physical borders. Anzaldúa's conceptualisation of borderlands encompassed material, abstract and lived space including psychological, sexual, spiritual, and intellectual borderlands which are not particular to any physical border. Anzaldúa defines borderlands theory as an honest enactment of hearing and seeing the other, a

"transitional space" between worlds where difference is seen and dialogued and multiplicity is accepted (Anzaldúa in Lara 2005, 4). Anzaldúa uses borderlands both as a spatial metaphor and a conceptual tool to articulate hybridity and fluidity of identity. According to Wiederhold, borderlands is a generative metaphor that highlights the "complexities accompanying acts of translation in ways that can help interrogate institutionalized categories" (2005, 110). In this way, *Borderlands* highlights a space of becoming, where identity is fluid and always in motion.

Anzaldúa theorises identity as non-static and in continuous liminality. She conceptualises the process of becoming and transformation as *conocimient*o – "a personal epistemological path based on seven stages of awareness or reflective consciousness" (Elenes 2013, 135). In this thesis, I apply the seven stages of *conocimiento: El arrebato, nepantla, coatlicue,* the call*, Coyolxauhqui*, the blow up and shifting realities, to the experiences of doctoral students in South Africa. The concept of *conocimiento* is a synthesis between space, body, and identity. In the opinion of Keating, *conocimiento* is also an alternative way of knowing "that synthesises reflections with action to create subversive knowledge systems that challenge the *status quo*" (Keating 2000, 5). In the chapter "now let us shift… *conocimiento*… inner work, public acts" included in her book, *Light in the Dark/Luz en lo Oscuro*, Anzaldúa offers the seven stages of *conocimiento* as a "mediation on the rites of passage, the transitions of life from birth to death, and all the daily births and deaths in-between" and as liminal thresholds of identity formation in colonial and oppressive spaces (Anzaldúa 2002, 546).

## Rhythmanalysis

In his book *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*, Lefebvre states that "everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm" (Lefebvre 2004, 15). In his rhythmanalytical project, Lefebvre's ambition is to develop a 'new science' of studying lived experiences that escapes the dialectical dualism subject/object in social theory. He proposes rhythmanalysis as a method that "does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism)" (Lefebvre 2004, 11–12). To capture this complexity, Lefebvre conceives rhythms as all kinds of social phenomena, always in motion, non-reducible to things/objects and subjects of an action or a relation. Part of the innovation of rhythmanalysis is, thus, to simultaneously resist the reification, objectification, and

subjectification of rhythms. Rhythms are used not as an object or subject of analysis but rather as a tool to explore a range of topics.

The aim of my research is to understand individual experiences and space. In this aim, there is an overlap of the disciplines of geography and ethnography. More directly, I aim to understand the individual experiences in the space which intersects the two disciplines of geography and ethnography. This space is also conceptualised as a 'third-space', in-between worlds which consequentially politicises space. To add to this complexity, the borderlands theory uses the metaphor of 'traversing' which suggests aspects of both mobility and temporality. In this sense, no one disciplinary approach could offer belonging. I employed rhythmanalysis methodology because one of its chief cornerstones is its multidisciplinary. The multidisciplinary nature of rhythmanalysis allowed me to foreground my analysis in rhythmanalysis whilst drawing on various other disciplinary perspectives "in order to interpret the world as moving complexity" (Charalampides 2017, 27). To achieve this end, Lefebvre conceptualises the body as the beginning of rhythm working as a metronome of rhythmic pulses. To underscore the importance of the body in understanding time and space, Anzaldúa describes the body as a text that can mediate between different forms of knowledge and act as symbolism for the social world (Anzaldúa 1987).

Data were collected through storytelling, observation, and *autohistoria*. Using Lefebvre's theory of moments, data were analysed using the concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia as analytical tools to analyse the experiences of *conocimiento* as rhythmic assemblages. The aim of the researcher in rhythmanalysis is to firstly focus on each rhythm separately, and then eventually focus on rhythms as a "succession of moments" in order to grasp their intersections (2019, 174). I unpacked and codified every significant moment or epiphany firstly as a singular moment and then subsequently as intersecting successive moments. This approach is also in line with Anzaldúa's view of the stages of *conocimiento* as interrelated singular moments that are successive but not prescriptive or linear.

## Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to open a dialogue on doctoral education as a spatial pluriverse traversed by bodies that embody multiple and sometimes contesting identities. Identity multiplicities transcend the homogenised narratives that categorise and pigeon-hole

individuals. Although categories such as underrepresented students, students of colour etc., can serve an analytical process, often they essentialise. This study seeks to rupture the fiction of identity homogeneity by mapping students' experiences of disidentification, hybridity and epistemic plurality. It also seeks to conceptualise the space that doctoral students traverse in the process of becoming. To achieve this, the borderland is used as a spatial metaphor and conceptual tool of understanding doctoral students' experiences. However, I do not claim to holistically represent the hybridity of identities even within the category of Black doctoral students.

## Thesis structure

### Introduction

In the introductory chapter, I give an introduction of the main claims and aims of the thesis. I also give an overview of the scope, rationale and thesis structure including a breakdown of chapters.

### Context: The Doctoral space and discourses of becoming

Drawing on Lefebvre's spatial triad, this chapter illustrates both the material and abstract spatial realities of doctoral education. Although it is divided into two sections – the first section focusing on perceived/material space and spatial practices and the second section focusing on conceived space and spaces of representations, this division is only for descriptive purposes. The three manifestations of space are discussed in this chapter as unitary and complimentary.

### Conceptual Framework: Borderlands theory

In this Chapter, I examine Anzaldúa's borderlands theory as the conceptual framework for my thesis. I systematically illustrate how the use of borderlands as a spatial metaphor and theoretical framework has enriching implications to the study of the experiences of doctoral students. I use Anzaldúa's seven stages of *conocimiento* as an alternative to understanding doctoral students' experiences of becoming.

## Methodology: Curation of a rhythmanalyst

I make the case for rhythmanalysis as a methodological tool for the exploration of space and spatial experiences in this chapter. Furthermore, the chapter is structured as a personal journey of self-reflexivity embodied in the search for an appropriate methodology for my thesis. I also detail the methodological tools used to answer the research question.

### *El arrebato*

This chapter opens the analysis of doctoral lived space. Additionally, I explore some of the crisis's students experience that rupture their taken for granted norms and core beliefs. I argue that moments of crisis are critical catalysts to bring self-awareness to the contradictions and ambiguities within a present reality resulting in a rupture between Self and reality. Anzaldúa (2002) characterises *el arrebato* is characterised by moments of crises, rupture, and fragmentation of Self and space.

### *Nepantla*

Once individuals experience the disjuncture between perceived realities and new alternatives, they enter a transitional space, displacing them from the old whilst remaining disconnected from the new. In this chapter, I explore the experiences of dissonance brought about when participants traverse the *náhuatl* (the space in-between worlds). I argue that various spatial and onto-epistemic practices position doctoral students in this space, which Lugones defines as "the position of the self being oppressed, terrorized, pressed by two worlds" (Lugones, 89). In this space, the individual is suspended between past contradictions, present conflicting realities, and an uncertain future.

### *Coatlicue*

In this chapter, I argue that the contradictions exposed in *nepantla* become a crossroad of choice. This stage presents an intimate struggle between awareness of an ambiguous cultural/intellectual/sexual identity and "resistance to knowing, to letting go" of the familiar Self for an unknown becoming and thereby "plunging blindly over the crumbling path rimming

the edge of the cliff" (Anzaldua quoted in Garber 2005, 220). I argue that in this stage, one experiences fear of liberation for the Self in-between as this stage because it firstly exposes the unfamiliar and the unknown. Secondly, the Self in-between leads to the responsibility of accepting that one is different. In a colonial, hierarchical, patriarchal, and heteronormative society, 'difference' can be construed as not making sense, non-belonging, and abnormality.

### The call…*el compromiso*

I make the argument that consciously or unconsciously, an individual can choose to enact transformation in their lived realities in this chapter. The fragmented Self begins to move out of the stasis of *Coatlicue* and there is a realisation that the conventional norms that once shaped one's realities can be destabilized, and a new Self can be re-envisioned. I argue that as part of the process of becoming, one sifts through the myths of selfhood imposed, inherited, or cultivated. However, none of these stages are prescriptive and can be experienced in varying ways.

### Putting *Coyolxauhqui* together

This chapter explores how individuals experience identity formation as a process of deconstruction and reconstruction. Whilst in the *El arrebato* stage, fragmentation was as the result of a violent rupture caused by oppressive binarised narratives. At this stage, one engages in self-analysis where one pulls oneself apart, and engages in the task of reconstituting oneself. The argument I make here is that a process of becoming and identity formation involves the unlearning of normalised onto-epistemological assumptions and delinking from the fragmenting and oppressive ideologies. Since identity constructions happen in relation to space and others, one has to continuously negotiate narratives that compete for one's allegiance offering only two choices – for, or against Self.

### The blow up…a clash of realities

After undergoing transformation, the new Self, experiences a stage of coming out and sharing their new story with others. Thus, I explore the interconnectedness of our identities to space and others in this chapter. Keating (2005) asserts that in sharing one's new story one makes

oneself vulnerable to others, and thus risks being misunderstood, excluded, and labelled. I argue that this stage is both an emotional and epistemological conundrum and challenges one's commitment to the new story, which can cause self-doubt and self-questioning. At this stage, one can experience a blow up either because of dominant narratives policing strategies against divergences and difference, or because of our new story's failure to recognise the interconnectedness of people and the world as a pluriverse.

### Shifting realities

In this chapter, I explore how the us/them binary is transgressed, and redefined and new alliances are formed within transnational and transdisciplinary spaces. Berila (2005) argues that binary transgression is a conscious political act of resistance disrupting dominant narratives of race, gender, and identity. According to Keating, the ability to see the 'other' is not merely a physical act, because what physical senses perceive "is not the whole picture, but one determined by your core beliefs and prevailing societal assumptions" (2005, 248). I argue that, in this stage of *conocimiento,* we begin to see the other in ourselves, opening ourselves to others' perception.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I reiterate the main arguments of my thesis as well as highlight limitations and make recommendations.

# Doctoral perceived and conceived space

*The historical and its consequences, the 'diachronic', the 'etymology' of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or space and thereby changed it — all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces — time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in its actuality. Thus, production, process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas (Lefebvre 1991, 37).*

## Introduction

In his seminal work, *The Production of Space,* Henri Lefebvre points out the continued casual and indiscriminate use of the word "space" in popular discourse and academic literature. He further states that such passive use of the term has created hegemonic imaginations of space that negate its most challenging characteristics. Thinking actively about space is integral to this project as the concept not only provides a historico-geographical conjuncture but also a rationale for the proposed conceptualisation of doctoral borderlands (both material and theoretical).  In higher education, studies of the concept of space have been widely utilized as a spatial metaphor: doctoral landscape, mapping doctoral studies, higher education space, etc. Conceptual metaphors denoting mental space have also been employed: racialised spaces, exclusionary spaces etc. (Baillie, Duker, and Nsele, 2019; Bitzer, 2010; Karlsson, 2004; Marginson, 2010; Hoppers, 2005). Temple (2010) views physical space as predominantly seen as a blank canvas waiting to be acted upon and filled with events in time. However, these varied ways in which we engage space are *a priori* dichotomies we impose. In accordance with Soja (1996), thinking of space in dichotomies leads to the hierarchization of space and privileging of its different conceptualizations – objective over subjective or subjective over objective. Such fragmentation of space displaces it from critical conversations and has a detrimental impact on how we research and understand lived experiences. Tumubweinee and Luescher (2019) highlight that the reinsertion of space as political and as a social construct in South African Higher Education transformation discourses is imperative. Tumubweinee and Luescher (10) highlight that "the way space is perceived, conceived, and eventually experienced has a

profound impact on students' experiences of higher education and by extension, of the experience of everybody interacting in and with the sector".

The aim of this chapter is, thus, to holistically contextualize student experiences within doctoral studies without binarising, hierarchising and fragmenting space. To achieve this goal, reference will be made to Lefebvre's spatial triad: perceived space, conceived space and lived space. According to Soja, in his triad,

> *Lefebvre proceeds to fuse (objective) physical and (subjective) mental space into social space through a critique of what he calls a 'double illusion'. This powerful attack on reductionism in spatial thinking is a vital part of the thirding process, working to break down the rigid object-subject binarism that has defined and confined the spatial imagination for centuries, while simultaneously maintaining the useful knowledges of space derived from both these binary fields (Soja, 1996, 62).*

The Lefebvrian conception of space sees unity between physical, mental, and social space (see Lefebvre 1991). The first of these, perceived space/spatial practices, is physical space that is generated and used. The second, representations of space/conceived space, is rationalised and intellectualised space. Lefebvre (1991) describes this as the space of *savoir* (knowledge) and logic, which is produced by urban planners, architects and engineers designating the instrumentality of space. The third, spaces of representation or lived space is associated with symbolism and meaning on one hand, and the experiences of the inhabitants and users of space on the other. These three concepts work in unity and are experienced as intersecting phenomena:

> *For Lefebvre, any emancipatory politics presupposes a dialectics of space, a particular set of theoretically informed spatial practices aimed at overcoming separation and dissociation between the global 'whole' and the 'local' every day. Apprehending that the maintenance of the conceived global whole is dependent on the local lived level is somehow integral for informing subversive spatial practices (Merrifield, 1993, 526, emphasis).*

In the first section of this chapter, I will provide an overview of the doctoral landscape. Post-apartheid South Africa higher education had to grapple with the impact of 50 years of structural and systematic racial discrimination. The contours of the higher education landscape can be understood against the backdrop of the national changes post 1994. Whilst numeric data has been predominantly used as diagnostic overview and representation of doctoral space, it

remains a very limited method. Booi, Vincent, and Liccardo (2017), for example, critique the equity index devised by Govender, Zondo and Makgobain (2013) as an example of the prevailing illusion that transformation can be reduced to the measurement of race and gender. Reay critiques how data is organized in polarizing analytic categories, arguing that such 'zombie categories' mirror inappropriate and oppressive regimes which continue to be used as analysis categories (Reay, 2006, 288). Although Reay focused on 'zombie categories' in class and social analysis in England, the same line of argument has been used to contest racial and gender categories in South African higher education (see Erasmus, 2010). The emphasis on numeric and categorized data particularly to understanding material space and spatial practices can inadvertently deprioritise other spatial realities such as representations of space (conceived) and spaces of representations (lived). The notions of conceived, perceived, and lived space are not experienced in isolation but in relation. According to Lefebvre (1991), social actors do not passively pass-through space nor is space a blank canvas waiting to be filled but the two are co-creators. As the subjects' traverse space, they impact on it and in turn their experiences are spatially constructed. This makes space pivotal in the understanding of everyday experiences and, therefore, needs careful conceptualisation.

The second section is an exploration of conceived space focusing on how doctoral student experiences are researched and discussed. Of course, this is a wide and growing field of study, so in this chapter, focus will be given to the experiences of the doctorate as a process of becoming. Haynes posits that the theories and metaphors we employ to conceptualise doctoral practices and experiences "reveal the epistemological stance that informs the research in question, as well as offering a meta-dialogue concerning the researcher, the process of research, relationships with Self, and others involved with them" (2009, 6). Hughes and Tight (2013) argue that the metaphors used to "reflect and interpret" doctoral experiences are informed by discourse and when a dominant discourse becomes monolithic narrative structure "it becomes a hegemonic lens through which all experience is to be understood" (2013, 765). It is from this critical departure point on how we interpret and engage doctoral practice and student experiences that I will frame the second section.

## Section 1: Perceived Space

The interactions between people and the material space are significant, as space has been argued to contribute to educational achievement, university effectiveness and "how learning is linked to signs, signifying social relations, embodied in the built environment" (Temple 2014, xxvi). Marmot (2014) also cites the increase in participation as one of the driving factors for higher education restructuring. The global surge of doctoral participation has resulted in corresponding rise of work in doctoral studies (see Cloete, Mouton, and Sheppard 2015). Cloete, Mouton, and Sheppard (2015) also highlight that the global interest in doctoral studies beginning in the 1990s was driven by its perceived role in the knowledge economy. The doctoral student output within this political economic landscape is regarded as part of the "new electricity of the economy" (2015, 75). Powell and Kaisa define knowledge economy as "production and services based on knowledge-intensive activities that contribute to an accelerated pace of technical and scientific advance, as well as rapid obsolescence" (2004: 199). Thune posits that within this political economic landscape doctoral students are an important link in the university-industry relationship "since they are significant producers of knowledge" (2009, 637).

The World Bank report in 2000, *Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise* published highlighted the importance of tertiary education knowledge as key to economic development. The link between higher education and the knowledge economy falls under the broad configuration of the present age as a "knowledge society" (World Bank, 2002). Wolhuter (2011) further highlights that this landscape has given prominence to doctoral education as the fuel of the knowledge economy. This global ideological shift in higher education conceived space has, in varying ways, impacted individual countries, necessitating redefinition, and restructuring of higher education spatial practices (Backhouse 2009; Halai 2011; Wolhuter 2011). Although the ideology and structural implications of the knowledge economy on higher education have been a subject of critical contestation, global and national initiatives have been launched to enhance the aims of higher education and training to become more in line with the knowledge economy (Halai 2011; Herman, 2017).

In Europe, higher education restructuring was initiated and instituted through policies enacted during the Bologna Conference of 1999 which led to a joint Declaration of the European

Ministers of Education (Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley, 2009). The declaration, along with other initiatives such as the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, to create a European Research and Innovation Area, were aimed at harmonizing the higher education landscape (Smith 2018). The USA launched several projects targeted at doctoral studies; the United States Council of Graduate Schools' PhD Completion Project (Council of Graduate Schools 2008), the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's Responsive PhD Initiative (Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation 2005), the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate and the Graduate Education Initiative funded by the Andrew W Mellon Foundation (Smith 2018).

### Global doctoral participation trends

Globally, there has been an increase of doctoral participation with Pearson (2005, 119) describing doctoral education as an 'emergent field of study' characterized by great vigour and a breadth of interest. Globally, developed countries continue to produce the most PhD graduates but the growth rate of doctoral output is higher in developing countries. Figure 1 illustrates that the USA, UK, Germany, and Denmark are the largest producers of PhD graduates. However, when compared to Figure 2, one notes that fast-developing countries have a higher percentage growth of doctoral output with Mexico at (17%) and China (40%).The statistical data shows that Africa has the lowest of doctoral graduate output and if one takes the 2014 figures as a benchmark, and South Africa as an example, a comparison with other countries shows that South Africa lags behind, yet has the highest doctoral output in sub-Saharan Africa (refer to Figure 3). In 2012, a conference entitled 'Innovative approaches to doctoral education and research training in sub-Saharan Africa' facilitated by International Association of Universities (IAU) and the Catalan Association of Public Universities took place in Catalan. Initiatives such as the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) leadership dialogue, entitled, 'Doctoral education: Renewing the academy' and the IAU's 'Changing nature of doctoral studies in sub-Saharan Africa' were also held to bolster doctoral participation in Africa (see Molla and Cuthbert, 2016).
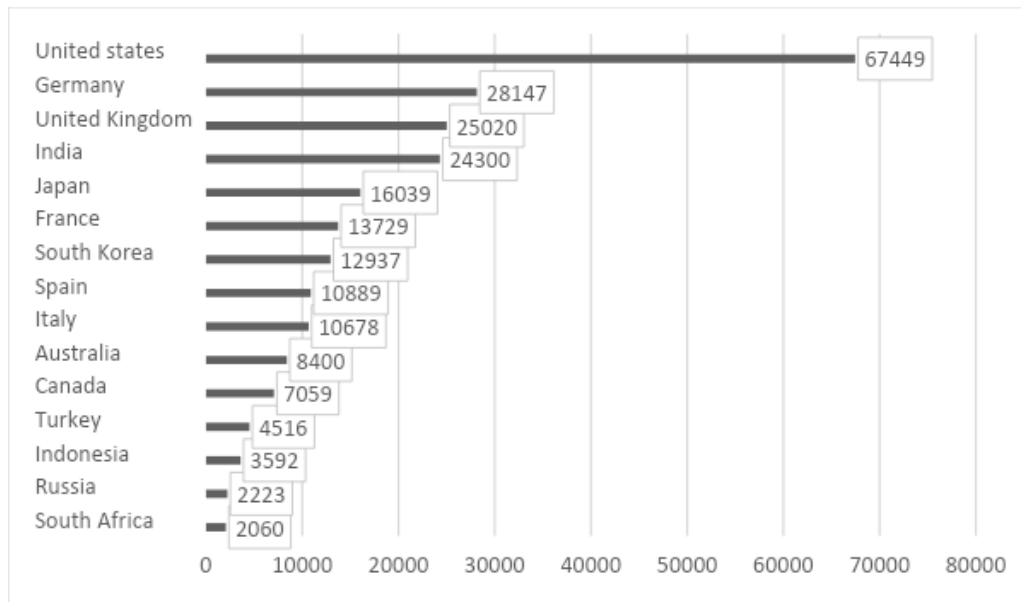
*Figure 1: Countries with the highest number of doctoral graduates in 2014.*

Figure 1 illustrates that most graduates are from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries with large emerging economies expanding their higher education training as shown by India's high position with 24,300 doctoral graduates.



**Figure 2***:* The rise of the doctorate: Percentage growth in doctoral output (1998–2006) (Sourced from www.weforum.org

**Doctoral trends in southern Africa**

A bleak picture of doctoral education emerged from an eleven-year study on eight sub-Saharan African universities carried out by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA) project at the Centre for Higher Education Trust (CHET) (Bunting, Cloete, and Van Schalkwyk, 2014). The total doctoral enrolment for eight Southern African flagship universities in 2011 was only 2 614, with the University of Cape Town (UCT) enrolling 1 226 and the other seven universities in the study only 1 388 collectively (see Figure 3). While the University of Botswana, Makerere University and the University of Ghana showed strong growth, albeit from a low base – doctoral enrolments at the University of Mauritius declined. Inconsistent performance at midpoints of this period is evident in the doctoral enrolment figures for the Universities of Dar es Salaam and Nairobi (Bunting et al. 2014).

The slow growth in doctoral enrolments illustrated in Figure 3 is in sharp contrast to the explosion in Master's enrolments at certain universities. At the University of Nairobi, Master's enrolments increased by 12% annually (from 3 937 in 2001 to 11 807 in 2011) and at Ghana by 13% (1 198 in 2001 to 4 280 in 2011).
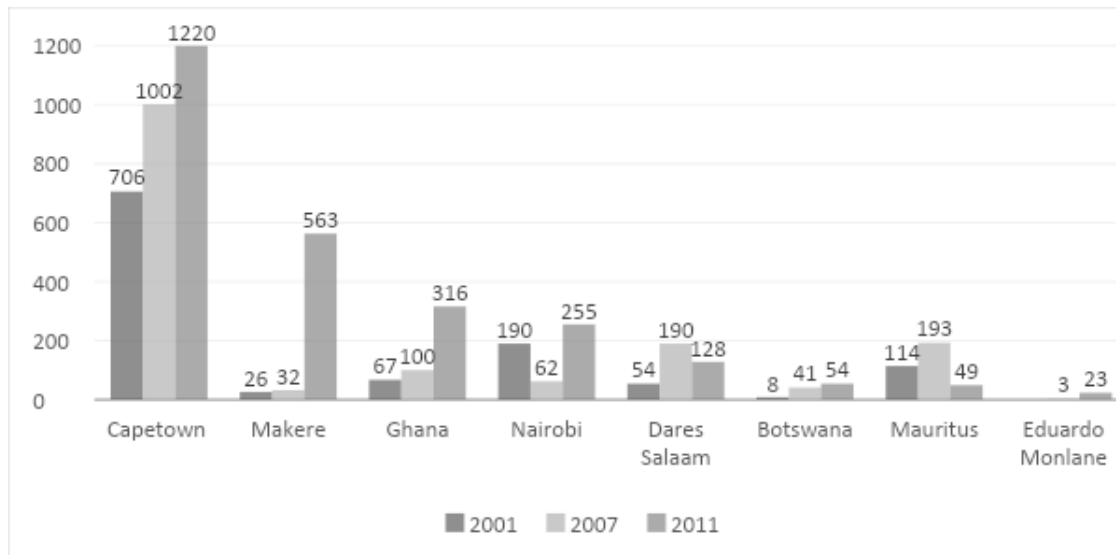


*Figure 3: Doctoral enrolments at eight sub-Saharan African universities (2001, 2007, 2011).*

The combined doctoral graduate total at the eight universities increased from 154 in 2001 to 367 in 2011. The University of Cape Town, University of Nairobi and Makerere University produced 80% of the 2001 doctoral graduate total in 2001, 82% of the total in 2007 and 76% in 2011. Over the same period, the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil produced over 1 000

doctoral graduates, a figure which virtually matches the combined output of all 23 South African universities in 2011 (Badsha and Cloete 2011). The average annual increases at sub-Saharan African universities are also well below 10%, except for institutions such as Ghana, Makerere and Botswana, all of which started from very low bases in 2001 (Bunting et al. 2014).
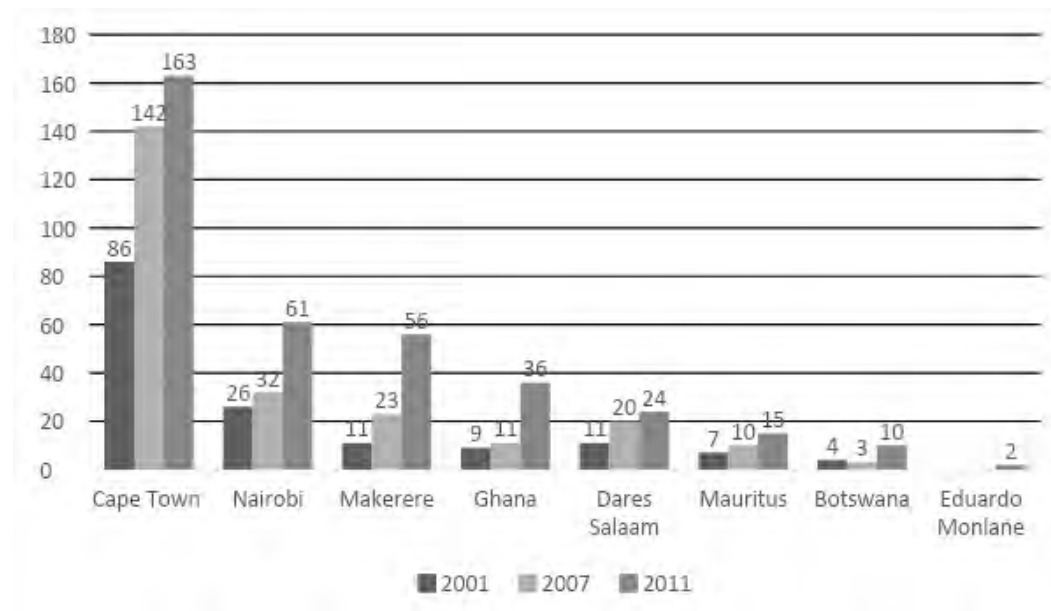


**Figure 4**: *Doctoral graduates at eight sub-Saharan African universities (2001, 2007, 2011).*

## Contours of Higher Education in South Africa

For over 1000 years the university has existed as a physical entity (Marmot 2014). In fact, Bologna, the oldest university in the world, was founded in 1088. Bologna along with other ancient foundations, "still thrive today, [and are] arguably part of the most persistent global growth industry ever known" (Marmot, 58). The physical space of the university has endured through time, adapting according to social, economic, and political configurations. The physical entity and its usage are perceived and acted upon in reference to the ideological representations of an era, a faculty or discipline. In the opinion of Ngo, spatial practices can become sedimented within spatial structures and, over time, sedimented practices ground and anchor future lived experiences and spatial practices (2017). Garuba gives the example of colonialism and slavery, socially constructed imaginaries which functioned as regimes that are:

*Largely organised through spatiality and subjectivity: spaces to capture, subjects to control. To capture the land, it first had to be explored and mapped, literally and figuratively. For the subject to be controlled, she first had to be contained, not only in terms of physical containment within subject territories – colonies and protectorates for example – but also contained in 'tribes', territorially demarcated, defined and culturally described. Physical containment was necessary to circumscribe the natural mobility of the body (in space) and discursive containment served to define the limits of the cultural (identity) mobility available to the subject (Garuba 2002, 1).*

Coloniality and segregation was, and continues to be, a planetary issue with physical space and structures being utilised as tools of policing, control, and subjugation. Coloniality conceptualised space into fragmented representations of race and gender. Universities were, on one hand, a victim of this ideology and on the other facilitated and arguably still perpetuate systemic racism and exclusion (Mignolo 2012; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). In African and other colonial territories, universities had their origins in the Asquith and Elliot Commissions on Higher Education in 1945 (Hargreaves 1973) and later British Colonial Policy on Education in sub-Saharan Africa began in 1882 (Abrokwaa 2017, 203). The establishment of these higher education institutions was meant to 'fit Africans into their new colonised conditions,' skill them as a colonial labour force (Abrokwaa 2017, 203). Thus, Africans in tertiary institutions have "undergone deep [W]esternisation processes to the extent that they became fully converted to the idea of the superiority of Western education and its values for the rest of humanity" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2017, 44). In the words of Gumport (2000, 73), the university is an institution that "maintains, reproduces, or adapts itself to implement values that have been widely held and firmly structured by the society". As such, the university constitutes "a subsystem of a larger social system" (Maoyuan 2015, 36). The higher education system "arranges people in space" and "arranges itself [in] the physical milieu of that society" (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 27). The spatial and social processes within the institution are thus "bound up … with the ways in which social formations acquire and change" (Hillier and Hanson 1984, 27). In South Africa, racial segregation in universities erected a racialised invisible fence between black and White institutions' built environments and onto-epistemologies (Bunting 2006; Odhav 2009). The built environment of higher education institutions mirrors the apartheid and colonial space's racial divisions between town and townships symbolising White/Black and rich/poor (Badat, 2008). Universities that were reserved for black people during apartheid were structurally disadvantaged and had a limited curriculum. These physical contours of the higher education space were, and continue to be, deeply embedded, and

reflected in the contemporary higher education landscape (Jansen, 2003). Temple (2014) argues that physical space has an impact on the effectiveness of universities, student participation and graduation rates.

In South Africa, the rise in doctoral participation in the 1990's was because of two fundamental political and policy shifts – the dismantling of the apartheid regime, and the rise of the doctoral degree as a prerequisite for academic citizenship (Soudien, 2011, 19). As universities began restructuring according to international standards of academic citizenship, they were also responding to internal political shifts to deracialise and restructure academic participation and institutions. Prior to 1994, South African higher education institutions were isolated from global academic citizenship. Since the end of the apartheid era in 1994, higher education institutions were forced to undergo restructuring to "forge a new identity to cope with the pressures of globalization" (Mokadi 2004, 1). One of these pressures was to increase doctoral participation in the country – prior to 1994, senior academic roles and professoriate could be held by individuals with a Master's degree which, in apartheid South Africa, had the same status that a doctorate held internationally (Soudien 2011). Increasing doctoral participation became one of the key higher education restructuring policies within the broader higher education policy framework post-1994 of transformation from the racialised and patriarchal organisation of higher education under apartheid. The first of these documents was the 1997 Department of Education White Paper 3 – *A program for the transformation of higher education*. The White Paper 3 objectives emphasise the need for higher education to address issues of access, participation, equity, redress, democracy, efficiency and produce internationally competitive research which is grounded in the African context. The Centre for Higher Education (CHE) published a report, framing a new higher education landscape: *Meeting the equity, quality, and social development imperatives of South Africa in the 21st century* in the year 2000. The Ministry of Education's National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) in 2001 reports on five key policy goals and objectives for the transformation of higher education:

> *To provide increased access to higher education to all, irrespective of race, gender, age, creed, class or disability and to produce graduates with the skills and competencies necessary to meet the human resource needs of the country;*

*to promote equity of access and to redress past inequalities through ensuring that the staff and student profiles in higher education progressively reflect the demographic realities of South African society;*

*to ensure diversity in the organisational form and institutional landscape of the higher education system through mission and programme differentiation;*

*to build high level research capacity to address the research and knowledge need of South Africa; and*

*to build new institutional and organisation forms and new institutional identities through regional collaboration between institutions (NPHE, 2001).*

In 2002, the Department of Education published a report entitled *Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education* (Ministry of Education 2002) which outlined the contours, objectives, and rationalization of the spatial restructuring of higher education. The report recommended a new landscape that entailed physical restructuring of Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The recommendations included the physical restructuring of HEI's into clusters of 23 institutions from 36 (Mouton, Louw, and Strydom 2013). To achieve this aim, the Minister of Higher Education (MHE) was provided with an amount of R3 billion to support the restructuring process. Furthermore, through the 1997 Higher Education Act, the MHE was also given power to allocate funds (Qhobela 2009) and, after "consulting the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and by notice in the Gazette, merge two or more public higher education institutions into a single public higher education institution" (Mouton, Louw, and Strydom 2013). In accordance with Pityana (2012 39), transformation initiatives and policies, including physical restructuring was from a realization that post-apartheid historically Black universities (HBU's) continue "to reflect their historic disadvantage" whilst historically White universities (HWU's) continue to benefit from their legacy of privilege and glory (see also Jansen 2003).

The reasons provided by the government for restructuring and mergers suggest that they were "strongly politically and ideologically motivated" (Mouton, Louw and Strydom 2013, 133). The authors summaries the reasons as follows:

*To overcome the racial fragmentation of the educational system;*

*to achieve economies of scale through reducing unit costs and economies of scope;*

*to streamline governance and management structures, and to enhance administrative and management capacity;*

*to achieve more effective utilisation of existing academic staff capabilities;*

*to improve administrative systems;*

*to reduce duplication between institutions located close to one another; and*

*to improve the quality of programmes offered.*

Restructuring and mergers were meant to also foster racial diversity in the hopes that it would in turn encourage social cohesion. The university as a physical structure is embedded in its social context and is, thus, a social construct and in historical conjuncture of South Africa this made universities a highly politicized space. The aim of policy initiatives towards mergers was meant to dismantle the legacy of apartheid but, as noted by Ramose, transformation of physical space without corresponding change in abstract space can result in a cosmic dress-up (Ramose 2004).

In line with the mandate from the Minister of Education, from the start of 1998 colleges begun to be integrated into universities and Technikons, and by 1999, institutions began to merging. The process of merging for most institutions involved the incorporation of former small institutions such as teachers training colleges into universities. Mergers dramatically altered the higher education physical landscape in a short space of time: the number of universities was reduced from 21 to 11 institutions, Technikons were reduced from 15 to five. A new cluster of universities coined 'comprehensive institutions' was introduced from the combination of universities and Technikons[1] – all in all, there were six new comprehensive institutions. The number of technical colleges was reduced from a sizable 150 technical colleges to 50 integrated technical colleges and the 120 colleges of education were reduced to two colleges of education with the rest either being merged into universities or Technikons. By 2004, the number of higher education institutions were radically reduced from 306 institutions to 72 (see Table 5) and a renaming process was also started. The new type of university (comprehensive institutions) was designed to widen access and increase participation in tertiary education. Because higher education in South Africa was highly politicized during and post-apartheid, the

---

[1] In South Africa technikons were post-secondary institutes of technology (polytech). They focused on career-oriented vocational training.

process of merging intuitions was "an intensive political process" (Mouton, Louw, and Strydom 2013, 134).

| Current Universities | Former Tertiary Institutions |
|---|---|
| **Traditional Universities** | |
| University of Cape Town | |
| University of Fort Hare | |
| University of the Free State | Incorporation of part of Vista University |
| University of KwaZulu-Natal | University of Durban-Westville<br>University of Natal |
| University of Limpopo | Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA)<br>University of the North |
| North-West University | University of North-West (UNIBO)<br>Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education |
| University of Pretoria | Incorporation of part of Vista University |
| Rhodes University | |
| University of Stellenbosch | |
| University of the Western Cape | |
| University of the Witwatersrand | |
| **Comprehensive Universities** | |
| University of Johannesburg | Rand Afrikaans University<br>Technikon Witwatersrand<br>Incorporation of part of Vista University |
| Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University | University of Port Elizabeth<br>Port Elizabeth Technikon<br>Incorporation of part of Vista University |
| University of South Africa | Technikon SA<br>Incorporation of part of Vista University |
| University of Venda | |
| Walter Sisulu University for Technology and Science | Border Technikon<br>Eastern Cape Technikon<br>University of Transkei |
| University of Zululand | |
| **Universities Of Technology** | |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | |
| Central University of Technology | |
| Durban University of Technology | |
| Mangosuthu Technicon | |
| Tshwane University of Technology | |
| Vaal University of Technology | Incorporation of part of Vista University and NWU absorbed Vista students and staff |

**Table 1:** A comparison between current universities and former tertiary institutions (sourced from Mouton, Louw, and Strydom 2013, 134).

## Doctoral Participation in South Africa: Intersections between race and gender

The 1994 policy debates carried out before, and immediately after the NCHE were primarily about equity, race, and gender. Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba state:

> *In the South African context, transformation refers more specifically to change that addresses the imbalances of the past (apartheid) era. It has many facets, including demographic and systemic change. However, regardless of the different components and qualitative measures for transformation, the ultimate (and most important) indicator is that of demographics (2014, 1).*

As illustrated in the above section, during apartheid South African higher education was structured such that it reproduced itself along racial and gender lines. Contemporary higher education policy therefore had to acknowledge and address that institutional symbols, culture and policy were implicated in racial segregation, economic inequality and privileging of Whiteness that characterised colonial and apartheid rule. The first Black university in South Africa, Fort Hare University, was established in 1916, nearly a hundred years after the establishment of the first universities for Whites. In 1948, the number of Black students enrolled at universities stood at a mere 4.8%, mostly enrolled at the University of Fort Hare (Badat 1991). Although there have been great strides made in increasing higher education participation of previously marginalized groups, an aggregation of participation and national demographics highlights slow progression (Govinder, Zondo, and Makgoba 2014).

Disaggregated racial enrolment trends during the period 2005-2014 reveal growth in minority group participation in doctoral studies. In 1996, African doctoral enrolment was 681 but by 2005 there was a 67% increase with an enrolment number of 3663. Doctoral enrolments have more than doubled between 2005 and 2015. However, given that in 2015 Blacks constituted 81% of the South African population, Black participation in doctoral studies remains significantly low (47%) relative to White student participation (29%) who make up 8% of the total population. The participation of women also remains low given that women make up 51% of the population and constitute 55% of total doctoral enrolments. The most alarming number is that of Black women, who are 41% of the total population and 80% of the total female population but constitute only 17% of total doctoral enrolments and 43% of total female doctoral enrolments. This, in comparison to White women who constitute 4% of total population and 8% of total female population but have an enrolment of 15% of total enrolments and 39% of total female enrolments.

The last decade has been marked by significant growth in both Black and female doctoral graduates, with an average annual growth rate of 11.2% between 2005 and 2015. It is during this period that the demographics of doctoral graduates started to show substantial changes. White students still accounted for most doctoral degrees awarded during the period 2009 with a headcount of 4637 against 4369 for Black participation. From 2011, shifts in the racial demographics started showing, with Blacks having a headcount of 5900 against 5064 for White

participation. During the period of 2005-2015, White doctoral enrolments increased by 1% on average per annum, whilst Black doctoral enrolments increased by 3%.
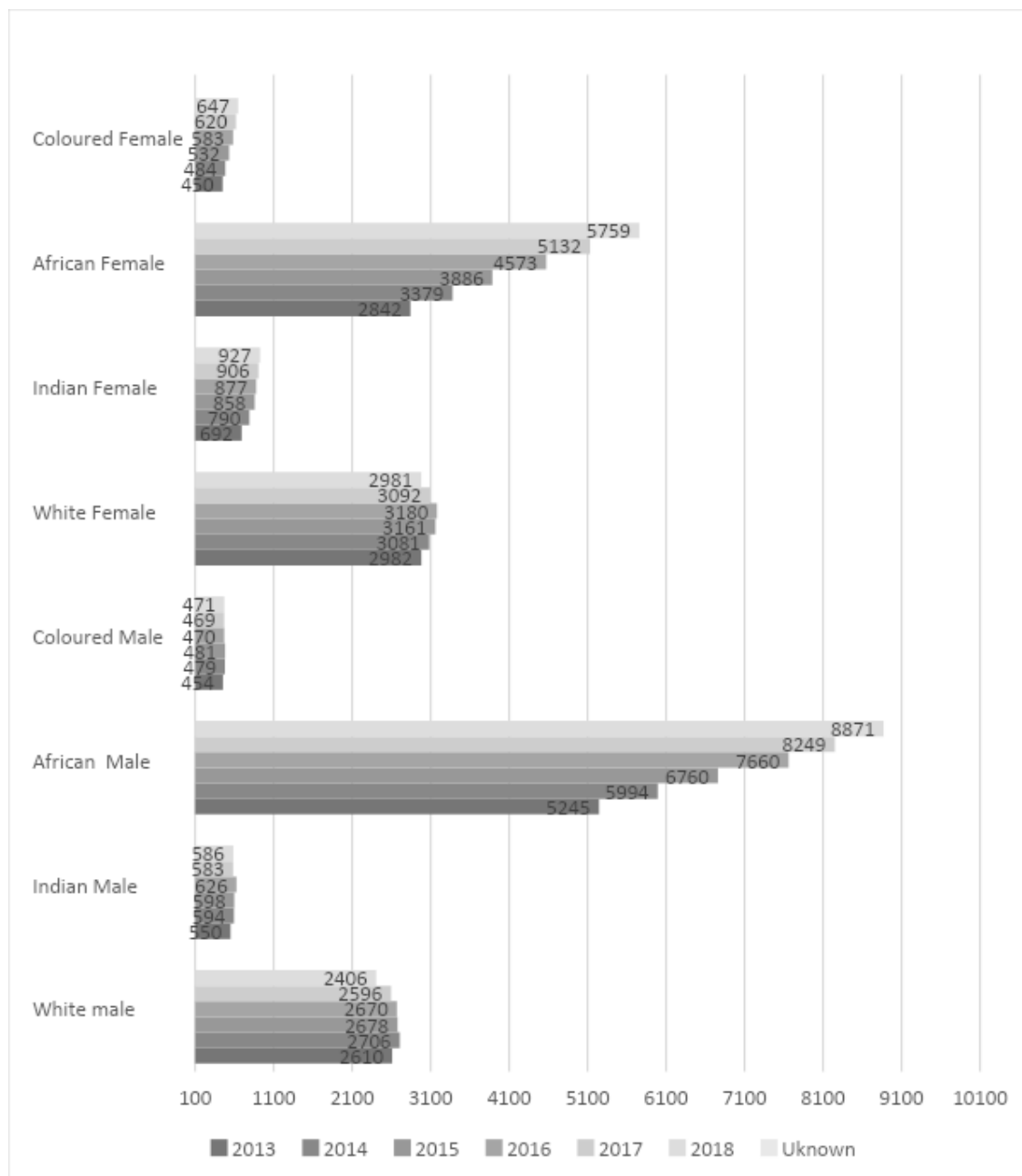


**Figure 5:** Doctoral enrolment numbers by gender and race.

When one breaks down the figures through race and gender aggregation it becomes clear that, as illustrated in Figure 6, the growth rate for White enrolments is lowered by White male participation whilst that of Black enrolments is high because of growth of Black male participation. Total female participation annual growth rate in the same period is 12%. Black

female growth rate is a mere 4% a number which becomes more disconcerting when pitted against the 14% annual growth rate of White females in the same period.
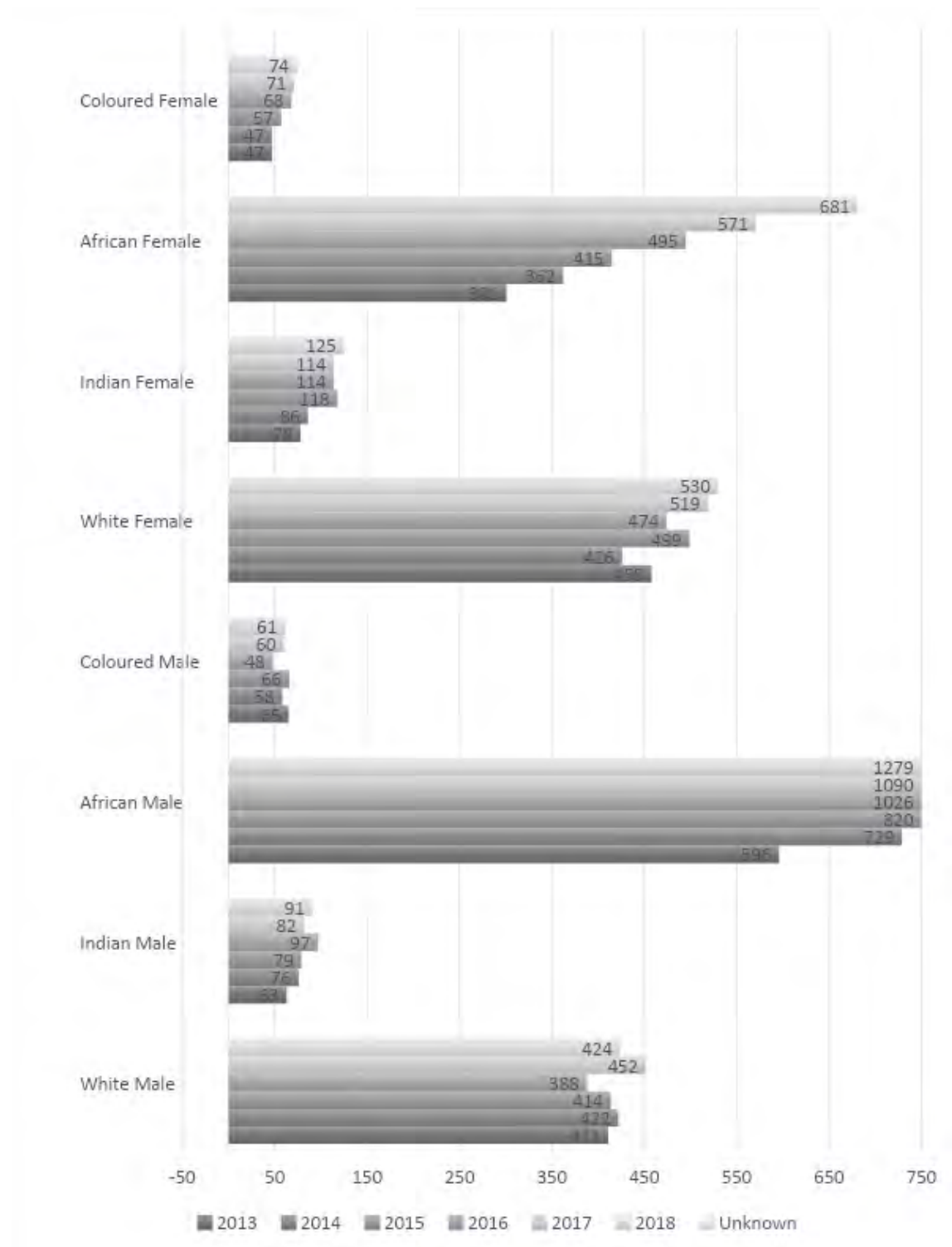


**Figure 6**: *Doctoral graduation numbers by gender and race.*

Whilst growth in general is good for doctoral studies, regarding transformation growth in previously disadvantaged groups, participation is a better outcome. In 2015, the Black female population between the ages of 20-40, those within generalised PhD enrolment age brackets was 5 536 068 and 3343 of these women enrolled for doctoral studies in this same year, giving a doctoral 0.06% participation rate. There were 425 126 White women in the same age group and 3056 of them enrolled for doctoral studies, giving a 0.72% doctoral participation rate. With transformation being the goal, one notes that female participation is still significantly low and Black female participation is a cause of concern. Gender demographics for doctoral graduates for 2005 to 2014 also displayed major changes. In 2005, 2011 and 2014 male doctoral graduates had a share of 55%, 57% and 57%, respectively the decrease is because of a low average annual increase in males of 1.6% over the period 1986 to 1995. Female doctoral graduates in the same period grew at 2% per annum on average and increased their share from 44% in 2005 to 41% in 2011 and 40% in 2015.

If transformation is understood solely within an equity and redress discourse, then one could argue that the doctorate in South Africa has transformed. African doctoral enrolments increased by 886%, while White enrolments increased by only 34% and African female graduates increased by 960%. But if transformation is viewed as the number of graduates per 100 000 of the population of 25- to 40- year-olds, then White graduate's participation rate is still 16 times higher than that of African participation. The participation rate of White females is 40 times higher than African females. In the period of 2005-2014 the average headcount of annual graduation rate for female doctoral graduates was 79 with an annual growth rate of 2%. White females' headcount annual graduation rate stood at 63 in the same period with an annual growth rate of 3%. Black female headcount annual graduation rate is 52 with an annual growth rate of 4%.

|  |  | Sciences | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | Natural | Engineering & technology | Health | Business, economic & management | Education | Humanities & social sciences | Total |
| Enrolment by gender, race, and major field of study 2005 | African Female | 202 | 27 | 196.5 | 39 | 202 | 414.5 | 1081 |
|  | Colored Female | 59 | 2 | 48 | 5 | 43 | 85 | 242 |
|  | Indian Female | 64 | 12 | 57.5 | 22.5 | 77 | 111 | 344 |
|  | White Female | 533,5 | 73 | 352.5 | 122 | 232 | 916 | 2229 |
|  | African male | 539.5 | 183 | 172 | 151.5 | 258 | 890 | 2194 |
|  | Colored male | 75 | 25 | 22 | 17 | 52 | 139 | 330 |
|  | Indian male | 89 | 50 | 38 | 32 | 52 | 149 | 410 |
|  | White male | 601 | 395 | 212 | 242 | 117 | 1015 | 2582 |
| Graduation by gender, race, and major field of study 2015 | African Female | 97.25 | 14.75 | 56 | 24.5 | 62 | 107.5 | 362 |
|  | Colored Female | 19 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 10.5 | 12.5 | 58 |
|  | Indian Female | 27.25 | 0.25 | 12.5 | 8 | 14 | 23 | 85 |
|  | White Female | 129.001 | 12,5 | 62 | 35.833 | 34 | 152,667 | 426 |
|  | African male | 239.7500 | 64.75 | 52.5 | 62.5 | 79 | 283.5 | 782 |
|  | Colored male | 9 | 0 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 16 | 44 |
|  | Indian male | 28.25 | 8.25 | 8.5 | 9 | 8 | 14 | 76 |
|  | White male | 131 | 66 | 36 | 41,5 | 12 | 135,5 | 422 |

*Table 2: Progress of 2005 intake of new doctoral students after seven years by major field of study*

## Doctoral attrition and challenges

An extensive literature review of doctoral studies as a field of study highlights that drop out and attrition rates are a crucial point of departure. As such, any research into the spatial practices of higher education should take attrition rates into account. Attrition rates are

calculated by counting students who enrol for doctoral studies but do not eventually complete their studies. The drop-out rate is best calculated by following a particular cohort over the ensuing years. Nationally, the cohort-analysis method is used to track student enrolment and graduation to allow for accurate measures and comparison of doctorate throughput rates. This method tracks students who enrolled for doctoral studies for the given period of anticipated completion of degree. The students are then tracked via their registration information to see if they successfully register until the completion of their degree. However, it should be noted that registration needs to be continuous; if a student registered for doctoral study, for example, in 2005 and was not registered in any subsequent year up to 2015, then that student is categorized as a drop out. However, if a student who registered for the first time in 2005 but did not go on to register for the subsequent years leading to 2015 re-emerges as a registered student for the same degree in the student record system then he or she was reinstated in either as a graduate or with studies incomplete. This research will utilize cohort data from South Africa's 23 public universities between the years 2005 to 2015.

| Year | Enrolments | Graduated |
|------|-----------|-----------|
| 2005 | 9434 | 1189 |
| 2006 | 9828 | 1100 |
| 2007 | 10051 | 1329 |
| 2008 | 9994 | 1182 |
| 2009 | 10529 | 1380 |
| 2010 | 11590 | 1421 |
| 2011 | 12832 | 1576 |
| 2012 | 13964 | 1878 |
| 2013 | 16039 | 2051 |
| 2014 | 17943 | 2258 |
| 2015 | 19513 | 2530 |

*Table 3: Comparison of doctoral enrolments and graduates (2005-2015).*

Over the period of 2005-2015 doctoral enrolments increased from 9434 in 2005 to 19513 in 2015 (a 106% increase), with an average annual growth rate of 6.4%. The number of doctoral

graduates increased from 1189 in 2005 to 2530 in 2015, a growth of 113%, and the average annual increase over the period was 6.5%. Thus, graduation rates have roughly grown at a constant annual rate.

The enrolment growth rates in major field of study are significant: ranging from 36% in the natural, health and engineering sciences to 53% in the humanities. Literature highlights that highest attrition rates are recorded in the first two years of PhD enrolment. Across all fields, 29% of students dropped out during the first two years.

| | Natural Sciences | Engineering and Technology | Health Sciences | Business, Economic and Management Sciences | Education | Humanities and Social Sciences | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Enrolment 2005** | 2165 | 768 | 1104 | 633 | 1035 | 3729 | 9434 |
| **Graduation 2015** | 788 | 221 | 253 | 260 | 303 | 706 | 2530 |

*Table 4: Progress of 2005 intake of new doctoral students after seven years by major field of study.*

This proportion is the highest for students in the business and management sciences (39%). At the same time, we should note that relatively large proportions of enrolled doctoral students (around 45%) dropped out before graduating. If the growth rate in graduates is higher than that of enrolments, it signals an improvement in efficiency.

An analysis of the data from the three university types reveals several trends within SA doctoral studies:

- The universities displayed a slight improvement in efficiency with an average annual increase in graduates of 6.5%, compared to 6.4% in enrolments.

- The comprehensive universities increased their doctoral enrolments as well as graduates by 5.1% on average per annum over the period 1996 to 2012. These universities have thus not improved their efficiency over this period; and

- Doctoral enrolments in universities of technology grew on average by 20.0% per annum, whilst their graduates increased by 20.7%, which signals a small increase in efficiency

|  | Enrolment 2004 | Graduation 2015 |
|---|---|---|
| **Universities** | | |
| Fort Hare University | 30 | 60 |
| University of Limpopo | 143 | 25 |
| University of the Western Cape | 304 | 96 |
| North-West University | 615 | 222 |
| Rhodes University | 216 | 69 |
| University of KwaZulu-Natal | 1115 | 338 |
| Stellenbosch University | 780 | 267 |
| University of the Witwatersrand | 643 | 203 |
| University of Cape Town | 898 | 223 |
| University of Pretoria | 1597 | 333 |
| University of the Free State | 520 | 97 |
| Subtotal: Universities | 6861 | 1933 |
| **Comprehensive Universities** | | |
| University of Venda | 39 | 8 |
| Walter Sisulu University | 1 | 15 |
| University of Zululand | 151 | 18 |
| Nelson Mandela University | 263 | 80 |
| University of South Africa | 908 | 235 |
| University of Johannesburg | 611 | 105 |
| Subtotal: Comprehensives | 1973 | 461 |
| **Universities of Technology** | | |
| Tshwane University of Technology | 101 | 61 |
| Durban University of Technology | 30 | 29 |
| Central University of Technology | 70 | 10 |
| Vaal University of Technology | 19 | 9 |
| Cape Peninsula University of Technology | 50 | 19 |
| Mangosuthu University of Technology | 0 | 8 |
| Subtotal: Universities of Technology | 270 | 136 |
| **Total** | **9104** | **2530** |

**Table 5:** Progress of 2005 intake of new doctoral students after seven years by institution type.
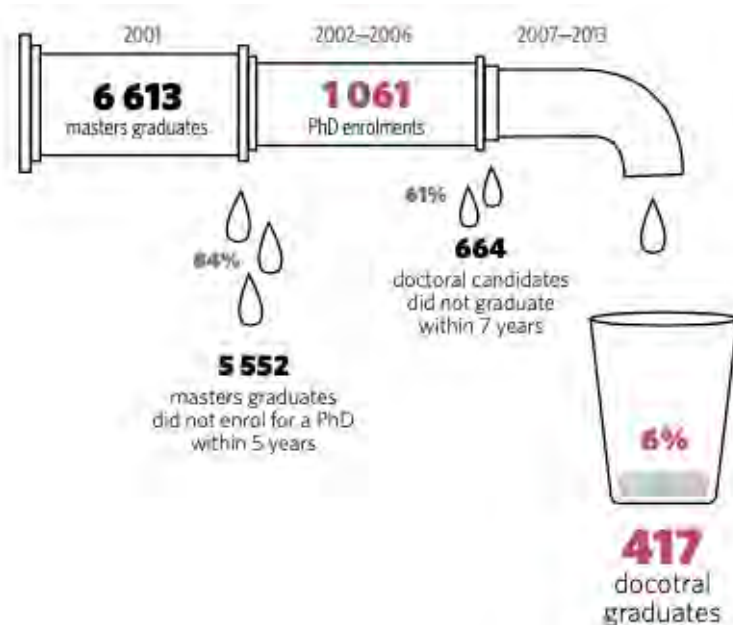
**Figure 7**: *Doctoral pipeline 2005-2014 cohort (Sourced from Bunting et al 2014).*

The more worrisome aspect in South Africa is that the average graduation (completion rate) over three cohorts (2003, 2004 and 2005) is only 35% after five years and 41% after six years. And the 2006 and 2007 cohorts (at 41% and 39%, respectively) show essentially the same trend. The progression trends illustrated in Table 5 reveal a worrying picture about retention rates of students within higher education. When one compares figures from previous years, one notes that growth rates as already alluded to in previous sections are shrinking. To add to the high attrition rates, is a problem of a leaking pipeline as illustrated in Figure 8. Pyhältö, Vekkaila, and Keskinen (2012) note that there are three main categories that affect the doctoral journey, and these are, the relationship between supervisor and the doctoral candidate, personal regulators, and research complexities and structures and resources. As stated by Gardner (2008), there has been an alarming increase of doctoral student attrition in higher education globally. However, the author notes that student attrition is higher in underrepresented populations such as "women, students of [colour], students with families, part-time students, and older students". Gardner claims that socialisation plays a key role in the success and retention of doctoral students and can reduce attrition in underrepresented populations. Weidman and Stein (2003) have emphasized that socialisation within a supportive and collegial environment can create a strong foundation for students to be able to ease into an unknown territory of academic norms.

The lack of structure and supportive academic environments directly related to institutional and faculty policies and practices has also been associated with attrition during the doctoral journey (Allen 2014). Allen reports factors such as socialisation, isolation from peers and faculty, a lack of personal and professional support and stress are the most common concerns affecting doctoral studies for students. Allen further argues that increased interaction in a collegial faculty environment and institutional facilitation of online networks to create a virtual community of practice can reduce feelings of isolation and attrition. Terry and Ghosh (2015) argue that formal and informal networks can both reduce dropout rates from the doctoral journey. The authors argue that:

> *Family members and friends supported participants with home duties, childcare, encouragement, and praise during their doctoral journey. Supervisors supported the participant's success both academically and professionally. Fellow doctoral students enhanced the learning experience by sharing different perspectives and providing academic and career advice/strategies. Faculty mentoring support was critical to the academic and dissertation process as well as to scholarly development (Terry and Ghosh, 2015: 1).*

Thus, academic, personal, and professional support are equally important to doctoral student success according to Terry and Ghosh. Jairam and Kahl (2012: 1) highlight that support from family and friends act as a stress buffer for doctoral students.

Students deal with feelings of isolation at various stages of their doctoral studies (Ali and Kohun 2006). Although there are various reasons that lead to the development of feelings of isolation the authors highlight two major issues as:

> *First, students begin feeling isolated because of confusion about the program and its requirements. What may start as simple confusion about the program, or the requirements of the program quickly grows into a feeling of being left behind and overwhelmed. Second is the lack of (or insufficient) communication that may take place during various phases of the program. Lack of communication takes place on two fronts: student-to-student and student-to-faculty communication (2006: 1).*

Herman (2008) states that doctoral studies are an emotional journey due to the ideological, political, and methodological facets of research, which most candidates embark on without prior familiarizations. Additionally, there are a host of emotional challenges which, if ignored and left unresolved, will cause emotional setbacks for the candidate. Additionally, Spaulding and Rockinson-Szapkiw believe that doctoral candidates negotiate factors such as,

> *Personal sacrifice, delayed expectations, dissertation challenges) and the personal factors (motivations for pursuing the degree, reasons for persisting, strategies for dissertation completion), social factors (support systems and coping mechanisms), and institutional factors (program characteristics) (2012, 12).*

Persistence is discussed by the authors as a major attribute that doctoral candidates need to exude in order to navigate the struggles inherent in the doctoral journey. Vekkaila, PyhältÖ, and Lonka (2013) argue that, although students face problems with the research itself, most of their serious problems emanate from the physical and emotional relationship between doctoral students, the scholarly community, and environments. The authors found that these three factors can cause doctoral candidates to experience disengagement, inefficacy, cynicism, and exhaustion along their doctoral journey. Cotterall (2013) supports this claim, arguing that the cognitive aspect of a doctoral journey is well documented but there is an absence of the important emotional aspect of the journey. Cotterall argues that there is a culture of silence that surrounds the emotional relationship between the write-up and supervision, which acts as a hindrance to any meaningful systematic change.

Completion has been cited as one of the most common challenges that students face (Bayley, Ellis, Abreu-Ellis, and O'Reilly 2012). The authors found that some of the major challenges to the completion of doctorate studies are "[f]unding, interactions with faculty, and the writing of the dissertation" (Bayley, Ellis, Abreu-Ellis, and O'Reilly, 2012: 1). The authors also note that there are structures and practices that either support or hinder the journey of candidates and affect their identity development. Financial aid and funding have been highlighted in literature as one of the major components of student prediction degree completion. In accordance with Ampaw and Jaeger (2012: 1), doctoral studies comprise three stages; "transition, development, and research, and the likelihood of the successful completion of all stages of the doctoral

process is highly dependent on the form of financial support the student receives". The authors argue that the longitudinal nature of the doctoral study heightens the risk of students dropping out of the program. Cloete et al. (2015) argue that financial aid and funding is more relevant in a context like South Africa, where the post-apartheid regime was not only racially discriminatory but was also deeply inefficient and corrupt.

The Department of Higher Education has provided a range of designators for doctoral quality ensuring quality doctoral program and markers of higher chance of completion (refer to Table 6).

| Dimension | Elaboration/interpretation | Nature of available measures |
|---|---|---|
| Quality of doctoral candidate | Prior training and academic record of doctoral candidate<br>Level of preparedness of candidate for doctoral studies | Academic records (D)<br>Curricula vitae (D)<br>Selection and screening processes of candidates (D)<br>Feedback from supervisors (D) |
| Quality of doctoral programme | Consistency with NQF requirements | Accreditation of programme by SAQA and HEQC (D)<br>Regular peer review results (D) |
| Quality of doctoral supervisor | Academic reputation and standing of supervisor<br><br>Experience as doctoral supervisor | Curriculum vitae of supervisor (I) |
| Quality of supervisory process | Degree of guidance and support given to candidate<br><br>Management of the supervisory process the burden of supervision | Feedback reports from doctoral students(I)<br>Surveys of doctoral students(I) |
| Quality of the doctoral graduate | Employability of the graduate | Proportion of doctoral candidates employed on completion of studies (I) |
| Quality of doctoral thesis | Quality of the contents and argumentation of the thesis<br>Contribution to the body of knowledge | Examiners' reports (D)<br>Possibility of getting thesis published as a monograph(I) |
| Quality of doctoral publications | Quality of articles and presentations emanating from thesis | Quality of journals in which papers are published(I)<br>Citation impact of papers(I)<br>Invitations to present results of doctoral study at national and international conferences(I) |

**Table 6: Measurements of quality of doctoral programme**

This section provided a brief overview of doctoral perceived space and spatial practices. The physical and statistical aspects of higher education are the material manifestation of the spatial and social practices which produce perceived space. This was however a brief sketch as more could have been said about the physical contours and spatial practices of higher education. This section, however, lays the foundation for the exploration of abstract space/conceived

space/ spaces of representation. Whilst material representation is pivotal, an emphasis on either material or abstract space does not present a holistic picture. As already alluded to, perceived space is influenced and shaped by the ideological configurations of an era. Such configurations can persist past the given era, for example, racist monuments, symbols and statues that continue to exist post-apartheid. The next section explores some of the discourses that shape our understandings of how doctoral students traverse and utilise the doctorate space.

## Section 2: Discourses of Becoming

### Conceptualizing doctoral abstract space

The process of making academics is a never ending continuous creative process. Elkana (2006, 66) describes doctoral education as a "complex process of formation". This process is not confined to the formation of academic attributes, but also includes "the personality, character, habits of heart and mind" (80) of the doctoral candidate. Baptista and Huet (2012, 934) state that during the process of formation, the metaphors used to conceptualise learning, knowledge (re)construction and becoming an academic can act as a symbol of "engagement and emotional attachment". The use of metaphors to conceptualise and understand phenomena and everyday experiences can "trigger all kinds of thoughts, suggestions, images and feeling" (Vicente 1991, 115). Thus, the use of metaphors to conceptualise, imagine and interpret abstract space plays a critical role in one's spatial lived experiences. PhD metaphors have been narrowed down to five groups by Mewburn (2011): metaphors of space, travel, action, body, and ordeal. This section is not exhaustive of all the doctoral conceptual metaphors and literature on academic identity construction but highlights some important themes to lay the foundation for the conceptualisation of doctoral space as a borderland.

The doctoral process has normatively been conceptualized through space and travel metaphors such as land, field, maze, quest, and journey (Midgley and Trimmer, 2013). McKnight and Whitburn (2017) argue that our use and critique of metaphors is informed by cultural assumptions that are at times gendered, racist, ableist and heteronormative. The authors argue that metaphors should be guided by students' experiences and cultural realities. Hence, the various metaphors explored in this chapter are not by means of critique but in line with the

argument by Baptista and Huet (2012,) that the metaphors we chose can illuminate and/or hide certain experiential realities.

Jones (2013) uses the unicursal labyrinth metaphor and the Persephone myth represented by death and resurrection to conceptualise the process that doctoral candidates experience – death of the novice and resurrection of the professional. Jones states, "sacrificed, transformed, and wisened, the researcher emerges from the immersive experience as an empowering force for others' research journeys" (2013, 67). The death and resurrection metaphor represents a temporal spatial journey that doctoral students embark on during their extended research process. Mishra (2015) describes the doctoral process as an exploratory journey of an unknown territory, rebirth, and change. Cotterall, (2015: 1) describes doctoral studies as a "mysterious learning process which culminates in PhD students' metamorphosis into doctors". Foot, Crowe, Tollafield, and Everett (2014) maintain that the identity construction of doctoral students often requires a transition from their colloquial past selves to present/future scholarly identities. This is however not a smooth transition and often requires an amount of self-study, self-awareness, and reflexivity to develop authentic identities. Haynes adds,

> *Perhaps most PhD babies are monitored more closely than mine was before birth and delivered in proper university labour wards...Once pregnant I had to deliver...Now of course, with a little distance from the birth, I am curious about my baby. How will she grow up? (2009, 28).*

The use of birth metaphors symbolizes the PhD as a journey of becoming and the "life cycle of knowledge creation" (Haynes 2009, 27).

