

# ***The curation of a rhythm analyst: An Autoethnographic Account of the quest for critical methodology.***

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## **Abstract**

This paper will use auto-ethnography to explore how some of the most mundane tasks of a PhD, such as searching for a methodology, can become an embodied quest for the authenticity of Self. I narrate the internal struggles I faced as a doctoral student theorising from the margins, outside dominant narratives, trying to find an ontological home for my project. This paper uses autoethnography to discuss my journey as a PhD student trying to find a critical methodology for my study. In my experience, the search for methodology is intricately connected to onto-epistemological belonging. It can be a space of contestation where one is constantly negotiating dressage, assimilation, and appropriation. This paper seeks to capture an account of myself, a PhD student speaking from the margins negotiating competing and sometimes contesting ideologies. This paper mainly reflects on how I negotiated disciplinary dressage- disciplinary entrainment into traditions and normative assumptions that offer no possibility of onto-epistemic alternatives. Secondly, I use the concept of dressage to discuss how I escaped strict dichotomies- where one can only be allegiant to one school of thought. I found this refusal of rigid dichotomies very isolating as you constantly find yourself in an in-betweenness, I used Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of *Nepantla*. Anzaldúa theorises nepantla as a liminal space between past contradictions, present conflicting realities and an uncertain future. 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 external world of reality, is a zone of possibility (Anzaldúa 2002, 544).

*Nepantla* conceptualises thresholds as a rite of passage undefined, non-linear and overlapping. Anzaldúa views threshold crossing in *conocimiento* as a process towards transformation; however, she does not prescribe what junctures and thresholds one needs to cross and how this crossing will be experienced. The nepantla process is thus situated and non-monolithic. *Nepantla*, as a conceptual tool, gave me the language to engage in a critical analysis of my everyday life, enabling me to discover the changeability of the ideologies that have formed some of my onto-epistemological grounding. It acted as and conceptual tool for ideological analysis and, primarily, a tool for incessant self-analysis (1991, 27).

## **Keywords**

Rhythm analysis, autoethnography, critical methodology, *nepantla*, doctoral education

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