McCulloch (2013) criticizes the framing of doctoral studies through the journey metaphor as linear and nonrepresentative of the complexities of doctoral students' experiences and identities. As mentioned by the author, the uncertainties and complexities of the doctoral process can be better captured by a quest metaphor. The quest metaphor is argued by McCulloch as offering "cross-cultural basis for both staff and student development activities through which sense can be made of the research experience, student concerns can be surfaced, and potentially difficult issues raised for discussion in an unthreatening way". Thomson (2015) argues that the traditional metaphor of a journey implies that there is a universal approach to doctorate studies, which is an inevitable minimal approach and, thus, exclusionary. McKenna

(2017) points out that the metaphor of a journey which depicts a lone scholar, who works in a silo with little to no collaboration, is inappropriate as collaboration is central to the doctoral studies and the nurturing of highly skilled critical citizenship.

Batchelor and Di Napoli (2006, 13) apply the voyager metaphor to the doctoral process, arguing that students "engage in a process of becoming" which impacts identity construction either positively or negatively:

> *A journey entails endings and beginnings, loss and retrieval. It offers a chance of change and renewal, but also a risk of disorientation and displacement. Researchers-as-voyagers, travel from familiar inner and outer landscapes into unknown territories with new horizons. They progress through an itinerary of developing meanings, both epistemological and ontological. Researchers-as-voyagers are engaged in a process of becoming, and of discovering a voice. The 'voyage' tenders experimental possibilities for alternative understandings of who they are, who they could be and what they know. It opens up transitional spaces for the formation of a new sense of identity. However, certain educational practices underpinning contemporary doctoral studies programmes may impede the process of self-authorship that is fundamental to research (2006, 13).*

Keefer (2015) describes doctoral students in the process of becoming as straddled in-between worlds: becoming, but not yet, academics. The doctorate, and the experience it offers, is a rite of passage. The search of academic identity is further explored by Keefer (2015) as "doctoral liminality" where candidates are striving to meet a completion threshold to become academics. Firth (2018) however, highlights that whilst liminal thresholds to completion are important, the doctoral experiences consisting of feelings of isolation, self-doubt and impostor are part of a hazing process and ritualized initiation into academia. In her blog *The PhD Quest: Arise, become a peer,* Firth compares academic liminality to the knighthood tests to prove skill, purity, and bravery.

McAlpine and Amundsen (2009) state that the development of an academic identity is one of the challenges that doctoral candidates have. The authors explored identity from the perspective of agency, where doctoral students are not just docile bodies being shaped by the academic environment and experience but also being actively involved in shaping their experience. Barnacle and Mewburn (2010) highlight that, whilst agency has been traditionally theorised in relation to epistemology and ontology, when it comes to the doctoral journey, candidates begin to perform their academic identity both in informal and formal networks using

material things. Material objects form part of the perceived environment and become part of the spatial practices of students. Bennett and Folley (2014) argue that rich interaction with material objects including social media tools can improve student doctoral experience and reduce feelings of isolation and improve participation.

Deegan and Hill (1991) describe the doctoral process as a conflicting process of self-discovery. Coffman, Putman, Adkisson, and Kriner (2016: 1) assert that as doctoral candidates wait for their scholarly expert Self to arrive, they possess multiple identities. These identities are negotiated within doctoral liminal spaces and the community of practice. The authors argue that candidates need guidance and direction from an expert in the field to help develop and emerge as experts, themselves, in the field. Deegan and Hill (1991: 1) argue that the "dissertation process is a liminal journey, a passage characterized by ambiguity, uncertainty, and crisis in which the student self is abandoned, and a new professional-self claims a world of power, authority, maturity, and responsibility". The authors further argue that the adoption of doctoral projects which employ "technical formulas" that leave no room for creativity and reflexivity "deny the possibility of liminal transformation". Cotterall (2015) adds that the formation of an academic identity is not neutrally constructed but guided by various traditional doctoral candidate expectations. Cotterall further states that minority group students, specifically international students often lack cultural capital to have favourable identity trajectories. Accordingly, Cotterall (2015: 1) advocates for a strengthened effort to support "non-traditional candidates in their journey to become confident scholars and researchers".

Carter (2013) employs the metaphor of a vortex to capture cognitive and emotional toil that students go through when trying to attain their doctorates. The author provides that there are "university, collective group and individual practices that may enable those coping with stressors (such as heightened emotions, from ecstasy to devastation) to maintain their well-being" (Carter, 2013: 1). In accordance with Amran and Ibrahim (2012), doctoral studies involve a personal odyssey encompassing identity formation, ambitions for career excellence and survival. Milestones which candidates reach as they transform from novice to expertise become rites of passage. Amran and Ibrahim argue that the study of these rites of passage, from the personal experience of candidates, is important as it can potentially unearth invisible aspects of a doctoral journey. Keefer (2015: 1) defines the doctoral journey as a rite of passage for young scholars and is mostly experienced by many as a period of "confusion and disorientation". However, Nutov and Hazzan (2011) have questioned if the emotional labour

that students experience in their doctoral journey can be researched, especially in the social sciences where most of their work involve qualitative research, which is intensively emotional laborious.

Stubb, Pyhältö, and Lonka (2014: 1) highlight that there are varying conceptions of research "ranging from viewing it as a job, as a means of obtaining qualifications and accomplishments, a personal journey and making a difference". There are some contesting views that whilst doctoral studies as a journey is symbolic of a pilgrim's progress, it can also be classified as work (Hughes and Tight 2013). The work metaphor is used by Hughes and Tight to denote doctorate studies as being multi-faceted, and not only limited to the traditional metaphor of a journey but also "indicating relevance of a range of metaphorical descriptions" (Hughes and Tight, 2013: 1). These descriptions are highlighted by Stubb, Pyhältö, and Lonka (2014: 1) as being influenced by field of study and level of study. The main conceptions of research cited by the authors are discussed as differing with regards to "how product-oriented vs. process-oriented and person- centred vs. community-centred they were".

It is highlighted by Turner and McAlpine (2011), that the nature of doctoral student roles is understudied, and this is a limitation as more social sciences doctoral students enter into research careers after the completion of their degrees. The authors found that if more were known about the nature of both roles – doctoral student and research staff, the doctorate experience could be enhanced to mirror that of a research role. The authors further argue that the status of both roles is complex and fluid as both roles are performed in similar ways. Jazvac-Martek (2009) argues that the academic and student roles are oscillating role identities that candidates fluidly negotiate throughout their doctoral journey. Jazvac-Martek further states that the formation of an identity is a social-psychological phenomenon which cannot be easily delineated as first the student identity which builds up to a second academic identity. This, he claims, is because doctoral candidates perform their academic identity as they struggle as students to finish their doctorate studies.

**Writing and becoming**

Mackenzie and Ling (2009, 1) describe writing as the performative aspect of research wherein the writer develops a new identity as their voice emerges through the narrative writing element of a research journey. The authors argue that the key elements of the culture of research are "interactivity, recognition of identity and reflection". Kamler and Thomson (2006) assert that writing forms part of the complexities of scholarly identity formation. Indeed, doctoral writing involves more than the self-help approach that usually forms the basis of doctoral writing in the literature. Thus, Kamler and Thomson describe the doctorate as a "delicate balance between providing rigorous and challenging theoretical insights into the complexities of doctoral writing and simultaneously outlining many practical writing strategies supervisors can implement with their doctoral students" (2006, 1).

Probert (2006: 1) claims that the choices that one makes about how to write and what to write are "inextricably linked with individual passions, fears, insecurities, and values". Using the example of choice of a research design, the author describes the doctoral journey as an unplanned critical analysis of both Self and writing options. Wegener, Meier, and Ingerslev (2016) posit that academic identity formation of a candidate does not happen in a vacuum or in isolation. The authors note that the process of writing a thesis is linked to the creation of a research identity. As the candidate engages in production of text, they are also finding their voice, which, in the authors' opinion, is strengthened by engagement in activities such as doctoral writing groups. Wegener, Meier, and Ingerslev (2016) argue that writing groups provide students with shared experiences and shared insecurities, and thereby diminish feelings of isolation. Furthermore, Wegener and his colleagues further state that common practice spaces enable doctoral students to borrow brainpower supporting them to thesis completion and development of a research identity.

Dillow (2009) holds that the search for a theoretical framework is an innate part of the doctoral journey as it influences decisions about approach and method. The author compares their experience in finding theory to that of a "growth spurt – sometimes painful but always exciting" (Dillow, 2009: 1). Berman (2013) adds that theory is a vital pillar of the doctoral journey that guides the student from the drafting of a research question, choice of methodology and is woven into the analysis. This renewed focus of theory as an integral aspect of thesis writing is noted by the author as being driven by supervisors in a bid to strengthen their supervisory role

in the doctoral journey of students. Berman (2013: 1) legitimates the conceptual framework of a thesis as it serves as "the reference for the supervisory relationship, and an organising structure for the written thesis… also providing a tool of metacognition for the author as she actively constructed and used her conceptual framework to support her doctoral study". Dillow (2009) notes that the process of finding a theory is not an easy one as it involves unlearning theories about theories and becoming aware of its vitality to the accomplishment of a doctorate. Ruto-Korir and Lubbe (2010) add that structures and practices of supervisors play a vital role in nurturing originality of candidates and their ability to critically engage with discourse in their search for an appropriate paradigm for their dissertation. The authors use the metaphor of a cradle to "imply the 'nurturance' and 'upbringing' that doctoral students might require to develop intellectual maturity in academic authority and voice". As the thought patterns of supervisor and supervisee (doctoral candidate) are different, the author describes the search for a theoretical framework as mind-conversations between supervisor and supervisee.

Pansiri (2009) describes the doctorate journey as an ongoing process of finding the gap. In keeping with the author, a PhD candidate continuously negotiates with literature as the doctoral journey evolves, from inception until completion. McAlpine (2012) highlights that, in addition to academic writing, the doctoral journey also involves reading, which contributes to the formulation of an academic identity. McAlpine argues that the role of reading in the construction of an academic identity is under-studied yet it has essential pedagogical implications. Ismail and Majid (2013) posit that the challenges doctoral candidates face in writing up their theses are largely associated with crossing threshold concepts. Additionally, a candidate needs to reach a portal of understanding of their field that will enable them to own the doctoral journey. Thus, Ismail and Majid found that there are four major challenges to crossing threshold concepts, "namely identifying research topics and objectives, conceptualizing research, managing supervisor relationships and inadequate advanced academic writing skills". The understanding of challenges of crossing threshold is argued to be key students' self-efficacy and identity construction.

## Significance of study: Doctoral borderlands

The above sections have mapped out doctoral space: perceived and conceived. Doctoral student experiences occur within the physical and abstract domains of doctoral space. The role of the

doctoral student as a novice in the doctoral space is *a priori* and in conceptualizing doctoral borderlands a brief defining of the apprenticeship role of the doctoral student is important. As already alluded to in this chapter, doctoral students begin their doctoral studies as novices and, according to Ktufiss, during the process of becoming, the student takes the role of a cognitive apprentice:

> *where a student goes through a process of modelling (demonstrating a cognitive task so students can observe it),coaching (assisting the learner during learning or performance of a task), scaffolding (providing expert guidance initially and gradually removing it), articulating (reasoning processes and knowledge in use), reflecting (comparing students' problem-solving processes with those of an expert), and exploring (encouraging students to establish their own goals or sub-goals within a given task) (1988, 66).*

Ktuffis (1988) notes that apprenticeship has a sociological aspect because students are encouraged toward situated/contextualised thinking, culture of participation, actioning research and engagement with multiple forms of text to foster critical thinking. The master-apprentice model has been contested in literature (see Bitzer, 2014; Ensor, 2004; Nerad, 2011). Various literature, suggesting initiatives such as cohort supervision would be a counterpoint (see Altbach, Reisberg, and Rumbley, 2009b; Chaya Herman, 2011). The merits of counterpoint approaches will not be examined here and, although these can, to an extent, act as mitigating alternatives, cognitive apprenticeship is not only about the hearing of multiple voices but rather how multiple voices affect a student's voice. Hubbard and Kitchin (2011), however, opine that 'apprenticeship' should not be regarded as a negative word to describe doctoral students as no theorist develops their intellectual identity in a vacuum and a genealogy of knowledge reveals knowing is a process of knowing, mis-knowing and continual growth – inspiring/influencing and being inspired/being influenced.

Doctoral apprentices create knowledge through curatorship. The student's intellectual identity is developed in contact with supervisors, peers, drawing from curricula: methodological, theoretical, and writing tools. These choices are not benign, but ideological, and impact on the intellectual identity formation of a scholar. Maldonado-Torres asserts that spaces of knowledge production "have become such important zones of struggle: it is there that a great amount of youth and other students come together to explore ideas and get to determine how they are going to position themselves in relation to them" (2016, 3). The scholars themselves become

sites of struggle as onto-epistemologies that define and defend intellectual boundaries compete for their allegiance and confer a sense of identity on them (Goodson 1981). The onto-epistemological tools assimilated make and remake intellectual identity and legacy. This legacy will be published and subsequently assimilated by other PhD scholars five, ten, fifteen years later, producing and reproduction onto-epistemological cultures. An apprentice does not only experience these competing narratives within this in-between space as fractured from cultural identity but must negotiate these multiple and sometimes competing identities. Drawing from Anzaldúa, in this in-between space, the apprentice is positioned in what I term 'doctoral borderlands' – a space of being and becoming – a space of "racial, ideological, cultural and biological cross-pollinisation" (Anzaldúa 1987, 99). That is, the doctoral apprentice is in a place of contradictions transgressions and shock… "a contradictory and ambivalent place from which a problematized notion of cultural identity emerges" (Almeida 2000, 119).

The apprentice, located in borderlands, is by virtue a border subject – existing within borders and speaking from the borders. Through the onto-epistemological choices, the apprentice positions their epistemic-location because knowledge is not disembodied and tools of research: methods, theories, data, articles, statistics are all a reproduction of onto-epistemological ideologies.

The use of the term 'borderlands' is not just reflective of the PhD candidate's role as an apprentice; the complementary positionalities of the unknowing/candidate/learner and the knowing/academic/master denote doctoral studies as a liminal process and yet, are also symbolic of the "dominance of hermeneutics and epistemology as keywords controlling the conceptualization of knowledge" (Mignolo 2012, 61). 'Unknowing' represents a category of all onto-epistemologies that have been racially and culturally categorised as unvalued and consequently repressed within the modernity imaginary. Yet, within the marginalised and 'othered' side of the border, there exists multi-voiced narratives that resist the labels which attempt to silence their onto-epistemological realities. These two value systems play out within the grand narrative of North/South and compete for the cultural and epistemic allegiance. Grand narratives, however, can be silencing as they can render invisible and unknown anything that falls outside their binaries. The use of the borderlands concept gives narration to the unheard voices that are not represented within grand narratives.

# Conclusion

Given the importance of spatial and conceptual metaphors in not only framing discourses but influencing experience, it is critical to develop a metaphor that captures the material and cognitive realties of student experiences in the South African context. The student is a border-dweller of both material and abstract manifestations of doctoral space. Anzaldúa defines the border-dweller as "the marginalized, the persecuted, the dark-skinned, the foreign, and the detribalized". In applying the borderlands metaphor to the experiences of the marginalised and persecuted, it is a "processes of many things, psychological, physical, and mental" and "does not apply specifically to one thing but can be applied to many things" (Anzaldúa and Keating, 2000:176). The aim in applying the borderland metaphor to conceptualise doctoral space is "to go beyond description and representation by using words, images, and theories that stimulate, create, and in other ways facilitate radical physical- psychic change," in myself as a doctoral student, my readers and "the various worlds in which we exist and to which we aspire" (xxiii).

# Conceptual framework: Borderlands theory

## Introduction

Academia has been described as a place and space. 'Place' is a situated approach of understanding spatial thought and signifies geographic positions that influence spatial discourses (Hubbard and Kitchin 2011). 'Space', however, has been conceptualised as an intertwining three-way dialectic between perceived (imaginations), conceived (representations), and lived space (cultural practices) (Lefebvre, 2001). To Hubbard and Kitchin, the interplay between space, place, perceived reality, and actions makes them "unavoidably caught up in power relations" and permeable and fluid structures "always becoming" as they are always transforming in accordance with the contemporary contexts (Hubbard and Kitchin 2011: 11). Artiles attests that representations of power in space materialise as ideology, and acts of control and surveillance (Artiles 2003, 189). Spatial place is thus not apolitical as bordering and mapping are tools of conceptualising difference, which tools are constructed and defined within an 'imaginary' i.e. "an enabling but not fully explicable symbolic matrix within which people imagine and act as world – making collective agents"(Gaonkar 2002, 1). Stein states that imaginaries are socially created and are neither purely ideological nor material but have the power to define reality, circumscribe what is deemed normal and proper and legitimate meaning making (Stein 2017, 29). When space and place are understood in their ideological implications, it necessitates critical reflections of how space affects normative onto-epistemologies which in turn effect on space.

Anzaldúa posits that borders are "set up to define the places (spaces) that are safe and unsafe, to distinguish us from them" (Anzaldúa 1987, 7). In line with Simmel, boundaries can be both symbolic and physical, as the border is not merely a "spatial fact with a sociological impact, but a sociological fact that shapes spatiality" (Simmel quoted in Dittgen 1999,167). Mignolo and Tlostanova further argue that the colonial/modernity imaginary classified and ordered bodies according to geographic and body-graphic borders where North/White translated to reason and rationality whilst South/Black translated to inferiority and devoid of knowledge (Mignolo and Tlostanova 2006, 205). As a preface of coloniality, modernity, synonymous to Western civilisation, classified areas outside Western metropolis as designated locations "of

the barbarians and of the primitives" (Mignolo and Tlostanova, 2006: 205).To Maldonado-Torres, in the colonial/modernity imaginary, geographical and spatial borders translate to binary distinctions – North/knowing/visible and South/unknowing/invisible that give hegemony and centrism to localised geographic spatial traditions (Maldonado-Torres, 2016). Mignolo is of the opinion that space (geo) and body location are intricately linked to ideological loci of enunciation (Mignolo 2000). He explains that geo-body location defines subject/agent position in relation to the coloniality/modernity imaginary which prescribes on who has legitimate authority to produce knowledge.

In keeping with Anzaldúa, space/land, subject/body and representations/text continually interplay and are interconnected elements at work within a framework of cultural intersections and displaced identities (Anzaldúa 1987). Anzaldúa argues that the interplay between space, subject and representation does not happen disconnected from the individual but more-so the body is a site of contesting and competing spatial discourses and practices. In the words of Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin:

> *The body is a text, that is, a space in which conflicting discourses can be written and read, it is a specially material text, one that demonstrates how subjectivity, however constructed it may in fact be, is "felt" as inescapably material and permanent (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 2013, 184).*

Understanding the body as a text transcends the restrictive reading of borders as "simple divide between here and there, us and them, but as psychic, social and cultural terrain that we inhabit, and that inhabits all of us" (back cover of Anzaldúa 2007). This statement imprinted on the back cover of Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* captures the anchoring motif of her work as the body inhabits and traverses what she terms 'borderlands (a world in-between)' it is subjected to imposed boundaries, laws, cultural practices, and value systems. To Anzaldúa, imposed boundaries are the residue of cultural, racial, religious differences which materialise in the body as oppressive binaries and limitations. Anzaldúa (quoted in Verhage 2014, 118) further propounds that material boundaries do not enforce oppressive boundaries but are merely a residue of the repeated and recited enactments of spatial practices and power that solidify and fixes racial, gender, religious binaries. 'Borderlands epistemology' was introduced by Anzaldúa, not only to describe a space of intersecting boundaries but as an enactment of living in-between intersecting ideologies.

## Borderlands Theory

Borderlands theory was born out of aerial studies of Texas and the U.S. Southwest/Mexican border (Orozco-Mendoza 2008; Vallone 2014). In 1987, in her ground-breaking book Borderlands/*La Frontera: The New Mestiza,* Gloria Anzaldúa added a conceptual and ideological understanding of borderlands that transcended physical borders. Gloria Anzaldúa's conceptualisation of borderlands, however, encompassed psychological, sexual, spiritual, and intellectual borderlands which are not particular to any physical border. In accordance with Anzaldúa:

> *Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy (1987, preface).*

In an interview with Sandoval, Anzaldúa described borderlands as an "alter-space" which can be located geographically (physical space) but importantly "existing in consciousness and culture, in all economies of power" (abstract space) (Sandoval 2005, xiii). In her work, Anzaldúa used her material reality, being a disabled lesbian Chicana feminist to locate her identity within borderlands (see Anzaldúa 1987). She has been described in literature as a 'feminist activist poet-philosopher' (Pérez, 2003; Verhage 2014, 111; Wilson 2012, 15). In an interview with Lara, Anzaldúa defines borderlands theory as an honest enactment of hearing and seeing the other, a "transitional space" between worlds where difference is seen and dialogued and multiplicity is accepted (Anzaldúa in Lara 2005, 4). Anzaldúa uses borderlands both as a metaphor and a conceptual tool to articulate hybridity and fluidity of identity. Wiederhold, conceptualises 'borderlands' as a generative metaphor that highlights the "complexities accompanying acts of translation in ways that can help interrogate institutionalized categories" (2005, 110). Yarbro-Bejarano (1994, 18) further states that the borderlands metaphor is "full of variations and seeming contradictions, that refuses the neat dichotomy of deep structure and smooth surfaces in its central core" (see also, Almeida 2000, 113). McDowall and Ramos (2017, 60) add that 'borderlands' is a "multifaceted metaphor" to describe spaces where multiple ideologies intersect. As a concept, Orozco-Mendoza (2008, 63) states that Anzaldúa developed "a map" for not only recognising and naming coloniality but also recognising how individuals experience and possibly work in the transformation of Self. The concept of borderlands informs an analysis of spaces influenced by 'in-betweenness' of physical, conceptual, psychological and spiritual borderlands (Chang et al. 2018). Yarbro-

Bejarano (1994) warns against universalising the concept of borderlands from its material reality to deracinated ideological and psychic borderlands. Yarbro-Bejarano argues that "appropriative readings" can run the risk of masking differences by imposing generalised experiences that exclude particularities (Yarbro-Bejarano, 1994, 8) (see also Kaplan 1987; Spelman 1988). Orozco-Mendoza (2008) posits that whilst universalising life in the borderlands based on situated experiences would be erroneous, the metaphors evoked by Anzaldúa's borderlands are planetary and exist in every socially constructed border. She opines that colonialism was a planetary system established on racial difference and organised the world according to racial hierarchies and borders, making borderlands a planetary metaphor (Orozco-Mendoza 2008). Saldívar views the borderlands theory as being a cross disciplinary, cultural, gender and racial "invitation to redraw the borders between folklore and the counter-discourses of marginality, between 'everyday' culture and 'high' culture, and between people with culture and people between culture" (1997, 17). Applying Anzaldúa's borderlands theory offers a critique of the colonial despotic dualistic structures that subjugated and continue to subjugate the mind to racialised ideologies (Méndez 2018). Mignolo's position is that, although colonial experiences are located in space and time, they are also pluriversal and planetary in as much as they incorporate the ideologies of all people affected by the modernity/colonial imaginary (Mignolo 2011). *Borderlands* offers an alternative approach that allows for particular and situated analysis of colonial "discourses of cultural authority and legitimation" (Yarbro-Bejarano, 1994, 9). Drawing from the above discussion, the material reality of Anzaldúa is one possibly situated application of borderlands. Whilst I acknowledge the limitations of appropriating metaphors (Western or otherwise), I situate the concept of borderland: both material and abstract in the lived experiences of South African doctoral students. In my application, I agree with Saldívar who states that any project which draws on Borderlands concepts to deconstruct and transgress binaries can be located "within a zone of dangerous crossings with new 'centralities' that challenge dominant national centres of identity and culture" (1997, 19).

The borderlands theory allows us to imagine ourselves within a contested in-between space unfettered from identity binaries, to hear unheard voices and scrutinize the shifting borders of space and identity in space (Espinosa-Aguilar 2007). Lugones, drawing from Anzaldúa, states that borders are arbitrarily enforced and cause a splitting, not only of space, but of Self and like a "chain link fence crowned with rolled barbed wire" borders mark "woman from man, object from subject, passion from reason, sexuality from spirituality" (Lugones 2005, 86). This binary

logic imposes oppressive categories and conceptual boundaries enabled by, on the one hand, exclusions of alternative ontologies, and on the other, unwillingness to dialogue with difference. Wiederhold describes categories as "cultural constructs, supported by imbricated institutions that empower them to make meaning in the world" and the history of Western thought has acted the part of a vanguard of absolute dualities by erecting conceptual borders that guard such distinctions (2005, 114). Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* is a resistance against dualism, arguing for the existence of an in-between space which escapes the confines of prescribed normalcy. Borderland epistemology advocates for the suspension of binary confinements and rhetorics of dominant ideologies that inscribe on meaning and meaning making for new possibilities of looking at reality, writing and thinking (Lugones 2005, 97). Borderland inhabitation does not, however, guarantee a liberatory experience but does open up the dweller to the possibility that "there are other ways of thinking, there are other sexualities, other philosophies" (Anzaldúa 2000, 229). Méndez adds that borderland onto-epistemology is about "the experience of creating new knowledge and new methods of knowledge construction" which can decentre Western philosophy as the original and legitimate paradigm of knowledge inevitably affecting meaning making (Méndez 2018).

In depicting borderlands, Anzaldúa uses the metaphor of 'leaping in the dark' to describe the intimate struggle of discovering Self (1987, 103). She views psychological oppression as an everyday reality of dwelling within the borders of patriarchal/colonial modernity. Lugones depicts borderlands as being composed of moments of resistance and transgression of despotic dualities refusing to be "split by the dichotomies of patriarchal/colonial modernity" (Lugones 2005, 97). Although the experience of being a border dweller can be isolating as there are systematic and structural barriers that exclude, silence, and render differences invisible, homogenising oppression is also silencing and oppressive (Anzaldúa et al. 2003). Schiwy, in a related point, argues that homogenising categories such as 'Black female' or 'Black male' can result in centering power to hegemonic counter movements reinforcing binaries, subsequently silencing difference (Schiwy 2007). Garcia views the borderlands lens transcends absolute and totalising binaries by giving voice to the situated experiences of the "unwanted, the ugly, the mutilated, the raped, and the queer" (Garcia 2019, 11). According to Lugones (2005), the borderland is a space where sense-making is not a progression towards commonality but is open-ended. She adds that the borderland is not a *place* of arrival but rather *a process* of becoming, where identity is continuously in transition.

Anzaldúa theorises borderlands as "a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary…The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants" (Anzaldúa 1987, 7). Mignolo (2012) asserts that in the colonial/modernity imaginary borders were maintained by the colonial difference – the systematic exclusion of people based on race, sexual orientation, and ethnicity from histories, knowledge, and meaning making (see also Grosfoguel 2002). Puwar (2004), in her book on racialised and gendered bodies in institutions, suggests that colonialism was structured and maintained by reductive categories that idealised the White male, irrationalised women and caricatured non-Whites as barbaric, uncivilised, and unknowing. The categorically prohibited and forbidden were, and continue to be, "systematically excluded" and portrayed as "bastards or unsophisticated scholars" (Maldonado-Torres 2012, 205). For example, hooks (1994) argues that Black women's lived experiences and intellectualism is discounted as experiential, not counting for "book knowledge". Rodan, Ellis, and Lebeck (2014) assert that those who cannot meet the pre-scripted standards of physical normality are rejected as inadequate and abnormal, whilst rigid gender categories silence and absentee those whose identity is not checked within normative boxes (Sills 2013). Borderland epistemology as theorized by Anzaldúa contends that identity categories – race, sexuality, and ability including other conventional categories are restrictive and imprisoning. In Vasquez' view, the borderland lens enables individuals to precede and supersede "socio-political and economic hegemony, sexism, essentializing feminism, enforced gender categories, classism, academic elitism, and other oppressive discourses" (Vásquez, 2005, 67).

Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, and Koobak argue that inherent to the coloniality/modernity imaginary is an obsession with normativity and a unified centre that organises individual experiences into homogenised hierarchical categories (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, and Koobak 2016). This drive towards sameness or what Anzaldúa (1987, 89) calls "aesthetic of virtuosity" permeates social, cultural, and epistemic realms and erects a

> *Plathian bell jar of sameness and homogeneity. Like the rule of sameness that organizes our understanding of how we communicate, the "aesthetic of virtuosity" presupposes a centered subject able to engage with symbols in systematic ways, in order to provide recognizable evidence of that engagement to likeminded teachers. Through this management of energies, speaking the same language identifies a state of belonging (Wiederhold 2005, 116).*

To maintain the *status quo*, onto-epistemologies are policed with the expectation that intellectual identities are defined within the "self-enclosed epistemological systems" (116). Intellectual achievement is judged on the ability to mimic established epistemological conventions and "the stakes are high when determining who is included and excluded from the intellectual arena" (116). To Wiederhold, intellectual points of liminality become points of reinforcement and reproduction of exclusion – on one hand, the colonial subject reinforces the rhetoric that their lived experiences are not legitimate accounts of normalcy and meaning making whilst, on the other hand, becomes the agent that reproduces oppressive and exclusionary epistemologies. Wiederhold argues that the colonial subject is presented two absolute points of liminal intellectual identity formation – unknowing and knowing. Knowing supposes the "universal location and the epistemological purity of the knowing subject", whilst unknowing represents an object to be known (Mignolo 2012, 200). The objectified colonial figures: gendered, racialised and abled, striving towards intellectual liminality are themselves presented within texts as objects to be known (Mignolo 2012). Anzaldúa notes that in spaces of meaning making, the othered subject is faced with multiplicity of selfhood – being both an object and a knower. To Anzaldúa, these contradictions and others presented by other intersecting identities cause a rupture in the everyday world, allowing one to see through the cracks of despotic dualities and the fictions of monolithic narratives (Anzaldúa 1987). Borderlands theory places emphasis on multiplicity in an attempt to make visible the "multi-voiced subjectivity of those who live at the borders between two cultures" whose identity is "hindered and handicapped by an implacable profiling that imposes homogenized categories" (Medina 2003).

The value systems imposed on the dominated and colonised inscribe racial, gender and epistemic stereotypes – the hypersexualised black man, the exotic black woman and the reduction of their knowledges to localised experiential knowledge systems (Rudolph, Sriprakash, and Gerrard, 2018). These stereotypes were produced and are reproduced by colonial difference (Mignolo, 2012). Anzaldúa posits that the colonial divide labelled the colonised as "transgressors, aliens and trespassers" the "only legitimate inhabitants are those in power, whites and those who align themselves with whites" (Anzaldúa, 1987, 7). In her poem *To Live in the Borderlands Means You* Anzaldúa states:

> *[t]o live in the Borderlands means to*
> *put chile in the borscht,*

*eat whole wheat tortillas*

*speak texmex with a Brooklyn accent;*

*be stopped by la migra at the border checkpoints. (1987, 194-195)*

In this poem, Anzaldúa captures imposed colonial homogenised identities of belonging. Colonial discourses when embedded in institutions become normative categories of labelling and naming difference. Although her last sentence refers to the policing of physical borders such as segregation laws within South Africa that legalised and institutionalised discrimination, this can also be applied ideologically (see Pérez 2003). Rabaka (2012, 36) states that academic disciplines and institutions are implicated in the "policing and patrolling of both the social and symbolic borders and boundaries". Alternative onto-epistemologies are banished into homogenised "academically ghettoized enclaves (e.g., Africana studies and women's studies, etc.)" (36). She argues further that alternative knowledges have been excluded and rendered intellectually invisible by "dialectic of homogenous discursive formations and hegemonic discursive practices" (37). Mignolo claims that institutionalised linguistic policing has been successful in the regulating of written and spoken grammar. He argues that language is not only a dictum of communication but "languaging in language allows us to describe ourselves interacting as well as to describe the descriptions of our interactions" (2000, 290). The superiority given to Occidental linguistic realities in turn gave priority to their cultural signs and symbols. Borderland lenses have also been used to reveal the policing of aged bodies (Rajan-Rankin 2018), queer bodies (Nelson 2010), female bodies (Dei 2018), and disabled bodies (Ramlow 2006).

Muñoz (1999) maintains that the alienation caused by absolute dualities presents individuals with two binary choices of assimilating or opposing dominant narratives. Muñoz further defines "identification" as the assimilation of the oppressed into cultural domination and structures of oppression (11). Muñoz opines that opposing narratives (counter-identifications) are a form of utopian oppositionality which inadvertently validate and reinforce the dominant ideology (11). Mignolo (2000) reinforces this position as he states that counter-movements run the risk of reinforcing monolithic conceptions of reason by centering Western ideology as the locus of enunciation. Both Mignolo (2000) and Muñoz (1999), draw from Anzaldúa to advocate for a 'third space' that decentres the locus of enunciation from Western and cultural dominant ideology. Mignolo (2000) proposes border thinking as a strategy of enunciating from

colonial difference, thereby decentering the colonial/modernity imaginary as the geography of reason. Muñoz proposes disidentification as a strategy of non-conformity to binaries, whether imposed by patriarchal/colonial/modernity or counter-movements (1999). The borderlands metaphor offers a 'third space' or a 'border culture' between binaries whilst borderland epistemology breaks down dualities and abandons all notions of a static Self for hybrid identities (Sills 2013).

In the borderland third space, one is able to dislocate from essentialising categories and identities, questioning all the narratives that compete for allegiance (Tlostanova, Thapar-Björkert, and Koobak, 2016). Anzaldúa states, "living between cultures results in 'seeing' double, first from the perspective of one culture, then from the perspective of another" (quoted in Reti 2016, 58). Anzaldúa critiques binary stereotypes arguing that border dwellers suffer from "an absolute despot duality that says we are able to be only one or the other". She thus argues that border-dwelling allows for the transgression and crossing of imposed binaries (1987, 41). In literature, border crossing has been discussed as enabling border-dwellers to transcend narratives of fixed and static identities by exploration of difference (Medina, 2003), transgressing binaries (Muñoz 1999), enacting epistemic disobedience (Mignolo 2011), and accepting pluriversity (Grosfoguel 2013). Anzaldúa writes that, "every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing" (1987, 70). Crossing, in Lugones' view, as a literal or symbolic act, represents advancement or knowledge acquisition (2005). In Mignolo's view, border thinking as "thinking from another place, imagining another language, arguing from another logic" is an enactment of border crossing (2000, 313). Border thinking refers to the moments in which the colonial/modernity, imaginary ruptures, and dualistic fictions are made visible by writing in multi-identities and knowledges in history, literature and discourses (Tlostanova 2016). Whilst counter movements propose ontologies to try and 'correct lies and tell the truth', border thinking aims at thinking otherwise and moving toward alternative logic of reason that critiques both dominant narratives and excluded narratives (Escobar 2007). Escobar's states:

> *Border thinking enables a new view of the diversity and alterity of the world, one that does not fall into the traps of a culturalist (essentialist) rhetoric but rather highlights the irreducible differences that cannot be appropriated by the monotopic critique of modernity (the radical critique of Western logocentrism understood as a universal category)…a necessary step in order to undo the subalternization of knowledge and to look for ways of thinking beyond the categories of Western thought (2007, 206).*

Berila (2005) suggests applying the borderlands lens and border thinking to problematise the borders that guard binaries and the exclusions that maintain binaries. The author reasons that this can be achieved through hearing and writing the experiences of those who live in the excluded and prohibited zones (Berila 2005, 124).To be a border dweller is not to appropriate a *mestiza* identity but rather to develop "new arenas where differently situated social actors can co-exist within negotiated boundaries, transcend visible and invisible borders, and acknowledge points of direct contact with each other's cultural expediencies" (Hill 2005, 133).The liminality of the border is not a utopian destination and/or place but rather the awareness of the open-ended nature of identity.

Anzaldúa asserts that in borderlands, one comes face to face with difference and the plurality of identities within and without Self. To be in the borderlands and have a border identity is a "hybridity, a mixture, because I live in this liminal state in between worlds, in between realities, in between systems of knowledge, in between symbology systems" (Anzaldúa quoted in Keating, 2005, 5). Urch, Dorn, and Abraham (1995, 76-77) believe the "[b]orderlands can also be considered as a state of mind which can be interrogated through language". This state of mind can be,

> *found anywhere where there are different kinds of people coming together and occupying the same space or where there are spaces that are hemmed in by these larger groups of people (Anzaldúa quoted in Urchet* et al. *1995,77).*

Fránquiz and Lewis (2013, 143) highlight that from a Cultural Studies perspective, although in-betweenness can denote physical spaces such as institutions and classrooms it is an "unlocatable space" that transcends physical space. The ambiguity of this space makes it a metaphor that applies to all processes of becoming where individuals have to negotiate multiple and competing identities, cultures, and epistemologies. She states, people who are in the process of crossing from one class to another or one country to another or one identity to another go through a transition, a nepantla state which is part of the Borderlands (Anzaldúa quoted in Urch, et al. 1995, 78).

## *Conocimiento*

*Nepantla* is one of the processes or stages within borderlands theory that individuals go through when building bridges towards identity formation. Anzaldúa's process of becoming and transformation entails seven stages which she calls "*conocimient*o – a personal epistemological path based on seven stages of awareness or reflective consciousness" (Elenes 2013, 135). *Conocimiento* is an alternative way of knowing "that synthesises reflections with action to create subversive knowledge systems that challenge the status quo" (Keating 2000, 5). In "now let us shift…*conocimiento*…inner work, public acts", Anzaldúa offers the seven stages of *conocimiento: El arrebato, nepantla, coatlicue,* the call*, Coyolxauhqui*, the blow up, and shifting realities. These seven stages offered as a "mediation on the rites of passage, the transitions of life from birth to death, and all the daily births and deaths in-between" (Anzaldúa 2002, 546). The seven stages do not occur in a linear format – individuals can be in more than one stage simultaneously, move between stages in a day, skip stages, or be stuck in one stage for months. However, in order to conceptualise and operationalise the concept, the stages will be outlined as conceptualised by Anzaldúa in her interview with Lara (Lara 2005,44-47) and delineated in literature (Elenes, 2013; Orozco-Mendoza, 2008; Villalba, 2016; Zaytoun, 2005). The stages are conceptual tools that describe and narrate experiences of "wounding—forms of alienation, rejection, hierarchy, and hostility" that have depicted individuals as "misfits in settings which they were expected to conform" (Barvosa 2020).

In the following section, I will outline the different stages of becoming within borderlands theory. Although each stage has its own experiential importance they are "neither clearly demarcated nor sequential nor linear – they overlap, shift back and forth, take place simultaneously" (Anzaldúa, 1999, 247). The first of these stages is *El arrebato* – the rupture that pushes one into a state of *nepantla* which is the second stage. In *nepantla*, someone begins to notice contradictions in Self and the world. This awareness of contradictions propels one into a distress called the *Coatlicue,* which is characterised by inaction and paralysis. Stage four begins when one enters active subjectivity seeking ways of transformation and change. The fifth stage, putting *Coyolxauhqui* together, is an attempt of gathering the fragmented Self towards meaningful identity formation. The re-constructed identity from stage five is shared with others in stage six and in stage seven, one learns how to negotiate the contradictions created by their own narrative and learns to cooperate and build alliances with others (Elenes

2013). These stages do not describe the "ultimate way of being but instead all stages are valuable mental spaces where learning and self-understanding occur" (Zaytoun 2016, 156). Although, in my description I establish a specific sequence of these processes, it is important to note that this sequence is not meant to be linear or deterministic and may be accommodated in a different order.

## *El arrebato*

> *And that's when it begins, when the outsiders are safely out, the insiders tucked within (Neile 2016, 18).*

### Crisis

This first stage is an upheaval of one's normalcy, comfort and the idea of safety attached to notions of 'home.' Anzaldúa's position is that crises are a form of transition "an emotionally significant event or a radical change in status. During this crisis, the existential isolation that all experience is exacerbated" (2009, 310). The event can be physical, emotional and/or spiritual and might not be limited to a one specific experience but it reveals the "cracks in the walls" of normalised realities (2009, 310). Based on Anzaldúa, "betrayal, systematic racism and marginalization" are all forms of violent crises that cause upheavals to normalcy (2000, 546). Heredia posits that the tokenisation of black bodies and women, and microaggressions within disciplinary movements such as women's studies are violences that disrupt the mythology that grounds Self (2011, 40-41). Anzaldúa adds that transitional spaces such as moving from without the ivory tower to within can create a representational crisis as a result of exclusionary onto-epistemological practices (2009, 206). Anzaldúa (1987) and González-López (2011) narrate their experiences of being linguistically and culturally marginalised within doctorate cultures as ruptures to their utopian views of doctorate studies. In describing these crises, Anzaldúa uses the metaphor of an earthquake – a seismic event that "jerks you from the familiar and safe terrain" (2002, 544). The earthquake breaks the bridges that connect us to normative meanings and categories, "fracturing" reality and "disaligning" meaning in the process (Anzaldúa 2009, 140). Anzaldúa described this disruption as the pulling of the "linchpin that upheld your reality/story together casting your mind to find a symbol to represent dislocation" (546).

**Rupture**

Once the linchpin has been pulled one's normalised reality ruptures. According to Anzaldúa rupture occurs when in the midst of a crises "an emotional bottom falls out from under you, forcing you to confront your fear of others, breaching the emotional walls you've built around yourself" (Anzaldúa 2002, 544). This process is characterised with awareness of contradictions and ambiguities within a present reality, resulting in a rupture between Self and reality. In keeping with Comaroff and Comaroff, when we become aware of the cracks in a normalised narrative, we experience a rupture with the "past—a past that, in the upshot, was flattened out, detemporalized, and congealed into 'tradition', itself a thoroughly modern construct" (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012, 118). At this stage, notions of the permanency of the status quo and fixed identities begin to shift, and the Self, crafted within binarized forms of normalcy begins to split open and question the consensus of what is normal and possible (Eldredge 2007). This process allows one to rethink and reinterpret meaning and understandings about Self and "question what the world is about" (Saavedra and Pérez, 2012, 439). Anzaldúa posits that psychic and social ruptures are an existential reality to persons of all genders and colours that have lived under oppressive and colonial conditions such as racism and sexism (1987).

Suyemoto believes that ruptures occur in everyday life and it is, at most, upon self-reflection that we become aware of them, not only as past crises but in how they acted as catalysts for change or assimilation (2006, 341). Ruptures, as a conceptual tool to understand identity formation, can help to understand how individuals negotiate, counter, or get assimilated into dominated value systems through the experience of crises that are, more often than not, isolating and alienating (Suyemoto, 2006; Anzaldúa, 2002). However, rupture does not only happen within Self but also entails epistemic ruptures from subject/object, us/ them, inside/outside dualities (Dahms 2012, 169). Epistemic ruptures impact on "material bodies" signalling "the beginning of the healing process for bodies that were erased, violated, and purposefully forgotten" (Dahms 2012, 169). Storytelling and testimonies are used as a tool to unearth experiences of rupture by enabling individuals to confront taken for granted assumptions and foreboding aspects of Self (Suyemoto 2006). Commenting on the value of narratives and self-recollections in Anzaldúa's work, Vallone states:

> *The use of the past that Anzaldúa makes in Borderlands/La Frontera is complex, meaningful, never separated from the analysis of the present and the vision of the future. The past is recovered in terms of mythology but also of*

*history and worked, adapted, made flexible to tell the most intimate things, to produce a vision for change, to reconstruct continuity against dismemberment and fragmentation, and to speak to future generations (2014, 7).*

**Fragmentation**

Anzaldúa uses *Coyolxauhqui* as a metaphor to describe the process of fragmentation that occurs as one ruptures. The *Coyolxauhqui* metaphor is drawn from a Aztec deity, *Coyolxauhqui* whose body was dismembered into a thousand pieces and scattered into the universe (Kattau 2007). The *Coyolxauhqui* metaphorical framework represents a "symbol for both the process of emotional psychical dismemberment, splitting body/mind/spirit/soul" (Anzaldúa 2002, 546). In her work *Charting Pathways,* Keating states that "viewed from within the Soul's presence there's no 'me' or 'you'. There's just 'us'. And yet this "us" has been shattered and fragmented – split into a multiplicity of pieces marked by the many forms our identities take" (2002, 19). Keating depicts fragmentation of Self as an imposed and bifurcated state of being unnatural and myopic. Anzaldúa believes that although fragmentation is as a result of awareness of multiplicity, it is still unnatural, she states:

> *For me there aren't little cubbyholes with all the different identities— intellectual, racial, sexual. It's more like a very fine membrane—sort of like a river, an identity is sort of like a river. It's one and it's flowing and it's a process. By giving different names to different parts of a single mountain range or different parts of a river, we're doing that entity a disservice. We're fragmenting it. I'm struggling with how to name without cutting it up (Anzaldúa 2000, 132).*

Although Anzaldúa argues that fragmentation can be symptomatic of splitting ourselves to reveal fractures of identity that fit universal forms of normalcy, she still recognises that fragmentation can be a catalyst to recognising contradictions within homogenising and dualistic narratives. Fragmentation can also destabilize centralized notions of Self and others, allowing us to recognise the myths and fictitious narratives that have defined reality (Kattau, 2007). Anzaldúa states, to pass over the bridge to something else, you'll have to give up partial organizations of Self, erroneous bits of knowledge, outmoded beliefs of who you are, your comfortable identities. ...You'll have to leave parts of yourself behind (2002, 557). She further asserts that, although fragmentation is painful, it allows us to see the cracks in dominant cultural symbols, myths, and ideologies.

In *La Prieta,* Anzaldúa, in reference to her multiple identities and disciplinary organisation of knowledge, argued that she refused to work in universities fearing "they would chop me [her] up into little fragments and tag each piece with a label" (Anzaldúa 1987, 220). Commenting on this statement by Anzaldúa, Tamdgidi asserts that labelling and categorising flows from dualistic paradigms that objectify others and has perpetually torn racialised bodies into pieces" (2011). Hence, *Coyolxauhqui* is a metaphoric process about recognising the restrictions of spatial fragmentation, fragmented academic disciplinary landscapes and "the habituated borders of classes, genders, "racial and ethnic groups, of ages, of abilities, and all borders that have helped for millennia to perpetuate the oppressive dualistic architecture of human experience" (Tamdgidi 2011, 223). Caputi describes the experience of identity in colonial modernity as being fragmented and dispersed, wherein the constructed Self is viewed as a "securely bounded individual, an isolated ego, ontologically disconnected from other humans, animals, the green world, the elements, and the flow of being" (Caputi 2005, 188). Caputi also argues that hegemonic power structures are constantly scattering fragments of Self. Being in the *Coyolxauhqui* state of dismemberment is a result of interconnected internal and external processes. To Anzaldúa, "the self does not stop with just you, with your body. The self penetrates other things, and they penetrate you" (Anzaldúa 2000, 162).

## *Nepantla*

> *A place where different perspectives come into conflict ... the zone between changes where you struggle to find equilibrium (Anzaldúa 2002, 548–549).*

### Displacement

Anzaldúa argues that bodies of colour were displaced and rendered cultureless, homeless, and unknowing (2009, 290). Furthermore, displacement of the material by external colonisation mirrors the effects of internal colonisation on the body and the psychic. The results of material displacement from familiar territory and home – a place of safety – are alienating and strip away a sense of belonging. Thomas (2012) argues that the experience of being an ethnic and cultural minority imposes an invisibility on people from minority groups who are only visible to the colonial dominant gaze as cultural tokens, displaced refugees or what Anzaldúa calls a "*trojan mula*" (2009, 207). Maseko (2018) is of the opinion that transitional spaces such as progressing from secondary education to university are a form of cultural and spatial

displacement that can result in identity fragmentation and alienation. In her work, Anzaldúa integrates material events of displacement with the internal feelings of being a misfit, and the feelings of alienation and unbelonging that one suffers when their spaces of safety are fractured (1897, 2000, 2009). Anzaldúa further posits that the separation of text/body/truth/spirit imposed by Western philosophy is unnatural and a unilateral representation of logic and reason. At this stage, these inherited fictitious binaries begin to disintegrate causing identity dissonance (2009, 209).

Furthermore, Anzaldúa (2002) argues that, internalised racial labels, stereotypes, and cultural binaries, although oppressive, give a sense of stability, normalcy and belonging. Thus, a fracture to normalcy can be experienced as dislocating and disorienting. Vallone argues (2014) that displacement can result in feelings of inadequacy, reinforced through dominant ideological structures – within family, educational institutions and other institutions that inscribe on normalcy. She goes further to state that within the family traditional roles of manhood and womanhood and in institutions of learning inscriptions of proper writing and epistemic correctness can displace Self, negatively impacting on identity formation (see also Elie 2012). Various authors drawing from Anzaldúa have argued that displacement out of dominant categories for racialised bodies, disabled bodies, queer bodies, and aged bodies can cause feelings of shame (see also Mercado-López 2014; Ramlow 2006; Vallone 2014). Anzaldúa argues that the scrutinizing gazes of others deepen identity fragmentation and shame. She states that in the *nepantla* state one can remain in "constant displacement" (2002, 1). Speaking of her experience of external and internal displacement she says:

> *But it's taken over thirty years to unlearn the belief instilled in me that white is better than brown – something that some people of color will never unlearn. And it is only now that the hatred of myself, which I spent the greater part of my adolescence cultivating, is turning to love (2009, 43).*

### *Náhuatl-* In-between worlds

*Náhuatl* is an Aztec word meaning "in-between space" (Keating 2006, 9). With normative reality ruptured, displacement brings the Self into a space of being torn between worlds, living in constant displacement, and facing an uncertain future. Anzaldúa describes this process as "intensely painful" since one is cast into an "unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundaries" (2002, 10). The concept of in-between is not

particular to Anzaldúa. Homi Bhabha (1994) has contributed his own theory of third space. Bhabha describes a third space as a form of living in-between outside the sphere and boundaries of totalising notions of identity and oppressive traditions of normalcy (1994, 190). Drawing from a cultural studies perspective, Fránquiz and Lewis (2013, 143) state that in-betweenness is an unlocated space, in the middle of available positions. In the words of Keating, "*[n]epantla* represents temporal, spatial, psychic, and/or intellectual point(s) of crisis. *Nepantla* occurs during the many transitional stages of life and describes both identity-related issues and epistemological concerns" (Keating 2009, 322). Keating and González-López (2011) add that this space "signals transition, uncertainty, alarming feelings of loss, pain, ambiguity, and oftentimes, despair" (4). Ojeda further states that her experience of in-betweeness, as a queer female immigrant and a PhD candidate, "is an embodied presence of displacement, discomfort, shame, dislocation and disorientation" (Ojeda 2020, 19).

Anzaldúa uses the bridge as a metaphoric illustration of the Self in-between. This metaphor, however, can have various symbolic references depending on the position of Self in relation to the bridge. 'Bridge' can represent what Anzaldúa calls *Nepantlera* those who act as a bridge of communication across and between worlds/binaries/conceptual borders (1987). They can also represent home (borderlands), which transcends despotic dualism and oppressive dichotomies (1987). The illustration of a bridge, particularly to the second stage of *Conocimiento* denotes "the position of the Self being oppressed, terrorized, pressed by two worlds" (Lugones 2005, 89). This stage of in-betweenness is brought about when we become aware of the contradictions and overlapping spaces "between different perceptions and belief systems… the changeability of racial, gender, sexual and other categories rendering the conventional labelling obsolete" (Anzaldúa 2002, 541).In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color,* Anzaldúa reminds us that for racialised bodies, disabled, and queer bodies in-betweeness is inscribed on their bodies and in this way "like a turtle", they carry the bridge on their backs (Anzaldúa quoted in Hill 2005, 135). Anzaldúa uses *Nepantla* as a stage within *conocimiento* but also as an expansion of the borderlands theory. This stage/concept is an important space to critically reflect on imposed normative value systems, their impact on one's identity, and as an intellectual and epistemological space to reflect on imposed ways of writing, thinking and being an academic (Elenes 2013; Lugones 2005).

## Liminal thresholds

*In this liminal, transitional space, suspended between shifts, you're two people, split between before and after. Nepantla, where the outer boundaries of the mind's inner life meet the outer world of reality, is a zone of possibility (Anzaldúa 2002, 544).*

Anzaldúa theorises *nepantla* as a liminal space, between past contradictions, present conflicting realities, and an uncertain future (Barvosa 2020). Anzaldúa describes it as, "the state or stage between identity that is in place and the identity in progress but not yet formed" (Anzaldúa 2000, 177–178). The term 'liminality' in Anzaldúa's *nepantla* should, however, be differentiated from Western conceptualisation of the term (Burkhart 1989; Carrasco and Sessions, 2007). James Maffie argues that the Western notion of liminality "presupposes a platonic style [and] metaphysics of being" abstract, temporary, and leading to stasis/completion (Maffie quoted in Antuna 2018, 161). A Western understanding of liminality as a descriptor of *nepantla* implies temporal self-conception and self-reflection, which metamorphosises into becoming or a "transition permanently into a new ideology" (Abraham 2014, 6). This understanding contrasts with the continuity and fluidity implied by *nepantla* as an everyday process integral to human existence where one is "always in a state of ideological transition" (Abraham 2014, 6; Antuna 2018). As Anzaldúa states, *nepantla* is an "in-between space, an unstable, unpredictable, precarious, always-in-transition space lacking clear boundary" (Anzaldúa 2002,1).

Anzaldúa states that "bridges are thresholds into other realties…bridges span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds" (2002, 1). In borderlands epistemology, thresholds are a type of rite of passage undefined, non-linear and overlapping. Anzaldúa views threshold crossing in *conocimiento* as a process towards transformation however she does not prescribe on what junctures and thresholds one needs to cross, and how this crossing will be experienced. The *nepantla* process is thus situated and non-monolithic. Barvosa notes that going through the *nepantla* liminal threshold is not itself transformatory as people can choose to "remain in refusal—we continue to be unwilling to see and unravel the conundrums of our untenable state through what Anzaldúa called selective perception". Thus, the resistance of conflicting knowledge pushes one towards the unfamiliar and amubiguous plunges them into *Coatlicue* (2020, 380)

***Coatlicue***

In an interview with Debbie Blake and Carmen Abrego, Anzaldúa describes the Coatlicue state as, "the cave, the dark – you're hibernating or hiding, you're gestating and giving birth to yourself. You're in a womb state. When you come out of that womb state you pass through the birth canal, the passageway I call *nepantla*" (2000, 225-26).

The womb is used as a metaphoric representation of the *Coatlicue* state and Anzaldúa likens coming out of *Coatlicue* to coming out of the *nepantla* experience. Whilst in *nepantla* the in-between Self is recognising contradictions, in *Coatlicue* the in-between Self is at the "crossroads of choice" (Lugones 2005, 94). The awareness of Self caught between two worlds dominated/dominator and two ideologies oppression/resistance evokes the need for change and the possibility of liberation. In this state self-consciousness increases and begins an inner struggle. In keeping with Anzaldúa, "*Coatlicue*… opens and swallows us, plunging us into the underworld where the soul resides, allowing us to dwell in darkness" (1987, 68). The imagery of darkness illustrates the struggle of living in cultural, epistemic, and ontological ambiguity (Garber, 2005). Darkness symbolises the inner struggle between awareness of an ambiguous cultural/intellectual/sexual identity and "resistance to knowing, to letting go" of the familiar Self for an unknown becoming and, thereby, "plunging blindly over the crumbling path rimming the edge of the cliff" (Anzaldua quoted in Garber 2005, 220). In borderlands, Anzaldúa alerts us to the fact that in a patriarchal colonial modernity, *Coatlicue* can be "a way station" or a "way of life" ( 1987, 68).Yarbro-Bejarano states that the *Coatlicue* state is an important interpretative tool in Anzaldúa's epistemology to understand the paralyzing effects of despotic duality and coloniality and how those with multiple positionings negotiate duality both externally and internally (Yarbro-Bejarano 1994, 16). Elenes (2013) states that those in privilege also enter a state of *Coatlicue* when they become aware of their privilege and are faced with a choice between complacency or change. Lugones describes the *Coatlicue* state as a phase experienced through simultaneous moments of intimate terrorism and stasis (2005, 96-97). These two moments describe the experience of the inner Self and the "psychology of oppression and liberation" (97). However, whilst *Coatlicue* is the experience of oppression as a fear of liberation, intimate terrorism is the fear of being labelled and named an outsider.

**Intimate terrorism**

Anzaldúa uses a mirror metaphor to begin her conceptualisation of the *Coatlicue* state. This metaphor is drawn from Aztec mythology which describes *Coatlicue* as a banished goddess, thrown into darkness and silence, as she falls "she sees herself reflected in obsidian, which sends her back the image of many faces" (Vallone 2014, 8). As she views her multiple gazes, she becomes conscious of her contradictory positioning – being both the "object and the subject of vision, of seeing and being seen" (8). The *object* Self is passive and petrified and does not want to break from normalcy although normalcy might be oppressive and fragmenting. Vallone (2014) claims that being the object of her own Self, *Coatlicue* is in a state of immense depression characterised by feelings of inadequacy, mostly brought about by dehumanising and idiosyncratic stereotypes. Anzaldúa, commenting on internalised colonialism, states "we hate ourselves, terrorize ourselves. Most of this goes on unconsciously, we only know that we are hurting, we suspect that there is something 'wrong' with us, something fundamentally 'wrong'" (1987, 67). The mirror metaphor is also a form of seeing double, how we are on one hand, victims of ubiquitous boundaries and how we reproduce and maintain them and begin to see and judge others through the fiction of monoculture (2000, 129).

To Anzaldúa, intimate terrorism is the internalisation of negative attributes, gender roles and sexual binaries. When one does not fit within cultural narratives and dominant ideologies of normalcy and propriety, one begins to feel shame and guilt, Anzaldúa calls this "internalising the monster" (1995, 14). Yarbro-Bejarano calls this "internalised oppression" (such as internalised racism and homophobia) where one starts to view their differences as abnormity and even monstrous (1994, 21). In this state, differences become "secret sins" that are concealed and shameful (Yarbro-Bejarano 1994, 21). Internalising the monster is also symbolic of how *Coatlicue* was narrated in Aztec mythology as woman possessing a desire for control and power thus, patriarchal and colonial narratives disfigured her body into a horrific monster – near animal (Carbonell, 1999). This disfigurement of *Coatlicue* is in two parts – firstly, it reinforces gender roles making binary transgressions a punitive act, and on the other hand, it reinforces notions of normal abled body (Carbonell 1999). Thus, in line with Trinh, normalcy as constructed within the colonial, hierarchical, patriarchal, heteronormative world system views difference as an outsider nonbelonging to the "circle of normality" (2019, 30). In Anzaldúa's words, in a state of terrorism the Self feels fear because of alienation:

> *...alienated from her mother culture, "alien" in the dominant culture, the woman of color does not feel safe within the inner life of her Self. Petrified, she can't respond, her face caught between los intersticios, the space between the different worlds she inhabits (1987, 20).*

Intimate terror also comes from a fear of not being able to make sense, a fear of not being able to belong, and fear of not only the unfamiliar, but also being abnormal. In Lugones' words, the *Coatlicue* state is one of "stasis because it is a state of making new sense. It is a state of isolation, separation from harmful sense" (1992,32).

### Germinative stasis

To Anzaldúa, intimate terrorism renders one paralysed and unable to respond to the acknowledgment of oppression. She states that "my resistance, my refusal to know some truth about myself brings on paralysis" (1987, 48). Anzaldúa's notion of stasis has a dual meaning: complacency and active stasis. Based on Lugones, complacency or passivity, is to abnegate responsibility to act against oppression both from reductive cultural narratives and Western forms of coloniality. In the state of passive stasis, the subject engages in repetitive activities that serve as defensive strategies. Repetitious activity refers to compulsive activities that distance one from oppressive realities, enables one to turn away *Coatlicue's* objective gaze and disengage awareness. Lugones (2005) calls these repetitive actions, "servile activity" (94) and "neurotic repetitious activity" (95). In this state the subject fears abnormality and "standing outside the bounds of the ordinary, even though the ordinary oppresses us into servility" (95). Lugones adds:

> *We know the use of both "neurotic," repetitious activity and depression in the face of lack of action and in the fear of possible action that would place us out of bounds. We all know the temptation to escape these states telling ourselves to play politics so as to give ourselves a sense of worth, of engagement. We go to meetings, pass out leaflets, join demonstrations (Lugones 2005, 95).*

Verhage, drawing from Anzaldúa, reasons that the choices and convictions that influence our habits – "sedimented patterns of voluntarily learned behaviour" are socially constructed "continued corporeal practices of a culture" (2014, 116-117). Verhage asserts that the normalisation of habits is through repetition, which in time distangles them from their arbitrary formation. Verge further states that when habits are seen as benign, commonplace and

mundane they become solidified, and this is how oppressive boundaries become normalised. She also asserts that the repetition of "sedimented behaviour" and "servile activity" is an enactment and reproduction of oppressive power and the more one engages in passive repetition the more oppression becomes "intimately close and are re-discovered in our behavior and materialized on our bodies" (118).

Engaging with Anzaldúa's notion of stasis, Lugones suggests that when subjects choose to disengage in servile work, they begin to feel the possibility of self-control (2005). Lugones calls this state "active subjectivity" or "germinative stasis" (2005). She argues that feeling intimately oppressed can be the beginning towards liberation. In stasis, one becomes aware of two responses towards oppression – "one uses the language of resistance, of awareness of being more than a victim. The other uses the language of reduction to passivity". Lugones differentiates between agent resistance and Western agency. To Lugones, Western agency presupposes that actions of resistance happen within the bounds of normalcy and structures of domination. However, being a border-dweller experiencing racism, sexism and other forms of exclusion, places one outsides the confines of normative discursive spaces and structures. Anzaldúa states:

> *Even though every move [the terrorized self] makes will have a status quo interpretation that reads her as an alien, an outlaw, reduced, her meaning co-opted in the direction of servility or incompetence, those interpretations do not hold her captive. She cannot act, but she is active, a serpent coiled" (quoted in Lugones 2003, 90).*

## The call...*el compromiso*

At this stage, one has become aware of the need to let go of the fragmenting inherited cultural conventions (Reza-lópez, Charles and Reyes, 2014; Romero, 2011). Awareness here does not always translate to consciousness that one is undergoing transformation (Sills 2013). According to Sills, individuals experience these stages throughout various phases of life, at most unconscious of their importance (2013). *Autohistoria* has been, and continues to be, used as a method to remember, and reclaim moments of rupture and the call that began the choice to depart from the old, familiar, and comfortable to the new and unfamiliar (Bobel et al. 2006; Abraham 2014; Vallone 2014). Wiederhood holds that the call represents an awareness that

conventional norms that once shaped one's realities can be destabilized, and a new Self can be re-envisioned (2005, 117). To Anzaldúa,

> *the knowledge that exposes your fears can also remove them. Seeing through these cracks makes you uncomfortable because it reveals aspects of yourself (shadow-beasts) you don't want to own. Admitting your darker aspects allows you to break out of your self-imposed prison. But it will cost you. When you woo el oscuro, digging into it, sooner or later you pay the consequences—the pain of personal growth (2002, 553).*

In this process, *autohistoria* plays the important role of blending "personal experiences with history...informed by reflective self-awareness" (Keating, 2005, 6). Keating further expounds that such "personal experiences – revised and in other ways redrawn – become a lens with which to reread and rewrite the cultural stories into which we are born" (6). Anzaldúa asserts that the stage of the call-in relation to *autohistoria* entails discovering one's imposed personal myths (2002).

### Sifting through the myths

Mythology plays an important role in Anzaldúa's onto-epistemology. Although Anzaldúa has been accused of appropriating Aztec mythology in an essentialising way (see Contreras, 2008; Alarcón 2003), Kauffmann claims that this appropriation and use of mythology depicts "its powerful ability to symbolize the nonessential nature of being and meaning" (2013, 66-67). Contreras also argues that, in decontextualisation and dehistoricising Aztec mythology, Anzaldúa is able to evoke double consciousness: challenging Western canons of civilization and sexist/patriarchal cultural myths (2006, 53). Ramlow adds that Anzaldúa's epistemology is a re-visioning of oppressive mythology – "heteronormativity, compulsory able-bodiedness, and institutional racism (mutually constitutive discourses and institutions)" (2006, 172). Commenting on Anzaldúa's work in *Borderlands,* Orozco-Mendoza states that "Anzaldúa uses myths as a counterargument to the practice of" binarised and racialised stereotyping and by her "re-writing the content of myths, she contends against" the Eurocentric monolithic logic of reason arguing that the "world is composed of many ways of knowing" (2008, 39).

At this stage, one begins to sift through the myths inscribed by the dominant culture and "elements of identity become more rooted in the discovery of the self" (Romero 2011, 25). Wiederhold (2005) argues that the allure of normativity within writing and literary discourses

regulate our understanding of writing form and practices. The commonplace and conventional form of writing to reach a "climatic realisation to give the story a meaningful conclusion" (Rainer quoted in Neile 2005, 24) and the promise of "going somewhere," forecloses on any power of invention and revision (Neile, 116). She assrts that the staging of a calling out should also involve "relinquishing of institutionalized obligations" of a "conceptualised formal center" in writing (118). Ramon Grosfoguel (2013) attests that the myth of the unsituated knower, devoid of body and geo-location, and an unknowing object is still a present legacy within Westernised university. Escobar explains that the claim of universality is derived from Europe's position as center (2004, 217). Koshy (2006) argues that the tale of the uncharted and unknown, yet to be discovered myth is derived from eurocentric logics of reason that center the cartesian subject as the knowing other. Koshy further asserts that one needs "to be conscious of my (the) internalization of the dominant paradigm and the dominant (harmful) myths about my (one's) otherness" (153). To Anzaldúa, the first step in sifting harmful myths,

> *…is to take inventory…this step is a conscious rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions. She communicates that rupture, documents the struggle. She reinterprets history, and using the new symbols, she shapes new myths. She adopts new perspectives toward the dark-skinned, women and queers. She strengthens her tolerance for ambiguity. She is willing to share, to make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety of the familiar… She is able to transform herself (1987, 82-83).*

This act of remembering, envisioning and reinventing prompts us to shift out of oppressive mythical realities and works by re-writing the history and content of myths to make visible their oppressive origins and transform the story of the oppressed (Orozco-Mendoza, 2008).

### Call to cross over

> *We will have our voices. Outraged, demanding, their words burned into my brain, and as quickly as a fire consumes a dilapidated house, feminist thought consumed my old self (Xining quoted in Keating and González-López, 2011, 104).*

The 'death and birth' metaphor is used to represent the processes of coming out of *Coatlicue* state (León 2010; Vallone 2014). As discussed in previous sections, the birth metaphor is used to describe the *Coatlicue* state as a womb and the birth canal as *nepantla*. Through this metaphor, Anzaldúa illustrates how the stages of *conocimiento* intersect, representing a "fractal

structure" with all seven stages repeating after each inciting incident (see Marzagora 2016, 166). At this bridging stage, there is a call to cross over from the old Self/space to the new Self/space. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Anzaldúa calls this fourth stage a transformation and conversion. The border-dweller, "the squint-eyed, the perverse, the queer, the troublesome, the mongrel, the *mulatto*, the half-breed, the half dead" are those who go through/pass over/cross over the confines of normal (1987, 3). Engaging with this statement by Anzaldúa, Hamdy reasons that Anzaldúa's use of violent, mutilated and physical pain metaphors challenges "the notion of celebratory hybridity" and escapes romanticising both borderlands and the border-dweller (Hamdy 2010, 222).Thus, crossing over is anything but benign, comfortable or easy. Furthermore, Hamdy states that Anzaldúa's description of the border-dweller resists normative corporeal labels and privileges racial, gender and physical ambiguity. Hamdy also maintains that crossing over entails breaking away from "internalised modes of cultural self-representations", "Western logocentrism", and "monolingual ideologies" in favour of plurality and heterogeneity (224).

### Sifting through old myths

At this stage, one has sifted through their old myths and the old Self has been consumed (González-López, 2005, 96). As one engages the call for action/agency, the ridged boundaries of meaning are transcended and this begins the processes of "continuous replacement of self-(re)definition" (Domínguez-Ruvalcaba 2011, 83). Drawing from Anzaldúa, Domínguez-Ruvalcaba states that "when *Coatlicue* makes sense, she immediately escapes the boundaries of meaning and crosses over, dragging the old skin along… painfully shedding her old skin, enabling us to flee from the given identity" (83). In the words of Anzaldúa, "you begin to define yourself in terms of who you are becoming, not who you have been" (Anzaldúa 2002, 556). One begins their process of self-definition, not as a fixed point but as "something else" with an unspeakable and undefined point (Anzaldúa 1987, 101).

## Putting *Coyolxauhqui* together

*Coyolxauhqui's* body was mutilated, dismembered, and scattered, symbolising aspects of identity fragmented by dominant colonial and cultural ideologies. The use of the

representational metaphor of *Coyolxauhqui's* scattered, torn limbs is a way of remembering the violences that split and scattered colonised people. Anzaldúa introduces the *Coyolxauhqui* imperative as a symbolic representation of "her desire to suture the wounds inflicted by patriarchy and Eurocentrism" (Anzaldúa quoted in Vallone 2014, 11). In an interview with Irene Lara, Anzaldúa described "putting *Coyolxauhqui* together" as, "an imperative… (of) healing the wounds, the work of striving for wholeness instead of being fragmented in little pieces" (2005, 49). The work of 'putting back together' is a slow process of recreating both the personal and social which is "not intended to return to a romanticized past, but to remember that the body, although dismembered, contains stories, beings, power and healing that carries the potential to imagine futures that advocate for wholeness" (Villalba 2016, 27). Thus, the deconstruction and reconstruction of Self are essential parts of *conocimiento*.

### Deconstruction

Whilst in the *El arrebato* stage, fragmentation was as the result of the violent rupture caused by oppressive binarized narratives. At this stage, one engages in self-analysis where one pulls themselves apart and reconstitutes themselves (Hernández and Anzaldúa, 1995). According to Levine, *conocimiento* is a methodological and epistemological commitment to "deconstructing binaries and sociocultural narratives, crossing boundaries, [and] replacing homogeneity with heterogeneity" (1995, 183). Although Anzaldúa acknowledges post-modernist deconstructivists, she engages them as incomplete and inexhaustive (Dahms 2012). Whilst the post-structuralist notion of deconstruction challenges the idea of fixed identities and "open out the Self to a free play of signifiers," Anzaldúa proposes a "power-sensitive analysis that would examine the construction of complex, shifting 'selves' in the plural, in all their cultural, historical, and situational specificity" (Kondo, quoted in Yarbro-Bejarano 1994). Escobar asserts that deconstruction as a critique to modernity falls short in its continual centering of rationality within Eurocentric categories – Marxism, liberalism, and poststructuralism (Escobar 2007, 186). According to Dussel:

> *There is no liberation without rationality; but there is no critical rationality without accepting the interpellation of the excluded, or this would inadvertently be only the rationality of domination. ... From this negated Other departs the praxis of liberation as 'affirmation' of the Exteriority and as origin of the movement of negation of the negation' (Dussel, 1996, 36, 54).*

Dussel's decolonial definition of deconstruction and reconstruction builds on Spivak's post-colonial definition:

> [D]econstruction does not say there is no subject, there is no truth, there is no history. It simply questions the privileging of identity so that someone is believed to have the truth. It is not the exposure of error. It is constantly looking into how truths are produced . . .Deconstruction, if one wants a formula, is, amongst other things, a persistent critique of what one cannot not want (Spivak, 1994, 278).

Deconstruction escapes totalising rationality and, as Levine points, within Anzaldúa's epistemology, deconstruction is "anti-rationalist without relinquishing reason and inclusive without obscuring difference" (Levine, 2005, 183). Whilst Spivak sees deconstruction as a strategy to rupture hegemonic discourses from within, Anzaldúa's *conocimiento* and Mignolo's border thinking view it as a strategy working from alterity and within theoretical and conceptual borderlands. At this stage of in-betweenness, the sifted myths are deconstructed and the ambiguities of one's contradictory positions are scrupulously engaged with and acknowledged. At this stage one begins to unlearn normalised onto-epistemological assumptions and delink from the universal idea of humanity (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2012).

To Anzaldúa, "putting *Coyolxauhqui* together" is when one begins to track and position-imposed identities, deciding on what is irretrievable from the past in order to create a new narrative that "(re) envisions the map of the known world" (2002, 545). Critical engagement, in this case, is an internal negotiation and reflects an "understanding of the structural and systemic power imbalances that support and maintain imposed stories" (Bobel et al. 2006, 336). Whilst in the first stage dismemberment was disempowering, through the work of deconstruction one disentangles from imposed stories and begins the work of re-composition and reconstruction.

### Reconstruction

To Anzaldúa, identity "has roots you share with all people and other beings" (2002, 560). She contends that, whilst we should reject the boundaries imposed upon Self, there should be a simultaneous work of breaking the boundaries between Self and others. Anzaldúa further states that 'seeing' as an act of resistance allows one to examine the ways in which one constructs

knowledge, identity, and reality, and explores how some of one's/others' constructions violate other people's ways of knowing and living (2002, 544). In this space, one enacts a double critique of Self in relation to dominant narratives and Self in relation to others. Anzaldúa maintains that reconstruction does not entail the creation of "an end product… the new you" rather symbolises the identity as fluid and shifting (2002, 562). Domínguez-Ruvalcaba drawing from Anzaldúa's notion of shifting identity reasons that there cannot be a utopian romanticized idea of identity as the "identity question must stay open until the machinery of oppression stops co-opting the emergence of subjectivities" (Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, 2011, 84). Although Anzaldúa uses the death and rebirth metaphor to illustrate the processes of becoming in the borderlands, Dussel reminds us that

> *[t]o transform or change is not simply to destroy: it is to de-construct in order to innovate and move toward a better construction… it means having a principle that orients the deconstruction just as much as it orients the new construction (it is not the business of destroying everything, only that which is irretrievable)(2011, 29).*

Anzaldúa uses writing to put *Coyolxauhqui* back together "[by] seiz[ing] the existing myths…and rewrit[ing] them" (quoted in Koshy 2006, 155). However, as argued by Koshy, her theory should be appreciated in its broader application to all systems of oppression. In this space we recognise the narratives that compete for our allegiance, offering us two choices of either, for us or against us. Rejecting to be split and binarised, we move away from dual narratives and accept the multiplicity of our identities and position our allegiances as shifting and fluid.

## The blow up…a clash of realities

> *You think you've made progress, gained a new awareness, found a new version of reality, created a workable story… But when you cast to the world what you have created and put your ideals into action, the contradictions explode in your face (Anzaldúa, 2011, 97).*

At this stage, one moves from interiority and introduces the re-scripted story/identity to the world. The awareness of contradictions and rejection of oppressive binaries that characterise re-constructed *Coyolxauhqui* are brought into contexts that might not yet be transformed

(Bobel et al. 2006). Keating explains that, in sharing one's new story, makes one vulnerable to others and can result in the risk of being misunderstood (2005, 250). Anzaldúa's work is a commitment to reveal the interconnectedness of people and move away from the rhetoric of individualism. As Keating states, "language, belief, perception and action are intimately related" and the stories we tell ourselves, the stories we share with others and the stories we learn from others all influence our beliefs (2005, 248). Keating adds that Western culture defines selfhood as "unique, fully autonomous, rational individuals with permanent boundaries between ourselves and all others" (248). At this stage, one forgoes the boundaries and attempts to bridge between alienating notions of individualism by sharing their differences/otherness. However, in a space where difference is viewed through a patriarchal and colonial gaze, there is resistance to alternatives (Lugones, 2005). By stepping out of the bounds of what is normal and conventional, one risks oppressive labels and exclusion from the groups that they were previously affiliated with.

To represent the tension that one undergoes at this stage, Anzaldúa uses a children's story of the tug between the old, familial, group affiliation and a new friendship:

> *Prietita heard some of the neighbourhood kids yelling and went through the gate to see what was happening.*
>
> *"Look at the mojadito, look at the wetback!" called out her cousin Tété.*
>
> *"Hey, man, why don't you go back where you belong?" We don't want any more mojados here," said another boy.*
>
> *Prietita felt her body go stiff. She had known Tété and his friends all her life. Sometimes she even liked Tété, but now, she was angry at him. She felt pulled between her new friend and her old friends. (Anzaldúa quoted in Vásquez 2005, 71).*

In this story Prietita's value system clashes with structural and systematic forms of racism and violence. She is thrown at a chasm when she challenges her own cultural allegiances and is forced to "mediate the chasm between imposed structures and self-realisation" (Vásquez 2005, 74). This stage is both an emotional and epistemological conundrum and challenges one's commitment to the new story and can cause self-doubt and self-questioning. The clashing of realities, cultural and personal codes, however, "challenges us to make some sort of meaning from chaos; and thus, forces us to change" (Keating 2015, xxxv). Epistemic disobedience (Mignolo, 2011), cultural disidentifications (Muñoz, 1999), binary transgressions (Elenes,

2013), and rejection of writing conventions (McDowall and Ramos, 2020; Short, Grant, and Clarke, 2007), are all forms of deviances from normative onto-epistemologies that fracture and antagonize dominant ideologies.

According to Andreotti (2011), dominant cultural value systems are social constructs that operate as normative realities running the risk of being exclusionary and antagonistic to alternatives. Within the colonial/modernity imaginary, Western ethnocentrism promotes universal norms that advocate for homogeneous humanism – a common cause and a common identity, which offer two fundamental problems for the other. Firstly, the standardised norm will see any opposition to it as a marker of deficiency or antagonism and secondly, the advocating of difference/blindness depoliticises difference while pushing a hegemonic ethnocentric agenda (Andreotti, 2011). Thus, Ramón Grosfoguel posits that an "uneven set of narratives with long histories" is reproduced and re-enacted in a world where the dominant imaginary is still colonial (2002, 210). Ideologies and actions contrary to the dominant imaginary in most spaces are demonised as:

> *Improper, shameful, unworthy, negative, blocking progress, complaining resisting transformation, destructive, devoid of thought and meaning, and polarizing the academic community into 'us' and 'them,' depending on which side of this discursively constructed axis of evil they may choose to line up (Kistner, 2008, 108).*

In Anzaldúa's words, the blow up is suffered by "the idea/picture of who you think you are, an illusion you're hell-bent on protecting and preserving at all costs" (2002,566). She asserts that, whilst in the phase of *arrebato,* rupture causes fragmentation to the myths imposed on Self. At this stage, antagonism towards one's new story is perceived as a "threat to [one's] identifications and interpretations of reality" (566). This clash of realities results in difficult emotions and, in the words of Anzaldúa, can be enraging as counter-knowledge and "new knowledge (is viewed) as an attack to your bodily integrity". Although the blow-up can occur because of the dominant narratives policing strategies against divergences and difference, it can also be as a result of our new story which "posits the self as local and limited to a physical body, a body perceived as a container separating the self from other people and other forms of knowledge" (566). This space is not only about calling to question Western normativity that represents the other, but one's own perceptions about reality and begins a call

to recognise the interconnectedness of people and the world as a pluriverse, triggering possibilities of transformation (545).

## Shifting realities

> *You commence the arduous task of rebuilding yourself, composing a story that more accurately expresses your new identity. You seek out allies and, together, begin building spiritual/political communities that struggle for personal growth and social justice (Anzaldúa 2002, 573–74).*

This stage does not signify an end, but the beginning of border-dwelling with the eventuality of arriving again at another stage of *conocimiento* as one develops new ways of thinking based on different transitions and transformations in life (Anzaldúa 2011, 44). The binaries of us and them, in and out, assimilation or resisting, are transgressed towards a dialogue of multiplicity. However, the notion of shifting identity, the instability of reality, and "acting holistically" in Anzaldúa's work should not be confused with "naïve relativism incapable of understanding the functions and effects of power and oppression in ourselves and our world" (2011, 24). Andreotti (2011) echoes these sentiments, arguing that there is need to unearth the epistemic arrogance and parochialism which would pave away towards a "non-coercive relationship or dialogue with the excluded 'Other'" (2011: 2). For this to be achieved, we have to be able to "see through the eyes of the Other, (re) claim new guiding myths for our times, risk the personal and intellectual" (see Koshy 2006, 150). Whilst in the first six stages one engaged in *autohistoria* and auto-ethnography as methods of self-reflection, at this stage reflective self-awareness paves towards actions of social justice (Keating, 2005, 6).

### Seeing through the eyes of others

> *I walk through the hole in the fence*
>
> *to the other side (Anzaldúa 2002, 24)*

According to Berila, the fence is an imposed boundary – splitting and separating belonging from alien and undesirable. The hole, presumably illicit, one walks through to get to the other

side – "a border crossing to a political agenda of resisting and reinventing national identity" (2005, 124). Koshy, drawing from Anzaldúa, describes seeing through the other's eyes as using a different lens and "a political act/choice that challenges one to see(analyse) through multiple/ "other" lenses/perspectives" (2006, 150). At this stage, the us/them binary is transgressed, and redefined and new alliances are formed within transnational and transdisciplinary spaces. Berila (2005) reasons that binary transgression is a conscious political act of resistance, disrupting dominant narratives of race, gender, nation, and identity. From Keating's perspective, really seeing the other is not merely a physical act, since the image drawn from one's physical senses "is not the whole picture but one determined by your core beliefs and prevailing societal assumptions" (2005, 248).

Seeing through the eyes of the other, according to Anzaldúa means one must leave the permanent boundaries of a fixed Self, literally "leave" oneself and see oneself through the eyes of the other (in Keating 2009, 115). To Keating, this entails a "transformational identity politics, or the construction of differentially situated subjectivities that, deployed tactically, deconstruct self/other dichotomies from within" (Keating, 1996, 62). A clash of realities makes one cognisant of contradictions and pluriversity, and to see through the eyes of the other is a step toward a noncoercive dialogue with the other. Koshy's words, we begin to see the other in ourselves, opening ourselves to others' perception of reality which makes identity "relational rather than as separate or exclusive" (2006, 152). Koshy also maintains that in cross-cultural research seeing through the eyes of others enables researchers to engage in self-reflexivity "which includes self-reflection and a critical assessment of one's positionality, experiences, and perceptions, vis- à-vis those of others" (152).

### (Re)claiming new "guiding myths" for our times

> *Imagination, a function of the soul, has the capacity to extend us beyond the confines of our skin, situation, and condition so we can choose our responses. It enables us to reimagine our lives, rewrite the self, and create guiding myths for our times (Anzaldúa 2002, 5).*

The work of deconstruction and reconstruction is a space of intimate resistance and "inner war" (Lugones 2005, 96). In speaking of the new story/Self, Anzaldúa shifts between the use of "she" and "we". Whilst the work of sifting through myths and enacting reconstruction is the

work of an individual, rupturing from all oppressive tradition, "we" signifies the presence of other border-dwellers engaging in the work of shaping new myths (Anzaldúa 2002). Lugones argues that whilst Anzaldúa views borderland inhabitants in their diversity and multiversity, she fails to acknowledge that border-crossing and resistance is also a social activity. Lugones reasons that "unless resistance is a social activity, the resistor is doomed to failure in the creation of a new universe of meaning, a new identity, a *raza mestiza*" (2005, 97). In other words, Lugones sees the making of new myths as a collective action, without which, new guiding myths fail to achieve meaningful transformation. For Lugones, "a dismissal of the "inner struggle" dismisses liberatory subjectivity; and a dismissal of the collective "moment" robs the struggle of the self-in-between of any liberatory meaning" (97). She further asserts that as a collective act, resistance makes new guiding myths possible "as meaning making is interactive…however disorganised and open ended" (97). Andreotti makes a related point, arguing that un-antagonistic meaning making entails a provisional paradoxical construction of a general epistemology that announces the impossibility of general epistemologies (2011). To Koshy, the process of "reclaiming new guiding myths" necessitates a transnational, transdisciplinary project that combines different "ideologies/belief systems… to elicit new ideologies" (Koshy, 2006, 155).

### Risking the personal and intellectual

The borderland is a transitional space between cultural, national, conceptual, and intellectual thresholds. According to Keating this third space is ambiguous as "exiting the old worldview (but without having) entered or created new ones to replace it" (Keating 2002, 529). Drawing from Anzaldúa's moments of self-exposure, Keating uses the phrase "risking the personal" to describe moments of self-knowledge that makes one vulnerable to criticism, rejection, and slander (Dahms, 2012). Anzaldúa uses the 'blood sacrifice' metaphor to represent the work of self-exploration as a way of understanding the world, others and making connections through shared experiences (Anzaldúa, quoted in Garber 2005, 218). Commenting on her commitment to making her own body the starting point of theorising, Keating states,

> *Anzaldúa transforms herself into a bridge and creates potential identifications with readers from diverse backgrounds. She models a process of self-disclosure that invites (and sometimes compels) us to take new risks as we reflect on our own experiences, penetrate the privacy of our own lives (Keating 2000, 2).*

Keating maintains that as a part of Western university systems, the third voice, objective and neutral stance towards meaning making is a means of masking, through academic language, "private feelings, desires, and deeply held beliefs behind rational, objective discourse and abstract thought" (2000, 1). She states that in theorising from the flesh and incorporating "the personal into my words, perhaps I won't be respected as a scholar. Or maybe you'll think that I'm vain, egocentric, and selfish…Or maybe I'll sound stupid, unsophisticated, naïve" (3). Commenting on Anzaldúa's writing form and epistemology Koshy argues that it is both a rejection and a resistance of spiritual/social/intellectual dichotomies. She asserts, "spiritual realities, imaginal realities, and the inner subjective life are all incorporated. She neither fragments the mind-body-spirit connection nor prioritizes one over the other" Koshy (2006, 156). The journey of becoming, in the borderlands is a synergy of the personal and political where on the one hand, one bridges into the unfamiliar and risks rejection and alienation from the familiar but on the other hand it opens avenues towards making new alliances towards a liberatory project.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the concept of borderlands as physical space, as a spatial metaphor and as a conceptual tool to understanding lived realities. Borderlands encapsulate all aspects of space – perceived, conceived and lived. It becomes an important spatial metaphor and conceptual tool in understanding the complex relationship between space, particularly third space, and those that traverse it. When applied in conjunction with Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space, it becomes a powerful tool to unearth latent aspects of space and give voice to those who live in transcultural, transnational, and transdisciplinary spaces. The use of borderlands epistemology enables me to, whilst acknowledging doctoral candidates, transcend the material liminal threshold toward 'doctorateness' i.e., proposal writing, theory building etc. To recognise intimate liminal thresholds involved in doctoral studies as a process of intellectual identity formation. Borderlands will be used to "see" doctoral candidates not only as striving towards a degree but as bodies straddled between spaces and identities.

# Curation of a Rhythmanalyst

The low song, the rhythmic shuffling of feet, fear-ridden pale faces daring not to look up. No eyes in sight – no watching gaze to welcome the throng as it shuffles in. Pale faces and stitched lips, silence only cut by the low song: *tinomubata, tinomubata, naniureurure uripe usatiwabatwa.* A threat whispered by the procession: *bad omens shall be cleansed away, dead, or alive.* Yet a relief to the victim, "yes, Tsikamutanda I have suffered, *ngaareurure aripe*, enough! My family has suffered enough." The fear-stricken crowd bundles into enclaves of association – the *ndari* drinkers, *bazalwane, veMudzimu* and the non-conformists. As Tsikamutanda approaches, the crowds get more tightly defined, bundling together in fear of cross contamination from the evil miasma of other groups. The invisible boundary of suspicion cutting across any family kinship: no friendship is spared. Each must stand with their own kind. As the whispers of the low song disappear into the night with only the rhythmic shuffling of the procession to be heard, enclaves of pale faces become disfigured silhouettes as bodies crush to reduce frames; all reason that – if *Tsikamutanda* cannot see me behind a wall of bodies, her finger cannot point at me, she cannot see me if our eyes don't meet; so, silence, eyes down and frame reduced.

Every step she takes through and between the empty spaces, she bridges. Occupying all empty space, she sits in silence rocking her frail body. She jilts and lets out a shrill cry, jilt, cry, and silence. I freeze in fear. "What if this time *Tsikamutanda* says it's me with the bad omen?" I cover my head in fear, no wall here to cover me, I have no tribe, here I am a mulungu/city-girl no tribe will have me. I look at the non-conformists "not here girlie, we do not associate with *mulungus*." I gaze up to find a familiar face, but only bodies all bundled up, faces down. "*Gogo, ndaakutya*," I dare whisper out for my grandmother. Only silence. My wandering eyes lock with *Tsikamutanda's*, I feel myself falling into an abyss of emotion, no one sees me but *Tsikamutanda*, I must fear her, but I also want to belong.

This is a hard strip in time, belonging only to *Tsikamutanda*. She is the remover of bad omens…So much power in a frail body, in a frail finger to point and name, "bad omen." Only *she* can cleanse from bad omens and those that cast them. There is a silver lining between bad and good, the dead and the living, the spiritual and the material. *Tsikamutanda* the key bearer

in-between worlds and her omens the talisman of protection for the living. That finger, shrivelled by the many years of pointing wields power to disfigure and maim, yet for the victim, the only glimmer of hope. Omen to replace omen! She freezes time for both the living and the spiritual, until her ritual is performed. Until she names, time is paused. "Am I in her time? What can her naming do to me?" Why am I questioning when I ought to fear? "Hush your mind girlie," I think to myself. But, in a jilt to survive, my mind breaks down the boundaries of fear and suspicion. "So, what," I allow myself to think "if I be called a bad omen? I will return back to the city and no one will know, if I tell them, they will ridicule her as a superstitious hag and pity me as a deluded believer." This is *my* strip in time! In the locking of the eyes and as I sink, I have to find my landing ground, my belonging. You and I, *Tsikamutanda*, are the only ones without a tribe. We have to share this bridge, carve out our own enclaves here in this strip in time – you, the namer of bad omens and myself, the one who does not care to be named because I am a *mulungu*/city-girl.

## Introduction

From the outset of this project, I faced multiple challenges. Firstly, finding a method that would allow me to explore the interplay between space and the social body in everyday interactions whilst simultaneously confronting what Warren (2018, 26) calls the "redoubling problem". In Warren's view, researchers are often confronted with the question of how to adequately investigate marginalised and displaced spaces without reproducing marginality since the methodological structures and discursive material we adopt to formulate an answer are often problematised and called into question (26). Secondly, the aim of asking, "how black doctoral candidates traverse doctoral borderlands," is neither to ascertain the homogeneity of black experiences (a point I will return to later) nor disqualify alternative lived realities; it was thus important for the methodology adopted to bridge any hegemonic forms of representation. Chela Sandoval, in his book *Methodology of the Oppressed*, opines that a liberating hermeneutic must bridge master narratives and hegemonic cultural logics that facilitate and perpetuate the "stubborn apartheid of theoretical domains" (Sandoval 2000, 10). Hence, I had to find a methodology that allowed for a double consciousness: giving me the ability to move in and out of ideology to maintain subjectivity.

Anzaldúa in the foreword to *This Bridge Called My Back* writes "*[c]aminante no hay puentes, se hacepuentes al andar* (voyager there are no bridges, one makes them as one walks)" (1981, v). In this statement, she makes two points that grounded me in my quest for methodology firstly, the quest for a methodology is an intimate and reflexive personal journey. Secondly, in framing methodology as a bridge which one makes through doing, methodology becomes more than a plan of doing research to answer a "ontomethaphysical" question of being (Warren 2018, 27). Spillers claims that on the question of methodology in critical inquiry,

> *We are confronted by divergent temporal frames, or beats, that pose the problem of adequacy — how to reclaim an abandoned site of inquiry in the critical discourse when the very question that it articulates is carried along as part of the methodological structure [or metaphysical structure], as a feature of the paradigm that is itself under suspicion, while the question itself foregrounds a thematic that cannot be approached in any other way (2003, 406).*

Lefebvre conceptualises the "temporal frames, or beats" that Spillers alludes to, as rhythms. In his book, *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time, and Everyday Life*, he states that "everywhere where there is interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy, there is rhythm" (Lefebvre 2004, 15). In his rhythmanalytical project, Lefebvre's ambition is to develop a 'new science' of studying lived experiences that escapes the dialectical dualism of subject/object in social theory. He proposes that a rhythmanalysis project "does not isolate an object, or a subject, or a relation. It seeks [instead] to grasp a moving but determinate complexity (determination not entailing determinism)" (Lefebvre 2004, 11–12). To capture this complexity, Lefebvre conceives rhythms as all kinds of social phenomena – always in motion, non-reducible to things/objects and subjects of an action or a relation. Part of the innovation of rhythmanalysis is thus, to simultaneously resist the reification, objectification, and subjectification of rhythms. Rhythms are used not as an object or subject of analysis, but rather as a tool of analysis to explore a range of topics. As articulated by Alhadeff-Jones:

> *[T]he critical aim of rhythmanalysis came therefore from the possibility to unveil how social practices…may be experienced as alienating or liberating, depending on their rhythmic qualities and the way they are shaped by social spaces and times (2019, 170).*

Lefebvre also conceived rhythmanalysis as an embodied and experiential approach, where the rhythmanalyst uses the body as a "metronome" to "learn rhythm from it" and understand lived spatial temporalities (Lefebvre 2004, 19). Becoming a rhythmanalyst entails adopting Lefebvre's onto-epestimological claim that spatio-temporal experiences and entities are rhythmic,which means analysing participants' experiences as rhythms in space. This, along with the other foundational attributes of being a rhythmanalyst, offered me two methodological adequacies – firstly, rhythms are understood through doing and experiencing hence, the methodological structure is always in motion, being shaped by bodily and extra-bodily impressions. Secondly, "rhythm as a metasense or a mode of meta-sensing invites the construction of new vocabularies (words, terms, and phraseology) that tap into those forms of feeling which are peripheral but work in subtle ways" (Chen 2016, 2). Although this does not completely answer Warren's 'redoubling problem', there is more room within rhythmanalysis to draw on mutli-disciplinary methodological tools, and to self-style one's methodological structure.

These foundational ambitions of rhythmanalysis not only capture the ambition of my doctoral project, but also interweave the aims of my study into its methodological praxis:

1. To examine how doctoral studies can be conceptualised spatially as borderlands.
2. To understand how doctoral students, as social bodies, negotiate and move within doctoral borderlands.
3. To understand what role, if any, doctoral borderland experiences diverge or break from the structured and linear doctoral programme.
4. To explore how doctoral borderland experiences possibly contribute to academic identity formation.

Inherent in my aims, is the centrality of space and the body in understanding doctoral experiences. The importance of the body in understanding spatial experiences is also echoed in rhythmanalysis. Lefebvre writes, "at no moment has the analysis of rhythms and the rhythmanalytical project lost sight of the body" (2004, 23). The rhythmanalyst does not only use the body as the subject of analysis but the body becomes "the first point of analysis and a tool for subsequent investigation" (Elden 2004, 12). Anzalduá's borderland theory emphasises the materiality of the body to develop what Cherríe Moraga calls a "theory in the flesh" (Anzaldúa and Moraga 1981). The body is seen as a visual and textual site, from where one

interprets their material, spiritual and social worlds (Román-Odio 2013). Like Lefebvre's understanding of spatial experiences as non-linear and continual rhythmic temporalities, Moya argues:

> *Identities are neither self-evident, unchanging, and uncontestable, nor are they absolutely fragmented, contradictory, and unstable. Rather, identities are subject to multiple determinations and to a continual process of verification, which takes place over the course of an individual's life through her interaction with the society she lives in (2002, 41).*

The temporality of being is a common theme in rhythmanalysis and borderlands. Lefebvre emphasises the notion of "creative, moving bodies" and that "bodily practices that give rise to socially constructed modes of space and time are also definitions of selfhood internalized within the body" (quoted in Simonsen 2005, 14). Anzaldúa reasons that being aware of "temporal senses of self" can evade stagnation and provide a liberatory pathway to co-creating new, and multiple identities (quoted in Keating 2005, 153). Lefebvre holds that the definitions of selfhood become sedimented through 'dressage'. Individuals are trained into the routines of everyday life through socialisation, cultural codes, language, and symbols. As one would break a horse, societal standards of normalcy and ideological correctness bind us to routinised practice. Belonging in a society thus entails 'to bend oneself (to be bent) to its ways', and humans must 'break themselves in like animals' (Lefebvre 2004: 39). As Lefebvre puts it "to belong to a given society is to know and use its codes for politeness, courtesy, affection, parley, negotiation, trading, and so on – as also for the declaration of hostilities*" (1991, 215).* Furthermore, Anzaldúa adds:

> *Identity is a filtering screen limiting your awareness to a fraction of your reality. What you or your cultures believe to be true is provisional and depends on a specific perspective. What your eyes, ears and other physical senses perceive is not the whole picture but one determined by our core beliefs and prevailing societal assumptions (2002, 542).*

What we perceive as reality and our normalised assumptions is, according to Lefebvre, determined by dressage which is important to bodily entrainment and "determines the majority of rhythms" (2004: 40). The metaphoric representation of breaking in the body as one would a horse to capture the process of bodily entrainment resonated with some of the literature, I read on student initiation into the culture of "doctoretness". For example, Firth (2015) in her paper *The PhD Quest: Arise, become a peer*, notes that doctoral students during their studies, undergo

a process of academic hazing and ritualised testing similar to the ritualised tasks knights have to accomplish before being drafted into knighthood. She insists that activities of "demonstrating research skills, making an original contribution to knowledge, and becoming an expert in your field" are part of the control structure to entrain doctoral students to achieve "the change of identity, and the gaining of a new title". Lefebvre (1991) asserts that ritualised spatial practices and mundane processes render the body docile and the potential for resistance lies in awareness of rhythms that disrupt and disengage from habituated practices. To Lefebvre, this awareness comes in the ability to use bodily senses –hearing, sight, touch, taste and feel to unravel the nuances in the interaction between space and the social body in everyday interactions. Thus, drawing from rhythmanalysis, I added to the aims of my project, to:

1. Explore how the experiences of doctoral students can be conceptualised as rhythmic spatial temporalities.
2. Determine the role rhythmic experiences play in academic identity formation.

Rhythmanalysis was developed by Lefebvre as a Marxist dialectical critique of everyday life in capitalistic society. However, Lefebvre's work has been criticised as failing to address French racism and colonisation, and to challenge patriarchy and heterosexuality (Reid-Musson 2018). Blum and Nast (1996) distinguish how his socio-spatial concept of subjectivity remains heterosexist, particularly as it relates to gender schemas and heterosexual family norms. Kipfer, Saberi, and Wieditz argue that,

> *Lefebvre was as little a feminist or queer theorist of gender and sexuality as he was a theorist of colonial history. In fact, Lefebvre had a basic tendency to describe women and men in essentialist terms or deploy gendered or heteronormative imagery to describe the world (2012, 124).*

Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis was part of his larger work of critiquing everyday life in a capitalistic society. He reasons that everyday experiences within modernity are increasingly linear, mundane, banal, routine, and repetitive (1991). As discussed in the context chapter, Lefebvre views specialised knowledge, such as doctoral education in this context, as integrated into the everyday through social structures such as the university and the lecture room. The concept of rhythms has been widely adopted into critical theory to engage how rhythms play a role in producing, reproducing, and disrupting constellations of interrelated race, gender, and class categories in institutions.

## Rhythmanalysis

Lefebvre defines rhythm as a repetitive, cyclical movement and interaction. However, repetition is not identified here as closure or as absolute and predictable occurrences. He argues that absolute repetition is a fiction of objective positivism, arguing instead that, "there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference" (2004, 6). Lefebvre develops rhythmanalysis as an analytical tool to investigate the rhythms in what he calls '*la vie quotidienne*' – 'everyday life.' He reasons that rhythms – everyday patterning, movement and routines are implicated in the structure and restructuring of social worlds. Even in specialised knowledges, disciplines, and institutions such as the university, Lefebvre discusses faculty as being part of the everyday. He writes:

> *And now, my dear philosopher, allow me to inform you that your activity – teaching philosophy – is both everyday and non-everyday. Insofar as it is an exceptional activity, a mediation, a journey into the purely abstract and conceptual, philosophy is constructed above the everyday, even when it meditates on life and the concrete. In so far as it is a social activity, integrated within structured groups, with their models, their norms and their social roles, such as the philosophy lecture, the lycée, the town, the university, it enters into the everyday (Lefebvre 2002, 56).*

Lefebvre maintains that the rhythmanalyst analyses how rhythms work in the production of a "different space" (Lefebvre, 1991: 352–400). Kemal (2019, 8) defines this position of the rhythmanalysts as a "middle sea" and "balcony where one is simultaneously inside and out". Kemal states that this 'middle space' is always in production with continually fluid rhythmic experiences. The rhythmanalyst as a balcony-dweller should however not be confused with the idea of border dwelling as conceptualised in borderlands theory. Whilst the borderland is the in-between 'different space', a rhythmanalyst would wish to explore, the rhythmanalyst takes the position of a balcony dweller, an embodied approach of both immersion and observation in his exploration of differential space. As Kemal (8) writes, "the rhythmanalyst feels, indulges, and grasps rhythms, and conceives, perceives, and lives rhythms to capture truths of space for a differential space".

Dawn (2019, 52) argues that in rhythmanalysis, "bodies are central to the story but access to bodily experience is through language and dialogue". However, Dawn also acknowledges that a key limitation of capturing rhythmanalysis via language is that precognitive or unconscious

identities (modes of being) are difficult to express and, therefore, often overlooked. Rhythmanalysis deploys bodily experiences including "talk, text, visual…materials, atmospheres and environments" to grasp rhythms (58). Lefebvre likened the human body to a "bouquet of rhythms", comparing the diversity of the bouquet to the diversity of lived experiences (Lefebvre 2004, 20). The body occupies an important role in rhythmanalysis because, as it inhabits the world through rhythmic exchanges, it becomes the emanation of phenomena making it a site of cultural-political revelation (Chen 2016, 34). In Román-Odio's words, the body acts as a "signifier for a place of origin and liberation, a site of quarrel where a history of dislocation, exclusion, and oppression is confronted and brought to resolution" (2013, 48). Drawing on borderlands theory, Lugones asserts that the body/flesh is central to understanding how oppression materialises in the lived experiences of the oppressed (Maria Lugones 1992). Focusing on the body as a site of knowledge develops a form of "in the flesh methodology" which emphasises on storytelling, dialogue, self-awareness, and self-reflection (Román-Odio 2013, 48). Figure 9 adopted from Simonsen (2005, 11) illustrates the centrality of the body in rhythmanalysis. The top half illustrates the body as the initial site for grasping spatial temporalities. The lower half illustrates how the body has been politicized through the continued abstraction of the body on one hand, and, simultaneously, its homogenisation, fragmentation and hierarchisation on the other.
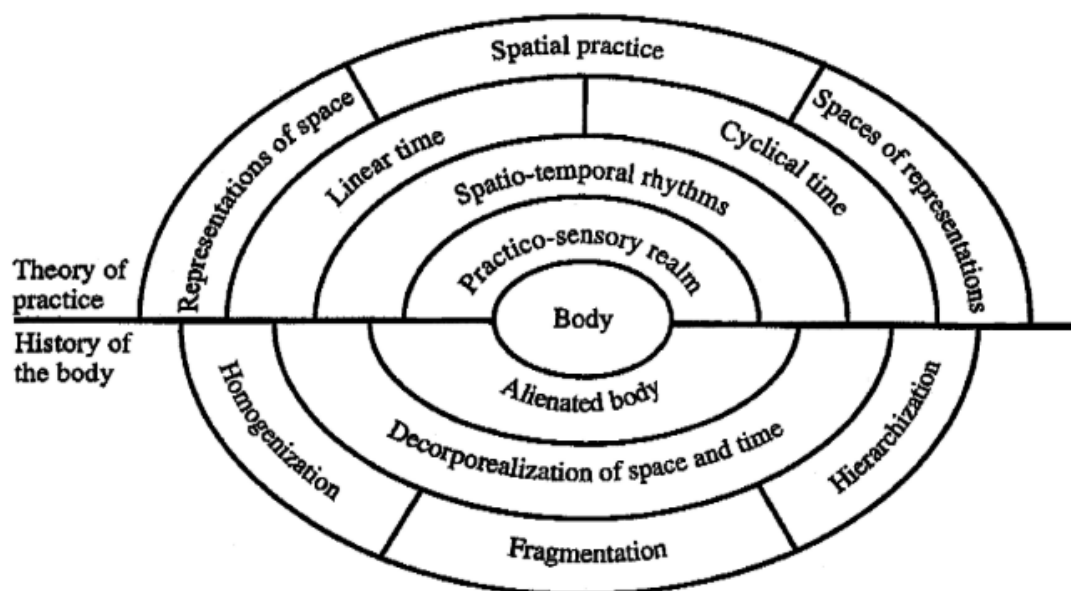


**Figure 8**: *Body, space, and time (sourced from Simonsen 2005, 11)*

As a border/balcony-dweller myself, rhythmanalysis contributed an embodied, subjective, and experiential way of sense-making, which gave me the language to go beyond representational narratives to engage in what Lefebvre calls "a critical analysis of everyday life [that] will discover ideologies and the understanding of everyday life [which] must include an ideological analysis and, especially, an incessant self-analysis" (1991, 27). As I consciously engaged in self-analysis of my position as both a doctoral student who by circumstance is immersed in doctoral borderlands and a rhythmanalyst observer, I found there is something isolating about the methodological process. I experienced a sort of ontological anxiety in attempting to capture the ontological realities of my participants and myself as a 'balcony observer.' The aim of my research is to understand individual experiences and space. In this aim, there is an overlap of the disciplines of geography and ethnography. Furthermore, the aim is to understand the individual experiences in a space that intersects the two disciplines of geography and ethnography. This space is also conceptualised as a third-space, in-between worlds consequentially politicising space. To add to this complexity is the use of the metaphor of traversing, which suggests mobility and temporality. In this sense, no one disciplinary approach can offer belonging. However, multidisciplinary approaches constitute a chief cornerstone of rhythmanalysis methodology. Lefebvre states that the rhythmanalyst:

> *first ha[s] to educate himself (to break himself in or accept training), to work very hard therefore, to modify his perception and conception of the world, of time and of the environment. His emotions will consequently also be modified, in a coherent (in accordance with his concepts) and non-pathological way. Just as he borrows and receives from his whole body and all his senses, so he receives data [données] from all the sciences: psychology, sociology, ethnology, biology; and even physics and mathematics. He must recognise representations by their curves, phases, periods and recurrences. In relation to the instruments with which specialists supply him, he pursues an interdisciplinary approach. Without omitting the spatial and places, of course, he makes himself more sensitive to times than to spaces. He will come to 'listen' to a house, a street, a town, as an audience listens to a symphony (Lefebvre 2004, 22).*

The multidisciplinary nature of rhythmanalysis allows me to foreground my analysis in rhythmanalysis whilst drawing on various disciplinary perspectives "in order to interpret the world as moving complexity" (Charalampides 2017, 27). Although the field of doctoral studies, and the doctoral student have been widely researched using both qualitative and quantitative approaches as argued in the context chapter there has been a polarisation of space either as a metaphor/mental (abstract) or physical space. The ambition of rhythmanalysis is to adopt a

multidisciplinary approach and apply the various tools in unison. To achieve this end, Lefebvre conceptualises the body as the beginning of rhythm, working as a metronome of rhythmic pulses. To underscore the importance of the body in understanding time and space Anzaldúa holds that the body is a text that can mediate between different forms of knowledges and act as symbolism for the social world (Anzaldúa 1987). Rhythmanalysis is primarily concerned with patterns of activity and movement, and with the body in space (Lefebvre 1991, 205). As Lefebvre's theorisation of rhythms begins with the body, it provides an embodied and phenomenological approach to understanding everyday life.

The rhythmanalyst also uses rhythms to reveal "repetition and difference, organicity and in-organicity, continuity and discontinuity as the relationships which compose the human perception of the world" (2004, 9). Lefebvre uses the metaphors of opposing forces to theorise how different 'moments' embody a different kind of sociality and how the transfer between 'continuity to discontinuity' for example, can be a pivotal moment to reveal nuanced relations between people and how identities are negotiated and contested (Mlekuž 2010; Blue 2019). Echoing Lefebvre's conceptualisation of space, Basil uses guiding metaphors, which he calls spatial notions of boundaries:

> [I]nside/outside, intimacy/distance, here/there, near/far, us/them.' These notions for the most part describe our perspective on, and our experience of space more than they describe space itself. In studying real space, we find that these notions get you into the problem, but don't get you out the other side. This is because space is fundamentally more complex and richer than these terms suggest: it is relational. I do not mean this in a Leibnizian sense, but in the sense that space does not exist for us as discrete elements but as a continuous system of interrelatedness shaped by, and shaping the way we live. In space, the pattern is the thing, much more than the elements that make up the pattern (quoted in Hillier 2001, 57).

Lefebvre uses the concept of rhythm to theorise these forms of experiences in their various temporal-spatial ordering; and rhythmanalysis as a tool to investigate these rhythms. Lefebvre (2004) defines rhythmic repetition in terms of two types – linear repetition (which is mechanical and monotonous) and cyclic repetition (which is grounded in processes exuding an organic quality). Linear repetitions are likened and linked to the ticking of a clock, while cyclical repetitions are closer to the 'natural' world. Importantly, the cyclical and linear are at another level inseparable and complementary:

*Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality, interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and movements, imposed structures (Lefebvre 2004, 8).*

The aim of the researcher using rhythmanalysis is firstly, to identify and define the nature of linear rhythms, within doctoral studies in this context, and examine how these emanate from dressage, and are thus socially constructed. Secondly, the researcher has to define and identify how the cyclical rhythms emerge and are incorporated in the everyday cyclical rhythms. Whilst the pedagogical structure of doctoral studies is predominantly linear following a predetermined structure: proposal, reading, data collection, write up-completion, etc.; the everyday experiences of doctoral candidates are more complex, fluid, and cyclical but not independent of the linear experiences.
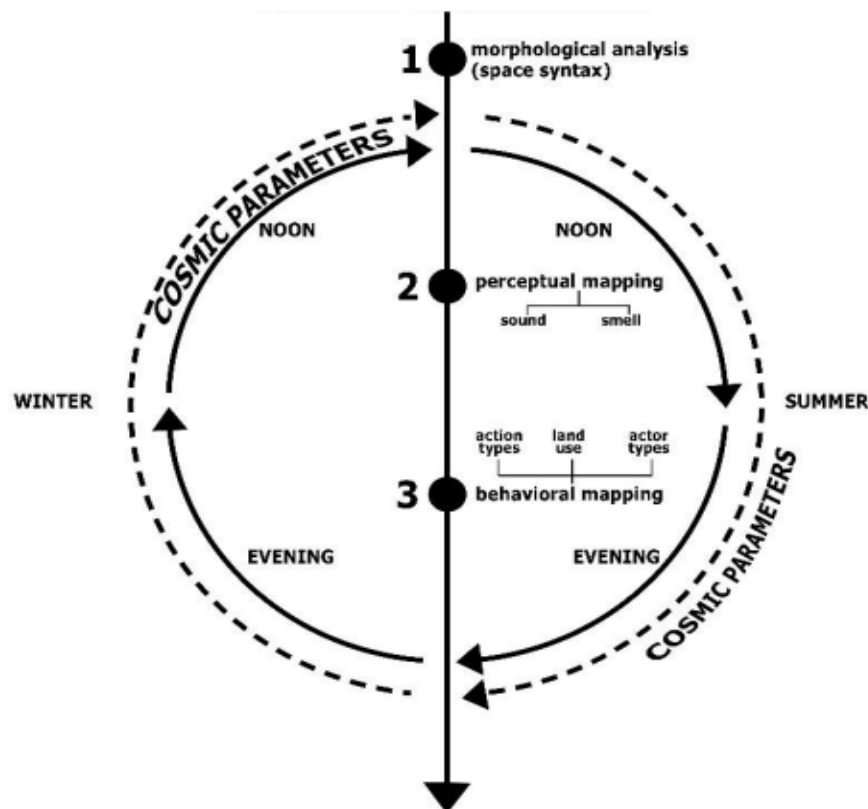


**Figure 9**: *Layers of Rhythmanalysis(sourced from Gümüş and Yılmaz 2020, 234).*

My participants are submerged in a space both as novices and as curators, their movements organised, for example, in keeping with the cyclical tenure of the doctoral three to five-year period broken down into semesters and terms grounded in the rhythmic cycles of the natural yearly cycles. The structure of the PhD, usually organised according to discipline, provides a more quotidian (the repetitive, predictable, and mundane) linear and socially constructed form of everyday life.

Thus, as stated by Lefebvre,

> *With regard to intellectual concentration and the activities with which it is bound up (reading, writing, analysis), they also have their own rhythm, created by habit, which is to say, by a more or less harmonious compromise between the repetitive, the cyclical and that which supervenes them (Lefebvre 2004, 75)*

Yet, the repetitive rhythm of dressage forms the basis of institutions, such as armies, religious and educational establishments. In such institutions, dressage is a convenient structuring and disciplinary device resulting in "[space] and time thus laid out make room for humans, for education and initiative, for liberty. A little room. More of an illusion: dressage does not disappear. It determines the majority of rhythms" (Lefebvre 2004, 40).

Lefebvre and Régulier (1985, 10) explain that "the surroundings of the body, whether they be social or cosmic in nature, are also packets of rhythm". Whilst I acknowledge the importance of time and natural rhythms, in this project, I focus on the social rhythms, and their continuity and disruption in the experiences of doctoral candidates. I argue that the doctoral space is reproduced in the everyday social interactions and rhythms that transcend material and quotidian boundaries. A rhythmanalysis of experiences of doctoral students in the context of this study includes listening to the body as text, doctoral studies as a rhythmic third space, and doctoral progression as rhythmic mobility.

Coming to rhythmanalysis as an analytic tool was not an easy process. I had to negotiate personal fears such as enacting the redoubling problem, betraying the decolonial cause and being superficial in my narration and representation of space and third space experiences. My initial assumption was that my data would be primarily narrative, so I leaned more towards an ethnographic narrative methodology. However, as I thought more about my project aims and

theory, there was continually a bridge that seemed uncrossed, and experiences silenced. My ability to capture the spatiality of the borderland and the plurality of the social agents that traverse the space became more elusive as time passed. I felt as if I were face to face with *Tsikamutanda,* with no tribe for ontological validation and belonging. I decided to capture the ontological terror set forth by my quest for a methodology through *autohistoria* and this is how the introductory narrative poem came to be. I felt suspended between worlds, each clamouring for allegiance– theoretical and disciplinary affiliation on one hand, and the decolonial project on the other hand. Yet, I refused to be fettered entirely into any enclave. Encouraged by my theory, I chose non-belonging, the hard strip of time owned by the tribeless. In reading Anzaldúa's cautionary note 'no bridges here, they are made' there was an intensity of moment in realising that as I searched for a method that would best fit my research, the process was in turn curating me.

Without a chosen methodology, I initially adopted grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) assert that questions of being are part of an emergent process not predetermined structures; and human beings are social agents who construct meaning through action and processes. Grounded theory proposes that researchers collect data from the beginning of the project so that the data becomes the foundation and guide to any onto-epistemological choices throughout the research project. Charmaz (2006, 2) states, "data form the foundation of our theory and our analysis of these data generates the concepts we construct". I decided to take this advice and conducted pilot interviews to develop a methodological framework (this will be further discussed in the following sections). In doing so, I realised that my participants spoke of their experiences in highs and lows, continuities and disruptions, cyclical, and linear movements. I, however, struggled to find the right language to capture and measure these moments until I was writing my chapter on the doctoral landscape and the discourses that I conceptualised after drawing on various theories of space. As I read more on Lefebvre's theory of space, I was introduced to rhythmanalysis after I had acknowledged, drawing from my theory, that the borderland is a space – mental, social, and physical and that doctoral students' experiences emerge in such a space. What Lefebvre's theory of space offered me was language to conceptualise the experiences of highs/lows, continuities/disruptions, and cyclical/linear.

Lefebvre's rhythmanalytical methodology adopts a subtractive syllogistic path to the study of rhythms. He advocates for a systematic study of rhythms that constitutes a deductive approach from abstraction to concrete. In this approach, a rhythmanalyst starts out with concepts and

definitive categories and extracts specific findings from the abstraction. It is from this reasoning that Lefebvre defines his own definitive categories: cyclical/organic and linear/inorganic, as opposed to categories that continuously interfere with each other. Whilst I continued to borrow from grounded theory methodological tools, I began to ground my work in this rhythmanalytical methodological approach. Rhythm is described as the tool that reveals repetition and difference, organicity and in-organicity, continuity and discontinuity as the relationships which compose the human perception of the world. Although the metaphor of rhythms is not specifically utilised in borderlands theory the cyclical nature of *conocimiento* as a rupture of the banal, monotonous, linear, and imposed subjectivity resonates with Lefebvre's conceptualisation of rhythms (see Romero 2011; Wilson 2012). The analytical tools provided by rhythmanalysis allow for the systematic study of the various stages of *conocimiento* as spatial rhythmic temporalities in the everyday lives of doctoral candidates.

## Rhythmanalysis, moments and *conocimiento*

Lefebvre's analysis proceeds from "what is most concrete: rhythm" measured through the "pulse of a particular cultural moment or event or space" (2004, 3). Whilst rhythm is a very broad concept, it can be used to analyse the micro and macro, if measured through the concept of moments to give it specificity. Lefebvre developed the theory of moments, especially moments of transcendence - what Griel Marcus calls 'tiny epiphanies' (quoted in Shields 1998, 61) and what Anzaldúa (1987) calls 'moments of awareness'. Anzaldúa writes that moments of awareness are "the point of contact where the 'mundane' and the 'numinous' converge, where you're in full awareness of the present moment" (1981, 549). According to Shields, moments are glimpses through time (past and future), unexpectedly illuminating "a flash of the wider significance of something. In the moment, there is sudden insight into the future, which simultaneously recomposes the past" (1998: 58, 59). It is in moments that it is possible to discern power and possibility. However, 'moment' here does not refer to utopic epiphanies. Rather, these can be confrontational and painful shocks that become the conduit for moments of transformation and/or resistance and liberation (Romero 2011). Moment does not also mean 'instant' as defined by Henri Bergson (*1859–1941)* (see Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre was critical of Bergson's conceptualisation of time as unbroken, linear, and progressive; in which instants/moments were points along a line. For Lefebvre, discontinuities, and moments of

rupture of the mundane open the way to resistance and revolution. Shields maintains that the moment is a "primordial form of time" which ruptures the triteness of the everyday (1998: 60–1).

Fox and Allan (2014, 104) propose what they call methodology for reflexivity to 'recollect' moments of becoming and unbecoming that unravel normalised assumptions and can possibly shape positive new becomings. This method involves going beyond the surface recollections of participants that are usually permeated with bias and prejudice, to explore how moments/epiphanies can avoid romanticising experiences and thus rendering them smooth and linear. Angrosino (2007) suggests that observation allows the researcher to experience and encounter moments as they occur in real life. Saldana (2009) writes that within epiphany narratives, data is coded as surges and turning points that occur through time. These moments/experiences are of "sufficient magnitude that they significantly alter the perceptions and/or life course of the participant" (175). Dawn states:

> *In practice, the rhythmanalyst must show 'sensitivity to moments', pay heed to their vitality and capacity 'to maintain and transform the temporal-spatial structure of experiences' and reveal relations which are normally veiled. Patterns of recurrent, if diverse, moments produce rhythms; in other words, rhythms may be composed of constellations of moments, intervals and repetition (2019, 21).*

## Rhythmanalysis as a heuristic method

Rhythmanalysis is described as an experimental and procedural method of trial and error. The experimental nature of rhythmanalysis lies in its emphasis on experiencing the world and "engendering frameworks which address the textures of experiences allowing for their enunciation" (Chen 2016, 7). Whilst the rhythmanalyst might enter a field with specific issues for investigation, these issues remain tentative, subject to being refined and transformed through the methodological process. Thus, there remains a distinct relationship between problem and method and, as Wakeford and Lury suggest, it is the combination between the "problem and method… that makes a method answerable to its problem, provides the basis of its self-displacing movement, its inventiveness, although the likelihood of that inventiveness can never be known in advance of a specific use" (2012, 7).

As already alluded to, rhythmanalysis does not propose solutions or attempt to investigate coloniality or such related topics. This lack of position on such topics makes rhythmanalysis unsystematic theoretically yet providing a methodical structure that "guides us to those fabrics and forms of experiences (in their plurality) that may evidence, enrich or problematise the construction of these abstract ideas". The heuristic quality of rhythmanalysis manifests itself "as a kind of arbitrariness when making inquiries about the vast and complex world" (8).

The rhythmanalyst uses bodily rhythms as the initial site of investigation and then works centrifugally to explore the various lived realities that "constitute perceptual dynamics, and that orchestrate at the site of bodily rhythms" (Wakeford and Lury 2012, 10). Lefebvre conceptualises rhythms through the concepts of polyrhythmia, arrhythmia, and eurhythmia (to be discussed later). Rhythmanalysis operates by oscillating within the push-pull relationship of singular rhythms and tensions of rhythmic assemblages. Inherent to this project is the politicisation of the doctoral process and identity formation within the doctoral process. This entails a suspension of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the doctoral space to investigate the complex and emergent nature of doctoral spaces. The potency of rhythmanalysis is inherent in its methodological structure, which allows for exploration of not only experiences, but the conditions that bring forth experiences by offering polyrhythmia, arrhythmia, and eurhythmia as politicising methodological tools.

## Data Collection

Rhythmanalysis is foremost a meta-science which grasps rhythms at the level of the sensory. The researcher draws on bodily and extra bodily impressions to explore senses and supply nuanced descriptions of sensual experiences, which often go beyond identification (Chen 2016, 3). Like borderlands theory, which seeks to understand how social actions materialise on the body and in turn generates a transformative process both internal and external to the individual, rhythmanalysis conceptualises rhythms as assemblages of spatial practices to explore the role of senses in the ordering of temporal-spatial experiences. A rhythmanalyst has to draw from various methodological tools to harness the meta-sensory possibilities of rhythmanalysis.

In one of my pilot interviews, a participant (whom I will call Khoza) asked me to take a walk with him before the interview. Khoza is a musicologist, poet and photographer by profession and is currently undertaking his doctoral studies. I felt disarmed as I was able to record our interview, but he assured me that he would recapture all he would have said in the walking conversation. Another participant (Mzo) asked me to bring a bottle of wine to an introductory meeting before the official interview. Mzo is an artist, musicologist, and identifies as a feminist. Both interviews were before my encounter with rhythmanalysis, thus, I only realised their value in hindsight. During the walk with Khoza, I tried to structure the conversation by asking questions such as "what topic is your PhD on, why did you decide to do PhD etc.?" However, I do not use the word 'try' idly, because all my attempts failed, as he continuously broke structure by erupting into poetry recitals or pausing to take a photograph. He spoke about the scenery and the feel of the walk, things that I did not know how to embody at the time. Khoza spent most of that walk reciting poems and speaking about his love for jazz music. Mzo, on the other hand, asked me to come to his house, which is on the outskirts of town. When I arrived, he played soft jazz music; poured two glasses of wine and began the meeting by giving me a tour of his flat. Again, all my attempts to structure the interview were futile as Mzo went into a monologue of his life experiences, occasionally disrupted by pauses to explain the artworks in his house. He explained almost every decorative piece in minute detail and after a two-hour conversation, he then asked me to introduce myself to him. Both participants, in this case, consciously resisted any forms of bodily entrainment (dressage). Thus, the continuous invitations from the participants for me to take an embodied approach to understanding their experiences in space and time broke the structural and linear rhythms as configured by my discipline – 'ask and probe'. I became more aware of my taken-for-granted rhythms of doing research as I progressed in my journey of becoming a rhythmanalyst. As Lefebvre and Régulier point out, we become cognisant of our rhythms "when we suffer from some irregularity" or dissonance (2004: 77).

From the experiences of the pilot study, I adopted three forms of data collection: observation, storytelling and, *autohistoria-teoría*. Both Khoza and Mzo grounded their doctoral experiences in time (by recounting their past experiences from childhood that have shaped their identities coming into doctoral studies) and space (illustrating how they have a relationship with the spaces they encounter). Hence, instead of capturing time as linear, their narratives intersected at some points childhood trauma with mundane activities in doctoral studies such as writing. These narratives underscore the argument that although rhythms are experienced at the "level

of bodily consciousness", they are "shaped by the intangible and are not bound by the body" (Dawn 2019, 83).

**Observation**

Upon including observation as one of my tools for data collection, I faced the question of what to observe and what I had already been observing (in relation to the pilot study). To answer this question, Charmaz (2006, 21) writes that one should study in a field "whatever is happening there". The starting point in ethnographic analysis, in this case, ethnographic rhythmanalysis, is the ontological assumption that all human action is relational and meaningful, and that action and meaning are inseparable (Blatter and Haverland, 2016). As a doctoral student myself, access to academic space was not a problem. However, maintaining a critical distance and a continual movement from inside to outside presented a challenge (Alhadeff-Jones 2019; Sandoval 2000). At the same time, the mere fact that I was a doctoral candidate myself did not inevitably make me a rhythmanalyst (Alhadeff-Jones 2019).

Lefebvre recommends a duality of being, enabling one to occupy an inside/outside position. He states, "in order to analyse a rhythm, one must get outside it" (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 95) whilst simultaneously suggesting that we cannot experience rhythms unless it is through our body. What he recommends is both observation and immersion. This, according to Nash, is reflective of Lefebvre's phenomenological orientation, emphasising that a rhythmanalyst is both a participant and a researcher. Ybema et al. (2009) argue that this is, however, a paradoxical position, as there is tension between engagement/immersion and detachment/critical distance. To Lefebvre rhythmanalytical observation is unlike phenomenology and other social sciences in that firstly, sensory engagement is essential as a precursor to observation and the more they are internalised, the more comprehensible they become. Secondly, a rhythmanalyst does not observe rhythms as things to be interpreted but acknowledges the existence of rhythms and seeks to reveal linkages with time and space. Lastly, rhythmanalysis is not merely interpretive but is inherently a critical project and "thus the methodology is influenced by its critical purpose, which distinguishes it from the pretence to objectivity, scholarly detachment and non-partisanship that has served to legitimate the social sciences" (Gardiner 2000, 5).

I attempted to understand rhythmanalysis by doing it. In reading Lefebvre, we must go outside and experience the spatiality of rhythms. Thus, I took my laptop and I sat outside the drama department at Rhodes University overlooking the Politics Department. Just as I sat thinking about the literal and metaphorical significance of 'going outside', a study participant (David), whom I had been requesting an *autohistoria* piece from, passed by and I called out to him. He complained that he is a scientist and, therefore, writing is difficult for him. Lefebvre says when one goes to the outside one must choose a position, which is both inside and outside, and preferably elevated like a balcony. The Drama Department offers an elevated platform and my open laptop seemed to give me the inside/outside positionality as I performed what I was entrained to primarily regard as an inside task (office, library), outside. I will use David's reaction to my somewhat imposed task of self-reflexivity and how it caused dissonance in his everyday activities as an example of reactions to my inside/outside positionality. David had ignored my follow up messages requesting his *autohistoria*, but by meeting him outside, I was able to engage both the role of a colleague and that of a researcher to get a fixed date. The movement of inside/outside disrupts normative everyday activities for the researcher and spatially, this movement, although causing dissonance reveals rhythms. According to Revol (2019, 6), "Rhythms are bound together and dissimulate themselves" and dissonance reveals them. I carried out this exercise several times during the observation and interview components of my data collection process.



**Figure 10***: Rhodes University Drama Department*

My research was physically grounded in a singular institution, but I conducted Zoom and telephonic interviews with participants from various institutions. Hence, my observation was passive and, in some cases, included mobility (Charmaz 2006). I actively participated in

observation for two years of my doctoral studies. I participated in social and academic activities for post-graduate students where I interacted and watched interactions. Initially, I did not record all my interactions, but following from the lessons from my pilot study, I began recording all information of my research process, including how I met participants and participants' interactions with space (Charmaz 2006). I occasionally went for lunch, walks and got involved in other such embodied activities (Palipane 2019). I grounded the data I generated from observation in my theoretical assumptions and rhythmanalysis methodological structure.

### Storytelling

Storytelling was my primary mode of data collection. Most of my interviews, drawing from the lessons of my pilot study, were split into two interviews per participant lasting about an hour. During the first interview, I asked participants to talk about their experiences that directly or indirectly influenced their participation in academia. For example, Khoza spoke of growing up in apartheid South Africa as a black man living in a township and witnessing and experiencing all forms of brutality, whilst at the same time, enjoying intellectualism and crossing a literal and conceptual bridge every weekday to attend a Model C school[2]. Owing to these experiences, he identified as a cultural activist constantly acting as a bridge for township youth to cross into intellectualism through poetry and writing as liberatory practices. It was important to capture these intersections of time and space, which become assemblages of rhythms that materialise in both social and academic activities. In the second interview, I asked participants to discuss their current PhD studies in detail.

According to Bhattacharya (2016), narratives are not always a form of protest or witness to shared victimhood but a way of finding strength in vulnerabilities and finding ourselves in each other's stories. One of the core aims of hearing stories of marginalisation and oppression, and stories of being and becoming, should be to build bridges (across racial, ethnic, gender, scholarly agenda, methodological preferences and so much more) and dismantle walls of silence. Bhattacharya suggests that we engage "discourses that enable us to work with honesty; to address prejudices, belief systems, and pain; and to discuss possibilities for discovering a

---

[2] This denoted to schools structed as semi-private schools and was a whites-only government school in South Africa, introduced in 1991 by the apartheid government. The term "model C" is still commonly used to describe former whites-only schools.

way forward based on connection and interrelatedness" (311). Although my primary role in this method is that of a listener, listening itself is a situated political practice. Whilst the spatial body location of the narrator is important, so is that of the listener. In a paper in which she advocates for a narrative rhythmanalysis, Tamboukou (2020) asserts that embedded and embodied narratives are a form of rhythmanalysis which is "entangled in the here and now of listening to the rhythms of movement and activities including the vocal expression and embodied sonority of storytelling" (4). She maintains that narrative rhythmanalysis involves "listening, feeling and understanding", engaging all senses but primarily engaging the "sensory antennae to what is audible rather than merely visible in transcripts" (5).

Listening as part of storytelling was of particular importance to me because the stories shared during the observation activities added to the structured interviews. In some cases, participants asked me not to record these, but rather just draw from them, and in other cases, such as a poetry reading session, recording would have been impossible. In such cases, I needed to observe an ethics of care regarding firstly, what I could preserve and secondly, my responsibility to protect the integrity of the storytellers (Tamboukou 2020, 5). In these instances, I took memos. Memo writing proved a powerful tool to foster rapport with participants who occasionally asked what I was jotting down and suggested what I should leave out. It also allowed me to constantly move between data collection and analysis since my analytical categories were grounded in my theoretical frameworks (Charmaz 2006). However, using moments/rhythms as units of analysis allowed for more reflexivity in how I interpreted both the data and my theoretical categories.

### Autohistoria

Anzaldúa describes autohistoria-teoría as a blending of "cultural and personal biographies with memoir, history, storytelling, myth and other forms of theorizing paired with lived experiences" (Keating 2009, 9). As opposed to storytelling, *autohistoria* allows participants to use fictional writing to recollect and narrate their memories. A*utohistoria-teoría* is an important tool for remembering in a world gripped by a culture of forgetting (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002). The *autohistorian* constantly shifts between relational, self-reflective, cultural, and political paradigms creating an interlinked landscape that blends lived and personal experiences with theory, fostering spaces of (re)membering and ways to "make knowledge,

meaning, and identity through self-inscription" (Anzaldúa 2015, 6). Pitts characterises *autohistoria-teoría* as a method that is "collaborative, sensuously embodied, and productive of critical self-reflection, which can be both harmful and enabling" (2016, 359). Memories as a means of critical reflection and as a tool to reflect on the "wounds, touch the scars, map the nature of my conflicts, croon to *las musas* (the muses) that I coax to inspire me, crawl into the shapes the shadow takes, and try to speak with them" (Anzaldúa 2015, 4).

Bhattacharya and Payne further add that,

> *Anzaldúa's conceptualization of autohistoria-teoría is an invitation for me to engage with my shadows, make my wounds visible to me, understand the ways in which some of my worldviews lie in contradiction to each other, and attend to the ways in which I create shadows and the shadows create me (2016, 1101).*

The divorce of my parents, teenage pregnancy, and quitting my PhD for six months are the central moments I came face to face with *Tsikamutanda* staring her down and allowing my fear to engulf me. The story has its roots in my early childhood when every Christmas, my grandmother would take me with her to the village. I remember dreading the trip and at the age of eight years old and trying hard not to imagine the rituals of protection that awaited me upon my arrival. I remember watching myself, as it were, participate in the convocations and ceremonies, confused and isolated from my own experiences. The radical and violent crossings from my town to the rural village, which forced me to shape shift for the sake of belonging, have matured into the sometimes violent contestation of self-identity that have impacted my doctoral journey. To give further understanding, a challenge such as my six-month break from my doctoral studies, is to find my shadow beast, *Tsikamutanda*, such a face off is a moment of transformation and transition.

Through *autohistoria,* I asked my participants to recount the central moments that they remembered as moments of transformation, pain, and loss, which directly or indirectly have affected their doctoral journey. To achieve this Anzaldúa recommends:

> *picture a movie screen in your mind's eye. Allow memories to surface. See your life as though a movie you are watching. See yourself as a character in it. Watch the cycle of events of your life unroll before you and take note [of] people, things, sensual perceptions, emotions, [and] intuitive reactions (cited in Neile 2005, 23).*

## Participants

I recruited participants through a range of personal and academic networks. Demographically, participants were all Black, with diversity in sexual orientation, class background, ethnicity, and nationality. The aim of drawing from various demographics within the Black community was to facilitate drawing on and exploring Black experiences in their multiplicity since focus on Black doctoral students does not suggest any homogeneity in their experiences or prescribe narratives of shared oppression and marginalisation. The lack of female participants was indeed a limitation to the study. Although various female participants were invited to participate in the study, I had a few responses and in some cases some withdrawer from the project. Most probably due to the fact that my interview process coincided with the national lockdown at the onset of COVID-19. I had participants who were at the first and some at the second stage of the interview process withdraw from the project. The inclusion of more female participants would have enriched the data. However, aim was to draw from a demographic whose experiences are usually taken as given and narrated as either protesting or victims and the data drawn from the participants captured these narratives. I should also state at this point that I do not argue against or protest the narratives of protesting and/or victimhood in this project, but I seek to tap into the third space narratives of contestation, fluidity, and multiplicity of identity. Although I aimed for a national distribution of participants, my final sample remains Rhodes University centred, reflecting my own geographical location. I used conferences and workshops as a means to recruit participants, and my participants include five participants that were not based at Rhodes University. The table below is a description of all my participants.

| Participant | Gender | Citizenship | Faculty/Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tsepo | Male | Non-SA | Economics/ Higher Education |
| Kandau | Non-binary | SA | Philosophy |
| Bobby | Male | SA | Statistics/ Higher education |
| Moses | Male | SA | Sociology |
| Anesu | Non-binary | Non-SA | Fine Art |
| Sikho | Male | SA | Musicology |
| Andile | Male | SA | Natural Sciences |
| David | Male | SA | Natural sciences |
| Khoza | Male | African | Musicology |
| Mzo | Male | African[3] | Anthropology |
| Thapelo | Male | Non-SA | Politics |
| Andisiwe | Female | Non-SA | Political science |

**Table 7**: *Description of study participants. (SA – South African; Non-SA – Black participants where were not from the African continent.*

**Khoza**

I met Khoza while taking my usual late afternoon walks. He was walking his dog and we happened to spark a conversation. He introduced himself as a poet and a cultural activist. Khoza at the time was in the fourth year of his PhD. What struck me about him was how he embodied his identity, both as a poet and a cultural activist as part of his everyday life. During our first walk, Khoza sometimes broke out into poetry when I asked him questions and would then explain the poems in relation to the questions that I had asked. When I visited his house for our first formal interview, there were young men present whom he was teaching creative writing as a means of "healing and grounding self". In all our subsequent interviews (there were four in total) he was usually engaged in some activity that he defined as cultural work. At the time of our first formal interview, I had already conducted three pilot interviews and I assigned our initial conversation as the third. During the first two conversations, I was still unsure what research methodology I was going to use and because of this, I discontinued interviews. Thus, there was a space of about two months between the first two conversations I had with Khoza and the last two when I had settled on rhythmanalysis as my method. Khoza was the first participant that I interviewed after beginning my journey as a rhythmanalyst. From the onset, the conversations I had with Khoza were not structured, but not for lack of trying. I had hoped to make my interviews somewhat semi-structured but Khoza, I think at most unconsciously,

---

[3] Some participants refused to be defined in terms of nationality, choosing to be identified as Africans.

resisted any form of dressage. Khoza grew up under apartheid, witnessing and experiencing violence and brutality and this drove his choice to become an activist. Before undertaking his Master's studies, he did not have any formal education post matriculation but had remained active as a writer. His doctorate is a PhD by book publishing. Although he loves writing, Khoza was struggling when I interviewed him, and this became apparent with time. Because of the nature of the PhD, Khoza reported feeling isolated. By the time we had our last interview, Khoza's health had deteriorated, and, in tears, he confided that he was abusing crystal-meth (methamphetamine). Firstly, he used it to help him write but eventually, he described himself as a "victim" of it. He called about a month after our last interview to inform me that his family had to come pick him up and that he had returned home. He is unsure of how his studies will go but at the time, he was not planning to register for his fifth year.

### Mzo

I met Mzo during one of the jazz sessions that I attended with Khoza and he took an interest in my study, telling me that he would like to share his "intellectual history" with me. We had a brief conversation and he invited me to his house the next day.  At the time of the interview, Mzo was in the first year of his PhD. He took a lot of pride in his studies because, as a man raised by a single mother in a patriarchal society, he had been undermined and expected to fail. However, he had a supportive maternal uncle, who took on the role of a father and helped him nurture his intellectual desires. What is interesting about Mzo's narrative is the way that his family life is intertwined with his intellectual development. Because of his mother's lifestyle, Mzo was often passed from family member to family member, which meant he had to adapt quickly to different environments without also losing his sense of Self. It is because of this that Mzo says "I have always been in spaces where structure is imposed but I never fit in… I'm a rebel or I'm against structure". Mzo constantly had identity categories imposed on him as a Black Xhosa man, so he built his identity around negotiating these multiple subjectivities.

### Andisiwe

Andisiwe is a West African woman doing her PhD in political science. I know Andisiwe from a mutual friend who suggested her as a possible participant. When I met Andisiwe, she was very sceptical about participating although we are from different institutions. She feared that someone from her department would find out about her participation and it would exacerbate what is already a hostile learning environment for her. On one occasion, after the interview,

Andisiwe called me, wishing to drop out of the study, but after we spoke and I reassured her of her anonymity, she agreed to continue participating. What struck me in Andisiwe's narrative is the fear of being found out and disciplined. She was having problems with her supervisor and the department about her epistemological and conceptual standing, and the fact that she was choosing to use narratives for her study was also being problematised by faculty members. Although she felt that this had little to do with her being a foreigner, she did highlight that, being a non-citizen facing these challenges made it impossible for her to progress in the department. Andisiwe's position was very complex and intersectional. She recognised this, and to cope with all the complexities, Andisiwe resorted to therapy. Her interview emphasised the bodily materialisation of what is usually observed as external rhythms. Andisiwe was able to engage in teaching, publishing, and attending conferences with the support of her department but, at most, her supervisory relationship had deteriorated to just sending occasional emails after a few months.

### Tsepo

At the time of the interview, Tsepo had just graduated with his doctorate. I met Tsepo at a conference, and after becoming acquainted, I asked him to be part of my study. Tsepo's father was an academic, and as he was transferred to different universities in Africa. This is important to highlight because Tsepo expressed that with every move there was a rupture in how he perceived the schooling system. The schooling system in one of the countries was very hierarchical and students had to kneel when addressing a teacher, whilst in another country there was a more collegial atmosphere even at primary school level. In one of the countries the primary language of instruction was the indigenous language whilst in the other it was English. Tsepo compared the hierarchy he experienced as a child to higher education and academia where senior White lecturers are perceived, and also perceive themselves, as superior. Tsepo had originally registered for a PhD programme five years prior to his current PhD but dropped out in his first year because of supervisory challenges and the doctoral structure offered by that specific institution. To explain the anxiety, he had about completion Tsepo said, "I think I was speaking to someone about the imposter syndrome even after I got my PhD and I am still feeling like an imposter, okay? I'm a drop out you know what I mean, I dropped out".

What was also evident in Tsepo's narrative is the systemic injustices and prejudice he experienced both in academia and his work environment. He felt as though he was constantly

in a war zone, and at some point, it had started affecting his home life – his role as a husband and father. Tsepo had a good relationship with his supervisor. Tsepo repeatedly emphasised that his supervisor's guidance and support helped him to finish his PhD.

**Bobby**

At the time of the interviews, Bobby was in the first year of his PhD. He had been trying to get enrolled as a Statistics PhD candidate at the university he works for, for the past seven years. However, he felt he faced systematic exclusion as a result of having obtained his Master's degree from a historically black institution. Although he had attained a distinction for his Master's and he was an employee at the university, Bobby failed on three occasions to be enrolled as a PhD candidate. He was willing to try again until he got involved in a book project where he collaborated with authors that helped him gain a deeper understanding of the experiences he was going through and their implications for future scholars. This experience led him to choose a different disciplinary approach to the questions he wanted to address in his doctoral research. Although a very bright student, Bobby has suffered from stereotypes about his being and intellectual identity he had shown continued persistence in overcoming these.

**Andile**

Andile is a good friend of mine. At the time of the interview, he was in his early thirties and had just finished his doctorate. I was a bit wary about interviewing him, fearing that our familiarity could influence the way I asked questions and the answers he gave me. The first interviews with my participants were structured to be very intimate, inviting participants to partake in *autohistoria* to trace their intellectual history. This involved exploring some intimate elements of Self and family. My familiarity with Andile affected the interview process, as there were questions about his background and family life that I felt he might consider as prying. To complicate the matter further, Andile was guarded about his responses when sharing about Andisiwe's fears of being found out, and as he was now a postdoctoral fellow, he feared that his participation could possibly jeopardise this post. In the end, we mutually decided to move on with the interview and it unearthed some key elements of intellectual academic construction. At the time of the interview, Andile had just submitted his PhD.

**Kandau**

Kaunda was in the final year of his doctoral degree at the time of the interview. We were in the same discipline, so we often shared the struggles and joys of academia. I had witnessed the toll his doctoral journey had on him and thought participating in the project would offer him some healing. Kaunda's story centred on his move from what one could call a 'progressive' HWU to a 'conservative' HWU. This move ruptured Kaunda's identity and his perceptions of academia in South Africa. He had challenges with his supervisor who was also the head of department. He shared some of their correspondence with me, wherein they swore at each other and in some cases, his supervisor simply refused to read his work. Our second interview was about three months before Kandau's submission deadline, and his supervisor had just informed him that he would not be able to supervise him. Kandau was in a state, happy to no longer have to work with his supervisor but unsure what he should do. Kandau was eventually able to graduate within three years. The supervisor he eventually worked with told him that epistemologically he did not agree with Kandau but firstly, that does not mean that he is wrong and that was no reason for him not to be supervised. His story raises concerns about the role supervisors play in what knowledge is legitimated and what knowledge is disavowed. In this case, Kaunda obtained his doctorate yet, throughout the three years, his supervisor had delegitimated the epistemology of his research.

**Moses**

At the time of being interviewed, Moses was in the second year of his doctoral studies. After his Master's Moses worked as a lecturer for a while and then decided to come back and do his PhD full time. His story centred around the challenges he faced to find a supervisor and have his proposal approved. Most of the universities he applied to loved his topic and he found several people who were willing to supervise him on the condition that he change his theory from decoloniality. Moses had assumed that he would not face such a push back at historically Black universities, which are often assumed to house progressive black scholars. In his experience, this was not the case. At one point, he found a supervisor and registered but he soon realised that his supervisor hoped that he would eventually change his theory, and so he deregistered. Moses' current supervisor is a White man in his late fifties, in a historically White university. He agreed to supervise both Moses' topic and theory and, so far, it has been a good experience. There is often an erroneous belief that working with a Black academic provides a

more liberatory and progressive experience but with one exception, all my participants had White supervisors with an equal number of good and bad stories.

### Anesu

Anesu is a Black southern African woman and an economist by profession. At the time of the interview, Anesu was in the final year of her PhD, but as she lamented "no one ever tells you it's impossible to finish this thing in three years". From her formative years, she has been an artist and as she said, "I'm a researcher at heart". As will be discussed in more detail in the preceding chapters, there is often a clash between following one's passion and economic constraints. In many cases, economic pressures lead to passion and talent being relegated to hobbies. After working what she calls a "nine to five" job and feeling like she was not contributing to knowledge in any way, Anesu decided to apply for a fully funded Masters of Arts position in South Africa. For most of my participants, postgraduate studies seemed to promise a space for them to embody a more authentic identity. Although Anesu realised this hope in her postgraduate studies, she also describes the space as lonely and isolating. Moreover, with her funding having dried up she now faces the "shame" of having to go back home, with her PhD incomplete.

### Sikho

Sikho is an accomplished jazz musician and scholar. Sikho is in his mid-thirties and at the time of the interview, he was in the second year of his doctorate. After my conversations with Khoza, Mzo and Anesu, I was interested to hear the interplay of the complex relationship between academia and artistic identities from his perspective. I contacted him on Facebook, and he made the time to participate in my study. Sikho is doing his doctorate in Musicology with a full thesis and this was the centre of his story. At Master's level, Sikho was able to complete his studies by practical/performative arts and thesis. For his PhD, he feels as though his artistic voice is being silenced whilst theoretical knowledge is being privileged. He also views the space as privileging European knowledge systems at the expense of other forms of knowing. After having celebrated Western knowledge and what he terms "American music" as the epitome of jazz ontology, Sikho desires to reconstruct his identity with the inclusion and centering of indigenous onto-epistemologies.

**Thapelo**

At the time of the interview, Thapelo was in the preliminary stages of his PhD. He is a colleague of mine and I took interest in him because his PhD is connected to his work and is thus being funded by his employer. During the interview, he often joked that the last time he was a full-time student was eighteen years ago when he did his master's. He was very aware of the internal conflict between being a student and his identity as an expert. He stated that he had to "school himself" on not imposing any form of authority, consciously or unconsciously, in the relationship with his supervisor. His supervisor is a Black female in her early thirties. His story mainly centred around threshold crossing and having to meet deadlines. He raised the cultural shift from West Africa to South Africa as one of the main challenges he faced.

**David**

At the time of being interviewed, David had just completed his PhD. David had come from a university where academia was very hierarchical, and a student did not hold any capacity for self-actualisation. His PhD supervisor helped him to reconstruct his identity as an independent scholar with self-efficacy. He identified independence as one of his core attributes. Growing up, although his mother was an educator, she was often ill. David had to take care of her, himself, and the household because his father worked far from the family. From his formative years, he had to be responsible for his academic choices and he stated that he decided early in life that he wanted to become a doctor. This decision was because growing up in a village, the most prestigious and affluent occupation one could have was to be a doctor. When David got to university, he realised there were many kinds of doctors, so he combined his love for nature and his desire to be a doctor to pursue a doctorate in the natural sciences. In this way, the doctoral space nurtured by his supervisor helped him reconstruct his identity as an independent being. Most of his story also centred around the spatial and intellectual challenges he faced settling into his doctorate.

## Data analysis

 In this project, the experiences of doctoral students are conceptualised in terms of Anzaldúa's seven stages of *conocimiento: el arrebato, nepantla, coatlicue,* the call, *Coyolxauhqui,* the blow up*,* and shifting realities (Anzaldúa 2002). These stages are conceptualised as moments

of transition and transformation. This section discusses how I explored and investigated these moments. Chen posits that

> *theories of moments foreground a modality of experiencing that is inherently historical. The constellation of moments brings forth rhythms, and rhythms compose the ordering of moments within which a particular moment is preserved (as they recur), while at the same time subjecting them to alterations and transformations (2016, 26).*

Lefebvre defines moments as being rhythmic, asserting that they can be configured as material assemblages. This is to say, one can measure the materialisation of these moments/rhythms. To this end, Lefebvre conceptualises three distinct ways to express how the experience of space and the experience of time interact with each other. He establishes the notions of rhythms of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia (Lefebvre 2004, 16). Lefebvre offers these three concepts as analytical tools to analyse the rhythmical dimensions that constitute social phenomena. These three concepts symbolise rhythmic alternance, dissonance, and resonance, respectively (Alhadeff-Jones 2019). The seven stages of *conocimiento* symbolise a continual and emergent process of becoming which can be characterised in rhythms of alternance, dissonance and resonance. The rhythmanalyst uses the concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia as analytical tools to analyse the experiences of *conocimiento* as rhythmic assemblages.

During data analysis, data went through three cycles of coding. As rhythmanalysis is an experiential and experimental process, I drew from other rhythmanalytical projects to develop a model that would best suit my thesis (see Charalampides 2017). Describing the role of a rhythmanalyst, Lefebvre states:

> *He must arrive at the concrete through experience. In fact, and in practice, an already acquired 'knowledge' [savoir] enters onto the scene and delineates the game. (Why the inverted commas around 'knowledge'? Because it is difficult to know whether knowledge goes as far as science – and consequently, whether it avoids ideologies, interpretations and speculative constructions; in such a way that the entrance of ideology is doubtless inevitable, as many recent, and certainly exemplary, cases have shown psychoanalysis, Marxism and even information technology (2004, 22).*

Drawing on the concepts of central moments, the triad notions of understanding rhythms and the categories from my theoretical framework, I developed three stages/cycles of coding. As rhythm is a relative measure, a reference point is central moments (Charalampides 2017). In the first stage, I identified central moments in the participants' narratives (I have already alluded to these. In the second stage, which I will discuss in the following section, I coded central moments as rhythmic assemblages defined as polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia. Lastly, using polyrhythmia, eurhythmia, and arrhythmia as my definitive categories (see previous discussion), I then worked my way to the concrete. In other words, the definitive categories were utilised as tools to explore how rhythms materialise in *conocimiento*. However, this was not a linear process, as these categories are not only interrelated but a materialisation of rhythms on different levels of analysis. According to Charalampides, the triune concepts of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia "constitute the cornerstone upon which Lefebvre draws his pre-visionary portrait of the rhythmanalyst" (2019, 25) and is the first step of analysis of any rhythmic project.
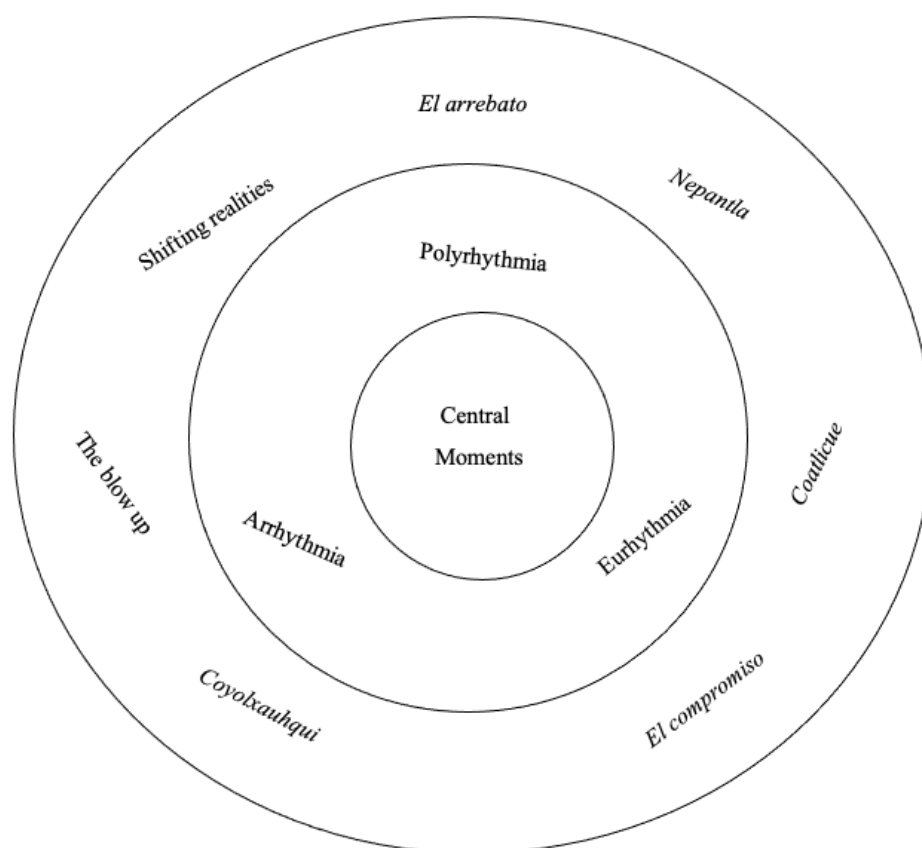


**Figure 11**: *Rhythmanalysis cycles of coding.*

**Polyrhythmia**

Lefebvre holds that "a rhythm is only slow or fast in relation to other rhythms with which it finds itself associated in a more or less vast unity" and one must always consider "the plurality of rhythms, alongside that of their associations … or reciprocal actions" (2004, 89). Lefebvre conceptualised the composition of plural rhythms through the notions of polyrhythmia, eurhythmia and arrhythmia (Lefebvre 2004, 16). Based on Silva, "[p]olyrhythmia is the overlay and superimposition of multiple rhythms. In polyrhythmia, bundles of rhythms intermingle and interact with each other and, as a result, form complex rhythmic fields" (2008, 97). Polyrhythmia is a collection or ensemble of experiences and the intersection of various rhythms, whether in harmony or dissonance, which produce space. Polyrhythmia is thus the experience of multiple but related and diverse but co-existing rhythms, which may clash or coordinate. For example, the rhythmic qualities of writing, whether they flow and are eurhythmic or are irregular and, thus, arrhythmic, are stitched together and collectively inform doctoral practice. Anzaldúa (1987) reasons that writing is a form of performance of identity. The intersections between writing, subjectivity and identity honed into by Anzaldúa are what Dawn (2019) calls polyrhythmic complexities of bodies and social life.

The first step for the rhythmanalyst is to identify these intersecting rhythms, moments, or activities within the complex polyrhythmic ensemble. This is not merely an analysis of how practices intersect and are interconnected. Polyrhythmia is to be understood as the "moving of rhythms, the repetition of practices, ripples through the complexity of movings, and doings that constitute the plenum of practices and the polyrhythmic ensemble" (Blue, 2019). Doctoral studies are polyrhythmic fields and a compound of everyday life, specialised rhythms, and rhythmic spatial patterns. The university is a triad of representational, perceptual, and material space that is overlaid by disruptive activities that enrich the already complex layers of academia's spatial rhythmic field. According to Bristow, Robinson, and Rattle, "academic lives are historically polyrhythmic, in that they have long been characterized by well-entrenched rhythms and temporal regularities, but also by their own temporal irregularities and arrhythmias" (2019, 5).

Polyrhythmic rhythms are non-linear and alternating. Alhadeff-Jones writes that alternance is crucial to understanding and grasping polyrhythmic ensembles. He suggests that the rhythmanalyst has to focus firstly on each rhythm separately, and eventually successively, as a "succession of moments" in order to grasp their intersections (2019, 174). At this stage of analysis, the aim of the rhythmanalyst is to explore the rhythmic moments that have formative effects, while continuously acknowledging the mutual dependence and fluidity of rhythms. At this stage of my analysis, a form of deconstruction took place: I unpacked and codified every significant moment or epiphany firstly as a singular moment and then, subsequently, as intersecting successive moments. This approach is also in line with Anzaldúa's view of the stages of *conocimiento* as interrelated singular moments that are successive but not prescriptive or linear.

### Eurhythmia

Eurhythmia refers to a rhythmic state characterized by regular repetition, working together in harmony. In medicine, eurhythmic state would refer to the perfect and smooth combination of rhythms such that produce a state of good health. Reid-Musson describes eurhythmia as "ensembles of rhythms so routine as to have normalizing and naturalizing qualities" (2018, 884). The pedagogical structure of the doctorate, although varying across discipline regulates the doctoral candidates use of time and space. Normalisation of rhythmic arrangements are argued to be the product of repetition and dressage (Edensor and Larsen 2018). Eurhythmia does not only manifest in overt structures but in cultures, social codes and taken-for-granted binaries of gender and race. These rhythms are internalised, forming what Lefebvre refers to as "dominating-dominated rhythms", which he defines as "everyday or long-lasting [rhythms] … aiming for an effect that is beyond themselves" (2004: 18). Dominating rhythms or "master rhythms" as put forth by Edensor and Larsen (2018), such as the acceptable PhD structure or writing style overtime superimpose themselves as the only alternative.

The aim of analysing rhythms, activities, and moments along the rhythmic ensemble (polyrhythmia, eurhythmia, and arrhythmia) is not to merely discover the presence of eurhythmia, but also to identify their impact as positive/negative or oppressing/liberatory. In keeping with Alhadeff-Jones,

*Eurhythmia evokes an experience of resonance, as it may involve the reinforcement and the amplification of rhythmic phenomena within a specific space and time. In the physical world, amplification may result from a transfer of vibration or energy (e.g. sound, tidal motion, electromagnetic field). In social interactions, it results from the power of evoking or suggesting images, memories, feelings and emotions that contribute to a corresponding or sympathetic response(2019, 175).*

Alhadeff-Jones also adds that, within academia, resonance involves how spatial experiences are ordered to sustain, reinforce, and reproduce specific discourses and learning phenomena. At this level of analysis, one is able to unpack the processes of entrainment also. Importantly, considering the "locus of action and influence" (Alhadeff-Jones 2019, 179).

### Arrhythmia

Arrhythmia is the breakdown of eurhythmia – continuity, repetition, and synchronisation within the polyrhythmic ensemble. The rupture and discordance brought about by arrhythmia "brings previously eurhythmic organisations towards fatal disorder" (Lefebvre, 2004, 16). It is, however, important to highlight that the notions of eurhythmia and arrhythmia are not in contest or conflict with each other as one would conceptualise opposition and collaboration. According to Lefebvre, these concepts are interrelated and every eurhythmia always already contains arrhythmia, pauses, breaks, and off-beats. Whilst arrhythmia initially is a rupture of continuity and repetition, it opens new pathways, creating new and stronger eurhythmic connections. These concepts help to analyse the stages of conocimiento which are characterised by continual rupture and reconstruction of social reality and the individual. Lefebvre uses the metaphor of waves of a sea to illustrate this dynamic process that is ongoing and never reaches a moment of stasis:

*But look closely at each wave. It changes ceaselessly. As it approaches the shore, it takes the shock of the backwash: it carries numerous wavelets, right down to the tiny quivers that it orientates, but which do not always go in its direction ... Powerful waves crash upon one another, creating jets of spray; they disrupt one another, absorbing, fading, rather than crashing, into one another (2004, 79).*

Khoza shared the story of his 15-year struggle with drug use, which occasionally causes disruptions to his academic polyrhythmic ensemble. However, he views each episode of relapse as a transitional period signalling the formation of new eurhythmic formations. Dawn (2019) holds that an arrhythmic stir, which is both repetitive and disjunctive, can lead to awareness. Lefebvre argues that, for there to be change, a social group, a class, or a caste must intervene by imprinting a rhythm on an era (2004: 14). Accordingly, Horton thus states that arrhythmic ensembles are of particular importance to rhythmanalysis not only because they are an integral part in everyday polyrhythmic ensembles, but also because it is the surfacing of arrhythmia that makes normalised and dominating rhythms more obvious (2005). Alhadeff-Jones (2019, 173) highlights that in the individual, arrhythmia and rhythmic dissonance can materialise as a form of "double belonging or schizochrony". I highlight this example because it speaks to the concept of border-dwelling (multiplicity of belonging). If arrhythmic conditions are left unresolved, they can superimpose themselves, causing "disorientation, confusion or even helplessness" which Alhadeff-Jones maintains can impact academic pursuits (174).

## The role of the rhythmanalyst in the data analysis process

Subjectivity is the "kernel" of the rhythmanalytical methodological structure. However, Lefebvre argues against absolute relativism, stating that subjectivity should aim to reason. This position the rhythmanalyst as a subjective observer, whilst simultaneously advocating for grounded interpretation, which is not wholly reliant on belief. This balance between positivism and subjectivism is reflected in his description of the rhythmanalyst, "in short, he is not a mystic! Without going so far as to present himself as a positivist, for someone who observes: an empiricist" (Lefebvre 2004, 25). The notion of empiricism implies that the rhythmanalytical procedure is based on an interpretation able to metamorphosise the present into presence (Lefebvre 2004). This act implies one's ability to mobilise the present (what one grasps through the senses) into a complexity of a moving and intersecting whole. Lefebvre parallels the rhythmanalytical methodological process to art painting where a painter uses his subjective interpretation of various stimuli to interpret the world (Lefebvre 2004). The act of painting and the pictorial manifestation mobilises even the immobile into "moving complexity" (Lefebvre 2004a). From the onset of the project, I desired to bring my participants' stories to life by interlocking the past and the present and allowing their voices to be heard more than my own

interpretation. Through *autohistoria*, I was able to allow my participants to mobilise their own past accounts into their present realities. My role was to weave these accounts into a complex whole.

Lefebvre describes the human body as a "bundle of rhythms" and states that the rhythmanalyst "listens – and first to his body; he learns rhythm from it, in order, consequently, to appreciate external rhythms" (Lefebvre 2004 20-21). In rhythmanalysis as already alluded to in detail in previous sections, the body serves as a metronome, "not in abstract but in lived temporality". However, Lefebvre emphasises that one's own rhythms are only used as a reference and are useful in as much as they help us to grasp external rhythms. This points to the dual role that the body plays – both as the vehicle of perception, and as the subject to be perceived. The role of a researcher is not to impose perception and belief but keep critical distance between their own meanings and that of their participants. According to Sandoval (2000), researchers must continuously act and speak from within and without ideology and internalised assumptions. He reasons that they have to adopt a middle voice, or double consciousness. This is more than acknowledging one's positionality relative to their research, but has, inherent in it, transformational qualities. In this case, reflexivity is a conscious deployment of subjectivity to act from within ideology, and without ideology at the same time. Sandoval posits that the researcher, through deploying subjectivity, begins a "chiasmic loop of transformation," in that the deployed action recreates the agent in as much as the researcher creates the action (2000, 156).

I titled this chapter "the curation of a rhythmanalyst" because I progressively became aware of how, through my initial quest for methodology and subsequent exercises at performing rhythmanalysis, a transformation process has begun in me. The deployment of the middle voice is a research strategy and methodological tool that allows the researcher to be curated by the same ideological intervention she is making. Sandoval maintains that the only "predictable final outcome is transformation of self" (2000, 156). Before this process, I had vowed obsolete allegiance to critical oppositional modes of consciousness. However, the ideas of border-dwelling, balcony observation and middle voice consciousness broke down the dual reasoning of oppositional/counter politics. I am interested in liberatory theories that also deploy embodied approaches, and this project allowed me to step out of master narratives on what liberatory praxis means. I acknowledge that I would have not fully grasped the aesthetics of

rhythmanalysis if I had not encountered participants who, not only major in liberal arts, but also embody them.

## Rigour, validity, and trustworthiness

> *Lost again. Where was I? Where am I? Mud road. Stopped car. Time is rhythm: the insect rhythm of a warm humid night, brain ripple, breathing, the drum in my temple – these are our faithful timekeepers; and reason corrects the feverish beat. A patient of mine could make out the rhythm of flashes succeeding one another every three milliseconds (0.003!). On. What nudged, what comforted me, a few minutes ago at the stop of a thought? Yes. Maybe the only thing that hints at a sense of Time is rhythm; not the recurrent beats of a rhythm but the gap between two such beats, the gray gap between black beats: he Tender Interval. The regular throb itself merely brings back the miserable idea of measurement, but in between, something like true Time lurks. How can I extract it from its soft hollow? The rhythm should be neither too slow nor too fast. One beat per minute is already far beyond my sense of succession and five oscillations per second makes a hopeless blur. The ample rhythm causes Time to dissolve, the rapid one crowds it out. Give me, say, three seconds, then I can do both: perceive the rhythm and probe the interval. A hollow, did I say? A dim pit? But that is only Space, the comedy villain, returning by the back door with the pendulum he peddles, while I grope for the meaning of Time. What I endeavour to grasp is precisely the Time that Space helps me to measure, and no wonder I fail to grasp Time, since knowledge-gaining itself 'takes time' (Nabokov 1965, 572).*

Lefebvre describes rhythmanalysis as a 'new science,' and although he emphasises temporalities and centres the sensing body, this does not mean that rhythmanalysis is without rigour (Veuren 2012). Although rigour is obsolete and generalisable in positivist sciences, rhythmanalysis measures rigour on a relative scale. In the above quotation, Nabokov introduces

the concept of measurement in our perception of rhythm. The author also highlights the complexity of paying "attention to the paradoxical relations between time and space which emerge when we try to separate them, the role that scale – physical and temporal – plays in our perception of rhythm, and the concept of measurement, which clashes with and upsets the direct, intimate experience of measure" (Veuren 2012). Rigour is achieved through the process of measure, which is conceptualised by Lefebvre as an inherent quality of rhythmic analysis. According to Lefebvre, "the preferences [of work and rest] measure themselves; the measure (notion and practice) passes through a frequency. Precise techniques enable us to measure frequencies" (2004, 10). However, Lefebvre avoids being prescriptive, arguing that rhythms are not rigid, static, or abstract:

> *We know that a rhythm is slow or lively only in relation to other rhythms (often our own: those of our walking, our breathing, our heart). This is the case even though each rhythm has its own and specific measure: speed, frequency, consistency. Spontaneously, each of us has our preferences, references, frequencies; each must appreciate rhythms by referring them to oneself, one's heart or breathing, but also to one's hours of work, of rest, of waking and of sleep (2004, 10).*

The three levels of analysis were not dogmatic but were, at all levels of analysis, guided by the insights drawn from participants' stories. Although my participants' narratives remained my instruments of measure, they did not remain static, atemporal and rigid. They, however, offered a relatively systematic procedure for identifying and conceptualising moments that formed the rhythmic ensemble within *conocimiento*. Fereday asserts that rigour can be arrived at by having a grounded scientific study methodology and protocol, appropriate analysis of the data and documentation of findings (2006). Rhythmanalysis offered the vocabulary to help explore my findings and as an embodied and situated approach allowed, at all levels of analysis, for interpretation to be rooted in data.

Koch (1994) reasons that interpretive research relies on the availability of evidence throughout the research process for credibility and trustworthiness. In this study, I documented my research processes and my own transformation processes through memo writing, where I detailed the difficulties of my metamorphosis into a rhythmanalyst. At all stages, data were deductively coded in accordance with the methodological structure and theoretical framework. Data was uploaded on to NVivo and sorted according to matching codes. NVivo made the clustering and categorisation of data more efficient, and also allowed for constant comparison

throughout the analysis process. I acknowledge that one can arrive at other rich conclusions from the presented data but using my body as a metronome and consciously deploying subjectivity, I present my findings transparently to allow for the reader to gauge the credibility, reliability, and trustworthiness of the proffered analysis.

## Conclusion

All throughout this process, I have experienced myself face to face with *Tsikamutanda*, so much so that it was difficult to call this section a conclusion because it marks the end of a face off and the beginning of belonging. I will have to define this section with an ellipsis (…) as a continuation symbol marking the fluidity of becoming. Curation is always an unfinished business with a utopic arrival point. Becoming a rhythmanalyst had a symbiotic relationship with deploying my theoretical framework. Both are situated and embodied approaches that are inherently critical of normative master narratives; but most importantly whilst *conocimiento* is a theory of moments, rhythmanalysis is a methodological analysis of moments. This relationship between my method and theory helped me to explore the rhythmic ensembles in the everyday lives and experiences of doctoral candidates and deconstruct how they are ordered to facilitate and reproduce spatial practices.

# Lived space

Spaces of representation, or 'lived space', is the third element in Lefebvre's spatial triad. It is space "as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users'" (Lefebvre 1991, 39, original emphasis). Lived space overlays physical and mental spaces as it is the enactment of everyday experiences. In keeping with Lefebvre, this element of the spatial triad retains prominence because it is the subjective manifestation of any spatial event. It is within lived experiences that polyrhythmia, arrhythmia and eurhythmia achieve their distinctive individuation, diversity, and partiality. However, the prominence and distinctiveness of spaces of representation is achieved in "conjunction with, while not being completely constrained by, the structures" of perceived and conceived space that have "developed to provide the necessary cohesion and competence for successful social interaction" (Watkins 2005, 213). According to Gordon, spaces of representation can be defined as "directional, situational, relational, elusive and fluid, dynamic and essentially qualitative" (2015, 41). Lefebvre described lived space as embracing "the loci of passion of action and of lived situation" (1991, 42), "the partial unknowability, the mystery and secretiveness, the non-verbal subliminality" (1993, 523). Whilst conceived space is concerned with *savour* (knowledge) and epistemology, lived space is concerned with ontological representations. Soja states that lived spaces are socio-political constructs and, "spaces of resistance to the dominant order arising precisely from their subordinate, peripheral, or marginalized positioning" (1996, 68).

The following chapters are an exploration of the experiential aspect of doctoral space. As highlighted in the context chapter, the racialisation and gendering of space created a dualistic conception of space and society in the South African higher education system. Furthermore, the structuring of the university as an ivory tower set apart from society, and the PhD as the ivory tower within the university, further fragments the identity of the university. The university becomes a borderland where differential societal and intellectual cultures meet and, it is in this context, that my participants' experiences and intellectual identities are shaped. Whilst the intellectual identity formation of doctoral students has widely been researched through the normative disciplinary liminal thresholds, this study reveals that identity formation is a continuous act of definition and redefinition through time and space. Intellectual identity formation cannot be reduced to the linear moments within the PhD or to abstract space, but

rather identity formation occurs in the intersectional contexts of perceived, conceived and lived space. Within this triradial context, participants experience academic identity formation as liminal stages/moments of transcendence and/or transformation.

The theoretical spaces offered by borderlands –*conocimiento* cannot be reduced to a single analysis. Instead, they offer a multifaceted exploration of spatial dynamics, systematic racism, marginalisation, sexism, homophobia, and the policies that safeguard the continuation of multiple forms of oppression. Within this space, especially for marginalised subjects, identity formation is a complex and cyclical process with multiple moments of encounters with power, ideology, liminality, and ambiguities. The doctorate is predominantly perceived as the first step of academic identity development for candidates. However, in the following chapters, I argue that students enter the doctoral space with varied assumptions about their intellectual identity, in which the doctoral process acts as a sieve, enabling them to deconstruct and reconstruct their intellectual identities. This process predates and outlives the doctorate; hence, the insistence on making the PhD the ivory tower of academic space and intellectual identity formation negates the fluidity of both space and identity. Like the university itself, the doctoral space is "the overlapping space between different perceptions and belief systems" (Anzaldúa 2002, 541). Hence, for any meaningful conversation around the transformation of the abstract/cognitive and lived spaces of doctoral processes, a multi-pronged approach that mirrors the multiplicity of being needs to be adopted.

# Chapter 5: EL Arrebato

## Introduction

This chapter examines the experiences of participants that can be framed as moments of arrhythmia- that cause dissonance in their everyday lives. I explore how these moments, in their different spatial ordering, unravel student's reality and open new pathways of self-actualisation and identity exploration. Although moments of crisis, ruptures and fragmentation are assemblages of arrhythmia, they constitute both a breaking down in the subject's natural rhythms and reveal new pathways and possibilities of transformation. I argue that such experiences during the doctoral process inaugurate the stages of *conocimiento, as a* cyclical process of academic identity deconstruction and reconstruction. *El arrebato* is a form of awakening and reckoning, an "unexpected disconnection with multiple possible sources… it is a catalyst, a deeply emotional and spiritual moment of dissonance and disconnection from one's established worldview and one's established self-view" (Bobel et al. 2006, 335). An *arrebato* can be a "violent attack, a rift with a loved one, illness, death in the family, betrayal, systemic racism and marginalization" … such moments/experiences rip you from your "familiar home casting [one] out of [one's] personal Eden" (Anzaldúa 2002, 546).

In this study, I found that moments of *arrebato* that impact academic identity formation do not always occur as accidental temporalities but as repetitious occurrences (repetition here does not mean sameness). As Lefebvre postulates, although rhythmic repetitions are cyclical, they are never the same. For example, confrontation with racism is continuous for marginalised subjects but its experiential manifestation is different at every confrontation. Participants narrate how their lived experiences, from as early as primary education are a continuous negotiation of oppressive intellectual culture and have a profound impact on how academic identity is developed during the doctoral journey. Two of my participants, Mzo and Khoza, relate how their academic choices have been shaped by their first encounter with alternative literature from the African Diaspora as opposed to their prescribed high school readings. These epistemic encounters, for both participants, ruptured their taken for granted worldviews and were catalysts for self-exploration. In Anzaldúa's words (2002, 99), an *arrebato* experience cracks "our perception of the world, how we relate to it, how we engage with it". I explore how

these shocks ripple through the lives of participants, breaking down linear conceptions of Self and space.

My participants' arrhythmic moments varied across the spatial triad. Whilst some ruptures were associated with mundane activities, such as finding one's way to a designated residence, other ruptures were more complex, revealing how lived space overlays physical and mental spaces. For example, Tsepo narrates how collecting keys for his accommodation lead to discussions about systematic racism and White privilege:

> *I think it was two occasions I was sent by the group to collect the keys of the entire group from the security office, when I got there, I was asked for my ID and I showed then my Student ID, but they still requested a [National] ID and I provided all of that. This experience was a bit problematic to me because prior to that day, one of my White classmates had been to collect the keys together for the group and no IDs were requested from him. I told my classmate that, "you won't believe it, these people asked me for the ID probably because they didn't trust giving the keys to me and I asked him to please observe that when [he] collected keys, whether they asked for [his] ID or not." When he arrived, as I expected, they did not ask for his ID so that's a nasty experience. They also asked if they could keep my friend's bags whilst he organise[d] accommodation, but I was never offered that service. It was uncomfortable in the sense that if you are in a public institution one would expect to be treated equally regardless of your gender, race, ethnicity, or whatever differences. In this case, this didn't happen. Obviously certain types of people are preferred based on how they look who they are. I didn't feel like I was welcome because of those attitudes which I [encountered]. So, although I did not experience that in the doctoral programme, the programme is part of the institution and I did not feel at home [at the institution].*

Tsepo's experience reveals how narratives that juxtapose Whiteness as trustworthy to Blackness as suspicious materialise. Although Tsepo showed the security guards his student card, he was still asked for his National ID. Although this could be standard practice, his White colleague was not required to prove his belonging. To add to that complexity, Tsepo's White colleague was given preferential treatment as the residence wardens offered to hold his bags. Tsepo, however, was treated with suspicion and asked to prove his belonging. This experience speaks to questions of Black body ontology in academic spaces. Tsepo experiences ontological displacement as his place in the academic home in this encounter is questioned. As will be discussed in this chapter, such crises are not happenstance occurrences. As revealed in Tsepo's narrative, moments of crisis rupture the mundane and create dissonance in the everyday. The

built environment as highlighted by Tsepo extends into and impacts abstract space. In his narrative he reveals the fictitiousness of neutrality of perceived space. The physical space of the doctoral studies goes beyond departmental buildings and is intertwined with the university and the surrounding community. Surrounding spatial realities impact the doctoral student's lived space. As will be discussed in following chapters, participants continually link issues of systematic and institutional prejudices that manifest as moments of crisis and dissonance in the lived experiences of marginalised bodies within the doctoral space. This chapter explores how arrhythmic moments within doctoral borderlands are experienced as catalytic and liminal moments of academic identity formation.

## Crisis

> *I am a musician; I want to play music and I think probably most of this interview that is what you [are] going to get out of me as an artist. I feel that the way the PhD is designed, it's not for us, or it's not accommodative to indigenous knowledge rather. It's like there is this umbilical cord, this knowledge – things that you are born with, you know? Things that come naturally, which is as a form of information and as an artist. Most of the time we carry that because I find myself, especially in my music playing in a way that logically probably something that I never thought of, you know? And most of the things are innovative. I'm coming in as a someone who is allowing the music to carry me or to take me to where I've never been which is not written down but the biggest frustration that I found with the PhD structure is with this kind of work – we call it a European kind of learning, a European kind of looking at information is that it must be analysed, it must be written, first it must be improved in writing. But what I'm doing is authentic, so to me basically that is where the biggest frustration has been – that the way knowledge is conceptualised at this PhD level, it is not fair to us especially for us artists, it's not fair. Instead of me sitting down and perfecting the craft I'm working on, I find myself frustrated with the books that I have to read of so and so has done this and that. By the time I have to play the instrument, it's like oh man, it becomes a burden, and, in the process, I find I'm losing myself and my identity, I find I'm losing myself (Sikho).*

The university in Africa has been argued to be a Westernised, privileging Cartesian philosophy and Western structures of knowledge that are detached from the geo and body location of students. Grosfoguel asserts that the role of academics within the Westernised university is consequently reduced to learning the theories drawn from the lived experiences and problems of a particular region of the world, "with its own particular time/space dimensions and applying

them to other geographical locations, even if the experience and time/space of the former are quite different from the latter" (2013, 75). This disjuncture is mirrored in Sikho's experience. He directly relates the disillusionment with his doctoral studies to the disjuncture between his experiential reality and the theoretical and doctoral structure of his PhD. He experiences estrangement from his doctoral studies. In commenting that, "I feel it's not for us", Tsepo recognises the connection between epistemological structures and belonging.

There is also a contestation between the two identities he embodies – a knower and an apprentice. This contestation is further complicated by the imposed onto-epistemological structures. These two positionalities cause a double bind for Sikho, to become a valid and recognised knower, he must be able to meet the thresholds of apprenticeship, these thresholds entail assimilation into dominant and specialised onto-epistemologies. Within universities, specialised knowledge is regarded as powerful knowledge with the ability to theorise and understand the world better than other forms of knowing (Rudolph, Sriprakash, and Gerrard 2018). In this case, Sikho's ways of knowledge production and conceptualisation of knowledge are seen as peripheral and subordinate. The validity of both his role as a knower and as an apprentice is premised by pre-existing intellectual categories which are arguably monolithic. As narrated by Sikho, such monolithic intellectual thresholds leave no room for self-styling and self-actualisation for the apprentice.

Sikho expresses how his Master's thesis had a combination of performative and theoretical components and this was the expectation he had for his PhD. Sikho's expectation is thus not an attempt to do away with one system for another, but for the creation of border epistemologies where alternative ways of being are accommodated. Disciplinary structures that do not offer possibilities of negotiation and alternatives consequently conceptualise identity as a fixed category without considering identities are always "transitioning and changing" (Zaytoun 2005, 152). The inability to accommodate alternatives is thus not a once off experience for marginalised bodies and epistemologies but cyclical whenever the two cultures – dominated and dominant collide. Kaunda's narratives also echo similar sentiments:

> *When I presented my proposal, I was told what I am doing wasn't philosophy, in fact, they asked, "why isn't [your] work in Philosophy of Education? So, you have to go to Education Faculty or Politics Department." Even my supervisor asked [about this] because I had drafted the proposal myself. He asked me if I really wanted to continue with philosophy and [whether or not I wanted] to the other departments and so forth, and I said to him, "no I want to*

*be here, I want to do philosophy." This is what I wanted to be my work… I have always been struggling with the space of education, and educational theory. as well as policy. So, for instance, I was working with Department of Education, teaching and advising on policy. I always struggled with that space of being at the intersection point within theory and practice, now being in a purely theoretical discipline, it is really frustrating because I think I only do my best work when my theory is supplemented by social experiments, if I can call [them] that, which of course create the data, the data which [I] will then work with to create theory. So being in a purely theoretical discipline has been really difficult for me and to the extent that I'm now beginning to look down on Philosophy. I'm beginning to dislike the discipline because I ask myself a very critical question of saying the stuff what we are doing… what is that going to do for us? Or how [can] my research be [integrated] in society? And that's what drives me in terms of being in higher education… being in higher education for me means dealing of working with theory that will change the social reality of everyday South Africa that's the stuff that I need because that's the stuff that keeps me going and I was telling one of my colleagues… I so hunger for this thing of necessary conditions or the possibility of [the] education system to create necessary conditions or [a] possibility for me to complete my studies without sitting idly and purely theorising. I can't be purely theorising that's impossible, I can't do that.*

Zaytoun (2005) poses the question, what would development look like if theorising began with attention to diversity and an acknowledgment of cross-cultural epistemologies? This question in connection with both Sikho and Kaunda's expectations coming into their PhD's negates the accusations of reverse discrimination and reverse epestimicide. The "hunger" that Kaunda feels, is not the exclusion of the other but to be onto-epistemologically validated. This hunger would be mitigated If theorising begins with an acknowledgment of plurality of being and knowing.  Anzaldúa advocates for an embodied theory of pluralist totality and cohesion which does not sacrifice differentiation of lived experiences. Western philosophical approaches foreclosure on alternatives is at most sustained by the fragmentation of the objective and subjective "the mechanical, the objective, the industrial, [and] the scientific" (Anzaldúa 2000, 163). Dichotomy is used as a tool to police thinking and knowing. Anzaldúa maintains that:

*Western philosophers created an illusionary appearance of unity and stability by reducing the flux and heterogeneity of the human and physical worlds into binary and supposedly natural oppositions. Order is imposed and maintained by displacing chaos into the lesser of each binary pair (Anzaldúa 2000, 139).*

What Anzaldúa raises here, and the crises that Sikho and Kandau face- dressage within academia. Within academia, eurhythmia is maintained within the polyrhythmic ensembles through disciplinary entrainment– spatial disciplinary practices. Disciplinary practices posit western and objective knowledge as academic and intellectual whilst alternatives are defined as complimentary experiential knowledge. Most disciplinary practices "force us to divide, detach, or disengage" from our lived realities to fit in to grand narratives (Torres 2005, 198). Anzaldúa (1987) and González-López (2011) argue that the experiences of being marginalised within doctorate cultures reveal how such moments of crisis are a recurring phenomenon that marginalised subjects experience as they traverse academic spaces. In describing these crises, Anzaldúa uses the metaphor of an earthquake, a seismic event that "jerks you from the familiar and safe terrain" (2002, 544). The earthquake breaks the bridges that connect us to grand narratives and dualistic categories, "fracturing" reality and "disaligning" meaning (Anzaldúa 2009, 140). Fracturing symbolizes how various crisis led to a breakdown of eurhythmia as the individual comes into awareness of dressage in their everyday lives within and without academia.

The suspicion that Sikho and Kandau have of closed epistemological structures, are theorised by Anzaldúa as "the work of the *mestiza* consciousness" breaking down "the subject-object duality that keeps" marginalised bodies prisoner (1987, 101-102). The act of crossing: shifting, moving, surrendering safety, and sustaining contradictions, in the case of Sikho and Kandau, is a deliberate attempt to escape totalising philosophies and rigid epistemological structures embedded in dominant discourse and social structures. Both participants are conscious of the violence of totalising epistemologies that offer no alternative or room for negotiation. Their argument is not for exclusionary epistemologies but inclusion, thereby reframing the well-established dichotomy of us versus them. In their crises, the participants adopt a border culture, occupying a middle space arguing for ethical conversations between those that have been firmly situated on opposite sides of the border.

As reflected in Sikho and Kandau's comments, an epistemological crisis within the PhD becomes a crisis of identity, rupturing one's conceptions of academia, Self and others. Sikho links the experience of his PhD to that of his first year in university. As Sikho told his story, drawing on his past experiences, his narrative revealed the fluidity of identity and the continuous violent crossings that are experienced by racialised and marginalised bodies:

*When I arrived, I was used to names like Mabuza, that are familiar. So I get here and boom the new names, I have to read the new names boom, boom, new music I was not familiar with. So, I was like, well, there is this kind of music, oh man, new names, new music, everything is new, new history you know, new kind of playlist. It's no longer what has pushed me to go to the university, but because I was [a] serious student, whatever I was doing, whatever I was given to do I was doing, like what I am doing for my PhD and to say now I must read this. I must do this. I'm going to do it and pass. You know what I mean? Just doing, it was, and is like that, it was safe like that. Everything was new, everything was foreign (Sikho).*

Saldívar describes the borderlands space as the intersection of "everyday culture and high culture, and between people with culture and people between culture" and locates marginalised bodies "within a zone of dangerous crossings" (Méndez 2018, 1). To Koshy (2006), the classroom represents such a transnational and cross-cultural space where cultural stereotypes and prejudices make them violent crossings for those belonging to marginalised cultures. Sikho's descriptions of new music, new names, new history which were foreign to him in relation to this on-going confrontation in the doctoral space is a continuous act of crossing he does at every stage of his education. In turn, the cyclical experiences of oppression continuously fragment his identity. In his narrative, there is an overlap of rupture, displacement, and the *Coatlicue* state. He is conscious of the epistemic violence he is experiencing, how it displaces him as a curator of knowledge and as an artist, yet he feels entrapped by disciplinary norms that determine his failure or success as a scholar. Sikho's crossings are marked by two contradictory movements of recognising and tolerating ambiguity. On one hand he recognises the dominance of foreign epistemologies as a colonial encroachment on his being yet there is also a safety in "just doing" so as to excel in academia. Thus, the marginalised adopt a dualistic identity, *la facultad*, as both a "dormant sixth sense and a survival tactic" (Anzaldúa 1987, 38-39). Just doing in this case becomes a survival tactic for onto-epistemologically marginalised doctoral students. Duality of being becomes an existential need for them to be able to cross doctoral thresholds.

Keeping with the fluidity of academic identity across time, Khoza states:

*So, I went to Parktown when I was 9 years [old]. I didn't know how to speak English. It's not that I struggled in school, I was  highly [intelligent] but I struggled with language. I thought I would fail because I struggled with composition. [Be]cause I could read very well in SeSotho and read English*

*and understand what I'm reading but articulating it on somebody else's terms... I think even now, in my PhD, I haven't learnt how to do that. I think even today, I have that way of voicing out that which is my intellect, I have to be in a space where I feel like I know what I'm talking about or I'm more comfortable to have any conversation through poetry and creative writing in multiple languages.*

Anzaldúa insists that, contrary to being a place of pluriversity and un-antagonistic dialogue, the "university has usurped [the] power to name" and theorise (Neile 2005, 18). Academic disciplines are argued by Wiederhold (2005), to operate as institutional categories designating safe and unsafe spaces, proper and improper ways of being. She maintains that one is constantly torn between allegiance to, and alienation from, academic identity categories. In Khoza's narratives, academic language, not only the dictum of English, but as he continually emphasised throughout our interview, the idea of languaging in academia where language is used as a tool to mask subjectivity. According to Vásquez (2005), human language is an ontological site filled with symbols and ability of subject making. As Boundy puts it, "language is a struggle. Words contain so much magic – are magic-shaping, and shifting reality and possibility with every breadth and every stroke of pen" (Boundy quoted in Neile 2005, 19). Keating reasons that material, abstract and lived space are impacted by language and that "language, belief, perception, and action are all intimately interrelated...the words we use shape what we perceive, which in turn shapes how we act" (2002, 523). Drawing from Boundy and Keating, one can read Khoza's narrative as an articulation of how language has been implicated in shaping his identity, from his formative years to his PhD. Khoza's emphasis on languaging instead of language *per se*, highlights that the aim of addressing language in academia is not merely about replacing one dictum with another but an acknowledgment of the fact that language carries symbols, representations and metaphors that legitimize or delegitimize peoples and knowledge systems. Harjo (1996, 99) echoes these sentiments arguing that "language is culture, a resonant life form itself that acts on the people and the people on it. The worldview, values, relationships of all kinds – everything, in fact is addressed in and through a language". In her own work, Anzaldúa (1987) engages in what she calls "code switching", moving between Spanish and English as a way of transcending imposed ontological categories. In higher education, transformation discourse conversations about the language issue/crisis are, at most driven, by totalising discourses of us versus them, proper and improper ways of being emancipated. However, in the academic space, which is multi-cultural and multi-lingual, language as a signifier of identity becomes more elusive. The challenge that marginalised

students face is not the presence and use of English, but its monopoly of all spatial representations and onto-epistemologies. It becomes a foreclosure to other forms of knowing contained in the representations and symbols of other languages and in this way language becomes a point of identity contestation and crisis.

## Rupture

A crisis is like a linchpin which is pulled and ruptures one's reality. The crisis that doctoral students face, as highlighted above, exposes imposed, inherited, and cultivated myths about Self, others, space, and institutional structures. Rupture signals the shifting of identities as one moves through time and between worlds. Rupture is an unstable space and "a deeply emotional and spiritual moment of dissonance... from one's established worldview and one's established self-view" (Bobel et al. 2006, 335). In my participants' narratives, I found that ruptures almost always created a third perceptive, a differential way of looking at the world. Arrhythmic moments are thus an integral element of the path to *conocimiento* because they reveal the cracks in that which is taken for granted and naturalised. However, these experiences are not always conscious experiences and do not translate to a utopic identity re-definition. Anzaldúa challenges us to put history of Self, culture, nation-states, and knowledge through a sieve, in order to consciously "rupture with all oppressive traditions of all cultures and religions" (2012: 104). Using *autohistoria*, participants sifted through and confronted the socio-historical conjunctures that shaped their identities and continuously impact their academic identities. As marginalised bodies, our histories contain oppressive narratives which originate from cultural and colonial imaginations, becoming so intimately close that we appropriate them into Self and normalise their origination and continuation. Speaking on the point of Western/White domination of the Black body, Verhage argues that, Western imaginaries replaced the embodied experiences of marginalised subjects "with an epidermal racial schema which is a permanent a-historical essence of [Bl]ackness" in this schema Blackness is devalued and inferiorised "because the meaning of the world has already been determined in accordance with the [W]hite gaze" (2014, 114). The Black man's body "is forced to swallow a new corporeal schema that becomes so intimately his own that it ruptures and destroys the original possibilities of his lived-body" (2014, 114). The various personal, epistemic, and spatial crises that participants highlight, framed in the abovementioned contextual realities, open up a space for critique, new pathways and of relinquishing of safety for multiplicity.

Anesu, narrates her experience of rupture as an immigrant doctoral student, who had never questioned her identity as a Black body until she came for her studies in South Africa. Her experience ruptured her ideas of Self from her localised and situated ideas to the new foreign context she now found herself:

> *Number one, Zambians we find out we are Black when we get to South Africa. Nobody has ever pointed out to you that you are Black when you are young in Zambia, but you're like, "okay," it seems very obvious if someone comes here and says, "oh you are a Black woman!" Like, when you arrive that first week you are like, "I know." You know? Like, it's not something you have to generally be very cautious about in Zambia, whereas in South Africa, it's something that's very in your face everywhere you go, there is always this thing that you [are] Black, you [are] Black, you [are] Black! Always, like, I won't even lie, when I got here, I had always been feeling overwhelmed about how everything dots down to race. Like gender, I could get, because even in Zambia right now or at least in the past decade, there has been this whole conversation on gender equality, empowering women, and things like this, so I could generally understand the idea of gender and trying to push forward trying to uplift women. The race one…it overwhelmed me, so I'm getting used to it now. It really does take you by surprise, even though my friend had told me, "friend," he said it as a joke, "like, ah my nigga when you go to South Africa, you are going to be Black". I was like, "what's he talking about?" and when l got here well, I was Black, when l got here, I thought, "like this is what he meant" (Anesu)*

Although Anesu experiences this unanticipated setback as an imposition of racial categorisation, it also alerts her to her global positioning in the world. Having left her home country for the first time, and then making several international trips during her studies, she becomes more aware of her otherness and how within the global colonial imaginary, her ontology is objectified and fractured. Like Fanon, in her confrontation with Whiteness, she raises the question, "what else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a haemorrhage that spattered my whole body with [B]lack blood?" and like Fanon she laments "but I did not want this revision, this thematization. My body was given back to me sprawled out, distorted, recolored, clad in mourning in that white winter day" (Fanon 1976, 112). Anesu states that in responding to racial conversations, she said, "I am Black. I know that you don't have to let me know", however, with time, she became cognisant of the subjectivity imposed by the racial category through apartheid/coloniality and modern racially oppressive structures. Anesu's identity ruptures under the weight of the objectifying colonial/White gaze. Whilst she acknowledged herself as a gendered body prior to coming to South Africa, she had to confront

a new layer to her identity, her Blackness. The experience of Anesu echoes Lefebvre's argument that material space is not neutral and an empty canvass waiting to be acted upon, but rather, it impacts on one's identity and lived experiences. In crossing physical boundaries, Anesu also crosses boundaries in abstract space. She crosses into a space whose physical and cognitive contours impose on her a new and foreign classification but also a new awareness of oppression as a planetary issue and the Self, her inner life fractured by oppression. Anzaldúa argues that whilst oppression occupies all spatial realities of the individual, it is also an intimate process which fractures the marginalised subject in the "inner life of her Self" (Anzaldúa 2012, 42).

Speaking on the point of crossing physical boundaries as a rupture of the cognitive, Sikho draws on his experience as a Master's student visiting USA and how this experience has shaped his identity as an academic and an artist.

> *When I went to USA that time, I was undermining any traditional music, I was like all the other guys that despise traditional music and feel that Western music is the music. So, I was not exempted from that kind of thinking because I also felt like, okay, proper music is Western and our thing is the backwards, it's behind… When I left here, I was so much into American jazz. The problems started when I arrived in the USA, they told me that the music I play is theirs and they asked me if I do not have anything that is original, anything that is my own. I was very confused because I thought this music was universal, but I was in New York and when I went to the mall, even just ordinary people played this music far better than they do in South Africa you know, and these were people busking on the road and under the bridge asking for money. To them, the music was a lifestyle, a culture, an identity, which does not exist in South Africa. We got our own culture which we are not growing. So, they asked me, "don't you have anything from your own country." So who am I to learn their culture while not living among them. So then I realised, no man, something is wrong, you know? I'm going to go back to what I have been looking down on, and come down to earth to our indigenous music. And now, mind you, I have to learn new music and unlearn, this is four years in varsity, four years playing American music right and by the time I came back to wanting to play my own music the American music is in my blood now, you know? I have to learn and get rid of this thing and the biggest part was that I couldn't get much of it in the music records because much of our music during the apartheid…basically these people [White] are smart because they burned our history. So that we can't have references, we can't go back. They created a new world for us, and they burned all the history, you know, which was our source, which is our real sources you know basically burned our sources burn our identity you know to such an extent that if I want to go back now, I can't find any sort of a foundation for me to build my music and they say its South African music (Sikho).*

Sikho's experience ruptures him from all notions of universalism. In crossing borders, he realises he is not only a stranger in a foreign land but also a stranger to his own lived realities. Universalism propagates that our bodies and encounters operate on polyrhythmic ensembles of reciprocity being mutually exclusive. Implied in this understanding of the world, is that we "mutually embrace each other, that we sculpt the other's body while we are sculpted by it, we encroach upon the other while being encroached upon, and we bite and swallow the other while being bitten by it" (Verhage 2014, 117).

It is this mutuality that Sikho had assumed, or rather, was being entrained to assume, during his undergraduate years. However, this perspective fails to recognise that other knowledges, bodies, and ontologies cannot engage in an ethical conversation and interaction because they have been silenced and suppressed. The marginalised bodies become more permeable, easily, and continuously being encroached upon, devoured, and occupied. Through *arrebato,* one comes to realise that what is familiar and what one calls 'home' is not safe and never was. Onto-epistemological familiarity gives us a sense of intellectual belonging – the disciplines we conform to also become our intellectual homes. We develop and pre-form our identities according to culture with our community of practice and much of our being is interwoven with the disciplinary traditions and spatial practices. In Sikho's case, his artistic and scholarly identities were developed by the dominant onto-epistemologies within his discipline. His being was so conformed to disciplinary mythologies, that he had, without question, seen them as an extension of Self.

Intellectual points of crisis which shake the ontological foundation of our intellectual identities thrust us into the phase of *arrebato* (Keating 2005). As Sikho's experience highlights, his undergraduate years became years of advance of Western occupation and encroachment on his academic identity until his identity became appropriated and fixed in Western onto-epistemologies. Hooks illustrates advancement by Western culture well. She maintains that dominant bodies engage in selective appropriation of the Other's fashions, foods and engage in intimate encounters with her to "add some spice" to one's experiences without compromising cultural identity (hooks 1999, 184). Based on hooks, the "exotic other" is unable to exercise the same level of selective appropriation, she is unable to "bite back" (10). The marginalised body, in wearing the clothes of the dominator, eating their food, and having intimate relations does not simply appropriate parts of the dominate subjects' body but surrenders their lived realities to be occupied by the dominator. According to Verhage,

> *The exotic other needs to wear these clothes in order to get a job, she needs to be able to cook and/or eat this food in order to be an appropriate hostess and/or guest, and she still needs to be able to cook what is conceived as her food in order to maintain her so-called cultural authenticity because the Other must assume recognizable forms (2014, 115; see also Hooks, 1999: 183).*

So, the body of the oppressed becomes displaced from her/his lived realities and from Self. The questions posed to Sikho whilst in the USA made him aware that his Self had been invaded and that he was occupied by 'Whiteness' in his musical and academic identities. He also realised that to fit into university, he had to abandon his authenticity for Western onto-epistemologies. However, now that he crosses the border into their physical world, they in turn, demand from him his authenticity, his exoticness. Banerjee states that the strive for authenticity is always elusive and to the border-dweller it never refers to "the authenticity of culture or language, but that of experience" (119). As will be discussed in following chapters, Sikho's doctoral journey and academic career was a response to this violent rupture which made him begin to redefine his identity, sifting away imposed identities and categories.

The rupture with coloniality of being was similarly discussed by Mzo, as he narrated that his epistemic rupture was experienced in his high school years. The setting of Mzo's narrative is particularly important. He invited me to his house where he and his artistic friends were listening to, and critiquing jazz music. As I sat in the room, I listened to the group of artists intertwine piano and drum rhythms with experiences of place. According to one of Mzo's friends,

> *the instrument becomes secondary; it was more about articulating the inner voices. It is an agent of articulating that which one is experiencing his socio-political landscape. Every beat becomes an invocation of lived experiences and I find it disturbing that universities have traded in these archives for Western archives… engaging in Western archives for Black scholars is a disturbance of their archives (Memo).*

I then asked Mzo when he had experienced such a disturbance during his doctoral journey and instead, he narrated his high school experience as the first conscious moment of rupture he had. This rupture was a catalytic moment for the development of his intellectual identity:

*This is now when I have started reading in high school. I joined the library and as I read novels from Western countries, I began to wonder who is doing this in Africa? These are nice stories, some would say choose your own adventure whatever. I started questioning how come there are no episodes, there are no scenarios that bring in indigenous knowledge systems and African history? Like now I can argue, and question why is it that this popular discourse is exclusive of me, but back then I just wanted adventure stories that had my history. So, then I started reading books like Sunset at Noon which was a story based in Lesotho and SA, although I haven't read it in a while, I remember it very vividly. It was nice to imagine when they talk about the cactus and I'm imagining a place like my village. But I could imagine myself, I could imagine my home in the literature I was reading, even though the story was about Lesotho and Joburg, which at the time being a place I had never been to but because experiences were similar, I could imagine myself. So, from there, I went looking for that kind of literature and I found The Return of the Amasi Bird. I loved that book so much, I actually stole it from the library and kept the book at home. Then I started reading short stories in magazines and Mutwa's writing eventually become the foundation of my intellectual upbringing and up till now he informs my perspective on all lot of indigenous knowledge , his work found the foundation of my understanding of mythology, religion, politics, history arts and like he contextualised a whole lot of things for me (Mzo).*

Like Sikho, Mzo experiences cultural and epistemic displacement within academia from primary school level up until the university postgraduate level. Displacement from the familiar results in various intrinsic complexities and nuances in identity formation for marginalised bodies. Maseko posits that South African education institutions suffer from the misrecognition of Black bodies which manifests as denial of the lived experiences and onto-epistemologies of Black subjects. Maseko holds that this denial filters into the "journey of epistemic and ontological becoming with implications for identity-formation" (Maseko 2018, 16). Black bodies within academia embody a multiplicity of epistemic identities which become fragmentary and displaced by institutionalised hegemonic ways of being. In Mzo's narrative, he recognised his displacement from popular and formal prescribed texts and in search for himself and his lived realities in alternative texts, he became suspicious of institutionalised knowledges. The agency exercised by Mzo as a young body counters the narratives that posit subjective docility of students and the idea of post-graduate education as the onset of intellectual identity. What Mzo was in search for was 'a knowledge of the flesh' – having his lived realities represented and validated, and this is what Sikho called "umbilical cord knowledge". The curriculum delineates what gets included and what is left out of the university space. It is the vehicle by which onto-epistemological tools are produced, reproduced, and disseminated into the bodies and cognition of students. Grosfoguel (2013) argues that colonial

structures of knowledge are the foundation of Westernized university onto-epistemologies. In this context, the curriculum imposes on students, Western modes of knowing and being as the only legitimate foundation of intellectual identity formation. Within this context, identity formation continues to be a contestation of imposed notions of Self and rupturing of imposed subjectivities.

## Fragmentation

> *I was working a nine to five job, then when I came to University, you know? Like you can go on campus at nine and come back at twelve especially at postgraduate level, if you want, you can go to campus at two pm, you know? It doesn't really have to be so structured. In that way, your brain now has to move to the way it works [on campus].Whereas before, because I'm working like for a year a half my brain has come used to this like at night I have to think like this at five it's time to switch off... Yah, so every time I went on campus at nine, my brain went back to that mode and I was supposed to be writing about art and making paintings but now my brain has gone back to the way I was thinking in Economics and when I come from campus and I go back home, brain will be like, "oh, now l am on artist mode." It is tired cause it has been struggling the whole day to try to do that (Anesu).*

Anesu, as a young, Black female artist, finds herself in a society that imposes the definitions of proper career, success, and accomplishment on her. She narrated how, in her choice of degree for her undergraduate studies, she had to choose a career that would ensure economic progress at the expense of her talent and desire of being an artist. According to Lefebvre (1991), in a capitalist society, linear forms of space and time, such as clocking in and clocking out, and ideas of progression are imposed and fictitious. Notions of self-actualisation and truth are obfuscated within a capitalistic society. In turn, as depicted in Anesu's narrative, one embodies a dualistic identity, fragmented firstly, by the linear understanding and use of time, secondly, by imposed spatial practices and lastly, by imposed notions of accomplishment. Anesu's socio-spatial practices during the one and half years she worked as an economist were ordered and referenced in clock time (Silva 2008). Her narrative reveals that space and time can be co-opted to regulate and synchronise the everyday lives of subjects. However, synchronisation is a form of dressage and in Anesu's case, it fragmented her identity. Her registration as a postgraduate student in Art is thus experienced as a rupture of imposed notions of accomplishment, space and time. Anesu continues to grapple with her dual identity synchronised in her conception of

time and space where "nine to five" and office space entails work, which she calls "objective work" and from five pm and home space means being artistic and "subjective work". Her narrative highlights the interplay between linear and cyclical rhythms in identity formation and also the impact of socio-political contexts on identity performance.

Anzaldúa uses the *Coyolxauhqui* metaphor to conceptualise the violence of imposed binaries and despotic dualism. *Coyolxauhqui* was an Aztec goddess dismembered, torn to pieces, and scattered across the earth, she is employed by Anzaldúa to explore the psychic and physical horrors that emanant from the fragmentation of space and mind-body-soul. The separation of identities that subjects must endure to survive and thrive in capitalistic, exclusionary and colonial spaces can be symbolised by *Coyolxauhqui*. The symbols of amputation, dismemberment, and the scattering of *Coyolxauhqui's body* parts to the four corners of the world captures how imposed onto-epistemologies and linear ways of being splits the identities of the subject and as Anesu's story reveals, scatters them in time and space. The clean separation of identities imposed by the modernity/colonial/capitalistic imaginary is impossible, as Lugones writes:

> *I realize that separation into clean, tidy things and beings is not possible for me because it would be the death of myself as multiplicitous and a death of community with my own. I understand my split or fragmented possibilities in horror. I understand then, that whenever I desire separation, I risk survival by confusing split separation with separation from domination, that is, separation among curdled beings who curdle away their fragmentation, their subordination. I can appreciate then, that the logic of split-separation and the logic of curdle-separation repel each other, that the curdled do not germinate in split-separation (2003, 134).*

Most of my participants showed an awareness of the difference between split separation and curdle separation. Split separation is imposed both by dominant/colonial and counter/resistance narratives. Split separation implies that one can, only in purity, embody absolute categories. However, I argue that acceptance of ambiguity is an existential need given the available classification of things in a schematised system. One has to find a way of being within the ivory tower yet speak from the margins and embody authentic experiences whilst curdling fragmentation. Hence, from this perspective the idea of romanticised identity purity is at once dismissed. One of my participants echoed the sentiments from Lugones, arguing that whilst clean compartmentalisation of identity is not possible, fragmentation is a reality when one crosses any kind of borders:

*My argument is that decoloniality does not only speak to an epistemological question of knowledge, but it also speaks to the ontological of the lived experience. So, when we argue for the curriculum to be changed even at PhD level, it's because it's alienated from the lived experience. Also, as a knowledge, we can't understand it because it draws from the global North not from the global South, so decoloniality comes into play with those two questions of epistemology and ontology. So particularly in research-based work that speaks to theory, the theory becomes the main process of producing knowledge, so when people say, "change your theory" sometimes it entails changing your study entirely and how you interpret the world because you interpret whatever knowledge using a particular theoretical lens. So, if in order to supervise you are requested to change your theory it also changes the knowledge you are going to create. And sometimes, supervisors do succeed in convincing students to study their theory. But I think what the 2015 and 2016 moment of student protest, and following that, the push towards decoloniality did was to challenge academics in their own work and it's not an easy thing, not an easy process, if one understands that academics have not been writing or researching certain theories…now as a doctoral student you come to them having already established what you want to do. This obviously they will be resistant but how they respond [to] this is very interesting because some respond positively… but others refuse, not because they [have] never written or read about a specific theory but [because] they don't want, or they disagree theoretically so you can call it a factionalism in academia. So, factionalism in academia creates bad scholarship because if you are Marxist you must go to this university, that's where [a] Marxist will supervise you, and if you are a Pan Africanist, you must go to these universities. So, for me, it created a very tense academic space, it's like political parties, which is very confusing for doctoral students. It's not supposed to be like that (Moses).*

In his narrative, Moses raises various aspects of fragmentation: his narrative speaks to physical and abstract spatial fragmentation of academia that impacts doctoral students' theoretical choices. Theory, as an integral part of the liminal thresholds in the doctoral process, impacts one's identity. In another part of the interview, Moses related how he had to move from one university to another trying to find someone who would supervise his topic with his chosen theory. The cognitive boundaries (academic factionalism) are formed in abstract space but manifest themselves in material space in terms of who gets access to a particular institution. According to Lugones, "geographies are determined by borders, territories, checkpoints, roads, fences, and highways. They are the natural and artificial physicality of the world superimposed with human meaning and signification" (Lugones 2003, 9). Like physical borders, cognitive boundaries delineate spaces where one can/cannot go and does/does not belong. In this case, cognitive boundaries fragment the lived experiences of doctoral students, not only because students' access to certain institutions is foreclosed, as in Moses' case, but also because theory as the medium of making knowledge becomes a contested space where students' identities are

imposed on. However, noteworthy is Moses' ability to acknowledge that his experiences of crisis, rupture and fragmentation are also experienced by senior academics. This locates him in an in-between space, himself suffering oppression but also ethically negotiating difficulties. To Anzaldúa (1987), even the dominators go through the various stages of *conocimiento*. She argues that the process is relational and requires the willingness for parties who have been firm on opposite sides of the border to engage in ethical dialogue about contradictions and ambiguities. Anzaldúa maintains that moments of fragmentation allow us to see the myths and fictitious narratives that have defined our realities. In Moses' case, he speaks of how his experience ruptured his ideas of what the progressive academic looks like and the academic institutions one is likely to find them in. In the beginning of his doctoral journey, he assumed that his supervisor would be Black and from one of the so-called progressive institutes but as he notes:

> *I think there [was] assumption in higher education after the context of 2015 and 2016. It has been rationalised that if you are a Black student you must work with Black academics: Black academics are progressive and White [academics] problematic. So, it created a very narrow categorisation, even initially for myself, which is not the case, because if you're saying that you are a Black student, the only person who can understand your experience is a Black progressive academic. For me that's wrong and it's not the only case. In my case, you find black academics are very problematic [and] will not even understand what they are trying to do or are not even progressive in terms of thinking and all of that. What we are saying about being located in the global South doesn't necessarily mean one is Black. It's the same thing in the South African context, being located in a university as a Black person doesn't necessarily mean you are progressive; and you are going to understand experiences of the students. With White academics, the assumption is that no White academic can understand when trying to deal with experiences of Black students. Those have been the two extreme categories that have been developed or imagined after 2015 and 2016 (Moses).*

At this historical juncture in South Africa, boundaries and categories of oppression and privilege are less rigid as they once were. Marginalised bodies have more access to resources and participation in higher education institutions and conversations of transformation must mirror that. However, as illustrated in Moses' narrative, assumptions of Whiteness and Blackness still pervade the debates around institutional and academic identity and transformation. As Lara (2005) reminds us, identities are intertwined, and it is important to use the categories of labels that mark out identities without locking ourselves into those

categories. In "*La Prieta*", although acknowledging her position as an 'other' Anzaldúa, also questions her own community. She asks, "[b]ut who exactly are my people? I identify as a woman. Whatever insults women insults me. I identify as gay. Whoever insults gays insults me. I identify as feminist. Whoever slurs feminism slurs me" (229).

As this statement implies, Anzaldúa views all oppressed and marginalized bodies as her people. She then poses a profound rhetorical question, "What about what I do not identify as?" (229). At this moment, Anzaldúa asks that if she identifies with these various identity categories, does this mean she excludes those who identify in different categories or in opposition to her identity? It becomes a moment of transcendence where she realises that in identification she is excluding. Like Anzaldúa, Moses realisation of the exclusionary and estranging nature of absolute categories is a profoundly radical stance especially when, in most cases, identity politics is accepted as part of progressive politics and transformation. Keating's description of Anzaldúa's academic identity is illustrative of border-dwellers who recognise the identity fragmentation imposed by despotic dualism, she states that:

> *At a time when, many progressive social-justice activists and theorists in the late 1970s and early 1980s, were banding together into identity-specific groups, Anzaldúa, was not. She rejected the demands for monolithic identities and exclusive, single-issue alliances and invented new forms of relational, inclusionary identities based on affinity rather than social categories (Keating, 2014, 2).*

Moses experiences a rupture with the myths that have been part of his identity, and systematic prejudices that shape dominant spatial practices that impact the lived experiences of doctoral students. From the perspective of oppositional politics, belonging entails exclusion and as highlighted by Anzaldúa (1987) this becomes an integral part to one's academic identity especially for the marginalised, where resistance and social justice is framed as exclusion. Moses' narrative reveals that the static categorisation of identities is fictitious and permeable.

Andisiwe, speaking of the impact of absolute categories and demining stereotypes on her doctoral experience and academic identity, states:

> *I have experience, you know, Fanon says he is in the train and a young White voice says of him, "look mama a Negro." And in that moment, Fanon is no longer the scholar, he is no longer the intellectual, he is basically just a Negro. I had an experience where one of our colleagues in the department asked me to my face, like, as we are talking in the passage, she asked me,*

> *"what exactly are you doing here? Because somebody like you shouldn't be doing Philosophy." I just laughed and walked away (Andisiwe).*

She further states:

> *Knowledge production is not ahistorical, so we can theorise as much as we want, but the fact of the matter is it is people who create knowledge, and it is people who gatekeep knowledge production. If we are being truthful and revealing gatekeeping turns away our souls, turns away our mental health, it turns away our physical health (Andisiwe).*

Most of Andisiwe's interview carried an angry tone and undeniable frustration with her doctoral programme and disciplinary structure. I had to use my body as a metronome, engage all my senses to allow myself to not only hear her narrative but also feel. Although proving herself to be a very capable scholar, Andisiwa's academic experience as a doctoral student is reduced to racial and gender stereotypes. Like Fanon, in that encounter with racism her identity is fragmented, and she is stripped away of her multiplicity of being by the white gaze and her ontological presence is only viewed against a racial corporeal schema. Her response under the weight of the racist colonial gaze is laughter.

Based on Snyder, Black women employ various coping strategies to navigate their doctoral journeys. Snyder's research found that "women often employed the academic mask, in which one takes extra measures such as varying their grammar, appearance, and interactions to combat the negative stereotypes about Black women". This takes a toll on "their well-being, forcing them to compartmentalize the academic Self from the personal or authentic self" (Snyder 2014, 17). Lugones links-imposed duality of being to intimate terrorism. She posits that rage and contempt are strategies of the "self in-between, the self-active inside intimate terror". To Lugones, whilst Western definitions of successful agency are presupposed if the enraged act of agency succeeds, this notion assumes that the enraged is able to exercise agency within the confines of normalcy prescribed by dominating structures with the "expectation of being understood" (2005, 91). For most marginalised bodies, this is not the case, so rage becomes a "a way of isolating herself, of making space for herself, of pushing back" and sifting through the myths because within dominating structures "her rage is out of character" (2005, 91). Andisiwe's identity is pigeon-holed according to her race, splitting her identity between her scholarly identity and authentic Self. Her acts of silence, walking away, and laughter are thus a manifestation of the Self in-between in *Nepantla* – conscious of her *arrebato* but torn

between belonging and resisting (see chapter 7 for a detailed discussion on agency and Andisiwe's story).

## Conclusion

The most important finding brought to view in this chapter is that the doctoral process is not the conception of an intellectual and academic identity. It is the birth of an academic identity that is already in full gestation. The various experiences of students during their doctoral studies become the rhythmic elements that give form to the identity formation process. These rhythmic moments are not linear or periodical but span through time and space. Spatial and epistemic practices within educational structures from formative years displace the lived and epistemic realities of marginalised students and become part of the cyclical oppressions' students experience throughout their academic careers. If not challenged, oppression within academia becomes a violent erasure of the authentic intellectual Self. The recognition and confrontations of one's moments of *arrebato* signals a catalytic moment for the transformative process of *conocimiento* and the transition into the multiple spatial nuances of identity formation.

# Chapter 6: *Nepantla*

## Introduction

> *Nepantla, "is where you question the basic ideas, tenets, and identities inherited from your family, education, and culture" (Anzaldúa 2002, 548).*

Whilst in *arrebato* one becomes aware of the contradictions in one's identity, at this stage "[one is] aware of the changeability of racial, gender, sexual and other categories rendering the conventional labelling obsolete" (Anzaldúa 2002, 541). I illustrate how my participants negotiate the tensions in-between spaces and identities. I argue that, as their basic imposed and inherited tenets and identities begin to fragment, they enter a space of temporal identity crisis. The pain that comes with the awareness that the appendages of one's identity have been torn apart is at this stage recollected, internalised, and mobilised. This stage is transitional, characterised by various points of liminality where one has ruptured from imposed ontologies but has not yet escaped their own ambiguities of being. Based on Anzaldúa, in *nepantla* one adopts the character of a *náhuatl* – a shaman and shape-shifter – continuously deconstructing and reconstructing one's identity (a point I will explore in more detail in chapter 9). However, in *nepantla* this process is a conflict of the Self in-between, the space between changes where one struggles to find equilibrium.

According to Elenes, "*nepantla* can also be understood as an intellectual, epistemological space where we can engage in profound critical analysis" (2013, 135). This is illustrated by Moses' experience, where during the struggle to find a supervisor, he became conscious that his believes about intellectual identity were forms of imposed subjectivities:

> *So, working with my struggle to get a supervisor and then working with the White academic who, although it was new to him, was willing to supervise my theory. This showed me that being a progressive academic is not necessarily about colour and producing a decolonial scholarship. So, for me, some of these extreme positions need to be investigated (Moses).*

Not only does he rupture from despotic dualism, but he begins a work of critical analysis of abstract space and his epistemological assumptions about scholarly identities. *Nepantla,* as a stage in identity development, is about movement and space, how both can change one's perspectives. It is the "uncertain terrain one crosses when moving from one place to another;

when changing from one class, race, or sexual position to another; when travelling from the present identity into a new identity" (Anzaldúa 2015, 56). This stage is, thus, characterised by displacement (in its various spatial and epistemic forms), the Self in between and the crossing of liminal thresholds.

## Displacement

> *When I moved from \*\*\*\*\* University to \*\*\*\*\* University, I started teaching and I saw students who were afraid to express their own agency in their own journey of knowledge, and for me that was very perplexing because I came from an institution where that is exactly what we want – don't give me what I gave you at the lecture theatre. Show me understanding; show what the concept means to you. Now, coming from a space of being a knower, I'm confronted at postgraduate level with concepts, I'm tired of regurgitating concepts. So, when I walked in here and I'm telling you; I felt the space, I felt a shift which is saying there is something off here. It reminded me of Patricia Collins, because again boxes, this is the box you have to fit, you are no longer a knower, you are empty. If we would go back to education, for the banking method of education, you are an empty bucket and with me that was different and in fact if anything, one thing I would say is, it has been traumatic. It's been traumatic in the sense that I'm not used to that anymore. I'm not used to being empty. At \*\*\*\*\* University I was given agency over my own knowledge claims. People said to me, "you are a knower." And of course, that category comes with a lot of responsibilities because there are many lived realities of being a knower (Kandau).*

*Nepantla* simultaneously emphasises movement, space, and moments of crisis and liminality. In Kaunda's account, movement from one institution to another results in displacement of Self in his normative reality. Any arrythmia that occurs disrupts polyrhythmic and spatial continuity, this perceived loss can have negative and positive outcomes, but it becomes a major source of identity discontinuity (Blue, 2019). Kandau is not only displaced in physical space but also in abstract space and lived space. Kandau's movement in physical space is not neutral but reveals that perceived space is a manifestation of the conceived space and thus a social construct in that his movement between physical space disrupts continuity in his identity as a valid "knower". It also reveals that 'being' and 'identity' are social constructs impacted by spatial practices. Thus, the spatial and ideological shifts that Kandau experiences are forms of epistemic and cultural displacement. Interesting in Kandau's account, is the fact that his former university had nurtured the perspective of multiplicity of intellectual identity but, in the move

to another institute he is confronted by dualistic philosophies, re-imposing on him epistemic and ontological monolithic categories. As an instructor, he not only experiences this displacement internally but as a form of performative displacement in the classroom. This echoes the argument I make in my introductory chapter – that marginalised bodies through epistemic dressage are co-opted as collaborators of their own suppression and tools for the perpetuation of their own onto-epistemic erasure. In this case, Kandau's awareness of his contradictory position is thus alienated from his own intellectual identity as a legitimate knower and knowledge instructor. Commenting on her experiences as a knowledge instructor, herself being oppressed and resisting, and in many ways perpetuating the systems that oppress, Ojeda laments:

> *It is hard to look back and feel satisfied with my previous words, my actions. It is hard to smell the scent of complicity in my hands, and realize, once more, that no matter how hard I try to change—me, the system—, I remain part of the cog that is pressed while pressing others. In other words, I can try to self-decolonize, but most likely I will never be a decolonized subject—how can I fully escape a neoliberal and imperialist world (dis)order...I encompass all—good, bad, colonizer, colonized, oppressed, oppressor. Complying, resisting, trying to change inherited cultural scripts – all at the same time. Permanently self-decolonizing, unable to fully self-decolonize (Ojeda 2020, 38-39).*

Andisiwe shares similar experiences of epistemic and ontological displacement:

> *I sat in a seminar and they taught on Hegel for seven weeks… I wanted to die, and this is the thing I'm saying – they don't take you as being located in the tradition; they don't take you as being located in a scholastic space. I could not see how I belonged there. They separate me from the text, my lived realities from the texts. Even himself, Hegel is not read in conversation, for instance, with Fanon or other African scholars he was responding to, [who] or have responded to him. And also, Fanon is not read in conversation with Hegel again. Even in that way, how do you begin to understand? Which is why I am saying I want to get out (Andisiwe).*

Yarbro-Bejarano (1994, 9) states, "the displacement of identities, persons, and meanings is endemic to the postmodern world system". In the postmodern colonial imaginary, there is double displacement of marginalised bodies, firstly from the history of knowledge production and their denial of authenticity (Rajan-Rankin 2018). Accordingly, Rajan-Rankin asserts that examination of narratives of displacement need to challenge "historical narratives of knowledge production" and also "examine epistemologies which are geographic in their historicity" (2018, 36). Andisiwe's narrative highlights that marginalised subjects are

dislocated in popular discourses that monopolise knowledge and the history of knowledge production. The result of such discourses is the silencing of epistemologies and lived realities of the marginalised. Both Andisiwe and Kandau are outsiders, alienated from their lived realities and dominant narratives. By virtue of being situated in the university for the greater part of the year, it becomes a 'home', and one is materially displaced from 'home/familiarity'. The under-recognition and misrecognition of colonised ontologies within dominant discourses in academia further displaces the doctoral student. I argue that displacement is a perpetual existential condition for racialised and gendered subjects. The doctoral space becomes an extension of this condition. The rhetoric that frames doctoral space as a neutral pursuit of intellect neutralises difference. This perspective, as related in my participants' narratives, masks how imposed onto-epistemologies subjugate, silences, and displaces difference. The neutrality of this space if unquestioned becomes a foreclosure on multiplicity and alternative ways of knowing and being.

My participants' narratives illustrate that displacement narratives are multi-layered and do not only reflect dislocations from material space or abstract space. They are also not hierarchical, occurring one at a time, but occur across time and space as interconnected and intersectional moments. How displacement is framed in higher education and doctoral studies is important, as it informs how we identify and research marginalised bodies. There is an expectation of the kind of knowledge and student one will encounter when one walks into a Drama Department as opposed to the student/knowledge system one may encounter in a Mathematics Department. These distinctions are a form of locational socialisation or "the meanings of locations, about what is expected to go on where, and who is expected to be doing it" (Lofland 1985, 101). Thus, there is a relationship between physical space and social identities where the built environment demarcating disciplines and departments also plays a role in spatial practices and lived experiences. Anesu highlights how the shift from one discipline to another necessitates a transition in identity.

> *Economics is very logical, whilst artists are way more subjective than anyone. It was part of the reason I really struggled, you know. Like, changing the way you think about something, you know? It took a bit of a while before I could get accustomed to it. So, if you ask an economist, say, "what colour is this?" they are going to say, "It is green", for example – it's green… it looks green, you know? It's green. They will be like, "It's from a two-litre bottle, it was manufactured by this person, it is sold here and there, and it is available at this market and it cost this much to produce and cost this much to…" This is how you think about it if you are an economist. But if you are an artist, you*

*will think like, "this is green, but it is also blue and yellow, you know? It is also blue and yellow. What does green make me feel, you know? Green makes me feel… What does green make me think of? Trees and grass" (Anesu).*

Although Anesu was already a practicing artist, she highlights that she had never studied Art beyond high school. Because her scholarly background was that of an economist, she found coming into her postgraduate studies especially a PhD where she had to do a full research-based thesis as a difficult transition. Her narrative also highlights that displacement does not only relate to negative experiences. According to Anesu, she loved the shift, no matter how difficult, as she is a researcher and artist at heart. However, her narrative reveals this crossing, no matter how transformative, is a space of identity contestation. Bobby's narrative highlights disciplinary displacement can occur within one's own discipline because of exclusionary systematic and spatial practices.

*The experiences I have had have diverted me to doing my PhD in Higher Education. I say "diverted" because that is not statistical at heart, now I have to deal with issues related to student success, though it is something that I'm also passionate about, I wanted to do PhD in Statistics. Now I have to do something cause of experiences or the barriers I faced. Now I am passionate of breaking those barriers to bridge the gap. Take for example my experience in Master's. I went to ***** University from ***** University. I only stayed six months. I was supposed to stay [there] for two years and finish my degree, but I stayed six months, because I was not coping at all. I didn't do work anyways, I couldn't finish lectures because they were in Afrikaans, I couldn't write anything. I just could not fit in. The weather, it was too cold; and the language, it was not easy. I was the minority in the class can you imagine? I was the only Black person in class. I couldn't make friends; I couldn't do justice in the environment there. I was not coping at all; the weather was also not doing justice to me, so it was always raining and cold so I was struggling into a lot of things, so I couldn't focus on my studies. I was just focusing on the environment and trying to fit in, all the time trying to adjust, trying to catch up. So, I was always [behind], so I have to catch up with everything, so I couldn't go well that was a bad experience for me that time and the students as well… They were not that nice so you can imagine the environment was not nice because they were not used to having someone that looks like me in their classes (Bobby).*

According to Maseko (2018, 17), marginalised students are a "full bouquet of individual cultural, cognitive and affective complexities," that result in experienced displacement from their previously disadvantaged contexts. Maseko believes that it is not that students from previously disadvantaged contexts are incapable of transitioning into

universities, but there is a misrecognition in policy and national dialogue of the cultural and epistemic intricacies marginalised bodies confront when transitioning from the familiar "(context of disadvantage) to the unfamiliar context (of the culture of the academia)" (2019, 18). Higher educational policies and development plans that focus on "techno-instrumental reason" pertaining to student success and attrition, deflect "attention from the systemic structures that are at the heart of the perpetuation of inequity" (17). Furthermore, Maseko argues that the subtle forms of racism and,

> *its associated complexities such as misrecognition, (are) an added affective and cognitive burden detracts from the ability to perform at optimal level. [This] burden is increased with the addition of alienation, exclusion, and marginalisation (17).*

The university Bobby moved from was a previously disadvantaged university (the familiar) and he moved to a previously White university (unfamiliar). Bobby, from undergraduate, had always been in the Statistic Department as an intelligent student but in moving to a new university he is confronted with systematic barriers that in turn reduce his performance to objectifying stereotypes – of an incapable Black body unable to cope with the demands of intellectualism at a White institute. However, Bobby's lack of success was not due to capability or intellect but to language and other onto-epistemic cultural injustices. However, statistical data will continue to reproduce objectifying stereotypes if cultural and subjective data is not factored. Bobby's experiences of systematic exclusion had such a profound impact that he could not keep on 'counting and measuring' whilst the numbers did not reflect the systematic barriers and exclusions that marginalised bodies are confronted by. So, although initially his statement "I could not fit in", speaks to displacement in physical space, his lived experiences include abstract space, causing epistemic and disciplinary alienation. In turn, this ruptured his intellectual identity. Whilst he still identifies as a statistician at heart, he is aware of the cracks and other forms of his being alienated from this part of his intellectual identity.

Bobby's narrative highlights the interplay of identity and space, and the fluidity of identity formation in space and time, relating to moments of dislocation. Mzo's account unmasks how imposed social identities result in continued moments of displacement as one traverses through space and time.

*I came from a family structure, within that family structure… I mean I'm a bastard child in that home, right? That's the structure where there is [a] mother, there is [a] father, there is [a] brother, sister and then there is the bastard child, who is the cousin. That was my positionality, and I'm not saying that in my society, in the Xhosa community I'm useless. No. But, however there are those slur words that keep coming and this is a derogative term that is used against children without their fathers there. You grow up and get bullied because you don't have a father figure. If your Daddy is not going to get into your issues but by just pulling him as a shield, then everybody steps back. I didn't have those privileges of hiding behind patriarchy because the very patriarchy that made me [and] brought me [up], took me through the "rite [of] passage to becoming a man" in inverted commas, I was a bastard in that family. I still am. I just get there and [I] feel like I'm just a boy [again]. That's the role that I had when I was a kid is still the same role I'm having now. I'm just a boy who is just there to be extra arms and hands to whatever the dominant patriarchy needs [me] to be. I identify as a feminist and for my Master's, and now my [for] PhD I draw from that because I am not accommodated in patriarchy and obviously there are biological markers that make me not to call myself a feminist, but I identify as a feminist (Mzo).*

Milligan (2003, 2) reports that, "social identity is given to an individual by someone who does not know that individual well, to whom he or she is more or less a stranger". The development of identity mirrors wider aesthetic – social and spatial configurations, and happens in tandem with aesthetic, social and spatial progressions. Mzo, from his birth, has, scripted on him, the identity of an outsider. By virtue of being a "bastard child," cultural and patriarchal norms place his manhood, as he puts it, "in inverted commas". Growing up in this space, displaced from his ethnic culture, Mzo redefines himself out of categories that define him as less than, into a third space. He realises he cannot fully identify with both patriarchy and feminism and thus, he transcends invisible cultural, intellectual, and psychological borders to occupy a space in-between which acknowledges multiplicity of cultural expediencies (Mzo's narrative will be unpacked in more detail in succeeding chapters).

## The Self in-between

*Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, la mestiza undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war (Anzaldúa, 1987, 100).*

The stories of my participants at every stage of *conocimiento* position them as continuously living in-between. Although the focus of this thesis is on doctoral studies, the implications of this study go beyond its limited focus. Being a subject occupying an in-between space is not a temporal event in space and time, but for marginalised bodies, the third space, the borderland is a home. The two worlds separated by the border only contain a fraction of one's reality and identity. Each world filters away some elements of identity and wholeness is only achieved in the acceptance of ambiguity. Although one might have a conscious awareness of their position of being in-between cultures, they are still affected and limited by the impositions of dominant cultures, epistemologies, and structures. Black people in South Africa are inherently border subjects. Through systems of oppression such as colonialism and apartheid, fencing was used as a way to demarcate between citizen and alien. In institutions of higher learning, knowledge was organised along racial binaries with vocational training being mostly for blacks and specialised knowledge for whites. Some of my participants live between the history of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. I say 'in-between' because of the way some participants continually interlinked this history with what they are currently facing in their studies. Although they acknowledge that they are no longer who they used to be under apartheid, they also suggest that they are still in transition:

> *At home I knew that when you meet another race specifically the White person, specifically the White people when you introduce yourself you tell them your English name so is like my English name is Joseph…I remember my sister was working in the kitchen, like cleaning for the White people, you know? So, she [would] bring clothes to us, we never have to experience a new thing we know, we don't even know that there is something called new clothes because all we have to wear is what somebody else has worn [before]. So, coming to university I was like, "Hi I'm Joseph." You know, [the] beautiful thing here was that they are willing to learn and know me by the name they use at home which was Sikho? That was the only thing that was beautiful about the space. And this was in undergrad. But as I said, everything was new, the knowledge was new. I had to unlearn my knowledge from home. Now I'm learning, I'm still going through it, it's not complete but I had to stop with Western music. I had to now start listening to what I was probably not listening to. I had to go back to traditional music here and now and some people that I should have known a long time ago. I started learning about them and old people that were so important in the construction of music…I would have passed them on the road without knowing who are they and what are they in the construction of South African music, you know? But then, now I'm trying to learn our names like oh, this is so and so…but still you have to incorporate certain forms and understand certain theories for you to be accepted, so I use Western foundations of composition and then I use my African feel. I took a structure of a song and then I composed my African melodies (Sikho).*

Sikho's narrative reveals the trade-offs one has to make for belonging in the two cultures separated by the border. On one hand in his cultural home, in the village, in certain spaces his indigenous name had to be given up for an English name and he had to make do with hand-outs but he was able, in that space, to retain his traditional ways of knowing and being. On the other hand, in the university space, although he got to retain his African name (his exoticness), he had to give up his ways of knowing and being. This duality only offers two choices between oppositional binary identities. However, this dual representation can only be maintained by, and through domination of the marginalised body. In each scenario Sikho trades elements of his identity. But before his trip to the USA, Sikho was unaware of the trade-off he had been and still was making. He was unaware of himself as a dominated subject whose being was being defined according to imposed labels. However, the crisis and rupture he experienced whilst in the USA brought awareness of himself straddling between two cultures and shifting between two worlds. Sandoval (2002) highlights the willingness of the dominator to learn and appropriate the ways of the other is a form of difference inoculation, where the other is allowed to retain certain elements of his being 'his exoticness' that are deemed as non-threatening. In the village lived space was segregated and thus the other's ways of being existed on the other side of the fence and thus was non-threatening to the coloniser's way of being. Naming was, however, a way to make it easier for the Black body to be identified in servitude to the colonising master. However, in the academic space Sikho's onto-epistemologies are regarded as miseducation. He experiences dressage as "unlearning his knowledge from home". For Sikho the knowledge he had to unlearn was the music as constructed and performed in his ethnic culture. He had to unlearn the music that had nurtured his passion and talent for the discipline. Coming into the doctoral space, Sikho had already decided "I had to stop…I had to unlearn". In this way, Sikho perceived the PhD space, not as the onset, but the continuation and possible birth of an identity already in gestation. Sikho's narrative highlights that, from whichever side you are standing on the border, domination permeates and constructs being.

Being in-between is not about a mere recognition of oneself in transition between worlds. I argue that it is also about unearthing the two worlds separated by the borderland. Firstly, this entails the examination of the imposed and cultivated borders, such as epistemic and linguistic borders, in their various spatial manifestations, that separate between – us/them, in/out, normal/abnormal, and proper/improper. Secondly, one has to examine the trade-offs one is making for belonging in the various worlds. For some of my participants, the trade-off for

obtaining the doctorate is consciously suspending their authenticity, to attain their degrees. Authenticity here does not mean chaotic, unscholarly, and poorly researched scholarship, but entails retaining some onto-epistemic authenticity in the doctoral processes.

> *I feel like, if I am not careful, I will lose myself. What I'm doing right now… I'm just doing it so that I can get this thing so that I can open more doors with that title honestly, but it is not moving me closer to the things I want to do. You know I want to play; I want to sit down, but they argued – my supervisors, okay? I have two supervisors, one understands what I'm talking about, but the other one doesn't get it.*
>
> *The other one unfortunately doesn't get it you know; he is like, "you have to write down, you have to write down the thesis." And I'm like, "but music is a carrier of information so if we write it, you must bear it in mind also music has a carrier to build information as a carrier of living experiences. That's what music is that's what I believe to be that chapter. A song can be a chapter, you know. At the very least incorporate the two, because a song can be a chapter, you know. But now how they look at its still very much European". We still have to do it right for the White people to understand and it's unfortunate for us, it's one of the things that you do because you have to do it, you know? If I didn't have to do it, I [would] be spending a lot of time with my instrument and that will probably even made me tap into zones that I have never even have thought of. But because I have to write it down, because I have to write a literature review, my topic is a musical construction of home, but I can't incorporate the music (Sikho).*
>
> *And I was at the point of sheer frustration, I was so frustrated and every time I came to the office, I would literally even to speak to strangers. I would say… I remember one time… there were some students I met in the [elevator] and they asked how I was doing. And I was like, "Man, it's one of those days when you are like it wouldn't be a bad idea to jump from the 20th floor." And one of them [said] to me, "That's something you don't say to strangers." I was so over it. As I said, they are attempting to domesticate me, they are reattempting to domesticate me. For the time that I remain here, I will [act] like I'm being domesticated because I know that my objective is to get out, that's the main reason that I'm pushing for, I want out, so I just pretend (Kandau).*

Doctoral space is the thin line between knowing and unknowing. It is the invisible space that separates the knowledge that can be known and those that can legitimately know it. As a borderland, the doctoral space is the fence safeguarding between safe spaces and unsafe spaces, eligible/welcome people, and trespassers. The bodies of doctoral students become the site where the razor wire cuts through, splitting their identity between what they can and cannot know, proper and improper performances of intellectualism, and legitimate and illegitimate onto-epistemologies. As revealed in the narratives of Kandau and Sikho, in some cases,

doctoral students are expected to be empty recipients of knowledge, to be broken-in, like one would a horse, into disciplinary and ideological identity categories. Anzaldúa asserts that,

> *The dominant culture has created its version of reality; and my work counters that version with another version—the version of coming from this place of in-betweenness, nepantla, the borderlands. There is another way of looking at reality. There are other ways of writing. There are other ways of thinking. There are other sexualities, other philosophies (Anzaldúa, 2000, 229).*

Having experienced onto-epistemic suppression during her doctorate studies, Anzaldúa's work highlights the violences of totalising epistemologies that offer no room for alternative ways of being. According to Wilson (2012), to be in *nepantla*, one can feel exposed and completely helpless. In the case of both participants (Kandau and Sikho), they are conscious of their ideological suppression and displacement but feel helpless and despair. The contemplation of suicide by Kandau highlights that being in-between, in *nepantla*, is being in a "limited space, a tight, dark, uncomfortable, maybe even dangerous space" (Wilson 2012, 30). The questions that should be asked of the doctoral space in the context of South Africa, is not if it is alienating, colonised or exclusionary – these pose as rhetoric questions. I argue that we should be exploring the various ways in which the doctoral space is a space of transition, contestation and unsafe for marginalised bodies.

One of my participants, Khoza, requested that we go for a walk during our first interview. The walk lasted about 30 minutes long. A bridge intersects the road we took, dividing the central business district and suburbs from the township (high density suburbs/ locations). When one makes the crossing, the roads are scanty and the water underneath the bridge is filled with empty plastic bottles and is a mixture of sewer- and rainwater. As we crossed the bridge, I mentioned my discomfort in traversing too far into the township area, Khoza then stated he does not fear crossing into dangerous zones, as he has always been a bridge crosser, physical and metaphorical. As a young boy, living in the township during apartheid, his mother worked for a white family in the suburbs, and she used this access to organise schooling for him in the suburbs. Every day he would cross a literal bridge to school, and then back to the township. I asked Khoza for more examples that identify him as a bridge-crosser, he then explained that he had never done an undergraduate degree or diploma but was invited to do his Master's based

on the work he had published; and he was also invited to do his PhD. I asked Khoza to describe his experiences of both physical and abstract crossings:

> *To move to somewhere, from one place to another, I think it's mostly about sound and moving with that sound, which is probably just more about revealing the everyday sounds probably of nights and the day and voices.*
>
> *Somewhere inside a block of flats,*
>
> *a tremble wields a blue flame, then dies.*
>
> *That's where the motion starts from, from that experience. Then I start to nurture that sound – that experience:*
>
> *Somewhere in the suburban,*
>
> *Somewhere in the work of a suburban silence,*
>
> *Cigarette raptures in the night, then quietly rises*
>
> *Somewhere inside our tirade Black screens.*
>
> *Somewhere across a treacherous road,*
>
> *Racists hounds grind to a stop.*
>
> *Somewhere behind a curtained window,*
>
> *A candle slowly suffocates,*
>
> *Somewhere in the crack of moisture,*
>
> *Tensions of several dreams.*
>
> *Somewhere behind shack doors,*
>
> *And the electric strings of wired fences…*
>
> *I was [more] privileged than most of the kids that I grew up with in the township and the privileged kids as well because, at an early age I was moving between the different spaces, and I think that somehow sort of gave me like a broader sense of the world (Khoza).*

Khoza asked me how I understood the poem in relation to crossing:

> *It sounds to me like an expression of what you were saying about crossing between two worlds from the location to the suburbs then back again. Constantly stuck between these two spaces, constantly stuck somewhere. And it's like an undefined space (My transcripted response to Khoza).*

In this poem, Khoza captures the rhythms in spaces and time to show how they are divided by a fence but at the same time connected by a treacherous road, a bridge cutting across both worlds. By conceptualising the two spaces through sound, Khoza also illustrates the interconnectedness of these two spaces, as one sound and/or motion starts out somewhere and rises across the "fence". Voyagers who continually traverse across that treacherous road become the link between two opposed spaces, connecting their inhabitants. Khoza narrates how, after a time, as his mannerism and accent changed, he became isolated from his township childhood friends who labelled him as a "*mulungu*", but he also could not fit into the suburban identity. He temporarily resorted to keeping to himself (a point that will be discussed in detail in chapter 7). For Khoza, it is these experiences he had hoped to articulate through his postgraduate studies. He states that:

> *Knowledge, knowledge is for free, knowledge is experience, knowledge is something we live. So, knowledge does not start in the education space, but the space of education is just a medium or rather a space to sort of get a structure to then sort of address or interrogate these aspects that one has experienced (Khoza).*

Borders, material or abstract, have real effects on the people living in and around them. Anzaldúa describes them as a,

> *1950-mile-long open wound/ dividing a pueblo, a culture,/ running down the length of my body,/ staking fence rods in my flesh,/ splits me splits me…This is my home this thin edge of barbwire (1987, 24-25).*

These borders encroach on the bodies of the marginalised not as a temporal event in time, but as assemblages of temporal but cyclical moments in space and time. These experiences leave their marks in space and on one's identity. As highlighted by Kandau, in some shape or form, the doctoral space, as a space of knowledge creation, houses dualistic and competing narratives and as highlighted by Khoza, one does not come into the space as an empty vessel waiting to be filled. The doctoral student in-between competing narratives, as narrated by my participants can experience the doctoral space as a treacherous road – alienated and displaced.

## Liminal thresholds

In doctoral studies, liminal thresholds often refer to the disciplinary requirements of thesis structure and 'doctorateness'. These include proposal writing, literature review, theory, methodology etc. Progression and success in the doctoral process and academic identity formation is thus examined and determined based on how the student crosses these liminal thresholds. However, this meritocratic analysis of success represents the "reduction of colonially created social and material conditions to technical 'mathematical modelling' that perpetuates the purposes of colonialism" (Maseko, 2018, 17). Maseko further argues,

> *when you add the concomitant effects of the potentially toxic mix of codification, meritocracy, and performativity, you have the kind of post-colonial discontent and alienation that gave rise to protest movements such as #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall (18).*

Whilst codification and statistical representations have their place in research, the process of liminality in identity formation is much more complex. Liminality in meritocratic and performative perspectives is based on the Western understanding of the term. In Western philosophy, liminality presupposes temporality of being which results in becoming, "a transition permanently into a new ideology" (Abraham, 2014, 6). Anzaldúa's conception of liminality implies fluidity and continuity. She explains that liminality is integral to everyday life as we are always in a state of ideological transition. Anzaldúa describes the *nepantlera* (someone in the stage of *nepantla*) as a nomadic traveller moving in and out of multiple worldviews. The traveller is not sedimented in one identity category or indoctrinated by any monolithic worldview, such that contradictory worldviews are foreclosed on. As the *nepantlera* traverses, she

> *encounters liminal spaces in which she negotiates her understandings, conflicting loyalties, and tensions through deep introspection, reflection on previous experiences, utopian imagination, spiritual connection to other realms, and memories of the future (Bhattacharya and Kim, 2018, 4).*

As previously highlighted, my participants live with contesting subjectivities and loyalties. Participants enter into the doctoral space with prejudices, assumptions, and identities which they are continually forced to challenge and interrogate in relation to Self and other people. Liminality does not only speak to moments of confrontation between dominating narratives and Self, but also moments of confrontation between one's multiple and interlocking subjectivities.

*I had to grow up fast, I wasn't a child anymore. I experienced layers and layers of many disappointments and, therefore, I could have projected that in every space that I am in if was driven by ego. That sense that I could be through so much and I deserve everything and anybody who is in my space should either abide by my rules and my philosophical understandings or they must just go, or I could be a space like I accept other people for who they are. So, that decision in my childhood would have affected my intellectual development and my intellectual identity today, and my emotional development and my emotional intelligence today. So, to answer that question, what kind of intellectual history could I attribute to the identity that I see myself as now? I would say I had to start engaging intellectually and also being emotionally intelligent at a young age and so I had to find the intersections of how the mind and the spirit works at that early age, so that when the mind can't find the reason why this is happening the heart can. When the mind can't forgive the heart maybe can. I have consciously tried to learn to exist as Self in any space of any rules. When I think of rules and structure, I think of academia, of when I went to the bush [to be circumcised], that's structure. I went to the bush, but manhood meant something different to me than what they were imposing on me…. In academia, in Master's, there was a course I took on feminism. We were given an assignment, and I failed it – they said I had plagiarised. But I didn't plagiarise, I wrote an autobiography of my journey into identifying as a feminist… I was called to the HOD's office, she is actually now my PhD supervisor. She asked, "So, dude what's your take on this?" and I said, "As a student coming to university to study, I came here expecting to do the readings and to reflect on Self and then to bring literature and self and create and produce knowledge, that's what I came here expecting to be taught. So, I'm not against everything that I'm accused of because I'm not doing the very thing that I'm expected to do by the discipline, but I also expected myself to do that which is true to self."*

*Then I said, "but when I came to this subject, I just suddenly have this passion of finding myself in it so much that I didn't want any information, any presumptions that are going to mould my understanding of femininity." Yah, so I was just like, "ah well, this makes me feel like I have to kind of construct myself because they are these prescriptions, and so I really went against my disciplinary mould [by not taking] instructions from my lecturer and when my lecturer says after the third essay, she is not going to mark my essays anymore and all of that, I accepted [it]. I'm not saying I don't care; I really care because I'm not really saying that I'm not submitting these essays because I'm entirely a feminist. I just want to find myself in this situation, but I don't want to find myself feeling like I have to be queer to be accepted or to see myself in*

*the space, my question was how I can, with a masculine identity also become part of feminism" (Mzo).*

Dahms (2012, 7) reasons that liminality is a position of "critical orphaning". In the borderland, one undergoes a continual shift in perception of reality and identity. It is a space of disruption of western dualistic logic and cultural myths. In Mzo's narrative, he negotiates his identity as a "bastard child", an outsider in patriarchy, cultural myths of manhood and as an outsider to the grand narratives in academia. As he makes linkages between his positionality with and without academia, he reveals the everydayness of liminality, as a process that one undergoes whilst in transition to becoming. However, as he also illustrates, this identity is also shifting, as one becomes more aware of their contesting subjectivities. Mzo uses the family structure, patriarchy, and disciplinary structures as ideologies that try to impose stasis of being. He continually finds himself in an in-between space, constantly crossing liminal thresholds that bring transformation of being. Regarding family, and patriarchal structures, Mzo allows himself to be bastardised and reduced to boyhood, not as a coping mechanism, but as a form of disidentification, rendering imposed identity categories obsolete. He redefines notions of manhood according to his own lived experiences. He is at the liminal stage where he is aware that he cannot escape constructions of racism, sexism, and patriarchy but he uses these prejudices as catalytic moments to confront and move away from identity imposing structures. According to Lugones, "the experience of victims of ethnocentric racism of moving across realities, of being different in each, and of reasoning practically differently in each, can be understood as liminal". To Lugones, "to do so is to understand its liberatory potential because, when the liminal is understood as a social state, it contains both the multiplicity of the Self and the possibility of structural critique" (2003, 61).

From his formative years, Mzo cultivated the desire to travel to liminal (in-between) spaces where he can fully see and inhabit himself. He continually moves his spiritual, emotional, and intellectual boundaries in search of self and as a resistance to structures of oppression. Bhattacharya and Kim maintain:

> *This movement may transport one between varied perspectives, into deeper parts of one's consciousness, or into liminal spaces. It is in this movement, in critical interrogation, and in reflexive awareness that one can attend to the stuck places, tensions, contradictions, and emotions, and address the pull to*

*look both at, and away from various parts of one's work to identify the relational components that bridge and fragment the researcher's onto-epistemologies (2018, 9).*

To Mzo, the academic space continues his displacement and fragmentation. As already discussed, disciplinary requirements can act as oppressive cognitive borders delineating proper and improper ways of knowing and being. In this case, although the head of department (HOD) acknowledged the creativity of his endeavours, even taking him as a PhD student, she was also bound by the invisible disciplinary borders. This also highlights that spatial practices sediment material and abstract spatial borders. If the origins of, and the structures of spatial practices are not interrogated, the epistemic and ontological displacement of marginalised bodies will be perpetuated by traditions whose origins are racist and sexist.

To this end, Lugones argues that, "the different journeys that we have taken to liminal sites have constituted each limen as a different way of life, not reducible to the other resistant, contestatory ways of life" (Lugones 2006, 22). Liminality thus does not mean the end of multiplicity or the successful negotiation of multiplicity of being, but symbolises the "interaction between ambiguity and control, between undifferentiated confusion and defined clarity" (Anzaldúa, 2015: 114). It is also a place of creativity and transformation as revealed in Mzo's and Sikho's experiences.

> *Yeah, I started creating something which was mine and which was [true to] my identity, which was foreign to them and they started noticing that "Hey, this guy, you know, I think this guy has got this kind of music. We don't know this kind of music." It was one night midnight; I don't know man, I was just playing something, and I was like "This reminds me of home" and then I dwelt on it and then I played it. Remember, I was still in America, and I was like this reminds me of home there is something about this, you know? And then when I talked to my American colleagues and they couldn't get it. They couldn't play the notes, they could see the notes but [could not play it] identical[ly] to how an African would have done it. The notes remain the same but who sings the notes that was the difference you know because as an African playing that rhythm, I carried myself. My playing carried so much, probably things that I know and things that I do not know. An American can play this music but with the different cultural perspective from an African playing the same music, when an African play it in a different cultural spirit, maybe it will remind him of old ladies dancing to it in a traditional wear; the Western person maybe he is imagining [a] suit and a tie, you know? In my village, there is no suit and tie there is a traditional dress. So, you carry yourself in the music (Sikho).*

After his *arrebato* in America, Sikho narrates that he was in a state of shock and confusion. Keating reasons that liminality can be a space and time of great "confusion, anxiety and loss of control" brought by "identity related issues and epistemological issues" (2005, 6-7). Sikho experiences both ontological and epistemological anxiety as his identity was ruptured and his knowledge systems fragmented. Sikho uses this liminal space as a space of transformation, still displaced and torn between his old and familiar notions of being and the new and unfamiliar, he begins to realise that the imposed epistemic boundaries are permeable. The fact that being in the USA away from home is the first time he plays music attuned with his lived experiences is in itself a performance of a contradictory performance – he performs his home identity in resistance to, but also as part of Western musical performance. On the one hand, he is rupturing from imposed Western intellectual/musical identity but, on the other hand, he performs his identity as a way to produce home/exoticness for a Western audience. His experience unmasks the fact that becoming in colonial spaces is always unstable and a contestation of subjectivities. To most of my participants, liminality was, thus, linked with confrontation with colonial and marginalising structures, but is also a space for transformation. However, liminality, as will be illustrated in the following chapter, does not always translate to transformation. This was also true for my participants. One can refuse to confront, see, and negotiate through contradictions and ambiguities that bring them into the *coatlicue* state (Abraham, 2014).


## Conclusion

Being in *nepantla* is not only being in between worlds physically, but culturally, historically, politically, and epistemically as well. Being in-between is thus a socio-spatial temporality that provides an alternative to normative constructions and worlds. *Nepantla* is not only a spatial metaphor representing spatio-temporality but is also an embodied conceptualisation of multiplicity. The *nepantlera* embodies multiple identities thus can be situated in and carry multiple worlds simultaneously. The act of traversing different worlds is thus an embodied activity of the different selves ("different socio-political identities and different onto-epistemic agency") navigating intersecting spatial-temporalities with different selves (Chang et al. 2018, 31). However, multiplicity of Self in *nepantla* does not mean fragmentation as the different Selves interlock and are mutually inclusive thereby maintaining the individual as a coherent and multiplicitous being.

# Chapter 7: *Coatlicue*

*As a minority within the gay community, I screamed in silence, in pain, in hopelessness. I thought about suicide because of bullshit and oppressions. Who gives who the power of judging, others while we all are getting stuck in a circle of normativity? Who gives who the privilege of silencing others while we are enduring the confusion of our own racialized and sexualized identities? Who gives who the freedom of choosing others while we also belong to others to be chosen? Who gives who the voices? Who gives us the voices? Who gives me the voice? I lost my voice … (Han 2015, 106-107).*

## Introduction

I separated intimate terrorism and germinative stasis in my conceptual chapter for analysis purposes. However, these two processes describe the different physical and social manifestations of the same moment. Anzaldúa (1987) asserts that the awareness of cultural, epistemic, and ontological ambiguities and contradictions plunges one into a darkness. 'Darkness' here symbolises an inner struggle between holding on to the familiar (even though it might be oppressive), and the journey into an unknown becoming. In this state, one refuses, and resists knowing and experiences a deep desire for transformation. Some of the experiences of participants give an embodied form to Anzaldúa's *Coatlicue* state. Their narratives unmask oppressive structures and discourses by explicitly naming them through experience, which gives them something tangible to combat. This state brings suffering to the forefront, disrupting eurhythmia in the polyrhythmic ensemble. It disrupts complacency but the resistance and fight to maintain eurhythmia creates a dynamic tension between the desire for survival/belonging/making sense and acts of destruction. Anzaldúa describes the *Coatlicue* state as "the hellish third phase of your journey" (Anzaldúa 2002, 551). Sills posits that *Coatlicue* is a violent process of becoming "that belies a politics of personal agency hinging on positive sites of identification" (2013, 1).

In this chapter, I argue that the *Coatlicue* state is an essential part of identity formation as it reveals a third space between victimhood and empowerment. My participants' narratives reveal that identity formation is a complex process of self-definition that transcends victimisation by retaining control over their subjectivities. Taking Mzo's narrative, for example, the labels and identities imposed on him, such as "bastard" imply victimhood. He acknowledges

disempowerment in this space but retains control over his identity definition as an outsider to both social definitions of family and manhood. In the academic space, being deregistered for a postgraduate course as a consequence of disidentifying with dominant dichotomies and labels also implies victimhood but, in his choice to disidentify, he retains control over his academic identity. Mzo identified with the terrors of being under the patriarchal and colonial gaze, and with the disempowerment of being categorised and regulated as a normal masculine body. *Coatlicue* is not a space of victimhood, it "encourages standing up to violence which threatens sense of self" (Sills, 2013, 18). However, one embodies what Anzaldúa (1987, 38) calls "shadow beasts" – a dual symbol characterised by a refusal "to take orders from outside authorities" and "intense repression, shock and denial". In Mzo's narrative, he refuses oppressive onto-epistemologies but laments that he "still cares". Although he acknowledges the need to rupture from oppressive structures, he still wants to belong, to make sense. Mzo's narrative reveals the juxtaposition of being in oppression – there is the Self oppressed in and by his home culture; the Self oppressed in and by Western domination; and "the Self-in-between-the Self-(himself) in resistance to oppression, the Self in germination in the borderlands" (Lugones 1992, 32). Thus, if the Self is being oppressed, although one pushes back, one can still feel one's limits. One's "capacity for response, pushed in, constrained, denied" (32). Keating holds that the *Coatlicue* state entails "the juxtaposition and the transmutation of contrary forces as well as paralysis and depression" (Keating 2009, 320).

## Intimate terrorism

From feelings of isolation to the contemplation of suicide, my participants' narratives reveal experiences of intimate terror. The state of intimate terrorism is brought about on one hand, by the lack of ability to respond to the realities of oppression and, on the other, the fear of being "unacceptable, faulty, [and] damaged" (Anzaldúa 1987, 28).

> *I feel eliminated, I feel anxious, I feel like I can't trust anybody in the department, to the extent that I wait for people to leave. So, what I now do in order for me to be productive [is], I wait for people to leave, so I come when I know everybody is starting to leave the department, that's when I can come in and work. That is how I feel, I feel eliminated, I feel anxious. Do you know the book, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings? In many respects, I can say I feel like that caged bird, I feel like in some respect they show me as this glamorous*

*thing, they wanted it, but they wanted to domesticate me, so it's like seeing the lion in the wild and then say I want it, and then put it in a cage. As a result of that, I'm isolated. My wings are clipped, my wings have been literally clipped, and it's the attempt to domesticate me…I'm over it. I'm so tired. I no longer have the fight in me to resist. I can't. From the perspective of my mental health, I can't. There is a time in my journey when I thought, "I'm on the 20th floor," and I literally thought, "You know it wouldn't be so bad to just jump." I got to the point where I was like, "it wouldn't be so bad" (Kandau).*

Kandau is a Catholic, bisexual, Zulu, Black man. In many ways, he is terrorised by the oppositional worlds that seek to shackle him in identity categories. Kandau once called me at around midnight, and we had a two-hour long conversation. In this conversation, he spoke of the frustrations he was facing in his PhD and his contemplation of suicide. He spoke of how isolated he feels not only from the Western cultural world but also from his mother culture. He spoke of his desires to become a Catholic priest but having to abnegate those desires because of his onto-epistemic standing on homosexuality and his own sexuality. In this regard, Kandau is culturally and epistemically a captive of oppressive worlds. The symbols of being caged, and of having clipped wings that Kandau employs to define his positionality is indicative of how "in the moment of being pressed" he feels "the imminent reduction of [himself] in the direction of abnegation" (Lugones 2005, 89). Lugones posits that, although moments of intimate terrorism are not in themselves liberatory, awareness of captivity and being pressed by oppressive worlds begins the process of resistance. In Kandau's case, although he is being pushed to change his topic and theory by his supervisor and his department, he pushes back and sticks to his chosen topic and theory. Now he has managed to graduate. Kandau's inability to respond is revealed through the avoidance mechanism – avoiding the department and working only at night. However, his refusal to respond is not capitulation, as he remains defiant. This is revealed by his sticking to his theory. Both strategies are part of being in the *Coatlicue* state.

To Anzaldúa, the inability to respond is still another manifestation of oppressive cultural worlds which define captivity as "shackled in the name of protection" (1987, 43). In this framework, identity categories are theorised as demarcating safe spaces of belonging and being for the good of the individual. Anzaldúa asserts that in this state to go against 'protective labels' is seen as deviance and rebellious and s marginalised bodies, we are "blocked, immobilised, we can't move forward, can't move backward… We do not engage fully… We abnegate" (43). Kandau's narrative is the embodied form of this state – he realises that he cannot capitulate to

domestication but also, he cannot engage fully with oppressive structures, so he isolates himself. Andisiwe also goes through a similar experience:

> *In our department, 70% of its members are White, and during my proposal presentation, I look at where the questions are coming from…the White vanguards for those who want to get there. They say I am not doing Political Science so I should go to another department, maybe Anthropology and I think they will get what they want at the end of the day because I'm not going to stay. I will leave at the end of the day, once I get my PhD, I'm leaving but it's really sad because when you get to the lecture and young Black female students see another young Black face, they can relate. Also, one who [is] using African literature…I have gone back into therapy. I had to go back to therapy in order for me to survive, that's what I'm doing. The only other Black lecturer, he teaches Ethics. For me, I taught First Year level because I was teaching epistemology and I was focusing on African epistemology. It's sad (Andisiwe).*

Andisiwe swallows the repression of her lived realities along with the very mundane activities in her life. This gives the illusion of eurhythmia and is a form of dressage which both Andisiwe and Kandau deliberately allow for survival. Oppressive spatial practices and disciplinary power set limitations to the performance of one's identity. Such limitations materialise on and in marginalised bodies, regulating their shape, movement, and expressions. Andisiwe experiences epistemic terrorism which imposes the tradition of silence to other ways of knowing. Andisiwe internalises this silence and resorts to seeking therapy instead of engaging oppressive structures. Whilst the choice to move away from the department can be read as a win for oppressive systems, the choice to stay or move from the department will both be read within the dominant structures as acts of insubordination. Lugones states, "[every] move the terrorized self makes will have a status quo interpretation that reads her as an alien, an outlaw, reducing, her meaning co-opted in the direction of servility or incompetence" (2003, 90). On one hand, Andisiwe's choice to stay in the department whilst resisting disciplinary epistemic entrainment, will result in her being labelled as an outlaw and rebel, and on the other hand, her decision to leave will be read as abdication because of incompetence. Thus, Lugones reasons that oppression is not to be understood as an accomplished fact, but rather "resisting meets oppressing enduringly" (2005, 90).

Lugones (1992, 34) argues that in *Coatlicue*, the resistant state, one "needs to enact both strategies of defence against worlds that mark her with the inability to respond and distractive strategies to keep at bay the fear of having no name". To Anzaldúa, the oppressed Self:

> *Has this fear that she has no names that she has many names that she doesn't know her names.... She has this fear that if she takes off her clothes shoves her brain aside peels off her skin... strips the flesh from the bone ... that when she does reach herself... she won't find anyone ... She has this fear that she won't find the way back (Anzaldúa, 1987, 43).*

My participants are aware of the consequences of being divergent and scripting their identities away from the norm. Lugones asserts that there is a conceptual difference between one terrorised by the possibility of resistance and unfamiliarity and one that is terrorised such that they yield control to someone else and abnegates any liberatory possibilities. However, one who experiences intimate terror fears not belonging anywhere, becoming an alien, and becoming a conceptual and cultural outsider, but is not held captive by that fear. This tension between the fear of not belonging and resistance is also expressed by Sikho and Khoza.

> *I was getting educated for ignorance. Doing things, the way they want, you don't have to question things, you know? Once you started questioning things, [the things you question] are demonized or told you don't listen, all those things, you know? You know that kind of education? At that time, you're ignorant, you don't know what's going on, you are not going to refuse to take part because it's for students to know that kind of life, that kind of information. You don't even bother to question what you are given, and you forget about what you used to know. A friend of mine used to say, I will say it in Zulu bongabokuncaneokhuthwalayookukhuluuzakuthathapi meaning "be thankful for the little that you have where are you going to get a big piece or the big". So, you grow up with that information and with that kind of narrative in you that this is how things are, this is how things are going to be, this is how things are meant to be. So, I came from that, thinking that was what I was meant for, but me being me, you know I now chose to break out, it wasn't a conscious choice at first, but I felt like…I do not belong here you know because I have to try to be there, and you know I have to try which is not natural to me (Sikho).*

> *You know, I will be honest with you. Like, there is a way that one sort of develops which is to say one then begins to sort of feel betrayed at a certain point, at a certain time in my life, I felt a little bit betrayed and still do. But at a certain point I became an angry young man, and I did not have many people to have a conversation about these experiences in a sense that when one reads*

*into African writers seriously, especially like reading the first-generation writers, one becomes more grounded in the voices of the land. I felt betrayed in the sense that, I felt like a lot of what I had learnt when I was young, in terms of the foundation, did not emphasise on this kind of knowledge, these kinds of experiences. I was very alienated and [I] still am alienated because also like you see outside of scholarship those kinds of conversations are not readily available but inside scholarship, they are also controlled. So, drawing on novels like The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born, I could see certain problems in our society, especially this Western culture. I could point them out and, for me that cause[d] me to be very pessimistic as a person. So, of course, that alienated me, and it caused me to be very unfavourable, in terms of, I was probably aligned with the Pan Africans. Not the organisation itself but it was probably that kind of thinking that Pan Africanist thinking (Khoza).*

Both Sikho and Khoza speak to the idea of the miseducation of Africans and the erasure of African epistemologies. Their awareness of oppression and the possibilities of an alternative, acts as a mirror, where they begin to watch their old Self's performing servitude and oppression. They begin to feel betrayed, enraged and alienated as they watch themselves in-between oppressive worlds. Anzaldúa uses the symbol of the obsidian mirror to characterise how the self in the *Coatlicue* state sees two aspects of Self –

> *The self-captured, objectified in the mirror by the glance. The glance possesses it, turns it into an object, freezes it in place. But the one who looks into the mirror also sees, has awareness, sees through things. She experiences herself in the mirror (Lugones 2005, 93).*

Khoza's and Sikho's experiences symbolise an important break with oppressive structures, and their resistance is anchored in their history of oppression. The mirror, although it renders one terrified of abandoning the familiar construal of Self, becomes an important tool for critiquing multiple subjectivities. The knowledge that Khoza gets from alternative texts exposes him to multiple forms of consciousness which make him aware of the multiplicity of oppression. Sikho also comes to the same realisation that dominant narratives of what he can know and what he can be had limited and kept him captive. However, as experienced by all my participants, there is an abnegation: choosing to withdraw, isolate and resign from certain spaces and people, but they also begin to move away from the language of passivity and victimhood. They engage a "language of resistance, of awareness of being more than a victim" and gradually, they "begin to act, to dis-identify with the fear and the isolation (552).

The linear and conventional doctoral thresholds also result in a certain level of terror. The doctorate is a spatial temporality governed by linear rhythms in time: two semesters and four terms. These linear rhythms are impositions on the natural cyclical rhythms of the year, and they order the social and cosmic patterns of doctoral students. Within doctoral studies, there are things such as proposal submission deadlines and annual progress reports which make up the social and intellectual rhythmic processes. Lefebvre argues that linear processes are socially constructed and sedimented over time through practice and usage. Lefebvre states that these processes, whether they be linear or cyclical, social, or cosmic, surround the body as packets of rhythm, thus the body is a site of multiple rhythms. Although linear thresholds can seem mechanical and mundane as revealed in my participants' narratives, they can also bring feelings of inadequacy and anxiety. Thus, rather than understanding these thresholds as bureaucratic requirements, neutral, detached, and unaffected, they are part of the social and intellectual rhythmic process and embodied activities of doctoral students.

> *Yeah, it's been a very interesting experience sometimes shocking, sometimes scary. There were times where you wonder if you can find amount of words required and you produce let's say a proposal at the first place and in a way that if you would touch on or can give you the points that are expected, but at times you wonder whether you can sustain an argument in a way that will be convincing enough and you need to ask yourself how many works must you review to be comfortable enough to start that kind of engagement (Thapelo)?*

> *Like yah, I feel like, maybe the thing is that okay so which they do tell you when you are beginning the PhD but they don't really. Yoh, when you're starting your PhD, you are so excited. Like, you are not really thinking about this thing, you know it's exciting to do research but can also be a lonely and long journey. No one warns you [that you] might not finish in three years, but I'm now in my third year, and finding that it is impossible to finish this thing in three years. I do feel ashamed because I have to move back home and like all my other siblings they have moved out and then me, I'm the unashamed one moving back in[to] my father's house (Anesu).*

The experiences of my participants illustrate the interconnectedness of body/space/time. Disciplinary liminal thresholds become a form of constant terror and, for Thapelo, the fear of not being able to get the right number of words for a thesis. All these things seem mundane but until completion, they structure the lives of doctoral students. According to Bitzer (2014), the conventional idea of crossing threshold concepts in academia is often depicted as a linear process and this results in students "being stuck" and feeling like until they cross one threshold they cannot move on to the next. She reasons that threshold crossing should be seen as a

cyclical process to accommodate various ways of learning. I argue the relationship between thresholds and time is more complex, beyond this, linear thresholds, time, and identity formation. The doctoral process as a space conceived to be a site of intellectual and academic identity formation: students often fixate on the linear thresholds they must cross in relation to time. Identity formation is thus compacted in three years and measured through crossings of linear thresholds.

Dawn (2020, 4) reasons, "speed is the motif of the times and yet we have also seen the emergence of various slow movements for alternative ways of living – in cities, food production and scholarship". Yet "the experience of speed and slowness, motion and stillness, temporal autonomy and dependence is uneven and unequal between people and over time". Drawing from this statement by Dawn, I argue that for marginalised bodies, identity formation measured in present time (three to five-year doctoral degree), even if one achieves completion, is a negation of the contesting lived realities that overlay the doctorate processes. The linear motifs of how successful mobility within the doctoral space is measured does not capture the multiplicity of being and the ambiguities confronted by doctoral students. As already highlighted in the narratives of participants, academic identity formation is the negotiation of multiple forms of coloniality including coloniality of space and time. This section illustrated the ways in which my participants experience intimate terrorism and use language of resistance. The next section will discuss how resistance manifests as passivity and paralysis.

## Germinative stasis

> *In many respects, I need to just shut up and get on with it, write and get out. That's the only thing that will make sense and that will work well for me… to shut up and write and get out (Kandau).*

The Western definition of agency is founded in Kant's ideas of rational autonomy (see Chang 2018). It characterises the oppressed as an autonomous subject who "pulls himself by the bootstraps" to enact institutional change (Chang et al. 2018, 2). Western agency presupposes that an agent's actions will make sense and will be interpreted as legitimate within dominant/oppressive social and political institutions. The agents whose actions are interpreted

as not making sense are denied institutional backing and their efforts are disqualified and delegitimised. In this sense, there are agents who are able to possess the Western form of agency and others who are disqualified. Furthermore, Western agency is grounded in the rationality and intentionality of the subject. However, Bierria (2014, 129) argues that intention is not simply "a function of practical reasoning but is also socially authored through others' discernment and translation of her action". Taking the example of Mzo, his decision to refuse to write in an objective manner that dislocates his scholarly epistemologies and identity from his lived experiences, would be interpreted by liberal agency as unsuccessful as he was eventually deregistered from that particular course. On the other hand, his actions were seen as epistemically innovative and progressive. These divergent narratives in the interpretation of his actions show that within the structures of domination, normative explanations criminalise the agentic actions of marginalised bodies. For them to be interpreted as making sense and possessing agency is to diverge from dominant structures of meaning making. This example also highlights the "relationship of production between observer and act" (Bierria 2014, 130). In colonial spaces where institutions facilitate and rationalise systems of domination, the criminalisation and distortion of the intentions of other agents were criminally sanctioned. Furthermore, marginalised bodies were always under the colonial gaze, which was scrutinizing and policing agentic action. Lugones asserts that only an "enfranchised agent reasons and acts in a world of meaning and within social, political, and economic institutions that back him up and form the framework of his forming intentions" (Lugones 2003, 211).

Lugones proposes the notions of active subjectivity and germinative stasis as the various tactical strategies of resistance marginalised agents enact. In structures and logics of domination, these actions can become obscured and impaired. She reasons that "from the standpoint of liberalism, (active subjectivity) would look like an almost inconsequential or attenuated sense of agency" (2003, 5). "The active subject concocts sense away from the encasement of dominant sense" (Lugones 2005, 86). I argue that doctoral students, particularly, those in historically colonial spaces, not only grapple with conventional threshold crossings and disciplinary requirements, but also closed up systems of meaning that order all spatial relations. This not only highlights that the doctoral process is colonised and exclusionary but also that resistance and agentic action (active subjectivity) is embedded in the processes of academic identity formation for marginalised subjects. The actions of my participants in choosing to be silent, walking away or performing subjectivity are not all mere acts of failure of agency, according to Lugones, although they cannot act, they are active as "a serpent coiled"

(2005, 91). The image of a coiled serpent represents germinative stasis, a state where one is aware of their own oppression and observes themselves being oppressed, this knowledge brings paralysis and lack of action. In this state, one continues to perform servile acts to mask the feelings of intimate terror.

> *I learn quickly what relates to me, and what is part of me. Anything that you teach me that is irrelevant to me I quickly shut automatically. So, what I'm saying is, we go to learn all these European ways but deep inside you, feel that it is not a part of you. I don't even remember what they were teaching me. Now, I just learn so that I could pass and get out. So, I can get the degree but at the end of the day, you are like, "Oh man this thing is not right." For my literature review, it is last week or from the beginning of this month for example that I have started learning about my history, you know? You always learn it last, I'm like why was this thing hidden all the way why was it not in school. Why did I have to learn all those European ways things when I was supposed to learn about who I was before I become you know whom they have made me now to be? Which is what keeps on happening we think we are advancing; you do your PhD; we go and stay in suburbs and we are staying in a community that isolates itself from what is happening and that is the same thing that is happening in academia – you start being more isolated. But this knowledge, it is not in my being (Andisiwe).*

Kandau and Andisiwe's decisions to stay can be read as complacency because a mere acknowledgment and awareness of oppression is not in itself liberatory. However, this paralysis of action in *Coatlicue* can propel one to begin the work of reconstruction away from oppressive dichotomies. Both participants continue to perform what Anzaldúa calls servile activity:

> *In order to escape the threat of shame or fear, one takes on a compulsive, repetitious activity as though too busy oneself, to distract oneself, to keep awareness at bay…repeating, repeating, to prevent oneself from "seeing." … Held in thrall by one's obsession, by… addiction, one is not empty enough to become possessed by anything or anyone else… [O]ne does not "see" and awareness does not happen. One remains ignorant of the fact that one is afraid, and that it is fear that holds one petrified, frozen in stone (1987, 67).*

The linear liminal thresholds within the doctoral process become a way of distracting from oppression and as both participants allude, the aim of "just finishing" is a goal that is associated with liberation. However, as argued to by Lugones, this is a state of stasis because "the activity, the going to and fro has no destination, no point except keeping us steady and inward" (2005, 95). Moments of contact with oppressive structures, which are continually cyclical for

marginalised agents rupture the dominant linear narratives yet these two in colonial spaces work together, in relation, as two opposing sides. This opposition is continual, as oppression and resistance are never closed and accomplished states of being. The emphasis given to the linear within dominant discourses, policy frameworks and even in the narratives of my participants gives the illusion that the completion of a PhD has in itself some liberatory elements. However, the imposition of dominating/Western onto-epistemologies ripples through the formative years of intellectual identity formation into the years when one becomes a professional. Elsewhere in Andisiwe's narrative, a Black lecturer who was seen to be problematic was demoted and reduced to lecturing Ethics to silence his push towards the inclusion of African and Black scholars in the curriculum. This imposition is thus an imposition of servile work on the marginalised bodies – as a way to distract them and silence subversion. The linear thresholds of the PhD are not in themselves problematic, but they can become systematic ways of excluding and delegitimising alternative onto-epistemologies, particularly in the case of my participants, who see liberation and authenticity as something to be achieved outside the doctoral process.

> *At the time, I just spoke to myself because I really at the moment either speak like, what exactly do you mean about that statement, who is philosophy open to that if is not open to someone like me? What does that mean? I wanted to ask a question, but I started asking myself because then I would be a problematic Black. I would have been put in the range of problematic Blacks. It would have been too emotional, but she asked a question, she asked me what I am doing in that department. I just laughed and I walked away, but yah, welcome to the University of \*\*\*\*\*. It has been an experience – a harm. But sadly, you learn, in many respects, you learn to forget all that, at some point, you learn that okay Black is not welcomed here. You learn to make peace with the reality of what Blackness is. But as I say, one of the things that I think is hard is that knowledge, yes it might be that. But they need me, and, in many respects, we need each other (Kandau).*

In his inaction, Kandau is aware that his intentions and actions will be co-opted and obscured. Lugones describes the stage as a coming to understand one's own possibilities "not through acting, but through not acting, since at this stage all acting would be oppressed activity carrying out servile activity". Fanon describes the experience of colonial domination through the imagery of amputation and burning flesh, "no longer having a space of his own, not even in the intimacy of his very own body, his body is trampled upon, ripped apart, distorted, and occupied by the encroaching and oppressive subject" (quoted in Verhage 2014, 114).

This is where Western agency fails the marginalised and alienised body, epistemic exclusion is a race, sex, gender, disability issue and other forms of exclusions. Making sense and rational intentionality in accordance with the White gaze, offers no space for, tramples and distorts the other's actions. In this way, inaction in the *Coatlicue* state becomes a form of resistance. For example, in the case of the student protests, Moses argues that action only served to polarise the academic space even further and resulted into further foreclosure of alternative/problematic knowledges and people. Booi, Vincent, and Liccardo (2017, 503-504) argue that the 'right kind' of Black candidates is carefully identified by their familiarity with the university's existing 'way of doing things' and whether their embodied dispositions reflect the dominant White middle-class institutional cultures. These individuals are recognised or approved by White senior academics as legitimate candidates for their inclusion into academia. The individuals who do not possess these characteristics or do not want to be the 'right kind' of Black candidates are alienated by the institutional culture.

> *But not surprisingly, [in] some of these universities its Black professors very well-known Black professors who show a level of discomfort with the decolonial theory... Following the student protest some departments are very uncomfortable with decolonial theory, so even at \*\*\*\*\* University, there are academics who, when I was presenting my proposal loved my topic but wanted me to change my theoretical lens. Most academics, they are very aversive of supervising decolonial theory, particularly at PhD level. Look, I think what the student protests did when it comes to academia was to question what academics have been doing in their scholarship, so students were critiquing how traditional academics have been drawing from the Global North and most academics in South African universities, particularly in the historically White universities, have been using theories from the Global North not from the Global South. So, that's critiquing their identity as academics. So from my experience, my interpretation of the situation was that it created a discomfort amongst scholars and some of them it was not a negative discomfort, but it was a very difficult discomfort (Moses).*

This is not to argue against student protests or diminish their importance, but to highlight how dominant structures distort the agentic action of marginalised bodies and use it to discipline and punish what they perceive as insubordination. Given the conditions that disenfranchised bodies encounter, Lugones reasons that agency (active subjectivity) should be defined not only as "discrete actions yielding clear victories; rather, but it also encompasses the dispositions, thoughts, and glances that make critiques of oppression thinkable" (Chang et al. 2018, 3). This notion expands our definitions of agency to incorporate alternative forms of resisting which

might be inward and not visible to the oppressor but are sensitive to signs and meanings within multiple and intermeshed worlds of sense. Action cannot always be read as possessing agency and inaction does not always translate to complacency. This is well illustrated in Sikho's narrative:

> *It was not immediate because I didn't scrutinize it, or I didn't unpack – it was too much, man. It went on until I started recording, until I embarked on this artistic journey where I had to define myself you know and then I started questioning: as an artist who I am going to be? What am I going to do? I do not know why I didn't pursue it earlier.. I don't know man. I can't know. I don't know what I was doing. I think I was still in the mist. When I came back, I worked with a few famous artists and then I was touring with them, I think what I was doing is that I was just playing with random artists, you know, just playing their music, but it was none of my music, you know? That's what I think I was probably doing but I never took it upon me the responsibility of awakening other people, you know? I just don't know why. I don't have an answer as to why I didn't show and do the right immediately when I saw it, you know? But the work I probably have is to forgive myself that probably it was too big for me to digest.*

In his academic and artistic identity formation, Sikho reaches a period of stasis. Whilst in Andisiwe and Kandau's narrative, stasis is as a result of the oppressive system that renders action impossible or defines it as being problematic, for Sikho, stasis is a form of escape from the awareness of his oppression. However, even in his stasis, Sikho is making a commitment to not duplicate oppressive epistemologies and his past errors, he allows for isolation from making music to escape, on one side, returning to his past oppressed Self and, on the other, as a denial of the need to transform. He broods over his condition. Based on Anzaldúa in this state, "you nurture the idea by ignoring it; you sit on your eggs," yet you continue doing servile acts to keep yourself distracted. After beginning the process of identity re-creation in accordance with his lived realities whilst in the USA, Sikho on arrival in SA abandons that music altogether and stops making his own music. He refuses to retreat to his oppressed ways, but he also becomes paralysed and begins to perform what Anzaldúa terms 'neurotic activity' – he works for other artists, making other people's music and touring. Sikho is in the *Coatlicue* state,

> *paralyzed by fear but instead of retreating into one of the oppressed selves and feeling safe in servile activity, (he) dwells in the paralysis and senses its cause:*

> *the very possibility of liberation, of ceasing ordinary life, or ordinary life as*
> *oppressed (Keating 2005, 94).*

His inaction was thus not a lack of agency – he was aware of his responsibilities, which he then took on as he came out of *Coatlicue* and began curating his artistic and academic identity.

> *You ask them if we can treat each other differently, you repeat it. Nothing*
> *happens, so I mean I don't know, it's like one of those things where you say*
> *I'm not going to talk about this thing anymore. You find other survival*
> *mechanisms. So, its yah if I put it perfectly, it's to use my frustration more*
> *productively. So, I think that's why I'm doing, because what once happened*
> *before is I would to come back home in this state you know, from work and*
> *then it affects other people at home. I needed to use that anger in a more*
> *productive way, if I can put it like that and I think that doing other work*
> *elsewhere, writing especially. So, I think it emerges from frustration and the*
> *acknowledgement that I'm not winning in the matter. I have been addressing*
> *this issue for the past ten years, I'm not winning. I'm just going around in*
> *circles the same people I'm talking with the same issues. I'm not getting*
> *anywhere, surely. I should find other ways of [approaching] this matter. So*
> *maybe other people may disagree with me, I think I disagree with a lot of*
> *people on that, but it works for me, I think. It keeps me sane if I may put it like*
> *that. For me, it's the feeling of despair so I have been broken down, but I think*
> *I have managed to solve out of that because I'm able to control my anger. I*
> *can say I'm able to control it (Tsepo).*

In Miranda's view,

> *displaying a passion for one's culture is a radical risk for people of difference*
> *within the academy: passion or anger, fear, pleasure, commitment—becomes*
> *synonymous with primitive, and that primitive voice is then okay to discount,*
> *deride, or even turn against itself (Miranda, 2002, 195).*

Tsepo becomes aware that the emotional responses are used as a justification to delegitimise and de-politicise his actions and do not yield any productive results for Self or the liberatory project. Through the doctoral process Tsepo becomes aware of how the multiplicities of his oppression are the manifestation of structural and systemic injustices. He begins to see himself through the obsidian mirror, himself in-between being pressed, broken down and in despair. However, his feelings that he is losing rest on the assumption that one arrives at a juncture where resistance is achieved. In any space colonised by monolithic dominating narratives and

dominated by a class afraid of losing their "material and psychological privilege, they drown others' voices with white noise". In Tsepo's case white noise is the continuing questions about his abilities and the enactment of colonial unknowing by his white colleagues through the denial of systematic racism and prejudice. Hence, resisting is a cyclical and repetitive act which materialises in various ways. Tsepo starts mobilising other strategies away from oppositional politics, thus finding other ways to engage and negotiate his frustrations. Tsepo narrates how he started to disengage from working groups and task teams that aimed at addressing issues of racism:

> *At work, we have had a committee – our own middle management group – that met with management and explained issues pertaining to systematic racism to them. So, there is that group we have that is addressing these issues, but in a workspace it's very complex you, see? For me at work, I'm not interested in any promotion. Just last month, my boss asked me to act because he was off and I told him I don't act because I don't have to be in the front role of racism, I can't work with those people because they are racists, I put it like that. I had to put it like that. So, I refused to act in the workspace and that group that we have is very problematic because I'm aware that. As much as they come as a group to address common issues, I'm aware that people in that group for example, to get a promotion and that's not the purpose for the project. It's not for us to get promoted but to eradicate the exclusionary culture (Tsepo).*

Although Tsepo acknowledges the necessity of being part of some of these groups and meetings he realises that they can become repetitive acts of 'saying the same thing to the same people' yet effecting no change. In Anzaldúa's view marginalised agents often feel the temptation to engage in political activities such as demonstrations and passing out leaflets without engaging with the Self terrorised internally, as though oppression did not materialise and touch the Self. The act of simultaneously refusing promotions and disengaging from groups that style themselves as 'the resistance', Tsepo refuses to implicate himself as a collaborator to the systematic and structural injustices and to the engagement in oppositional politics that do not serve to dismantle oppression. Tsepo positions himself between two dominant narratives and in disengaging from them as a way to deconstruct the Self in space and start making sense, he embodies *Coatlicue*.

## Conclusion

According to Warren (2018), although the Black being has been fundamentally constituted spatially as an outside problem, he argues that since the question of ontology provides the foundation for possibilities and transformation it is also an intimate question of the inside. The marginalized body becomes a site of "projection and absorption" of ontological ambiguities and terror (Warren 2018, 30). The darkness of *Coatlicue* is symbolic of ontological ambiguities that the marginalized embody, and the anxieties and terror they result in. At this stage, terror is two sided – on the one hand, it is the result of the internalization of oppression and at the other, it is the awareness of terror and resisting that might lead to ontological nihilism. This chapter highlights that doctoral students embody *Coatlicue* as they become aware of their oppression within academia. As they see themselves performing acts of servitude and being collaborators to their own suppression, there is a paralysis of action – disillusioned by their condition, but also gradually dismantling complacency and refusing to be implicated in their own suppression.

# Chapter 8: El Compromiso

## Introduction

*El compromiso* directly translates to 'the commitment'. During this stage, one becomes committed to self-transformation and change. This is a deliberate conscious or unconscious action to separate oneself from the conventional yet oppressive norms that once shaped one's realities. Whilst *Coatlicue* is a crossroads of choice between the familiar and comfortable and new and unfamiliar, this stage marks the beginning of the work of redefinition away from oppressive structures and onto-epistemologies. Anzaldúa asserts that at most this stage happens unconsciously, and it is through the use of *autohistoria* that we get to reclaim these moments, including the *arrebatos* that lead us to these moments. In most cases, my participants could not identify a single moment they could relate to this stage, but it is mostly intertwined with other stages. As one confronts the various forms of oppression which manifest as moments of arrythmia, there is a simultaneous move towards finding balance and eurhythmia. The options for reaching eurhythmia are to either go back to your oppressed self, or to allow the arrhythmic moments to reveal new pathways to balance within the polyrhythmic ensemble.

However, to subjects facing various forms of oppression, balance or eurhythmia is not a utopic moment of resistance and victory – it is the integration and absorption of arrhythmic moments into polyrhythmia. Lefevebre's wave metaphor of powerful waves crashing upon one another, disrupting one another then, "absorbing, fading, rather than crashing, into one another" rightly illustrates the balance in opposing forces (2004: 79). Lefebvre argues that each eurhythmic moment already contains arrhythmic qualities characterised by breaks, pauses and ruptures of the mundane. Lefebvre uses the metaphors of opposing forces to theorise how different moments embody a different kind of sociality and how the transfer between 'continuity to discontinuity' for example, can be a pivotal moment to reveal nuanced relations between people and how identities are negotiated and contested. As Anzaldúa puts it, the movement toward knowledge/*conocimiento* sometimes involves *desconocimiento*, rupture, and *Coatlicue*. She holds that "the knowledge that exposes [one's] fears can also remove them" (2002, 553) and "detours are always part of the path" (554). Romero expounds that at this stage one enters into a:

> *"Trance" state as she engages, sifts, sorts, and permits particular wishes/images to emerge and be manipulated by her conscious mind. In this re-entry stage, "nothing is fixed," but rather everything is converging—fluidity, creativity, and the ever-changing elements of identity become more rooted in the discovery of the self. Knowledge prompts the spirit to shift into new perceptions, emerging from within the conscious self to transform aspects toward a new identity (Romero 2011, 26).*

In his story, Sikho states that his transformation can be traced in his music, from album to album, as he gains new perspectives about his identity. He argues that some of his music is reflective, illustrating maturity in his identity and more authentic to his lived realities. As the shift in his identity occurs, his experience reveals that *conocimiento* is a cyclical process that one undergoes at various stages in life, it is never complete. Romero defines this stage as an invitational pull to let go of the old Self and move toward a new identity.  In his commitment, Sikho continually tries to draw from what has now become unfamiliar but constitutes his home narratives. Anzaldúa posits that as the point various worlds admonish one "to stick to the old-and-tried dominant paradigm, the secure relationships within it," one begins to search for "remnants of one's community'. She argues that those who have crossed the bridge into the borderlands before you, through their written and spoken words become shamans to hold your hand, mentor you in your crossing and as you transform yourself. This is revealed in my participants' desire to access alternative texts and epistemologies that spoke to their lived experiences. Kandau characterises this desire as hunger:

> *The African philosopher does philosophy because they want to respond to the European who says we don't have philosophy, so that's African philosophy. I am no longer concerned with that. I am into Africana philosophy, which is concerned with, in part, the African archive. So, Africana philosophy does not concern itself with mechanisms, ethics of epistemology and ontology. It turns to African poetry, music, and art; to all that because it is concerned with the phenomenological existence of Blacks. In a very nice way, Africana philosophy is concerned with Blacks in Africa. So yes, I was naïve. Yes, I didn't know anything about it, I didn't know a damn thing about it all, but I was hungry for that kind of knowledge (Kandau).*

Kandau's statement relates to the institution where his identity as a legitimate knower was nurtured. His desire was to access epistemologies that had been hidden and erased from

dominant discursive frameworks. During apartheid, the erasure of the Black archive was overt, involving burning and censuring of African literature. However, post-apartheid, it is more subtle, taking the form of misrecognition, misinterpretation, and the obscuring of African literature. These subtle forms of erasure are facilitated, in part, by disciplinary structures and academics who act as onto-epistemic gatekeepers and spatial practices that recruit marginalised bodies as collaborators to their own erasure and oppression.

This chapter will, therefore, explore the experiences of participants as they begin confronting the various shadow beasts that guard identity thresholds. Anzaldúa forewarns that you have to be ready to confront the:

> *Shadow-beast guarding the threshold—that part of you holding your failures and inadequacies, the negativities you've internalized, and those aspects of gender and class you want to disown? Recognizing and coming to terms with the manipulative, vindictive, [and] secretive shadow-beast (Anzaldúa 2002, 557).*

## Sifting through the myths

> *We have to unlearn the impulse of allowing mythologies to replace knowing'' ( Alexander 2002, 91).*

> *Knowing that something in you, or of you, must die before something else can be born; you throw your old self into the ritual pyre, a passage by fire. In relinquishing your old self, you realize that some aspects of who you are—identities people have imposed on you… and that you have internalized—are also made up. Identity becomes a cage you reinforce and double-lock yourself into. The life you thought inevitable, unalterable, and fixed in some foundational reality is smoke, a mental construction, fabrication. So, you reason, if it's all made up, you can compose it anew and differently. (Anzaldúa 2002, 558).*

Within our identities are myths infused through our cultures, sedimented spatial practices and dominant discourses – the subtle and unspoken warnings against insubordination and abnormality. As Sikho states, "bongabokuncaneokhuthwalayookukhuluuzakuthathapi meaning, "*be thankful for the little that you have [now], where are you going, you will not get a/the big piece*". Although this statement in its cultural context carries a lot of symbolic meaning, when transplanted to dominant discourses its meaning becomes perverted and appropriated to regulate and discipline subservient bodies – those that are labelled as outlaws and renegades of one's cultural and Western mythos. Drawing from Mzo's narrative, being born out of wedlock severed him from everything that socially counted as 'manhood' in his culture. Being a 'bastard' – carrying his mother's clan name and surname, and the characterisation of his mother as an outlaw:

> *smoking cigarettes, drinking, and also having multiple partners and not having a man that one is committed… By virtue of being born in that situation the conversations that you overhear about your up-bringing, about who you are, your identity, about your place within community and within society because obviously when you don't have a father in an African society you hold a lesser place (Mzo).*

By virtue of being born in such circumstances, in his culture, it was an ultimate shame to manhood and thus a betrayal of his cultural norms. Clarke holds that "patriarchal domination is buttressed by the subjugation of women through heterosexuality. So, patriarchs must extol the boy-girl dyad as 'natural' to keep us straight and compliant" (Clarke 1981, 130). Against this backdrop, like Mzo by circumstance or by choice, one who disidentifies "lives dangerously" (Clarke 1981, 130). In coming to the university, Mzo is met with yet another bitter disappointment with the academy wanting to silence his lived realities. Mzo laments that when he came to the master's and doctoral space, he had hoped to begin to curate his intellectual identity drawing from his lived realities but was confronted by reproval and ultimately being disowned. It is in this instance – at once oppressed and at once resisting that Mzo begins to see the "universities underbelly, academia's sordid politics and values" (Martínez 2002, 46). However, it is in that same feminism course that he began to disidentify with academia's narration of masculinity and feminism, and to deflect the attempts to binarise his identity as either male or female.

Postgraduate studies, especially doctoral spaces, are perceived as spaces of intellectual plurality and a space to nurture intellectual growth. In the case of several of my participants, this is not the case – they are confronted with a space that alienates and hands them token gestures. In academia, my participants (such as Mzo), by virtue of being Black or belonging to marginalized groups, have to confront epistemic erasure and cultural amnesia which is meant to mask the origins of dominant spatial practices and educational myths. In this regard, marginalized bodies that are concocting their identity away from imposed and cultivated binaries always must sift through their inherited myths.

Miranda and Keating believe that mythologies always have two interpretations where the dominant narratives rationalize the perpetuation of oppressive and essentialist myths as a means of racialising and dehumanizing the other. Thus, the oppressed/resisting view mythology as the colonisation and rewriting of their identities and "their souls" (2002, 204). In Blanchard's opinion "often the academy, despite its objections, is vested in viewing the term Black scholar as an oxymoron… a sure sign of affirmative action diluting the genius inherent to a White male institution" (2002, 255-256). Blanchard holds that marginalized bodies must wrestle with the prevailing myths that Black students, especially women of colour, are accepted into postgraduate studies as a form of affirmative action. This narrative results in the parading of Black students as tokens and symbols for faculty/disciplinary/departmental progressiveness. However, the presence of the Black body is not expected to translate to onto-epistemic visibility on the contrary the myth of Black presence on affirmative action functions in unison with Western mythic structures of subservient and docile Black bodies see for example in Andisiwe's case:

*There was a point in time when the dean met me and he said to me, "You look rather sick." And I said to him, "Being at university is rather difficult". And the thing is we were with company so the dean always likes to parade me as his token star in the faculty, he says to me, "You look rather sick." And I caught myself out to say, "we are in company." But I wanted to say it has [not] been easy to exist being Black in the University of \*\*\*\*, but I thought I shouldn't be airing our dirty laundry in public, but it was the truth of the matter. On Facebook, on Instagram they are all of these wonderful pictures. They are all of happy women captured and everybody thinks I'm doing so well. I'm doing totally good presenting papers, publishing and people think "she is having a great time" because you are doing so well in publishing. People don't take the time and think to sit back and ask themselves questions*

> *of what the hell is positioned underneath, what's underneath the calculus*
> *publication.*

Andisiwe realizes that as the only Black woman in her department, she gives the department a progressive window dressing. She is also aware of the role she is expected to enact to act the part of a well behaved, docile, and passive body or as Kandau puts it, not to be a "problematic Black". The myths that foreground the narratives that Black presence is a dilution of demographics are destructive to the academic identity of Black students. They at one hand, shoulder the weight of being a good representation of a 'good Black academic' whilst vanguards safeguard the sanctity of dominant and mainstream thought. In keeping with Blanchard (2002, 256), acting from this myth of Black presence as just politically driven affirmative action, vanguards of Western thought discourage the research efforts of Black scholars,

> *Not in any real attempt at helping us focus our scholarship, but rather to*
> *safeguard the sanctity of current thought. They relate to us through an old*
> *pattern of patriarchy, and they don't hear us…whether we scream or whether*
> *we whisper (Blanchard 2002, 246).*

Although Andisiwe is experiencing oppression, she shoulders the burden of having to save face and perform the identity of a 'good' Black doctoral scholar and academic. The subjectivities imposed by these myths fracture her reality – where she wears a performative mask and subsequently internalizes her oppression. Even in her productiveness as an academic Andisiwe still must confront myths of Black intellectual inferiority on one hand and meritocracy as the measurement of doing well in academia. Keating (2002, 527) argues that the myth of universalism coupled with the myth of meritocracy that frames academia as a neutral space which rewards hard work "makes students callous and judgmental: they blame the individual for his or her failure to succeed". She maintains that this belief is condescending and negates "how racism, sexism, and other forms of oppressive discrimination impede attempts to achieve success" (527). In this case, persistence becomes a means to overcome mythologies that limit her onto-epistemologies and fracture being.

In South Africa, superimposing on the myths of Black intellectual inferiority is the historical division between historically Black/disenfranchised and historically White/enfranchised

universities. Historically, being from a predominantly Black institute was stigmatized and one's intellect questioned:

> *Well, first even before I got here, we are given this perception that people at Rhodes they are smart, smarter than everyone but then, at first of course, when a person speaks in a certain way, speaks really good English, really fast and then you are like, "Yoh, wow this person seems to be ahead of me." Then after a few months then you realize, knowing good English is not a measure of intelligence. So, it's at first because you are still scared and you freeze sort of even your mind freezes if you are scared, even if you have the right ideas, you won't be able to express yourself (Andile).*

Andile highlights two important points, firstly the myth of intelligent White institution students vs. inferior Black university counterparts. Secondly the myth that language is connected to intellect. As Andile sifts through these myths he fractures mythological structures that caricaturise students from previously Black institutes. In this narrative, there are two things at play – Black institutes were poorly equipped during apartheid structurally and epistemologically resulting in curriculum fragmentation and a suboptimal history of knowledge that must now be disavowed. To contend that these injustices have been dismantled and universities now enjoy equal access is an ahistoric and apolitical conclusion. White institutions continue to enjoy their privileged position as the epicentres of knowledge creation and dissemination in South Africa. Badat, commenting on the post-apartheid higher education system in South Africa notes,

> *[The] inherited higher education system was designed, in the main, to reproduce, through teaching and research, White and male privilege and Black and female subordination in all spheres of society. All higher institutions were, in differing ways and to differing extents, deeply implicated in this. The higher education 'system' was fragmented, and institutions were differentiated along the lines of race and ethnicity (Badat 2004: 3-4).*

 Khumalo posits that within HWU's, Black students continue to be marginalised and experience ontological displacement through the denial of their onto-epistemologies and lived experiences. According to Khumalo, in this space Black students within HWU's are "natives of nowhere" (Kumalo 2018, 1).  Lebakeng, Phalane and Dalindjebo's (2006: 72) argue that the

exclusionary practice within universities leaves students feeling alienated and "unhomed". Instead of the university space being a home for intellectual inquiry, 'home' becomes a code word for the universalisation of Western onto-epistemologies and the assimilation of the Black subject into White and inauthentic identities. As unhomed natives of nowhere, I argue that Black doctoral students traverse academe as border-dwellers – both within and without the ivory tower. Within defined as presence in perceived space and without as onto-epistemically invisible. To further complicate their positionality – whilst by virtue of being a doctoral student they are framed as knowledge making apprentices, the onto-epistemic marginalisation they confront de-legitimises them as valid knowers. In the case of Andile, a Rhodes University student is not defined merely as a White student but as someone "conversant with the mores and cultural values which dominate the historically White university" (Khumalo 2018, 9). Coming from a historically Black university as a Black doctoral student further alienates him. Not only does he confront myths around Blackness and intellectuality but also the intellectual inferiority of Black students from historically Black institutions. However, Hlatshwayo reasons that, the Black student who has become conversant, may seem better positioned, but they "experience a double consciousness of accessing privilege in historically white universities while at the same time feeling isolated, depressed, gendered, racialised and excluded in the academy" (2021, 170).

Andile's experiences of feeling 'frozen' and of questioning his intellectual capabilities as a student from a historically Black university is an embodied manifestation of ontological terror resulting from the structures of apartheid. Although apartheid as a state system has been dismantled for more than two decades, its roots are still entrenched in the institutions of the academe – systematic racism, epistemic injustices, and ontological negation. Khumalo argues that for Black students within historically White universities belonging/citizenship entails the abdication of one's identity and allowing one's Self to be "domesticated" as narrated by Kandau. Dressage in this space not only involves the breaking in of the Black student into Western epistemic norms, but their indoctrination with White mythologies that criminalise and denigrate alternative ways of knowing and being.  Based upon White mythologies, Black students often must prove their intellect and their academic identity according to dominant epistemic and ontological traditions, such traditions alienate Black experiences and those of other marginalised groups. As highlighted by Andile, language becomes one of the ways that students perform and prove their academic identity. The inability to master or possess a good command of English reinforces the stereotype of the "undereducated, inadequate, incorrigible

savage who is unable to master her own passions, much less the English language and a classroom full of students" (Miranda 2002, 195). Langston argues,

> *Our language indicates conscious decisions about whom we want to speak to… Scholars must realize the impact of our language choices. We have a right to speak our minds, but must recognize the tremendous responsibility our words carry, act in ways that are careful of others, speak straight, use our words to express practical wisdom and show respect (2002, 79).*

In his narrative, Andile addresses the tone and speed of language which represents one's command of language. A good command of language is equated to higher order thinking. Speaking on the influence of language on identity, Banerjee states that "language is your passport", she argues that there are spaces where for belonging, subjects strive to shed their accent to gain access and belonging. However, in abandoning authenticity we only confirm the myths that link English and Anglophone speakers to higher order thinking and prejudice difference. However, the implications of language highlighted by Langston in constructing reality, and as a carrier of experiences, necessitate us to deconstruct the ways in which we, through language, essentialise and marginalise. There are various ways in which language has been used as a tool of domination and erasure. I argue that language as a carrier of experiences and meaning, also narrates mythologies into reality, the dominant culture usurps the power of language to irrationalise and mythologise other ways of knowing whilst posing its own myths as absolute objective reality. Cervenak and colleagues (2002) argue that academe has structured language in a dichotomy on common language and theoretical language, where common language is the carrier of lived experiences and theoretical language represents high order thinking. This dichotomy serves to "devalue personal experience as a way of knowing while emphasizing the knowledge of high theory as the only 'real' route toward making sense of the world. Such theory is used against people to silence, censor, humiliate, and devalue [them]" (349).

Whilst theory is not in itself emancipatory, it can open avenues to a third space: "a place where one can presumably find a sanctuary, can imagine possible futures, a place where life [can] be lived differently" (hooks 1994, 61). However, countering this theory by proposing to throw out all theory and English language, only reinforces binary thinking. The aim is to unearth mythological structures that rationalise the imposition of identity subjectivities. Moments of

sifting through some of the myths that impact identity development were almost always followed with the movement towards self-redefinition.

## Call to cross over

> *Not only do we find a space around us offering us openings for movements, but we also find it issuing compelling calls for us to act…more than just being, a space of possibilities open to our actions, it also has its own requirements… you're talking about working in the space (Watkins 2005, 213-214).*

To Anzaldúa, this phase symbolises a commitment to transformation, conversion and to the creation of meaning outside of dominant narratives, "a commitment to explore untrodden *caminos* – which means turning over all rocks, even those with worms underneath them" (Anzaldúa 2015, 97). At this point, one has confronted the shadow beast guarding the threshold and signifies the crossing of the boundary/bridge from the "one you've just left and the one ahead (and) is both a barrier and point of transformation… By crossing, you invite a turning point, initiate a change" (Anzaldúa 2002, 558). Conversion means a break from oppressive and imposed identity "and also entails relinquishing one's unjust power and privilege". One has to be able to confront and negotiate one's own privileged positions. Hence, conversion is a social process one goes through in relation to others and the material world. The idea of transformation and conversion does not mean a static coming into being, but the awareness that nothing is fixed, and the ever-changing elements of identity are a part of rediscovery and identity construction. The awareness that identity categories are not fixed introduces fluidity of perception, enabling one to "begin to define [her/him] Self in terms of who you are becoming, not who you have been" (556).

Anzaldúa uses the death and birth metaphors to illustrate this stage of *conocimiento.* The first four stages one is in-between change but at this stage, one accepts to die to the old Self and begins the process of rebirth. The dark and violent metaphor of death avoids the romanticising of transformation in *conocimiento*. Let me reiterate here that the stages of *conocimiento* are not linear and prescriptive, they can occur at different stages in life and as highlighted by Anzaldúa, one can make *Coatlicue* or *nepantla* their home. For most participants, the call cannot be identified as a single moment but is integrated in the various stages of *conocimiento*. If one takes the example of ontological terror and displacement, most of my participants are aware of

themselves being pressed in-between worlds and desire change. Desire, or as Anzaldúa terms it – passion promotes you to consciously cross the threshold and transform.

> *Okay, the group emerged because I raised an issue of racism in the branch and there is no one in their right mind who could done that in front of the managers. But for me I didn't do it because I'm brave, I didn't do it because I got nothing to lose – I got a lot to lose. Like I need money to pay my son's school fees, but it was a matter where I could not breathe. I had to raise it because I couldn't take it anymore.  So, I had a discussion with my classmate who also recently completed his PhD, we drafted a document highlighting [issues] of systematic racism and the sort which I literally just read it out during the meeting (Tsepo).*

Anzaldúa asserts that crossing is a risky business because we are never sure of the consequences of crossing. The theme of systematic racism dominates most of Tsepo's narrative. He views his intellectual identity as a continuous confrontation with systems that oppress and silence Black bodies. In *nepantla*, Tsepo characterises himself as angry and fighting. Yet as he starts becoming aware of the limitations of his approach to transform his material, cognitive and lived spaces he slips into *Coatlicue*, becoming paralyzed and choosing to distance himself from any conversations and activities that symbolise a performance of resistance. Breaking out of *Coatlicue* in Tsepo's narrative is characterised as him being "unable to breathe" or "take it anymore". In this moment Tsepo breaks the paralysis of *Coatlicue* and enacts *el compromiso* in relation to others like minded and his dominators. He states:

> *I think then I was angry, and I wanted to fight, I wanted to deal with these people, I was dealing with people but with the conversations that we had with like-minded people I realised that we need to deal with the structure (Tsepo).*

Tsepo brings up several points that one experiences at the beginning of their crossing. Firstly, there is a commitment to separate from oppressive worlds and one's entrenched beliefs. Anzaldúa frames agency, not merely as a question of what is being done to us, but what we are doing to others and to space. There is a symbiotic relationship between space, time, and the body as they work collaboratively as co-creators of knowledge, ideologies, beliefs, and myths. Tsepo, before embarking on his PhD journey, defined resisting by anger and confrontation. Similarly, Moses defined resisting in the binaries of us/them and White/Black. These two positions not only fragmented conceived space by further entrenching epistemic polarisation, but also as highlighted by Moses and discussed earlier fragment physical space.

Transformation framed within this perspective of absolute opposites is a form of exclusionary identity politics. The bridge as conceptualised by Anzaldúa is not a crossing from one competing worldview to the next, but a crossing into a third space doing away with demarcations like ours/theirs.

> *It's about honouring people's otherness in ways that allow us to be changed by embracing that otherness rather than punishing others for having a different view, belief system, skin colour, or spiritual practice. Diversity of perspectives expands and alters the dialogue, not in an add-on fashion but through a multiplicity that's transformational, such as in mestiza consciousness. To include whites is not an attempt to restore the privilege of white writers, scholars, and activists; it is a refusal to continue walking the colour line. To include men (in this case, feminist-oriented ones) is to collapse the gender line. These inclusions challenge conventional identities and promote more expansive configurations of identities—some of which will soon become cages and have to be dismantled (Anzaldúa 2002, 4).*

I define my participants as *nepantleras* because, as part of their crossing, they become cognisant of the violence of despotic dualities and framing identity within narratives of opposition. Keating reasons that the danger in being a *nepantlera* is that, to dominant narratives of resisting, one can be seen as a collaborator and thus, there is always the temptation to "manage the voices, allow only those conforming to your beliefs, your identity politics, your vision" (2002, 15). She highlights that within narratives of resisting and transformation, there are two contradictory trends – one that continues to rely on identity politics and specific geo-body location, and another that recognizes the many "differences among us yet insists on our commonalities and uses these commonalities as catalysts for transformation" (2002, 18). So, whilst the culture of identity politics holds on to binary identity categories, crossing demands that we let them go. In my participants' narratives, the awareness of the fiction of binaries and identity politics is both the invitation to cross over, and the bridge that needs to be crossed.

The second issue that Tsepo raises is the fact that crossing over is a dangerous process and carries consequences for the border dweller. To Tsepo, the choice to cross over is not a matter of courage or bravery but necessitated by the uninhabitable spaces he is forced to traverse as a marginalised body. Anzaldúa states that although c*onocimiento* and crossing is painful, it is not as painful as *deconocimiento*, the refusal to know/act, and capitulation. For most of my participants, acting was accompanied by some kind of trade-off.

*We are so myopic in our thinking as philosophers because we seek to conceal the locus of enunciation but when we conceal the loci of the enunciation. first of all, we have confused the loci of enunciation and then we proceed to make students think it's okay. Yah, so and, this is really what woke me up to say let me finish my degree, let me get out because I was looking for something different in my scholarship. I love the department, but I have to get out, otherwise I will hate the university itself. For instance, my particular question at the moment is to argue this and I wanted to do it here this year, but honestly maybe I might to it next year when I'm upstairs, in Politics. I want to start the project of building theory from an African perspective using African language because there is so much that we have in our languages, in our ways of thought, that is undervalued, undermined, and taken for granted. This department would have been a good place to start that work but because we are so sophisticated on importing theory from the North how does that openly happen? How does that begin in the university space? As I said, I don't think I can do it here, I think I will be doing it upstairs in Politics. (Kandau)*

*The curriculum texts one has to read authors like Shakespeare and all of those. I mean, I found value in those books… I was very enthusiastic to see what is happening in the writing once I was at school, but it was not the stuff that I picked up in those books that I still hold on to but was the stuff from the other texts I read on my own, which is essentially of South African poetry. My dad had hoped I [would] become an engineer and [write] that Western style of writing but that is not the stuff I hold on to. I stopped writing in that way and also my grades dropped as I focused more on my artistic work as a cultural activist. I realised that change had come, and that I was no longer interested in the sort of essays that look at how to develop a debate. I was not interested in that. I was interested in having certain conversations and the narratives came out of a space that was also musical and I think that came out much stronger in the writing. (Khoza)*

Anzaldúa argues that,

*change is never comfortable, easy, or neat. It'll overturn all your relationships, leave behind lover, parent, friend, who, not wanting to disturb the status quo nor lose you, try to keep you from changing (2002, 558).*

She proposes that change is "resistance to ideological pressure—to risk leaving home and risking our safe spaces" (5). Kandau is unable to reconcile his love for philosophy and the scholarly identity he envisions. He realises that for him to perform his identity more authentically he has to risk leaving his disciplinary home. This trade-off is not simply about moving from one tradition of thought to the other but speaks to disciplinary practices that

silence and push out marginalised bodies, who are by consequence carriers of alternative onto-epistemologies. These strategies keep disciplines closed off and unwilling to engage in non-conceive dialogue with the other. Commenting on epistemic exclusion, Martinez (2002, 45) writes that, as she entered post-graduate programmes with the expectation of self-authoring and inclusion of her lived realities, she was soon disappointed that the "place that once fed (her) intellectual growth, now tried to silence (her)". She maintains that the ivory tower betrays and abandons the lived experiences and epistemic realities of marginalised bodies. Considering her experiences, Martinez decided to leave the university space and become a community educator, which one of her graduate professors called "such a waste!" (46). Martinez highlights that in shifting one's discipline, one also loses their legitimacy, which is also echoed in Kandau's narrative where he is delegitimised as a philosopher. The decision to leave a discipline or the university space, is in many ways an expulsion of marginalised bodies and epistemologies by making the space uninhabitable and unsafe, while giving the false illusion of choice. Anzaldúa also makes the same choice to leave the university space arguing that "I don't want to teach in a university, except for a special class, then only one. Universities can subvert you" (2000, 68).

In Khoza's case, his decision to pursuit liberal arts has caused tension between himself and his parents for a long time. Khoza is an above average student whose career prospects were wide, but after he matriculated, he pursued his passion of writing and 'cultural activism.' However, this is read as a betrayal by his parents and in the achievements, he has made, he has not been able to live up to their expectations. In the story of "Prietita", Anzaldúa highlights the tension crossing can have on personal relationships. In the story, Prietita, by befriending Joaquín, disobeys political and social structures, which causes tension between her and her childhood friends. Both Prietita and Joaquín choose to transgress imposed borders. Although this choice is the most humane, within the *status quo*, it is still read as defiance and rebellious. Similarly, Khoza's act of defiance is a realisation that "change had come". Inevitably, however, his relationships and belief systems were overturned. Thus, Khoza's narrative highlights that interpersonal relationships are often a trade-off that *nepantleras* are forced to make (to be discussed in more detail in chapter 11).

Thirdly, Tsepo's narrative highlights that crossing is relational. Keating describes *conocimiento* as,

> *an intensely personal, fully embodied epistemological process that gathers information from context, conocimiento is profoundly relational, and enables those who enact it to make connections among apparently disparate events, persons, experiences, and realities (2005, 8).*

Although crossing is an intimate process, it not only impacts the traverser but the various worlds that one exists in. Most participants' crossings are documented in their writings, art, and music. This documentation adds to the archive of alternative onto-epistemologies which impacts theirs and others conceived and lived spaces. The narration and documentation of alternatives is not only an invitation for others to cross over but empowers those who will cross after you. Anzaldúa (2002, 557) believes that "to transform yourself, you need the help (the written or spoken words) of those who have crossed before you. You want them to describe *las puertas*, to hold your hand while crossing them." Whilst my participants' search for alternative archives is an attempt to form an authentic academic identity, their efforts in writing and music contribute to that archive to guide those that will go through *compromiso*.

## Conclusion

> *The life you thought inevitable, unalterable, and fixed in some foundational reality is smoke, a mental construction, fabrication. So, you reason, if it's all made up, you can compose it anew and differently (Anzaldúa 2002, 558).*

This stage lies between inaction and action. Consciously or unconsciously, one makes the decision to begin the work of composing Self anew and differently. Most participants experienced this stage sub-consciously and as they traced their histories, putting them through a sieve through *autohistoria,* they were able to recognise the moments they "could not take it anymore" and recognised "change had come". Oppressive mythologies in disciplinary and theoretical traditions are aimed at regulating and disciplining the body (dressage). This entrainment is present at all levels and in all structures of the education system. Hence, this stage can be experienced in high school yet still profoundly impact the development of academic identity at doctoral level. Hence, as one traverses through all the levels of education and even after the doctorate level, there is a continuous need for the deconstruction and reconstruction of identity.

# Chapter 9: Putting *Coyolxauhqui* together

## Introduction

> *Personal experiences— revised and in other ways redrawn— become a lens with which to reread and rewrite the cultural stories into which we are born. (Keating 2005, 6)*

> *She is willing to... make herself vulnerable to foreign ways of seeing and thinking. She surrenders all notions of safety, of the familiar. Deconstruct, construct. She becomes a nahual, able to transform herself into a tree, a coyote, into another person. (Anzaldúa quoted in Sandoval 2000, 66).*

Identity construction is marked by moments of self-reflectivity and striving for wholeness. Anzaldúa reflects on how re-construction of Self is linked to wholeness of Self and interconnectedness "that is not embraced by traditional academic stories with disciplinary boundaries" (Bobel et al. 2006, 336). At this stage, *autohistoria* plays an important role in allowing one to sift through one's memories to see how imposed mythologies and one's own made-up mythologies have shaped one's identity. My interviews were bipartite – in the first part, participants were asked to narrate how they have experienced aspects of *conocimiento* from their formative years, up until the time of their interviews, and secondly, they narrated their current experiences of academia and identity formation. As already highlighted, participants constantly shifted from the formative experiences to their present experiences. I argue that identity construction moves beyond one's negotiation of their present challenges and the crossings one undertakes in spatial temporalities to the interrogation of how ethnic and dominant cultural myths have been internalised over time. The first step is to recognize the faulty pronouncements of, "disintegrating, often destructive stories of self, constructed by psychology, sociology, anthropology, biology, and religion… scrutinize the fruit they've borne, and then ritually disengage from them" (Anzaldúa 2002, 559).

At this stage, awareness and analysis come together, enabling one to move beyond germinative stasis and begin confronting the structural and systemic power imbalances that maintain and perpetuate oppressive narratives and identity fragmentation. One begins to acknowledge their positionality as a *nepantlera*, rejecting imposed boundaries – spatial, interpersonal, and epistemic. Engagement with one's identity as a *nepantlera* is not a romanticisation of identity or spatial hybridity but is a revision of one's various identities and an intervention against

dehumanising stories. As I listened to Sikho's story, I found this stage of *conocimiento* the most compelling. Whilst in the USA, Sikho can find his voice and begin the work of putting *Coyolxauhqui* back together in his musical creations, upon his return to South African academia, he abandons this process and finds himself falling into the darkness of *Coatlicue*. To avoid the work of putting together the fragmented Self, he isolates himself from making music and focuses instead on reproducing and performing the music of others. However, as he begins to put back the fragments, he continues the work of transformation that he had suspended, and he begins recreating music as a way of putting *Coyolxauhqui* back together again. Sikho's experience reveals that identity formation is rhythmic in nature, with pauses and breaks of dissonance but as highlighted in his experiences, these do not however, resemble a breakdown of polyrhythmia in *conocimiento*. His experience highlights the cyclical nature of *conocimiento* and the complexity of identity formation.

At this stage of *conocimiento,* the work of deconstruction and reconstruction is a simultaneous process. Deconstruction is a deliberate effort to remember *Coyolxauhqui* – by whom, and why she was dismembered. Fragmentation at this stage is the conscious action of taking apart one's multiple subjectivities to decide what to keep and what to leave behind. This process is ongoing, occurring whenever one experiences moments of arrythmia that force one to re-examine normativity and complacency in everyday life. The purpose of deconstruction is thus to make anew. However, as Anzaldúa highlights, "in this space, the aim is not necessarily to create a new stable story: [y]ou realize it's the process that's valuable and not the end product, not the new you, as that will change often throughout your life" (2002, 562).

I argue that for Black doctoral students, deconstruction. and reconstruction of Self is interwoven with the process of becoming, not only because of oppressive academic monocultures but also internalised ontologically exclusionary beliefs about intellectual identity.

In this section, deconstruction and reconstruction will be discussed simultaneously. The aim is not to merely prove the legitimacy of the theory, but also to show how participants are its embodied form. Thus far, I have been highlighting how various spatial practices and configuration, on the one hand, influence identity formation and, on the other, overlay the process of identity formation. This section illustrates how participants during the doctoral process, as a spatial temporality, experience the process of integrating their multiple

subjectivities. The doctoral space is thus just an example of how spatiality overlays the process of identity formation.

## Deconstruction and Reconstruction

> *People who live at the margins of categories provide an especially valuable starting point for exploring all the ways that identity can be deconstructed or reconstructed. (Mary Combs quoted in Milczarek-Desai 2002, 126).*
>
> *It got to a point where I started recording again and embarked on this artist journey where I had to define myself, you know? And then I started questioning that, as an artist, who am I going to be? What am I going to do? But it was not as conscious as when I recorded in 2018 – when I recorded an album which was now intentionally "home", which is the title is still "home" now I didn't have to prove anyone , I don't have to prove everything to anyone that I can do anything, you know? And then I just did the music. I didn't have to borrow from European if the structure of music closer to home is simple, I did it as simple. I didn't have to prove to any musician or any scholar that I can play because I have done it, man. I felt like I have done too much already to prove myself, that I'm worth[y]. So, I was intentionally no longer using the structural tools because I felt like, "until when am I going to use theories and all those things trying to align to American kind of or to the Western kinds of doing [things], you know? Until when?" Hence, with the album, I published in the first year of my PhD, even an ordinary musician from the village who didn't go to the university can play that music. Well, the gate keepers of jazz questioned it. Obviously, they undermined it, but I got to a point where that's not my fault, that's their fault, that's their ignorance. (Sikho)*

Sikho's experiences represent most of the lived realities of marginalised subjects within academia. As discussed extensively in previous sections, marginalised subjects who are committed to the liberatory and epistemic justice project are forced to construct their identities in onto-epistemic borderlands. Sikho's questions of his artistic and scholarly identity are in direct response to dominant paradigms that currently construct reality and shape worldviews and he begins to deconstruct the assumption that traditional Western epistemology is the best knowledge "system, the only true, impartial arbiter of reality" (Anzaldúa 2002, 560). One of the key challenges that marginalised bodies face is having to negotiate the rationality of Western universalism which poses difference as unstable, uncertain and, therefore, unknowable. Cervenak et al., (2002) argue that most academic literature on exclusion/inclusion frames diversity as a problem thereby, fixating on solutions. Although academia acknowledges issues like systematic racism and exclusion, they continue to be theorised within the falsities

of problem/solution. Within this paradigm, the only rationality lies in "having an answer" and in its absence, there is a falling back to problematising and deconstructing until a solution is reached (2002, 354). However, as highlighted by Cervenak et al., marginalised subjects and onto-epistemologies exist "outside both dominant and oppositional frameworks of comprehensibility" and thus, traverse this space in uncertainty and the "dark space of possibility" (353, 354). Lugones argues that as we begin to reconstruct outside constraining narratives meant to dominate our identity, we begin to engage in playfulness:

> *The playfulness that gives meaning to our activity includes uncertainty, but in this case, the uncertainty is an openness to surprise. Rules may fail to explain what we are doing. We are not self-important, we are not fixed in particular constructions of ourselves, which is part of saying that we are open to self-construction…We are not wedded to a particular way of doing things. So, positively, the playful attitude involves openness to surprise, openness to being a fool, openness to self-construction or reconstruction and to construction and reconstruction of the "worlds" we inhabit playfully (Lugones 1987, 401).*

Sikho's reconstruction involves what the mainstream would call 'common music', and in academia, his music is disavowed as knowledge let alone theory. Sikho embodies playfulness in several ways, firstly within normative structures he is a rebel, producing questionable music. However, he chooses to forgo the rigid rules of 'knowing' and meaning making and begins his crossing (self-construction). Secondly, he playfully denotes engaging in activities that may be regarded as muses or indulgences. In the same way that undermining of the lived experiences of women of colour are regarded as experiential non-academic knowledge, so too Sikho's reconstructions are regarded as foolish and playful. I argue that the solution-based approach offers two problems for the other, firstly they must try and make sense and prove rationality within systems of knowledge production that render them unintelligible and incomprehensible. Secondly, this narrative does not acknowledge the multiplicity of being and offers no space for uncertainty and fluidity. In response to this dilemma Sikho, abdicates making sense and reconstructs his identity in alterity, in the borderlands.

Sikho continues to experience academia as a colonising and exclusionary space but instead finds authenticity in alterity. Sikho disengages from the instructions on how to be a 'proper academic' transmitted by mainstream academic culture. Sikho's narrative is indicative of the fact that moments of crossing and reconstruction are not celebratory epiphany moments but a

continuous challenge between the old Self and the sketching of an alternative Self (Keating 2002). Mignolo explains that being a border subject entails a negotiation and deconstruction of multiple forms of subjectivities from alterity and within theoretical and conceptual borderlands. Whilst deconstruction is defined by postcolonial theorists as resistance from within dominant structures, Anzaldúa defines it as the occupation of a third space in-between hegemonic spaces "reversing the polarities, erasing the slash between them, then adding new aspects of yourself" (2002, 559). Similarly, Andisiwe and Khoza construct the identities in alterity:

> *If it were up to me, I would walk away from academia. Academia speaks in an authoritative voice and crowns itself as the experts. But to me, I do not think just because you are trained in something, you know, it makes you more knowledgeable in a specific subject. I am a composition of many knowledges and they are all legitimate. My fear is making academic knowledge more [superior] than others. I have to find a way to bring them all together… I try to do that when I write, I draw from poetry, music and also academia, so I try, maybe not here but in my own writings. (Andisiwe)*

> *Because now I'm interested in pursuing being a poet, I never really actually went to school after high school. I didn't want to go to school at all after Matric...So, what happened is that I felt that if I could pursue any form of education that has anything to do with my writing, it will silence my inner voice, so if I go pursue journalism or anything that has to do with writing, it will silence my voice. (Khoza)*

The silencing and exclusionary practices within academia have been widely documented. My participants raise another phenomenon on how these exiled voices construct their intellectual identities from the alterity whilst simultaneously having to prove themselves in academia. Cervenak et al. argue that construction of an academic identity for marginalised bodies is fraught with complexities of being "always-already an outsider within" (2002, 342). The authors describe the continuous crossings, imposed and deliberate, across boundaries of difference as "in-between moments of schizophrenia" (342). The doctoral space already implies a contradictory space where students are both the knower and the apprentice. As highlighted in the context chapter, two-thirds of doctoral candidates in South Africa are Black. Amidst the calls to decolonise, the doctoral space especially positions itself as a neutral space accommodating diverse and oppositional thinking.

However, as already highlighted, this space is wrought with contradictions and biased narratives about identity. Firstly, in line with the global corporatisation of universities are "commodified notions of identity grounded in consumption practices" (Cervenak et al 2002,

345). Secondly, the notion of spatial neutrality and universalisation of doctorateness culture, doctoral quality, and standards, homogenises student experiences along a linear scale. Although academic literature and studies speak to students' subjective experiences including racialized ethnic, gendered, and queer identities, the policy and hegemonic discourse rhetoric emphasis on corporatism and linear thresholds become repressive to oppositional identity formation. These imposed identities to the "scapegoated, marginalized, enslaved, and colonized," like Andisiwe and Khoza shatter and split their personhood (Sandoval 2000, 34). In line with Sandoval:

> *Those not destroyed by this kind of schizophrenic effect, the war zone that shatters one's sense of [S]elf into hysterical exhilaration or depression beyond scope, those who survive the discovery that freedom and triumph are forbidden to them… develop modes of perceiving, making sense of, and acting upon reality that are the basis for effective forms of oppositional consciousness in the postmodern world. (2002, 34).*

Sandoval asserts that scholarship and the academy facilitate the perpetuation of Western subjectivity and post-modern commodification. Subjugated bodies experience spaces such as the academy as both a psychic and physical space and as a warzone. To survive, they have to adopt a "schizophrenic perceptual schema" (29). In this schema, marginalised bodies concoct a third space outside their various subjectivities – a form of third subjectivity "a shifting place of mobile codes and significations, which invokes that place of possibility and creativity where language and meaning itself are constituted" and reconstituted (33). The acts of Andisiwe and Khoza in voluntarily severing from dominant ideology reveal a commitment to deconstructing epistemic mythologies. As argued by Sandoval, this commitment banishes one from the very world she/he lives in and is a form of self-imposed exile from reality. In an attempt to repossess their identity, Andisiwe and Khoza use writing to deconstruct and reconstruct Self. Disjoined from dominant ideology, they remain connected to others, in theory, only through their continued bodily presence in academia.

Carbajal (2002) reasons that we affirm our identity through writing, the collection of words on a page gives visibility to that which has been miswritten, silenced, and erased. Through written words we are able to examine ourselves, others and the world around creating a "path toward breaking free into self-identification, self-discovery, and a new consciousness" (52). Documented knowledge, be it in rhythms, songs, and art, is a way of representing one's lived experiences and knowledge. Anzaldúa asserts that one of the aims of *Coyolxauhqui* state is to,

*record what others erase when I speak, to rewrite the stories others have miswritten about me, about you. To become more intimate with myself and you. To discover myself, to preserve myself, to make myself, to achieve self-autonomy (Anzaldúa 2002, 563).*

Writing becomes an important tool for deconstruction and reconstruction of histories, mythologies, and knowledges. To Anzaldúa, the use of the *Coyolxauhqui's* imperative is not only symbolic of the violence done to the subjugated in splitting their identity and disempowering them but is also to put them back together again. She writes,

*my whole struggle in writing, in this anticolonial struggle, has been to…put us back together again. To connect up the body with the soul and the mind with the spirit. That's why for me there's such a link between the text and the body, between textuality and sexuality, between the body and the spirit (Anzaldúa 2000, 562).*

*Okay, for me I think I don't think I have managed to build myself because of the space which I am in. I am in a space where the is violence is like an ongoing thing, so I am always in a defence mode and the danger of that is sometimes, like I said, you overanalyse things and it's not good for a person's peace. I think I am still building myself. Even on the issues of 'a violence' I had to explain to them what I mean, and they agree that, "yes this is actually happening." you know? So, you gave people those tools to understand how to present the issues but yes, it's a wrong space for me to address what I wanted to address the workspace is the wrong space for me. I don't think it's a right space. I think I can address that through writing. I think, yah, that's the only space I think I can address these issues effectively – to write about it, but the problem with academic writing you are writing to a given audience and I think could help also writing to the broader society as well. I don't know how to do both; I think there is no space to do both. (Tsepo)*

Bobby's experience also shows the impact writing has on his identity and the negotiation of contradictions:

*The choice of joining a different field for my PhD – a part of it is coming from the experiences I went through. So, I worked on a paper on the violence of research, what we choice to research or not research, it was interesting. It was in itself a violent experience trying to get that paper to be the part of*

*everything we were doing. It was like a topic we could not research, you know. It was a lot of heightened emotions. But for me, writing that paper in collaboration with like-minded people, it was a way of healing, I was able to learn to express things I was feeling and experiencing here at work and in academia. But we still do not know if it will be part of the book project, we don't know because it was contested, by White academics who were all the senior academics. They said it was not a proper fit. There were no senior Black academics. Yeah, but my PhD is a continuation of the conversation raised in that paper. I'm basically focusing on the student categories used in higher education. Those categories used to research and measure success. So, I am questioning higher education, who came with these categories, why are we still using the categories that were formulated during the colonial and apartheid era? So, the history of categories used to analyse student data or related to students and it is more or less some of the questions raised in that chapter on the research of violence and, as a researcher, I'm mostly focusing on students at the highest risk level of dropping out. So that actually influenced me to come up and analyse and understand how we are we researching students? I am included in this, I was a student at risk who dropped out, so it is a way of healing.*

Writing is a performance of identity and according to Keating "writing can transform us" (2002, 8). Tsepo intertwines the act of building himself up with the act of writing. In his narrative, Tsepo juxtaposes material and cognitive space. Whilst he is unable to perform his identity in his material reality, which in this case is his workspace, he is able to confront, deconstruct and reconstruct Self in the cognitive space. As Tsepo articulates, the process of deconstructing and reconstructing is as ongoing as oppression and imposition of subjectivity is an ongoing condition in colonial spaces. Bobby's narrative shows that he employs the doctoral space as a way of deconstructing his own lived realities and experiences as one labelled as a "student at risk", unpacking his subjectivities towards healing. Bobby's desire to heal personifies the Coyolxauhqui metaphor, Anzaldúa writes that, at this stage you,

> *wish to repair and heal, as well as rewrite the stories of loss and recovery, exile and homecoming, disinheritance and recuperation, stories that lead out of passivity and into agency, out of devalued into valued lives (2002, 563).*

The doctoral space for both participants opened possibilities for them to analyse and articulate the various ways that they, and other marginalised border dwellers, experience subjugation and marginality. Whilst Bobby emphasises the role that writing played in unearthing his various experiences of oppression, Tsepo emphasises how writing is a form of giving voice to his

various subjectivities. On the other hand, Sandoval reminds us that writing in academia has been structured to support and reproduce Western ideological domination.

The writing space itself is a borderland (see McDowall and Ramos 2017). McDowall and Ramos argue that in the process of becoming an academic, one becomes aware of the relationship between writing and power and that the expected ways of writing attune with academic and doctoral quality determines what one can write about. In Bobby's narrative, he highlights how, even though writing was a means of deconstruction of the violences within academic research, the act of writing has also been co-opted as a tool for silencing and epistemic regulation.  In this case, Bobby explains how the chapter he contributed to the book was the only contribution that spoke to the Black condition in academic research, yet it was regarded as untimely and not a 'proper fit' even in the light of the book being about research in southern Africa. Writing is thus a space of contestation and contradictions constructing/destructing empowering/disavowing making visible/negating. McDowall and Ramos (2017) making the case for doctoral and academic writing as a borderland critique Palmer and Thompson who write:

> *Part of the work of doctoral study is to be inducted into disciplinary CoPs [communities of practice] in order to learn their accepted ways of thinking, speaking, and writing. It is not uncommon for the first response of the doctoral researcher to be a feeling of inadequacy or a rejection of texts and traditions. . . By persisting, they become part of their specific scholarly community and this is marked by the facility with which they speak and write as 'insiders' . . . as the discipline's way of thinking, writing, doing, and being become more and more 'natural', these specialized terms tend to disappear from view. (quoted in McDowall and Ramos 2017, 57)*

McDowall and Ramos in response, arguing instead that:

> *As doctoral students become part of their respective communities of practice and the strangeness of terminology begins to 'disappear from view', their writing identities can be subsumed into the academic discourse in which the work is situated. The 'thinking, speaking and writing' at the start of the passage almost unwittingly mutates into 'thinking, writing, doing and being' by the end: the way we write in the academic world is ontological. The geo- and body-politics of research writing is concealed by the accepted discourses of academic disciplines. (2017, 58)*

Here, I want to bring in Khoza's experience in relation to that of Bobby's:

> *It is difficult for me because for one to develop a structured book about poetry but most of us we write poetry out of inspiration. You can write a book in one night when you are inspired. It is now difficult for me because I came from a different space. I haven't published since I came here, what I'm writing about now and how I'm writing is different. When I came for my Master's, I had written and was [an established] poet and had self-published my poetry and had really enjoyed it, I was doing well. And my mentor who is also my friend thought this space would help me and he became my supervisor for my Master's thesis but not my PhD. So, a space that I came from was creating jazz and poetry in the city and in my writing, I drew from that, which is very different [because] here I had to adjust because I am not writing out of inspiration. I was writing within the structure and there was accountability to that discipline, it was a more disciplined space. In the end, I managed but I struggled to adjust and also, I had to change my rules about how I view poetry itself. The main critique I have about it is too much English and Western influence. Which is very different from how I probably would've articulated myself and I have been articulating myself in a space that allowed me to write out of my being so I can be able to then begin new works and enable myself to reflect. Here, in the academic form of writing the language is a bit censored but I still think the space is necessary. But you cannot mix the two spaces. For me, I think one will suffer.*

Coming out of matric, Khoza refused to go to university because he feared that his voice would be silenced and co-opted into the Western paradigm. In his choice to pursue his postgraduate studies as an already accomplished writer, he hoped to gain access to a wider audience and publish more. However, as he narrates his experience, it echoes what McDowall and Ramos allude to – disciplinary dressage. Khoza himself acknowledges that the crossing from his former space into the one in which he finds himself now is a trade-off of his creativity to academia. As he learns to perform the scripted academic identity, he is aware of his accountability to disciplinary traditions. Furthermore, whilst he celebrates the benefits academia has afforded him, he continually laments that he is unable to 'be creative' and be inspired. Thus, the academic space in his experience is a deconstruction of his authenticity and creativity and a reconstruction of a scripted identity. Randall maintains that when the subject operating from the margins is incorporated into the institutional centre, he/she "is unaware of the identity imposed by the desire for identification with the dominant culture" (1991, 533).

The use of the words "censored" and "writing within the structure" reveals the various ways in which forms of ontological and epistemic repression are legitimised through spatial practices

and Western supremacy subtleties. Morris (2002) reasons that the creation of academic positions and space for oppositional paradigms is regarded as a way of legitimising their onto-epistemologies, but is risky as it runs on the presupposition that presence of academic categories such as Gender Studies and Queer Studies equates to mainstream academia valuing such scholarship. Morris (140) holds that at most those academics that take up these positions become "assimilationists". Khoza makes this trade-off in negating his identity as a cultural writer and after "coming out in the wash" he regards himself a "real" poet even though, from his entering into academia, he has not published. In the last conversation I had with Bobby, he had moved back to "the city" as he calls it and put his studies on hold. He said that he felt as though the space- material and cognitive was corroding him: "I feel like something in me is being corroded".

Assimilation is destructive and manifests as melancholy: "depersonalization, splitting, dissociation, numbness, and detachment" (Morris 141). Khoza's experience echoes Anzaldúa's argument that cognitive and physical boundaries materialise on the bodies of the marginalised. Khoza has started curating a photograph gallery of all the musicians, poets, and writers he has met over the years, thus re-building his identity as a cultural activist. His narrative reveals the precariousness of identity construction and that the role academic activities plays is construction and reconstruction of Self.

Implicated in the act of writing, reading and being in academia is language. Although the inclusion of indigenous languages as primary modes of instruction is important, they can run the risk of giving the appearance of diversity and inclusivity (e.g., African Languages Department) whilst masking the ideological implications of language. Language can be used to create and recreate multiple forms of reality or to naturalise the *status quo*, according to Sandoval, language that aims at 'fixing' the hierarchies of the dominant order are ideological. The only option for the oppressed is to "speak outside the terms of ideology" and hierarchies of power (2000, 66). Thus, language employed by the oppressed/resisting is meant to unmask and deconstruct the hierarchies of power and the geo/body/historic position of enunciation and ideology. Kandau echoes this when he asserts that the language and texts used in traditional philosophy are a White man's project meant to conceal his historical and geographic position.

*I'm not using philosophical texture but I'm using poetry and I'm using literature, and everybody is like, "it's not philosophy." The thing is I'm using literature and poetry that is written in indigenous language and everybody is like, "what the hell are you doing?" Because nobody can use it to know. I'm personally sick and tired of the White man's project and to be honest with you, I do not give a damn for the White man anymore. We are in South Africa, in a majority Black country. I'm interested in my people, in what my people have been thinking through for centuries. I'm interested in how my people have responded to colonial impressions and it is political philosophy it's not philosophy and, in that chapter, (of her PhD) one detail how pure philosophy is not emancipatory for Black people, but political philosophy is concerned with actions and pure philosophy is concerned with thought. So, it tells me something, because even in my other recent projects I have told people I collaborate with, and work with that I'm going to pause purely writing in English, I'm also going to write in [isi]Xhosa, I'm going to write in isiZulu , I'm going to write in English as well. So basically, in Chapter Two, I'm using isiZulu texts and even isiXhosa, I'm not using English texts. I might use English text to analyse, but where the work exists, I will quote it in isiXhosa. I refuse to translate. I will quote Vilakazi in isiZulu and I will not translate it, and this is why we have it so difficult because we are so caught up in the White man's project, we do not archive our own knowledge. (Kandau)*

*The oppressed is nothing, he has only one language, that of his emancipation, the oppressor is everything, his language is rich, multiform, supple, with all the possible degrees of dignity at his disposal: he has an exclusive right to metalanguage. The oppressed makes the world, he has only an active (political) language: the oppressor conserves it, his language is plenary, in-transitive, gestural, theatrical (Barthes quoted in Sandoval 2000, 106).*

Kandau's engagement with language reveals how it is employed ideologically to construct and naturalise the dominant power hierarchies. In his narrative, he discusses how the language of the oppressed is emptied of any epistemic legitimacy whilst knowing is centralized in Western languages. In performing his multiplicity through languaging, Kandau reveals an "in-between form of consciousness" engaging an "active and political" language but also "able to engage with and through the languages of ideology".

Sandoval reasons that there are six rhetorical figures within academia aimed at masking and erasing difference which need deconstruction: the inoculation, the privation of history, identification, tautology, neither-norism, the quantification of quality and the statement of fact. In the first rhetoric for being (inoculation) recognition of difference by dominant culture is used to give the appearance of toleration of difference to control its manifestation. In the rhetoric of inoculation "difference can be recognized, taken in, tamed, and domesticated" (2000, 121) This also has wider implications as it can extend to collective epistemic

inoculation, where for example, focus can be placed on accidental problematic doctoral practices, such as an exclusionary doctoral culture negating the "principal evil" of a Westernised higher education system (118). The second figure is a form of colonial unknowing – the concealment of the body/geo/historic location of the subject of enunciation and dominant structures. Through concealment, this rhetoric can naturalise the *status quo* and absolve oppressive narratives from any responsibility for past, present, and continued oppressive structures and narratives. This rhetoric also deprives the subjugated of history and alternate reality and identity outside the framings of the dominant culture.

In the third rhetoric, "perceptions of difference are reduced to sameness" allowing the enfranchised subject to centre his identity as the prime example of being, whilst simultaneously blinding themselves to differences, ignoring differences, denying the other and/or transforming the other into themselves (120). Under the fourth rhetoric,

> *tautological reasoning enables citizen-subjects to believe that Western knowledge can be understood and justified as such: "History is history", "Truth is truth" and even "That's just the way it is—that's all." Tautology operates behind a badge of authority, where its rationality is hidden (121).*

This rhetoric protects the status quo and sabotages any efforts by the other to alternative realities "by freezing meaning" (121). The fifth rhetoric is the construction or realities in opposing dualities, which are "relieved of (their) historically produced differences", in which the enfranchised subject positions themselves as neutral and objective. This imperative is to highlight oppositional spaces whilst arguing that a rational being can transcend these differences without choosing "between power-laden realities". The position of neutrality and objectivity only "creates an inflexibility of being that supports the order of the dominant rather than that of some other moral, or political, order" (122).

Under the sixth rhetoric, consumerism and high quantity is equated to quality and goodness. Identity in this imperative is reduced to "quality disguised as quantity economizes scholarly intelligence itself, and academic knowledge has come to understand reality more cheaply" (122). The last rhetoric positions one who speaks from within the dominant discourse as authoritative. It identifies this subject as one who knows for sure and beyond any reasonable doubt, Sandoval asserts:

*The costs of this form of knowledge and its powers are high, for the statement of fact is no longer directed towards a world to be made; it must overlay one which is already made, bury the traces of this production under a self-evident appearance of eternity (123).*

These seven rhetorics/mythologies are at the foundation of Western ideological formation giving it supremacy whilst immobilizing other forms of being. These seven mythologies are negotiated by my participants at the various stages of identity construction and have been highlighted throughout the analysis chapters.

## Conclusion

Reconstruction within colonial spaces is not an easy process. It often means criminalisation and delegitimisation. Although the doctoral space can be a space of liminality leading to transformation, one still has to find a way to negotiate multiplicity. Hence, in this space reconstruction is not the end of ambiguity and contradictions but the construction of identity with ambiguity and uncertainty as an existential condition. The closure that is imposed on identity categories, is not a privilege afforded to marginalised bodies who must traverse space in multiplicity. Hence, part of being a *nepantlera* is the construction of identity with the realisation that cyclical deconstruction and reconstruction are endemic to identity formation. Confrontation with oppression always forces one to authenticate one's voice and, as argued by Alexander:

*Sometimes we can only authenticate our voice when we are up against a wall; if not, we are only an impostor in a new language, speaking in the name of populism. Authenticating voice comes through rediscovering the underbelly, literally unearthing and piecing together the fragmented members of existence (Alexander 2002, 97).*

# Chapter 10: The Blow-up

*"I know you're not a poet, but your words are just so—inauthentic." She paused to let the word take effect, her eyes unwaveringly on An's.*

*"Inauthentic?" Anger began to pulse in An's head, but she was confused and keenly aware of the professor sitting like a cat waiting for a mouse to run from its hole.*

*Sensing her resistance and impatient for the chase, the professor's eyes flashed dangerously. "Yes, inauthentic."*

*Taking a deep breath, An said tremulously, "That's why I'm afraid to write."*

*"Let me read to you —" The professor reached out to recover the pages, and An suddenly noticed the windows open around them and the hum of conversation from students waiting their turn out in the grass.*

*"You ask what I am?" the professor read in a loud, slightly mocking tone. "Am I Black or am I White? I am both so I am neither. I am no one. But what are you? Who are you to need to know?"*

*"That's inauthentic?"*

*"Uninteresting. I've heard it all before, I've read the literature. Don't you have anything original to say?" Her face was flushed and her eyes wide and engaged.*

*An gripped her hands together to keep them from trembling and felt an unfamiliar sense of outrage stirring inside her. "It's what I feel. What do you want me to write about?"*

*"I want you to make a choice and write about it."*

*"But the point is not choosing. Not being able to choose."*

*"Boring," the professor intoned childishly. "Wishy-washy middle ground. Come down on one side."*

*An swallowed hard. "Choosing sides is authentic? Because it's easier for you?"(Andemicael 2002, 38-39)*

## Introduction

In reconstructing Self, one reformulates one's identity away from the familiar and normative. Whenever we enact an ideological shift which disrupts heteronormativity, we create rhythms that ripple through the personal and spatial polyrhythmic ensembles. Change does not only rupture the old Self but also the various worlds we traverse. The new reality can manifest as

eurhythmia giving one a sense of stability, growth, and self-actualisation. For example, Sikho's reconstruction of his artistic and scholarly identity enabled him to start making music again as a way of self-redefinition. However, Anzaldúa reasons that most change causes arrythmia as tensions can arise internally, between one's multiple identities and externally, between Self and others. Tension arises because of the clash of realities and worldviews causing a blow-up. The blow-up shatters the foundation of one's new story resulting in chaos, existential crisis, and ontological anxiety. One's new story is your own assertion of being away from imposed subjectivities so the conflict that questions this new story becomes an ontological threat. When a Black woman chooses to identify as a feminist, for example, there is a clash between internalised cultural scripts of womanhood and this new identity. There is also a clash between her own narration of what feminism means and the definitions of hegemonic onto-epistemologies. To the border-dweller who chooses to disidentify with the various imposed narratives from both sides of the bridge, she is accused of assimilation in one world and in the other, she is delegitimised. Her ontology and being is thus questioned and she risks becoming a 'native of nowhere' and not making sense.

This stage challenges one's commitment to one's new identity (Anzaldúa 2002). Anzaldúa states that in the face of "conflict and threat… fighting, fleeing, freezing, or submitting" are some of the mechanisms used to negotiate this conflict and tension. The various strategies are either aimed at protecting the new Self, a withdrawal to deconstruction and reconstruction, or forfeiting the new Self. Anzaldúa states,

> *Those fighting or fleeing shut their ears and assume a hypervigilant guard mode to help them attack or escape. Those freezing separate their awareness from the reality of what's happening—they dissociate. Those submitting surrender their ground to more aggressive forces. All struggle to burrow back into their past histories, former skins, familiar racial and class enclaves even though these may be rife with discomfort and disillusionment and no longer feel like home (2002, 566).*

Again, one finds themselves negotiating another identity rupture and thrust into *nepantla*. It is in this way that *conocimiento* is like a fractal, where the various stages repeat, in different degrees, at every stage. These confrontations are continual and force one into *nepantla* – the in-between space, pressed between competing worldviews. Taking the narrative of Mzo, on

one side of the border, cultural definitions of manhood bar him from identifying with manhood whilst on the other side, academic dominant ideologies impose forms of (feminist) identifications which are not in tune with his lived realities. At every side, there are gatekeepers or what Anzaldúa terms "fence-maintainers" (566).

The clash is suffered either as the result of the resistance by dominant frameworks to accept difference or the new identity's confrontation with said difference. The stories we tell ourselves about our identity and others can be self-enclosing, creating a boundary between Self and others. Oppositional thinking and difference in being can be seen as a threat to our being so we enclave ourselves and our identities. This form of identity construction leads to oppositional and identity politics which always lead to confrontation as the only means to conflict resolution. The problem with this is the inability to recognise multiplicity in others, thereby reinforcing oppressive binaries. When this Self is presented to the world,

> *what takes a bashing is not so much you, but the idea/picture of who you think you are, an illusion you're hell-bent on protecting and preserving at all costs. You overlook the fact that your self-image and history (autohistoria) are not carved in stone but drawn on sand and subject to the winds. A threat to your identifications and interpretations of reality enrages your shadow-beast, who views the new knowledge as an attack to your bodily integrity. And it is a death threat—to the belief that posits the self as local and limited to a physical body, a body perceived as a container separating the self from other people and other forms of knowledge. New conocimientos (insights) threaten your sense of what's "real" when it's up against what's "real" to the other. But it's precisely this threat that triggers transformation (Anzaldúa 2002, 566).*

This stage is not just about contrasting identities, but a commitment to the continuous negotiation of multiplicity in Self and others. Since borderlands theory does not at, any point, romanticise the idea of wholeness of Self or advocate for celebratory hybridity, contrasting identities are thus a continuous state of being. Contrasting identities and a clash of realities in this context, result from the impositions on Self and the impositions we make on others. It is the inability by others or/and ourselves to recognise, dialogue and negotiate contrasting identities that result in the blow-up.

## A clash of realities

In the quotation above by Andemicael, An uses the classroom space to script her identity, of who she thinks she is and when she presents this script to the world, she is charged with

inauthenticity and replication. An's professor tries to fit her account into the identity categories of the dominant ideology. The professor enacts two violences, firstly she denigrates the authenticity of An's lived experiences and secondly, she labels An's in-between positionality as fraudulent, thereby, providing her with two choices – becoming a native of nowhere or imposed identification. Moreover, An's rage is seen as irrationality which at once delegitimates her lived experiences and lived space. The charge of being fraudulent emanates from her being seen as repeating already existing narratives and failing to make a new/original knowledge contribution. In academia, "original" as 'authentic' comes to mean a sincere and unique expression having its source in an individual whose identity is fully (increasingly) self-possessed and unrepeatable" (Randall 1991, 528). During colonisation and apartheid, there was state and institution sanctioned censorship of revolutionary epistemologies, forcing alternative texts to speak from the margins. Post-colonial rule and apartheid, oppositional and alternative epistemologies are incorporated into dominant institutions, thereby centering them. Inclusion of such knowledge does not, however, change the power structures that govern meaning making. Hence, to be accommodated within the institution, alternative discourses are sifted to remove what is termed bad, unauthentic, and unoriginal texts. Sandoval recognises this as a strategy to domesticate and overturn the power of subversion within alternative epistemologies. Additionally, Randall believes that assimilation of marginal discourses into institutional centres:

> *Posits an inevitable double-bind situation in which the colonized culture, desiring assimilation, is condemned either to a sterile and disempowering repetition of the discourse of the colonizer, or to a cultural self-devalorisation: the notion of Culture cannot exist outside of the validating influence of the institutional centre which is its source and guarantee (Randall 1991, 533).*

The narrations of oppression, such as my own work in this project, are thematised and seen as closed subjects. Even though oppression remains ongoing in the same spatial ordering, to re-narrate is to over-narrate and possibly obfuscating the theme. Narrating marginality from within becomes an interplay of semiotic gymnastics and conceptual dress up to give the appearance of originality. Mignolo maintains that theorising within the decolonial project entails making a "contribution to the growing processes of decoloniality" (Mignolo 2009,4). He also contends that the claim to originality is "one of the basic expectations of modern control of subjectivity" and the aim of writing from the margins is to "confront those who take

'originality' as the ultimate criterion for the final judgment" (4). Randall states that, when the question of originality is seen in its historical and ideological backdrop, it becomes a question of identity. The clash occurs when one attempts to authentically embody alterity in spaces that are themed (Gender studies, Decolonial studies, and Feminist studies to name a few) as marginal, see for example Mzo's experience.

> *In my Master's, I had a queer lecturer [for] my course on feminism. I wrote my first essay and he failed me and later, he failed me [for] the course after because I simply just did not adhere, not disagree. I didn't disagree but did not adhere to how he thought I should define myself. I have always been a rebel, you know. The thing is, I have always felt like, I believed that I was a feminist, and I wrote these essays, that were for me, nice and great essays about having come from a matriarch[al] background. The surname I have is matriarch[al], the clan name I have is matriarch[al]. So, for me, if the clan name is coming from my mother and that's matriarch[al]. Remember, actually they call it Mahlathi instead of Hlathi. So, he asked me [what] my understanding of what African families [is]? Because…when you start getting into that discipline then you're going to first engage with the played-out conservations – debates about definitions. Hence, now to say African family is to give the impression that there is no alternate definition of anything but there is womanism, there is motherism. So, he was asking a scholar of gender studies how do you understand yourself in contextualizing your story in terms of African feminism? So, people can go on Google and go to Chimamanda [Adichie] and so on, and me, I dissected my family situation and that was valid information. As an anthropologist, I'm entitled to using my lived experiences and the like. The thing is, you will do the readings and pass, but you are borrowing from someone else to define yourself, that does not even make sense to me. I failed because I didn't cite anything because that was not where I got my knowledge from…I did peruse [the readings] but specifically for that course, [feminism] was something I had already identified as, so I just needed a space to articulate that. I felt I was being made passive in the sense that I felt like, if I relied too much on the readings and instruction, they would mould my mind to something instead of enlightening me to understand something about myself (Mzo).*

Within hegemonic theoretical and spatial domains, authenticity is defined as conformity and performance of identity in pre-existing categories. Hill (2002, 260) submits that in the academic world, "pre-existing-isms: racism, sexism, classism, and heterosexism, to name a few", constrain one's mobility towards authenticity and self-actualisation. Like the professor's insistence on An's identity based on geo-body location, pre-existing-isms categorically define how oppression is experienced and can become identity cages. The fixation of Mzo's lecturer on him to define himself according to what he thinks are the proper definition of family, manhood and feminism delegitimates his lived experiences and grades them as 'bad literature'.

Mzo was called by the head of department (HOD), who told him (Mzo) that his work was good but didn't meet the disciplinary requirements of the faculty. The HOD later supervised Mzo's PhD, giving him full funding. The clash in this context occurs not because the work itself deserves is of poor quality, but it was a presentation of the Self in an untransformed space that is themed as marginal. This is also evident in Sikho's narrative:

> *When I recorded my first song, I recorded [it] in a way that I felt, "This is how an African song should sound." It was a remake of another song; the song was called "Africa" but to me, there was nothing that sounded African about it. I took the same song and I played it in the way that relates to me as an African. That album was not well accepted by jazz collectors because they felt it was not jazz. You see, this other thing of looking down upon…whenever you do anything African, you get looked down upon. So, with that album I changed the song incorporating Afro[themes] and the critics came for me. The jazz critics and all the jazz police came and then they said I'm trying to be commercial; you know? And that is just not jazz because in their minds, although these are South African listeners in South Africa, to them it was like jazz is supposed to sound American. That time, it really [put] me off, but I learn. But now I'm starting to think that I don't care whether people say I play jazz or I don't play jazz but I play my music and I play my people's music – the name tags, I don't know how they came about. I don't want to know about the name tags. All I know is I got a short time in this life and I'm just going to do what I feel is right for me to do (Sikho).*

The terms 'bad knowledge' and 'bad music' are inherently oxymoronic. Higher education, especially postgraduate studies, is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and aesthetics is committed to music. This means that knowledge is positively valued in higher education as is jazz music in aesthetics due to their qualification as knowledge and music. The term 'bad' is not mutually exclusive to knowledge and music. The use of 'bad', in the case of Sikho and Mzo, is thus a signifier of non-conforming knowledge and music. Randall argues that for such texts to be legitimised they are co-opted by the "institution which moves the marginal and disruptive into the centre, creating a norm out of an intended aberration" (1991, 534). The effect of this is the neutralisation of difference and of divergent voices. Both Sikho and Mzo refuse to be identified, "moulded", and "name tagged" in the institution which causes a conflict between their re-constructed selves and the spaces they traverse. In the various worlds we exist in, we often must negotiate our emergent Selves and the Self that is perceived by others. The Self perceived by others is almost always governed by heteronormativity which defines difference as 'deviant' and 'idiosyncratic'. Mzo and Sikho break the categories of being by refusing to be domesticated and imposed on.

The audience also determines the nature of the clash and how the subject negotiates. In a doctoral space, the audience is largely other scholars who act as guardians of disciplinary and epistemic boundaries. However, one can also experience an internal conflict between the new identity and the old Self.

> *Before I came here, I was involved in what they call the Art Rising Movement which actually started in the seventies. Uprising movement in terms of this thing of admiring the arts – it was quite a middle-class kind of thing. It was only done in galleries and art exhibitions so [regular] people couldn't know these things and yet, most narratives actually come from those people. So, in the space bringing art to the community, you are a cultural worker, it meant developing images of my community with intention to distribute this and show this image at good galleries and also for the community. Just distributing to galleries for me, it was somehow a kind of betrayal to my community. It was a form of passive photography…which is to say, our students who were trained well…will have their images also shown at the exhibition and [we will] also have, like, display like our own photo albums cause that's where these cultures come from, but [now they] are disappearing. That's who I was. Now, I feel like I sacrificed consciousness, it's hard at times. But, because I needed to get into a discipline and learn certain trades and until I was comfortable in absorbing those trades and I started to feel like I was getting that in motion and setting that and making sure that I'm really good at it, for me it was important. But it's different, because when I write poetry when I get to that space of music, poetry, and jazz as a cultural activist and all of that it's almost like my whole being transforms (Khoza).*

Khoza's story highlights a paradox of realities. He hoped the doctoral space would make him a more active and productive cultural activist and literary scholar but finds himself having to "sacrifice his consciousness". Throughout my interaction with Khoza, he moves between celebrating his identity as a cultural activist and applauding the benefits of being in academia. This movement in-between his different worlds manifests as an identity crisis which, in the end, unable to reconcile academia he drops out of his doctorate programme. Most of the reasons that are regarded as legitimately impacting the doctoral process in literature have to do with the crossing of linear thresholds. However, the reasons my participants highlight that bring them to the brink of dropping out, and in Khoza's case dropping out, are fraught with complexities. Whilst epistemological, conceptual, and writing boundaries are part of linear thresholds for the marginalised, they are overlaid with various forms of systematic silencing and exclusion. So, beyond the inability to cross threshold boundaries or the impediments to crossing thresholds, it also encompasses how these thresholds are conceptualised and

operationalised. It also has to do with how thresholds, as ideological and social constructions impose various subjectivities on doctoral students. In Khoza's case, the blow-up is the dropping out itself – his inability to negotiate his various identities and the estrangement and displacement brought about by imposed subjectivity. This does not absolve the student of personal responsibility or accountability but makes visible other spatial and subjective configurations that overlay their experiences.

Some of my participants straddle two worlds – professional/work, scholarship and personal revealing the mutual exclusivity of the multiple worlds we traverse. In most cases the blow-up would be experienced in both worlds although at varying moments. For example, in the case of Sikho when he came back from the USA and attempted to introduce the new Self, reconstructed based on home narratives, he was met with push back which caused him to slip back into *Coatlicue* as discussed in Chapter 7.

> *When I came back, I wanted to find the sources of our foundation, our sources I can't find any. I started looking for the foundation for me to build my music and they say its American music… I wanted to create a way of marrying them, if that is a possibility, but the two worlds are tough you know. But, like I said, my way of doing things is not academic. I think it's a matter of finding ways to marry them without compromising the individual capabilities. It was like a mist – a lot going on at that time, and it took me to be aware, but people don't get it, they don't get that we are trying to be people that we are not. It frustrates me and it frustrates everyone, you know? Because they also don't get me. But our children are going to grow with that thing obviously not knowing unfortunately (Sikho).*

Sikho's narrative highlights the way in which the unwillingness of spaces to transform causes a conflict of realities for the re-constructed subject. Sikho experiences a double bind, firstly there is tension between the new Self and Western supremacy and on the other hand, tension between Self and the desire of the oppressed to assimilate. Morris asserts that assimilationists benefit from the work of those who work on the margins:

> *[A]ssimilationists live off the fruit of our labour. Now, some argue that there is nothing wrong ethically with assimilation. Some choose to take this path as a way to survive. For assimilationists, too queer means too dangerous. Ethicality demands living dangerously. Cowards live on an easy path (2002, 140).*

Furthermore, Sandoval adds that assimilationists are used as tokens to show the progressiveness of institutions, and as examples of 'good citizen-subjects' as opposed to the irrational others operating from the margins. To Morris, the perpetuation of domination and oppression in academia is assured by liberals who "talk the talk but not walk the walk" and assimilationists who leave radicals "on the front line, alone and in danger" (2002, 144). However, as Sikho stands on the thresholds of both worlds, he is aware of the pressures to assimilate and the consequences of disavowing Western onto-epistemologies. He contends for a way to "marry" the two ideas. The need for narratives of inclusion when a clash of realities occurs is also raised by Tsepo:

> *Yah, that's still happened to me. Now at work, I mean two weeks ago, we were having a meeting and it was a crisis control meeting, meaning we were addressing a crisis that had taken place. The reason why the crisis happened is because some of us were excluded from the planning phase, so I was asking, why [they] excused us. And the response was, "No when we were busy doing the contextualisation of this project, it was an emergency that's why we didn't have a chance to include everyone." But to me that's when you include everybody when there is emergency, but I still experience the exclusion at work, but I have come to accept that it's not a space that I should expect inclusion [from] because I'm dealing with people that are in denial. When you raise issues of epistemic violence, they dismiss it. Even if you have evidence that, "look you are actually doing it right now", they dismiss it. I was in a strategic [meeting] and I raised an issue where I was dismissed, they said, "Well Tsepo, if you don't know you don't know just say it." Basically, I was told I don't know how to do my job, a job I have been doing for more than eight years. I was like, "But in my PhD, in my research, I'm doing this exact thing, so do not dismiss me." They tried to fight me on it, until a senior White colleague stepped in and suggested they listen to me as I am an expert. But I used words like do not think some of us are stupid, but I was still dismissed until that colleague stepped in (Tsepo).*

Tsepo, through the doctoral process reconstructs himself away from anger and confrontation as discussed in chapter 8, he recognises the disadvantages of building a wall between himself and both sides of the border. In his experience however, the clash is as a result of the dominant group's efforts to render him invisible. Strategies such as being dismissive, pacifying, and ignoring the other, are microaggressions used to silence and regulate their visibility. As Tsepo highlights, this is a form of denial from the dominator. These strategies also have the double effect of relinquishing the dominator of any responsibility and accountability for the *status quo*. Although statements like "if you don't know, you don't know" seem on the surface benign, as

revealed in Tsepo's experience, they are a way of reinforcing the stereotype of his incapability. His experience is a manifestation of the tautological rhetoric, where the judgement and opinions of the dominator and the incapability and docility of the Black body are reinforced as a matter of fact. The power dynamics that permeate all spatial and intersubjective relations are thereby naturalised and this is used to justify the actions of the dominator. As the oppressed, in this case, Tsepo attempts to validate his position as an authoritative knower and unmask the interplay of power in his workspace, there is a blow-up. Anzaldúa asserts that the "bridge buckles under the weight" of the two opposing factions at this stage (2002, 567). In Tsepo's case, interestingly, his White colleagues are not necessarily fighting him, as he is standing at the bridge trying to negotiate from both sides of the border, they are in conflict with their perception of his identity. The Black body and his onto-epistemologies are at once treated as irrational and a threat, this makes a non-coercive dialogue near impossible without first confronting this mythology and rhetoric about Blackness. Anzaldúa (2002, 567) argues that there is always a temptation to "retreat behind racial lines and hide behind simplistic walls of identity". Tsepo had previously noted that under his old Self, he used to be confrontational, fighting people instead of structures and ideologies and in this case his disclaimer, "do not think some of us are stupid". "Some of us" referring to the Black body can be read as a retreat behind racial lines. However, Anzaldúa also highlights that "perpetual conflict erodes a sense of connectedness" especially in "gatherings where people luxuriate in their power to prevent change instead of using it to cause transformation" (568).

In Tsepo's narrative, the conflict of realities is also because of the rhetoric of invisibility. This rhetoric is double sided – one side, the dominant culture is touted as universal, neutral, rational, and objective thereby making its historical and geographical conception inevitable and natural. Once positioned as the universal and rational centre, other forms of being are essentialised and moved to the margins. The attempt to centre marginalised onto-epistemologies as reflected in my participants' narratives inadvertently results in a blow-up. 'Centering' in this case does not refer to inoculation and/or assimilation but the shifting of absolute power away from the oppressive structures and the reinstating of all onto-epistemologies as non-universal and situated. In a monolithic universal centre perspective, the condition of the marginalised is attributed to unseen forces that "nevertheless are said to always determine, ultimately, the subject's life, work and way of speaking" (Mbembe 2002, 5). My participants' experiences are thus reduced to a series of moments of "subjection interconnected in a seamless continuity"

(5). The cause of this condition is rendered faceless, making the attempts of the subjugated to repossess his/her identity, a violent and continuous negotiation of subjugation and subjectivity.

The aim is not only for the acknowledgment of repressive spatial practices and structures, but an interrogation of the historicity of the dominant Self that grants him/her eternal authority and rationality. The aim is also to make visible the backdrop the dominator functions in, thereby unmasking how spatial and intersubjective relations are laden with power dynamics for example, Kandau's and Sikho's relationship with their supervisors and disciplinary epistemic traditions.  In both cases, although participants try and challenge the legitimacy of these practices, the disciplinary tradition and the voice of the supervisor emptied of its historical and body location is presented as a naturalised reality. The authority vested in the supervisor and mythologies are eternalised and rendered non-questionable – the student has to pay the price by changing a supervisor or being expelled out of a discipline.

 Santos highlights another key element of the culture of invisibility:

> *The division is such that "the other side of the line" vanishes as reality becomes nonexistent, and is indeed produced as non-existent. Nonexistent means not existing in any relevant or comprehensible way of being. Whatever is produced as nonexistent is radically excluded because it lies beyond the realm of what the accepted conception of inclusion considers to be its other. What most fundamentally characterizes abyssal thinking is thus the impossibility of the co-presence of the two sides of the line. To the extent that it prevails, this side of the line only prevails by exhausting the field of relevant reality. Beyond it, there is only nonexistence, invisibility, non-dialectical absence (Santos, 2007, 2).*

While most my participants' cognitive experiences are discarded and made invisible. Anzaldúa (2002) posits that the desire to be heard is an integral element of being human and the denial of co-presence results in a clash of realities. If I trace the experiences of my participants through history and time, there is an overarching desire to be heard and to perform their identity with authenticity. This desire for most of my participants culminates and reaches its climax in the doctoral space, based on the romanticisation of the process of becoming in this space. This space is perceived as granting the liberty for self-styling and identity construction grounded in one's lived experiences. However, upon coming into the doctoral space, some participants find it as a continuation of epistemological dominance and abyssal thinking:

*I decided to write my PhD as an ethnography/auto-ethnography, but it is still the same. I am drawing from indigenous knowledge but there is always this push for me to fall back on theory. And what I think is theory, they do not agree. Like if you draw on feminist theory or feminist thought, you are agree with. Basically, using what feminism is saying to reflect on your action as a man and you get to reflect but you are still supposed to able to say how you embody your own violences as a man in patriarchy. So, I want to do that using indigenous knowledge, I am paying tribute to homage. I am supposed to be able to do that with indigenous knowledge, but it is not theory. I am tired, you walk around, and people do not know you are tired. Sometimes at I lay awake at night and I am just convinced that I should just stop (Mzo).*

After his experiences, in Master's, Mzo had hoped that his experiences in PhD would be different. He assumed he would be able to confront his invisibility/non-existence and reconstruct his identity, drawing on alternative knowledge systems. This experience is like Andisiwe's, who had hoped the doctorate would open a space to deconstruct disciplinary traditions and make visible marginal onto-epistemologies. Abyssal thinking is  premised on the invisibility of the other through the construction of despotic dichotomies. Across one side of the abyssal line is what is regarded as real academic knowledge worthy of being labeled as theory and on the other side of the line "there is no real knowledge; there are beliefs, opinions, intuitive or subjective understandings" (Santos 2007, 2). However, let me emphasise at this point that this form of subjectivity climaxes in the doctoral space because of the romanticised idea of what becoming means in this space. I argue that when framed as a borderland, the clash of realities that happen in and around the doctoral process are not just regarded as a result of a spatial temporality but as an existential reality of the past, present and future Self within intellectual spaces of inquiry. From this viewpoint deconstruction of the culture of invisibility is lifted from the cognitive spaces where it is regulated and policed within and by the institutional center; to make it an integral element of identity construction, more so within the doctoral process as a space that facilitates the curation of future knowledge creators and gatekeepers. The character "An" from, Andemicael, responding to the blow-up resulting from the presentation of her reconstructed Self writes:

*I am amorphous, transparent. I am a test tube in a racial centrifuge.*

*I am a mote of dust in a stream of light. I am not the dust.*

*I am a ray of light refracted by the stained-glass pane. I am not the light.*

*I am a leaf slapping against its will against others in the wind. I am not the leaf.*

*I am a genie or a hologram, the lighted stream of dust that carries an image from the projector to the screen; molecular, metaphysical, I am nothing and I am all.*

*I am my pounding heart, heavy, insistent, stubborn, and young. I am not my heart. I am not invisible, nor should I be (2002, 40-41).*

## Conclusion

Our identities are grounded in mythologies and perceptions about Self and others. We also perform identity in relation to others. When we present the new Self to the world after reconstruction, we might find that our mythologies and perceptions are a foreclosure on others or perceived as a threat to the *status quo*. Either way, the clash in realities results in a blow-up – a rupture in the newly constructed Self. This stage tests one's commitment to their new identity whether one will abdicate the new Self and retreat to the old Self or the arrhythmic wave to absorb and disintegrate into the polyrhythmic ensemble.  As we traverse through space and time, we are often re-negotiating and times abandoning identity because of various ontological threats. At this stage, there is always a contestation between belonging and authenticity. This negotiation is done in relation to others and one's own contesting identities or one's old Self.

# Chapter 11: Shifting Realities

## Introduction

This stage represents a shift in one's positionality and various enlisting competing narratives and paradigms throughout time and space. This stage is not utopic but is characterised by a level of awareness of the interconnectedness of people – even those that reside in competing worlds. Shifting at this stage does not mean relativism but refers to the multiplicity of strategies aimed at responding to "the mobile circulation of power" (Yarbro-Bejarano 1994, 11). The marginalised body continuously enacts shapeshifting – shifting subjectivity as various forms of oppression are confronted and negotiated. Being and identity as static and as a matter of fact is a privilege that is out of reach for disenfranchised subjects. The blow-up experiences in the sixth stage rupture the newly constructed Self, revealing internal boundaries and boundaries between Self and others. In accordance with Anzaldúa, not all walls can be broken, nor can all the bridges be crossed. She maintains that "sometimes you need to block the other from your body, mind, and soul. You need to ignore certain voices to respect yourself…It's impossible to be open and respectful to all views and voices" (2002, 573). Bobel et al. add that "part of the seventh space is developing awareness of when to open and when to protect (2006, 338).

At this stage, one assumes a responsibility of being a *nepantlera*, a commitment to building a 'bridge' that "honors people's otherness, deconstructing barriers from that otherness and opening possibilities for the creation of allies and further connection" (Bobel et al. 2006, 338). After his experiences of exclusion and systematic racism in university, Bobby forfeits his passion for Statistics to pursue his doctorate in a space that would help others labelled "at risk students".

> *No, I actually never thought I would leave Statistics, but with the challenges I*
> *went through in higher education I want to change or help address the*
> *problems in higher education especially related to students who are coming*
> *from disadvantaged backgrounds. So, I ended up doing what I'm doing now*
> *because of that experience or those experiences I got in higher education or*
> *[in the] environment I got in[to] White institutions. Yeah, for me I had to work*
> *myself out of it because I didn't know people who can offer help or*
> *understanding of what I was going through. I want something to be done in*

*terms of inclusivity or equal opportunity. If at PhD I have faced all these challenges, now I have to learn that to go beyond those challenges, those barriers and make a way to break down those barriers for others (Bobby).*

By embodying the identity of *nepantlera*, Bobby acts from within the contradictions and complexities of multiple contexts. He chooses to move from his familiar disciplinary home to contribute to the body of knowledge that challenge exclusionary systematic practices. The shift in perspective illuminate's identity construction as process of self-shaping and re-shaping overtime, influenced by external and internal configurations. However, Romero reminds us that although identity is "influenced by society, politics, and even environment; nonetheless, identity is a construction made up of self-knowledge which is subject to aeration, modification, and transformation" (2011, 66). Koshy, drawing from Anzaldúa, highlights several elements that characterise the *nepantlera* at this stage: seeing through the eyes of the "other" i.e., (re)claiming new "guiding myths" for our times and risking the personal and intellectual. Using the example of the doctorate space, I will highlight some of the ways participants exude these characteristics. However, as interviews were carried out during the doctoral process, most participants' experiences have not yet culminated into this phase. It would be enlightening to do follow up interviews several years post-doctorate to explore their experiences in relation to this phase.

## Seeing through the eyes of others

The act of seeing through the eyes of others implies a commitment to transgress identity boundaries and be able to see through multiple perspectives. In academia, disciplinary boundaries can lead to a form of identity politics where disciplinary backgrounds are the most common roots for collaboration and epistemic alliances. Taking the example of Kandau, he is unable to reconcile his identity as both a philosopher and political philosopher because of what he calls the closed-up nature of "pure philosophy". Inter- and transdisciplinary collaborations in this case, entail an alliance between disciplines with the traditional underpinnings. Consequently, such alliances are inadvertently forged in opposition to those outside their identity group. This defeats the point of inter- and transdisciplinary collaboration which is meant to break what Sandoval calls "academic apartheid" (2000, 3). In Sandoval's words,

*It is easy to outline the territories of this theoretical imaginary: the domain of "White male" poststructuralist theory (primarily concerned with power, subjectivity, and class) has been challenged for ignoring the theoretical contributions developed out of Euro-American/White feminist, postcolonial, and/or third world feminist theoretical domains. Euro-American White feminist theorizing, on the other hand (conceived as primarily interested in power, subjectivity, and sex/gender issues), has been criticized for reluctantly drawing from the domain of white male poststructuralism (except when transcoded through "French" feminisms), postcolonial, or U.S. third world feminist theoretical domains. "Postcolonial criticism" (focused primarily on issues of power, subjectivity, nation, race, and ethnicity), unlike the others, is perceived as freely exchanging with the realm of White male poststructuralist theory (this cross-exchange has an old volatile history, as witnessed in 1940–60 Sartre/Fanon/Barthes relationships). Such generous attention also is criticized, however, for rarely extending to U.S. third world feminist scholarship, and even less to White feminist theory. Queer theory, for all its interdisciplinary innovation, is generally considered the primary domain of sex studies in relation to minoritarian and majoritarian behaviours…Insofar as academic disciplines generate division in this way, they continually reproduce an apartheid of theoretical domains. These divisions further demonstrate the articulation of knowledge with power inasmuch as what is being re-enacted on a conceptual level are colonial geographic, sexual, gender, and economic power relations (2000, 70).*

In academia, part of seeing through the eyes of others, is the ability to enact intellectual identity in interdisciplinarity thresholds. Being a *nepantlera* is to build bridges that transcend familiar and safe spaces and risk uncertainty of change (Anzaldúa 2002, 574). One of the main challenges for my participants is the clash between the resolution and desire to escape theoretical and disciplinary apartheid and the sedimented theoretical traditions that segregate disciplines. It is in this context that agency, as defined through Western paradigms, becomes inapplicable to the experiences of those operating from the margins. The move towards epistemic injustice is either coined as theoretical deviance or naïve relativism. In both instances, the agenda of the marginalised in denigrated and delegitimised. Anzaldúa (1987) further adds that our enactment of identity is relational and, in academia, doctoral students as apprentices operate under the scrutinizing gaze of senior academics (fence maintainers). For most of my participants the performance of a *nepantlera* identity is impeded by imposed notions of what being means in a specific discipline. The argument here is not the endless conflation of disciplinary traditions but the recognition that traditions are ideological and were framed within specific historical and spatial configurations. After this has been established, the aim is to see how these ideological backgrounds silence and privilege specific onto-epistemological traditions.

Participants mostly experienced this phase in relation to conceived space. In most cases, participants relocated from one country/province/city to the other for their doctoral studies. This is a form of physical boundary crossing which, however, involves cultural and cognitive crossings:

> *First, there was [a] cultural difference between, I would say, South Africa and my home country. I have never been to any other southern African country apart from maybe Angola. Particularly, the priority given to the gender policy at Rhodes, it made me feel like some of my innocent behaviour could be criminalized. I remember, there was a meeting for boys when I first entered Rhodes. I think the first week or two and I happened to attend so those are the concerns I have raised that I think the South African society writes their approach to assist other states and it doesn't bring the collective to the form, it brings the individual to the form. So, your conduct is screened by the law and if you are found guilty… at first, I didn't get it, maybe because I was a foreigner, but the impression is that you don't have the benefit of social behaviour or not, deputation of common issues in terms of such kind of stuff. You don't have that benefit you have to go by what the rules say, and you can crack a joke and you don't know how the recipient will receive it. You may end up being the happiest person or the worst person on earth. So, I had to learn that. I think what it taught me is that you cannot operate across the globe from one social and cultural lens and so you need to learn the environment that you find [yourself in] and adjust to it (Thapelo).*

> *So, when you get to the environment so introduction and everything it was easy and having to feel at home like you can do whatever. But, with time, there is the cultural shock around the town that took some few months to get used to. So, initially when I was coming here, I was like you go to church and then you grow up in church where you where, like, you cannot be gay it's not right and all that. Then when you go to a place where you going to be like, "Oh shit, this is actually different." So, that was the biggest shock because you have to get used to the place and then you go like my "belief says this" and then you go to a different place – it's more like culture shock. Then you have to adapt, but as you grow…you think outside the box and then you see things differently. So, as I was busy with my studies on the side and then you get to experience what is happening around you, you go like, as a matter of fact this is the way people chose to be, so you accept what's happening around you. and then don't judge the choices of people and also it is not your business to deal with other people's issues (David).*

In various ways, overt and some more nuanced, our beliefs and opinions are laced with prejudice and discrimination. Springer (2000) notes that at most, those who have suffered oppression and discrimination find it hard to believe that they themselves harbour prejudice

towards specific and entire groups of people. However, throughout our lives our social groups and the spaces we choose to associate ourselves with are mostly influenced by cultural and religious prejudices. The judgement we pass in our everyday lives and intellectual activities reveal unconscious prejudices we have about Self and others. Conner and Sparks argue that "as we claim our identities, we make family/alliances as well as knuckle under to the available categories an oppressively hierarchical culture has created for us" (2002, 512). As we are exposed to deferential spaces, there is always a clash between how we perceive others and how others enact their identities. As others perform their identities outside of the ethnic, racial, religious, class, gender, or national classifications, one has internalised, one is thrust at a crossroads of choice – to wall oneself against difference or to adapt and view the world in multiplicity. This choice often entails surrendering beliefs that have become core identity signifiers. Thapelo identifies himself as 'playful', in which the use of innuendos and flirtatious jokes were just part of that persona. He characterises his behaviour as "innocent" and not being "harmful". However, as Munyuki (2018), writing on contra-power harassment argues, the use of such terms "innocent" "not harmful" are used to rationalise forms of sexual harassment. Although Thapelo acknowledges his need to adapt, he fails to see through the eyes of others when he falls back to blaming the sensitivity of the space to being misunderstood instead of seeing fault with his behaviour. Koshy posits that, when the self is individualised and aggrandised usually rooted in strong beliefs about Self, they become closed off and "foreclose the possibility of being transformed by another's experience and perception of reality" (152). Furthermore, Thapelo narrates that to survive, he has compartmentalised his social and intellectual identities because some spaces are not safe for him:

> *There are multiple rules playing at the same time in life, so when you are in [an] academic space, you should know what you want. Even the social space, you should know what to do to keep safe. You are free but also you are quite responsible…kind of a behaviour so compartmentalised in terms of the consciousness, but they may play out at the same time.*

In contrast, David challenges and deconstructs his belief systems. David links the development of his intellectual identity to his social identity. Instead of compartmentalising the various identities that he enacts in the various worlds he traverses, he recognises the plurality of Self, acting in unity. In compartmentalising, Thapelo refuses to see/know, thereby constructing a Self that is isolated and insulated from others (Koshy, 2006). In contrast, David traces the

historicity of his belief systems and how they are permeated with prejudice and wall off Self from others. In seeing through the others, David bridges between separatist ideologies rooted in identity politics.

## (Re)Claiming New "Guiding Myths" for our times

> *So, if you get to intellectual spaces where you discuss issues and [have] to come up with some ideas, all that it gives you [is] a different character… It is the same in social spaces. You get to learn something from those moments and everything you experience in those spaces with people, so it gives you a different character (David)*

As a *nepantlera,* you become aware of the destructive stories/narratives/myths that we use to define history and reality. In colonial spaces, such histories are usually circumscribed by dominant ethnic and cultural myths on one side and the monolithic hegemony of Western onto-epistemologies. Take for example the epistemic erasure under colonial and apartheid eras that were carried out under the pretext of modernisation/civilisation/rationality. The harmful stories told about this process exonerate the subjugating subject of the indiscriminate burnings, killings and displacement that were carried out based on "myths of progress, civilization, liberalism, education, enlightenment, refinement" (Sandoval 2000, 127). The myth of a rational subject crossing oceans to civilise the irrational other empties the colonised of their histories, cultures and ways of knowing.  This tale legitimises the dominance of Western culture as the only pure and rational mode of thought. It supports the idea that within academia, indigenous knowledges only offer an inferior 'spicing up' of an otherwise complete and universal knowledge system. As students from disenfranchised cultures enter academia, these myths impose on identity construction. It is from this context that Koshy asserts that, "theorizing in *nepantla* requires a simultaneous learning/unlearning/deconstructing/constructing that can lead us toward a new theorizing in the present, a creation of new myths, a reclaiming of suppressed oral histories and indigenous narratives" (153).

The blow-up exposes the myths that have been guiding one's identity construction and re-construction. In most cases, oppressed subjects who become aware of the various subjectivities imposed on them cross the bridge into oppositional politics. This can be seen in several of my participants' narratives, for instance, Tsepo and Moses. Both participants had fixed their ideas

on the us/them and White/Black binaries as a response to onto-epistemic oppressions they faced in academia. This binary is built on the mythology of separatism and identity politics as the most viable means to resistance and liberation. Moses held the belief that in order for him to construct an authentic identity as a decolonial scholar, he had to be supervised by a Black decolonial scholar in a progressive university. The clash between this belief and his lived reality was a call for him to deconstruct and reconstruct his identity using new guiding myths. The myth that positions White people as the enemy poses two problems for the *nepantlera*; firstly, it creates a binary of competing worldviews in which one has to make a choice. Secondly, to choose to disidentify with both groups and engage the systemic, historical, and conceptual materialisation of oppression instead will result in one being considered a sell-out (Cervenak et al. 2002, 351). In the end, Moses and Tsepo transcend these modes of thinking revealing possible new ways of resisting oppression in all its spatial ordering.

David reveals that, as a *nepantlera,* the aim is not only to acknowledge difference and find a way to side-step it whilst preserving one's mythologies. Managing difference is a form of self-inoculation where one allows oneself to dialogue and tolerate oppositional views, but one's boundaries, concepts and structures remain fixed. This approach is a form of liberalism which tends to "ignore or minimize racial and other difficult differences", thereby perpetuating oppressive myths (Sandoval 2000, 49). David allows the experience to change him. He shifts his reality and adopts new guiding myths, not only for his temporal reality, but as part of his identity. To be able to create new guiding myths, one has to go through the process of confronting internalised myths and often times subtle ways we name and identify. In all the spatial dimensions we occupy, there are borders erected by ourselves and others limit and constrain intersubjective relations. But as a *nepantlera*, one is conscious of the way socially, politically, and intellectually dominant bodies police being and the performance of identity. Anzaldúa characterises this crossing as passing through a hole in the fence, illustrating how crossing is a transgression, an act of criminality and deviance within the dominant framework. For David to begin to re-shape his identity, and not only to tolerate or accommodate the other, but to be transformed through the interconnectedness of being, he transgresses his cultural and religious mythologies. However, Anzaldúa warns that in our commitment to deconstruct our subjectivities and reconstruct new identities, we have to remain wary of the ways ideologies we have nurtured in our social and intellectual spaces percolate into our identities. She maintains that when "we the objects, become the subjects, and look at and analyse our own experiences, a danger arises that we may look through the master's gaze, speak through his

tongue, use his methodology" (1990, xxiii). As Sikho laments, "I came back to wanting to play *my* music. [But] the American music is in my blood". Thus, dominant narratives become embedded and engrained in our "blood" and the way we do things, and, like Sikho, we must recognise and extricate ourselves from oppressive myths and ideologies.

Most of my participants turn to the codification and archiving of knowledge through song, literature, and scholarship as a way of resisting monolithic Western narratives. Through the schooling system, some of my participants had internalised the myths of Western intellectual supremacy. However, as they become sceptical of some "Western-led scholarship", they use their writing, songs and poetry to "replace the dominant narratives by documenting the oral histories that were lost during colonial invasions" (Koshy 2006, 153).The aim of new guiding myths is not to replace one culture with the other but, as Sikho's narrative highlights, it is to reverse the single monolithic domination of Western narratives with counter narratives that make the colonised as a people with culture and knowledge visible. These myths are also not meant to romanticize cultural onto-epistemologies but rather, as Mzo highlights, pay homage without romanticizing.

> *I was once interviewed by a guy who asked me about the tools that I used to do my music and…all the tools were Western, but the question was that the music sounds simple to the ears until you sit down and try to work it out as a musician, then you realize that it is infused with some indigenous tools foreign to Western theories. Then they ask, "What was this guy thinking? What's going on here?" You know? But to the ordinary ears, it sounds like this is our African music but from an artist's perspective it is complex in terms of understanding the tools I use (Sikho).*

> *I finished working on my thesis in October and on the 28th of November, I submitted with everybody else. But because of the situation in the department, the dynamics and politics, my submission to examiners was prolonged. I was paying homage to an isiXhosa legend and you know as a Xhosa, myself, you are defined in a certain way. However, in my thesis I also critiqued our legend from a feminist perspective, I was shown flames. So because I refused to write in a certain way about our heritage and the era of \*\*\*\* like all those other Xhosa scholars who just, well I mean I get it but I learnt the diction and also my intellect grew from reading and my experiences have now shaped my interpretation of \*\*\*\* So, [what] I'm trying to deal with is something that \*\*\*\* never [had] to deal with at all… so I don't see why I have to, in my thesis, be talking and praising \*\*\*\* without raising the contradictions. So, the funny thing is some Xhosa examiners it was originally sent to refused to mark my work and eventually I got a distinction but barely because some Xhosa guys just basically gave me a lesser mark (Mzo).*

The fusion of multiple tools for the reconstruction is the physical manifestation of the identity of *nepantlera* and in doing this, Sikho was intentionally re-creating an identity drawing from the mythologies of the multiple worlds he traverses. This is in line with Koshy, who states "[t]he process of (re)claiming new guiding myths requires that we combine different ideologies/belief systems of the past with those of the present and reinterpret and resolve misunderstandings between them" (2006, 155). Sikho throughout his experiences is positioned between worlds and whilst he is critical of the multiple worlds he occupies and the identity categories they impose on him, he draws from various mythological structures without privileging any one dominant culture.

## Risking the personal and intellectual

> *We must act in the everyday world. Words are not enough. We must perform visible and public acts that might make us more vulnerable to the very oppressions we are fighting against. But our vulnerability can be the source of our power— if we use it"* (1981, 195).

The stages of *conocimiento* do not end in an internal process of reflection and identity construction. They are not a form of escapism which does not impact the external environment and does not lead to any real change. *Conocimiento* involves taking a risk at every stage, allowing oneself to be vulnerable to transform borders and walls into thresholds. Based on Anzaldúa, in transforming borders into bridges, "*la nepantlera* runs the risk of being stoned for this heresy—a case of killing the messenger" (2002, 573). There is a real risk in actively embodying the identity of the *nepantlera* as revealed in the narratives of my participants. In the academic space, there is always a resistance to theories and ideologies that are considered dangerous and/or problematic. Usually, these ideologies are defined as being politically motivated, holding no substance in academia as seen by the persistent questions such as, "how do we decolonise?" or narratives that propagate that "decolonising is problematic". Although a large body of work has been committed to advocating and delineating the decolonisation of higher education, these oppositional narratives serve to obscure the debates on decolonising such that it remains a theoretical and political agenda that is practically and rationally not feasible. To take on this work is to risk one's reputation as highlighted by Moses' narrative. After the student protests (#FeesMustFall and #RapeMustFall), decoloniality, in his view, was

seen as a disruptive concept which brought some anxiety to academics, as they felt they would have to begin incorporating it. In taking up this work, Moses had to sacrifice the choice on who supervised him and where he did his doctorate. During his first enrolment he was continually asked to change his topic until he had to leave.

In Sikho's case, his decision to compose from the liminal place of *nepantla* opens him up for criticism and his work being labelled as not being jazz. Sandoval notes that control over naming and defining belongs to those in a position of privilege, thus in academia it belongs to scholars (2000). However, the authority is not shared equally amongst scholars because some voices count more than others. By naming, we denote meaning and when this power is concentrated in the hands of a few, the marginalised are constrained in their ability to formulate an alternative consciousness. Sandoval notes that "when oppositional tactics become strategies, metalanguages, ideologies" they distort reality by unnaming and renaming "in order to take better control, to be more easily understood" (2000, 182). As Sikho deconstructs the name tags that delineate and impose on his identity as a jazz musician, he begins to rename himself and through the initial risk, he paves a pathway to a more fluid identity. However, Anzaldúa notes that,

> *The danger of occupying the in-between space of nepantla lies not only in being seen as a threat to the dominant discourse but also as being seen as a threat to one's own cultural group. By rejecting and criticizing the hierarchical ways (racist and patriarchal beliefs) that circulate among one's own, the possibility of being viewed as subversive by family or peers is imminent (2000, 227).*

Although in the academic space, the scholarly and intellectual risks are more prominent, one also risks the personal.

> *I didn't go on after Matric and [the] whole thing upset my father but when I was in matric, my mind was not there anymore… I was starting to think about our activities with the cultural groups. I was starting to become more of an artist, and I started to develop a sense of activism. Basically, what I'm saying is that [my] relationship with my mother and father deteriorated [over] time and so much more with my father until maybe when I was a man, but he was still disappointed (Khoza).*

As the only man in the family, there was cultural pressure for Khoza not only to do well and become successful but to father children and continue his father's name. However, the work he had chosen to do did not allow him to become an engineer and for him to marry and have children as his father had hoped.

> *I had no time… I struggled for a long time. On one hand, I want[ed] to build my name from scratch, so I sacrificed a lot of things – I don't have children, I need to be a father one day for my father's sake, even, but for me as well (Khoza).*

Khoza's choices, as already highlighted in preceding chapters, were motivated by his awareness of the multiple forms of oppression he and others in his community were facing. He chose from an early age to become the bridge on which his community can resist and redefine themselves. But in order to do this, he forfeited his cultural role, based on patriarchal mythologies, as the only son in the family. Koshy explains that "stepping out of social/cultural/gender roles by refusing to fit in and by choosing not to be complacent, *nepantleras* risk being attacked, wounded, or even killed" (2006, 155). It is from such experiences that Anzaldúa characterises this phase as making a blood sacrifice (Anzaldúa, quoted in Garber 2005, 218). In describing his experiences, Khoza stands from his seat and in a low tone begins to recite a poem:

> *Me firing, dancing, high lips kissing the skies/ chanting rebelling, lion soul sisters showing love making –/ slowly the generator on the soul/ I am still recovering from the world/ I shred against your terror/ Light endlessly moving in and out of the cracks// finding moisture more than often…// A glimpse of rainbow/ blistering golden beyond the sunset to/ different languages (Khoza).*

There is a price to be paid in becoming a *nepantlera*, one risks non-belonging and becoming a native of nowhere. One risks not making sense like Andisiwe and Tsepo. One risks theoretical/disciplinary exile like Mzo and Kandau. One risks challenges to one's capabilities as a scholar like Mzo and Bobby. As Moses' experiences highlight, one also risks resistance from those who fear change – he faced resistance from Black academics who saw decoloniality as a threat to their being, their ingrained onto-epistemologies. Koshy holds that "exposing the falsities and fears within categories can be dangerous, for we jolt others who share/claim this space out of their own complacency". However, for most of my participants, the fear of being different or going against the grain did not deter them with what seems as indomitable

obstacles. They forged on, deconstructing and reconstructing. When asked for a reason for his persistence, Sikho narrated:

> *Because I think there is power in knowing and in academia. They call it academia, but I understand it differently. I believe that pursuit of knowledge is in humanity always, part of everyday life. Every single time that we get to learn something, and if that's what they call academia then I want to stay there because I want to learn, I want to keep learning. I'm not sure if that is academia but to me, that's my understanding – that I want to keep learning. But I am also on this journey, and I am willing to embrace the change and try to change the narrative for our Black people, you know? Even if you were White having this interview with me, I was going to say I want to change the situation for my (Black) people, that is what is keeping me here. I see education or academia as a tool that will help me to drive the narrative into changing my people's situation. They're struggling. I travelled all around the country – our people are struggling, you know? In terms of recognition as artists and scholars. We need African scholars who will teach the African way, who will teach them how to restore the brokenness in them, who will restore their identity, who will tell them the truth, man, of what is going on without taking advantage of them. Without looking for benefits in them – for profits. We need guidance on what subjects [we are] teaching, what [courses they are offering], who should offer those subjects, and what knowledge they include (Sikho).*

## Conclusion

As *conocimiento* is experienced as a continuous shift between dissonance and balance, this stage makes the end of the process in a specific spatial temporality. However, whilst in this stage, one could fall into the darkness of *Coatlicue* in another competing worldview. For example, as one comes to terms with identity as a gay Black man, one could be facing challenges as a Black man from a historically disadvantaged university in academia. Hence, for marginalised bodies, resisting/oppression is never a closed subject but an active awareness of multiplicity of being and identities are at times contrasting and competing. Constructing identity in alterity is different from constructing it in resistance to dominant narratives. Whilst the latter is grounded in identity politics, the former negates any form of identity categories that have the potential of caging one's ontology. In this space there is a deliberate movement towards mythologies of interconnectedness that have fewer rigid structures and categories.

# Conclusion

There is a tirade of political, social, and economic pressures that universities undergo and these inevitably affect the doctoral space. Moreover, the university is not an island. The university, as a physical entity, is located within a community. While the university simultaneously impacts the community on a spatial and intersubjective level, the built environment of the university, the relations of the university with the surrounding community, and the spatial practices within and without converge in lived space. Both the intellectual life, and the lived experiences of those who inhabit this space emanate from the intersection of these multiple and intersecting spatial and intersubjective relations. In South Africa, there have been on-going spatial reconfigurations of higher education. The effects of the end of apartheid to higher education space have been widely documented. The need for transformation of higher education space has been, and continues to be, widely documented. In the midst of all these material and cognitive shifts lies the doctorate.

The doctoral space is not immune to all the changes that continue to occur nationally and within higher education. During apartheid, the Master's degree was recognised as the highest qualification, equal to the level of doctorate degree internationally. Post-apartheid, the doctorate rose to its internationally recognised position in the ivory tower, in line with global demands and standards. Institutional mergers also changed the demographic landscape within higher education and, consequently, within disciplines and doctoral studies. With the rise of the doctorate, there have been questions of participation of diverse racial and gender groups and the quality of the doctoral process and candidates produced. It has also been argued that diversity in demographic representations does not also entail onto-epistemological diversity. All these questions highlight the link between physical space, cognitive space, spatial practices and lived experiences. Although there is a substantial amount of literature on doctoral student experiences in South Africa, and a fair amount of literature on academic identity construction, there is a paucity of literature that focuses on conceptualising the doctoral space (perceived, conceived and lived). The main reasons for this lack of literature are, firstly, the continued focus on mental spaces whilst simultaneously viewing material space as a neutral space to be acted upon. This approach fragments space and leads to one-sided analysis. Focused and specialised research such as racialised, exclusionary, and gendered spaces have their place and importance in academia, but especially within the context of transformation and identity, it is

important to analyse how various experiences within their various spatial ordering interplay. Such an analysis, I argue, can help to reveal deferential third spaces and how identities are constructed within these spaces.

The first step in this research was to examine the spatiality of doctoral studies. Doctoral space is considered as an ivory tower within an ivory tower whilst simultaneously is at the bottom/beginning of the hierarchy within academia. This positions it, cognitively, as a space in-between. Doctoral studies are housed in disciplinary material and cognitive spaces. In most departments, there are specialised spaces for doctoral students and those for other postgraduate students and doctoral students are usually presented with more teaching opportunities. Such spatial and disciplinary practices further position doctoral studies as an in-between space. For example, for one of my participants, Kandau, all doctoral students in his department are required to hold a lecturing post and are thus, all assigned offices for the duration of their studies. After severe disagreements with his supervisor, who was also the head of department, he was thrown out of his office although he was still lecturing. The physical space becomes a space of contestation and an identity signifier. So, far from being a neutral physical space, it can be co-opted in ways that displace and fragment identity.

Drawing from this perspective, I conceptualise doctoral space as a borderland. I use Gloria Anzaldúa's borderland theory to conceptualise doctoral space as a physical and psychic borderland, the lived space for border subjects. Anzaldúa defines the borderland as, where the two worlds of the marginalised and the dominant cross paths and "bleed… and before a scab forms, it haemorrhages again, the lifeblood of two worlds merging to form a third country – a border culture" (Anzaldúa 1987, back cover). Her concept of borderlands encompasses both ideological and physical borders, she further conceptualises borderlands as the space not only to theorise about but to theorise from. This understanding depicts the borderland as a container of lived experiences and voices of alterity. Thus, inherent to Anzaldúa's borderland theory is the holistic conceptualisation of space.

In the context chapter, I use Lefebvre's spatial triad to unpack doctoral space in relation to my study. In my view, my context chapter is only a rudimentary sketch, and a more in-depth study could be done to extensively examine and conceptualise the spatiality of doctoral studies. Lefebvre posits that although perceived, conceived and lived spaces are independent elements, they operate in unison and cannot be isolated from each other. He conceives the spatial triad –

representations of space, spaces of representation, and lived space to illustrate the various elements of space. He also emphasises that both material and conceived space overlay lived experiences. Lefebvre's triad provides the necessary tools to examine and contextualise the doctoral space. In the context chapter I simultaneously draw on Lefebvre's spatial triad whilst making a case of the doctoral space as a borderland.

The metaphors Anzaldúa employs to describe the borderland- wound and haemorrhaging allude to the violence that occurs when two oppositional and competing worlds intersect. The doctoral space is often theorised as a neutral space. This perspective in examining differential and negative experiences, theorises them as spatial temporalities that happen to the doctoral student and the doctoral space and are attributed to the occasional incidents of exclusionary practices such as sexism, homophobia, racism, and other oppressive constructs. I argue that these forms of oppression are endemic to the doctoral space within the coloniality/patriarchal imaginary. In colonial spaces, higher education spaces were constructed to be exclusionary and to segregate between unsafe/safe onto-epistemologies, bodies, and spaces. Thus, one cannot talk of space in its neutrality in the context of colonial spaces or any space. In this study I contribute to the body of knowledge that seeks to transcend oppositional politics by theorising a third space where the marginalised/oppressed straddle and negotiate between two competing worlds/ideologies. The subject in-between is conceived by Anzaldúa (1987) as a border-dweller.

It is this space that doctoral students traverse and construct academic identities. The second step was to locate the student in the borderlands. My theory prescribed the identity of a border-dweller, but this is not a static identity category. Identity categories almost always imply some sort of identity purity. For example, there are assumptions of how a Black student looks, sounds, and behaves; and from these assumptions, identity stereotypes are formulated. I argue that this is also the case in relation to academic identity. Disciplinary traditions and spatial practices prescribe what it means to be a philosopher, economist, artist etc. Disciplinary traditions and mythologies safeguard disciplinary ontological purity. Being in this space is thus a matter of conformity to pre-existing identity categories. From this perspective, identity construction in doctoral space involves self-styling within already set parameters and a crossing of standardised and linear disciplinary thresholds. Although it is easy to readily problematise restrictive identity categories, the meeting of disciplinary thresholds is mostly regarded as

benign. In this project, I highlighted that when linear thresholds are given prominence, they mask students' subjective realities and the fluidity of identity.

In prescribing the identity of a border-dweller, the aim was to dismantle thresholds crossing that predominantly link identity construction to static linear thresholds. Such narratives investigate the challenges and experiences of doctoral students in a way that neutralises the multiplicity of being. For example, in the study of Black students, their lived experiences in connection to attrition, although this study is vital, it inadvertently imposes a threshold in relation to ontology and identity. Alsultany argues the "categories that purport to designate any of us are too rigid and oversimplified to fit anyone accurately" (2002, 109). The point I am arguing is not the replacement of such studies but to highlight their limitations and the importance of studies that utilize "less-structured thoughts, less-rigid categorizations, and thinner boundaries" (Anzaldúa 2002, 568). My study seeks to contribute to this body of work. A border-dweller embodies multiplicity and exists in a place of multiplicity. One is allowed to identify and disidentify with multiple subjectivities and there is also an acknowledgment of the pluriversity of space. This does not lead to relativism, but critiques monolith cultural and Western mythologies of being.

Rigid identity categories mask differences and play into the schema of identity and oppositional politics. Writing on the impact of rigid identity categories in academia, Piper contends that identity impositions have cognitive implications in which there is an effort to fit and situate individuals into a:

> *Conceptual mapping of the world, not only by naming or indicating the niche in which they felt (they) belonged, but by seeking my verbal confirmation of it . . . [an attempt to] locate me within the rigid confines of [their] stereotype of [Black] people (Piper quoted in Alsultany 2002, 83).*

As border-dwellers, my participants narrated their various subjectivities, how they identify and disidentify. I do not read their difference as divergences, but as a precondition to being a *nepantlera,* a border-dweller.

Social, intellectual, and political categories constitute identity. However, in conceptualising doctoral space as a borderland, I transgress constructed categories to explore how doctoral

students traverse the doctoral space as a transgression to identity categories. I also use the concept of *nepantla* to show the fluidity of identity. Identity is not bound by space and time but is a continuous deconstruction and reconstruction through space and time. Some of my participants traced pivotal moments throughout their intellectual journeys from formative years in relation to their doctoral studies. This rupture the localisation of identity construction to the spatial temporality of the doctorate. Through the concept of *conocimiento*, I was able to highlight the fluidity of identity especially for marginalised bodies and those constructing their identities from alterity. This study is thus significant for the marginalised doctoral student as it offers a different way of understating their duality of being- existing both within and without normative structures. To negotiate this duality students' "concoct sense away from the encasement of dominant sense". I found that students' performance of agency cannot be defined by the western version of agency where action is something the agent possesses, and agency is valid when it yields success. For my participants agency was performed in the moments that they fractured determinacy logic and embraced the indeterminacy and multiplicity of being and becoming. In this way agency is not something the subject can have "but rather is 'doing'/'being' in its intra-activity" (Barad 2003, 826). This approach enables us to go beyond researching how students experience and respond to violent hegemonic structures to how hegemonic imaginaries materialise on students' bodies/subjective realities and in their epistemologies.

To study this space, I adopted a methodology that allowed me to take an interdisciplinary approach. Rhythmanalysis gives importance to the body in space and the interaction between body and intersubjective and spatial relations. In the production of space, Lefebvre argued that "what we live are rhythms, rhythms experienced subjectively" (1991, 206). Lefebvre emphasises the notion of rhythmic moments that can be measured and analysed using the tools of eurhythmia, arrhythmia and polyrhythmia. The two key elements of rhythmanalysis that were pertinent to the study were tools to study and centralise the body and the conceptualisation of the seven stages on *conocimiento* as rhythmic moments/assemblages. Rhythmanalysis also advances the idea of fluidity of being in relation to time and space. Hence, nothing is fixed except that which is imposed through dressage/entrainment. Using the various analytical tools from rhythmanalysis and drawing from Arendt's philosophy (1958/1998), participants were asked to recount stories of 'who they are' in their multiplicity of being not as 'what they are'– objectified Black students, at risk, victims, docile and ontologically invisible. The aim of this

was from the onset to make imposed categories permeable and also make the interview space a safe environment for participants to narrate their boundary transgressions.

Drawing from participants' narratives and *autohistorias,* I examined how their various experiences can be understood as rhythmic assemblages of *conocimiento*. The aim was not to thematise their experiences but to identify moments that manifest as arrhythmia and eurhythmia and analyse them within the *conocimiento* ensemble. I will detail some of my key findings. In this study, I found that confrontations with various forms of systematic oppression are experienced by doctoral students as moments of intellectual crisis. Moments of crisis bring awareness to their various forms of subjectivities that have imposed intellectual identity categories. These moments are not confined to the doctoral space but are continuously negotiated before and after doctoral studies. As doctoral students confront various crises, it continuously pushes them to re-negotiate their beliefs and perceptions about Self and others. This challenge to one's self-conception ruptures one's worldviews enabling them to see the mythologies of inherited, cultivated, and imposed beliefs. This process is not closed, only occurring in temporality but recurring and cyclical through time and space. I also found that this process climaxes in the doctoral space. This is because of the duality of being inherent to the doctorate – it positions students as legitimate knowers thereby implying their capacity for self-style and self-definition. Marginalised bodies come into this space aware of their various subjectivities and onto-epistemic injustices they face. The identity of being a doctoral candidate is thus perceived as a space for the rewriting and re-injection of their onto-epistemological realities. As they come into this space, often to only be continuously delegitimised and face further alienation, the identity is fragmented. However, this fragmentation is not destructive but in *conocimiento*, rhythmanalysis and the experiences of my participants it acts as a catalyst to transformation and change.

Doctoral students embody the *nepantla* identity as they cross both linear and cyclical thresholds. For the most part, I refrain from referring to my participants as Black doctoral students. To do this would fix identity categorisation and makes assumptions about the various challenges they encounter and how they negotiate them. I found that in connection with intellectual identity, participants straddle two worlds. They have to negotiate between dominant and marginal cultures, they identify and disidentify as they construct their own academic identities. To label them from the onset is to situate them on an oppositional side of the border. However, academic identities for border-dwellers are a result of cross-pollination

and multiplicity. Liminality for doctoral students, navigating academia between cultures is a constant negotiation of intersecting and competing interests and ideologies. The awareness that comes with liminality is not utopic but often brings about ontological terror. I found that as participants become aware of themselves being pressed in-between two dominating and oppositional worlds – on one hand, they internalise this oppression, and on the other, terror results from their state of non-belonging. Awareness gives them the spatial and body location of their oppressor, such as suppressive disciplinary traditions which are safe-guarded by senior-academics that act as gatekeepers. To act against the *status quo*, one risks losing their disciplinary home and therefore their belonging and sense-making in academia. Thus, I found that doctoral students engage in differential agentic action (not recognised under Western definitions of agency). They disengage, isolate, hide, theorise from alterity etc. These are not mere coping mechanisms but represent the resources available to them to disengage from servitude and complacency. Thus they utilise these resources when they find themselves disempowered by their positions as apprentices and delegitimised onto-epistemically within dominant knowledge systems, whilst they still fear ontological nihilism.

From the paralysis of *Coatlicue,* most participants realised that a change had to happen. The mythological structures that entrain and discipline the body are also used to rationalise any form of suppression and onto-epistemic injustices. 'Change' in this space involves a break from oppressive mythologies. As doctoral students traverse doctoral borderlands, disciplinary and theoretical mythologies along with myths about Black academic identity neutralises their ability to self-define. It becomes necessary not only to resist dressage, but to first dismantle the mythologies that rationalise bodily entrainment in the first place. One cannot talk of transformation without confronting mythologies in their various spatial ordering that govern and rationalise relations in space. This study demonstrates that academic identity construction is a process of deconstruction and reconstruction in response to the violent ruptures caused by multiple and intersectional forms of oppression. What was interesting were the various tools participants used to reformulate their academic identities in spaces hostile to the spatial realities. For marginalised bodies, identity is formulated in a space which imposes foreign, objectifying, and colonising identity categories. Hence, as outsiders, they use deferential tools such as writing, poetry and music to concoct their identities outside of the *status quo*. The inability to visibly perform their identities within the dominant space is limiting and imposes a dualistic performance of Self. Reconstruction is mostly the work of the student in trying to

reconcile these imposed dualities of being by adopting a language of resistance – re-writing mythologies and legitimising alternative ways of knowing and theorising.

As identity is performed in relation to others the re-constructed Self is eventually introduced to the world. However, the internal work undertaken does not transform the spaces we traverse, so the Self decolonising and resisting is presented in untransformed spaces. Whatever work doctoral students devote to re-scripting their identities away from colonising categories, they must often simultaneously find a way of performing this identity in untransformed spaces. This makes academia a hostile and uninhabitable space for the resisting subject. There is a need for research that also problematises doctoral space and unearths how it is uninhabitable but also the stories of survival of those who embody the identity of outsiders within.

I think that this study would have benefited by limiting the number of participants to a maximum of five. The aim of *conocimiento* is to extensively trace how individuals oppressed/resisting embody this process. This means one has to be able to take one moment and explore how it plays out in the various stages. As an embodied theory, I think it requires an in-depth ethnographic and rhythmanalysis study of space and a limited number of participants. However, an achievement of this study is that it begins a conversation on the presence of deferential spaces in doctoral studies and how identities are negotiated and constructed within these spaces.

# Reference List

Abraham, Stephanie. 2014. "A Nepantla Pedagogy: Comparing Anzaldúa's and Bakhtin's Ideas for Pedagogical and Social Change." *Critical Education* 5 (5).

Abrokwaa, Clemente. 2017. "Colonialism and the Development of Higher Education." In *Re-Thinking Postcolonial Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century*, 201-220. Rotterdam.: Brill Sense. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-962-1_12.

Akala, B M. 2018. "Challenging Gender Equality in South African Transformation Policies – A Case of the White Paper : A Programme for the Transformation of Higher." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 32 (3): 226–48. http://dx.doi.org/10.20853/32-3-1521.

Alexander, M. Jacqu. 2002. "Remembering This Bridge, Remembering Ourselves: Yearning, Memory, and Desire." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1177/13558358070130030903.

Alhadeff-Jones, Michel. 2019. "Beyond Space and Time—Conceiving the Rhythmic Configurations of Adult Education through Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis." *Zeitschrift Für Weiterbildungsforschung* 42 (2): 165–81. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40955-019-0133-0.

Ali, Azad, and Frederick Kohun. 2006. "Dealing with Isolation Feelings in IS Doctoral Programs." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 1: 21–33. https://doi.org/Ali, A., & Kohun, F. (2006). Dealing with isolation feelings in IS doctoral programs. International Journal of Doctoral Studies, 1, 21–33.

Allen, Ila R. 2014. "Virtual Communities of Practice: A Netnographic Study of Peer-to-Peer Networking Support among Doctoral Students." *ProQuest LLC*.

Almeida, Sandra Regina Goulart. 2000. "Bodily Encounters: Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera." *Ilha Do Desterro* 39: 113–23.

Alsultany, Evelyn. 2002. "Los Intersticios: Recasting Moving Selves." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818x.2009.00170.x.

Altbach, Philip G, Liz Reisberg, and Laura E Rumbley. 2009. "Trends in Global Higher Education : Tracking an Academic Revolution Trends in Global Higher Education." *Higher Education*, 22. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bse.2004.04.006.

Ampaw, Frim D., and Audrey J. Jaeger. 2012. "Completing the Three Stages of Doctoral

Education: An Event History Analysis." *Research in Higher Education* 53 (6): 640–60. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11162-011-9250-3.

Amran, Najah Nadiah, and Rozita Ibrahim. 2012. "Academic Rites of Passage: Reflection on a PhD Journey." *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 59: 528–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.310.

Andemicael, Iobel. 2002. "Chameleon." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822394389-008.

Andreotti, Vanessa. 2011. *Actionable Post Colonial Theory in Education*. Edited by Peter Mayo, Anne Hickling-Hudson, and Antonia Darder. 1st ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Angrosino, Michel angrosino. 2007. *Naturalistic Observation*. California: LCoastPress.

Antuna, Marcos de R. 2018. "What We Talk About When We Talk About Nepantla: Gloria Anzaldúa and the Queer Fruit of Aztec Philosophy." *Journal of Latinos and Education* 17 (2): 159–63. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2017.1295859.

Anzaldúa, Gloria E. 1987. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. *Aging*. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004.

———. 1999. "Chapter 22 : Putting Coyolxauhqui Together : A Creative Process Putting Coyolxauhqui Together : A Creative Process." *Counterpoints* 90: 241–61.

———. 2000. *Interviews/Entrevistas*. Edited by A Keating. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2013.09.008.

———. 2002a. "(Un)Natural Bridges, (Un)Safe Spaces." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformations*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating, 1–5. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391272-035.

———. 2002b. "Now Let Us Shift . . . the Path of Conocimiento . . . Inner Work, Public Acts." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Analouise Keating. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203952962.

———. 2007. *Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza. La Frontera*. 3rd ed. Michigan: Aunt Lute.

———. 2009. *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*. Edited by AnaLouise Keating. London: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822391272.

———. 2015. "Preface." In *Light in the Dark/Luz En Lo Oscuro: Rewriting Identity, Spirituality, Reality*, 1–8. Durham: Duke University Press.

https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.194827.

Anzaldúa, Gloria E, and Cherríe Moraga. 1981. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color. Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. New York: Kitchen Table.

Anzaldúa, Gloria E, Simon J Ortiz, Inéz Hernández-Avila, and Domino Perez Source: 2003. "Speaking across the Divide." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 15 (3): 7–22.

Artiles, Alfredo J. 2003. "Special Education's Changing Identity: Paradoxes and Dilemmas in Views of Culture and Space." *Harvard Educational Review*. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.73.2.j78t573x377j7106.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. 2013. *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts. Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/978023777855.

Backhouse, Judy. 2009. "Doctoral Education in South Africa: Models, Pedagogies and Student Experiences." http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/7475/Backhouse Doctoral Education in South Africa.pdf?sequence=1.

Badat, Saleem. 1991. "The Expansion of Black Tertiary Education 1977–90: Reform and Contradiction." *Apartheid Education and Popular Struggles*, 73–94.

———. 2008. "Redressing the Colonial/Apartheid Legacy: Social Equity; Redress and Higher Education Admissions in Democratic South Africa." In *Affirmative Action in Higher Education in India, the United States and South Africa*, 121–51. New Delhi, India. https://doi.org/http://hdl.handle.net/10962/d1015852.

Badsha, Nasima, and Nico Cloete. 2011. "Higher Education: Contribution for the NPC'sNational Development Plan." https://doi.org/10.2174/1874312901812010019.

Baillie, Giselle, Mary Duker, and Zamansele Nsele. 2019. "Grasping the Regimes of Language , Space and Identity in the Visual of Post - Apartheid Higher Education in South Africa" 7 (1): 123–43. https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v7i1.3697.

Baptista, Ana, Liezel Frick, Karri Holley, Marvi Remmik, and Jakob Tesch. 2015. "The Doctorate as an Original Contribution to Knowledge : Considering Relationships between Originality , Creativity , and Innovation" 3 (3): 55–67.

Baptista, Ana V., and Isabel Huet. 2012. "Making Sense of Metaphors about Doctoral Students' Competences: Analysis of Supervisors' Voices." *Acta Academica Supplementum* 1 (47): 930–37. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.759.

Barnacle, Robyn, and Inger Mewburn. 2010. "Learning Networks and the Journey of 'Becoming Doctor.'" *Studies in Higher Education* 35 (4): 433–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070903131214.

Barvosa, Edwina. 2020. "Reviewed Work(s): The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader by Analouise Keating; Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own by Analouise Keating and Gloria González-López." *Hypatia* 28 (2): 377–82.

Batchelor, Denise, and Roberto Di Napoli. 2006. "The Doctoral Journey: Perspectives." *Educate* 6 (1): 13–24.

Bayley, Jonathan G., Jason Brent Ellis, Carla Reis Abreu-Ellis, and E. Kathleen O'Reilly. 2012. "Rocky Road or Clear Sailing? Recent Graduates' Recollections and Reflections of the Doctoral Journey." *Brock Education Journal* 21 (2).

Bennett, Liz, and Sue Folley. 2014. "A Tale of Two Doctoral Students: Social Media Tools and Hybridised Identities." *Research in Learning Technology* 22. https://doi.org/10.3402/rlt.v22.23791.

Berila, Beth. 2005. *Reading National Identities: The Radical Disruptions of Borderlands/La Frontera*. Edited by AnaLouise Keating. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549411411607.

Berman, Jeanette. 2013. "Utility of a Conceptual Framework within Doctoral Study: A Researcher's Reflections." *Issues in Educational Research* 23 (1): 1–18.

Bhabha, Homi K. 1994. *Introduction: The Location of Culture. The Location of Culture.* London and New York: Routledge.

Bhattacharya, Kakali. 2016. "The Vulnerable Academic: Personal Narratives and Strategic De/Colonizing of Academic Structures." *Qualitative Inquiry* 22 (5): 309–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800415615619.

Bhattacharya, Kakali, and Jeong-hee Kim. 2018. "Reworking Prejudice in Qualitative Inquiry With Gadamer and De / Colonizing." *Qualitative Inquiry 1*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418767201.

Bhattacharya, Kakali, and Rachél Payne. 2016. "Mixing Mediums, Mixing Selves: Arts-Based Contemplative Approaches to Border Crossings." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 29 (9): 1100–1117. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2016.1201163.

Bierria, Alisa. 2014. "Missing in Action: Violence, Power, and Discerning Agency." *Hypatia* 29 (1): 129–45. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12074.

Bitzer, Eli. 2010. "Some Myths on Equity and Access in Higher Education." *SAJHE* 24 (2007): 298–312.

———. 2014. "Learning the Language of the Doctorate: Doctorateness as a Threshold Concept In Doctoral Literacy." *Per Linguam* 30 (3): 39–52.

Blanchard, Mary Loving. 2002. "Poets, Lovers, and the Master's Tools: A Conversation with Audre Lorde." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.7591/cornell/9781501746413.003.0002.

Blatter, Joachim, and Markus Haverland. 2016. "Qualitative Research in Political Science Introductions to the Four Volumes." *Qualitative Research in Political Scienc* 4.

Blue, Stanley. 2019. "Institutional Rhythms: Combining Practice Theory and Rhythmanalysis to Conceptualise Processes of Institutionalisation." *Time and Society* 28 (3): 922–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17702165.

Blum, Virginia, and Heidi Nast. 1996. "Where's the Difference? The Heterosexualization of Alterity in Henri Lefebvre and Jacques Lacan." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14 (5): 559–80. https://doi.org/10.1068/d140559.

Bobel, Chris, Tim Sieber, Karen L Suyemoto, Shirley Tang, and Ann Torke. 2006. "Introduction: This Bridge We Are Building: "Inner Work, Public Acts"." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 4 (3).

Booi, Masixole, Louise Vincent, and Sabrina Liccardo. 2017a. "' If It Ain't Broke , Don ' t Fix It': Challenges Facing Institutional Transformation of Historically White South African Universities" 21 (1): 1–19.

———. 2017b. "Counting on Demographic Equity to Transform Institutional Cultures at Historically White South African Universities?" *Higher Education Research and Development* 36 (3): 498–510. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2017.1289155.

Bristow, Alexandra, Sarah Robinson, and Olivier Ratle. 2019. "Academic Arrhythmia: Disruption, Dissonance and Conflict in the Early-Career Rhythms of CMS Academic." *Academy of Management Learning & Education* 18 (2). https://doi.org/10.1029/2008GB003237.

Bunting, Ian. 2006. *The Higher Education Landscape Under Apartheid*. Edited by N Cloete, P Maassen, R Fehnel, T Moja, T Gibbon, and H Perold. *Transformation in Higher Education. Higher Education Dynamics*. 10th ed. Springer Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-4006-7_3.

Bunting, Ian, Nico Cloete, and F Van Schalkwyk. 2014. "An Empirical Overview of Eight Flagship Universities in Africa: 2001 - 2011." *Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA)*. Cape town.

Caputi, Jane. 2005. "Shifting the Shapes of Things to Come: The Presence of the Future in the Philosophy of Gloria Anzaldúa." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by AnaLouise

Keating, 185–93. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137_18.

Carbajal, Hector. 2002. "Nacido En Un Puente/Born on a Bridge." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-015-0429-z.

Carbonell, Ana Maria. 1999. "From Llorona to Gritona: Coatlicue in Feminist Tales by Viramontes and Cisneros." *Melus* 24 (2): 53–74.

Carter, Susan. 2013. "The Reflections of a New Researcher : The Spiralling Vortex of a Doctoral Journey." In *Metaphors for, in and of Education Research*.

Cervenak, S. J, K. L Cespedes, C Souza, and A Straub. 2002. "Imagining Differently: The Politics of Listening in a Feminist Classroom." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1140/epjp/i2012-12087-9.

Chang, Yi-Ting, LITZY Galarza, MERCER Gary, ERIKA Grimm, Lenau RYAN, CYNTHIA Marrero-Ramos, and KIERSTAN Thomas. 2018. "Lugones Lexicon." *Towards Decolonial Feminisms*.

Charalampides, Kyriakos. 2017. "Rhythmanalysis" Institute of Sonology.

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory A Practical Guide Through*. London: Sage Publications.

Chen, Yi. 2016. *Practising Rhythmanalysis: Theories and Methodologies*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2016.1130638.

Clarke, Cheryl. 1981. "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance." In *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color*. New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1220htt.35.

Cloete, Nico, Johann Mouton, and Charles Sheppard. 2015. *Doctoral Education in South Africa Policy , Discourse and Data*. Cape Town: African minds.

Coffman, K, P Putman, A Adkisson, and B Kriner. 2016. "Waiting for the Expert to Arrive: Using a Community of Practice to Develop the Scholarly Identity of Doctoral Students." *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education* 28 (1): 30–37. http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/pdf/IJTLHE28(1).pdf#page=36.

Comaroff, Jean, and John L Comaroff. 2012. "Theory from the South : Or, How Euro- America Is Evolving Toward Africa." *Anthropological Forum* 22 (2): 113–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/00664677.2012.694169.

Contreras, Sheila Marie. 2006. "Literary Primitivism and "the New Mestiza"." *Interdisciplinary Literary Studies* 8 (1): 49–71.

Cotterall, Sara. 2013. "More than Just a Brain: Emotions and the Doctoral Experience." *Higher Education Research & Development* 32 (2): 174–87. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.680017.

———. 2015. "The Rich Get Richer: International Doctoral Candidates and Scholarly Identity." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 52 (4): 360–70. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2013.839124.

Council on Higher Education. 2018. "Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework: Qualfication Standard for Doctoral Degrees." Pretoria. https://nr-online-1.che.ac.za/html_documents/3.Doctoral Degrees Qualification Standard_Version 1.0_ HEQC Approved 8 November 2018 (002).pdf.

Dahms, Elizabeth Anne. 2012. "The Life and Work of Gloria Anzaldúa: An Intellectual Biography." University of Kentucky.

Dawn, Lyon. 2019a. *What Is Rhythmanalysis?* London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350018310.0007.

———. 2019b. *What Is Rhythmanalysis?* London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350018310.0007.

Deegan, Mary Jo, and Michael R. Hill. 1991. "Doctoral Dissertations as Liminal Journeys of the Self: Betwixt and between in Graduate Sociology Programs." *Teaching Sociology* 19 (3): 322–32. https://doi.org/10.2307/1318198.

Dei, George J Sefa. 2018. "' Black Like Me ': Reframing Blackness for Decolonial Politics ' Black Like Me ': Reframing Blackness for Decolonial Politics." *Educational Studies* 54 (2). https://doi.org/10.1080/00131946.2018.1427586.

Delanty, Gerard. 2001. *Challenging Knowledge: The University in the Knowledge Society*. https://doi.org/10.1080/1356251022012428.

Department of Education. 1997. "Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education." Pretoria.

Dillow, Celia. 2009. "Growing Up: A Journey Toward Theoretical Understanding." *Qualitative Inquiry* 15 (8): 1338–51. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800409339581.

Dittgen, Herbert. 1999. "World without Borders? Reflections on the Future of the Nation-State." *Government and Opposition* 34 (2): 161–79.

Domínguez-Ruvalcaba, Héctor. 2011. "Gloria Anzaldúa and the Meaning of Queer." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*. Texas:

University of Texas Press.

Dussel, Enrique. 1996. *The Underside of Modernity: Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor, and the Philosophy of Liberation.The Modern Schoolman*. New Jersey: Humanities Press. https://doi.org/10.5840/schoolman19967417.

———. 2011. "From Critical Theory to the Philosophy of Liberation: Some Themes for Dialogue." *Transmodernity. Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the Luso-Hispanic World* 1 (2). http://escholarship.org/uc/item/57c8s9gr.

Edensor, Tim, and Jonas Larsen. 2018. "Rhythmanalysing Marathon Running: 'A Drama of Rhythms.'" *Environment and Planning A* 50 (3): 730–46. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518X17746407.

Elden, Stuart. 2004. "Rhythmanalysis : An Introduction." https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285712763_Rhythmanalysis_An_introduction.

Eldredge, Elizabeth A. 2007. *Power in Colonial Africa*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Pres.

Elenes, C Alejandra. 2013. "Nepantla, Spiritual Activism, New Tribalism : Chicana Feminist Transformative Pedagogies and Social Justice Education." *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies* 5 (3): 132–41.

Elie, Serge D. 2012. "The Production of Social Science Knowledge beyond Occidentalism : The Quest for a Post-Exotic Anthropology The Production of Social Science Knowledge beyond Occidentalism : The Quest for a Post-Exotic Anthropology." *Third World Quarterly ISSN:* 33 (7): 1211–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2012.691828.

Elkana, Yehuda. 2006. "Unmasking Uncertainties and Embracing Contradictions: Graduate Education in the Sciences." In *Envisioning the Future of Doctoral Education: Preparing Stewards of the Discipline*, edited by C.M. Golde and G.E. Walker. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. https://doi.org/10.5614/jpwk.2015.26.1.1.

Ensor, Paula. 2004. "Contesting Discourses in Higher Education Curriculum Restructuring in South Africa." *Higher Education* 48 (3): 339–59. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:HIGH.0000035544.96309.f1.

Erasmus, Z. 2010. "Confronting the Categories : Equitable Admissions without Apartheid Race Classification 1." *SAJHE* 24 (2): 244–57.

Escobar, Arturo. 2007. "Worlds and Knowledges Otherwise: The Latin American Modernity/ Coloniality Research Program." *Cultural Studies* 21 (2–3): 179–210. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162506.

Espinosa-Aguilar, Amanda. 2007. "Radical Change through Radical Means: Learning Power."

In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 227–32. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-007-9031-0.

Fanon, Frantz. 1976. "The Fact of Blackness." In *Black Skin White Masks*. London: Pluto Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003060802-26.

Fereday, Jennifer. 2006. "Demonstrating Rigor Using Thematic Analysis : A Hybrid Approach of Inductive and Deductive Coding and Theme Development." *International Journal of Qualitative Methos* 5 (1): 80–92.

Firth, Katherine. 2015. "The PhD Quest: Arise, Become a Peer." The Doctoral Journey. 2015. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3098732.

Foot, Rachel, R Crowe, Karen Andrus Tollafield, and Chad Everett Allan. 2014. "For the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Exploring Doctoral Student Identity Development Using a Self-Study Approach." *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* 2 (1): 103–18.

Fox, Alison, and Julie Allan. 2014. "Doing Reflexivity : Moments of Unbecoming and Becoming." *International Journal of Research & Method in Education ISSN:* 37 (1): 101–12. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2013.787407.

Fránquiz, María E, and Brenda Ayala Lewis. 2013. "Engaging Bilingual Students in Sustained Literature Study in Central Texas." *Journal of Latino/Latin American Studies* 5 (3): 142–55.

Gaonkar, Dilip Parameshwar. 2002. "Toward New Imaginaries: An Introduction." *Public Culture* 14 (3): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-1.

Garber, Linda. 2005. "Spirit, Culture, Sex: Elements of the Creative Process in Anzaldúa's Poetry." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Garcia, Santiago Andrés. 2019. "Contesting Trauma and Violence through Indigeneity and a Decolonizing Pedagogy at Rio Hondo Community College Contesting Trauma and Violence through Indigeneity And." *Journal of Latinos and Education* 0 (0): 1–21. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2019.1603749.

Gardner, Susan K. 2008. "Fitting the Mold of Graduate School: A Qualitative Study of Socialization in Doctoral Education." *Innovative Higher Education* 33 (2): 125–38. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10755-008-9068-x.

Garuba, Harry. 2002. "Mapping the Land/ Body/ Subject: Colonial and Postcolonial Geographies in African Narrative." *Alternation* 9 (1): 87–116.

Glaser, Barney G., and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203793206-1.

González-López, Gloria. 2011. "Conocimiento and Healing: Academic Wounds, Survival, and Tenure." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria González-López, 91–100. Austin: University of Texas.

Gonzalez, Jorge Manuel. 2014. "Suspending the Desire for Recognition: Coloniality of Being, the Dialectics of Death, and Chicana/o Literature." *Igarss 2014*, no. 1: 1–5. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13398-014-0173-7.2.

Goodson, Ivor. 1981. "Becoming an Academic Subject: Patterns of Explanation and Evolution." *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 2 (2): 163–80. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569810020203.

Gordon, Dusting. 2015. "Mordenity/ Coloniality and the City: Representations of Time and Space." Radboud University.

Govinder, Kesh S., Nombuso P. Zondo, and Malegapuru W. Makgoba. 2014. "A New Look at Demographic Transformation for Universities in South Africa." *South African Journal of Science* 109. https://doi.org/10.1590/ sajs.2013/20130163.

Grosfoguel, Ramón. 2002. "Colonial Difference, Geopolitics of Knowledge, and Global Coloniality in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist World-System." *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 25 (3): 203–24. https://doi.org/10.2307/40241548.

———. 2013. "Epistemic Racism / Sexism and the Four Genocides / Epistemicides of The Structure of Knowledge in Westernized Universities." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 9 (1): 73–90. https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/17506200710779521.

Gumport, Patricia J. 2000. "Academic Restructuring : Organizational Change and Institutional Imperatives." *Higher Education* 39 (Gumport 1993): 67–91. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1003859026301.

Gümüş, İmran, and Ebru Yılmaz. 2020. "Rhythmanalysis as a Method of Analyzing Everyday Life Spaces : The Case of Kıbrıs Şehitleri Street in İzmir." *Online Journal of Art and Design* 8 (3).

Halai, N. 2011. "Evolution of Doctoral Education in Pakistan: Challenges and Successes of Doctoral Students of Education in a Public Sector University of Pakistan." *Perspectives in Education* 29 (3): 64–75. http://www.scopus.com/inward/record.url?eid=2-s2.0-84866398577&partnerID=40&md5=bda0b895dbc69d100180b07199724f54.

Hamdy, Noha. 2010. "The Border as Third Space: Between Colonial Gaze and Transnational Dislocation." In *Locating Transnational Ideals*. New York: Routledge.

https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203370131.

Han, C. 2015. *Geisha of a Different Kind: Race and Sexuality in Gaysian America*. London: NYU Press. https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2016.1232426.

Hargreaves, John D . 1973. "The Idea of a Colonial University." *Royal African Society* 72 (286): 26–36. https://www.jstor.org/stable/720580.

Harjo, Joy. 1996. *The Spiral of Memory: Interviews*. Edited by Laura Coltelli. An Abor: University of Michigan. https://doi.org/10.1145/42404.42410.

Haynes, Joanna. 2009. "Living PhD: Metaphors of Research, Writing and Supervision." In *The Doctorate: Stories of Knowledge, Power and Becoming*, edited by Tony Brown. Bristol: Subject center for Education Escalate.

Hendricks, Cheryl. 2018. "Decolonising Universities in South Africa : Rigged Spaces ? Decolonising Universities in South Africa : Rigged Spaces ?" *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies - Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity* 13 (1): 16–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/18186874.2018.1474990.

Heredia, Jessica. 2011. "My Path of Conocimiento: How Graduate School Transformed Me into a Nepantlera." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria González-López, 39–34. Austin: University of Texas.

Herman, Chaya. 2008. "Negotiating the Emotions of Change: Research, Restructuring and the Doctoral Student." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 22 (1): 100–115. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v22i1.25776.

———. 2011. "Editorial Introduction Doctoral Education in South Africa – Research and Policy." *Perspectives in Education* 29: i–v.

———. 2017. "Looking Back at Doctoral Education in South Africa." *Studies in Higher Education* 42 (8): 1437–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2015.1101756.

Hernández, Ellie, and Gloria Anzaldúa. 1995. "Re-Thinking Margins and Borders : An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa." *Discourse* 18 (1): 7–15.

Hill, Simona J. 2002. "All I Can Cook Is Crack on a Spoon': A Sign for a New Generation of Feminists." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.492.

———. 2005. "Teaching La Conciencia de La Mestiza in the Midst of White Privilege." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 129–38. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137_13.

Hillier, B., and J. Hanson. 1984. *The Social Logic of Space. The Social Logic of Space.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429450174-9.

Hillier, B. 2001. "Is There a 'Spatial Device'? A Reflection on the Work of Basil Bernstein." In *A Tribute to Basil Bernstein 1924-2000*, edited by S. Power, P Aggleton, J Brannen, A Brown, L Chisholm, and J Mace. London: institute of Education. https://doi.org/10.1080/01425699995380.

Hlatshwayo, Mlamuli Nkosingphile. 2121. "Being Black in South African Higher Education: An Intersectional Insight." *Acta Academica* 52 (2): 163–80. https://doi.org/10.18820/24150479/aa52i2/9.

Hooks, Bell. 1994. *Teaching to Trangress: Education as the Practice of Freedom.* New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/Article.

———. 1999. *All About Love: New Visions. World Literature Today.* New York: William Morrow & Co.

Horton, Dave. 2005. "Book Review: Henri Lefebvre, Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life." *Time & Society* 15: 157–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463x0501400105.

Hubbard, Phil, and Rob Kitchin. 2011. "Introduction : Why Key Thinkers?" In *Key Thinkers in Space and Place*, edited by Phil Hubbard and Rob Kitchin. London: SAGE Publications.

Hughes, Christina, and Malcolm Tight. 2013. "The Metaphors We Study by: The Doctorate as a Journey and/or as Work." *Higher Education Research & Development* 32 (5): 765–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2013.777031.

Hurtado, Aida. 2015. "Gloria Anzaldúa's Seven Stages of 'Conocimiento' in Redefining Latino Masculinity : José's Story." *Masculinities and Social Change Vol.* 4: 44–83. https://doi.org/10.4471/MCS.

Ismail, Hamidah Mohd, and Faizah Abd Majid. 2013. "Crossing Threshold Concepts in a Doctoral Learning Journey." *International Journal of Learning in Higher Education* 19 (4): 69–75.

Jackson, Alicia Y., and Lisa A. Mazzei. 2013. "Plugging One Text Into Another: Thinking With Theory in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Inquiry* 19 (4): 261–71. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800412471510.

Jairam, Dharmananda, and David H. Kahl. 2012. "Navigating the Doctoral Experience: The Role of Social Support in Successful Degree Completion." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 7: 311–29.

Jansen, Jonathan. 2003. "Mergers in South African Higher Education: Theorising Change in Transitional Contexts." *Politikon* 30 (1): 27–50. https://doi.org/10.1080/0258934032000073897.

Jazvac-Martek, Marian. 2009. "Oscillating Role Identities: The Academic Experiences of Education Doctoral Students." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 46 (3): 253–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703290903068862.

Jones, Janice K. 2013. "Into the Labyrinth: Persephone's Journey as Metaphor and Method for Research." In *Metaphors For, In and Of Education Research*, edited by W Midgley, K Trimmer, and A Davies, Metaphor. for, Educ. Res. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015608900.

Kamler, Barbara, and Pat Thomson. 2006. "Helping Doctoral Students Write: Pedagogies for Supervision." *Education* 2006: 154–57. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315813639.

Kaplan, Caren. 1987. "Deterritorializations: The Rewriting of Home and Exile in Western Feminist Discourse." *Cultural Critique* 6: 187–98. https://doi.org/10.2307/1354261.

Karlsson, Jenni. 2004. "Schooling Space: Where South Africans Learnt to Position Themselves within the Hierarchy of Apartheid Society." *Pedagogy, Culture and Society* 12 (3): 327–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/14681360400200206.

Kattau, Colleen. 2007. "Review of EntreMundos/ Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria Anzaldúa Edited by AnaLouise Keating." *Intersecting Gender and Disability Perspectives in Rethinking Postcolonial Identities* 4: 201–3.

Keating, Analouise. 2002. "Charting Pathways, Marking Thresholds... A Warning, An Introduction." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.5751/ES-04933-170211.

———. 2014. "Women Reading Women Writing: Self-Invention." In , edited by Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315840154-29.

Keating, AnaLouise. 1996. *Transformational Identity Politics: Seeing 'Through the Eyes of the Other.'" Women Reading Women Writing: Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Audre Lorde*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2015.08.012.

———. 2000. "'Risking the Personal: An Introduction.'" In *Interviews/Entrevistas.*, 1–15. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1p6jht5.5.

———. 2002. *"Forging El Mundo Zurdo: Changing Ourselves, Changing the World." This*

*Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. Edited by Gloria E. Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge.

———. 2005. "Introduction Shifting Worlds, Una Entrada." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 1–12. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137_1.

Keating, Analouise, and Gloria González-López. 2011. *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own. Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*. Texas: University of Texas Press. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.49-1314.

Keefer, Jeffrey M. 2015. "Experiencing Doctoral Liminality as a Conceptual Threshold and How Supervisors Can Use It." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 52 (1): 17–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2014.981839.

Kehm, Barbara M. 2015. "Higher Education as a Field of Study and Research in Europe." *European Journal of Education* 50 (1): 60–74. https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12100.

Kemal, Bahriye. 2019. "Rhythmanalysts of the Postcolonial Partitioned Diaspora: Writing Differential Cyprus through Henri Lefebvre and Yi-Fu Tuan." *Journal of Commonwealth Literature*. https://doi.org/10.1177/0021989418808057.

Kipfer, S, P Saberi, and T Wieditz. 2012. "Henri Lefebvre: Debates and Controversies." *Progress in Human Geography* 37 (1). https://doi.org/10.1177/072551369203300110.

Kistner, Ulrike. 2008. "Africanization in Tuition': African National Education?" *Mediations* 24 (1).

Koshy, Kavitha. 2006. "Nepantlera-Activism in the Transnational Moment : In Dialogue with Gloria Anzaldúa's Theorizing of Nepantla." *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 4 (3).

Kruss, G., G. Haupt, and M. Visser. 2016. "'Luring the Academic Soul': Promoting Academic Engagement in South African Universities." *Higher Education Research and Development* 35 (4). https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2015.1137874.

Ktufiss, Joanne Gainen. 1988. "Critical Thinking: Theory, Research, Practice, and Possibilities." George Washington University. https://doi.org/10.1177/1938640014525338.

Khumalo, Siseko H. 2018. "Explicating Abjection – Historically White Universities Creating Natives of Nowhere?" *Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning* 6 (1): 1–17. https://doi.org/10.14426/cristal.v6i1.132.

Langston, Donna Hightower. 2002. "The Spirit of This Bridge." In *This Bridge We Call Home:*

*Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.3368/lj.13.2.165.

Lara, Irene. 2005. "Daughter of Coatlicue: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldúa." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by Analouise Keating, 41–55. New Jersey: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137_5.

Lefebvre, Henri. 1991a. *The Production of Space*. Oxford UK: Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.2307/490789.

———. 1991b. *The Production of Space. College English*. Oxford: Blackwell. https://doi.org/10.2307/378107.

———. 2002. *Critique of Everyday Life II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday. Critique of Everyday Life II: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday*. London: Verso.

———. 2004a. "Elements of Rhythmanalysis: An Introduction to the Understanding Rhythms." In *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*.

———. 2004b. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. London: Bloomsbury. https://doi.org/10.2307/490375.

Lefebvre, Henri, and Catherine Régulier. 1985. "The Rhythmanalytical Project." *Communications* 41: 191–99. https://doi.org/10.3406/comm.1985.1616.

León, Ann De. 2010. "Coatlicue or How to Write the Dismembered Body Coatlicue or How to Write the Dismembered Body." *MNL* 125 (2): 259–86.

Levine, Amala. 2005. "Champion of the Spirit: Anzaldúa's Critique of Rationalist Epistemology." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Lofland, Lyn H. 1985. "The Social Shaping of Emotion: The Case of Grief." *Symbolic Interaction* 8: 171–190. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.1985.8.2.171.

Lugones, María. 1992. "On *Borderlands/La Frontera*: An Interpretive Essay." *Hypati* 7 (4): 31–37.

———. 2005. "From within Germinative Stasis: Creating Active Subjectivity, Resistant Agency." In *Entre Mundos/Among Worlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldúa*, edited by A Keating, 85–99. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

———. 2006. "On Complex Communication." *Hypatia* 21 (3): 75–85. https://doi.org/10.1038/nrn.2017.149.

Lugones, María. 1987. "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception." *Hypatia* 2

(2): 3–19. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1987.tb01062.x.

———. 2003. *"Introduction" to Pilgrimages/ Peregrinajes: Theorizing Coalition against Multiple Oppressions*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers. https://doi.org/10.25058/20112742.340.

Mackenzie, Noella M., and Lorraine M. Ling. 2009. "The Research Journey: A Lonely Planet Approach." *Issues in Educational Research* 19 (1): 48–60.

Maldonado-torres, Nelson. 2016. "Outline of Ten Theses on Coloniality and Decoloniality." *Berkeley Planning Journal* 26 (1): 217–20. https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.2011.5.6700.

Maldonado-Torres, Nelson. 2012. "Epistemology, Ethics, and the Time/Space of Decolonization: Perspectives from the Caribbean and the Latina/o Americas." In *Decolonizing Epistemologies: Latina/o Theology and Philosophy*, edited by Ada Maria Isasi-diaíz and Mendieta Eduardo. New York: Fordham University Press. https://doi.org/10.5422/fordham/9780823241354.003.0010.

Maoyuan, PAN. 2015. *Selected Academic Papers of Pan Maoyuan on Higher Education. Selected Academic Papers of Pan Maoyuan on Higher Education*. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004309227.

Marginson, Simon. 2009. "University Rankings, Government and Social Order: Managing the Field of Higher Education According to the Logic of the Performative Present-as-Future." In *Re-Reading Education Policies: Studying the Policy Agenda of the 21st Century*, edited by M Simons, M Olssen, and M Peters. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

———. 2010. "Higher Education in the Global Knowledge Economy" 2 (5): 6962–80. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.05.049.

Marginson, Simon, January Martin, Luther King, and X Malcolm. 2015. "The Landscape of Higher Education Research 1965- - - 2015 Equality of Opportunity : The First Fifty Years,".

Marla, Morris. 2002. "Young Man Popkin: A Queer Dystopia." In *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.5204/mcj.1803.

Marmot, Alexi. 2014. "Managing the Campus: Facility Management and Design, the Student Experience and University Effectiveness." In *The Physical University: Contours of Space and Place in Higher Education*, edited by Paul Temple. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315813776.

Martínez, Renée M. 2002. "*Del Puente Al Arco Iris*: Transformando de Guerrera a Mujer de La Paz. From Bridge to Rainbow: Transforming from Warrior to Woman of Peace." In

*This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, edited by Analouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.repod.2017.03.003.

Marzagora, Sara. 2016. "The Humanism of Reconstruction: African Intellectuals, Decolonial Critical Theory and the Opposition to the 'Posts' (Postmodernism, Poststructuralism, Postcolonialism)." *Journal of African Cultural Studies ISSN:* 28 (2): 161–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2016.1152462.

Maseko, Patricia BN. 2018. "A Transformative Exploration of Epistemic Individual(Istic) Identity Formation within a Synergistic Decolonial Student Support System." *Perspectives in Education* 36 (2): 15–27. https://doi.org/10.18820/2519593x/pie.v36i2.3.

Mbembe, Achille. 2002. "African Modes of Self-Writing." *Public Culture* 14 (1): 239–73. https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-14-1-239.

McAlpine, Lynn. 2012. "Shining a Light on Doctoral Reading: Implications for Doctoral Identities and Pedagogies." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 49 (4): 351–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2012.728875.

McAlpine, Lynn, and Cheryl Amundsen. 2009. "Identity and Agency: Pleasures and Collegiality among the Challenges of the Doctoral Journey." *Studies in Continuing Education* 31 (2): 109–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/01580370902927378.

McAlpine, Lynn, Anthony Paré, and Doreen Starke-Meyerring. 2011. "Disciplinary Voices: A Shifting Landscape for English Doctoral Education in the Twenty-First Century." In *Doctoral Education: Research-Based Strategies for Doctoral Students, Supervisors and Administrators*, edited by Lynn McAlpine and Chery Amundsen, 157–69. London: Springer, Dordrecht. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-0507-4_9.

McCulloch, Alistair. 2013. "The Quest for the PhD: A Better Metaphor for Doctoral Education." *International Journal for Researcher Development* 4 (1): 55–66. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJRD-05-2013-0008.

McDowall, Ailie, and Fabiane Ramos. 2017. "Doing Decoloniality in the Writing Borderlands of the PhD." *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 47 (1): 54–63. https://doi.org/10.1017/jie.2017.23.

McKenna, Sioux. 2017. "Crossing Conceptual Thresholds in Doctoral Communities." *Innovations in Education and Teaching International* 54 (5): 458–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2016.1155471.

McKnight, Lucinda, and Ben Whitburn. 2017. "The Fetish of the Lens: Persistent Sexist and Ableist Metaphor in Education Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in*

*Education* 30 (9): 821–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2017.1286407.

Medina, José. 2003. "Identity Trouble Disidentification and the Problem." *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 29 (6): 655–80.

Méndez, Susan C. 2018. "Borderlands and Nepantla Theories' Interactions with Western Philosophy in Himilce Novas' Mangos, Bananas, Coconuts: A Cuban Love Story." *Label Me Latina/O* 9: 1–12.

Mercado-lópez, Larissa M. 2014. "Laboring Histories : The " Reconciliation " of Maternity in the Poetry in the Poetry of Laurie Ann Guerrero." *Diálogo* 17 (2).

Mewburn, Inger. 2011. "The Metaphors That Research Students Live By." 2011. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.1997.10778876.

Midgley, W, and K Trimmer. 2013. "'Walking the Labyrinth': A Metaphorical Understanding of Approaches to Metaphors for, in and of Education Research." In *Metaphors For, In and Of Education Research*, edited by W Midgley, K Trimmer, and A Davies. New Castle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Mignolo, Walter. 2000. "Introduction : From Cross-Genealogies and Subaltern Knowledges to Nepantla Introduction : From Knowledges to Nepantla." *Nepantla: Views from South* 1 (1): 1–8.

———. 2011. "Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto." *Transmodernity: Journal of Peripheral Cultural Production of the LusoHispanic World* 1 (2): 4467. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275.

———. 2012. *Local Histories/Global Designs*. Edited by Ortner Sherry B, Dirks Nicholas B, and Geoff Eley. *Local Histories/Global Designs*. New Jersey: Princeton university press. https://doi.org/10.23943/princeton/9780691156095.001.0001.

Mignolo, Walter D. 2009. "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom." *Theory, Culture & Society* 26 (8): 159–81. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275.

Mignolo, Walter, and Madina V Tlostanova. 2006. "Theorizing from the Borders Shifting to Geo- and Body-Politics of Knowledge" 9 (2): 205–21. https://doi.org/10.1177/1368431006063333.

Milligan, Melinda J. 2003. "Displacement and Identity Discontinuity: The Role of Nostalgia in Establishing New Identity Categories." *Symbolic Interaction* 26 (3): 381–403. https://doi.org/10.1525/si.2003.26.3.381.

Ministry of Education. 2001. "Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century." *National Plan for Higher Education*.

Pretoria.

———. 2002. "Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education." *Document on the Mergers of Instititons in 2005 in Higher Edcation*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

Miranda, Deborah A. 2002. "What's Wrong with a Little Fantasy?: Storytelling from the (Still) Ivory Tower." In *This Bridge We Call Home_ Radical Visions for Transformation-Routledge*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1353/aiq.2004.0051.

Mishra, P. 2015. "Doctoral Journey of a Management Scholar: A Viewpoint." *Vision: The Journal of Business Perspective* 19 (3): 185–88. https://doi.org/10.1177/0972262915593665.

Mlekuž, Dimitrij. 2010. "Bodies, Houses and Gardens: Rhythm Analysis of Neolithic Life-Ways." *Documenta Praehistorica* 37 (1): 193–204. https://doi.org/10.4312/dp.37.17.

Mmeje, Kenechukwu K C, B Newman, Dennis a Kramer Ii, and Mark a Pearson. 2009. "The Changing Landscape of Higher Education." *Student Engagement in Higher Education*.

Mokadi, AT. 2004. "Conceptions of the Transformed University: South-African/African Engaged." In *CHE Colloquium*, 1–6. CHE.

Molla, Tebeje, and Denise Cuthbert. 2016. "In Pursuit of the African PhD: A Critical Survey of Emergent Policy Issues in Select Sub-Saharan African Nations, Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa." *Policy Futures in Education* 14 (6): 635–54. https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210316641567.

Mouton, Nelda, G. P. Louw, and G. L. Strydom. 2013. "Restructuring And Mergers Of The South African Post-Apartheid Tertiary System (1994-2011): A Critical Analysis." *Journal of International Education Research (JIER)* 9 (2): 127–44. https://doi.org/10.19030/jier.v9i2.7718.

Moya, Paula M. L. 2002. *Learning from Experience: Minority Identities, Multicultural Struggles*. California: University of California press. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.40-0148.

Muñoz, Jose Esteban. 1999. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature*. Minneseto: Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/1348176.

Munyuki, Chipo. 2018. "'It's Something You Kind of Get Used to': Female Academics at South African Universities Narrate Their Experiences of Contrapower Harassment." Rhodes University. https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(93)E0003-Y.

Ndlovu-Gatsheni, Sabelo J. 2013. *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*. *Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity*. New York and Exford: Berghahn Books. https://doi.org/10.25159/0256-6060/623.

———. 2017. "The Emergence and Trajectories of Struggles for an 'African University': The Case of Unfinished Business of African Epistemic Decolonisation." *Kronos* 43 (1): 51–77. https://doi.org/10.17159/2309-9585/2017/v43a4.

Neile, Caren S. 2005. "The 1,001-Piece Nights of Gloria Anzaldúa: Autohistoria-Teoría at Florida Atlantic University." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 17–27. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Nelson, Lise. 2010. "Bodies (and Spaces) Do Matter : The Limits of Performativity." *Gender, Place and Culture* 6 (4). https://doi.org/10.1080/09663699924926.

Nerad, Maresi. 2011. "What We Know about the Dramatic Increase in PhD Degrees and the Reform of Doctoral Education Worldwide: Implications for South Africa." *Perspectives in Education* 29 (3): 1–12.

Ngo, Helen. 2017. *The Habits of Racism: A Phenomenology of Racism and Racialized Embodiment*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Nutov, Liora, and Orit Hazzan. 2011. "Feeling the Doctorate: Is Doctoral Research That Studies the Emotional Labor of Doctoral Students Possible?" *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 6: 18–32.

Odhav, K. 2009. "South African Post-Apartheid Higher Education Policy and Its Marginalisations: 1994-2002." *South African Education Journal* 6 (1): 33–57.

Odora Hoppers, Catherine. 2005. *Culture , Indigenous Knwledge and Development: The Role of the University*. Johannesburg: Centre for Education Policy Development.

Ojeda, Carmen G Hernández. 2020. "The Coyolxauhqui Process of a Scholar Unbecoming an Enemy of Youth: A Performative, Embodied, Self-Decolonizing Story of Transformation and Hope." University of Massachusetts.

Orozco-Mendoza, Elva Fabiola. 2008. "Borderlands Theory : Producing Border Epistemologies with Gloria Anzaldúa." Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Palipane, Kelum. 2019. "Multimodal Mapping — A Methodological Framework." *Journal of Architecture* 24 (1): 91–113. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2018.1527384.

Pansiri, Jaloni. 2009. "Evolution of a Doctoral Thesis Research Topic and Methodology: A Personal Experience." *Tourism Management* 30 (1): 83–89.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2008.04.001.

Pearson, Margot. 2005. "Framing Research on Doctoral Education in Australia in a Global Context." *Higher Education Research and Development* 24 (2): 119–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360500062870.

Pérez, Emma. 2003. "Queering the Borderlands: The Challenges of Excavating the Invisible and Unheard." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 24 (2): 122–31.

Pitts, Andrea J. 2016. "Gloria E. Anzaldúa's Autohistoria-Teoría as an Epistemology of Self-Knowledge/Ignorance." *Hypatia* 32 (2): 352–69. https://doi.org/10.1111/hypa.12235.

Pityana, Barney.N. 2012. "Higher Education, Transformation and Africanisation - a Paradigm Shift ?" *Study South Africa: Higher Education and Development in South Africa*, 39–41.

Powell, Walter W, and Snellman Kaisa. 2004. "The Knowledge Economy." *Annual Review of Sociology* 30: 199–220. https://doi.org/10.1108/00400910110399184.

Probert, Anne. 2006. "Searching for an Appropriate Research Design: A Personal Journey." *Journal of Research Practice* 2 (1): 7.

Puwar, N. 2004. *Space Invaders : Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place. Space Invaders : Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. Oxford: Berg. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474215565.

Pyhältö, Kirsi, Jenna Vekkaila, and Jenni Keskinen. 2012. "Exploring the Fit between Doctoral Students ' and Supervisors ' Perceptions of Resources and Challenges Vis-à-Vis the Doctoral Journey Engagement in Doctoral Research." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 7: 395–414.

Qhobela, M. 2009. "Why Mergers Matter." *Mail and Guardian*, October 2009.

Rabaka, Reiland. 2012. *Against Epistemic Apartheid W. E. B. Du Bois and the Disciplinary Decadence of Sociology*. Plymouth: Lexington Books.

Rajan-rankin, Sweta. 2018. "Race , Embodiment and Later Life : Re-Animating Aging Bodies of Color." *Journal of Aging Studies* 45 (February): 32–38. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaging.2018.01.005.

Ramlow, Todd R. 2006. "Bodies in the Borderlands: Gloria Anzaldiua's and David Wojnarowicz's Mobility Machines." *Race, Ethnicity, Disability, and Literature* 31 (3): 169–87.

Ramose, M. 2004. "Transforming Education in South Africa: Paradigm Shift or Change?" *South African Journal of Higher Education* 17 (3): 137–43. https://doi.org/10.4314/sajhe.v17i3.25413.

Randall, Marilyn. 1991. "Approriate(d) Discourse: Plagiarism and Decolonization." *The Johns*

*Hopkins University Press* 147 (7): 775–803. https://www.jstor.org/stable/469202.

Reay, Diane. 2006. "The Zombie Stalking English Schools: Social Class and Educational Inequality." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 54 (3): 288–307. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8527.2006.00351.x.

Reid-Musson, Emily. 2018. "Intersectional Rhythmanalysis: Power, Rhythm, and Everyday Life." *Progress in Human Geography* 42 (6): 881–97. https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132517725069.

Reti, Irene. 2016. "Living in the House of *Nepantla*." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 57–59. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Revol, Claire. 2019. "Rue Rambuteau Today: Rhythmanalysis in Practice." *Rhuthmos* 23.

Reza-López, Elva, Luis Huerta Charles, and Loui V Reyes. 2014. "Nepantlera Pedagogy : An Axiological Posture for Preparing Critically Conscious Teachers in the Borderlands." *Journal of Latinos and Education* 13 (2). https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2013.821062.

Rodan, Debbie, Katie Ellis, and Pia Lebeck. 2014. *Disability, Obesity and Ageing: Popular Media Identifications. Disability, Obesity and Ageing: Popular Media Identifications*. New Jersey: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323115589268b.

Román-Odio, Clara. 2013. *Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural Productions*. Edited by Chandra Talpade Mohanty. *Comparative Feminist Studies Series Chandra*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Romero, Audrey Nathalie. 2011. "Gloria Anzaldúa and Alanis Morisette : The Untangled Flavors of Conocimiento By." California State University,.

Rudolph, Sophie, Arathi Sriprakash, and Jessica Gerrard. 2018. "Knowledge and Racial Violence : The Shine and Shadow of ' Powerful Knowledge .'" *Ethics and Education* 13 (1): 22–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/17449642.2018.1428719.

Ruto-Korir, R., and C.R. Lubbe. 2010. "Locating the Doctoral Study in the'paradigm Skirmishes': Challenges and Prospects for Adopting a Paradigm Cradle." *Perspectives in Education* 28 (3): 99–109. http://www.up.ac.za/dspace/handle/2263/15235.

Saavedra, Cinthya M., and Michelle Salazar Pérez. 2012. "Chicana and Black Feminisms: Testimonios of Theory, Identity, and Multiculturalism." *Equity & Excellence in Education* 43 (3): 430–43. https://doi.org/10.1080/10665684.2012.681970.

Saldana, J. 2009. *The Coding Manual For Qualitative Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, Carlifornia: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Saldívar, José David. 1997. *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies. The*

*Western Historical Quarterly*. California: University of California Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/970583.

Sandoval, Chela. 2000. *Methodology of the Oppressed. Theory out of Bounds*. Vol. 18. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

———. 2005. "Unfinished Words: The Crossing of Gloria Anzaldúa." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*, edited by Analouise Keating. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Santos, Boaventura De Sousa. 2007. "Beyond Abyssal Thinking : From Global Lines to Ecologies of Knowledges." *Binghamton University Review 30(1):* 30 (1).

Schiwy, Freya. 2007. "Decolonization and the Question of Subjectivity: Gender, Race, and Binary Thinking." *Cultural Studies* 21 (2–3): 271–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162555.

Shields, Rob. 1998. *Lefebvre, Love, and Struggle: Spatial Dialectics*. London and New York: Routledge.

Short, N, A Grant, and L Clarke. 2007. "Living in the Borderlands ; Writing in the Margins : An Autoethnographic Tale." *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing* 14: 771–82.

Sills, Julia. 2013. "Sex / Context Critical Theory and Social Justice Journal of Undergraduate Research." *Occidental College* 3 (1).

Silva, Filipa Matos e. 2008. "Symphonies of Urban Places : Urban Rhythms as Traces of Time in Space A Study of ' Urban Rhythms .'" *KOHT Ja PAIK /PLACE and LOCATION Studies in Environmental Aesthetics and Semiotics VI* VI (VI): 91–111.

Simonsen, Kirsten. 2005. "Bodies, Sensations, Space and Time: The Contribution from Henri Lefebvre." *Geografiska Annaler, Series B: Human Geography* 87 (1): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0435-3684.2005.00174.x.

Smith, Sidonie. 2018. *Manifesto for the Humanities: Transforming Doctoral Education in Good Enough Times*. Michigan: University of Michigan. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv65sw68.15.

Snyder, Cyndy R. 2014. "A Woman ' s Place : Women of Colour Navigating Doctoral Education in South Africa" 16 (2): 15–35.

Soudien, Crain. 2011. "Interrogating the Nature of the 'universal' in South Africa's New Educational Order." *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 9 (3–4): 323–36. https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2011.605318.

Spaulding, Lucinda S., and Amanda J. Rockinson-Szapkiw. 2012. "Hearing Their Voices: Factors Doctoral Candidates Attribute to Their Persistence." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 7: 199–219.

Spelman, Elizabeth V. 1988. *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*. *Choice Reviews Online*. London: Beacon Press. https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.26-5715.

Spillers, Hortense J. 2003. *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2007.0022.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1994. "Bonding in Difference." In *An Other Tongue: Nation and Ethnicity in the Linguistic Borderlands*, edited by A. Arteaga, 273–85. Durham: Duke University Press.

Stein, Sharon. 2017. "The Persistent Challenges of Addressing Epistemic Dominance in Higher Education : Considering the Case of Curriculum Internationalization." *Comparative Education Review* 61 (1): 25–50.

———. 2019. "Beyond Higher Education as We Know It : Gesturing Towards Decolonial Horizons of Possibility." *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 38 (2): 143–61. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11217-018-9622-7.

Stricklin, Michael. 2000. "Chaos Knowledge and the Death of a Cliché." In *Reflexões Sobre o Mundo Contemporâneo*, Revan. Rio de Janiero.

Stubb, Jenni, Kirsi Pyhältö, and Kirsti Lonka. 2014. "Conceptions of Research: The Doctoral Student Experience in Three Domains." *Studies in Higher Education* 39 (2): 251–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2011.651449.

Suárez-Krabbe, Julia. 2009. "Introduction: Coloniality of Knowledge and Epistemologies of Transformation." *Kult* 6 (Epistemologies of Transformation: The Latin American Decolonial Option and its Ramifications): 1–9.

Suyemoto, Karen L. 2006. "Processes of Emergence and Connection: Interrelations of Past, Present, and Future in Journeying for Conocimiento." *Human Architecture* 4 (3).

Tamboukou, Maria. 2020. "Narrative Rhythmanalysis: The Art and Politics of Listening to Women's Narratives of Forced Displacement." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 00 (00): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2020.1769271.

Tamdgidi, Mohammad H. 2011. "The Simultaneity of Self- and Global Transformations: Bridging with Anzaldúa's Liberating Vision." In *Bridging: How Gloria Anzaldúa's Life and Work Transformed Our Own*, edited by AnaLouise Keating and Gloria González-López, 218–25. Austin: University of Texas.

Temple, Paul. 2014. "Space, Place and University Effectiveness." In *The Physical University:*

*Contours of Space and Place in Higher Education*, edited by Paul Temple. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.1093/jeg/lbq018.

Terry, Tarae, and Rajashi Ghosh. 2015. "Mentoring from Different Social Spheres: How Can Multiple Mentors Help in Doctoral Student Success in Ed.D Programs?" *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning* 23 (3): 187–212. https://doi.org/10.1080/13611267.2015.1072396.

"This Bridge." 2002. *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, 608. https://myasucourses.asu.edu/bbcswebdav/pid-10623195-dt-content-rid-44544750_1/courses/2015Spring-T-WST602-18246/This Bridge Called My Back.pdf.

Thomas, Valorie. 2012. "'Dust to Cleanse Themselves,' a Survivor's Ethos :Diasporic Disidentification in 'Zeitoun.'" *Biography* 35 (2).

Thune, Taran. 2009. "Doctoral Students on the University-Industry Interface: A Review of the Literature." *Higher Education* 58 (5): 637–51. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-009-9214-0.

Tlostanova, Madina. 2016. "Border Thinking and Disidentification : Postcolonial and Postsocialist Feminist Dialogues." https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700116645878.

Tlostanova, Madina, Suruchi Thapar-Björkert, and Redi Koobak. 2016. "Border Thinking and Disidentification : Postcolonial and Postsocialist Feminist Dialogues." *Feminist Theory* 17 (2): 211–28. https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700116645878.

Tlostanova, Madina V., and Walter D. Mignolo. 2012. *Learning to Unlearn: Decolonial Reflections from Eurasia and the Americas*. Ohio: Ohio State University Press.

Torres, Monica. 2005. "'Doing Mestizaje': When Epistemology Becomes Ethics." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

Trinh, Ethan. 2019. "Breaking Down the 'Coatlicue State' to See a Self: Queer Voices Within a Circle Ethan Trinh, ." *The Assembly* 2: 28–32.

Tumubweinee, Philippa, and Thierry M Luescher. 2019a. "Guest Editorial Space , Language and Identity Politics in Higher Education." *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 7 (1). https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v7i1.3688.

———. 2019b. "Inserting Space into the Transformation of Higher Education." *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 7 (1): 1–13. https://doi.org/10.24085/jsaa.v7i1.3689.

Turner, G., and L. McAlpine. 2011. "Doctoral Experience as Researcher Preparation: Activities, Passion, Status." *International Journal for Researcher Development* 2 (1): 46–60. https://doi.org/10.1108/17597511111178014.

Urch, Kakie, Michael L. Dorn, and J Abraham. 1995. "Working the Borderlands, Becoming Mestiza: An Interview with Gloria Anzaldua." *DisClosure: A Journal of Social Theory* 4 (1). https://doi.org/10.1215/00382876-4235062.

Vallone, Mirella. 2014. "The Wound as Bridge: The Path of Conocimiento in Gloria Anzaldúa's Work." *E-Rea* 12 (1). https://doi.org/10.4000/erea.4135.

Vásquez, Edith M. 2005. "La Gloriosa Travesura de La Musa Que Cruza/The Misbehaving Glory(a) of the Border-Crossing Muse: Transgression in Anzaldúa's Children's Stories." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by Analouise Keating, 63–75. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137_7.

Vekkaila, Jenna, Kirsi PyhältÖ, and Kirsti Lonka. 2013. "Experiences of Disengagement - A Study of Doctoral Students in the Behavioral Sciences." *International Journal of Doctoral Studies* 8: 61–81.

Verhage, Florentien. 2014. "Emotion , Space and Society Reprint of ' Living with (out) Borders: The Intimacy of Oppression.'" *Emotion, Space and Society* 13: 111–20. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2014.06.001.

Veuren, Mocke J van. 2012. "The Rhythms of Minutes: Henri Lefebvre's Rhythmanalysis and an Investigation of Spatial Practices of a Selected Public Site in Urban Johannesburg." University of Johannesburg Faculty. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.1.2806.8968.

Vicente, B. 1991. "Metaphor, Meaning and Comprehension." *Atlantis* XIII (1–2): 111–19. https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03212981.

Villalba, Alex Aleman. 2016. "Putting Coyolxauhqui Back Together: Queer Nepantleras Rewriting Latinx Memory Abstract." Oregon State University.

Wakeford, Nina, and Celia Lury. 2012. *Inventive Methods: The Happening of the Social*. London and New York: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203854921.

Walke, Polly. 2000. "Native Approaches to Decolonising Education in Institutions of Higher Learning." *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education* 28 (02): 28–34. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1326011100001629.

Walker, Melanie. 2006. "Academic Identities : Women on a South African Landscape Academic Identities : Women on a South African Landscape" 5692. https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569980190304.

Warren, Calvin L. 2018. *Ontological Terror*. *Ontological Terror*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822371847.

Watkins, Ceri. 2005. "Representations of Space, Spatial Practices and Spaces of Representation: An Application of Lefebvre's Spatial Triad." *Culture and Organization*

11 (3): 209–20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14759550500203318.

Wegener, Charlotte, Ninna Meier, and Karen Ingerslev. 2016. "Borrowing Brainpower – Sharing Insecurities. Lessons Learned from a Doctoral Peer Writing Group." *Studies in Higher Education* 41 (6): 1092–1105. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2014.966671.

Weidman, John C., and Elizabeth L. Stein. 2003. "Socialization of Doctoral Students to Academic Norms." *Research in Higher Education* 44 (6): 641–56. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1026123508335.

Wiederhold, Eve. 2005. "What Do You Learn from What You See? Gloria Anzaldúa and Double-Vision in the Teaching of Writing." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds*, edited by AnaLouise keating, 109–20. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Wilson, Dana G. 2012. "Conversations on Conversion: Applying Anzaldúas Theory of Nepantle to Rosemary Radford Ruether's Call to Conversion." Texas Woman's University.

Wolhuter, Charl C. 2011. "Research on Doctoral Education in South Africa against the Silhouette of Its Meteoric Rise in International Higher Education Research." *Perspectives in Education* 29 (3): 126–38. http://www.ajol.info/index.php/pie/article/view/76981.

World Bank. 2000. "Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise." *The Task Force on Higher Education and Sociefy*. Washington, D.C. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0272-7757(03)00062-1.

Yarbro-Bejarano, Yvonne. 1994. "Gloria Anzaldúa's Borderlands/La Frontera: Cultural Studies, 'Difference,' and the Non- Unitary Subject." *Cultural Critique* 28: 5–28.

Zaytoun, Kelli. 2016. "New Pathways toward Understanding Self-in-Relation: Anzaldúan (Re)Visions for Developmental Psychology." In *EntreMundos/AmongWorlds: New Perspectives on Gloria E. Anzaldua*, edited by AnaLouise Keating, 147–59. New York:Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781403977137.

**Consent Form**

I _____ agree to participate in the research project of Rudo Hwami on Doctoral borderlands.


 I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a

PhD degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on 0730282454 (cell phone) or rudohfhwami@gmail.com (email). **The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee**(s), and is under the supervision of Prof Louise Vincent in the Political and International Studies Department at Rhodes University, whom may be contacted on 046 603 8353 (*office*) or l.vincent@ru.ac.za (email).

2. The **Researcher is interested in documenting how PhD students experience the doctorateness culture.**

3. My **participation will involve being interviewed at my convenience** for a duration of about one hour to one hour 30 minutes per interview.

4. I **may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.**

5. I am **invited to voice to the researcher any concerns** I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.

6. I **am free to withdraw from the study at any time** – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.

7. The **report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences**, attitudes and behaviors, **but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader**.


Signed on (Date):

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____